



23. December 2015

## Let's Get Serious About Education Policy



It all started with the ridiculously named, "No Child Left Behind."

NCLB then morphed into the equally ludicrously labeled, "Every Child Succeeds Act."

In the meantime we've seen "No Excuses" charter schools, "zero tolerance" behavior policies, and a leading Presidential candidate say, with a straight face, that she

"wouldn't keep any school open that wasn't doing a better-than-average job," seemingly unaware that such a policy--in addition to being impossible to monitor and enforce, and mathematically improbable if not impossible--is not within her purview if she were to become POTUS.

The national rhetoric around education reform has become indistinguishable from our current dialogue around politics and entertainment, which is dominated by the obscene and the grotesque, while serious and reasoned discussion on substantive issues is ignored and even scorned.

Leaving aside for the moment that it is not the President's job to determine which schools get closed and which remain open, that--although it sounds sweet and kind and warm--it's pretty naive to make it a goal of education policy to guarantee that "no child gets left behind," and that a policy recommendation that stipulates "every child will succeed" is a bit short on both definitions (what do we mean by "succeed"?) and details (how will student success be measured, by whom, under what conditions, what resources will this policy goal require, etc.), let's consider a few serious policy recommendations that would be worthy of our collective consideration and discussion.

- The "No School or Teacher Left Behind" Act: This initiative establishes new state and federal funding policies that guarantee the end of so-called "unfunded mandates." In other words, no longer will state and federal politicians be able to pass new laws concerning student testing, curriculum changes, or teacher evaluation without simultaneously providing all necessary resources for implanting, supporting and maintaining such laws. Additionally, no education-related laws may be passed without significant input from practicing teachers--and this means **real input**; not faux "grassroots" efforts made up of "blue ribbon panels" consisting of folks with no education degrees, teacher certification, or actual classroom teaching experience.
- The "Every School Budget Succeeds" Act: This new policy guarantees that all public schools receive adequate funding, and that government budgets include the necessary funds to bring all school buildings and facilities into compliance with state and federal regulations on workplace safety. As a part of the ESBS Act, all public schools must offer a rich and diverse curriculum for all learners, including music and art, physical education, library, school nurses, and time for recess.

- The "No Excuses for Charter Schools" Act: The NECS Act is a rider inserted into the ESBS Act that prohibits the use of any state or federal monies for the support of charter schools or private/religious schools, and mandates that all monies that had previously been earmarked for charter school support be returned to the public schools in those jurisdictions.
- The "Zero Tolerance for Charter School Operators" Act: This new law would establish serious fines and punishments for charter school operators who embezzle funds, abruptly close schools when teachers show an interest in forming a union, falsify data, use their schools as fronts for money-laundering, and employ untested and miseducative pedagogical and behavior strategies (such as draconian suspension policies). All funds remitted for these fines would be returned, by law, to the public schools in those jurisdictions, and must be matched, dollar for dollar, by the charter authorizer in each incident.
- The "Better Than Average" Act: This new federal law is not an education policy per se--it applies to political candidates, and requires that any candidate for elected office who is found to have lied more than the average of all candidates in their race must immediately resign from that campaign, and turn over all remaining contributions to the public schools in the candidate's home town and state.

Rather than making a series of empty, unfilled promises, these policies would actually improve teachers' working conditions, students' learning conditions, and school funding; would protect public schools from inequities of funding caused by the proliferation of charter schools; and would "encourage" the decision makers who currently establish public education policy to play within the rules, or forfeit the thing they are really most concerned about: those sweet, sweet campaign contributions.

Policy making is not about coming up with fanciful names for unrealistic policy goals that over-promise and under-deliver. It's about developing serious, considered and thoughtful recommendations for improving the conditions under which we work and live.

It's time to get serious about education policy. Let's make sure the candidates from both parties understand that we won't accept more empty promises and unfunded mandates.

And let's make sure they also remember the most important thing: We vote.

Write a comment

Comments: 9

**Sue Hill** (*Wednesday, 23 December 2015 17:05*)

#1

Brilliant!

**Aina Bernier** (*Wednesday, 23 December 2015 17:31*)

#2

Thank you for the clear, rational recommendations!

**[Arbaa Raad](#)** (*Wednesday, 23 December 2015 23:34*)

#3

Extremely true

**[Physics Tuition](#)** (*Sunday, 09 April 2017 21:52*)

#4

Physics Tuition I think this is an informative post and it is very useful and knowledgeable. therefore, I would like to thank you for the efforts you have made in writing this thread.

**[academic help](#)** (*Tuesday, 04 July 2017 14:46*)

#5

Thanks for taking the time to that, I feel strongly about this and so really like getting to know more on this kind of field. Do you mind updating your blog post with additional insight? It should be really useful for all of us.

**[Anthony Kiedes](#)** (*Friday, 28 July 2017 07:30*)

#6

great, thanks for sharing!

**[paper help](#)** (*Saturday, 29 July 2017 12:18*)

#7

I think that no matter how much efforts to make education better were done. The result as great graduation process should be the only thing that should worry all these governmental senators!

[Claim](#) (Thursday, 05 October 2017 06:10)

#8

Wow what a Great Information about World Day its very nice informative post. thanks for the post.

[Appvn APK](#) (Wednesday, 17 January 2018 01:50)

#9

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#10

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