

The Tatiana Jimenez Memorial Speech Tournament DISCUSSION Artifacts

Round 1:

<https://character.ai/>

Round 2:

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/trump-says-parents-should-elect-principals-what-would-that-look-like/2023/07>

Trump Says Parents Should Elect Principals. What Would That Look Like?

By Libby Stanford — July 14, 2023 7 min read

Former President Donald Trump addresses the crowd at the Moms for Liberty national summit in Philadelphia on June 30, 2023. Trump is more focused on education during his third presidential run, and has said multiple times that school principals should be elected.

Former President Donald Trump thinks parents should have the ability to fire their children's school principal.

"If you have a bad principal that's not getting the job done, the parents will—under the Trump administration—be allowed to vote to fire that principal," Trump said during a June 30 speech at the Moms for Liberty Joyful Warriors Summit in Philadelphia. "This will be the ultimate form of local control."

The proposal is a novel idea, though the concept of an elected school administrator isn't entirely foreign. Florida and Alabama are the only two states in the nation that allow schools to elect local superintendents. No states, however, allow for principals to be elected to their positions.

Trump argued that principal elections will give parents the power to take schools back from "radical Marxist maniacs." In a campaign video, the former president said that he'd "implement massive funding preferences and favorable treatment" for states and school systems that adopt principal elections in addition to abolishing teacher tenure; adopting merit pay for teachers; cutting the number of administrators, especially those focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; and adopting a parents' bill of rights that includes curriculum transparency.

Education Week decided to look into how principal elections could work. But the idea is flawed and impractical at best and dangerous at worst, education policy experts say. And Trump would have an arduous time instituting such a massive change for local education systems.

Can he do that?

As president, Trump would have little recourse to incentivize local communities to elect school principals and no ability to require it, said Derek Black, an education law and policy professor at the University of South Carolina.

“The president has no power, nor does Congress have any such power,” Black said. “It is theoretical that Congress could pass some sort of law giving states money and, in exchange for that money, states would agree to change their own law. The only means through which it could be accomplished is legislation.”

Trump has indicated he would advocate for such a law. But if Congress remains divided as it is currently, it would be nearly impossible to pass. Even among Republicans, it could be difficult, Black said, as some may perceive the move to be the federal government infringing on the U.S. tradition of local control of schools.

Trump may also have a difficult time inspiring states to change their laws for the same reason, Black said. Most states don't have laws allowing for the election of school superintendents, much less the direct election of principals.

Widening the political divide in schools

If Trump succeeded in encouraging states to allow principals to be elected, communities that decide to do such a thing would have to restructure their entire election systems.

It's unclear how voting districts for school principals would be set up. States could decide to have election districts match school zones, allowing only voters living in a school's zone to vote on the principal—a move that would be complicated even more by school choice policies that allow students to attend schools in zones outside of where they live.

Or, voting districts could follow the structure established in school board elections, allowing voters to choose principals for schools their students don't attend. It's unclear, based on Trump's description of the policy, if voters would be limited to parents with children currently attending the school or include parents of incoming or outgoing students. It's also far from certain constitutionally that voters in school principal elections could be limited to parents.

“There would be lots of questions about what that actually would look like, who would be implementing that, and logistically how that plays out,” said Chris Curran, director of the Educational Policy Research Center at the University of Florida. “In the bigger picture, there are issues with what that could do in bringing more political divide to the school environment.”

Principal elections would naturally force prospective and current principals to become politicians, meaning they would have to spend their free time campaigning for votes, a time-consuming addition to an already demanding job.

There's also a question of ethics. How might a principal who is hoping to win over voters to keep their job change the decisions they make as a school leader? The effects could be disastrous, said Edward Fuller, an education policy professor at Penn State University, who focuses his research on school leadership.

“It would impair their ability to be an effective principal because now you're listening to some group of individuals in a community who have enough votes to vote you in or out,” Fuller said. “If you want to be principal, you have to do what they want you to do whether it's good for kids or not.”

A blow to principal morale

The principal profession experiences higher rates of attrition and turnover than comparable management roles in other professions. That's because of limited pay, the demands of the job, working conditions, and increasingly vocal parent opposition to school curriculum and policies, Fuller said.

Fuller, who has studied principal turnover in Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Texas, said 10 to 15 percent of principals leave the profession each year and the average length of stay for a principal is four years, with around half of principals leaving the profession before the fifth year.

The shift to an elected model would only exacerbate those challenges, both leading to higher turnover and discouraging new principals from entering the profession, Fuller said.

"It would be disastrous for the principalship," Fuller said. "We would see schools have a really difficult time getting anybody to do it."

