As Trump doubles down on his flawed education ideology, it’s worth checking his facts.

Claim
Trump says his $20 billion program would provide vouchers for 11 million students to attend the schools of their choice.

Reality
Trump’s plan would harm 10 students for every 1 student it covers. The average cost of a K-12 private school is $13,640 per student, per year. Only a few states offer state-funded vouchers, so Trump’s program would have to carry the full cost in most states. As a result, it would serve as few as 1.4 million students while stripping funding from 10.5 million children or more.

To fund his $20 billion voucher program, Trump would have to cut all Title I funding and another $5 billion in other federal education programs. The Title I cuts alone could strip critical federal funding from up to 56,000 public schools serving more than 21 million children.

Here is the likely impact of this massive Title I cut:

• Losing tens of thousands of highly qualified teachers and classroom aides, increasing class sizes and decreasing students’ access to one-on-one attention.

• Cutting curriculum improvement programs and professional development for educators.

• Slashing resources for extended learning time and tutoring for kids who need extra help.

• Firing counselors and ending counseling programs that help at-risk kids stay in school.

• Cutting programs that increase parent participation and involvement.

• Firing school nurses and ending in-school medical and dental care for students.

• Cutting funding for classroom technology, school supplies and other critical materials for high-needs students.

In addition to ending Title I support, Trump would need to take roughly $5 billion more from other priority areas to reach $20 billion. This could mean cuts to federal support for preschool, Pell grants, and crucial resources that help low-income students, students with disabilities and English language learners.
Claim
Vouchers boost student achievement by allowing families to choose private schools.

Reality
Trump’s proposal could have a devastating impact on student achievement. According to studies of voucher programs in the District of Columbia, Milwaukee and Cleveland, and most recently in Indiana and Louisiana, students offered vouchers do not perform better in reading and math than students in public schools. Voucher programs also fail to offer participating students greater educational resources. Department of Education studies of the D.C. voucher program show participants are less likely to have access to English as a Second Language programs, learning support and special needs programs, tutors, counselors, and school nurses than students not in the program.

Claim
Vouchers improve opportunities for kids from low-income families.

Reality
Vouchers rarely cover the cost of tuition or other mandatory fees for private schools. In Wisconsin, the state Department of Public Instruction found that 67 percent of voucher applicants were already enrolled in private schools. Under most voucher programs, a private school can take taxpayer money but still deny admission to any student. In contrast, public schools, which serve 90 percent of American students, do not turn children or families away.

Claim
“I’m not cutting services, but I’m cutting spending. And I may cut the Department of Education.”

Reality
In addition to his brazen voucher scheme, Trump’s promise to cut the Department of Education would slash services to those students most in need. This is the impact of his rhetoric on real people:

- **8 million students** every year could lose Pell grants.
- **490,000** or more teacher positions could be eliminated.
- **5 million** children and students with disabilities could lose **$12.7 billion** used every year to ensure that they receive a high-quality education.
- **750,000** or more students from military families, Native American students, students living in U.S. territories, and students living on federal property or Native American lands could lose **$1.1 billion** per year for their schools.
- **4,000** or more rural school districts could lose more than **$175 million** used annually to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in many hard-to-staff schools.
- **$700 million** used by states to support the **5 million** English language learners currently in public schools—representing close to 10 percent of all students—could be cut.

Conclusion
Trump’s education proposals would put millions of students at risk, help far fewer students than he promises and devastate public schools. No surprise from a man whose only foray into “education,” Trump University, was a scam so brazen that multiple states launched investigations. While Trump faces ongoing lawsuits in California and New York, campaign contributions by Trump to attorneys general in Florida and Texas—both of whom declined to prosecute—have raised questions about possible pay-to-play.