*The Take Over of Public Education by Corporate America*

**Link to the North Carolina General Assembly ASD Committee**

[**http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=House+Select\_174**](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=House+Select_174)

**Disclosure:**

***I realize what I have written is long, but time is running out. I did not have the luxury of time to turn this into a more polished document. The ASD Committee will decide on Wednesday, April 13 whether or not to present Bryon’s legislation to the General Assembly to vote on ASD districts.***

Dear Members:

I wanted to bring you up-to-date on legislation initiated by Rob Bryan (R-Mecklenburg County—District 88) to turn North Carolina’s lowest performing elementary schools to ASD districts or recovery school districts. He is using the model established in Tennessee and New Orleans. Hopefully, the facts speak for themselves and you will contact your legislator and the committee expressing your views on the legislation.

After listening to research experts on the topic of ASD districts, Bryan is rewriting the legislation to present to the ASD Committee on **Wednesday, April 13, 2016**, to bring it to the floor of the General Assembly for a vote. Our goal after you read the facts is to help defeat the legislation before it comes before the General Assembly. I would love to see this bill die in committee.

I have been following Bryan for a year and his move to privatize public education in the state. He is a former *Teach for America* teacher who does not view public education as a positive force for the civic good. If he is successful and convinces the General Assembly they should vote yes to establish an ASD district, it will open the floodgates to move public charter schools to a “for profit” charter school system sanctioned by the state and supported by your tax dollars. It is all perfectly legal.

The ultimate beneficiaries of such a move are the rich who invest in charter schools because it makes them money from state tax dollars with healthy tax breaks, and our public schools will become fodder for the wealthy capitalist looking to increase his or her portfolio. The sad news is that the losers in an ASD school district are the children their parents and the taxpayers. Let me explain how “for profit” charter schools have gained momentum throughout the United States.

History:

According to an article from *Alternet*, May 8, 2013, by Kristin Rawls, she states two little-understood policies have helped to pave the way for the kind of charter growth we see today. She explains, “One is called the **New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC**), which began in 2000 at the end of President Bill Clinton’s administration. According to the Treasury Department, the credit combines:

…the private sector and the federal government—to bring economic and community development to low-income communities. From job creation to increased access to essential educational, health, and retail services, and from the **rehabilitation of blighted communities** to the development of renewable energy sources, NMTC projects have benefited neighborhoods throughout the country (2).

Hedge fund managers and wealthy real estate developers are cashing in on the “rehabilitation of blighted communities” through the charter school boom. She states, “**The government frames it as a useful tool that builds communities up, operating on the assumption that charter schools provide some sort of de facto restoration, but they don’t**” (3).

Wealthy investors receive **a 39% tax credit that** more than doubles the returns after seven years. The hedge fund managers and developers tout the advantages of such an investment. For instance, David Brain, head of a large real-estate investment firm **Entertainment Properties Trust** states, “Well I think it’s a very stable business, very recession-resistant. It’s a high demand product. The charter school business . . .highest growth and most appealing sector right now of the portfolio. It’s the highest in demand, it’s the most recession-resistant and an opportunity-- set with 500 schools starting every year. It is a two and a half-billion-dollar opportunity set in rough measure annually. (4).

I hope that many of you will read the essay because the author goes into detail of how the charter school movement is playing out across the United States.

**North Carolina: What I know so far**

* Bryon wants to rewrite previous legislation to set up iZones through ASD district. He plans to present the new legislation to the ASD Committee on Wednesday, April 13. **See link to research report from Vanderbilt University.**
* Setting up an ASD district means the legislature will choose another **Superintendent** to run the system, possibly firing teachers in the schools without due process, and possibly taking over school boards. These are the things that happened in Tennessee and New Orleans. **The Superintendent’s salary is paid by your tax dollars as well as the wages of those employed with an ASD district.** The Department of Public Instruction already has a system in place for low-performing schools.
* The charter schools under an ASD district order their curriculum from outside sources—not the state.
* **The competition will become the norm for charter schools and public schools.** We have seen in the state this year of one public school closing because parents were pulling their children out and sending them to a charter school down the street.
* **Research is coming out that shows charter schools are performing no better than public schools.**
* Bryon wants to turn these low-performing public elementary schools into “for profit” charter schools. He has visions of $$$$$ in his eyes. He’s a lawyer and knows how the law works.

Listed below are the members of the **NC ASD Committee** in the General Assembly. I have provided the information so you will have background knowledge about what to say when writing the committee members and/or your legislator.

**North Carolina House Select Committee on ASD Districts**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Legislator** | **District** | **Occupation** | **Email** |
| Chair: Rep. Rob Bryan (R) | Dist. 88-Mecklenburg | Attorney | Rob.Bryan@ncleg.net |
| (R)) Rep. Blackwell | District 86—Burke County | Attorney | Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net |
| (D) Rep. Brockman | Dist. 60-High Point | Legislator | Cecil.Brockman@ncleg.net |
| (D) Rep. Cotham | Dist. 100 -Mecklenburg | Small business owner & educator | Tricia.Cotham@ncleg.net |
| (R) Rep. Elmore) | District 94—Alleghany & Wilkes | Teacher | Jeffrey.Elmore@ncleg.net |
| (D) Rep. Hanes | District 72-Forsyth | President & CEO of Monticello Park Holdings | Edward.Hanes@ncleg.net |
| (R) Jon Hardister | District 59-Guilford Co. | Marketing | Jon.Hardister@ncleg.net |
| (R) Rep. Horn | District 68—Union County | Retired Food Broker | Craig.Horn@ncleg.net |
| (R) Rep. Jones | Dist. 65-Caswell & Rockingham | Dentistry | Burt.Jones@ncleg.net |
| (R)Rep. Malone | District 35-Wake Co. | Case Manager—G4S Compliance & Investigations | Chris.Malone@ncleg.net |
| (R)Rep. Dennis Riddell | District 64-Alamance Co. | Marine engineer, educator, Thermography | Dennis.Riddell@ncleg.net |
| (R)Rep. Rena Turner | Dist. 84-Iredell | Retired Clerk of Superior Court, Iredell | Rena.Turner@ncleg.net |

Please take time to read a few of the sources attached to the letter. Let me know if you have any questions or comments. I encourage you to email the members of ASD Committee. Let others know who are not in DKG about this legislation. You may have to copy and paste the sources in your browser.

Thank you for all you do for Delta Kappa Gamma.

Best,

Diane Howdeshell

President, Beta Delta

Sources:

<http://www.alternet.org/education/who-orofiting-charters-big-bucks-behind-charter-school-secrecy-financial-scandal-and>

The Washington Post. “The big business of charter schools” Valerie Strauss, August 17, 2012.

The Association of North Carolina School Administrators

<http://www.ncasalegislativelink.org/nc-general-assembly.html>

Here you can find information on anything related to legislative issues in education.

Research link to Vanderbilt University on test scores for ASD districts

<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wpln/files/201512/ASD_Impact_Policy_Brief_Final_12.8.15.pdf>