

April 23, 2014

Highline District Superintendent Enfield and School Board Members, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you tonight. I am Don Carmignani, 40 year resident at in SeaTac. After having taught English here for nearly 30 years, I have been retired for 20. I am also active with 33rd District Democrats and am serving as Precinct Committee Officer of Precinct 33-3075. I am on the Social Justice committee of my church, and on the Legislative Action Committee that meets with Legislators of Washington State School Retirees Association. But most of all, I am a concerned citizen who has put my five children through the Highline Public School system and am intent on defending it. Once a Teacher/Parent, always a Teacher/Parent...

Admittedly, I have been out of touch with Highline School District until recently when I decided to look into what is going on in classrooms these days. I have read several books on the subject , chiefly Diane Ravitch's well researched books, THE REIGN OF ERROR and DEATH & LIFE OF THE GREAT AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM; and also Kris Nielsen's UNCOMMON: THE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT TO SAVE OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR SCHOOLS, John Owens' CONFESSIONS OF BAD TEACHER, Henry Giroux's AMERICA'S EDUCATION DEFICIT AND THE WAR ON YOUTH, and the Lubienski's well documented THE PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVANTAGE: WHY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OUTPERFORM PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

Since becoming aware of the Free Market's Conspiracy to kill Public Education and replace it with their own profit making business models, I have been shocked at the success their largesse of funds has been able to harm Public Education. Bill Gates for all his philanthropy that has done great good in the world is misdirecting his financial power over education. Business man that he is, he sees the world through profit making colored glasses. He sees students as products to be programmed by Corporate Slaves. His efforts would be better

directed toward solving the real problems of Public Education: broken communities, poverty and homelessness.

I have been observing our Superintendent quite closely to determine if she is on the side of Public Education or the Free Marketers. Her recent recommendation of contracting with Teach for America pretty well convinces me the Superintendent is on the side of the Free Marketers.

As a result, I am compelled to question the superintendent's motives. I have never voted against a levy, but I might well do so this time, unless our current superintendent changes her allegiance from Free Market exploitation to Public School defense.. I will not support any Education Reforms that promote the Free Market philosophy because it is out to destroy Public Education.

Students are People not Products. Market psychology may be effective in the Private Sector, but it is totally out of place in the Public Sector—and that applies especially to Education!

LET'S STOP THINKING OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS BOOK III OF THE HUNGER GAMES ON FIRE AND THINK OF THEM AS THE SECOND WOMB.

Remember when you were a teenager totally unsure of who you were with all those hormones raging through your body and who you might/should become? I do! It was stressful enough just getting through it!

But then add to that the stress of competition and fear of failure from the burden of having to prepare for the cutthroat, survival of the fittest completion of the free market corporate world from pre-school on up through your senior year, and then, what do you have: The possibility of NOT being able to

participate in graduation ceremony because you failed your Math test. That happened to 7,000 Seattle high school students I last year!

What kind of childhood does that provide? The Japanese tried using the whiplash on education and this is what they got: An abundance of school age suicide. They let up on the pressure. Already signs of stress and depression are showing up in our preschoolers as they are rushed into the Free Market's No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top competition.

It's past time to change the Free Market attitude toward Education that robs kids of their right to be kids and teachers of their right to be Teachers. We need to start providing Kids with an environment that helps them grow up in a nurturing, not punishing, environment. Kids need encouragement, protection, a sense of security, and a sense of confident self-worth.

Kids need a Second Womb in their homes, their communities, and their public schools where cooperation, not competition and People not Profits are the primary motivators.

It takes a Village to raise a child, not a Dealership.

I am firmly against contracting with the free market's Teach for America. Ultimately, they are out to privatize Public Education and RUIN teaching as a rewarding, honorable profession.

Thank you!