Guest post by Darcy Bedortha.

In late August, 2012, I took a job in a school that is part of the largest virtual charter school chain in the nation. While I had misgivings about the nature of the school, I thought perhaps if I were diligent, I could serve my students well. In November 2013 I decided I could no longer continue as a teacher. This is my story.

Some Background on K12 Inc.

K12 Inc., the virtual-education company, was founded in 1999 by the one-time “junk bond king” Michael Milken and the hedge fund banker Ronald Packard. The company’s original board chairman was William J. Bennett, who had been the U.S. Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan. (Bennett resigned from his position with K12 Inc. in 2005 after sparking controversy by stating that the U.S. crime rate would go down if more African-American babies were aborted.)

As a private company founded by financiers, K12 Inc. is highly profit-driven. Though its stock price has apparently taken a hit recently, there is little doubt that K12 Inc. has been quite successful in bringing in revenue--even as regular public schools have faced dire financial straits. According to the Center for Media and Democracy’s PR Watch, Packard, who is the current CEO, earned $19 million in compensation from 2009-2013. In 2013 alone, as Chicago closed 50 of its public schools and Philadelphia closed 23 more, K12 Inc. brought in a whopping $730.8 million in taxpayer dollars from its managed public schools, and its top executives saw their compensation skyrocket by 96 percent.

My Life as a Virtual Teacher

I became a teacher because I am an advocate for youth and social justice. However, this purpose was hard to fulfill working in a K12 Inc. school. With the kind of technology, systems and process management needed to keep the enrollment machine running (and the machine is priority), there is never much time to actually teach. In my former school, each class met for 30 minutes in an interactive-blackboard setting one day each week. Fewer than 10 percent of students actually attended these “classes.” Other than that time and any one-on-one sessions a teacher and student might set up (which, in my experience, almost never happened), there is no room for direct instruction.

Given the extensive needs of the students, this set up does not serve them well. Most of my contact with students was by email, through which I answered questions about everything from login issues and technology glitches to clarifying of assignments, and even that communication was only accessed by a very small percentage of students.

In addition, because students continuously enroll, no one was on the same assignment at the same time. I taught high school English. In a given day in mid-November I would grade introductory assignments, diagnostic essays and end-of-semester projects, and everything in between, for each course (this month I had 30 separate courses). I found it to be impossible to meet the learning needs of my students in that situation.

For most of last year I was Lead Teacher at the school, which required me to attend national staff meetings each week. At first the marketing focus of the conversations turned my stomach, and then it made me furious. In my experience, the conversation was never about how our students were struggling, how we could support those who were trying to learn the English Language, how we could support those who were homeless or how we could support those with special needs. It was never about how we could support our teachers. It seemed to me like the focus was often about enrollment, about data, about numbers of students who had not taken the proper number of tests, about ranking schools and ranking teachers. And there was marketing: how to get more children enrolled, how to reach more families, how to be sure they were pre-registered for next year, how to get Facebook pages and other marketing information “pushed out” to students.

The state-level staff meetings were not much better. Teachers were occasionally bullied and disrespected by the head administrator. Threatening teachers who had been unsuccessful at reaching students, he once yelled “I own your phone and I can see if you’re making calls!” (K12 Inc. does own the phones its teachers use, as well as the laptops and office equipment for teachers and students). During one meeting, in effort to force students to take yet another standardized test, it was suggested that we lock students out of their classes until they completed the tests. I urged them not to lock the curriculum. I had spent days each week trying to keep my seniors engaged and working in their classes, they were hanging on by their fingertips, and I knew that if pushed, they would simply give up.

Teachers who work for K12 Inc. are not well compensated for all their scrambling. At my former school, teachers are paid based on the number of students on their rosters. With 225 students they are still part-time (at .75 FTE), for which the pay is $31,500 a year. With 226 students they become full time employees, and will then be paid $42,000. Some full-time teachers now carry loads of well over 300 students. Even considering other expenses (but noting that these schools have no building or transportation costs), it is clear to me that K12 is
generating considerable profits from the student/teacher ratio and compensation scheme.

My first month of teaching exhausted me, and there was never a moment in 15 months to catch my breath (many of us taught summer school, with no extra compensation, per employment agreement). Teachers are responsible for setting up courses, due dates, course pathways, etc. in connection to an extensive and ever-changing digital curriculum which is fraught with technical glitches and system-level errors. Teachers are also required to be available to students during the day, late into the evening and on weekends. In addition, they must contribute to “special projects”.

