

WALDORF REPORT ON SCHOOL CHOICE

PRAISED NATIONWIDE

A new report titled “Independent Schools and School Choice Legislation in the United States” has drawn significant praise from independent school leaders and school choice researchers around the country.

Co-published by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and the Institute for Social Renewal (ISR), the 49-page booklet provides a detailed, concise analysis of current school choice legislation. The analysis includes financial support for independent school families and an overview, impact statements, and regulations associated with both education voucher and tax credit programs in each state.

Patrick Bassett, President of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), calls the report “an extraordinarily well-done and useful document, a veritable tour de force on the history and context of independent school and choice movements.”

Adam Schaeffer, a Cato Institute education policy analyst, states that the report’s “particular importance is its recognition that school choice becomes meaningless when independent schools are robbed of their freedom to specialize and differentiate themselves from one another. The report encourages the school choice community to pursue policies that increase educational options for families while preserving the independence essential to excellent private education.”

The document includes a history of education funding dating back to the Colonial era. It also offers a survey of school choice court cases, a critique of current model legislation and high stakes testing, a summary of the effects of charter school legislation on independent schools, and the results of various opinion polls comparing education vouchers and tax credits. All of these are presented in the context of Rudolf Steiner’s ideas on a threefold social organism and the social mission of Waldorf education, which are explained at the outset of the document.

“Independent Schools” makes the case that society-wide funding of education through personal and scholarship education tax credit programs are in harmony with Rudolf Steiner’s threefold ideas concerning the right of a child to an education and the funding of education.

Instead of government-funded education, the booklet describes ways that education subsidies could flow from individuals and businesses directly to foundations and schools without going through the government. The movement to pass education tax credit legislation in various regions of the U.S. is a step toward that goal.

Gary Lamb, ISR board member, compiled the material for the monograph and wrote the introduction and chapters with editorial help from Patrice Maynard, Leader of Outreach and Development for AWSNA. Hard copies of “Independent Schools and School Choice Legislation in the United States” can be purchased for \$12.00 each, plus postage, by contacting AWSNA Publications at 518-634-2222 or publications@awsna.org. A 60-page .pdf version also can be downloaded from the publications section on the resources page at the ISR’s website: www.socialrenewal.com.