

A Canal Winchester school board member responds effectively to a September 25 Columbus Dispatch column by Troy McIntosh.

School privatization (at public expense) enthusiast Troy McIntosh unconvincingly used a broad brush to trash public schools in a September 25 guest column in the Dispatch. School board member Dave George, in an October 17 Dispatch column, demolished McIntosh's unfounded blast of public schools. George sets the record straight. More public school advocates need to respond to those who trash public education.

Pornographic material, crime haven't overtaken Ohio schools

You can come to every Canal Winchester board meeting and participate. Financial records are available. Decision makers are taxpayers in your district, and — either — have or had children in the district.

Your Turn

Dave George

Guest columnist

I'll give Troy McIntosh the benefit of the doubt that he's not dishonest.

'Disingenuous' or 'ignorant' are on the table regarding his guest column, 'Our kids are not OK. Public schools failing to provide accountability parents need,' published by The Columbus Dispatch Sept. 25.

Let's take the points presented by McIntosh, executive director of the Ohio Christian Education Network, in order:

Schools are overrun with pornographic material

'Parents across the state are pushing back against radically progressive ideologies — including alleged pornographic instructional material,' he wrote.

McIntosh links to an issue in 2021(!) regarding a district-taught college course that used material inappropriate for a high school student. He fails to mention that this issue was resolved at the local level within three days of being reported by parents.

The curricula for these courses are determined by the college offering the course. College credit plus courses are required to be offered by public schools under the Ohio Revised Code.

It specifically calls out the potential for mature subject matter, and parents are made aware.

Parents have the power to opt their child out of any instruction that they find inappropriate. Schools will work with those parents to find instructional alternatives.

Schools are ineffective

McIntosh wrote that 'over two-thirds of Ohio's public school eighth-grade students are not proficient in reading or math and scores have been declining for years.'

Using the link from his article to the Ohio's Nation's Report Card profile, math scores are indeed just under two-thirds proficient with 65% at or above a basic achievement level. Those same charts show increasing scores since 1990, a steep decline post-COVID, and significant increase in the last assessment period. Ohio is above the national average in both categories.

The same general trend follows in reading minus the increase in the last two years.

Private schools aren't measured by the same standard. Comparison isn't possible. I can acknowledge that their performance may be better than public schools. They can pick and choose which students they are willing to educate.

Children aren't safe in public schools

Directly quoting McIntosh, 'all parents want their child to be safe at school. Yet, the FBI reported last month that 1.3 million crimes were committed at public schools between 2020 and 2024, including over half a million assaults and 45,000 sex crimes.'

This FBI document he linked to, Crime in Schools 2020-2024, reflects all incidents at any school from a reporting agency, including: private, public and colleges. The data cannot be used to say that children are any safer at a private school. It isn't broken down that way.

Ohio public schools are mandated by our revised code to provide many safety procedures that are not required at private schools.

They include:

- Emergency management plan filing and review. ORC 3313.536
- Threat assessment teams and tiplines. ORC 3313.669, 3313.6610
- Staff background checks (BCI/FBI) for all new employees and volunteers. ORC 3319.39, 3319.391
- Annual safety and violence prevention reports (HB123). ORC 3313.6611

Schools are not fiscally responsible

McIntosh mentions combined cash reserves of Ohio's school districts exceeding \$10.5billion and wonders about fiscal accountability.

Public school revenue comes in chunks generally tied to tax receipts. December to April is a very lean revenue time. Districts need reserves to get through that portion of the year because operating costs don't stop coming in.

Canal Winchester Local Schools, a district of 4,000 students, needs a reserve of \$25 million to get through this time period.

The average district size in Ohio is 3,000 students and would need a reserve of \$18 million. Ohio's 611 school districts need \$10.98 billion in reserves to be fiscally comfortable.

Canal Winchester has more than the amount that we need. We know that there will be a construction need in the relatively near future, and we want to be prepared for that. There is a purpose for every fiscal decision that we make.

Here's the actual truth about accountability

Finally, McIntosh states, '...there needs to be accountability for education funding in Ohio. However, it shouldn't be handled by the same tired measures that have led to poor results...EdChoice is what will ultimately deliver the accountability we all desire.'

There is zero accountability in Ohio's voucher program. There is no academic or fiscal reporting requirements.

We have no way to know if a student using a voucher has a better result than a public school student. Students that have vouchers ready for use may be denied entry for any reason.

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CC4177 10.30.25 Thursday

We will educate every student who comes to us.

Dave George is a board member of Canal Winchester Local Schools and is currently seeking reelection. George currently works for the City of Columbus in the technology field, but has varied industry experience in government, telecommunications, and retail grocery.

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