

Technology News

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Apple CEO Jobs attacks teacher unions

By APRIL CASTRO
Associated Press

AUSTIN — Apple Inc. CEO Steve Jobs lambasted teacher unions today, claiming no amount of technology in the classroom would improve public schools until principals could fire bad teachers.

Jobs compared schools to businesses with principals serving as CEOs.

"What kind of person could you get to run a small business if you told them that when they came in they couldn't get rid of people that they thought weren't any good?" he asked to loud applause during an education reform conference.

"Not really great ones because if you're really smart you go, 'I can't win.'"

In a rare joint appearance, Jobs shared the stage with competitor Michael Dell, founder and CEO of Dell Inc. Both spoke to the gathering about the potential for bringing technological advances to classrooms.

"I believe that what is wrong with our schools in this nation is that they have become unionized in the worst possible way," Jobs said.

"This unionization and lifetime employment of K-12 teachers is off-the-charts crazy."

At various pauses, the audience applauded enthusiastically. Dell sat quietly with his hands folded in his lap.

"Apple just lost some business in this state, I'm sure," Jobs said.

Dell responded that unions were created because "the employer was treating his employees unfairly and that was not good."

"So now you have these enterprises where they take good care of their people. The employees won, they do really well and succeed."

Dell also blamed problems in public schools on the lack of a competitive job market for principals.

Earlier in the panel discussion, Jobs told the crowd about his vision for textbook-free schools in the future. Textbooks would be replaced with a free, online information source that was constantly updated by experts, much like the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

"I think we'd have far more current material available to our students, and we'd be freeing up a tremendous amount of funds that we could buy delivery vehicles with — computers, faster Internet, things like that," Jobs said. "And I also think we'd get some of the best minds in the country contributing."



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