

October 14, 2015

Word Count 224

Attention editors  
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute  
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900  
Fax: (503) 242-3822

[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900  
f: 503.242.3822  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)  
[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)

## QuickPoint! – How Would You Spend \$100 Million?

By Steve Buckstein

How would you spend \$100 million? If you're Mark Zuckerberg, founder of the most successful social network on the planet, you spend it trying to improve one of the most unsuccessful public school districts in America: the one in Newark, New Jersey.

[In 2010 Zuckerberg donated \\$100 million](#) to the Newark Public School System on condition that then-Mayor Corey Booker, a Democrat, and Governor Chris Christie, a Republican, directed how the money was spent. Booker was [a school choice supporter](#), and Christie took on the powerful teachers unions.

Five years later, Zuckerberg's money has apparently been spent on consultants and teacher compensation, with little to show in the way of better educational outcomes. A [recent Wall Street Journal op-ed](#) explained how this was just one more failed top-down reform attempt by private and non-profit donors working with government education systems.

Booker and Christie were unable to fundamentally change the top-down school system that put bureaucrats and unions, rather than parents, in control.

It's amazing what lessons can be (re)learned when you spend \$100 million dollars in ways guaranteed not to improve education. Hopefully, all of us will learn from this failure that you can't reform the public school system just by giving it more money. Next time, [give the money to the parents](#) to spend on the schools and educational resources of their choice.

---

*Steve Buckstein is Founder and Senior Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.*