

Education Choice for All Students

A Moral and National Imperative



Education Choice for All Students: A Moral and National Imperative

A Policy Briefing Presented by the Center for Urban Renewal and Education

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Background

Education choice, also called “education freedom,” is the idea that parents should be able to choose where to send their children to school. The call for education choice impacts approximately 48 million students enrolled in K-12 public schools across America and their parents.¹

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) reports that K-12 public school enrollment dropped by more than 2 percent in fall 2020¹ and other reports cite post-pandemic increases in private school enrollment and homeschooling. The most recent data from the Department indicates that enrollment is still down 1.3 million from pre-pandemic levels. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of America’s children still attend a taxpayer-funded government school to which they were assigned because of where they happen to live.

ED estimates that \$947 billion was spent on public K-12 education in the United States during the 2023 fiscal year, with Federal funds accounting for \$120 billion of the spending. This amounted to an expenditure of \$16,526 per student.² Due in part to emergency relief funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, federal funding for K-12 education has more than doubled from the pre-pandemic level of \$58 billion in 2019.

Title I (one) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965 provides for federal funds to school districts that are earmarked to help low-income students. In the 2022–2023 school year, about \$17.3 billion in federal funds went to school districts for this purpose.³ A small portion of Title I funds are shared with private schools, but some public-school districts are not entirely cooperative in distributing those funds. Congress appropriated approximately \$18.4 billion for Title I in both FY24 and FY25.⁴

Responding to a complaint filed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles in September 2019, the California Department of Education issued an “investigation report” on June 25, 2021, charging the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) with “egregious” violations of federal law by withholding millions of dollars in Title I funds from archdiocesan schools.⁵

This report finds that K-12 education in the United States is far from what it should or could be. As a nation we are underperforming by international standards. CURE is also concerned that low-income Americans are particularly underserved by our nation’s approach to education.

Lack of Competition

The public school system is controlled by government bureaucrats and unions. Nobel prize-winning economist Milton Friedman described the situation in a 1993 article:

The behavior of union officials does not reflect the views of all or perhaps even a majority of union members. Public school teachers know what is at issue. In Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities, twice as large a fraction of public school teachers send their children to private schools as the citizenry in general. I have talked to many teachers who don't like the conditions in their schools, and have heard some denounce at public meetings the conditions at their schools that prevent them from being effective teachers. Most of the extra money that we have been spending on schooling has not been going to classroom teachers. It has been going to administrators, to consultants, and for all sorts of noneducational purposes.

Moreover, I believe that public schools would be the chief beneficiaries of effective, unhindered, empowered parental choice. Our institutions of higher education, both public and private, are number one in the world; our public elementary and secondary schools are near the bottom. How come? The answer is in one word: choice. Students can choose among many institutions of higher education (though here, too, the heavy hand of the government is increasingly reducing the diversity of educational alternatives); at lower educational levels, only those of us who can afford to pay twice for the schooling of our children have effective choice. Let parents have effective choice, and the public schools would rapidly shape up or go out of business.⁶

Apple founder Steve Jobs said:

The unions are the worst thing that happened to education because it is not a meritocracy. It turns into a bureaucracy, which is exactly what has happened. The teachers can't teach, and administrators run the place, and nobody can be fired. It's terrible.⁷

We know that the key to the success of our great American economy is freedom and competition. Competition is what produces excellence.

How can it be that in a sphere where excellence is possibly more important than anywhere else—the education of our children—we don't have freedom and competition?

Union Control

In the 2023–2024 school year, there were about 3.2 million full- and part-time teachers in America’s public schools.⁸ According to the U.S. Department of Education’s 2015–2016 National Teacher and Principal Survey, about 70 percent of public-school teachers were in a union or employees’ association.⁹

While more recent Department data on union participation of public school teachers is not available, the largest teachers’ union in America, the National Education Association (NEA), currently boasts 2.4 million active working members.¹⁰ The second largest teachers’ union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), boasts 1.8 million total members, including 250,000 retirees.¹¹ It’s worth noting, however, that union membership has been on the decline since the COVID-19 pandemic. The NEA lost 82 thousand working members in the 2020-21 school year, 40.1 thousand the following year, and then 12.5 thousand in the 2023-2024 school year.¹²

While many members of these two giant teachers’ unions are early childhood and K-12 public school teachers, many others are paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education personnel, nurses and health professionals, retirees, community allies, and other public employees.

