



# Update

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## EDUCATION, INC.

Over the last few years, change has been sweeping across this country's school yards. I am not referring to turf fields and thick rubber mats meant to protect our children's joints and heads. Those changes, too, are taking place; and sometimes I wonder how I survived childhood without a bike helmet or with hard dirt under the swing, lead paint and all those small parts in toys! I guess I was just lucky. But, I digress – thinking back to when being a child meant having fun, riding a bike and learning the ABC's and 123's in school.

Those simpler times are gone for the moment and, perhaps, forever. You see, the secret is out. There is big money to be made in education, and there are billionaires and corporate hedge funders who know it and are already seizing the opportunity. Unfortunately, they have no true knowledge of child development or how to actually teach children of all ages and abilities. Most of them likely haven't set foot inside a classroom since they graduated from college. What they do have is gobs of money and the inclination to make more at the disastrous expense of both our students and our profession.

Education, Inc. is a documentary which NYSUT and many local school unions have been presenting across the State. The movie is told through the eyes of parent and filmmaker Brian Malone as he travels cross-country in search of the who's, where's and why's behind the privatizing of American public education, and what it means for his kids. With striking footage from school protests, raucous school board meetings and interviews with some of the most well-known educators in the country, Malone zooms out to paint a clear picture of profit and politics that is sweeping across the nation right under our very noses.

As the SFT President, I have access to a steady stream of information about Ed-related issues across the country - access to the inside scoop, if you will. Attending conferences and workshops and reading emails and periodicals from NYSUT and the AFT, I thought I knew, more or less, the lay of the land in public education. Well, I was wrong. I saw this film for the first time in October and called NYSUT the next morning to inquire about obtaining a screening for you. I found myself, throughout the one-hour film, with my mouth agape or mumbling some expletives under my breath. I was floored. The insidious, unscrupulous greed of the people involved - and the damage caused to schools, students and educators - will amaze you, too.

I know that, at times, I see things from a different perspective than some; so in December, I decided to show the film to the entire SFT Executive Board. Perhaps, I thought, they wouldn't feel as compelled as I was to share the movie with you. Perhaps, they wouldn't find its message as important as I did. But when the movie ended, there was a palpable silence in the room. Did they hate it? No! Your Executive Board members were stunned, much like I was the first time I watched it. And they agreed. Our members needed to see it, too.

After discussing this with the four component elementary school presidents, we have collectively decided to show it to all of our members of the Sewanhaka, Elmont, Floral Park-Bellerose, Franklin Square and New Hyde Park unions. We have also taken out an ad in local papers inviting community members to attend a free screening. After all, what happens in our schools is, naturally, of utmost importance to them, as well.



While much of the film takes place in Colorado, it is important to know that what occurred there is happening now across the country from California to Maine. The movie paints a dire picture of two particularly jeopardized school communities and the coalition that was built between educators and community members seeking resolution. How these communities are currently faring will be discussed during the Q & A sessions following each of two showings at the Elmont Public Library on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. The first showing will begin promptly at 4:00 pm, and the second will begin at 6:00 pm.

I do not believe that I can overstate the importance of becoming aware of this issue. I know that each of you has many responsibilities and hectic schedules. Maybe you think, as I did, that you already know enough. To put it bluntly, none of us does. We all need to have a better understanding of what is happening to our profession and, more importantly, why and how.

How much is your profession worth to you? Well, it's worth billions to those who see our children as nothing more than dollar signs. Billions.

In Unity,  
*Ro*

**Guest speakers:**

**Jeanette Deutermann** – LI Opt-Out

**Blanca Villanueva** – Alliance for Quality Education

**Jeff Friedman** – NYSUT PAC

**Joan Sommermeyer** – NYSUT LRS

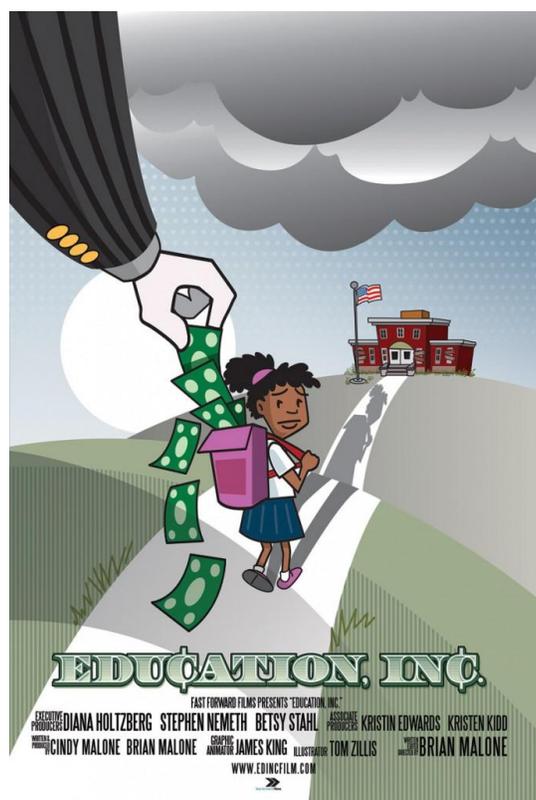
**There is no charge for this event!**

**Where: Elmont Public Library**  
**700 Hempstead Tpke, Elmont, NY 11003**

**When: Thursday, January 21, 2016**

**Time(s): 4:00 - 5:00 pm and 6:00 - 7:00 pm**  
**with Q&A following each presentation**

**RSVP requested at [SFT266@aol.com](mailto:SFT266@aol.com)**



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