

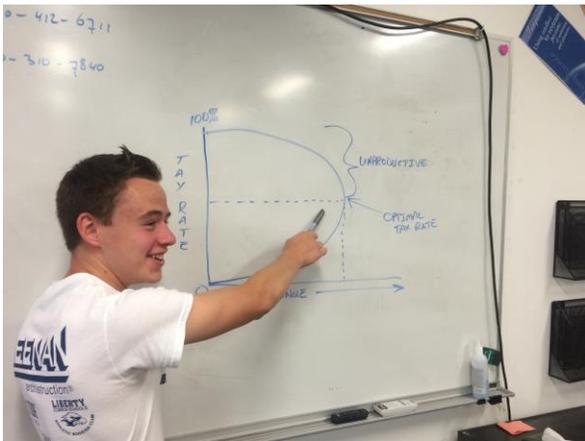
The Clean Air Of Liberty

By: Bob Schaffer, LCHS Headmaster

Starting in kindergarten, Liberty students learn important economic lessons involving tradeoffs – wants versus needs, property rights and elementary principles of voluntary trade. By the time they graduate, our students enjoy quite an impressive and refined understanding of economics.

It is a very important academic discipline, one that gets only summary treatment in most American schools. In fact, most college graduates today have never been exposed to a

legitimate course in economics.



This is an unfortunate reality that enables too many tragic personal decisions, and political ones when considering the widespread economic illiteracy among the American electorate. As an academic discipline, economics informs vital subjects such as engineering, business, philosophy, political science, and all the other social sciences.

The depth of Liberty's economics program is yet another example of what makes our school so unique. As parents, applying our students' economics lessons to the school itself will prove crucial in charting the institution's success over the next decade and beyond.

For example, our school is directly threatened by the rapidly intensifying trends of federal and state lawmakers to meddle more deeply in the management and the very craft of public education. With every new top-down "reform," America's public schools get worse.

Liberty must remain vigilant in the face of these troubling national trends, and we must be prepared to rise above them. It is imperative we do everything possible to preserve traditional American concepts of parental control, school choice and marketplace education.

Historically regarded as a local responsibility in America, public education is now more dominated by the whim and fancy of politicians than ever before. This is a hazardous reality for our students.

One of the economic philosophers studied by our ninth-grade economics students is **Claude Frédéric Bastiat**. Writing amid the 1848 Revolution in France, Bastiat characterized the proclivity of French politicians to pass more laws as an arrogant attempt to force French people to become more equal.

On the contrary, Liberty adheres to the Core Knowledge Sequence which views a rigorous education itself – not the law – as the great equalizer. This philosophy is ingrained in the school’s mission statement and in all we do.

So is the concept of parental control. Liberty rejects the idea that a school is a place a parent can simply send her or his child to become educated by others.

We firmly believe it is the exclusive responsibility of parents – indeed a moral obligation – and their natural right to direct the education and upbringing of their children. As conscientious parents, we commonly hire instructors who teach in schools to assist us in best accomplishing this solemn duty.

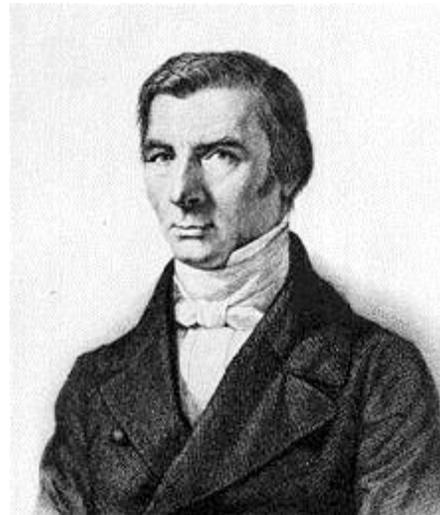
We the parents choose them. Not the other way around.

Parents have authority to make the best academic choices for their own child. At Liberty, parents actually oversee the school and ensure the institution maintains strict fidelity to its mission statement, its organizational objectives, and its charter.

Sending our kids off to government-owned buildings and expecting them to somehow return home smarter has never worked. It can’t work. It doesn’t work.

Yet, many people somehow expect it would. Topping that list are politicians.

Of them, Bastiat wrote, “There are too many ‘great’ men in the world – legislators, organizers, do-gooders, leaders of people, fathers of nations, and so on, and so on. Too many persons place themselves above mankind; they make a career of organizing it, patronizing it, and ruling it.”



Our economics students know very well the interplay of these economic principles in such an equation. Self-interest (as opposed to selfishness), free markets, capital efficiency, sound money, and less bureaucracy help humans to, in Bastiat’s words, “develop themselves harmoniously in the clean air of liberty.”

He wrote, “Away with the whims of governmental administrators, their socialized projects, their centralization, their tariffs, their government schools, their state religions, their free credit, their bank monopolies, their regulations, their restrictions, their equalization by taxation, and their pious moralizations!”

Bastiat finished his most famous work *The Law* this way, “And now that the legislators and do-gooders have so futilely inflicted so many systems upon society, may they finally

end where they should have begun: May they reject all systems, and try liberty; for liberty is an acknowledgment of faith in God and His works.”

Bastiat’s mantic words sprung from the French upheaval of his day. Liberty scholars read *The Law* now to better understand the economic principles of theirs.

As Liberty parents, we are similarly obligated to understand how contemporary political impulses and economic conditions overawe the future success of our children. It is our duty – actually our moral privilege – to help Liberty’s young scholars “develop themselves harmoniously in the clean air of liberty.”