Union Values

The AFT and NEA are closely aligned with the hard left in American politics. In 2016, the AFT adopted a “Stand With Planned Parenthood” resolution saying:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers stands with Planned Parenthood and the millions who depend on its healthcare services, including contraception...and legal, safe abortions...

RESOLVED, that the AFT condemns the decades-long assault on Planned Parenthood by anti-abortion groups that demand barriers to reproductive health care and make it as difficult as possible for women to access the health care they need...

RESOLVED, that the AFT will call upon all its state affiliates, locals and members to urge their legislators, both state and federal, to stand up for women’s health and defend, not defund, Planned Parenthood.¹³

During the NEA’s 2022 annual assembly, the organization passed a resolution stating:

NEA will publicly stand in defense of abortion and reproductive rights and encourage members to participate in activities including rallies and demonstrations, lobbying and political campaigns, educational events, and other

actions to support the right to abortion, contraception, and a person's decision about their health.¹⁴

In 2024, the NEA sent a letter to U.S. Senators, calling on them to support and vote for S. 4554, the Reproductive Freedom for Women Act to protect abortion.¹⁵

The NEA advocates for “social and educational strategies fostering the eradication of institutional racism and White privilege perpetuated by White supremacy culture.” They argue that “in order to achieve racial and social justice, educators must acknowledge the existence of White supremacy culture as a primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism, and White privilege.”¹⁶ This ideology underpins the push for divisive critical race theory indoctrination in K-12 schools and colleges across America.

Both the AFT and NEA have been in the forefront of LGBTQ advocacy and have supported sex education curriculums that many parents find objectionable. They have called for large increases in domestic government spending and have opposed vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other policies that would provide low-income families with more choices in where their children are educated. They've also adopted several measures to “take all necessary steps” to oppose laws that prohibit instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity for students in K-3.¹⁷

During the spring of 2020 and the 2020–2021 school year, teachers' unions set a very high bar for steps that needed to be taken to reopen schools for in-person education.¹⁸ This reflected the inclination of the teachers' unions to put the interests of teachers ahead of the needs of children, who suffered socially, emotionally, and academically by their absence from in-person school during this period.¹⁹

Education Makes a Big Difference

When we talk about education, it's important to be thinking about what good ends we are trying to achieve. For our purposes, it is important to consider how education reduces poverty, although it is vital to remember that education aims at other high priority non-economic goods as well. It is clear that there is a very direct connection between education and earning power. Here's where blacks and whites over age 25 stood in 2024 regarding education achievement, according to the United States Census Bureau:²⁰

	WHITE (%)	BLACK (%)
High School diploma	89	88.1
Some College	63.9	57.4
Associate degree	49.7	40.9
Bachelor's degree	38.6	29.6
Advanced degree	14.6	11.2

Although the gap between high school graduation rates for blacks and whites has almost completely closed, it still is the case that blacks are graduating high school with deficient skills in reading and math and that far fewer blacks than whites are moving on to higher education.

This has meaningful implications in earning power.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that median black household income for 2023 was \$56,490, compared to the national average of \$80,610.²¹ Also according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the black poverty rate was 17.8 percent in 2023, compared to the national average of 11.1 percent.²²

Lagging International Test Scores

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment is conducted every three years and measures achievement of students around the world primarily in three areas: math, reading, and science. The 2021 assessment was delayed due to COVID-19, so the most recent numbers are from 2022.

The 80 developed and developing world countries assessed included high performers like Singapore, Japan, and Estonia, along with low performers like Uzbekistan, Kosovo, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines. How does the United States fare against these other nations?

