

An Expert Explains Failure

August 20, 2018

The failures of the public high schools in the District of Columbia go on and on. It is quite a scandal, as I explained this weekend at Townhall.

And yet some “charter schools that serve large populations of children from low-income families,” notes the *Washington Post*, after providing much detail about the massive failures, “recorded big increases in scores.”

What hint about improving education does that fact give?

Once upon a time, public education was proclaimed to be the great equalizer, allowing the disadvantaged to climb the economic ladder, and, if not wipe out poverty completely, to certainly dramatically reduce it.

Well, Kevin Welner, a professor who heads the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado, has an interesting thought: “People want to read into these



test scores lessons about what the schools are doing. But these scores, even the growth scores, depend a great deal on students’ opportunities to learn outside of school. If we address the poverty and racism, then we will see these test scores increase.”

Hmmm. Let’s review: (a) the problem is at home and (b) it cannot be overcome by the schools. Moreover, the esteemed professor perceives the cause of these detrimental home environments to be “racism and poverty.”

Once upon a time, public education was proclaimed to be the great equalizer, allowing the disadvantaged to climb the economic ladder, and, if not wipe out poverty completely, to certainly dramatically reduce it.

Now, we discover from a certified education expert that we had it backwards.

So maybe it is time to chuck the whole experiment and just try to educate kids.

Not “save” them, or society.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.