Courses and students are added daily, so there is continuous juggling, all happening during the first month of school (and beyond) while students (and teachers) are trying to learn how the system works. Granted, the first months of school are difficult for any school, but teachers at my school were putting in 40, 50, and 60 hour weeks in September 2012 while being paid only for the students on their roster, which for me hovered around 100 by the end of the first month. I think my first two-week paycheck, given the 75 students on my roster in the beginning, was about $300. Students are enrolled and drop out daily throughout the year (enrollment pauses only in December and May-June) so numbers change constantly and part-time teachers are never sure of their income.

Serving Disadvantaged Students Poorly

I believe K12 Inc. targets poor communities and economically struggling regions; they are easily influenced because they are desperately seeking alternatives to devastatingly under-funded schools. These financially strapped schools are being further bled by the exodus of students who are lured by what I now see are empty promises of marketing experts at K12 Inc. It is a vicious cycle in which, as far as I can see, no one but the corporate profiteers are winning, and that is no wonder to me: K12 Inc. has worked closely with the American Legislative Exchange Council, which has lobbied extensively for draft legislation to expand virtual education in 39 states or territories, potentially further crippling the financial status of public schools whose funds they siphon.

Luis Huerta of NEPC and Teachers College, Columbia University cites K12 Inc.’s explicit strategy of targeting the least-supported population of students. He states that the corporation has an established practice of going after students who are ”at risk” because of their tendency not to engage in school or expect much, if anything, from their educational experience, thereby creating a greater profit margin for K12 Inc. If a student is not active in school or demanding a quality education, he or she does not take as much of a teacher’s time; fewer questions are asked, less work needs reviewing and less interaction is required. By targeting these students for enrollment, K12 Inc. is able to push a higher student to teacher ratio: fewer teachers equals less expense, more students equals more income, fewer expenses in conjunction with greater income equals greater profits. This is a core issue with for-profit education management organizations.

The majority of students at the school are the kinds of kids whose histories and current realities cause concerned adults to keep eyes open for signs of trauma, those that haunt the dreams of educators and social workers. My students were survivors - of suicide attempts, of bullying, of abuse, of neglect, of the attempted suicides of siblings or best-friends or boyfriends. Some of them battle addictions and destructive habits; some self-harm, isolate themselves, or even run away.

I was an English teacher, so my students would write. They wrote of pain and fear and of not fitting in. They were the kinds of young people who desperately needed to have the protective circle of a community watching over them. They needed one healthy person to smile at them and recognize them by name every day, to say “I’m glad you’re here!” Many of my former students do not have that.

The last thing these young people needed, I came to realize during my time with K12 Inc., was to be isolated in front of a computer screen. A week or two or three would often go by without my getting a word from a student. They didn’t answer their email, they didn’t answer their phones. Often their phones were disconnected. Their families were disconnected. My students also moved a lot. During my first year at the school I spent days on the phone trying to track students down. This year I struggled to not simply give up under the weight of it all.

In the fall of 2013, 42 percent of our high school students were deemed "economically disadvantaged." I had a number of students who were not native English speakers. I cannot wrap my head around how to serve a student who is unable to read or comprehend the language that the virtual curriculum is written in, let alone learn the technology (when it is functioning) without sitting beside them in the same space. Many of my non-native speakers had parents who did not speak English at all. These students often struggled for a very short time, and then I never saw their work again. They dropped out, moved on.

The majority of the students at the school were lacking credits needed for graduation. Most of them could not afford another failure, not in terms of credits and not in terms of emotional well-being, yet, as I wrote this in early December, nearly 80 percent of our students were failing their classes. At that time there were 303 students (12 percent of the school) enrolled in special education programs - and 259 of them were failing while 17 had no grade at all. Eighty-two percent of the 9th graders were failing. This kind of failure is in no way limited to this school; it is system-wide, reigning throughout the virtual-school world, explicitly true for K12, Inc. and its national network of online schools.
According to a July 2012 report published by the NEPC, a nonprofit research organization that is skeptical of privatization initiatives in public education, only 27.7 percent of K12, Inc. schools met the Annual Yearly Progress goals, as compared to 52 percent of brick and mortar public schools (Miron & Urschel, 2012). Similarly, the same study calls attention to the fact that only 37.6 percent of students at full-time virtual schools graduate on time, as compared to the national average of 79.4 percent for all public high school students. A substantial number of my students transferred in from other virtual schools, such as Connections Academy. These students were markedly transient, and did not find success with K12 Inc. either.