In science, out of 80 countries measured, the United States finished 18th. The average score of these nations was 485, and the U.S. score was 499.²³

In reading, the United States finished 9th out of 80. The U.S. score was 504, compared with an average of 476 among all the nations.²⁴

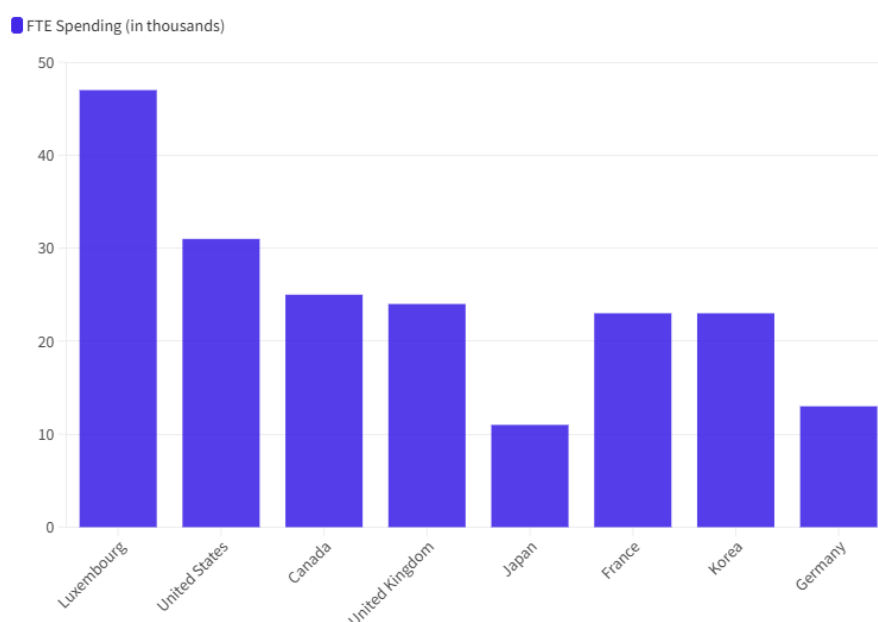
In math, the United States finished 34th out of 80. The U.S. score was 465, compared to the average of 472 for all the nations assessed by OECD.²⁵ The U.S. math scores are particularly devastating. American students scored 13 points lower than in the 2018 assessment. In fact, it was the lowest math score for American students since the assessment began in 2003.²⁶

Given that the United States is one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations in the world, these mediocre results on international science, reading, and math tests is something to be concerned about.

Furthermore, China did not participate in the 2022 assessment. Neither did India. However, both greatly outperformed the U.S. in previous assessments, including the 2018 assessment. China is our leading global competitor—economically and militarily. Along with Singapore, China is generally leading the pack and substantially outperforming the United States. This has grave implications for the future, especially if left-wing activists in the United States succeed in lowering academic standards in the name of racial ‘equity.’

U.S. Spending per Student

While the U.S. is lagging in international test scores, it is leading in one area – expenditure per student.



Source: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The dramatic skyrocketing in dollars spent, dating back to the 1970's, has not corresponded to a parallel increase in test scores whatsoever. As Angela Morabito, former press secretary for ED during President Trump's first term, once said: "If money were the answer to all of our educational woes, we would have one of the premier education systems on Earth. We need to expect better out of our schools and that doesn't mean throwing more money at a failing system -- when you do that all you get is a better funded failing system."²⁷

COVID Shifted the Landscape on School Choice

As teachers' unions opposed the opening of schools for in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents sought alternatives through private schools and homeschooling.

The U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey found that in late April/early May 2020, about 5.4 percent of U.S. households with school-aged children reported homeschooling. By October 2020, that number more than doubled to 11.1 percent. The proportion of black families homeschooling increased by nearly five times, from 3.3 percent to 16.1 percent.²⁸

The Associated Press (AP) interviewed some parents to find out why they had switched from public schools to homeschooling. They reported:

The parents in one of those households, Arlena and Robert Brown of Austin, Texas, had three children in elementary school when the pandemic took hold. After experimenting with virtual learning, the couple opted to try homeschooling with a Catholic-oriented curriculum provided by Seton Home Study School, which serves about 16,000 students nationwide....

