

The American Enterprise, March 10 article by school privatization advocate Robert Pondiscio—The Last Days of Public School

[Robert Pondiscio](#) is a talented writer steeped in the juices of school privatization. In his March 10 [American Enterprise article](#) he says out loud, by the title of his article, the goal of the school choice (privatization) crowd: eliminate the public common school system except to accommodate poverty students and those with disabilities. (Private schools select their students and of course cannot be forced to take students they don't want.)

Mr. Pondiscio is a senior fellow at the [American Enterprise Institute \(AEI\)](#). From 2014-2021 he was a Senior Fellow and Vice President, External Affairs at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. The Fordham Institute is one of the nation's most zealous and influential school privatization cheerleaders with a large footprint in Ohio. Fordham operates a stable of charter schools in Ohio.

Pondiscio suggests that the mounting fervor for school privatization spells the demise of the public common school system. Actually, a majority of folks involved in each of the major political parties support public education.

The voters in no state in a statewide vote have ever approved school vouchers. The leaders of the education privatization crowd talk openly about the need to trash public education as a prelude to the expansion of vouchers and other privatization schemes. They now seem to believe the privatizers have won the battle; with them being the victor.

The rugged, relentless attack on traditional public schools, beginning in earnest, with President Reagan's meritless 1983 [Nation at Risk](#) report, has damaged the public image of the common school system but it is still standing. The public is beginning to awaken to the fact that numerous well-funded groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Walton Foundation, representing a small segment of the citizenry, are responsible for trashing the public common school system.

Extremist politicians have designed "school reform" measures that have harmed education and diminished the image of public schools.

Pondiscio talks about decades of lethargy and poor performance of public schools. If there is lethargy and poor performance, it should be noted that the states share an outsized responsibility. During the last third of the twentieth century, the funding system in each of 45 states was challenged due to the perception that state officials were not meeting their constitutional responsibility for school funding. Lack of state funding has been and continues to be a major problem in public school funding.

Pondiscio may not understand that a high percentage of major urban and other high-poverty district students enter school two or three years developmentally behind. The level of funding allotted to many of these high-poverty districts is insufficient to provide the essential programming needed to adequately address the ongoing developmental challenges of the children living in poverty.

State officials in Ohio are bound by the Constitution to secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools. The state's lack of commitment to a thorough and efficient system of common schools over the years is a huge consideration. The state contributes to the problems and then exacerbates the problems by recklessly further short-changing school districts in favor of private ventures.

Since the 1983 [Nation at Risk](#) debacle, no president has in earnest fully supported the public common school system. Most of them have pushed the privatization of public education agenda. But the common school has survived due to pronounced public support.

<https://www.aei.org/articles/the-last-days-of-public-school/>