



Kilgore For School Board

2963 Ash Street
Denver, Colorado 80207
303-333-1408
info@RogerKilgore.com

News and Views: Vouchers, Private School Choice, Opportunity Scholarships, and School Funding Portability.

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Dear Voter,

Two years ago, I raised the issue of school vouchers in Denver and many said that it just couldn't happen here in Denver. My opponent in this election, Landri Taylor, says:

"This whole revelation in my own mind and where I sit ... is that at one time I was really against charters and vouchers in public education. Now I am 100 percent for charters. I'm 200 percent for vouchers. I am at the point where we cannot afford to let parents stay shackled in any environment, suburban as well as urban, when it comes to kids' education. They have to have the freedom to take that piece and go anywhere they so choose. That education will respond to that by making it more competitive for kids to want to go to one school over another." (I-News Report "Losing Ground," page 108-109)

During the appointment process to fill the unexpired term for the school board member for District 4 (northeast Denver), two of the five candidates chosen by the corporate reform board majority for further consideration openly supported vouchers during the selection process. Mr. Taylor, the candidate that was chosen by the same majority and ultimately appointed in the sole discretion of the board president, also supports vouchers.

Just south of us, Douglas County has pushed forward with its voucher agenda. At the same time, several well-funded local and national groups continue to push in the same direction, disguising their support for vouchers by using terms such as "private school choice," "opportunity scholarships," "cross-sector parental choice," and "school funding portability." These groups, such as the Walton Family Foundation and the Daniels Fund, support these concepts and see vouchers as the logical extension of school choice. Stand for Children discusses voucher programs extensively in their policy white paper on school choice, "Learning from the Evidence on School Choice." They admit, though, that there are no data supporting positive outcomes overall for voucher programs. Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) supports mechanisms "where education dollars follow each child to their school." DFER has not clarified whether their support is only for mechanisms within the public school system or if they would support public dollars going to private schools, including religious schools.

I have heard Mr. Taylor's argument that vouchers will "unshackle" students from failing schools. This is an ideological pipe dream. I am unequivocally opposed to vouchers because:

- 1) vouchers drain the public schools of public money for private, sometimes religious, schools and weaken the public school system and its ability to serve all its students,

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- 2) vouchers do not provide the same level of accountability for how our taxpayer dollars are spent in private schools that is required of the public schools, and most importantly
- 3) voucher amounts are insufficient to pay private school tuition for poor and some middle class families and amount to a direct transfer to more wealthy families.

Vouchers are a reverse Robin Hood policy; voucher proponents fail to even consider which students and what resources will be left in the ruins of our public school system.

Please join me in the fight against vouchers in the Denver Public Schools. Please join me in stopping the efforts to privatize our public schools!