

[The Bill Walton Show](#)

Charter Schools and Parent Choice

Speaker 1:

Common Ground with Bill Walton, October 10. Look in the camera, Bill, and when you're ready.

Bill Walton:

Today we're here to talk about education. Public education, charter schools, education opportunity, and specifically we want to talk about a recent movie that talks about all of this, a movie called Backpack Full of Cash. With me to talk about it are Jeanne Allen. Jeanne is the founder of the Center for Education Reform, 1993, and she is an early advocate for school choice or education opportunity, and played an important role in the creation and development of the charter school initiative. Jeanne?

Jeanne Allen:

Hi, Bill.

Bill Walton:

Also with me, Johnny Taylor, who is head of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. It has about 300,000 students that you help get through college, and Johnny also has a background in the movies, or in the entertainment business, which pertains to today's show. He was with Barry Diller and with Blockbuster and also Paramount Pictures. Johnny, welcome.

Johnny Taylor:

Thank you.

Bill Walton:

Jeanne, Backpack Full of Cash.

Jeanne Allen:

Yes, what is it?

Bill Walton:

It's a movie, a documentary. It's narrated by Matt Damon. It's coming out pretty much as we speak in October or November of 2017, and it has a very strong point of view that public schools are just great, there's no problem with them, and the only thing we need to do is just pay some more money in and things will be fine. And that we ought to be very happy with the public school monopoly, and Randi Weingarten with the AFT, the American Federation of Teachers, is the hero and you are one of the villains.

Jeanne Allen:

Amazing. Poor Matt Damon. Little did he know I really liked him once upon a time.

Bill Walton:

We all have, we all do. So, tell me about the movie.

Jeanne Allen:

So, it's based, when they first started filming and doing interviewing, which was actually five years ago, they just wanted a background. They were going to do some kind of review of education reform, where it stands. They knew that they were going to do all different sides, which happens all the time. They really grabbed a hold of this phrase and this idea that I often talk about to help people understand why giving parents an opportunity to make a decision about where their kids go to school is important. And what I say is imagine that everybody, all the kids are, you know, strapped to their back with a backpack full of cash equivalent to the same amount for every child. Right? Because that doesn't happen now. And imagine the privilege of you buying for my child. So you have to come to me and I hand you that backpack, as opposed to opening the door and your kids just have to go to the school they're assigned to.

Jeanne Allen:

Well, they took that and twisted it to be about cash. Not about the backpack and the child ...

Bill Walton:

And choice.

Jeanne Allen:

And choice and having a better opportunity. Matt Damon said he did the film because he believes in public education and believes it's under attack, and he wants every child to have the kind of prestigious public school he went to in Cambridge, which was a single school basically run by Harvard educators, and then he chose to send his kids to a private school.

Bill Walton:

Johnny, the thing I think we need to establish, are public schools in great shape? Is there not a problem and we shouldn't be concerned? One of the publicity pieces for the movie says, in general, public schools in the United States are not failing, and that the test scores are the highest ever for US students, including Black and Latinos, dropout rates are the lowest ever, and graduation rates are rising. So what's the problem?

Johnny Taylor:

Well, they're disingenuous. The reality is they pick and chose, or pick and choose the numbers that work for them. The reality is, I remember when I really got my second wind on this issue, January 1, 2016, Washington Post. There was a piece written and it talked about what was happening in Washington D.C. public schools, and it really spoke to the issue that only 17% of Black and Brown children, Blacks and Latino children in Washington D.C. public schools were doing Math on grade level and English on grade level. This was in the 8th grade. So, we're not talking Calculus and, you know, European Literature, AP European Literature. We're talking eighth grade. Only 17% of Black and Brown children were on level, at grade level.

Johnny Taylor:

To suggest to me, therefore, that there is not a problem in our public school systems is not just disingenuous, it's a lie.

