

# The business of education

**By Rick Radners**  
 Guest Columnist

It strikes me that people don't like to use the words business and education in the same conversation. I often find myself stepping out of an awkward exchange because people don't like to mix these two subjects. With some fore thought, I find that not only do the two models fit together, but also putting them side by side can teach us a great deal. I'd like to talk about the two ideals within this paired concept and see what kind of conversation I can spark with others.

First is the concept of charter schools. It is no mystery that many of our public school systems have been struggling under ineffective curricula and stressed leadership. Public schools find it hard to make the grade in subjects such as math and science compared to other districts or countries whom spend a considerable amount less per student than the United States. Therefore, what is the answer in fixing our public school issues? Arguments can be made for more community involvement, greater spending in regressed areas both urban and suburban, and stronger curriculum development however, these ideas take time, money, and people.

Now switch to business for a second and ask yourself the same question. If a business is struggling, what con-

cept forces it to improve or close its doors? The answer is competition. Competition is the one tool that forces us to



**Takin' Care of Business**

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Public school districts have a history of fighting the charter schools based on competition for head count alone. Primarily because a charter school can act as a business in that, it can release ineffective staff, change its model to suit the needs of its customers, and close its doors if it can't meet the needs of the public it serves. Charter schools have a history of enrollment waiting lists and better than average graduation rates to prove their worth. There are some minor draw backs however, charter schools are in demand, and the public school districts aren't at all happy about it. Ask yourself why.

The second concept is the community college funding announced several months ago by President Obama at the University of Michigan. Anyone that knows me states that my political views are personal to me and I don't usually share them unless necessary.

improve or leave the market/field and the same concept can work for public school district via charter schools.

I always have respect for the Presidents' office based on the job that it carries and that someone will ultimately know more than I do about a given situation. With that, the funding proposal for community colleges has me a bit puzzled.

In a struggling economy like ours, jobs are needed for college graduates. I heard a statistic the other day that 13 out of 100 college graduates will begin work in their field of study within 12 months of graduation. Back when I was in business school, the business concept of supply and demand was delivered repeatedly. Learning this concept meant that you understood how to pull back supply to stabilize a price and effectively meet market demand.

Now back to community colleges, why is it important to make funding for training/education of more people when ultimately they will have no jobs to go too? Somehow, the simple concept of supply and demand is being met. I'm certainly not saying that the funding shouldn't be put forth however, spend it on job placement services or create programs between areas business and community colleges that use interns or word study concepts. In short, the supply is growing every December and June with every college graduation. This country needs paid career



**tracks for these skilled graduates. Keep tuition in check and work on job programs; it's one of the simplest equations in business of education!**

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