

# WHY WOULD ANYONE WHO CARES ABOUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SHOP AT WAL\*MART??



Most people are aware of the controversies surrounding Wal\*Mart's foreign product sourcing, treatment of suppliers, miserly employee compensation and poor working conditions. They also know that when a WalMart moves in, the entire community can suffer. Long-time, unique businesses are forced to close, downtown areas are shuttered, and whatever made the place special can be lost.

**Charter schools are the Wal\*Marts of public education:** Fewer people are aware that Wal\*Mart and the more than \$1 billion it has given to privatization efforts have been having a similar effect. When a neighborhood school closes, the community loses open access to a critical institution, and sometimes the only source of family support services. Yet due in part to the overly powerful influence of the Walton billion, hundreds of public schools have been closed. Many were closed to make way for charter schools, others due to under-enrollment - often after charter schools skimmed their students- and still others after too many budget cuts at the same time as district and state funding has been redirected to charter schools.

**Why boycott Wal\*Mart?** Besides that \$10 blender and those \$4 jeans, here are a few more examples of what YOUR Wal\*Mart dollar buys:

- **More charter schools:** Wal\*Mart funds one in four of the nation's charter schools.
- **More school closings:** Wal\*Mart spent nearly \$500,000 to pay for a sham “public engagement” school closing hearing process in Chicago, where Mayor Emanuel closed 47 schools in one year.
- **More astroturf “parent” groups:** Wal\*Mart funds fake grassroots groups like Stand for Children (millions) and Parent Revolution (\$6.3 million) to push the parent trigger and other corporate privatization schemes.
- **More high-stakes standardized testing:** Walton supports teacher bonuses linked to raising test scores.
- **More vouchers** for private and religious schools.
- **More interference in more states:** Walton family members have donated millions to elect pro-charter legislators and school board members in several states where none of them live (e.g. Wisconsin, Louisiana).

**Can we really have an impact?** Corporate image is the Achilles heel of American business. Corporations want the public to believe that they are good citizens. Philanthropy is a large part of any corporation's marketing strategy. This provides an opportunity for public school advocates. While our boycott may not harm them much financially, we can hit them in another place that really hurts by showing how their supposedly good deeds are really bad for children, families, and the community.

The fact is, the goal of the corporate takeover of public education is not to improve and strengthen schools for all children using methods they truly believe will work, but to destroy it altogether and remake it as a competitive marketplace which creates wealth for a few even as it produces a lower quality education for many and push-out and drop-out for some. We must use the tools at our disposal to stop this harmful agenda. So....**STOP SHOPPING AT WALMART!**