

# The Real Reform of Education

Unlike any other point in the prior four decades, the push to reform the education system through school choice has serious political support and is likely to be passed in many states in the coming years.

Over time, education reformers have met with success in showing how the education system, despite [sucking up ever more taxpayer funds](#), has declined so precipitously that many teachers and schools fail to achieve the mission of educating America's youth. Far too few of America's youth can [read](#), write, or perform [math](#) anywhere near what's needed for them to fully engage in American society.

The great catalysts to change, though, were not the work of education reformers but rather the combination of lockdowns and woke teachers revealed through social media, particularly by the [Libs of TikTok](#) Twitter account.

The COVID lockdowns allowed parents to see what is passing for education these days. Many were troubled by the apparent leftist cultural framing of nearly every subject and the lack of rigor. As the lockdowns ended, Libs of TikTok revealed the radical LGBTQ+ propagandizing taking place in classrooms, from 12th grade down to kindergarten. Parents were horrified and rightly so:

*This non-binary teacher's favorite part of the day was talking about non-binary with a student*  
[pic.twitter.com/2qDzUFz93H](https://pic.twitter.com/2qDzUFz93H)

– Libs of TikTok (@libsoftiktok) [March 20, 2023](#)

Due to what they saw, many parents made dramatic changes for their children. Homeschooling has [skyrocketed](#) while private schools find their student populations [growing](#).

With parents getting more engaged and shouldering the responsibility of pulling their kids from the public schools, it should be no surprise that they look at the current education situation as unfair and want education reform.

Realistically, reform of education in America requires two parts: structure and content.

The current structure of public education is centralized control. It only provides local public schools for students living within set school districts. In this system, money only follows the student if the student stays within the district. If you don't like the local district's public schools, you get to pay for the alternative—whether by having to move or fund homeschool or private school out of pocket.

School choice reform effectively conveys the idea that the taxpayers should fund education for the common good but that the funding should be able to follow the student to a school that best matches his needs and the values of the parents.

Changing the structure of public education through school choice provides a much more realistic opportunity to make the second and even more important reform: the content of education.

To understand the content reforms needed in American education, we must answer this fundamental question: What is the purpose of education in our republic?

On this question, Annette Kirk—the wife of [Russell Kirk](#), one of the great 20th century political philosophers—put the point powerfully in a [speech](#) (emphasis added):

*I believe there is a close relationship between the soul of the person and the well-being of society. When the health of the soul decays, society declines, and general decadence results. If decadence is defined as the loss of an object, we ought to begin our educational reform with an examination of*

*the true ends or objects of schooling, the purpose of learning. ... Education should impart ethical understanding of those enduring norms that make life worth living. Also education should enlarge our imagination, that we may appreciate truth and beauty in literature, art, and music. Without any element of such an education, people's lives are fragmented. The more true learning one acquires, the more one experiences awe at the mystery and miracle of life.*

If the current reform winds continue to blow hard, most of America's children will be freed of the failing system in the coming years through structural changes—most likely school choice vouchers. But as that takes place, we require a renewed dialogue on the purpose of education in a republic. Is it merely preparation for college, work, or the military? Or is there more to an education as Annette Kirk alludes?

In an [interview](#) with Patrick McGuigan, Annette Kirk stated that “the fundamental ends of education are imparting wisdom and of virtue, for the sake of the person and of the republic.”

If that is true, we shouldn't be shy about aggressively promoting school choice and then the reform of the content of education in America. To modify the words of Annette Kirk, our society is rapidly declining because our souls have decayed. It is only through family and education that future souls can be restored to their potential glory.

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*Image credit: Pexels*

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