By: Susan Pendergrass

Having worked in education reform for more than twenty years, I've often found myself in a familiar debate about public education: Is it a private good—for the benefit of the child being educated—or a public good—for the benefit of society? Of course, it's both. But what it isn't, or shouldn't be, is a pawn to prop up the tourism industry in a state.

Missouri has made the decision to mandate the earliest dates that schools can open each year, even as other states are moving away from similar policies. The reason? So that families have an extra week or two to vacation in the state's tourist areas. I'll be very curious to see how many families change their plans because of this law.

Where is the outrage from parents with full-time jobs who have to make summer arrangements for their children for a longer stretch of time? Where is the outrage from school boards that clamor for local control? Where is the outrage from principals who know full well about the impact of the summer slide?

The Missouri legislature had the opportunity to improve education in the state by encouraging innovative ideas and options for parents. Instead they chose to manipulate the public school system in the hope that it will benefit the Lake of the Ozarks and Branson. The next time a
lawmaker claims that public education is their priority, pay attention to their actions, not their words.

About the Author

Susan Pendergrass
Director of Research and Education Policy

Susan Pendergrass was Vice President of Research and Evaluation for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools before joining the Show-Me Institute. Prior to coming to the National Alliance, Susan was a senior policy advisor at the U.S. Department of Education during the Bush administration and a senior research scientist at the National Center for Education Statistics during the Obama administration. She earned a Ph.D. in Public Policy from George Mason University.

Read Online

https://showmeinstitute.org/blog/local-control/public-education-more-important-tourism

Links

[1] https://showmeinstitute.org/blog/local-control/public-education-more-important-tourism

Mission Statement

Advancing liberty with responsibility by promoting market solutions for Missouri public policy.

Show-Me Institute

5297 Washington Place 3645 Troost Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63108 Kansas City, MO 64109
Phone: (314) 454-0647 Phone: (816) 287-0370
Fax: (314) 454-0667

Email: info@showmeinstitute.org

Support Our Work
The Show-Me Institute is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Make your tax deductible contribution today: http://ShowMeInstitute.org/donate