



Los Angeles Times

EDITORIALS:

LETTERS

'What the U.S. needs is a change in priorities.'

MARK TANNENHAUS, *Spring Valley, Calif.*

Friedman's ideas about education

Re "Are Public Schools Worth the Effort?" column, July 3

Friedman has matters 100% right. Most urbanized public school systems are doomed to expensive failure. We need to step back and realize that there is no compelling reason for government to be in the education business. If we can't bring ourselves to separate school and state, then we should stop subsidizing the producers and instead subsidize the consumers. Competition will ensure quality that a bureaucracy cannot deliver.

JAMES E. MOORE II
*USC Professor of Engineering
Los Angeles*

I am distressed that anyone would consider economist Milton Friedman a legitimate participant in the discussion of any social issue, including public education.

Friedman's professed concern about equality is mere window-dressing for his advocacy of a brutal system that can only increase inequality, not lessen it.

It should never be forgotten that in Latin America, beginning in the 1970s, policies based in large measure on Friedman's notions were responsible for incalculable suffering, poverty and death — the latter not only because of poverty and inequality but because of the desire of those in power to suppress the "irrational attachment to a socialist system" of which Friedman so inaccurately complains.

It is time for Friedman to retire and shut up. Since that apparently will not happen soon, it would be appropriate for people to stop giving his inaccurate, simplistic and poisonous drivel a respect it does not deserve.

DANA MARKIEWICZ
Los Angeles

I agree with Friedman: The Los Angeles Unified School District is simply too large. It's over-administered, over-regulated, and the unions stand in the way of long-overdue reforms.

My children attend Warner Avenue Elementary in Westwood, a school with broad ethnic diversity that is among L.A. Unified's few shining stars. Why? Because the parents demand excellence.

The school effectively competes with many local private schools for students residing in the district, and many parents choose to send their children to Warner because of the quality of the education, extracurricular programs and strong community spirit.

This model could more easily be replicated if L.A. Unified were split into a large number of smaller districts administered locally, coupled with a voucher system that would give parents more educational choices for their children.

It is so refreshing to see Friedman bring some rational thinking to the equation.

LAURIE ALLEN
Westwood