

ROMNEY'S EDUCATION PLAN

To read Romney's Education Plan,

<http://www.mittromney.com/sites/default/files/shared/120523-Education%20White%20Paper%20FINAL%20for%20PDF.pdf>

For summary see ♦♦ below

Romney Calls for Using Title I, IDEA Funds for School Choice By **Alyson Klein** on May 23, 2012, **Common Core, College Loans**

Romney's campaign staff said he is supportive of the **Common Core State Standards**, but thinks the Obama administration has gone too far in encouraging states to adopt them. Obama made college- and career-ready standards a requirement for states seeking waivers from the NCLB law. And the administration gave states credit for embracing rigorous, uniform standards under the Race to the Top education reform competition.

Those policies "effectively are **an attempt to manipulate states into**" adopting common core, said Oren Cass, Romney's domestic policy director on a call with reporters prior to the speech.

When it comes to higher education, Romney favors bolstering the role for the private sector, which he contends has been decimated by the Obama administration's choice to scrap the Federal Family Education Loan Program and ensure that all loans originate through the U.S. Department of Education.

"We welcome private sector participating instead of pushing it away," Cass said.

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2012/05/romney_to_call_for_using_title.html

Does Mitt Romney's Education Plan Make the Grade? By Shane Vander Hart, Christian Conservative blogger of caffeinatedthoughts.com

He describes the "bad" and the "good" **in Romney's education plan and gives him an overall "D" grade on it.** This article is a good practical summary.

<http://www.redstate.com/shanevanderhart/2012/06/14/mitt-romney-education-plan/>

From the Romney platform:

<http://aboutmittromney.com/education.htm#platform>

“Mitt Romney launched a blistering attack Wednesday on President Barack Obama and teachers unions, saying they're blocking crucial revisions to education and are hurting children, particularly young Latinos and other minorities.

“ "This is the civil rights issue of our time," Romney said. "President Obama has been unable to stand up to union bosses and unwilling to stand up for kids."

“The Republican presidential candidate said he aimed to answer a "crisis" in U.S. education, one in which American schoolchildren rank 14th of 34 developed nations in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math.

“ "It's the great challenge of our time," he told a Washington meeting of the Latino Coalition, a small-business group.

“He proposed a series of changes, including greater choice in public education, more charter schools and digital learning, and a one-two punch of less job security for poor teachers and higher pay for better ones.

“His agenda wouldn't increase federal spending for elementary and high school education. Obama proposes to increase federal spending.

“Among Romney's ideas:

- Allow low-income and special-needs students to choose any public or charter school or private school where allowed by local law.

- Require states to open all their schools to those students to increase choices.

- Eliminate limits on charter and digital schools, also to increase choices...

“Romney blamed the teachers unions. "Whenever anyone dares to offer a new idea," he said, "the unions protest the loudest."

“He said the two largest unions, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, exerted influence by using union dues to funnel \$600 million a year to political campaigns. In 2008, he added, the NEA spent more on campaigns than any other group did, and 90 percent of it went to Democrats.

“ "The teachers unions don't fight for our children. That's our job," he said. "And our job keeps getting harder because the unions wield outsized influence in elections and campaigns." ”

<http://www.mittromney.com/news/press/2012/05/mitt-romney-proposes-education-reform-will-provide-chance-every-child>

◆◆ Summary of plan

MITT ROMNEY'S EDUCATION REFORM, MITT ROMNEY PRESS | MAY 23, 2012

Today in Washington, D.C., Mitt Romney delivered a speech on education and presented his plan for reform that will provide a chance for every child. Romney criticized President Obama's preference for increased spending over genuine reform, and emphasized the unproductive role that teachers' unions have played for decades.

“I believe the President must be troubled by the lack of progress since he took office. Most likely, he would have liked to do more,” said Romney. “But President Obama has been unable to stand up to union bosses, and unwilling to stand up for kids.”

Romney outlined a vision for restoring the promise of America’s education system and guaranteeing every student the opportunity to succeed. For the nation’s K-12 schools, his policies will provide more choices for parents, further emphasize responsibility for results, and place a quality teacher in every classroom. For higher education, Romney will ensure that all Americans have affordable options to prepare them for successful careers.

“As president, I will pursue bold policy changes that will restore the promise of our nation’s education system,” said Romney. “Dramatically expanding parental choice, making schools responsible for results by giving parents access to clear and instructive information, and attracting and rewarding our best teachers — these changes can help ensure that every parent has a choice and every child has a chance.”

