

The Star-Ledger

September 30, 2010

Reader Forum – Letters to the Editor

Money is not magic

Mark Zuckerberg, multibillionaire founder of Facebook, certainly is generous in his recently announced gift of \$100 million to Newark's public schools. But most likely his generosity will be swallowed in corruption and inefficiency and have no effect.

In the mid-1990s, billionaire Walter Annenberg gave \$500 million to public education in the United States. The system swallowed the money with no measurable effect on the quality of education.

The problems of public education have nothing to do with money and a lot to do with bureaucracy, teachers who do not have the freedom to teach, over-paid teachers unions, and families that have been destroyed by drugs and crime. After New York state, New Jersey spends more per pupil on public education with dismal results in cities like Newark. Failure should not be rewarded with more spending!

There is, however, success in education in Newark — but mostly in private and parochial schools where nearly all of the graduates go on to college and fine careers. These pockets of success need to be rewarded and fertilized to spread their success. And this is where Zuckerberg should be donating his wealth.

A. Michael Noll, Stirling

Former dean and professor emeritus at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California