Jeanne Allen:

So true. And Johnny talks about and many people do, you can game the numbers, right? So, here's the stat that I like to use. As opposed to saying your graduation rate, which was based on schools and districts, and those numbers flow up to a state and then are reported out nationally, how do the kids do across school lines? How do they do across state lines? How do they do nationally? WE have a nation's assessment of educational progress. That's the one that gives us all those numbers, how proficient we are in reading, and math, and civics, and history. Just remember this number, 65%. 65% are not proficient in anything. Anything. Math, reading, civics, history, geography, nothing, science. So, 35% of students are proficient.

Jeanne Allen:

Now, then, that's average. You break that down and the kids of color and disadvantage, and you're at 15-17-20%.

Johnny Taylor:

Yeah, it gets pretty ugly, pretty quickly.

Jeanne Allen:

That's what they should be talking about. That's what Matt Damon should be talking about.

Johnny Taylor:

And you pointed out, which I love, the irony of, frankly the hypocrisy of they're good enough for your children. Matt Damon, you send your kids to a private school. Frankly, I made this point when, and I thought it was an opportunity for President, then, Obama and Michelle Obama when they brought their children to D.C. Why sign them up for Sidwell Friends if public schools are so good? See, they're good enough for your children, but they're not good enough for mine, is really the message. And that is annoying.

Bill Walton:

Well, he went to school, so called public schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and that's not exactly a typical inner-city school district, and he makes the claim now that in Los Angeles, you can't find the kind of progressive schools that we had when we were going to school in the 50's and 60's and 70's. He would put them in public schools, but the public schools have, and I think he's sort of defeating his own argument, aren't providing what he got.

Jeanne Allen:

You know what's funny? And he's maybe a few miles from the first charter school in Massachusetts, which two teachers founded called City on a Hill, which is incredibly progressive. In fact, they didn't want walls. They wanted the school to live outside the classroom for the students. And subsequent charters, not in Massachusetts ...

Bill Walton:

That actually sounds pretty interesting.

Jeanne Allen:

It was. Right? Progressive is the middle name for things like charter schools, which were part of this larger opportunity movement. People don't go and leave their jobs, their livelihood, and their comfort to start schools that look like traditional, back-to-basic schools. They do, because they believe kids should be much more connected with nature. They should be learning differently. They should be in smaller groups. They should have exposure to the arts. They should have exposure to all sorts of other things. So progressive, if he wants progressive, and look, let's cut Matt a break. I actually think we can educate him. I think he's been duped, and I think that, unfortunately, he's heard one side, and I'm going to hold out hope that there's an opportunity here to educate him.

Bill Walton:

As I like to say, I'm great friends with a lot of misguided progressives and I think he would be in that category. Yeah, but the labels that are used, though, create opposition just almost instantly. And you know, I think you ought to establish ... I've known you for decades. We're for kids. We want this to work for everybody. This is not about taking public education away from children. This is about something else. It's about how we organize schools to deliver the best results for children and what the value of competition is.

Johnny Taylor:

And that's the issue. It's what's in the best interest of the student? Frankly, I don't care about the school, I don't care about the faculty and instructors and everything else. But you're right, they've found a way, words matter, and to be fair the word, the phrase "school choice" suggests literally that the school is choosing. And that is problematic, frankly. On our side that was a problem. I think we should have always spoken to the issue of parental choice, because the parents should be able to make the best choices that are in the best interests of their children. And who knows those children better than the parents? Little things like that, little tweaks like that. And we've actually figured out, when speaking to, frankly, the community, God forbid, they don't even like parental choice. They like educational opportunities, because who can argue with opportunity and all sorts of opportunities. From home schooling to, you know, virtual schools, which are not home schools, but virtual, to public charter schools, we just want choices and the ones that work best for our children.