In addition, CEO Ronald Packard was named in a 2012 class action complaint citing his alleged false statements regarding student performance and K12, Inc.’s “aggressive tactics” to recruit and enroll students in effort to cover up the 40-60 percent turnover rate (the parties reached a tentative $6.75 million settlement agreement in March 2013).

I can’t say I’m surprised by any of this. Earlier last fall, due to the sudden need for a colleague to take leave I was handed his student load on top of my own. For a month I had 476 students on my rosters, in 30 different classes. In my classes, my students were writing narratives, argumentative and research papers and poetry - all of which I was committed to reading. I had students who struggled to find their way through the course pages to the assignment they wish to work on, and in their frustration they often emailed for direction. I had students who were struggling to find their way through life. I began to write my story during the third week of November and at that point, I still had students beginning their first day, with the expectation to finish a semester’s work by January 24th.

Each of these situations and many others required individual attention. How does anyone offer anything close to personal attention for over three-hundred students, most of whom you never see? Practices such as excusing (eliminating) assignments were the norm at the school. K12 Inc. calls it a "proficiency model" but it amounts to an easy route to course completion. Even the students who were more or less on pace were not learning deeply; they were often merely filling out digital worksheets as quickly as they could. The most motivated of my students regularly finished more than a dozen assignments in a day. What kind of depth of learning could that offer? That kind of workload for K12 teachers created fertile ground for practices like minimizing curriculum or sending essays to India to be graded.

Last year I had a student who never showed up to class, never turned work in, skimmed by on gaming the system with a phone call every few weeks, just enough to keep from being dropped from the rosters. She called me three days after my final grades were submitted in June, desperate to find a way to graduate. I apologized, said my grades had been submitted, and offered information for the summer school we were holding. A week or so later, when I arrived for graduation an administrator pulled me aside to tell me that this student had passed “by the proficiency method” and would be graduating. Our graduation rate was so low that this was not a surprise to me, not after the year I had spent working in this system. I was learning how things worked. Similar things have happened elsewhere. In Tennessee an email was discovered at a K12, Inc. school directing teachers to delete poor grades.

The July 2012 NEPC report concludes that virtual schools are not adequately meeting the educational needs of students. “Children who enroll in a K12 Inc. cyber school, who receive full-time instruction in front of a computer instead of in a classroom with a live teacher and other students, are more likely to fall behind in reading and math,” the authors state “These children are also more likely to move between schools or leave school altogether - and the cyber school is less likely to meet federal education standards.”

I became a teacher because I am an advocate for youth. My wish is to empower them to find their voices, to use them respectfully and effectively to work for justice in this world. I only scratched the surface of building relationships with my students last year. This year it was even more difficult.

As I reflect, I realize that the inability to dig into their realities and connect provided me a level of protection.

As I begin telling my story to a national audience, I face considerable dilemmas. How do I call out the corporations for the wrongful actions they are taking, for the massive deception being perpetrated and the money being siphoned from public schools without real people who are trying to do good work being hit by the fallout? How do I highlight the research that makes clear the failure of virtual schools without throwing talented teachers who are doing their best under the bus? Teachers I worked with are afraid to speak out, they are afraid to challenge or even question the administration or the system. I see the same fear dominant in the narrative across the country, in all walks of education. It is a justifiable fear; work is hard to come by, in part because of the very online programs I am rallying against. It is not hard to see that as I speak out, I might lose friends and I will jeopardize my own potential to be hired elsewhere as a public school teacher. It is a lonely place to stand, and a difficult decision to make.

I struggled with the decision to leave my students, and if I had better identified their individual challenges and truly gotten to know them it would have been doubly difficult. I continue to remind myself that I left to save my own health, that if my health had failed I would not be able to continue to advocate for youth. I would not be here for my own sons and I would not be able to hold my grandchild. The internal agony of compromised values and the endless dance of ethical dilemmas spinning through my sleepless nights finally got the better of me and I decided...

