



Ideas Changing the World

Daily Policy Digest

Education Issues

April 16, 2010

OBAMA'S EDUCATION PLAN AGAINST PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE

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 dropout rate. In fact, 1.2 million students drop out of high school each year -- that is 7,000 a day, says FreedomWorks.

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. According to a research by Cato Institute's Andrew J. Coulson, there are no positive correlations between federal spending per pupil and test scores in reading, math or science, says FreedomWorks.

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

All of these options, however, grant the federal government more power over education while restricting the choices of parents, teachers and students. In order to have a true impact on student achievement and reduce dropout rates, school choice needs to be implemented through methods such as school vouchers and private scholarship programs, says FreedomWorks.

Source: Julie Borowski, "Obama's Education Plan Against Parental School Choice," Freedomworks.org, March 1, 2010.

For text:

<http://www.freedomworks.org/blog/jborowski/obamas-education-plan-against-parental-school-choi>

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http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_Category=27