Bill Walton:

We're talking about a movie, and I was thinking about this before we went on, if Matt were working in a Hollywood that was a monopoly, the way education and public schools are a monopoly, let me think about it. There'd be one studio, we'd have a union contract and the most outstanding actor on the lot couldn't get paid much better than the worst actor on the lot. So I don't know how Matt would really fair under that system. But then the other side, we might not have had sound. Because if you remember in the 20's, the studios didn't want to put sound in. It was only because some outlier, I can't remember which studio, maybe it was Warner, who was struggling and needing to get ahead.

Johnny Taylor:

Something different.

Bill Walton:

Something different and they brought sound in and then everybody had to have sound. Same thing happened with color. They didn't want to use color because that was also more expensive and they didn't want to change anything. And it just goes on and on. You can probably add to the list. Barry Diller had to deal with a lot of competition.

Johnny Taylor:

When I think back on the days, we named the company then Interactive, it was new media versus traditional media.

Bill Walton:

Yeah.

Johnny Taylor:

And it wasn't necessarily that traditional media or old media was broken. You can make the argument that everything was fine. But it's the only, you know education is the one industry that only, that like refuses to innovate. And I think that's my rug. Let's pretend that all of our public schools were working wonderfully. Why can't we want to be better? There is an iPhone 8 because we think we can be better, marginally, than the iPhone 7. And that's the notion, is the idea that any sector that does not innovate is actually going backwards by definition.

Jeanne Allen:

You know, there's conversation I've had many times over the years. I'll never forget this particular one. I was actually in L.A. with a gentleman named Hank Levin, who started the National Center for the Study of Privatization, which is the theme of this movie, that somehow giving parents options creates privatized organizations. Never mind that privatization is complete disconnect from any kind of government, which is not what we're talking about. And he said to me, he's an honest opponent. He said, look, here's what I'm really worried about. I'm worried that people are going to Balkanize themselves into little groups, into little fiefdoms that people who look alike, sound alike, have the same kind of money, and that's how we're going to destroy society.

Jeanne Allen:

And I said, Hank, I appreciate the concern. But if that were the case and if you thought government could solve that, why aren't putting everybody in the right housing patterns? Why aren't we telling them where their jobs are? In other words, that doesn't cut it.

Jeanne Allen:

But I have to tell you, this was close to twenty years ago he said this. This is what happens as this movie unfolds and you see in the trailer the Philadelphia school closing, and parents screaming about their school. What the proponents of the status quo want you to believe is that it's better for society and for children to just keep those kids there than let them go somewhere else, because we can't make sure they have, what? That someone cares about them? That there's a rule or a regulation expecting them to be in a seat?

Jeanne Allen:

If you take it to the next level, it's a very hollow theory. But ideologically they believe that they need to control where students go to school or they will not be able to manage and manipulate how those kids learn.

Johnny Taylor:

Well, that's the thing that bothers me the most as a member of the African American community, is the fact of the matter is we see how that plays out. It's by your zip code, you know. And it would be a different thing if all of these schools were equally preparing our children, but they're not. And so, therein lies the problem, is you divide it and then we end up with separate, but unequal. Fancy, I'm from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, I wonder where that comes from.

Johnny Taylor:

But, it is inherently unequal. And even if you could pretend that somehow we could ensure that the same level of proficiency was coming from Capitol Hill as it is from Anacostia in Washington, D.C., even if you pretended that we could somehow create that, it is inherently unequal. The Courts have said it, people have acknowledged this forever. So, again, very disingenuous. It's not real.

Jeanne Allen:

It's true. And the other piece of this, too, is that the really do believe that parents can't make choices.

Johnny Taylor:

That's uber-offensive to me, by the way.

Jeanne Allen:

Exactly. And we've been with tons, you and I both and many of us, thousands of us, with poor, low-income parents, that actually know how to make choices better than most of my affluent friends. They actually know what to ask because they are so concerned, and they see the distinctions. Right? When you don't have something, you work, really, all the time to understand what it takes to get that stuff.

Jeanne Allen:

And so these parents who left their traditional public school because an option opened, a charter in the case of many of these discussions today, do so because their kids aren't learning, they're not safe, they're not motivated, and they want them to have a better future.