Higher principal turnover also leads to other problems in schools, including higher teacher turnover and lower math and reading scores. And past studies on the impact of elected superintendents have shown that students in districts with superintendents appointed by a local school board have outperformed students in districts with elected superintendents, though how a district selects its superintendent isn't necessarily the determining factor.

The argument for parents' rights

Trump wants to give voters control over their school principals to expand upon parental rights in the governance of schools, an issue that has become the top education agenda item for Republican presidential candidates, especially as organizations like Moms for Liberty—which endorses conservative school board candidates in much of the country—have gained political influence.

But it remains to be seen whether principal elections would be an accurate representation of parent voice. Turnout is historically low for school board elections, and the pool of people invested in an individual principal's election would be even smaller.

And many parents, often for legal reasons, don't have complete information about what is happening within schools. For example, a principal may decide to suspend a student, angering a group of parents. But the federal law known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, would prohibit the principal from releasing specifics on such a situation, leaving voters to make up their own minds, Black said.

"It could be quite destructive," Black said. "All of a sudden the principal, instead of becoming a school leader because that's what the principal is ... the principal becomes a customer service representative."

There are ways to increase parent involvement and give parents more of a voice in schools that don't require such a massive logistical transformation and are more realistic, Curran said. For example, some large districts, including Chicago, have elected local school councils that perform annual evaluations of principals and decide whether to renew principal contracts.

"Exploring some of those avenues might be more fruitful ways to think about how we encourage parents to be involved and give them a formal process to be involved in the decisionmaking," Curran said.

While it will be nearly impossible for Trump to make elected principals a reality, the proposal itself and the rhetoric accompanying it have an impact on educators, Fuller said.

“What he’s communicating is principals aren’t doing their jobs, schools aren’t doing their jobs, and you have people on both sides of the aisle saying that,” Fuller said. “That’s one of the reasons we have a shortage of teachers and principals now, because of the constant attacks on educators.”

Round 3:

<https://www.yahoo.com/finance/news/former-nba-star-kenny-smith-114700138.html>

Former NBA star Kenny Smith says he learned this 1 crucial lesson from his billionaire college roommate Vishesh Raisinghani

Sun, November 10, 2024 at 6:47 AM EST · 3 min read

In his memoir, “Talk of Champions,” former NBA point guard Kenny Smith shares that he was roommates with future billionaire David Kohler during college. That’s Kohler, as in the person who would go on to be the fourth generation of his family to own and operate the giant plumbing manufacturer of the same name.

According to Forbes, the Kohler family is worth an estimated \$16.2 billion. Smith was surprised to see his roommate sleeping on his couch instead of working for the family business.

“Why didn’t your father just make you an executive?” Smith, now an analyst on “Inside the NBA,” recalled asking Kohler at the time, in a 2023 conversation with radio personality Big Boy.

“He said, ‘No, I’ve got to be a plumber first,’” Smith continued. “He’s going to make me be a plumber and then I go through the steps so if I get an invoice as an executive for \$7 for screws I know that they’re really \$3. So I know everything about the company.”

Smith says the conversation changed his perspective on business, sports and life. Here’s why.

Practical experience

The Kohler family isn’t the only one that insists that the next generation acquire practical work experience.

According to researchers at the University of Louisville, St. John Fisher University and Kennesaw State University, many business families mandate external experience for younger generations “believing it to be the best way for younger family members to gain legitimacy, to learn what work ‘is really like’ and to make mistakes at no cost to the family business,” as written in Family Business.

To be clear, you don’t have to be a billionaire business family to implement these lessons.

“Now, when my kids ask me for things, I’m, like, ‘No, you’ve got to be a plumber first. I’m going to give it to you, but you’ve got to go through the steps, and you’ve got it, it’s waiting for you. It’s waiting for you at the end,’” Smith told Big Boy.

Seeking it out

A quick brush of practical experience can help you as an investor and as a parent.

Making use of a product or service before purchasing or investing can help give you insight and could be a part of doing your due diligence. If you’re trying to invest in an industry where practical experience is

inaccessible, try reaching out to experts and veterans of the industry to get their perspective before putting in any money.

In other words, be a plumber first or speak to a plumber first before investing in a plumbing company.

Similarly, helping your children develop their personal finance skills can go a long way toward giving them the best shot at success. Teaching them early about things like budgeting and opening a bank account for them can help them gain the skills to control their financial destiny independently.

This article provides information only and should not be construed as advice. It is provided without warranty of any kind.

Round 4:

“Impromptu” round. You know at our tournament I have to have at least one round be a little crazy. So, you can’t prepare for this round. You have no idea what the artifact will be. When you enter the room, there will be a paper bag with something inside it. You will open it together. And then get your questions. You will have access to the Internet this round. Let the trying-to-get-into-my-mind-and-guess-what-I-will-or-will-not-choose begin! As I write this, I have no idea what it will be. So many ideas!