"I didn't want my kids to become a statistic and not meet their full potential," said Robert Brown, a former teacher who now does consulting. "And we wanted them to have very solid understanding of their faith...."

Charmaine Williams, who lives in the St. Louis suburb of Baldwin, also is using the National Black Home Educators curriculum as she homeschools her 10-year-old son, Justin, and 6-year-old daughter, Janel.

Williams said she and her husband tried two previous stints of homeschooling for Justin after school officials complained about his behavior. Now—with the new curriculum and an accompanying support network—they feel more confident about choosing it as a long-term option.

“At school, children have to follow a certain pattern, and there’s bullying, belittling—compared to being home where they’re free to be themselves,” Williams said.

“There’s no turning back for us now,” she added. “The pandemic has been a blessing—an opportunity to take ownership of our children’s education.”

Joyce Burges, co-founder and program director of National Black Home Educators, said the 21-year-old organization had about 5,000 members before the pandemic and now has more than 35,000.²⁹

According to *Education Week* magazine, based on a nationally representative survey of parents by the EdWeek Research Center, nine percent of parents who weren’t homeschooling their children during the 2019–2020 school year said they planned to do so during the 2020–2021 school year.

Education Week further reports that homeschooling in response to the pandemic

is driving enrollment declines in schools and districts across the country, according to a majority of principals and superintendents surveyed by the EdWeek Research Center. Fifty-eight percent in a mid-October [2020] survey listed home schooling as being a major contributor to enrollment declines caused by COVID-19—more than any other single reason, such as losing students to charter schools, private schools, or “pandemic pods” in which families band together to hire instructors who teach their children at home.

In North Carolina, *Education Week* found that “more than 10,000 new families filed notices of their intent to home school between the beginning of July and the end of August [2020], compared to just over 3,500 during the same time period last year.”

Wisconsin reported “a spike in parents and guardians filing with the state their intent to homeschool. For the previous two years, intent to home school forms were submitted for about 14,800 students between the beginning of July and mid-October. [In 2020] the number was just over 23,000.”

At the local level, *Education Week* cited the DeForest school district in suburban Madison, Wisconsin. While the number of students leaving the district was relatively small at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year (about 50 out of nearly 4,000), the school district’s leader estimates that the number of new families enrolling in kindergarten compared to previous years dropped between 15 and 20 percent.³⁰

Resources for Private Educators

The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which partners with about 100,000 members, has a map on their website that provides detailed information on how to withdraw from public school, as well as state-by-state homeschooling requirements including testing and mandatory subjects.³¹

HSLDA has been operating for more than 40 years “to advance and protect homeschool freedom in the courts, legislatures, and in the court of public opinion.” They “equip parents with resources, educational consultants and Compassion grants because [they] love homeschooling and want more families to experience it.”³²

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) helps schools and educators deal with today’s challenging times. ACSI has a map on their website to help parents find Christian schools across America.³³ They also provide resources about curriculums and assessments, accreditation and certification, professional development, and legal and legislative issues.

In operation since 1972, the American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) serves more than 100,000 students and teachers in member schools throughout the United States. The purpose and objectives of AACCS are to aid in promoting, establishing, advancing, and developing Christian schools and Christian education in America.

AACCS has a federation of state associations that work with the national association to provide member services.³⁴

State Legislators Promote School Choice Initiatives

Many conservative legislators have long favored school choice and giving families alternatives to their public schools. In early 2021, however, that momentum accelerated.

Mike McShane, Director of National Research at EdChoice, reports that 13 states created five new school choice programs and expanded 13 existing programs between January and May 2021:

Education savings accounts, or ESAs, are the vanguard of school choice policy. No longer must students exchange a voucher or a tax-credit scholarship at a single educational institution. Now, funding is placed in a flexible use spending account that families can spread across private schools, tutoring, therapies, and other educational resources. West Virginia passed an absolutely massive ESA bill that will have the broadest eligibility of any school choice program in the nation. Kentucky and Missouri were the first states to create ESAs that would be funded by tax-credited donations rather than by the state. And not to be left out,

Indiana created a new ESA program, and Florida consolidated one of its voucher programs with its ESA program, allowing more students to have access to ESAs.