Bill Walton:

Well, what they would say, well, go to these other schools, but they're run like corporations, and they're going to be focused on standardized tests and accountability, and they're going to treat children like widgets, and children aren't widgets. What do you ... I know my answer to that, but what do you think when you hear that?

Johnny Taylor:

Well, first of all, that's bogus. I mean the reality is, thank God, that my mother was that parent that you talked about. Neither of my parents attended college, etc. They had three children in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and they were trying to ensure that we had a better life than they did, with more options. Forget educational options. They wanted more career and life options for us, better options. And so, my

mother decided to send me to what was not called a charter at the time, but what was called a Magnet School. It took me on a bus 45 minutes away from my town, away from my public school in my neighborhood, but I was back home this last Christmas and I looked around and I saw where all of the kids who were from my neighborhood, many of them had parents and college degrees? I see where they are and then I see what difference in my life my mother's decision, because the school, Broward County Schools gave her the choice to send her children to a different school. I see how it worked out. So, again, it's all about giving parents who know their children best, the options, the educational options.

Jeanne Allen:

And there's nothing corporate about the school that you end up choosing. This is interesting. They want to use this word because they think that the people that are going to be on their side, who are going to help the fund their movie and unite against policies that give kids opportunity are going to do so, because we tell them we're corporate-izing.

Johnny Taylor:

Right and privatization.

Jeanne Allen:

Think about what that means. We're not creating a new company. What you're doing is putting people in place who actually know how to run a school or they're not going to have a job. You're creating efficiencies. You're actually, in all of the school reform efforts that we advocate for, you're actually bypassing the school district, which is famous for fat bureaucracy, lots of nefarious dealings where you can't see the money, there's no transparency how it's spent. We're saying the money should go to the school level and let that school decide as a collaborative how to use it very transparently, so you can see the school. If corporate is seeing the school and deciding whether to go there or not, what's wrong with that?

Johnny Taylor:

And that's what I would say. I don't care using these words that get everyone upset, privatization, corporate, if it works.

Bill Walton:

Well, the words are used on purpose.

Johnny Taylor:

Of course they are. But if it works, if the kid at the other end, if the outcome is a kid who's going to be able to go to college or frankly, community college or trade school, whatever, wherever this kid ends up. If they're going to have a better life because some corporation intervened in their education, then God bless it. So, I just don't get upset ...

Jeanne Allen:

Like McGraw-Hill has intervened for years. Like all of Pearson, like all the companies. These are textbook publishers, computer companies ...

Bill Walton:

That are selling into the ...

Jeanne Allen:

They're selling into schools. Actually, not until there were choices and opportunities for kids were those publishers were fully held accountable. They have had to completely reinvent themselves on a regular, daily basis, because they're having a hard time keeping up with what they call a segmented market. They used to be able to knock on the door of a state or school superintendent, buy their wares, go home, put their feet up and five o'clock and watch the news. Not any more.

Bill Walton:

Well, the argument of this movie is that this all could be solved if only public schools had more money.

Johnny Taylor:

So, I don't know.

Bill Walton:

Don't shoot the messenger.

Johnny Taylor:

I got it.

Bill Walton:

But hasn't spending risen some dramatic percentage and performance has gone down, and most of the money has gone into administration and not teaching?

Johnny Taylor:

Well, ridiculous, and not to beat on the school system, but Washington, D.C. and Baltimore public schools, the closest two us. You know, number two and number three I think on the per-pupil-spending in the freakin' country, and look at what that's gotten us. So the argument that more money is going to solve these problems is just mind-numbing, because I know that they know better.

Jeanne Allen:

And all of the economists, you know, it's not just an opinion. Yes, you can look at the numbers, you can look at the national numbers. All around us, the economists, liberal, conservative, nothing, have said the same thing. On productivity measures, whether it's teachers, dollar-for-dollar, we do not get anywhere near what the money suggests is spent. It only happens when students are in or near an environment where there are opportunities for parents to make those choices.

