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To: Lt. Governor's OfficeLtGov@scstatehouse.gov

Date: 5/14/2018 5:11:46 PM

Subject: From Mark L. Hopkins

Attachments: Editorial 11- PUBLIC EDUCATION-the big picture.docx

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Dear Lt. Gov. Bryant,

Please note that this is the only letter/E-mail you have received from me. Since I have been in Anderson for more than thirty-five years now and know most of your ancestors, I suspect I don't need to identify myself or justify my educational foundations. Though, it may be worthy of note that I have been an educator for more than 50 years and have served at elementary/junior high/high school/college/and administrative college Dean and President levels.

I read with interest your "special to the Anderson Independent Mail," this morning. You had lots to say and said it directly and with conviction. I felt really good about your first three paragraphs and your last three. I couldn't agree more that 1) we are running our best teachers off and killing off our best prospects by how we are running our educational system; 2) we need to give our local schools back to the local parents and teachers; and 3) we need to let the teachers teach and the administrators administer.

The issue of school choice is a perspective promoted by many of our party nationally for many years. On a small scale it has promise. Done across the entire country and carried to its natural end result it is not workable. The "why" of that requires a long discussion but much of it relates to the broad range of students our public schools must work with to fulfill their purpose.

Perhaps the statement you made in paragraph six is the one I disagree with most strongly. Our system has worked well for us for more than two centuries and, while it needs some adjustment, (We should never stop adjusting it.) it continues to work well if you understand its purpose and the rest of the education system that surrounds it. In that I am including our ladderized higher education system of vocational/community/private 4-year/university/and graduate schools.

One of the things that keeps the constant criticism of our public school rolling is trying to make comparisons between our K-12 system and those of other countries, especially in math and science test scores. Our system is based on the Thomas Jefferson model that is designed to create citizens for a democratic society. We teach government, history, social and behavioral sciences as well as math and science. To compare us with India and China (just to pick two) is comparing Apples and Oranges. Those countries teach three math courses and two science courses each year of high school. We teach only one of each for each of the four years. They don't bother with history or government. After all, their students don't have to know what a citizen has to know in a democratic society. If you want to test our students when they have had a full load of math and science you should do it after the two year point of college, perhaps at the end of junior college. To prove my point, our students test very well in comparison with theirs at the 4-year college and graduate levels. We still outstrip the rest of the world in Nobel Prizes of all descriptions. (If we are so inferior and the system doesn't work, how can we do that year after year?)

I recently wrote several columns on the subject of our educational approach. One is included with this E-mail as an attachment. I would be pleased to send them all to you if you have an interest. I would offer you a discussion opportunity at some time when your schedule permits. You have but to ask.

With respect and best wishes,

Mark