

PUBLIC PANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a Gallup survey comparing public schools to its alternatives:

When the public is asked to rate public schools as excellent or good, it captures the vote of 44 percent. But 71 percent rate independent private schools as excellent or good. The figure for parochial or church-related schools is 63 percent; for charter schools it is 55 percent; and for home schooling, it is 46 percent.

When it comes to rating private schools, the difference between Republicans and Democrats is not large: 76 percent of Republicans and 68 percent of Democrats rate them excellent or good. But when it comes to the other three alternatives, the margins widen.

Parochial and church-related schools capture an excellent or good rating of 71 percent of Republicans, but only 56 percent of Democrats. The figure for charter schools is 62 percent for Republicans and 48 percent for Democrats. Home schooling earns a rating of 55 percent for Republicans and 38 percent for Democrats.

Only 39 percent of Republicans and 48 percent of Democrats rate public schools as excellent or good.

Regarding Democrats, their secular leanings account for their comparatively weak approval of parochial and church-related schools. Charter schools and home schooling are seen by Democrats as a direct threat to the public schools, and for that reason alone they are not looked upon favorably, even though most Democrats are not exactly enamored by the performance of the public schools.

The reason why Democrats hold private schools in high regard can be explained by the affluent among them who enroll their

children in such schools. This raises a thorny issue. If the Democrats care about the poor—that is what they say—why don't they support alternatives to public schools, which they pan, other than the private ones that they prefer and can afford?

As we have seen over and over again, many poor minority parents would like to send their children to a parochial or church-related school. Moreover, they are highly overrepresented among parents who would like to send their children to a charter school. Who is fighting against them? The ones who say they are on their side—the Democrats.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio boasts that he is the champion of the poor. He is also the biggest foe of school choice, whether it be in the form of vouchers for parochial schools or funds for charter schools.

This is a game. It needs to end. The time is long past when public officials can say that the public schools are not good enough for their children, but they are nonetheless worthy of everyone's support. They need to buck up.

If the public schools aren't good enough for the kids of rich Democrats, just whose kids are they good for?