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Budget Project: Voucher program gets 'F' in accountability

Written by Heather Miller
Tuesday, February 14, 2012

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Private schools accepting vouchers for low-income students should be held to the same accountability standards as public schools in Louisiana, according to a report released Tuesday by the Louisiana Budget Project.

Otherwise, parents, who Gov. Bobby Jindal recently described as "the best accountability program we have," cannot make informed choices when deciding which route to take for their children's education.

The nonpartisan research group cites Indiana as an example of how to effectively measure the success of private schools using public money, as Indiana now grades private schools and requires that private schools taking voucher kids test all students in the school, whether they're receiving voucher money or not.

Jindal, who wants to expand the current number of Louisiana students on private school vouchers from 1,850 to almost 400,000, has indicated that he will not support accountability measures for private schools accepting voucher students:

But Louisiana requires almost no accountability from voucher schools. To qualify for state dollars, private schools must submit documents showing that their curriculum is similar to public schools, their personnel are certified, and school health and safety conditions are adequate. They also must advertise their racial non-discrimination policy in their community for prospective parents and students. Unlike public schools, they are not required to provide special education and can set their own policies on student retention.

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While voucher students are required to take the same assessment tests as public school students, there are no penalties for private schools if they fail to measure up to their public counterparts. In fact, Gov. Jindal vetoed language in a 2011 appropriations bill that would have removed participating schools if their students' scores lagged those in the lowest performing schools in the Recovery School District, which incorporates most New Orleans public schools.

Voucher students actually performed worse overall on standardized tests than students in RSD schools, according to a recent analysis by New Orleans nonprofit Educate Now! The organization found that 38 percent of voucher students performed on their grade level in state math and reading tests, compared to 49 percent of all RSD students. The governor's veto protected four private schools that continue to fail the hundreds of students whose parents thought they chose a better learning environment.

The Budget Project also cites concerns about oversight from the state Department of Education, which is further supported by The Independent's recent voucher coverage, "[Incomplete.](#)"

View the full report from LBP [here](#).

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written by chano leal , February 14, 2012 - 12:07 pm

Shame Shame Shame, Jindal can't be held accountable, this is how it is when you possess a state of zombies and your law is " The Law. Never answer for your call !

What a joke of an administrator

First your money and then your clothes

Thats how the coin rolls

Then you find yourself up to ya ass, in alligators

...

written by chano leal , February 14, 2012 - 12:10 pm

Happy Valentines Day to all of the Indy staff and Sir Walter.

...

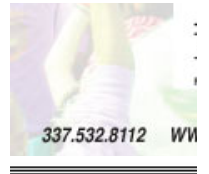
written by Walter Pierce , February 14, 2012 - 12:21 pm

Right back at ya, Chano!

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