

Movie Reviewer Consensus Gives *Won't Back Down* Some Rotten Tomatoes

NPR: '*Won't Back Down*' Takes A Too-Easy Way Out

"In fact, it's nuance and reason that fall by the wayside amid the sloganeering rhetoric of *Won't Back Down*." [\[1\]](#)

The Nation: Bad Lessons From '*Won't Back Down*'

"*Won't Back Down* is a crude work of art. Each character in the new film, about Pittsburgh parents and teachers who band together to take over a struggling school, is crafted less as a believable human being than as a talking point." [\[2\]](#)

Dissent Magazine: "Empowerment" Against Democracy: Tinseltown and the Teachers' Unions

"Daniel Barnz is no Leni Riefenstahl, of course—he's not as skilled a filmmaker, and there's nothing racist or hateful in this movie—but the emotional experience of *Won't Back Down* is, for the viewer, not unlike that of the best propaganda. As we cheer for Jamie and Nona, we are rooting against ourselves, against our own capacity for self-governance." [\[3\]](#)

Nashville Scene: *Won't Back Down*: An Important Public Service Message from Rupert Murdoch

"Not all the important players appear onscreen, however. A report published by the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation discusses the political and financial ties of *Won't Back Down*'s backers, including News Corporation mogul Rupert Murdoch and billionaire conservative Christian activist Philip Anschutz — the latter a financial supporter of Colorado's Amendment 2, a 1992 forerunner of the legislative effort that overturned Nashville's anti-discrimination ordinance protecting GLBT employees." [\[4\]](#)

Associated Press: Review: '*Won't Back Down*' fails to make the grade

"Despite earnest performances from Maggie Gyllenhaal and Viola Davis as a pair of moms leading the fight, "*Won't Back Down*" lives down to its bland, us-against-them title with a simple-minded assault on the ills of public schools that lumbers along like a math class droning multiplication tables."

"Theaters should install glow-in-the-dark versions of those old clunking classroom clocks so viewers can count the agonizing minutes ticking by as they watch the movie." [\[5\]](#)

Boulder Weekly: Why '*Won't Back Down*' should go back to school

"The 34th richest person in the country, a conservative Christian and oil man, went and made a movie. Spoiler alert: It pushes conservative values and themes at the expense of depicting anything realistic." [\[6\]](#)

Salon: "*Won't Back Down*": Why do teachers' unions hate America?

"This is what I took away from the inept and bizarre "*Won't Back Down*," a set of right-wing anti-union talking points disguised (with very limited success) as a mainstream motion-picture-type product."

"But all we get here is the most blithe and moronic kind of "let's put on a show" magical thinking, in which ripping up the union contract and wresting control of the school from the bureaucrats becomes an end in itself, and what happens later is shrouded in the mists of an imaginary libertarian paradise." [\[7\]](#)

The Hollywood Reporter: *Won't Back Down*: Film Review

"The hot-button issue of public school reform gets unsubtle treatment in this pedestrian and insultingly tendentious drama."

"That scene is one of many such preachy interludes in a dumbed-down agenda film that veers shamelessly between didacticism and soap." [\[8\]](#)

Variety: *Won't Back Down*

"Grossly oversimplifying the issue at hand, writer-director Daniel Barnz's disingenuous pot-stirrer plays

to audiences' emotions rather than their intelligence, offering meaty roles for Maggie Gyllenhaal as a determined single mom, and Viola Davis as the good egg among a rotten batch of teachers, while reducing everyone else to cardboard characterizations.”[\[9\]](#)

Salon: School reform's propaganda flick

“The first thing to know about Friday’s opening of the school-choice drama “Won’t Back Down” is that the film’s production company specializes in children’s fantasy fare such as the “Tooth Fairy” and “Chronicles of Narnia” series. The second thing is that this company, Walden Media, is linked at the highest levels to the real-world adult alliance of corporate and far-right ideological interest groups that constitutes the so-called education reform movement, more accurately described as the education privatization movement.”[\[10\]](#)

Roger Ebert: If School Reform Was Only This Simple

“It all sounds so simple — and it is, because the movie makes it seem simplistic. In this scenario, based on the proverbial "true story" that isn't even cited in the film's end credits...” [\[11\]](#)

Chicago Sun Times: 'Won't Back Down' gets a D+ for a public school polemic

“On the lowest possible eye-rolling level it's hard not to respond emotionally to scenes such as the heinous teacher, the one messing with her smartphone in the intro scene, confining Jamie's long-suffering daughter to a janitor's closet for punishment. See what organized labor will do? It will lock your daughter in a janitor's closet. Right, left or center, once a movie has sunk to that sort of hyperbolic implication, not even Viola Davis can salvage it.” [\[12\]](#)

[1] <http://www.npr.org/2012/09/26/161546081/wont-back-down-takes-a-too-easy-way-out>

2 <http://www.thenation.com/article/170175/bad-lessons-wont-back-down#>

3 <http://dissentmagazine.org/online.php?id=631>

4 <http://www.nashvillescene.com/pitw/archives/2012/09/26/wont-back-down-an-important-public-service-message-from-rupert-murdoch>

5 http://www.heraldstandard.com/entertainment_ap/movies/review-won-t-back-down-fails-to-make-the-grade/article_fe0648de-ce64-5d15-a858-72d449252eff.html

6 <http://www.boulderweekly.com/article-9799-why-wont-back-down-should-go-back-to-school.html>

7 http://www.salon.com/2012/09/26/wont_back_down_why_do_teachers_unions_hate_america/

8 <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/wont-back-down-film-review-374060>

9 <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117948420/>

10 http://www.salon.com/2012/09/27/the_corporate_education_agenda_behind_wont_back_down/

11 <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120926/REVIEWS/120929988>

12 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/movies/sc-mov-0926-wont-back-down-20120927,0,3027197.column>