“Public Education in Puerto Rico: The Plan to Privatize Public Schools and How Communities are Fighting Back”
Teachers and school community members in Puerto Rico have been fighting and winning against the intention of the privatization of our schools for more than 25 years.

In 1983 the “Nation At Risk” report elaborated by Ronald Reagan’s administration stated that public education was “broken” and needed structural reforms, following the market principles and accountability measures.

Despite of that reality, in Puerto Rico the first intention of privatizing public education, took almost 10 years (1993).
1994- Vouchers Declared Unconstitutional

Voucher Plan For Students Is Struck Down

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS   DEC. 5, 1994

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A court has struck down a school voucher program in which more than 2,000 students received money to attend private school, saying the vouchers violated Puerto Rico's Constitution.

The ruling, issued on Wednesday by Puerto Rico’s Supreme Court, prompted Gov. Pedro Rossello to seek alternatives to his administration's voucher program, which will end after the current school year.
2008- Ten-day strike against privatization of public education, amongst other claims.
2011- March against charter proposal from Arne Duncan
NO Privatización Escuelas Charter
2015- One day stoppage against Senate Bill 1456 that promoted school closures and privatization.
School Closures
2014-15 Resistance against school closures (120 were shut down from 200 that were on the DOE list)
January 2017- Julia Keleher appointed PR’s DOE Secretary

- $250,000 salary
- Announced 305 school closures in April 2017 as of May 2017.
- Communities resisted.
- She ended up closing 166 schools
Hurricane María: Category 5
September 2017- Hurricanes María hit our island
Our schools were severely damaged
Our schools were severely damaged
Our schools were severely damaged
But teachers responded
And fixed them up
Our teachers
Our teachers in action
And went to the communities in solidarity to help our people.
Solidarity is not another thing, but an act of love
Solidarity from MORE and PS 15, Brooklyn
National Conference of PR Women in California
While this was happening: Disaster Capitalism was used as an excuse to accelerate the privatization of schools

- New Orleans used as a point of reference in order to advance the government’s privatization agenda.
- As 300,000 homes were damaged, 75,000 permanently, people lost their lives, family and friends migrated, Secretary of Education Julia Keleher announced the closure of 184 additional schools immediately after Hurricane María.
- Communities along with the FMPR resisted, protested and forced the DOE to open the schools for our children. She finally reopened them and closed 24 schools.
- It took massive protests, civil disobedience, 21 teachers arrested, and a lawsuit to win this battle.
Parents of the Antonio S Pedreira Elementary School occupied their school and began with school activities.
Communities protested and won
John F Kennedy Elementary School, Toa Baja
School closure was revoked
Communities fight against school closures after the Hurricane
November 7, 2017 Civil disobedience in Secretary of Education’s Office
Edwin Morales, FMPR’s vicepresident
Mercedes Martínez, FMPR´s President
March 2018- Attack on public schools
March 2018, Civil Disobedience Against Charters
March 19th
One day stoppage against charter bill
May 2018- 252 additional schools were shut down. Today children and teachers are facing the harsh consequences.

562 shut down the past 5 years, representing 34% of the total schools of the island. It’s the most amount compared to any other US jurisdiction.
Where are we now?

- Strengthening solidarity bonds with unions, organizations and activists nationally and internationally.

- Resisting disaster capitalism and fighting right now to stop 10% of school charter implementation in August 2019.

- Organizing for massive collective actions.

- Rescuing spaces from privatizers.
NOW: Organizing communities to claim back our schools in community driven projects.
Movement “To the Rescue of Our Schools”
"Rescatar y devolverle a lxs niñxs las escuelas de su comunidad no es solo parte del deber sino de la felicidad."

José Morales
-Ex presidente de la Asociación de Natación de Puerto Rico

Carlos Santiago
-Yudoka

#DefiendeLaEducaciónPública
Fighting against charter implementation, organizing and resisting and winning

- 14 out of 32 schools requested by private entities to become charters next academic year have withdrawn their proposals, due to community struggle. The FMPR has been with them 100% in the past 2 weeks.
March 18, 2019
José de Diego School
Our schools are not for sale
Protesting against charter implementation
Juan Ponce de León Jr. High School says NO to charter schools
Artists in solidarity with parents, students and teachers against charters

"Decimos no a las charters porque solo buscan el lucro y no trabajan por una mejor educación"

Jocelyn Velázquez Rodríguez
-Madre

#DefiendeLaEducaconPública
Agitarte: Using art as a political education tool and fight against privatization
"Education is a right, not a privilege" - Jan Torres
UPR student

#DefiendeLaEducaciónPública
This is a global fight in defense of public education
UTLA Strike January 2019
UNLIKE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS, CHARTERS DON’T SERVE ALL STUDENTS.
"This fight is part of something broader."

Estudiantes
-East High School, Denver, CO

#DefiendeLaEducaciónPública
"Quite simply, you can't feed the minds of our students by starving their schools."

Keith Brown
- President of the Oakland Education Association

Oakland teachers on strike

#DefiendeLaEducacionPublica
When we fight, we win!

- Teachers all over the have been fighting, striking, and winning.
- Believing in our members and the working class works.
Eugenio María de Hostos - Puerto Rican educator

- “There is no triumph without struggle, and no struggle without sacrifice”