

THE BRIEF

Celebrating 10 Years of Impact

FROM THE DESK OF GABE CONGER

Dear Friends,

Vladimir Lenin famously said he needed just one generation of youth to change the world. But in America, we've given his intellectual heirs two generations of access to our schools. The difference between the riots of the "Summer of Love" in 2020 America and those in Bolshevik Moscow isn't the animating spirit—the spirit is exactly the same.

The difference is how resilient America has been against it. Recall that early twentieth century America also saw communist groups marching in the streets and an American president who was elected after declaring (while president of Princeton University) that his goal was that the next generation should be as unlike their parents as possible. This attempt at revolution was rebuffed, even as it moved into the universities, where its champions could, at least for a time, be protected from the dire consequences of their own ideas.

Even today, amidst a near-complete takeover of America's K-12 schools by that revolutionary spirit, we're seeing historic parental choice policy wins in states across the country, entrepreneurs meeting the moment's demands for alternatives, intellectual defense of principle and tradition in education, and grassroots leaders bringing a distinctly American "Don't tread on me" spirit of their own to school board meetings and state capitols.

It's no contradiction to mourn what we've lost in America and celebrate the boldness and creativity of the parental freedom in education movement. As you'll see in pages that follow, our friends at The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation have been backing this movement all along. And with the Impact Fund, you and I get to share in this battle with fellow happy warriors who have no intention of ceding another inch to the revolutionaries. The wins are welcome, but there is much more to do. Thank you for being part of the counterrevolution!

Onward.



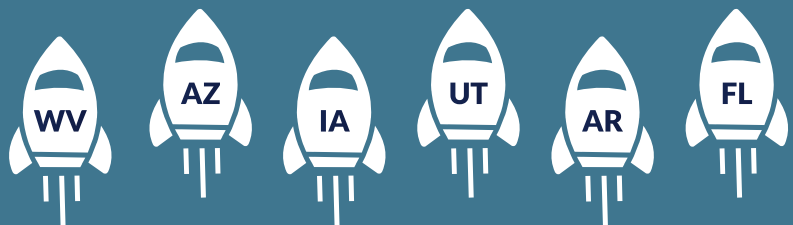
Gabe Conger
President, Bradley Impact Fund



DID YOU KNOW?

Achieving Escape Velocity

Six states have already adopted universal ESAs



March
2021

July
2022

January
2023

January
2023

March
2023

March
2023

*It is possible that another six states could join them
by the end of 2023: ID, KY, OK, TX, WY, OH*



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PARENTAL CHOICE IN EDUCATION:

Sudden wins,
decades in the making



Some day we may end up calling it the Cov-Ed effect. Or something catchier. After a series of high-profile, state-level wins, parental choice in education seems to be both gaining momentum and dominating many conversations on the right. So, what was it that turned the tide in favor of parental freedom in education?

When classrooms were locked and classes went online during the pandemic, parents could see for themselves the toxic drivel being fed to their children. For many, the “eye-opening” moment came when teachers’ unions used their unchecked power to keep classrooms locked long after scientists said it was both safe to reopen and urgent that we do so.

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The recent flurry of wins for parents and students wasn’t easy to foresee from a flooded basement office across from the United States Supreme Court in 1990. With support from The Lynde and Harry

Bradley Foundation in 1989, Clint Bolick had set his sights squarely on his target, even if it meant taking off his shoes, wading through the flooded basement, and hoping the vital documents he’d left on the floor late the night before were salvageable.

They weren’t. But as one of only a small handful of parental choice champions, Bolick knew sacrifices had to be made. The Court hadn’t decided in favor of free enterprise for a half century,



and there wasn't yet a single educational freedom law to defend. There was no "movement." At least not yet.

Movements require more than funding—they require voluntary effort, often by unlikely allies. Seeing the need for collaboration early on, The Bradley Foundation convened conversations between Bolick and Wisconsin's Republican governor, Tommy Thompson, and a Democratic state assemblywoman, Polly Williams. The duo had just led efforts to pass a law allowing one percent of the students trapped in Milwaukee's dismal urban public schools to use public funding to attend non-sectarian private schools. The battle had been joined.

Williams was nonplussed when mutual friend Bob Woodson introduced her to a young attorney from DC who was offering to defend her law in court. She didn't like Bolick and didn't see the need. They'd won, after all. In reality, victory wouldn't be secured until Bolick successfully defended the law in a steamy Wisconsin courtroom packed with dozens of parents who were bussed in for the occasion.

