

The School Privatization Movement Rejects the Goal of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Horace Mann of a Common School System for All the Children of All the People as a Crucible of Democracy

Horace Mann, as Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, beginning in 1837 initiated a crusade to establish a common school system in line with the education philosophy of Jefferson, Adams and other American political leaders of the 18th and 19th centuries. The prevailing belief they espoused is that ignorance and freedom cannot coexist and that all students are entitled to a high quality education required for productive citizenship. Mann campaigned for a tax-supported system that would attract the wealthy, as well as, the less affluent; the religious and the irreligious; the entire race of humankind.

Mann envisioned the common system as a melting pot—an environment in which children would learn together and become American citizens together. His vision was that the common school would meld the diverse social, economic, racial and religious groups into one mighty nation. Common school education was essential, as envisioned by Mann, as a public good as private benefits accrue in the classrooms.

Mann's vision of common school education being the great equalizer is in jeopardy. The education privatizers have been gaining ground.

The philosophy of the school privatizers is antithetical to Mann's common school system vision. Privatization divides the social order; embraces and accelerates disunity; segregates students along economic, social, racial, ethnic, and religious lines.

The advocates of funding the students, not the system lack an understanding of the consequence of such policy. They seemingly have no concept of the symbiosis between the common school system and democracy. They seem oblivious of the reality that a fractured, competitive, divisive arrangement of private schools replacing the common system will divide American into warring tribes.