

Edward Stevens Jr. / George H. Wood / James J. Sheehan



Justice, Ideology, Education

An Introduction to the Social Foundations of Education

fourth edition

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An Introduction to the Social Foundations of Education

FOURTH EDITION

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*In memory of Edward W. Stevens, Jr.—Teacher, Mentor, Friend.
G.W.*

*To my wife Olivia, for her love and support, and to our child,
for the sweet promise of tomorrow.
To my parents James and LaVerne, and to my sisters Deb
and Barb, for their words of encouragement.
J.S.*

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Preface

The beliefs that underlie the theory and practice of American education are deeply ingrained in our culture. They affect our expectations for students, the way we organize curriculum and instruction, the decisions we make about school funding, and our judgments about the contributions of education to the national welfare. In addition, they shape our views on how people should be treated, how the rewards and benefits of education should be distributed, and who should make decisions about education.

When a system of beliefs functions to shape people's behaviors, to give them direction, and effectively acts to exclude other beliefs, we call that system an ideology. In American education the concepts of merit, opportunity, and equality together form an ideology that has helped to shape nearly every dimension of public schooling. Our beliefs about fairness and social justice in American democracy are organized around the concepts of merit, opportunity, and equality. These same concepts also determine much of what we think about how schools should be organized and how the outcomes of education should be evaluated. In this book we examine the beliefs that make up an ideology of American education and how that ideology helps to determine the outcomes of education.

Two questions have guided our thinking about the educational issues presented in this book. The first is, Who makes decisions about schools and about how children are treated when in school? The second question is, Are the processes and outcomes of these decisions fair or just? Responses to the first question have to do with authority and power and how they are distributed in the decision-making process. The second question has to do with our ideals of individual and social justice.

The concepts of justice, authority, and power must be understood in some social context. They are, moreover, closely linked in practice. The principles of justice in a society help define the rights and obligations of people relative to each other and to the social institutions of which they are a part. These same principles define to whom and for what society's rewards ought to be distributed.

Fairness itself is often considered a part of justice. A situation is usually considered fair when no one feels exploited by participating in it or denied some legitimate claim.¹ Fairness, then, is very much a matter of common expectations about how people will be treated. People feel unfairly or unjustly treated when agreed-upon expectations are not fulfilled or when those in authority deny them their due. Quite clearly, then, injustice may occur through delinquent or abusive authority. It may also occur when those in authority are not recognized as having a right to that authority or when their decisions are out of keeping with the rules most people accept.

In education, as in other social institutions, authority and justice are closely linked. Parents, children, and political leaders have certain expectations for what schools should accomplish and implicitly recognize certain legitimate means for achieving these. Nearly everyone recognizes schools as institutions that dispense credits that can be redeemed later for economic and social rewards. Everyone recognizes also that the public school serves a larger public interest as well as the interests of individuals. Because public schools are called upon to serve so many individual, group, and public interests, questions of individual fairness and social justice often arise.

Each of the six parts in this book relates selected educational issues to the broader themes of individual and social justice. Thus issues having to do with equal opportunity, evaluation, student classification, curriculum, the politics of schooling, and democracy in schooling are all seen in the light of a broader concern with justice.

Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) focuses on the concept and practice of equal opportunity, including its relationship to the ideals of meritocracy and social utility and its application to minority groups in American culture. A historical overview is provided that introduces students to issues of justice and fairness and how these have been played out in the legal system and legislative action.

Part Two (Chapters 3 and 4) addresses the ways in which American public schooling has dealt with human diversity. Race, ethnicity, socioeconomic stratification, sex-role socialization, and gender are dealt with in the context of literacy and language acquisition and tracking. The readings provide a close-up and sometimes personal view of these issues.

In Part Three (Chapters 5 through 7) the concept of ideology is examined in detail as are its implications for the curriculum of public schools. These chapters deal at length with citizenship and the quest for efficiency in the management of public schooling. The shaping of behavior through the structure of the school and curriculum is foremost in our concerns as we look at the school as a culture within which students' expectations for themselves and others are formed.