Romney presented the details of his plan:

Education Reform That Will Provide A Chance For Every Child

As president, Mitt Romney will pursue genuine education reform that puts the interests of parents and students ahead of special interests and provides a chance for every child. He will take the unprecedented step of tying federal funds directly to dramatic reforms that expand parental choice, invest in innovation, and reward teachers for their results instead of their tenure. These policies will equip state leaders to achieve the change that can only come from commitment and action at the local level. He will also ensure that students have diverse and affordable options for higher education to give them the skills they need to succeed after graduation and that, when they graduate, they can find jobs that provide a rewarding return on their educational investment.

K-12: Promoting Choice And Innovation

Giving students trapped in bad schools a genuine alternative requires four things: (1) such alternatives must exist, (2) parents must receive clear information about the performance of their current school and of the alternatives, (3) students must be allowed to move to a new school, and (4) students must bring funding with them so that new schools can afford to serve them. Romney’s reforms achieve each of these objectives:

- **Allow Low Income And Special Needs Students To Choose Which School To Attend.** Make Title I and IDEA funds portable so that eligible students can choose which school to attend and bring funding with them. This plan will allow the student to choose from any district or public charter school, or a private school where permitted by state law, or to use funds toward a tutoring provider or digital course.

- **Provide Incentives For States To Increase Choices For Parents And Develop Quality Alternatives.** Require states to adopt open-enrollment policies for students receiving Title I and IDEA funds, and to eliminate caps on charter and digital schools.
- **Build On The Success Of Effective Charter And Digital Schools.** Amend the federal Charter School Program so that successful school management organizations can receive funding to replicate their efforts, serve more students, and take their programs to scale.
- **Expand The DC Opportunity Scholarship Program To Serve As A Model For The Nation.** Reverse President Obama's efforts to eliminate this popular and effective program. Increase funding and raise caps on participation to allow more families to benefit.

K-12: Ensuring High Standards And Responsibility For Results

Currently, there is little easily-available data for parents about their children's schools. Providing better information for parents will empower them to hold districts and states responsible for results and, when combined with increased parental choice, give them more control over their children's education. Romney's reforms will improve transparency and give parents the information they need:

- **Reform No Child Left Behind By Emphasizing Transparency And Responsibility For Results.** Replace federally-mandated school interventions with a requirement that states create straightforward public report cards that evaluate each school on its contribution to student learning.

K-12: Recruiting And Rewarding Great Teachers

A school is only as strong as its teachers, but the most promising teachers often find it difficult to reach the classroom door or receive recognition for their efforts once inside. Romney's reforms smooth the path for talented individuals to join the profession and shape the next generation.

- **Attract And Reward Great Teachers Through Increased Flexibility And Block Grants.** Consolidate the numerous and overlapping federal teacher quality programs. Offer states flexible block grants if they adopt policies to advance and reward teacher quality, such as eliminating or reforming teacher tenure and establishing evaluation systems that focus on effectiveness in advancing student achievement.
- **Eliminate Unnecessary Certification Requirements That Discourage New Teachers.** For instance, the federal "highly qualified teacher" requirement, while well-intentioned, only serves to reinforce hurdles that prevent talented individuals from entering the teaching profession in the first place.

Higher Ed: A New Vision Of Affordable And Applicable Learning

America's traditional community and four-year colleges are the heart of our nation's higher education system. However, a flood of federal dollars is driving up tuition and burdening too many young

Americans with substantial debt and too few opportunities. Meanwhile, other models of advanced skills training are becoming ever more important to success in the American economy, and new educational institutions will be required to fill those roles. Romney's reforms spur the access, affordability, innovation, and transparency needed to address all of these challenges:

- **Strengthen And Simplify The Financial Aid System.** Consolidate duplicative and overly complex programs within the Department of Education. Focus the Department on giving students and families with financial need the appropriate information about completion and persistence, loan repayment rates, future earnings, and other indicators to intelligently weigh the risks and benefits of the many options available to them, rather than limiting choices through punitive regulations.
- **Welcome Private Sector Participation Instead Of Pushing It Away.** Reverse President Obama's nationalization of the student loan market and welcome private sector participation in providing information, financing, and the education itself.

Replace Burdensome Regulation With Innovation And Competition. Encourage market entry by innovative new education models, emphasize skill attainment instead of time spent in the classroom, and support research and development. Repeal confusing and unnecessary regulations that primarily serve to drive costs higher, and replace them with common-sense reforms that ensure appropriate student outcomes.

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