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/living-in-dialogue/2014/01/15_months_in_virtual_charter_h.html
compromised values and the endless dance of ethical dilemmas spinning through my sleepless nights finally got the better of me, and in facing a choice between financial crisis and health crisis, I gave my notice. I am unleashed, I am educated and I am fighting for the students I left behind. As an advocate I have chosen to walk my talk. I will speak for my students until they can fill my shoes, and I have faith that they will.

**Darcy Bedortha, MS, MA**

High School Teacher  
Student, Antioch University PhD in Leadership and Change  
Oregon Team, **Institute for Democratic Education in America**

What do you think of Darcy Bedortha's story? What should be done about virtual schools that operate in this fashion?

**Categories:** Dropouts, Virtual charter schools, ethics, privatization, school to prison pipeline, technocrats

**Tags:** K12 Inc

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**What Do You Think?**

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**Sort by:** Oldest to Newest

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**alison38**  
11:36 AM on January 6, 2014  
Score: 8

Thank you for this piece! The federal and state governments need to be convinced, with information and data like this, that K-12, at least, is a huge waste of taxpayer dollars for education. Our public schools struggle to survive on LESS money because the tax dollars are being diverted to THIS? So wrong! Large-scale waste of public dollars! Legislators need to be educated to this so they can say, "no more". This should be sent to every legislator and urban mayor in every state.

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**Readdoctor**  
11:46 AM on January 6, 2014  
Score: 9

How many times will we allow these carpet bagger private entities to rob our children of their futures? I see no difference between these new slave merchants and those old ones who brutalized and enslaved two continents for profit. These new pirates enslave teachers, and sell our public schools and children to the highest bidder for silver. Like 500 years ago powerful, the politically connected, and wealthy come again to profit off our most vulnerable. When will we stand up to these pirates? The silent and apathetic are as guilty as these pirates who have put our children on these new auction blocks.

Still marching,  
Jesse The Walking Man Turner

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**KKosobud**  
3:40 PM on January 6, 2014  
Score: 9

I work as an advocate for students who are facing long term suspension and expulsion, or for other reasons are unable to attend "brick and mortar" schools. So much of what Darcy describes in her essay is what the students I represent also face. I have students with mental illness whose last chances depend on virtual schools, where they are given little consideration for their illnesses, and are continuously threatened with being locked out of their classes for the times when they are too ill to take part in the routines of schooling. Yet, it is quite difficult to document the violation of these young people's civil rights, and to compel these virtual schools to make any adjustments to support their progress.

Thank you for posting this essay. And, please continue to speak truth to power.
Kathleen Kosobud, NBCT, PhD (ABD),  
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan

11:20 AM on January 7, 2014
Michigan now allows - thanks to ALEC-written legislation and the dumbest congress in the nation - UNLIMITED charter cyber-schools to exist wherever they can be developed. Moreover, the state now REQUIRES k-12 public schools to PAY for ANY student who wants to take online classes in lieu of attending a regular school.

Anyone who thinks this is not WHOLLY about privatizing public education is simply not paying attention.

12:39 PM on January 7, 2014
Virtual charters are nothing more than a mouthpiece for the Gates foundation of mass production when it comes to public schools. American corporations have decided the next big gold rush is virtual charters and they are going to exploit this source for all the public money they can get.

2:16 PM on January 7, 2014
I am so proud of you for speaking out! I've considered virtual learning for my own struggling learner, but your story paints a dismal picture. Thankfully my son is doing better at school ... and you are out from under this horrible system.

3:00 PM on January 7, 2014
The piece is eye opening. I must confess that I am no champion of the public school system in its current form, because of its dismal record of educating poor and Black children. For years I have viewed charter and virtual schools as necessary alternatives to a failed system of education. However, based on this article, the systemic contempt of public schools for students of color and their needs appears no worse than this so-called educational model which obviously tries to divert resources for educating children to private coffers while leaving nothing of benefit to families or their communities. I refuse to believe that we cannot address the problems created by cynical and self serving people in both the public and alternative camps. I think it is time for those most interested in solving this problem (dedicated teachers and parents) to convene their own local and national discussions. Leave the usual suspects (stakeholders) out of the conversation and just talk about what the real issues are, what works, what doesn't work, and where to go from here. Since there is virtually no positive leadership coming from national or state levels, we should concentrate on getting it right on our local levels and work outward from there.

