

OUR OPINION

This 'n that

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Steve Williams

You can tell how much Americans are starting to focus on our increasingly dysfunctional public school system by the rising tide of criticism of it, accompanied by a rising tide of ideas to fix it.

Latest is legislation proposed by Sen. Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican, to allow states to use federal education dollars to create \$2,100 tuition vouchers to follow some 11 million low-income children to any accredited school, public or private, that their parents choose.

Sen. Alexander says his proposal is “a real answer to inequality in America.” Yes. But as we said, the senator is a Republican, and thus his proposal hasn’t much chance of making it even through that body. And if it did, Barack Obama

— based on his opposition to charter schools, vouchers, or any other reform that teachers union money and votes oppose regarding school reform — would apply a killing veto.

Still, the idea is attractive because it offers choice to parents who fear their children are getting little or nothing from their public schools, and thus are almost automatically destined to a life of poverty echoing their parents.

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Speaking of unions, there is more and more discussion in the Victor Valley about the real problems facing Victor Valley College, not only in its bid to return to full accreditation but to return its control to taxpayers. Those real problems are wrapped around VVC’s history of being controlled by the California Teachers Association, either directly or through manipulation of the school’s board of trustees, and through the board, control of the administration.

Over on the Op-Ed page today, Pat Caldwell’s Valley Voices piece identifies the union problem, and then calls on the trustees to begin using the authority granted them by voters and board policies and start making decisions that are in the best interests of the students and the taxpayers, and not those of the CTA. The trustees could begin, of course, by selecting a new superintendent/president of the school who exhibits at least a modicum of independence from union control.

If the trustees don’t do this now, we can all look forward to a continuing hubbub over accreditation, financial management, and of course the school’s reputation. All of those things need repair, but if the board doesn’t assert itself, VVC’s troubles will continue.

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Now that the bridge providing another traffic connector between Apple Valley and Victorville is looking like it may actually get built, a controversy has sprung up over what to name it. There have been literally dozens of suggestions, apparently, but as a letter to the editor points out today, a bridge by any other name will still be called the Yucca Loma Bridge.

Of the suggestions we’ve heard thus far, though, we confess a partiality to “Mojave Trail Bridge” in recognition of the first known residents of the Victor Valley — native Americans. Beyond that, we haven’t heard a suggestion yet that would be an obvious choice.

The Apple Valley Town Council is accepting suggestions, we hear, but the necessity of picking a name doesn’t seem all that important. There’s lots of time to pick something innocuous that the majority won’t find offensive. Political correctness seems in the offing here.