McShane further noted expanded voucher and tax credit programs in Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Indiana and Maryland. Finally, “Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, and South Dakota either created new tax-credit scholarship programs or expanded eligibility or funding for their existing programs.”³⁵

By the middle of 2021, the American Legislative Exchange Council reported that 42 states and the District of Columbia have laws allowing public charter schools to operate, and half the states have some form of private school choice program.³⁶

Into 2022 and 2023, the school choice wave continued to reach unprecedented heights. Arizona became the first state to enact universal school choice, expanding its Empowerment Scholarship Account program to every family in the state. The program had previously been limited to certain groups, such as students in low-performing public schools or special-needs students. By the end of 2023, eight more states had enacted laws to expand school choice to almost all K-12 families: Arkansas, Iowa, Florida, Utah, Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, and North Carolina.³⁷

Short of full expansion, several more states expanded school choice options in 2023. Montana raised caps on its tax-credit scholarships. South Carolina created a voucher pilot program for low-income and special needs students. Nebraska enacted its first tax-credit scholarship program. The momentum continued in 2024, with Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Utah, and Wyoming all enacting ESA's.³⁸

In 2025, Texas enacted its first ever private school choice initiative, with universal eligibility. It will provide about \$10,000 per student for families to spend on private school tuition or other educational expenses, beginning in 2026. Considering that Texas has the second largest state population in America, this will be one of the largest expansions of school choice in our nation's history.³⁹

EdChoice has a map of the 50 states that describes the kinds of school choice programs various states have enacted. The site is updated regularly to reflect new developments.⁴⁰

The One Big Beautiful Bill Expands School Choice Options

On July 4th, 2025, President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) into law. Among many conservative advancements, the bill creates school choice tax credits to expand education freedom and opportunity for students. Taxpayers who donate up to \$1,700 annually to a scholarship granting organization (SGO) are eligible for a 100% federal income tax credit for their contribution. SGO's will allocate the donated funds as

scholarships, which students can apply toward educational expenses (e.g., tuition, textbooks). The OBBBA also expands the scope of 529 savings accounts, allowing them to be used for K-12 educational materials and other expenses. Families with income not greater than 300% of their area median gross income will be eligible for this benefit.

Unfortunately, a parliamentary interpretation of U.S. Senate rules reportedly caused senators to insert a state “opt-in” condition for taxpayers in those states to claim the federal tax credit for contributions to SGO’s in their home state. This will effectively empower governors who oppose school choice to limit their own state taxpayers’ access to a federal tax credit that will be more broadly available to taxpayers in many other states.

CURE is calling on Congress to remove this absurd “opt-in” provision as soon as possible. In the meantime, we are encouraging supporters of school choice to insist that their governors ensure that this federal tax credit is available to every taxpayer in their state who wants to support such an SGO in their home state.

Furthermore, at the executive level, on January 29, 2025 President Trump issued the “Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families” executive order. In asserting the administration’s policy “to support parents in choosing and directing the upbringing and education of their children,” the executive order directs several federal agencies towards educational choice initiatives. The Secretary of Education was directed to issue guidance regarding how States can use Federal formula funds to support K-12 educational choice initiatives, and to include education freedom as a priority in discretionary grant programs. The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Labor were instructed to review their respective discretionary grant programs and each submit a plan to the President that identifies, evaluates, and makes recommendations regarding using relevant discretionary grant programs to expand education freedom for America’s families and teachers. The Secretary of the Interior was similarly instructed regarding Bureau of Indian Education schools.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) was instructed to issue guidance regarding whether and how States receiving block grants for families and children from HHS, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant, can use them to expand educational choice and support families who choose educational alternatives to governmental entities, including private and faith-based options.

