



Parent Voices Legislative Fax

Addendum #1 to March 1, 2017 fax

New Research: Voucher approach may be “harmful to student learning”

Parents Across America (PAA) is very concerned that, in his speech to Congress last night, President Trump renewed his call to spend millions of federal education dollars on school vouchers. His Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos, is also a strong voucher proponent.

PAA opposes voucher programs because they redirect scarce money away from our public school system, may cross constitutional lines separating church and state, and – most importantly – have a poor-to-mixed overall academic track record.

A number of new studies paint an especially dismal picture of voucher programs. According to a recent LA Times article (<http://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-hiltzik-devos-vouchers-20170228-story.html>), multiple studies of **Louisiana’s voucher program** found that

- Students **lost ground** in their first two years in the program. Those performing at average levels in math and reading — that is, at about the 50th percentile — fell 24 percentile points in math and eight points in reading after their first year in the program.
- Participation in the program **“substantially reduces academic achievement.”**
- Voucher students **“have fared worse academically”** compared to their closely matched peers attending public schools.... Such impacts also appear to **persist over time**, suggesting that the results are not driven simply by the setbacks that typically accompany any change of school.”

The Times also reports on the voucher program in Indiana, which former governor, now Vice President, Mike Pence, strongly promoted:

- **Two researchers from Notre Dame** have found that “voucher students who transfer to private schools experience **significant losses in mathematics achievement” and no improvement in English** compared to their records at their former public schools.

One researcher summed things up in this way, “In (DeVos’s) rhetoric, it’s the creation of market mechanisms that are the important thing to promote. This research does not support that view. In fact, it may support the idea that that approach is **harmful to student learning.**”

Parents Across America is a national network of grass-roots parents from all backgrounds across the U.S. who support quality public education for every child.

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