

OBAMA'S EDUCATION PLAN AGAINST PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE

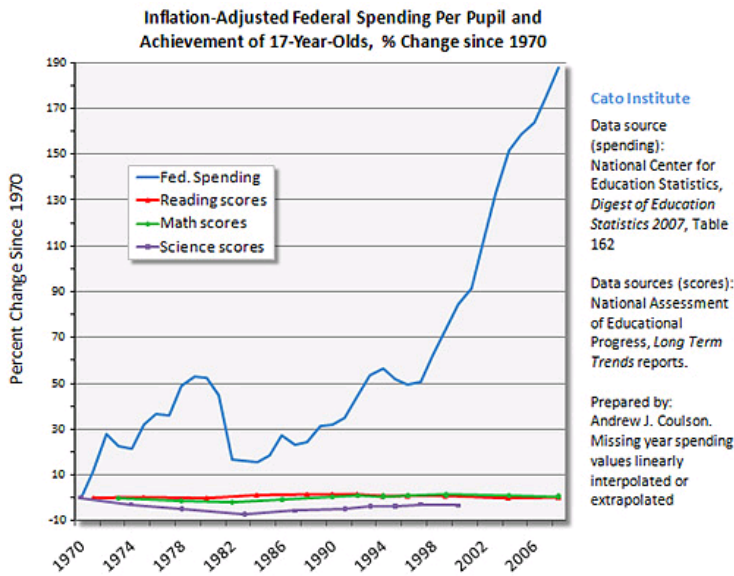
By **Julie Borowski** on **Mar 01, 2010**

Today, at an event sponsored by the America's Promise Alliance, Obama [announced](#) that more federal money will be granted to the states in order to improve their failing schools:

President Barack Obama is offering \$900 million in grants to states and school districts to turn around low-performing schools.

The White House asserted that the [\\$900 million](#) will target the nation's soaring drop out rate. In fact, [1.2 million](#) students drop out of high school each year—that's 7,000 a day. The Obama administration firmly believes that it is necessary to focus on the schools with graduation rates lower than 60 percent. In addition, the administration deems it necessary to focus on students early in their education and ensure a safe learning environment in order to reduce high school drop out rates.

Since 1965, American taxpayers have spent [\\$2 trillion](#) on public education. In inflation adjusted dollars, federal education spending per student has practically [tripled](#). So what effect will Obama's \$900 million education grant have on student achievement? Chances are that this money will make absolutely no difference. Below is a [graph](#) prepared by Andrew J. Coulson, an education policy scholar at the Cato Institute, that shows no positive correlations between federal spending per pupil and test scores in reading, math or science.



In order to receive the federal money, states will have to choose one of these [methods](#) to fix a failing school:

_Turnaround Model: The school district must replace the principal and at least half of the school staff, adopt a new governance structure for the school, and implement a new or revised instructional program.

_Restart Model: The school district must close and reopen the school under the management of a charter school operator, a charter management organization or an educational management organization. A restarted school would be required to enroll, within the grades it serves, former students who wish to attend.

_School Closure: The school district must close the failing school and enroll the students in other, higher-achieving schools in the district.

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_Transformational Model: The school must address four areas, including teacher effectiveness, instruction, learning and teacher planning time, and operational flexibility.

However, all of these options grant the federal government more power over education while restricting the choices of parents, teachers and students. As Andrew J. Coulson eloquently [states](#):

Wouldn't it be better to make schools adapt to the needs of individual kids instead of trying to forcibly fit the kids into a single bureaucratic learning schedule? Wouldn't it be better to give teachers the professional freedom to do their jobs, and then make it easier for families to pick the best schools for their children — public, private, or parochial?

We cannot afford to throw millions more taxpayer dollars at public education and once again receive no positive results. As we should all know by now, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over again and expecting different results. In order to have a true impact on student achievement and reduce drop out rates, school choice needs to be implemented through methods such as school vouchers and private scholarship programs. It is urgent to end the monopolistic model of public education and allow every child and parent the opportunity to choose their education based on individual need. To learn more about FreedomWorks' continuous support of school choice programs visit: [FreedomWorks' School Choice Page](#).

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