



## Elizabeth Warren's School Choice Blunder

Corey DeAngelis

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Elizabeth Warren came out swinging against school choice when she released her education plan on October 21. The Massachusetts senator and Democratic presidential candidate called for ending federal funding for public charter schools, banning for-profit charter schools, increasing regulations for all charter schools, and making it more difficult to start new charter schools. She also said she wanted to stop private school choice programs.

Warren then started tweeting that she was "#PublicSchoolProud" and that "we must stop the privatization of public schools." She also bragged about how she attended and taught at public schools.

But the senator remained silent about where she sent her children to school. She'd been silent on the subject for a while, in fact, having failed to respond when *Education Week* asked where her children went to school. If Warren was so loud and proud about public schools, wouldn't she be more than happy to tell everyone that she sent her two kids, Alex and Amelia, to public schools? Of course she would.

Unless, that is, she had the privilege to send her own kids to private schools while fighting against extending similar options to the less fortunate.

On October 28, using ancestry.com, I discovered a 1987 fifth grade yearbook photo of "Alex Warren" at Kirby Hall School, an expensive private institution. The school's current tuition is \$17,875, and it is located about half a mile from the University of Texas at Austin, where Warren was teaching at the time. The student's year of birth—1976—matched Elizabeth Warren's son's.

A few weeks after my discovery, Elizabeth Warren gave a speech in Atlanta about the rights of black women. The November 21 rally was interrupted by a group of black protesters from the Powerful Parent Network, a pro-school choice group that opposes Warren's anti-choice education plan.

After the rally, Warren tried to do the right thing by talking with the protesters. One of the parents, Sunny Thomas, recorded the 17-minute conversation and posted it on Facebook for the world to see. Warren probably regrets two things she said in that recording.

First, she accidentally made a good case against the idea that you can fix education by throwing more money at it, saying: "I told all of my folks back in Massachusetts, 'You're going to get an 85 percent raise' at all of our little-child development centers. You know how much they got? Zero! Somehow it all went to the state government and never made it down!" *Somehow*, yes.

Second: When a parent told Warren that she "read that your children went to private schools," Warren quickly responded, "No, my children went to public schools."

A day later, the Warren campaign told Fox News: "Elizabeth's daughter went to public school. Her son went to public school until fifth grade." So, yes, they both went to public schools. It's just that one of them *also* went to a private school. To more than one private school, in fact: After the controversy hit, one of Alex Warren's classmates sent his high school yearbook photo to *The Federalist*, showing that he attended Haverford School while Elizabeth was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania. Haverford's high school tuition and fees are currently set at \$39,500.

Warren was so "#PublicSchoolProud" that she decided to send her son Alex to expensive private schools for the majority of his K–12 education. And I don't blame her! I'm happy they had that option. But maybe Elizabeth Warren shouldn't fight tooth and nail against extending similar opportunities to poor families.

Since then, Warren has spiraled downward in both the polls and the prediction markets. The latest nationwide survey, from Quinnipiac, shows a 14-point drop from last month. But Warren might be able to regain some ground by actually listening to what a majority of minority families want for their kids: school choice. It also wouldn't hurt for the senator to try not to mislead people.

*Corey A. Deangelis is the director of school choice at Reason Foundation. He is also an adjunct scholar at Cato Institute.*