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## QuickPoint! – Emancipate the Students

By **John A. Charles, Jr.**

The state legislature is seeking policy proposals for “equity in education.” Here’s an idea: how about *a money-back guarantee* for public schools?

The K-12 system is based on the assumption that all students should attend neighborhood public schools. Even in the best of times, that wasn’t working for many families. Now the assigned schools aren’t even open; the governor has mandated online learning.

Virtual education has some benefits, but also imposes new costs for parents. They are now part of the educational workforce, except they’re not getting compensated.

There is a solution. School districts are funded from three primary sources: the state school fund, the federal government, and local property taxes. The state share alone averages about \$10,000 per student annually. The legislature should offer parents a refund of the \$10,000 if they leave the public school system. This would instantly make the departing families better off, while reducing crowded conditions for those students who remain. With fewer students, it would be easier for public schools to restore classroom education. Everyone wins.

One system cannot satisfy all needs. The best way to give families more options is to provide them with the equivalent of a Food Stamp card upon request, and let them swipe it for the instructional services they need.

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