This was a really big deal. Educational freedom was, in the words of then Bradley Foundation president Michael Joyce, a "silver bullet" issue, with the regulatory state playing the role of werewolf. Battles over issues that point at the heart of the regulatory state are especially important to fight, whether on offense or defense.

Twelve years later, the opportunity arose for a high-stakes defense of parental rights in education at the US Supreme Court. Of the sixteen cases that Bolick and his colleagues had fought in the interim, the first to reach the nation's highest court was a voucher case from Ohio. Bolick and his team knew that if the case was about religion (the Ohio vouchers could be used at religious schools), they

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would lose. If it was about education, they would win. The keys to victory were held by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, then the Court's swing vote, and it could truly go either way.

The arguments went well, and Bolick and his team were encouraged when Justice O'Connor showed her famous "tell," interrupting their opponents with "Now, wait just a second. . ." But over the next few months, before the decision was released, rumors were circulating that O'Connor had second thoughts. Concerns were only heightened when every decision of the term was announced except for theirs. Historically, this meant that a dissent was being read from the bench. Bolick and his colleagues ran to the court and heard the news: parental choice had won.

There was a movement. It was built not by one person, but by thousands who showed up at conferences and in voting booths, courtrooms, and classrooms. There are no permanent victories, only permanent battles to be fought, and where there are, you can bet that The Bradley Impact Fund donor community remains committed to supporting the fight.

THE STATE OF EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM

in the United States





After three decades of relatively few legislative wins, parental freedom in education is starting to achieve “escape velocity,” said Jay Greene, senior research fellow in the Center for Education Policy at the Heritage Foundation, at a recent panel discussion.

With six recent victories for universal education savings accounts (ESAs), the movement is seeing incredible national momentum, even across political boundaries. West Virginia, Iowa, Arizona, Utah, and Florida could, Dr. Greene expects, be joined by even more states by the end of 2023. What has changed?

After countless “Charlie Brown and the football” moments, parent-empowering legislation is beginning to stick, both due to what parents saw during the lockdowns and a fruitful change in strategy. Previous arguments used to center on two facts: choice and competition yield better student outcomes, and minorities are hardest hit by the present government monopoly on education. These were true, but largely ineffective at advancing policy. What is working now, Greene says, has been a shift toward focusing on middle-class concerns, primarily the failure of schools as revealed during the pandemic.

Parents want their values affirmed, or at least not attacked, in their kids’ schools. Although there is not yet unanimity in the parental choice movement on this strategy, it is working in red states, where there is greater openness to choice and where the dominos are already falling. Growing these systems rapidly will give these states a competitive

advantage over blue states, which are already losing population to states with more robust economies and options for school.

Clemson University’s Brad Thompson changed his approach to parental choice advocacy twenty years ago, when he was inspired by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison’s moral arguments against slavery. Practical arguments may hold, but they don’t move people en masse. The task, according to Dr. Thompson, is to incite a moral and intellectual revolution against what government schools have done to young Americans for generations.

The single most important social movement in the United States, Thompson believes, has been the homeschool movement, which—after decades of slow growth—has exploded in the wake of the pandemic. Noting that many states have tried to regulate homeschooling into oblivion, their task is becoming more difficult now that parents have seen with their own eyes the horror of public school class content. And with new organizations leading the school board rebellion, he sees hope for a continued expansion of parental choice in education.

Dr. Thompson also discussed the recent stratospheric growth of the Lyceum Scholars Program he founded at Clemson University. Eight years after its founding, the program received 735 applications from students in all fifty states for ten scholarships for the 2022-2023 academic year. With an emphasis on moral character as vital to a free society, scholarship recipients now include Rhodes and Fulbright scholars, with several alumni continuing to PhD programs.

Parental Choice Wins!

NOW WHAT?

As more states embrace robust parental choice in education, we face a hopeful new world of freedom and opportunity wherein parents can choose to educate their children as they best know how. Yet, as The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation's Jason Crye pointed out at a recent panel discussion, hundreds of thousands of families interested in exercising their rights to choose the right school for their children don't know where to start.

With entrepreneurs meeting the new market demand for a dizzying array of educational options, helping parents make the most of the opportunity is now a crucial front in the parental choice battle.

This will take different forms in different states. California, for example, isn't known as a haven for parental choice in education—indeed its education sector is dominated by powerful teachers' unions and their allies in state government. The results are telling: despite massive budgets, government schools in the state with the sixth largest economy in the world consistently rank at the bottom of national rankings in student performance. Private schools remain out of reach financially for most, but charter schools have launched in counties where parents have an upper hand in local politics.



parentunion

Parent Union founder Cecilia Iglesias

has emerged from school board battles as a community leader who fought for families with traditional values. Now a leading proponent of charter schools in California, especially with Latino families, Cecilia and her team focus heavily on helping families understand that tuition-free charter schools are a great option in districts where the standard schools are failing academically while undermining parents' values. Her team knocks on doors, reaches out on social media, and hosts community events that have become so popular that even some of the better district schools have asked to attend.



