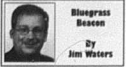


OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

Lawmakers should charter a flight to better education



Bluegrass Beacon By Jim Waters

I wonder if strict critics of school choice pay attention to that one of the best charter schools throughout the nation. If they do, I suspect they choose to ignore it or dismiss it as some kind of fad - a bad experiment gone good. But the facts tell us otherwise.

port ranked 131 charter schools among the nation's 100 best high schools. You can find all of the rankings on the magazine's Web site at: <http://www.usnews.com/sections/education/highschools/>. The No. 2 ranking in the

survey went to Pacific Collegiate Charter School in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Charter schools use public money but run more like private schools. Their principals and teachers escape the suffocating rules and regulations rampant in traditional public schools.

Much to the chagrin of teachers' unions, charter-school principals have much more flexibility in hiring staff than in traditional, government-run schools. The teachers unions want "years served" in the system as the driver for hiring and pay. But charter-school principals can sign up the best teachers for a school's academic needs - even if a teacher lacks the longest tenure.

In return for this freedom, these schools must achieve a certain level of performance outlined in their "charters," ostensibly a contract with those who use them.

Part of the reason why charter schools succeed stems from lifting the heavy hand of regulation and letting parents choose to use them instead of traditional public

schools. Meanwhile, principals and teachers in charter schools get to exercise innovation. They can choose their emphasis. Some emphasize math and science, and others focus on the arts. They choose a curriculum, dress codes and disciplinary standards.

Depending on how a state writes its law, a group of teachers or parents, universities or nonprofits can create charters. State entities start some charter schools, but such an approach is only effective the extent that charters can remain free from school-district control.

One approach that works great involves charter schools started on university campuses.

For example, Preuss (pronounced Pree-sue) School (USCD, housed) on the University of San Diego campus became so successful that the parents want in a lottery to get their children in.

Kentucky would skim the "cream of the crop" from the student body in failing public schools, leaving behind the riff-raff.

Not at Preuss. All applicants to attend must be eligible for "Title I or Free or Reduced Lunch" programs, the subsidies for students from low-income families.

State universities could start schools on their campuses, such as the University of San Diego and others have. And the law should allow private entities to form neighborhood charter schools.

Even if they don't like the idea, lawmakers should consider the political capital of bears. Some 49 percent of Kentucky's public-school students come from low-income households.

That's a lot of votes. That's a lot of votes. That's a lot of votes.

with a better education. If lawmakers in Frankfort want to take on a winning political issue, they should propose a charter-school bill that at least offers a way out for students from low-income homes and trapped in failing schools.

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Jim Waters is the director of policy and communications for the Bluegrass Institute, Kentucky's free-market think tank. You can reach him at [jwaters@bips.org](mailto:jawaters@bips.org). You can read previously published columns at www.bips.org.

TALKIN'

Continued from Page 4

for the rich, now promises if elected he will make Bush's tax breaks permanent and stop the Democratic plan for "a crippling tax increase in 2011."

I like Preston too. I try to get to court days every year, and I love visiting Helen and Rubie Blevins' grocery store. My friend Byron Crawford has written about the store and a few years ago I took Nick and Nina Chorney in for a visit. (No, George wasn't along but he would have loved it. I'm sure.)

Welcome everybody in Robertson and Bath counties. If you don't agree with me, send me an Email and tell me about it.

It would be a ball world if we all agreed.

Dale Greer is a member of the faculty at Morehead State University. He has an expensive background in media including award winning reporting and sits as a major television anchor and talk show host. He can be reached via email at dgreer@roadrunner.com.

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GENERAL NEWS

New Family Drug Court is implemented

Nicholas Robertson, Harrison and Hardacre counties will have a drug court as part of their community justice program. The new Family Drug Court program is a way to help people who have substance abuse problems and mental health needs and who are at risk of being arrested and jailed.

with Family Court and serves families in which substance abuse is a continuing factor in children's lives. Harrison County Judge Alex Barrett said, "Most of the program participants are not on probation or parole. They are people who are at risk of being arrested and jailed. They are people who are at risk of being arrested and jailed. They are people who are at risk of being arrested and jailed."