3:58 PM on January 7, 2014
Charter and virtual schools exist because they offer a lower cost alternative to public education. Education has turned into a numbers game, so if you show great results, you are doing a good job in educating students. With all the measuring we try to perform in deciding if our public students have mastered a subject, we allow the private schools to choose their own "standards". Atlanta just uncovered a large cheating scandal which involved many teachers and some administrators. Public and private schools are not much different. Individual teachers make the greatest impact. We give education a lot of lip service, but, we do little to ensure our students are getting a worthwhile education because we will not invest the time and money required. Not all charter schools are bad and not all public schools are good.

9:41 PM on January 7, 2014
And to all those uninformed "experts" who believe (not think) that technology is the "silver bullet solution" to all education ills - read this article one more time. Then repeat as necessary until you grasp this concept.
My kids were in a private Christian school where I would have preferred they remain but I knew because of shenanigans my ex was pulling with child support that eventually I would have to take at least some of the children out of that school. Our local brick & mortar public school is dismal & not an option. I researched virtual school options in Ohio for five years (talking to current & former parents & students of all of them, reading online reviews, state scores, all available literature) before firmly deciding on Ohio Connections Academy. 18 months later my ex pulled the rug out from under us. I trust my research. I trust my judgement. I enrolled my children in OCA.

I wanted a school with a curriculum as rigorous as that of the private school my children were coming from so they wouldn't lose ground because, if the opportunity arose to move them back to the private school where their older siblings graduated from, I planned to do so. OCA is, frankly, the only virtual school in Ohio that had such a curriculum. I also needed a school with flexibility as all four of my boys have ADHD & two have other disabilities just to make the mix more fun. OCA had that as well. My 15 year old who has a processing disorder & ADHD will NEVER return to a brick & mortar now that he's had the home school/virtual school experience of OCA. It has been his academic salvation. He is finally able to earn A's & B's without a dumbed down curriculum...simply some accommodations.

The transient students from homes where nobody seems to care about their education are the very same students my public school teacher friends fret over. You certainly have more of them to fret over because of the profit motivated marketing strategy of K12 Inc. By the way, K12 Inc. was the very 1st school to be eliminated from my list of potential schools. I think it would likely be among of the first to go by any concerned, involved parent.

And here is where we will come to a fork in the road & part. I blame or credit a student's performance in a brick & mortar school primarily on their school who has that child 7 hours each day. I blame or credit a student's performance in a virtual school primarily on their parent/learning coach/person who has their child the entire day. That is the person responsible for seeing that they attend online classes, do their daily work, read their textbooks & do workbook lessons. Obviously this totally negates the student's will but I'm responding to your editorial piece, not writing the great American novel.

I live in a community with a large number of migrant workers. Some choose to find work & stay over the winter. Others leave at the end of harvest season & come back at planting time. They come & go with their families. When the children leave, their non-English speaking parents often don't remove them from school properly. They just leave. The local school gets a call from Texas in a few weeks...maybe longer, requesting the records for said student. This happens whether the child is attending a virtual school or a brick & mortar school.

I live in "the rust belt." There is a high incidence of unemployment, drug addiction & alcoholism. Unemployed people get evicted & leave, without notice, taking their kids. If they leave the district there may be no official withdrawal until they know where they are going to land. They just don't turn up one day. This happens whether the child is attending a virtual school or a brick & mortar school.

Drug addicts & alcoholics have one 1st love...their drugs...their alcohol. It comes before making sure their kids get to school, have their homework done, in fact, for the ones I've had the chance to serve (as Director of Community Resources for a local human service organization) their 1st love comes before making sure their kids are adequately fed, clothed, or even clean. This happens whether the child is attending a virtual school or a brick & mortar school.

I'm sure it happens more in virtual schools because #1) if you are transient due to work issues or even being evicted often, your kids can remain in school. That takes the foresight of a caring parent. #2) As you said K12 Inc. markets specifically to poor drug addicts & alcoholics. It comes before making sure their kids are adequately fed, clothed, or even clean. This happens whether the child is attending a virtual school or a brick & mortar school.