Love Your School founder Jenny Clark

is introducing parents to the possibilities now open to more than a million Arizona students in the wake of last years' universal ESA victory. Her team of consultants helps parents navigate the many options available in a state where education entrepreneurs have been launching a wide variety of options for years. One of these—Phoenix Woodworking School (PWS)—illustrates the challenges and opportunities facing both entrepreneurs and parents.

Ken Zevenbergen launched PWS two years ago to provide a stand-alone “shop class” for families whose children didn't have the option in school. His school qualifies for ESA funding, but he didn't know how to get the word out, so his first few classes were small. Working with Love Your School, which provides no-fee consultation to parents, he now has forty-one students enrolled and 140 more on a waiting list. He is now looking for tradesmen to join him and offer more options to parents. With early successes like these, Clark is working to bring LYS's model to other states.

At the Foundation for American Innovation (formerly Lincoln Network), **Brandon Detweiler** works with other tech founders to connect Silicon Valley with Capitol Hill. FAI has been growing because, as the 2021 Zuckerberg hearings showed, policymakers don't get tech, and many in the culture of technological innovation don't feel their concerns are understood by lawmakers. But Detweiler doesn't just advocate, he brings his entrepreneurial skills to the table, developing Schoolahoop, an app that consolidates parental choice options for parents. By helping parents search for scholarships and connecting them with programs and schools, Schoolahoop has augmented its strategy from a national focus to a state-level focus. Primarily, this has meant partnering with parent advocates like Love Your School.

With data showing that parents are five times more likely to embrace parental choice in education if they have a friend who does, Detweiler believes we're in the early stages of an explosion in adoption of parental choice. But he, Iglesias, and Clark agree that while good technology is essential to helping parents make the most of school options opening up, trust and personal relationships are what really make the difference in families choosing the education options that are right for their children.

THE VALUE OF FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

— JOHN ADAMS

Although John Adams’ famous line is more likely to inspire derision than praise today, his sense was quite common among the Founders. Adams and his exceptional peers saw a necessary tension, rather than a contradiction, between faith and freedom, insisting in the founding documents and countless letters that both be upheld.

Yet, as noted by Arizona Supreme Court Justice Clint Bolick and others, defenses of parental choice in education have tended to avoid the religious question. As a matter of prudence, this made sense, but experts now caution that parental choice policy must preserve the freedom and autonomy of religious schools as they welcome students using ESAs or vouchers. Doing so both honors the Founders’ intentions and preserves the distinctiveness and missions of many of our nation’s most excellent K-12 schools.

As Superintendent of Milwaukee’s St. Marcus Lutheran School, Henry Tyson doesn’t hedge when it comes to the school’s mission: “We disciple children for Christ

and train them for excellence in their roles in the home, church, community, and nation.” Which is to say that questions of Christian identity are not an aside to their mission. “Our students know that they get their identity from Christ and therefore they have a purpose. The gospel is transformative, and it’s the foundation of how we equip students to be successful.”

Not that every student is immediately successful. When St. Marcus opened their third campus last year, the new school saw higher absentee and tardiness rates than its other campuses. This wasn’t completely unexpected, as

Tyson explains, since education embraces the whole family, and when introducing high standards for the first time, often the whole family needs to be brought along with the habits that support higher achievement.

Stephanie Saroki de Garcia, co-founder and managing director of Seton Education Partners, agrees. As leader of fourteen Catholic schools in nine cities nationwide and three virtue-based charter schools in the South Bronx, she wanted to ensure that the families they

Experts now caution that parental choice policy must preserve the freedom and autonomy of religious schools.



served—most of whom live below the poverty line—are brought into the educational process. Seton Education Partners’ mission is to expand opportunities for parents in underserved communities to choose an academically excellent, character-rich, and—for those who seek it—vibrantly Catholic education for their children.

The focus on faith, families, and character is key. “Parents love their kids more than we can. And our parents know that their children need to understand there is something greater than themselves—that they are uniquely made and they have a purpose.” So, when it comes to educating for both academics and virtue, the student’s family and their faith must be part of the conversation. For Catholic families, options for a faith-based, in-school education have become extremely limited since the 1960s, when the Church subsidized education by providing clergy and religious sisters and brothers as administrators and teachers.