Our concerns in Part Four (Chapters 8 through 10) cut across the ways in which the bureaucratic structure of schools has influenced educational decision making and the dilemmas this raises for those interested in local control, more "choice," and democratic decision making. Here we deal broadly with the problems of whom should the public schools serve.

¹John Rawls, "Symposium: Justice as Fairness," *Journal of Philosophy* 54 (October 1957): 657.

Part Five (Chapters 11 and 12) focuses on proposals for reform in the 1980s, 1990s, and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Like previous sections, it begins with a historical overview: a summary view of reforms from the 1890s, the Progressive era, and the 1950s. The common element of reforms in these watershed periods—debate over the role of schooling in the civic and economic welfare of the nation—is then traced through to proposals of the 1980s to the present. Issues of efficiency, quality, equity, and elitism are examined critically, and alternatives to present dominant trends are considered. Our discussion of current issues in education concludes by asking students to reconsider the historic conceptions of schooling in the United States and how they might aid in the resolution of current issues. We ask, also, that students critically reexamine the ideological foundations of American education to see how they converge with—and diverge from—democratic ideals.

In Part Six (Chapters 13 and 14) teaching as a profession is examined. Here we deal broadly with societal perceptions and pressures that affect teaching and with issues that are faced by teachers today such as allegations of child abuse, violence, and drugs in American schools. We also deal broadly with teacher accountability and long-term educational careers. The readings provide a realistic view of these issues.

George H. Wood
James J. Sheehan

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PART ONE

Schooling and Justice

Equality, Opportunity, and Justice

The central purpose of this chapter is to show the ways in which debates about education are related to concerns about social justice and equality. In considering how fairness, social justice, and education are related, we must deal with the purposes of schooling and education, how people expect to be treated, and how they actually are treated. Many issues, even when they appear to be limited to instruction, curriculum, and testing, actually involve questions of justice and fairness. Thus, for example, measures of achievement and aptitude, methods of instruction, and the grouping and classification of students are often based on particular conceptions of what is right or what is fair. Issues directly related to equal opportunity, the rights of the handicapped, bilingualism, and sex equity are more obviously related to the problem of achieving social justice in society.

The concept of justice is often associated with the terms *fairness* and *equality*. In the United States, for example, parties to a legal case are treated as equals, and the law must determine if someone has been wronged and how to rectify the situation. Justice, understood in this way, is the correct application of law so that arbitrariness and favoritism will be avoided. However, one could debate the following: Is justice achieved in our legal system, and if the aforementioned argument about law can be related to education, is there justice in education?

Jonathan Kozol, in *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, illustrates how public education varies not only from state to state but from city to city. Schools differ in the quality of teachers and equity in funding. In addition, in spite of landmark civil rights cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, some schools remain essentially segregated.¹ Segregation of schools, however, is no longer the major focus of public debate (as it once was). Scrutiny of test scores, lack of motivation, and dropout rates have become the major foci of debate. Our society clamors for the improvement of the public educational system and heralds this noble end through the lessening of disparities in student achievement. However, this lofty dream begs the question: If American public schools

are to provide all children with an equal education, how can this goal be achieved?²

Kozol paints the deplorable conditions of the neighborhoods in which many urban schools are located. Likewise, the educational facilities themselves need improvement. Kozol wonders “why we would agree to let our children go to school in places where no politician, or business CEO would dream of working.”³ He then continues with examples of poverty in rural Mississippi—stories about communities that are like third world nations and not like those expected to be found in the United States. Kozol describes public education in areas of New York and funding inequities that cause great disparities in education: lack of textbooks, materials, and hope. Our popular media and influential interest groups demand the raising of the academic bar, but seldom do they realize or acknowledge that all children do not have access to an equal education—or, perhaps more accurately, to a quality education.

Paulo Freire grapples with the issue of educational quality in his *Politics and Education*. He states, “Quality of education; education for quality; education and the quality of life—it doesn’t matter in which form we find the words; it always revolves around a political question that demands critical reflection and understanding; without these we are unable to comprehend either word.”⁴ Freire states that education cannot be neutral or objective. It is not a value-free concept. It will, however, reflect the values and ideologies of the community. Specifically, it will reflect the values and ideologies of those in power.