Bill Walton:

That's interesting. Let's follow all the money, because the argument that's made here, for example, Washington D.C. where we have a lot of charter schools, is that you're taking money with the kids in their backpack to the charter school and it's hollowing out the funding for the remaining public schools. How do we answer that question?

Johnny Taylor:

Well, first of all, in D.C. in particular, you get, you take a lot less money in that backpack to a charter school than you do if you were going to traditional schools. So let's start with that, right? You spend \$20,000 to a public traditional public school. And by the way, words do matter, or you can take \$10,000 to a traditional, charter public school rather, to a charter public school because they're all public schools.

Bill Walton:

They're all still public schools.

Johnny Taylor:

Right, they're still public schools, so they intentionally don't refer to the public in public charter. But that, again, is part of the gamesmanship. But if you can take half of that money in that backpack to a school that will give you better outcomes, then all of us taxpayers should feel better and, indeed, America will benefit from it. So, I don't know that I'm bothered by it because we should want that. It's a more efficient way to do this.

Johnny Taylor:

By the way, my daughter is in Washington D.C. at an immersion, Mandarin-immersion charter public school. Washington Yu Ying in town. This is something I ... you want to talk about a backpack? I'd have to spend fifty, sixty grand to send her to the equivalent, by the way none exists, in this very town. So my little Black daughter is going to get an amazing education and opportunity to speak and write fluently in Mandarin because of the D.C. public charter schools.

Johnny Taylor:

To suggest to me that she should go to her neighborhood public school because we want traditional public schools the way it's always been, is really offensive.

Jeanne Allen:

And would you have stayed in D.C. if you couldn't make that choice?

Johnny Taylor:

Well, let's be clear. I would not be. I'd be down in McLean or somewhere else, Essex County. The reason I'm in D.C. and remained here, and bought here by the way, is because of that opportunity.

Jeanne Allen:

Well, the other thing that the producers of the film overlook is precisely what you just heard from Johnny. There are people like him all over the country, who have come back to cities that they, once they became more successful or were successful, White or Black, were never going to go near that city because of public schools.

Jeanne Allen:

In Philadelphia, think about the economic surge in cities like Washington D.C. and Philadelphia. Business didn't start. Business followed the improvement of schools and people who were in the city, working in the city, and wanted services and wanted to be accountable. So, there's another piece about that money following kids, though.

Jeanne Allen:

So, yes, when students leave, they argue, they take their money with them, then they leave this void and there's contracts that have already been negotiated and commitments that have already been made. It's like any, this is where it's correct, it's like any business where if you suddenly stop shopping there, how are they going to pay the lights? The lights are still on. You might go to Home Depot less, but the lights are still on. True. For a very brief amount of time.

Jeanne Allen:

Guess what happens? Money is sponge-able. School districts can move around money. They just choose not to. So, what happens, I like to say, when there's a baby boom and there's tons of kids and there's no more money, but somehow they fit them in? And then what happens when there's a baby, what's the drop equivalent? Somehow they figure this out. So districts know how to figure it out, but the fact of the matter, what they're really saying, which is revealing, is that there are so many contracts and fixed costs they can't possibly make changes. Well, that's not, it has nothing to do with kids. So change the way you operate, right? If you have so many fixed costs that you're worried about that you suddenly can't pay the 14 janitors you have because you have 30 kids left or you suddenly can't pay that teacher, why are they leaving? Fix it or go out of business. They've gone out of business in Detroit, they've gone out of business in Philadelphia, they've gone out of business in D.C. Schools that fail go out of business when people choose to leave, and that's the way it should be.

Johnny Taylor:

And, frankly, if they responded appropriately, I would look at this and say if all of my students are leaving to go over here, then I've got to change my game. I have to prepare a better product. And if you brought, if you created a better school, then students would come back or other students would come to you.

