

# **AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

## **Press Release 698**

### **America is Catching up with Australia in the Downgrading of Public Education:**

#### **Trump's Budget Slashes Funding For Public Schools While Giving \$1.4 Billion For Privatization**

For forty years, Australia's public education has suffered while Lib-Lab governments have toadied to the private, religious sector. Every year, billions of dollars of public money have been systematically diverted from our public systems into what can only be described as a dependent, parasitic system which undermines our civic and civilised democracy.

In March 2017 many public school advocates are attempting to persuade the Turnbull/Birmingham government to provide a few more crumbs from the private school table for the so-called Gonski Reforms. Union representatives and parents have travelled to Canberra to give him their Gonski messages.

All they want is a few billion for the disadvantaged children in our public schools. Birmingham cannot even provide this—even though he admits that some private schools are 'overfunded' on his own generous terms.

Meanwhile, Mr Trump, to howls of rage from advocates of public education in the United States is going down the same slippery slope as that pursued by Australia for the last half century. He is giving only \$1.4 billion for privatisation – peanuts in the Australian context, if you think about it. He is also slashing funding for public schools in the United States. 'SO what is unusual about that?' DOGS ask.

In America, where the Supreme Court protected public education for a longer period of time than did our High Court, it is early days for the privatisation process. And there, supporters of public education are marshalling to fight, and fight hard. DOGS have been fighting harder and certainly longer than they, and we wish them well. Many thanks to John Foster from the Gippsland who has provided the following information for our readers:

SEE

[Educate! Budgets, Donald Trump, Education, Privatization, Public Education](#)

By Carol Burris, [www.networkforpubliceducation.org](http://www.networkforpubliceducation.org)

March 18th, 2017

Donald Trump's education budget is a declaration of war on public education and our nation's neediest children. It was surely designed by Betsy DeVos.

Trump's budget would axe after-school programs known as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers which help school districts, churches and non-profit groups serve more than 1.6 million American children, most of whom are poor. In defending the cuts to such programs, White House Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney said after-school programs don't "show results." He went on to say that feeding children after-school has never been proven to get them better jobs, so we cannot afford to do it anymore. A full stomach for a hungry child is not good enough—but there is 1.4 billion to send them to voucher schools and for for-profit online learning.

The budget also slashes programs that prepare disadvantaged middle and high school students for college. College assistance for first-generation students is also reduced. And if disadvantaged students are still able to get to college, it will be harder for them to stay—Trump's budget cuts funding for federal work study programs.

Our public schools would be hurt. The biggest proposed Trump cut to education is the total elimination of Title IIA funds at about \$2.4 billion. A significant share of those funds is used to keep teachers on staff since the recession. That means increases in taxes or in class sizes.

And yet there is ample funding for the school privatization agenda—\$1.4 billion in all.

Trump's budget contains:

- a 50% increase for charter school funding.
- a \$250 million private school "choice" program.
- \$1 billion for a fund portability program—which is nothing more than a disguised voucher system. Portability could bankrupt some public schools and slash funding for the rest.

The Network for Public Education will not stand by and allow Trump to break our public school system and crush the dreams of millions of children. We believe in the promise and hope of an equitable education for every children. A shot-gun system of segregated private schools, charters, virtual and home-schools is a recipe for disaster.

But we cannot fight without your help.

Send your email to your senators and representative today.

Let's barrage Congress with our emails and let our representatives know where we stand.

This is our first step. In the coming weeks we will provide you with one page informational sheets to help you teach others about the threats that charters, vouchers, and tax credits for private schools pose. We will begin call campaigns, flooding the White House and Congress. We will give you tools for social media.

Commit to the fight today.

Send your email, then post it on Facebook, tweet it and send it to friends.

Join the Network for Public Education in stopping the privatization agenda of Trump, Pence and DeVos. If our public education system is dismantled, we will never get it back. And that is a tragedy that our nation truly cannot afford.

Thank you for all you do,

Carol Burris, Executive Director

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