

Comments on the governor's education proposal

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Here are what I see the underlining principles that guided the governor and the commissioner's proposal:

1. **Private is better than public** - Charter schools and the corporations that run them could be the remedy for "low performing" schools or whatever is not working in the public schools. Similarly, public teacher education programs (UConn, CSU system etc.) are not good so private "leadership" and other private alternatives would be better.
2. **Teacher unions and tenure are the problem** - lets reduce the safety net for teacher tenure to the minimum and find any excuse to weaken or eliminate collective bargaining such as for under-performing schools.
3. **Reduce local control** - Board of education and local districts are to blame for the achievement gap so lets reduce their power by creating such structures as commissioner school network (which of course will be run by.... charter school folks).
4. **Education is a competitive enterprise like the private sector with winners and looser**- Any opportunity to provide conditional and competitive money is preferred to just giving all school districts money (similar to the federal programs of Race To The Top, School Improvement Grant, etc.).

Here is my proposal:

- **Strengthen Public education** - Go back to the basics as the founders of American Public Education Horace Mann and Henry Barnard advocated- the common school. ALL our children deserve the best education not just the few. ALL schools deserve equal funding based on their needs under a well-supported local control.
- **Increase local control** – provide more professional development and curriculum enrichment tools for local school boards, parents, teachers, and administrators to provide more challenging and interesting curriculum.
- **Invest in early childhood education:** Start with giving ALL 3-6 year old children access to public education. That's the formula for reducing the achievement gap. Funding could come from shifting resources from the prison system that houses mostly non-violent offenders. Currently each inmate costs \$140,000 a year while educating each young child would cost a fraction of that.
- **Invest in communities:** Schools cannot do it alone. Invest in universal health care, affordable housing for all, strongly unionized and well paid jobs, and livable environmentally friendly towns and cities. **These have always been the principles of the Democratic Party so lets implement those principles seriously.**