



The Most Important Thing You Won't Pay For

July 10th, 2009, 11:18 am · 1 Comment · posted by [Bill Goodwin](#)

Neal McCluskey wonders why voters and politicians [invariably favor increasing dollars for education](#), despite the absence of any improvement in test scores or student ability.

What explains this slavish addiction? It's hard to say for sure, but it seems to come down to this: people feel that education is important; that the more teachers we have, the better; and that you can never spend too much on the children.

That's true, but doesn't explain the whole story. On a poll (or a ballot initiative), voters will always support more funding for education, but that isn't necessarily how they spend their own money. It would be fascinating to examine support for increases in education funding and household expenditures on things like tutors, pencils, and books. Anecdotal evidence, from the public schools where my wife has taught, suggest that we shouldn't be so quick to give parents the benefit of the doubt. McCluskey may be right that most folks believe "you can never spend too much on the children," so long as it's *you* who is doing the spending. Perhaps a better slogan would be, "Everyone else can never spend too much on the children."

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One Comment



[Barbara Berger](#) says:

July 12, 2009 at 1:55 am

Undoubtedly, the schools are strapped for cash and teachers continue to spend more and more of their own paychecks on needed supplies. However, simply throwing money at a system that is struggling doesn't work, either. It takes more.

Parents must step up to their responsibilities and provide the involvement and encouragement their children need to succeed in school.

I'm sure that many parents feel that it's the schools' responsibility, alone to teach and guide but they are wrong. Students who are uninspired and unencouraged at home will not succeed at school.

So, turn off the TV and the electronic games once in awhile and get to know what your child is learning and become part of the team. They need your help, your interest and your support.