

School Choice Weekly #158

The Results Are In:

What Will Education Policy Look Like Going Forward?

In the weeks leading up to the recent elections, we looked at what the president can and can't do about education policy and what education policies voters in several states would decide at the state level. The results are in, and the Cato Institute's Jason Bedrick outlines what president-elect Donald Trump's first 100 days in office might mean for education policy:

The details are far from clear, but it appears that his education policy will focus on three areas:

School choice

Trump has the right instinct on school choice, but if he is planning to promote a national voucher program, then he's going about it the wrong way. Expanding educational opportunity is admirable, but using the federal government to do so is misguided.

Common Core:

Yet again, Trump has the right instinct but the policy leaves much to be desired. Ending Common Core is a noble goal, but it is primarily a matter of state policy and at this point there is little the federal government can do about it. The only way for the federal government to get rid of Common Core would be to engage in the same sort of unconstitutional federal coercion that critics of the Core opposed in the first place.

College and Vocational Education

Here is where Trump's plan is the murkiest. He wants to "expand" vocational education and make college "more affordable" but he does not explain how.

The Wall Street Journal is also talking about Trump's "unclear" education policies, and *Education Next* has released a podcast exploring what Trump's victory could mean for education. For now, it's a lot of speculation, and the media could end up being just as wrong about Trump's education policy as it was about Trump's election. Stay tuned.

School Choice Roundup

- Charters: Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani says Trump "is going to be the best thing that ever happened for school choice and the charter school movement."
- Democrats: Voters elect to the U.S. House of Representatives three Democrats who support school choice: two in Florida and one in Pennsylvania.

- Iowa: Forecasters predict school choice expansion as the Republican Party takes control of the state House, Senate, and governorship for the first time since 1998.
- Massachusetts: The ballot initiative to lift the cap on the number of charter schools allowed in the state fails to pass.
- Atlantic City: A ballot proposal to introduce school vouchers in the city fails narrowly.

Common Core and Curriculum Watch

- Michigan: The Great Lakes State experiences a huge jump in students enrolling in virtual schools.
- Alabama: The Alabama board of education is doing away with the traditional A-F grading system, replacing it with measurements of “achievement” and “learning gains.”
- Common Core: The national standards are not necessarily here to stay, NPR opines, because Republicans may feel emboldened now to repeal and replace Common Core at the state level.
- Getting Personal: Palm Beach County elementary schools use the “i-Ready” learning system to test students regularly to design “personalized” lesson plans.

Education Today

- Federal Funding: The U.S. DOE will award more than \$103 million for the 2016 “Investing in Innovation Competition.”
- Ed. Sec. Replacement: Choice Media reports Beltway pundits favor Dr. Ben Carson as the best choice to be the nation’s next education secretary.
- Higher Taxes: Maine voters say yes to raising taxes on people earning more than \$200,000 per year, to fund public schools.
- New Mexico: Teacher performance evaluations in New Mexico will now consider teacher attendance.