

Veteran Educator Frustrated with Push for School Choice

Chris Chism, a veteran MPE member and educator who serves as principal of Pearl High School, recently shared the following two posts on Facebook regarding his frustration with state leaders' push for school choice here in Mississippi.

January 23 at 7:51 p.m.

I have a lot on my mind, Facebook. Thanks for asking...

It is amazing how angry I become when I see our state leaders don their yellow scarves in support of school choice... To be perfectly honest, it has very little to do with their "support" of that particular cause. My anger comes from the thousands of teachers and administrators in public education in this state that bust their butts every single day - without acknowledgment. We only hear negativity from our leaders, and that becomes frustrating. Administrators this.... Accountability that.... Teachers "need to do this".... Regulate - reform - regulate.... 🤔🙄

Yet, you support sending money to specialized institutions that can say "no" to any student trying to enroll - with NO accountability at all. Public education is the backbone of this state. We are very much like the saying on the Statue of Liberty - "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." We take them all. A little acknowledgment of this fact would go a long way with the educators in this state. 👉👉👉👉👉👉

Frustrating is not the word.... Anger is not the word.... Complete and total disappointment is the best description I have, but that simply doesn't do it justice. Our own leaders need to learn the basic tenets of leadership. There is an art to building morale and instilling a sense of pride in the work of an organization - especially a big one. Here's an idea. Why don't you all wear blue scarves in support of the people you currently employ that happen to teach them ALL....

Also, just a FYI - Maybe, just MAYBE, if you supported public education as openly as you do "choice", there wouldn't be such animosity even when you don't/won't/can't support it financially. 🤔🙄

I'm not sure when we all became the enemy. More importantly, I am not sure if I ever remember a time when we were friends... That's a shame.

....steps down off his soapbox. 🤔

January 28 at 6:26 p.m.

Here's my follow up to last week's post... I do not like complaints without ideas and/or potential solutions. If you will allow me, please let me step back on my soapbox briefly... 😊🙄

First and foremost, public education needs a CHAMPION. 👉👉 We need a leader or leaders that have the purest of intentions when it comes to our students. Leaders that aren't swayed by PAC committees, testing companies, or any other outside affiliation when it comes to public education. 🤔🙄 We need someone that truly supports what our public teachers do every day and recognizes how difficult this job can be in this day and time. In simple terms, someone that BELIEVES in us and openly shows it at every turn. And OBVIOUSLY, someone who WEARS BLUE in support of what we do. 😊🙄 #blueformteachers

That's what we need. End of story. 👉👉👉

We shouldn't have to worry about how much money Grant Callen raises for Empower Mississippi. (See Clarion Ledger article) In my eyes, it is an embarrassment to this state that we even NEED an article that articulates how much money Empower MS is spending on elections and the "pro choice" movement. Some may say, "That is just politics." It doesn't have to be if it isn't allowed. The futures of our kids and our teachers should be placed on a shelf well above this type of foolishness. Period. 👍👏🙏

Let me also say this in simple terms. People like Callan are FUNDING CANDIDATES, with hundreds of thousands of dollars in total, in order to be sure his "pro choice" cause gets the votes he needs - votes that ultimately take money from a public education system that is consistently underfunded. Read that over and over in your head two or three times. Does this seem right to you? 🙏🙄

Something is wrong here - and it isn't with education. The system needs to change, OR the hearts of the legislators involved need to change.

Teacher and administrator friends - never lose heart. Many are working hard on your behalf. We may not have "Empower money" or a Callen to manage it, but what we do have is the ability to speak with a collective voice. 🙏👏 Most importantly, we have pure intentions for our kids - ALL KIDS.

Teachers, thank you so much for what you do every day! You are my heroes! #blueformteachers

Patiently waiting for a champion....

...steps down off his soapbox again.