STEVIE'S

Continued from Page 5 so glibble, and then go looking for some mischief.

The only difference was, Mrs. Cleaver was obviously a lot more perceptive than the adults I knew. Eddie would try to sweet-talk Mrs. Cleaver, but he didn't fool her for a second. Either the kid I knew was a better actor, or the adults around us were more easily tricked.

One day when we had a day off from school, a bunch of us boys got together at a friend's house. His parents were not at work but had given their son permission to invite us over.

Golden Boy got on, started it up, and took off for the next. The next thing we knew, he had lost control and careened off the road. He hit the side of the neighbor's house at an angle and climbed right up the wall. It was impressive. The tire tracks he left nearby made it all the way up to the second story windows before he ran out house and gravity took over.

The motorcycle landed in a broken heap in the back

yard. Golden Boy wasn't looking much better. He was more like Black and Blue. His nose was smashed. One eye swollen shut - sticking out all huge and purple. His lips were split and bleeding and his wrist bent back at an angle that made my stomach feel like doing cartwheels.

When the adults found out what Golden Boy was really like, they shrugged and said, "You can't judge a book by its cover."

A few years after that, I came across the book, "The Idiot in the Family" by George Eliot. It was a great story - or at least until old George threw in this unbelievable apper, or romantic ending.

"No way was this ending written by a man!" I exclaimed as I flipped to the "About the Author" page. Sure enough, George turned out to be Mary Ann Evans.

"Hi, I know it," I cried triumphantly. "Just goes to show you, you can't judge a book by its cover."

What a handy expression! You can use it to mean someone is better than you thought, or worse than you thought. You can even use it to describe an actual book. Amazing.

I guess when it comes to some expressions, you really can't judge a book by its cover.

Signing out from Honolulu Steve Scalf

Steve Scalf is a member of the U.S. Military. Reach him at sstscalf@msn.com.

CHARGES

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had left his residence. Buckler said that Kearns had looked through a window and positively identified one of the brothers inside of Willoughby's house.

"He (Kearns) walked into the yard and saw Clayton Willoughby's house," Buckler said. "It had his initials on it."

Buckler testified that the alleged burglars, who were all about 17 years old, had been in the cab of the truck and at various other points in the neighborhood.

Buckler testified that several items including a cell phone and power tools were in the house as if they were in the process of being moved outside.

Buckler testified that several items including a cell phone and power tools were in the house as if they were in the process of being moved outside. Buckler said that he had called a neighbor and asked the neighbor to "keep and eye on his place."

Wittmeyer asked Buckler if his investigation indicated that anyone had seen the Willoughby charges bound over to the grand jury.

Autumn Turns 8 on February 8th. Happy Birthday Autumn! Love, Daddy, Mommy and Shelby

Ladies Auxillary, Lloyd George, and Post 8666 would like to thank the following businesses that helped make "Come Sit With Santa" such a success! Soper's Drug, A Little Off the Top, Susie's Flower's, Little Rascals Daycare

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\$1500 To Mimi and Papaw, Happy Valentine's Day! Love, Antonio and Analise. Mail or bring your message with picture to: The Carlisle Mercury, 117 S. Locust Street or POB 272, Carlisle, KY 40311. Please include payment, your name, contact information, message and picture.

Other spoke in support of the program. "There will be intense drug testing," Harrison County Judge Alex Barrett said. "Most of the program participants are not on probation or parole. They are people who are at risk of being arrested and jailed. They are people who are at risk of being arrested and jailed."

Each Family Drug Court program will have a case manager and project coordinator, a Cabinet for Health and Family Services representative and local treatment providers.

The success of the program will be measured by the number of arrests in the state and may start in earnest by the end of next month.

Carter Turns 3! Hope your Birthday's lots of fun in every kind of way! Happy Birthday! Love, Mommy and Daddy, Clay

Carter Allen Marcum is turning 3 on February 2, 2008. You have always been a part of us right from the start! You are always in our hearts! You continue to make us smile! With all the funny things you say, who else but you, would wish for a nanny goat for his birthday? Happy Birthday Baby Boy!!! Lots of hugs and kisses and Birthday wishes!!! Love, Mommy & Donald

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