



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Unfair Attack on Parent Choice Dismissed by True Education Experts

Arlington, Va., December 14, 2011—On Tuesday, the *New York Times* (NYT) ravaged online education with a 5,000-word article. The piece is written by an “investigative journalist” who fails to cite a single pro-reform, pro-parent choice expert and instead relies on the sworn enemies of education reform – status quo academics, education administrators protecting their fiefdom, anti-reform politicians, and the teachers’ union (in this case, through the research they pay to support).

True education experts took notice, providing commentary to correct the record about the benefits and success of online education. Four are listed below:

Tom Vander Ark is a nationally recognized expert in education, having served as Executive Director of Education for the Gates Foundation. Mr. Vander Ark is also a Digital Luminary for Digital Learning Now, who thoughtfully provided a path forward for education technology in their *10 Elements of Digital Learning*.

Vander Ark strongly rejected the NYT piece calling it “a series of hit pieces targeting private companies supporting innovations in learning that salaciously lift worst-case examples and present them as representative.” Specifically Vander Ark identifies five fatal flaws: parent choice is a sham (!), online learning is brand new, state policy problems are the fault of education providers (see Andrew Rotherham’s comments below), most online teachers don’t enjoy their profession, and – finally – her sources are unbiased (see Jeanne Allen’s comments below). Thank you, Mr. Vander Ark, for defending a parents’ right to have a say in their child’s education.

Read his piece here: gettingsmart.com/blog/2011/12/axe-grinding-dressed-up-as-reporting-at-the-times/

Jeanne Allen is the President of the Center for Education Reform and an advocate for parent choice with impressive reform credentials. She dismisses the NYT attack as a collection of anti-reform special interests – some have “no academic standing” and others have “a slant as to how [for-profit education companies] hurt charter schools” but all of them are predictable enemies of parent choice. Thank you, Ms. Allen, for identifying how slanted the NYT’s so-called sources really are.

Read her piece here: www.edspresso.com/index.php/2011/12/its-not-just-the-education-system-thats-been-dumbed-down/

Andrew Rotherham is a former Clinton Administration education official who consults with schools and writes a column for *Time*. He focuses on the necessity for state policy fixes that are not the fault of online education providers: “Many of today’s policies simply don’t work in this environment. If providers fight efforts to fix these issues hold them accountable for that, but don’t hold them accountable for the existence of policies they didn’t create.” Thank you, Mr. Rotherham, for defending innovation and thoughtfully pleading for a more civilized dialogue that improves quality while defending a parents’ right to have a say.

Read his piece here: www.eduwonk.com/2011/12/online-yet.html

Bryan Setser revitalized and transformed the North Carolina Virtual School into a national model for e-learning. He wrote that the NYT “occupied Wall Street this morning by bashing online education.” Mr. Setser cites the fact that corporations will always play a role in public education, but he attempts to refocus the conversation on results – “What outcomes do we want for kids? How we will measure those outcomes? What supports are needed for kids, teachers, leaders, and the community?” Thank you, Mr. Setser, for dismissing the corporation-bashing rhetoric and instead centering the debate on getting the best educational outcomes for our children.

Read his piece here: gettingsmart.com/blog/2011/12/fuel-for-great-schools-outcomes-measures-and-supports/