Bill Walton:

At the heart of the matter, then, this is all about competition.

Johnny Taylor:

That's pure.

Bill Walton:

And it's purely about delivering an outcome for a kid that they wouldn't otherwise get someplace else and you succeed, and that's pretty much the way business works.

Jeanne Allen:

Yes, but I would say on an economic level what is happening is driven in part by competition, right? Because when you have competition, things start changing and there's reactions and interactions. What they would like you to believe is we are only about competition. That we only care whether schools compete, and we don't worry at all about the people involved. That's not the case. We worry first about the people involved, and then we want to give the people involved the chance to make their own dreams come true, which is what this nation is about, which happens to be a capitalist system, where competition is the heart of it.

Jeanne Allen:

I just wanted to go through that extra exercise because too often the people who malign competition jump and act like we just think kids are widgets. Oh, my gosh. Sara, out there if you're listening.

Bill Walton:

Well, the other players in here are the teachers. And the film makes the point teachers have been beaten up for decades. This is all about beating up teachers. I don't hear us talking about beating up teachers. I think we're talking about systems, processes, curriculum, different ways of doing things and so forth, delivering learning outcomes. Teachers thrive in that kind of a system.

Jeanne Allen:

So, these three teachers came up to me after an event recently, just a couple months ago. PDK released their annual polls. And they waited around for me. They were from Baltimore city, and they started telling me that I should know that charters are taking money from the traditional public schools and that affects the teachers. Because now, what they want to do, is they want to get rid of these teachers, these are the public school teachers saying this to me. They want to get rid of them and hire people who are cheaper. So I said, you know what you need to do if you think that's the best action, let me explain to you. And I explained what I just said about money. I said, but let's say I'm wrong. What should you do? Create your own schools. Isn't that why you went into education? She's like, we're not happy where we are. That's interesting. Thank you for that perspective. They want power. They want just as much power as parents want power. Right? So, if you give teachers the opportunity to change the way they do things, they're not going to get rid of you. You just stop doing what you're doing. Go do something different.

Bill Walton:

We had an afterschool program that taught kids Spanish and French, and I wouldn't use the power word, I'd use the autonomy word in that they really liked being actors and bringing about something good. We had no trouble finding teachers for this afterschool program. Where did they come from? They have all been former public school teachers that didn't like working in the system, and they didn't have the autonomy to bring about the results they wanted to bring about.

Jeanne Allen:

Yeah.

Johnny Taylor:

It's interesting. In D.C. here, there was a recent discussion around the beginning of the school year that you have all of these teachers in the D.C. public schools, traditional public schools, they had all these openings. Three or four hundred teachers had quit and they just had a shortage of teachers. Meanwhile, the charter public schools in town, the public charter schools had applications out the door. There were people dying to get in and teach at these institutions. So, I mean, the market is responding. People want to work there, students want to attend there, parents want to engage in there, and frankly, business wants to give money to those institutions because ultimately, businesses want the students to be successful so that they can be consumers and employees. That's their ultimate, if you really get to it ...

Bill Walton:

And that's really true. I was involved with a group of bankers and we'd go to different meetings and you'd find a banker from Columbus, Ohio or one from Atlanta, Georgia or from Los Angeles. We'd talk about education, about the fact that if we could fix schools and we could make things better, that it would be better for everyone, better for society and they'd have better employees. I don't know. It doesn't sound like a nefarious scheme.

Jeanne Allen:

No.

Bill Walton:

So, what should we tell Matt Damon? I mean, we're going to ... we talked about him being misguided and we talked about it here. What would you say to him if he were sitting here?

Jeanne Allen:

I'd say, let's go to New York and visit the school that John Legend helped to found in Harlem. Or, let's go to Detroit and visit the one that Jalen Rose, the NBA player, helped to found, NBA. Or, Pit Bull School in Miami.

Bill Walton:

Pit Bull?

