

The Classics and Public Education

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To my chagrin, public schools, those schools that Thomas Jefferson valiantly started in the early 1800's have come under assault from various factions. Most charter schools especially in the state of Ohio have been woefully underperforming yet are highly promoted by many especially our current governor as a way to elevate and enhance your child's education. As we have witnessed as well, online schools who promote learning at home with computers and a middle man money maker philosophy are better defined as a place for student's to do their work in a laisse faire environment. This setting not only lacks structure but also lacks the reality of how the social and psychological of everyday business and personal interactions are navigated. Our country's educational environment works intricately for there are many lessons to be learned here in the state Ohio and the USA, in a public educational forum. Tough lessons that can be cruel that may be felt in student's formative years can help students prepare for an uncertain future and an unfair world.

Today we have seen some of these online schools being tepidly investigated by state authorities and these schools have been found to be lacking in many facets of education and business ethics. This has splashed egg on the faces of some Ohio politicians who insisted that these online and charter schools were the answer to the disgraceful public schools, especially city schools.

I can tell you that some of the best teachers and best public schools, though poorly rated, reside in the city schools. There are wonderful, caring teachers and administrators that would do anything for their students. Teachers and administrators spend hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars on their students for anything such as student supplies, shoes and clothes. Yet politicians, especially at the

state level have now interfered in such a way that we are seeing the stress level of teachers, administrators, students and parents reaching all-time highs. Bickering between state officials and different boards concerning education has lowered public confidence that politicians can affect the change needed to elevate public education in the city, suburbs or rural areas. In addition the benefit of putting retired administrators and teachers to work for their friends in Columbus should end which may ruin some of the padding of retirements and unseemly political favors. This adds to the financial and emotional stress of the public school aggregation.

What some parents have done, especially of elite and high intellect students, inner city or rural is take their children from these learning environments and start to home school their children. This is yet another significant loss to the public advocates like me who promote exciting changes in public education so students can get the best of what education and the world has for our students. What many of these students have done is create personal learning philosophies and have employed them in the classical realm where students work at their own pace, working in a 21st century mentality while introduced to the classical learning model at an early age. Grammar, logic and rhetoric are introduced at an early age. Along with these methodologies, I believe that an early introduction to Latin, Penmanship and Technology prepares young scholars to become magnificent writers, thinkers, technicians and then ultimately entrepreneurs.

These opportunities can be and should be provided to all students. This makes me believe that instead of politicians bashing public schools might a transition and or an exploration of some of these homeschooling philosophies add to public education paradigms. This may eliminate the flood of students leaving public school or the lesser opportunities that charter and on-line schools may allow. I am certainly not saying that all things public school are perfect. Everyone and everything can improve. I will take Thomas Jefferson's dreams any day over some of the educational mechanisms and political

rancor that has infected education when non-educators get into the political game. Public education has developed some of our greatest talents. Let us keep improving public education through great educators not through the quagmire of political wrangling and favors.