



News Release

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Whiston Statement on Charter School Comment

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State Superintendent Brian Whiston appeared recently on the public television show “Off the Record.” Amongst the wide array of education topics that the show’s panelists fired at him was one on the impact of public charter schools in Michigan. Superintendent Whiston responded with a comment to which he’d like to make the following statement:

In a recent appearance on the public television show *Off The Record*, I was accurately quoted as saying: “While I do support choice – and I want to be clear on that – it’s probably taken us backwards overall.” That was a poor choice of words on my part and I apologize for those words.

I do not think that choice – as defined by multiple pathways within a district; outside district choices; and charter schools – has set us back. In fact, I say it is an important part of our education system and I support these choices – my record is clear on that.

The point I was trying to make was:

- 1) If choice (as defined above) was the only answer, then Michigan would be a Top 10 education state now, because we have more choice than just about any other state. Even with that said, I was clear in saying that I still support choice. Addressing school performance is much more complicated than just one solution, however – there are no quick fixes. The changes we need to make are complicated and will take time.
- 2) We do have to take the politics out of the discussion and see how school choice has impacted districts that have lost students, and address that problem. But with that said, I still made it clear that I support school choice.

So, let’s be crystal clear – I support school choice for students and parents. I define choice as students having choices in multiple pathways within a district; outside district choices; and through charter schools.

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