Johnny Taylor:

Let's go visit their schools together and let's ask them why they do what they do. Let's why you what's really happening, and let's show you the corollary that would be there before and help you understand that your mom might be a teacher, and that's wonderful and laudable, but the people you're dealing with who want you to say the things you're saying aren't putting teachers first.

Johnny Taylor:

And in that same vein, I would say come visit Howard University's charter school. Come visit the Developmental School at Florida A&M University and HBCU. Come visit several of our HBCUs where we operate. Go visit the 100 Black Men, where they operate charter schools.

Bill Walton:

HBCU is Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Johnny Taylor:

Historically Black Colleges and Universities created to educate African American children at a time when African American children weren't allowed to attend majority institutions or white institutions. Go visit those schools, all of whom, Howard University, the mecca of HBCU world has said it is important enough for us to create the next generation of STEM African Americans, that we are actually going to create our own charter school. They didn't rely, even though they're sitting here in Washington D.C., they didn't rely on D.C. public schools to do what they created their own. So, visit people who actually live in these institutions before you decide for us what is best for us.

Jeanne Allen:

And let's also be clear that the schools that we're talking about are constantly iterating and making improvements in how they teach, how they assess, whether they're on the right track or not. They are nimble. What we're looking for here is the ability to be flexible, and that's what great teachers want and great teachers get.

Jeanne Allen:

Now, they have been cow-towed into believing that unless a union supports them, they're going to be treated unfairly. But the rank and file don't really believe that anymore.

Johnny Taylor:

I think it's really important to also remember, we're not suggesting that all charter schools are great and I'll vouch for [inaudible 00:31:30] and everything is great. We're suggesting that if an institution works, it works, irrespective of the label that you put on it. I had several teachers wrote me last week after my article, public school teachers, and they said I just can't believe, and this one woman was anti, anti charter schools. And I said, ma'am, I'm not anti any institution, except the one that doesn't work. When it fails a student, then it is what I am anti.

Jeanne Allen:

Um hum.

Bill Walton:

Well, Jeanne and I have talked about this in the past. Charter schools still have the same input requirements a lot of the regular public schools do.

Johnny Taylor:

For sure.

Bill Walton:

And that, in many ways, is a limitation on how much innovating they can do and how much change they can bring about. So it's not that different. You're right, not all of them, it's not a panacea, but it's a step in the direction where people have to compete based on outcomes.

Jeanne Allen:

It can be. Yeah. You have, in many cases, and it's a challenge and a policy environment because there's constantly push-and-pull, in many cases you have the ability to be as dramatically different as you want. You can immerse kids in Mandarin Chinese, you can do virtual reality, like the group whose board I sat on, Washington Leadership. You can send drones out to pick up, you know, signals from NASA, like the charter school in Houston does. I mean there's tons of great things. Yes, can other traditional schools do it? A lot of traditional public schools, a lot of private schools are doing similar things. Or, they are learning from each other.

Johnny Taylor:

And we encourage them to. This is not shut down the traditional public schools.

Jeanne Allen:

But if it's not for me, if it's not for you, then why would you require me to have my money spent somewhere else?

Bill Walton:

I think you gave a very good answer to the question, what would you say to Matt Damon?

Johnny Taylor:

Yes.

Bill Walton:

And, Matt, if you're watching and we're sure you are, we'd like to invite you on to the show so we could all talk about this together, and together learn how we could make the world better, which is what you want and it's what we want. So, thanks. Jeanne, Johnny? Johnny can be found at tmcf.org.

Johnny Taylor:

Yes.

Bill Walton:

And Jeanne can be found at edreform.org.

Jeanne Allen:

Dot com.

Bill Walton:

Sorry, dot com, and links are on our website. Look forward to more conversations. Thanks guys.

Jeanne Allen:

Thank you, Bill.

Johnny Taylor:

Thank you.

Bill Walton:

Was that fun?

Johnny Taylor:

Yeah.

Jeanne Allen:

Yeah, and then we can socialize it and get it out there.