

1889 INSTITUTE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT**

MEDIA

Byron Schlomach
(405) 646-3272
bschlomach@1889institute.org

1889 INSTITUTE RELEASES “STRAIGHT TALK ON PUBLIC EDUCATION”

The truth about Oklahoma’s public education system and why it cannot be fixed from within.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. (July 25, 2017) – The 1889 Institute, an Oklahoma state policy think tank, has published “Straight Talk on Public Education,” a compilation of historical and current Oklahoma and national public education statistics as well as a short history of public education in the United States, in an effort to counter some of the mythology that has arisen around public education.

“This paper simply looks at statistics and history objectively, which leads to basic, inevitable conclusions,” said Byron Schlomach, the study’s author and Director of the 1889 Institute. Schlomach has a long history of involvement in education policy going back to 1994.

A few of the statistics include:

- From 1950 to 2000, real spending per student rose 200 percent; real teacher salaries rose 33 percent.
- Today, fewer than half of Oklahoma’s public school employees (>84,000) are teachers (41,047).
- 40 percent of Oklahoma high school graduates who attend college must take remediation classes due to inadequate high-school preparation.
- In 2017, only 16 percent of Oklahoma’s high school seniors were college-ready on all four of ACT’s benchmarks while 42 percent of seniors did not meet a single college-ready benchmark.
- Oklahoma is one of a handful of states formula-funding pre-K for all comers; only Vermont and Florida serve a higher percentage of their 4-year-old populations in public schools.
- Oklahoma’s 4th-grade National Assessment of Educational Progress results have shown no improvement since the advent of universal pre-K. The 2015 score improvement was wiped out in 2017.
- If Oklahoma halved its pre-K program, there would be \$200 more to spend on each remaining student.

Some points from the history section include:

- The story of public education has been one of constant cycling through re-packaged pedagogical fads, mission creep, and frustrated efforts at reform, all accompanied by spending increases.
- The education model Jefferson proposed is most akin to a fully “charterized” school system with parent-governed schools, but with parents substantially funding them.
- The degree to which Americans are literate today cannot be attributed to the existence of a centralized public education system.
- The roots of the current U.S. education system can be traced to Prussia, the leading state of Germany.
- John Dewey turned the education system toward its Prussian roots of molding society.
- Schools have become centers of social experimentation, social work, community health, entertainment, child care, transportation, and nutrition.
- The system has been shamed, prodded, threatened, begged, encouraged, asked, sued, pandered to, and bribed.
- School Choice gives parents the ability to choose good schools with good teachers.

###

About the 1889 Institute

The 1889 Institute is an Oklahoma think tank committed to independent, principled state policy fostering limited and responsible government, free enterprise and a robust civil society. The publication, “Straight Talk on Public Education,” can be found on the nonprofit’s website at <http://www.1889institute.org/ed-finance.html>.