The Secretary of Defense was instructed to review any available mechanisms under which military-connected families may use funds from the Department of Defense (subsequently given the secondary title of Department of War through an executive order issued by President Trump on September 5, 2025⁴¹) to attend schools of their

choice, including private, faith-based, or public charter schools. A plan, and the next steps to implement such a plan, must then be submitted to the President.⁴²

As of August 21, 2025, the U.S. Department of Education, in the second term of the Trump Administration, had already issued four Dear Colleague letters providing guidance to State and Local Education Agencies on how they might better provide Title I-A services for students enrolled in private schools.⁴³

Religious School Choice and the Courts

In a 5-4 decision (*Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*) on June 30, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a major victory for religious schools. The Court held that the Montana Constitution's "no-aid" provision to a state program providing tuition assistance to parents who send their children to private schools discriminated against religious schools and the families whose children attend or hope to attend them in violation of the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.⁴⁴

On July 2, 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it would hear a case (*Carson v. Makin*) brought by families from Maine who wanted to access a state tuition program to send their children to religious schools.

A Maine Department of Education rule allowed families who live in towns that don't have public schools to receive public tuition dollars to send their children to the public or private school of their choice. However, that program excluded religious schools from eligibility.

The Institute for Justice, which represented the families, said this was a "potentially landmark case" and that the State of Maine was "singling out religion—and only religion—for exclusion from its tuition assistance program."⁴⁵

As Amy Carson herself put it, "the state will take your money, but won't allow you to use it as you know best."⁴⁶

On June 21, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Maine's exclusion of religious schools from tuition assistance. The Court ruled that the exclusion violated the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment and that once a state decides to subsidize private education, it cannot discriminate against schools solely because they are religious. Chief Justice Roberts wrote, "The State pays tuition for certain students at private schools—so long as the schools are not religious. That is discrimination against religion."⁴⁷

Recommendations

Parents should consider removing children from public schools.

The promotion of critical race theory in public schools has raised fundamental questions about the education of our nation's children. Education is about more than teaching children to read and write. It is about transmitting a worldview and a set of values that will define how our youth think and how they will live. Many public schools have been captured by teachers' unions, and those unions do not hold conservative views on equal opportunity, sex education, or capitalism. Parents should prayerfully consider removing their children from public schools and insist that legislators let the money to educate those children follow each child.

Pastors should start private schools and homeschool networks.

As key leaders in many communities, especially low-income communities, pastors can play an enormous role in guiding their congregations. They can stress the importance of instilling Biblical values and urge parents to remove their children from the toxic culture that is pervasive in many public schools. Pastors of small churches should pool resources with other likeminded pastors to start a private school. If it's not possible to start a private school in the near term, or if a private school is not for everyone, homeschool networks are another effective means for parents to pool financial resources and instructional capabilities.

State legislators, governors, and local officials should expand access to school choice, including for religious schools.

More than 90 percent of funding for K-12 education is provided at the state and local level. Therefore, it is imperative that state and local officials embrace the principle that money should follow each child as parents direct it, including for private and religious schools and homeschooling. Education savings accounts with maximum flexibility are an efficient means to facilitate parental choice. Tax-exempt education scholarship funds are another means to help children from low- and middle-income families access high quality private education. State leaders should also ensure that federal funds that flow through state agencies are provided on an equal basis for children educated through private schools and homeschooling, to the maximum extent permitted by federal law.

Congress should make all federal funds for education available to private schools and home schools on an equal basis.

Senators and House members have proposed creative ideas to empower parental choice in education. Ideally, all federal education funds should be block granted to the

states with instructions that they be provided on an equal basis for public, private, or homeschool education. At a minimum, Title I funds for low-income students should flow to local communities through the states and be distributed equally to students regardless of the type of school they attend. Congress should also permit dollar for dollar federal tax credits for contributions that provide scholarships to low-income children to attend any school of their parents' choosing. It is imperative that Congress exercise its oversight responsibilities to ensure that the executive branch is treating private education and homeschooling fairly and in accordance with federal law and the U.S. Constitution. This includes careful oversight of the federal rulemaking process and executive branch guidance that is sent to states and local communities.

