

Availability of a Public Funds Public Schools Webinar on Student-Centered Funding (Money Follows the Student, Backpack Funding) April 7 at 3:00 PM EST

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has circulated model backpack legislation to states throughout the nation. The Universal Voucher Bill, HB290 in Ohio, is in line with the ALEC model. The attached document provides details regarding student-centered funding and information about the webinar. The education privatizer's campaign to fund individuals and not the system wars against the public good.

Student-Centered Funding: Danger to Public Schools, Gateway to Private School Vouchers

A new resource in the Public Funds Public Schools fact sheet series warns of the dangers to public education of "student-centered" funding systems. PFPS fact sheets are designed to provide concise, downloadable tools for advocates, students, families, educators, and policymakers.

For over a decade, "education reformers" have been pushing "student-centered funding," also called "backpack funding," which distributes funds from districts to schools by assigning a dollar value to every student, thereby setting the stage for those dollars to march out the door of public schools and into privatized education programs. In fact, the right-wing American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) drafted a model student-centered funding bill, noting that it can pave the way to private school voucher programs.

Student-centered funding increases inequities in already under-funded schools, works against coherent district-wide policies and priorities, and ignores the key attributes of adequate and equitable school funding systems by failing to account for the true cost of education, student need, or district wealth.

As the PFPS fact sheet demonstrates, student-centered funding is anything but "student centered."

On April 7 at 3 p.m. ET, PFPS will host a webinar about the harms of "backpack funding" and what constitutes an adequate and equitable school funding formula.

The webinar, entitled "Student-Centered Funding: Danger to Public Schools, Gateway to Private School Vouchers" will feature:

Dr. Danielle Farrie, Research Director, Education Law Center (ELC). Dr. Farrie conducts analysis on school finance and other education issues to support litigation and public policy efforts for ELC and partner organizations. Her work includes an annual school funding report on the condition of school finance and state-level analyses of school funding policy with the goal of improving resource equity.

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Cecily Myart-Cruz, President, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA). President Myart-Cruz is a teacher and activist with over 25 years of experience. She previously served as UTLA NEA Vice President and is currently chair of the CTA Civil Rights Committee and the NEA Black Caucus and a member of Black Lives Matter Los Angeles.

Dr. Michelle Valladares, Associate Director, National Education Policy Center (NEPC). Dr. Valladares, who is also a Faculty Affiliate of the University of Colorado Boulder School of Education, leads and partners in projects that aim to increase educational opportunities for all students and supports the development and implementation of equitable education policies by conducting original research on a wide range of issues.

Dr. Valladares will moderate a conversation on topics including: common features of student-centered funding systems, research on the harmful effects of such systems, their links to school privatization, advocacy to oppose student-centered funding in the Los Angeles Unified School District and elsewhere, and what constitutes an adequate and equitable funding formula.

A registration link for the April 7 PFPS webinar will be available soon.

Be sure to check out additional PFPS fact sheets: “Research Shows Private School Vouchers Don’t Work for Students and Harm Public Schools,” “Why Vouchers for Private Virtual Education are Misspent Public Money,” and “The Myth of Cost Savings from Private School Vouchers.” These fact sheets, as well as more tools for advocates and recordings from the PFPS webinar series, are available here.

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