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TEACHERS UNIONS HARMING EDUCATION

1 message

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OPINION

The Virus May Strike Teachers Unions

y David R. Henderson

f you have school-age children, you may be wondering if they'll ever get an education. On Tuesday the American Federation of Teachers, the cond-largest education union, reatened "safety strikes" if repening plans aren't to its liking. Ome state and local governments e insisting that public K-12 schoolig this fall be conducted online tree to five days a week and imposg stringent conditions on those udents who actually make it to the assroom.

Vhat happens when they efuse to do their jobs and turns out home-schoolers re better at it anyway?

Yet there are three reasons to be ptimistic about the future of educaon. First, many parents will be more repared to home-school their kids tan they were in the spring. They or their hired teachers will do a better b of educating children, in many ases, than the public schools.

Second, once the pandemic ends, any parents, perhaps millions, will ave a new appreciation of how meiocre a job the public schools were oing. They will continue homechooling, switch to a private school, r push hard to end restrictions on he growth of charter schools. Third, s schools sit empty and homebound eachers draw their regular salaries or less effective work, there will be nore opposition to more funding for ublic schools, which, in turn, will nake local school boards amenable o lower-cost options such as charer schools.

Consider California. On July 17, iov. Gavin Newsom decreed that neiher government-run nor private chools may open in counties that



A former teacher protests in Orlando, Fia., July 7.

have rising Covid-19 caseloads and hospitalizations. Like most governors who imposed lockdowns in March and April, he has completely abandoned the original "flatten the curve" rationale for lockdowns; the curve has flattened but the lockdowns remain. With current caseloads and hospitalization rates, 80% of California residents live in counties that won't be allowed to open.

Even if the numbers allow them to open, teachers and staff members will have to distance themselves by at least 6 feet from each other and from children. Students in third grade and higher will be forced to wear masks. Even if Mr. Newsom backs down, school boards in Los Angeles and San Diego have already decided against in-person instruction for the start of the school year.

Public schools are dominant because they don't need to compete for funds. Taxpayers are forced to finance them. If a family decides to take a child out of the local public school, thereby saving the school board the cost of educating that child, the family gets no tax break, no rebate. If a family finds a cheap private school that charges \$8,000 in annual tuition, sending the child there makes economic sense only if the family values the private education by at least \$8,000 more than they value the public education. That's a high hurdle for most parents.

But with public schools' shift to online instruction, the equation changes dramatically for two reasons. First, the public schools have done a poor job of adjusting to the new reality. Second, and possibly more important, online instruction eliminates arguably the most valuable service provided by public schools: child care. On net, therefore, the value of the online public school is much lower, especially for young children, than the value of inperson public school.

Many will opt instead to homeschool. This summer, parents have had time to plan for the fall. Many of them are forming "learning pods," which are small groups of families getting together to hire a teacher or a tutor to teach their kids.

What if, as I predict, homeschooling works, on average, better than the public schools before the pandemic? Once the pandemic ends, many parents will want to continue with home-schooling. A poll taken in May of 626 parents found 40.8% of them saying they were more likely than before the pandemic to enroll their child in "a home school, a neighborhood home-school co-op, or a virtual school" once the lockdowns ended. There are now about 56 million children in K-12 schools. Before the pandemic, an estimated two million children were homeschooled. If even a third of the 40.8% of parents who said they might take it up followed through, the number of home-schooled children would almost quadruple.

Even many who don't homeschool will push for an expansion of charter schools, which tend to be responsive to parents and can more easily fire poor teachers. The advantage for taxpayers is that charter schools cost, on average, thousands of dollars less than traditional public schools. Teachers unions won't be in a strong position to object to a shift to lower-cost charters if they continue to object to the idea of teaching in person five days a week. The unions might even "settle" for charter schools over the dreaded home-school option.

Get ready. A school renaissance is coming.

Mr. Henderson is a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and editor of "The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics."

The Mideast Pudding Loses Its Theme



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Covid 19 and Recent Increases in El Dorado County

1 message

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07-30-2020 To: El Dorado Supervisors

From: Keith Field Pollock Pines Retired Firefighter 30 Years {Democrat}

I am writing to you today because of the dramatic increase in the county of cases of the Corona 19 Virus. I have watched since the reopening

the sharp increase in Pollock Pines from 1 case to now approx. 15. Also the big changes in the rest of the county especially in El Dorado Hills and South Lake Tahoe. I know we are not on the "Governor's watch list" However if we don't make Mask's and Distancing more of a "Mandatory Situation" not only will we be on the list, but we might have to "shut down again".

I worked in the bay area during the height of many Epidemics and worked very hard not to expose my family to things I was exposed to on a

on a "Daily Basis". I know that the County has to worry about Financial Health also, and I Know all of us understand and remember what the shut down did? I think it is So Selfish of us to "Continue Exposing" our health care workers, who have NO CHOICE! {not that they would choose different anyway} I know I wouldn't. I think the Simple things like wearing a face covering if not able to stay 6' away or indoors is really not to much to "ASK" of the residents of The Great County of El Dorado. My wife works part time cleaning a couple Post Offices in the area and is worried every day about bringing home to "ME" this virus. I am so "VERY" proud of her, and supported any decision she wanted to do, work or not.

I wear my mask now and when I saw what was going on in New York, I told my wife then that this virus was "AIRBORNE" and was not going to stop until it swept the country. The fact that the Government took a month calling it a Hoax!, then slow reaction time and quickness of spread was too much to overcome at first. The shut down worked, now we have to not waist that "Sacrifice" that was made by so many.

I think it is Imperative! to make the wearing of Masks and Distancing Mandatory in the county and have signage put up is stores and restaurants in the county. I do believe Alot of the Exposures are coming from outside the county especially to, El Dorado Hills and South Lake Tahoe but people pass through Highway 50 corridor.

I am a "Transplant of the Flatt Land" but fell in love with the Weather here first then the County. I have lived here since 1994 and commuted

for 20 years 2 hrs. each way to be here and raised both my children here.

This "Isn't a Political thing, It is a Caring for others thing" People have to think about Doing for others and in Return will do for themselves!

Thank You, Keith Field