

Christopher Rufo, a celebrated school privatizer: “To get universal school choice, you really need to operate from a place of universal public school distrust.”

Rufo stated out loud what the voucher militants have covertly done since the Reagan years: undermined public confidence in the public common school.

School choice, i.e., privatization of public education zealots have been engaged in trashing the public common school system for four decades. At the federal level, the last president that fully embraced the public common school was Jimmy Carter. (Carter had served on a board of education early in his public life. The U.S. Department of Education was established during the Carter administration.)

Carter’s successor, Ronald Reagan seemed to be significantly influenced by Economist Milton Friedman’s economic theories, especially the idea that every student should be given a voucher for private school attendance. Upon the announcement of the seriously flawed Nation at Risk report, Reagan expressed gratitude that the report recommended vouchers (The report did not even mention vouchers.); nevertheless, this seriously defective report bashing the public education system suggesting that the public education system put the USA at risk, was a springboard for school privatization.

President Reagan favored the elimination of the U.S. Department of Education.

President Bush 41 picked up the voucher/privatization rallying cry. President Clinton embraced charters. President Bush 43’s NCLB (No Child Left Behind) stuff set up public schools for failure. President Obama and his Education Secretary Arne Duncan put NCLB on steroids. The Trump administration, with mouthpiece Betsy DeVos, trashed public education incessantly.

It is a tribute to the strength and efficacy of the public common school that it is still standing. Having said that, recent lavishly funded militant attacks on the public common school system, in concert with the universal voucher schemes, must be vigorously countered by all public common school advocates.

These conjoined twins (public school bashing and vouchers) are an existential threat to the common school system. Hopefully, citizens across America, and particularly in Ohio, will awaken to the threat. Where is the outrage from the public school community and Ohio taxpayers?