



Donald Trump says he will be the “Biggest Cheerleader” on School Choice

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Republican nominee Donald Trump says that, if elected president, he will make school choice the center of his education plan and will use \$20 billion to establish a block grant to fund school choice for children living in low-income areas.

Public schools are “our government-run monopoly” that has “trapped millions of African-American and Hispanic youth in failing government schools that deny them the opportunity to join the ladder of American success,” Trump said in a speech at the Cleveland Arts and Social Sciences Academy on Thursday.

He will be “the nation’s biggest cheerleader for school choice,” Trump said, adding that he supports merit pay for teachers “so that we reward great teachers – instead of the failed tenure system that rewards bad teachers and punishes good ones.”

Video: Savannah State U Goes to School on Donald Trump

Trump said:

I want every single inner city child in America who is today trapped in a failing school to have the freedom – the civil right – to attend the school of their choice. This includes private schools, traditional public schools, magnet schools and charter schools which must be included in any definition of school choice.

Our government spends more than enough money to easily pay for this initiative – with billions left over. It’s simply a matter of putting students first, not the education bureaucracy.

The Republican nominee reviewed that the United States spends more than \$620 billion on K-12 education annually at both the state and federal levels.

“We spend more per student than almost any other major country in the world,” he said. “Yet, our students perform near the bottom of the pack for major large advanced countries.”

Reacting to Trump’s speech, senior director of the Center for Education at Pacific Research Institute Lance Izumi tells *Breitbart News* Trump’s identification of school choice as a central strategy to achieve success for all students is on target.

“Mr. Trump cited school-choice programs around the country, but rightly said we need to do more,” he added. “His plan to ensure school-choice tools for every disadvantaged student in our nation recognizes that the federal government does not dictate education policies to the states, and that school choice must be a joint undertaking.”

Izumi continued:

While the details of his plan will be dissected in the coming days, it is important to not lose sight of the big picture: Donald Trump wants to end the government education monopoly and empower parents and their children. Mr. Trump’s vision speaks to ordinary Americans in a way that is unfathomable to the big teacher unions, entrenched government education officials, and to organizations like Black Lives Matter, which has just come out against charter schools. Mr. Trump’s school-choice proposal demonstrates that he understands that an education system exists for the learning of our children, not as an expensive jobs programs for protected adults.

However, Izumi cautions that school choice should not come about with government “strings” attached.

“Trump said that states should come up with their own formulas and programs as to how to implement choice, so it is imperative that both the federal government and the states ensure that private schools are protected from intrusive government regulations and mandates,” he said.

Though Trump briefly mentioned the nationalized Common Core standards and reiterated the program’s failure to bring about a decline in the achievement gap, he failed to go into more detail about how he would end federal involvement in schools.

Heather Crossin, co-founder of Hoosiers Against Common Core in Indiana tells *Breitbart News*, “Parents who have been fighting Common Core are counting on Donald Trump to ensure that future federal block grants to the states no longer contain the “all controlling” strings that plagued No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top.”

“He must eliminate the federal testing requirements, which have been the biggest ‘stick’ used by the federal government to infect and pollute America’s schools with greatly detested Common Core curriculums,” she explains.

Izumi adds:

It is therefore of importance that Trump once again came out against Common Core, the ultimate intrusion by the federal government into schools, both public and private. The government schools have become re-education camps to indoctrinate children with liberal/left ideologies, and school choice is needed to give parents and children new alternatives to escape this indoctrination. Yes, choice programs must be bullet-proofed against over-regulation, but worrying about that possibility shouldn’t stop us from pushing well-thought-out choice efforts.

Neal McCluskey, director of the Center for Educational Freedom at Cato Institute, also tells *Breitbart News* that school choice is “the key to empowering parents to get the education that is best for their unique children, and for educators to teach how they want and try new, innovative approaches.”

“But this is not something that should come from Washington,” he warns, adding:

The federal government has no constitutional authority to meddle in education, and as it has proven over the last several decades—including by coercing states to adopt the Common Core—once it starts paying for education it starts controlling it, telling everyone what to do and how to do it. The federal government should be withdrawn from education except in Washington, DC, itself, federal installations, and prohibiting state and local discrimination in providing education.

“It is what the Constitution demands, and fifty-plus years of experience with federal spending and interference tells us is right,” McCluskey concludes.