The President and Secretary of Education should use their bully pulpits to promote education freedom in America.

It is impossible to consider our nation as free when millions of parents have restricted options regarding how to educate their children. The President, Secretary of Education, and other high-level federal officials should promote education freedom as a matter of justice, equal opportunity, economic empowerment, and national security. The public school system is controlled by government bureaucrats and unions. We know that the key to the success of our great American economy is freedom and competition. The President has the most high-profile bully pulpit to make that case regarding education. The President, his appointees, and all government employees have an obligation to ensure that our laws are faithfully executed and our constitutional freedoms protected. Officials should promulgate federal rules and regulations in a manner that maximizes opportunities for parents to choose the best educational tools for their children.

School choice advocates should file lawsuits to ensure that children have the right to attend private, religious, or home schools.

It is a fundamental principle of our faith that all people have a God-given right to be treated equally; this right is enshrined in our nation's founding documents and the U.S. Constitution. When low-income children and others are denied the opportunity to receive a good education, the moral fabric of our nation suffers and we fall short of our founding ideals. The public school system is failing millions of our children, especially low-income children. We must use every tool at our disposal to right this wrong, and that must include legal action through the courts. The U.S. Supreme Court has been moving to affirm the right of parents to educate their children in a religious setting, and we must ensure that right is fully protected. CURE is continuing our work with allied advocates to advance educational freedom and equal opportunity for all American children.

Authors

Donald T. Eason

President

Donald T. Eason is an accomplished corporate executive and Pastor who has a unique set of experiences in his business, educational and ministerial background.

During the 25 plus years of his business career, Donald worked as a Strategic Consulting and Business Development Manager at a top International Engineering and Consulting firm. He also worked as Senior Consultant for Mutual of America. During his professional career he has also had the privilege of being a Sales Trainer and has conducted workshops for key decision makers for both corporate and non-profit clients.

He has served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Outreach, Inc. an Indianapolis, IN non-profit organization that services the needs of homeless and displaced youth. He has also had the pleasure of serving in leadership positions to a variety of not-for-profit organizations, including Corporate Chairman for the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (ATL Chapter), Great Lakes Regional Director for the Douglass Leadership Institute, State Representative for Family Research Council and Special Assistant to President Dr. Larry Arnn of Hillsdale College.

As a minister for over 30 years, in his early ministry God blessed Donald to speak at youth conferences across the country. He has also spoken at lectureships throughout the US and internationally, including Panama, South Africa, and Swaziland Africa and he currently serves as the Pastor of a church in Michigan.



Marty Dannenfelser

Vice President for Government Relations & Coalitions

Marty is Vice President for Government Relations and Coalitions, guiding CURE's policy promotion with Members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and State leaders. He also works with coalition partners to advance CURE's policy objectives – particularly as they relate to culture, race, and poverty - and shares CURE's ideas on free markets, religious freedom, personal responsibility, and other policy matters.



Dannenfelser previously served as the presidentially appointed Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and as a Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Public Liaison. He has served in senior policy, government relations, and external relations positions with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Energy. Dannenfelser has also served as Senior Policy Advisor and Coalitions Director for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and as Legislative Director for Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ).

Blake A. Johnson

Director of Policy Research

As the Director of Policy Research for CURE, Blake conducts in-depth, data-driven research, most often through policy reports and white papers that advances CURE's mission to fight poverty and restore dignity through faith, freedom, and personal responsibility. Working closely with scholars, policy experts, and stakeholders, Blake's work seeks to transition data and analysis into actionable insights, particularly in areas of education, health, and family stability.



An alumnus of the University of Central Florida, where he received his B.A. in Political Science, Blake got his first start in politics and advocacy as a Field Organizer for the Republican Party of Florida. Prior to joining CURE, he worked for over three years in the U.S. House of Representatives, serving the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and then Congressman Pete Olson (R-TX).

Endnotes

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