

School Vouchers Loomed Large in the March 1988 Report on President Reagan's Commission on Privatization

On September 3, 1987, President Reagan announced his intention to appoint a Commission on Privatization. One of his charges to the Commission was to consider the "use of vouchers to provide services to the public through the private sector." The March 1988 report from the Commission devoted an entire chapter (14 pages) to Education Choice. In the introductory section of this chapter, in tune with the rhetoric of the flawed 1983 Nation at Risk report, the Commission stated that even with the substantial spending on education, public schools were not producing commensurate results. This dubious conclusion, of course, led the Commission to recommend vouchers as a vehicle to improve education.

One must remember that Reagan's charge to the Commission was to consider "the use of vouchers to provide services to the public through the private sector."

The advent and promotion of vouchers was never about improving education. The intent was then and continues to be the privatization of the government function of education. Current voucher users and some of the voucher advocates have been duped into believing that vouchers are merely to provide choice. Not so! The sole intent of vouchers is to privatize public education.