I'm sure it happens more in virtual schools because #1) if you are transient due to work issues or even being evicted often, your kids can remain in school. That takes the foresight of a caring parent. #2) As you said K12 Inc. markets specifically to poor communities with schools like those in my district. They use the same agency as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and GlaxoSmithKline. All this to give families hope that K12 Inc knows those families don't have the personal resources to attain. And #3) The great underbelly, crappy virtual schools give lazy, useless parents who should have given their kids to someone who cares long ago a place to enroll their kids where they won't have someone "in their face" about not signing report cards, not coming to IEP meetings, skipping conferences, ignoring Billy's crappy grades, etc.
Thank you, Darcy, for your devastating insight into the effect of capitalism on education and for citing research that begins to take your effort beyond the anecdotal—which Cindy's post shows the need for. In the meantime, Packard et.al. will harvest their taxpayer dollars for efforts that are not illegal but only immoral.

Wait, is this the K-12 Inc. that's headquartered in Herndon, VA? Is that Eric Cantor's district? Yes, the Eric Cantor who's quoted today (in this publication) for his ongoing support of school profits...I mean school choice,...it's school choice, not profit, choice.

Ah...I thought so.

Reminds me of the good 'ol days, when Bush's No Child Left Untested was the darling of the Macmillans, too.

Oh well, no time for these dreary ruminations when there's profit to be made!

While my own son has reaped some benefits from being enrolled in K12, bullying is absent, and the self-pace is an asset, why we give public funding to for-profit schools is astonishing to me; why would we use tax dollars, set aside for the education of our children, to be used to line the profit margin of a company? Education dollars should be used exclusively for the education of our youth, for-profit ventures can continue as private schools, no need for the waste of the precious tax dollars we have set aside for education.

I considered enrolling my children in a virtual school. But after checking out the performance for various of the charter schools on GreatSchools.org, I was pretty horrified. Their performance was worst than anything my local public school could offer. In retrospect, the thought of putting children in front of a screen for the majority of their schooling is just ridiculous. Perhaps there are no easy answers when it comes to schooling, but at the very least our students should be known, their work carefully reviewed in light of what a teacher knows about the student's needs and the progress that the student is making. Assessment comes from the root word meaning "to sit with." There's a whole lot to be said for the power of sitting with a student, in order to really know what a student needs.
all. This is the way the system is set up and I know they do what they can and try very hard to adjust! I know his learning style and can adjust as needed at any time. My brother and his family also homeschool all three of their children through Connections Academy and those children are bright children that are advanced past their grade level with three dedicated adults assisting them in their home.

"I was an English teacher, so my students would write. They wrote of pain and fear and of not fitting in. They were the kinds of young people who desperately needed to have the protective circle of a community watching over them. They needed one healthy person to smile at them and recognize them by name every day, to say "I'm glad you're here!" Many of my former students do not have that.

The last thing these young people needed, I came to realize during my time with K12 Inc., was to be isolated in front of a computer screen. A week or two or three would often go by without my getting a word from a student. They didn't answer their email, they didn't answer their phones. Often their phones were disconnected. Their families were disconnected."

This paragraph is offensive to me personally and should be offensive to most virtual school parents! Not EVERY family is disconnected. Most are NOT. This teacher generalizes students and their families. I also do not have much phone contact with my son's teachers. I do not NEED phone contact with them. My son is able to work through the curriculum. The idea that every family is disengaged and that no healthy people are greeting them with a smile or they do not have a "protective circle" around them is offensive, false and FAR from what I have seen from my son's peers in their chat sessions and whiteboard classes. I see children whose families are engaged. Children who are interacting with each other. Children who are learning. My son is in this program because HIS FAMILY IS HIS PROTECTIVE CIRCLE. There's nothing more upsetting to me as a professional or as a mother than teachers demonizing families as useless and disengaged and valuing themselves as the only asset a child has. And this is what portions of this article do. It's ludicrous! And to suggest that my child sits in front of a computer screen all day is a gross miscalculation of what his learning environment consists of.

I understand the frustration of this and other teachers regarding the drive for money and funding instead of a focus on education. I worked in state and county programs for mental health and child welfare and I, too, would become frustrated with the lack of focus on what seemed important. This is true of almost any state funded entity. Schools aren't unique in that. This article doesn't speak to all students, families and their experience. I sincerely hope this choice is not removed for our children. And will lobby just as hard to keep it in place. As will many other parents who aren't "disconnected" and who, like mine, have found great success in these programs.