



Written by [Dr. Duke Pesta](#) on May 4, 2020

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A Pitch for FPA and Homeschooling

From the print edition of **The New American:**

Dr. Duke Pesta, academic director of FreedomProject Academy, was interviewed by *The New American* about what parents and families are seeing from schools in response to the coronavirus, and what long-term lessons can be gleaned from what they are seeing.



The New American: *How has FreedomProject Academy been dealing with coronavirus?*

Dr. Duke Pesta: Other than the societal macro-stresses that the virus inflicts on all of us — including the frustration of watching constitutionally protected rights and liberties stripped away by state and federal bureaucracies — we continue to provide live, online classes with actual teachers for our students across America and a dozen foreign countries. Our FPA students are in class every day in the safety of their own homes, receiving a strong classical education rooted in Judeo-Christian values. Technology helps us to create a virtual classroom environment that allows students to interact with their teachers and peers. For FPA, it is business as usual, and our students have not missed a single day of classes because of COVID-19. As a distance-learning school, we are also considered “essential personnel” by all 50 states, a recognition that we can continue to educate during the pandemic.

It is overwhelming to consider what public-school kids are up against in their government-controlled classrooms as we begin the third decade of the 21st century: school shootings, Red for Ed teacher walk outs, radical sexuality curriculum starting in elementary school, the war on gender and biological sex, the incessant encroachments into the curriculum by Planned Parenthood and the LGBTQ agenda, bullying, meaningless high-stakes testing, and, now, a virus that has shuttered the schools and left thousands of unprepared teachers and millions of struggling kids to create online learning models out of whole cloth. And all of this without dwelling on the 800-pound gorilla in the classroom: the sobering realization that the American public-school system is no longer able to — or interested in — educating your children with academic success, or even basic proficiency, as their primary purpose. According to National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests, more than 60 percent of public-school kids are not able to read or do math at the grade level where they belong. Many of these students are as much two and even three years behind where they should be.

TNA: *What can others learn from FPA, if anything?*

Dr. Pesta: The current upheaval of global government education is more about consequences than warnings. For decades now, activists across the country have warned families about the corrupt, compromised, inefficient, needlessly expensive, and altogether politicized nature of modern public schools. We have called out the sexualization of children, the displacement of parents at the hands of teachers and edocrats, the extensive data gathering, the one-size-fits-all curriculum, the ideological imbalance, and the social-justice takeover of the classrooms. More Americans than ever before are



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homeschooling, but the reality is that too few American families heeded the warnings, so the consequences are now being felt most directly because of the pandemic. As long as government schools were providing eight hours a day of “free” day care, along with a meal or two, many parents were willing to put up with the high costs of public schools, the mediocre (at best) education, the transformation of schools into sites of radical indoctrination, and the freezing out of parents about every aspect of their children’s education. But now the kids are sheltering at home, and it is increasingly obvious to parents sheltering alongside them how insufficient and slapdash are the online accommodations offered by the public schools. If there are things to learn from FPA amidst this chaos, they should be that 1) parents must take back control of their children’s education, become primarily responsible for seeing that their children receive an education that will allow them to thrive in adulthood, and 2) they must recognize that there are almost limitless resources available to help with homeschooling, FreedomProject Academy preeminent among them.

TNA: *Are FPA students doing better academically than public-school children?*

Dr. Pesta: We give placement exams in reading and math for every student who seeks to join our school. In many instances, these exams show that when public-school kids come to us, they are one to two years behind where they should be vis-à-vis their age and grade level. We can help them catch up, but it is important to realize that the results of the placement exams demonstrate the problem with great clarity. As mentioned already, the nation’s NAEP scores underscore what our exams show. This is not simply an accident or honest failure on the part of the public schools: It is a feature of the new social-justice education. When kids are held to high standards and made accountable for their progress, there will be, by definition, children who cannot or will not reach the standard. To today’s politicized educrats, this system of expectations and accountability is a form of “white supremacy,” bigotry, and intolerance. To combat the fact that some kids are smarter and work harder, which leads to quantifiable differences in results and opportunities for those “privileged” students, social-justice education artificially lowers standards and actively retards student success. If they cannot make every student equally gifted or successful, they can at least hold down those students capable of moving ahead. That is what the “common” in Common Core actually means: In the name of “social justice,” “equity,” and “inclusion,” the public schools are sacrificing real learning and student individuality for one-size-fits-all collectivism. FPA rejects this socialistic approach to teaching and learning. We prioritize the mastery of subject matter and encourage individual student development and excellence. Whether it’s kindergarten or senior year of high school, we educate your children to be at or above expectation for each grade.

TNA: *How soon can a student transfer to FPA, and what would it require?*

Dr. Pesta: We are enrolling students for the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 school year right now and all the way through June. There is a real possibility that the coronavirus will interfere with the start of public-school classes in fall. By enrolling with FPA now, you are guaranteeing your student will be in school and receiving a quality classical education regardless of what happens with the pandemic through the rest of this year. To find out more and receive a free program guide for FreedomProject Academy, visit [FreedomForSchool.com](#) or [fpeusa.org](#).

TNA: *What should American parents be thinking about education during these unusual times?*

Dr. Pesta: Besides the obvious advantages of convenience and the flexibility of the home environment,



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the biggest benefit of homeschooling is the ability to manage the message. It is impossible not to recognize the increasingly volatile politicization of our government schools. As an educator who has personally worked with students from middle school through graduate school, I can attest to the fact that far too often today's public-school students are taught what to think, as opposed to learning to think for themselves. Homeschooling reinforces the idea that parents should be the first and most important filter, one that protects their children from ideological indoctrination and the one-sided, politicized spin of the contemporary classroom. Ultimately, it doesn't matter how many vacations, cellphones, and soccer practices we provide for our kids if we have not given them the best possible education. If parents do not educate children in a manner that allows them to take care of their own families in the future, we have failed them.

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