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With the number of Catholic schools a fraction of what it used to be, educators like de Garcia have had to be innovative. One

such example is Seton Partners’ Brilla (Spanish for “Shine”) virtue-based charter schools that offer religious instruction only after academic instruction concludes each afternoon. With the support of New York’s archbishop, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the experiment is working well so far—students are thriving academically, and the schools have seen 214 baptisms in four years.

In addition to agreeing on the need for religious schools to stay true to their missions, both Tyson and de Garcia agree that vouchers and ESAs are a huge step forward, but still not enough. In Milwaukee and across the country, private schools receive a fraction of what government schools receive per student, so private investment is still necessary for schools to be viable for years to come. Tyson mentioned, for example, how many requests they’re receiving to open a high school, but without philanthropic partners, this isn’t yet possible.

Still, both de Garcia and Tyson are encouraged by the wave of parental choice legislation sweeping the nation and will continue to advocate for the protection of religious freedom and identity in any and every case.

SPECIAL FOCUS

Family Legacy Planning

By Chris Ciancimino
and Lori M. Coonen



Families who remain strong and unified across generations often do so by keeping traditions, getting together regularly, and modeling the family's values. Going to church, getting an education (often at the family's alma mater), perhaps even working in the family business or trade, or supporting certain charities—these are the things that families do that communicate the family's values. Yet, the “why” is often not discussed.

It's becoming increasingly important to make explicit the family's “why”—its deeper purpose. Many families are now comfortable putting significant time and care into figuring out the best way to pass along wealth, but many parents are hesitant when it comes to discussing values. Will future generations understand the principles that built not just the family business, but the family itself?

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A legacy is more than financial wealth. It's really the sum of what is most valuable that is passed down from one generation to the next. And the time to start sharing your legacy, in this broader sense of the term, is now. Some families host annual conversations that are less about the family business and more about the business of being a family—the stories, beliefs, traditions, milestones, lessons learned, and decisions that make the family unique. Such meetings can become milestones of their own—even providing a valuable example to follow for the younger generation.

Some families have built this habit into the time they get together, while others have hired specialists who can provide structure for family discussions about important topics, including everything from faith to values to philanthropy. Granted, it's not a traditional way to approach such a conversation, but it can be a tremendous help to a family that wants to relearn the art of conversation and discuss the things that matter.

Restoring trust and open communication with the family's next generation is key if the full legacy is going to not just be offered, but received, especially when it comes to philanthropy. Much has been written about how generational differences influence attitudes toward wealth and giving. For example, older generations may be more inclined to donate to churches, local social services, children's charities, and animal rescues; while younger donors may tend to gravitate toward health charities, human rights organizations, and international development. Now is the time to start conversations about the family's philanthropic history and reasons for giving, while opening up room for the next generation to discuss what they find most meaningful. Common threads between family members' interests can often be identified, creating an overarching mission that allows the next generation to both honor the values

and ideas that made such generosity possible in the first place, and make the legacy their own.

Including the next generation in philanthropy also provides an opportunity for mentorship. There's no better way to share the how and why of parents' giving philosophy than walking through the groups supported and the impact they've had. A next step can be opening a donor-advised fund for children and grandchildren, providing them with opportunities to learn about investments, how to work with professionals, and how to research organizations that are best solving the most important problems. Overseeing a family donor-advised fund is a great way to "practice" being a philanthropist and prepare for the eventual transfer of the family legacy.

The Bradley Impact Fund protects donor intent by ensuring that our account holders' charitable giving supports only those ideas and organizations that align with their principles during their lifetime and beyond. Including family members and future generations in one's giving decisions, or by naming them as successor advisors on a donor-advised fund account, can bond a family through their philanthropy and help to protect the family legacy and values.

Strengthening and uniting the family in common cause is its own reward. It may not be a guarantee of continued prosperity, but it can help donors continue their philanthropic vision into the future.

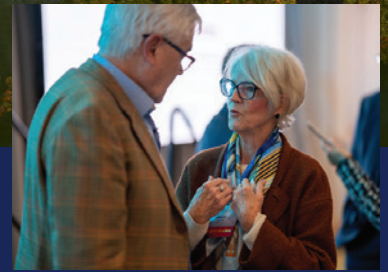
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2023 BRADLEY IMPACT CONFERENCE



The American Club Resort Hotel Kohler, Wisconsin

Photo courtesy of Kohler Co.



PLEASE SAVE THE DATE
MONDAY & TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 23-24, 2023

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