In the early 1990s, school districts collected over 40 percent of the property taxes in the United States.⁵ Because most districts receive the lion’s share of their financing from local property taxes, some argue for the states to regulate funding. The argument is that many state constitutions have a provision saying that the state will provide equal education for all students. Essentially, we have a calling for education equality not only in state constitutions but as a general public belief.⁶ However, problems arise because not all people control what is taught in schools and not all school funding is equal. So public education is left with two striking facts: (1) Educational funding varies from district to district. (2) Those who control local school districts have varied and often divergent political agendas.

In the case of education we have to ask, At what levels are educational needs to be provided for by a society? If education is considered necessary to good social order and political survival, for instance, then at what level and at what cost should it be offered? If education, on the other hand, is an item for consumption like other consumption items, such as cars or TVs, then there may be no obligation to offer it at all, or it may be appropriate simply to offer it to the highest bidder. It is easy to see that we are faced with a series of issues related to the level of education desirable in a society and the fairness with which it is distributed. To address these issues, we will next look at three basic concepts that have guided our thinking about education and justice in the United States: merit, equality, and opportunity.

MERIT, EQUALITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

Merit

In the United States the relationship between education and the problem of justice has usually been seen in terms of the concepts of merit, equality, and opportunity. Merit is important because it is often used as a criterion for determining one's "just desserts." It is often assumed that just rewards are made proportional to merit. Thus, for example, a person having more merit than another person should have greater rewards.

The concept of a society based on merit (a *meritocracy*) evolved historically as a reaction to aristocratic theories and practices, which assumed that rewards should be based on inherited social status and wealth. The idea of merit, on the other hand, rested on the assumption that the individual is free and capable of making decisions in his or her best interests—that is, the individual is free to choose and is morally responsible for that choice. In a meritocratic society it is effort and achievement that should be rewarded, providing the purposes and outcomes of the choices are worthy of reward.

The analogy most often used to illustrate the concept of meritocracy is that of a foot race. The assumption is that life is like a race, with winners and losers but with certain guarantees that the race will be run fairly. As in a race, it is performance that counts. The runners have talent and they work hard at what they do, but it is the combination of the two (talent and effort) that produces a winner. *Why* some finish and some win while others drop out and lose is not crucial to the idea of merit, although it is important to making a judgment about whether the race was won fairly.

Even though the analogy of a race is simplistic and does not begin to describe the complex situation we call life, let us assume that in the race for status, wealth, and honor there are winners and losers and that merit has something to do with the outcome of the race. If we assume that fair play is important and that the rewards for performance are "just" rewards, then we must ask questions about the *sources* of effort and talent and possible obstacles to a fair race. For example, is talent mostly a matter of genetics or environment, and if so, should an individual be rewarded when, in fact, the race was stacked in his or her favor at the outset? Are discrimination, favoritism, or poverty practically unsurmountable obstacles to the winning of the race? These questions will receive greater attention in the pages that follow.

Equal Opportunity

Proponents of meritocracy insist that some approximation of equal opportunity to win the race should exist. They see equal educational opportunity as a precondition for equal opportunity in general. They have tremendous faith in the efficacy of education to break down barriers to equal opportunity and to create an environment that will stimulate talent and shape attitudes necessary to putting forth maximum effort. Can education, and more specifically the school, really do this? In a society in which cultural backgrounds are diverse, in which

there is a tremendous range in wealth, in which the means for discovering and assessing talent are imperfect, and in which all may not agree that life is a race, to what extent can the school really help guarantee that the race is fair, that justice will be done, and that the rewards will go to the most deserving? Also, one must ask the question, Does an equal opportunity for education mean that students will receive an equal education once they are in school? The answer is no. As the old saying goes, “You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink.” Students entering schools are at different levels of social and cognitive development, teachers vary in quality, and schools differ in their approaches to education. While not all students have an equal education, they have an equal opportunity to receive an education—that is, the public educational system entitles every American-born child to receive a free education. Enabling students to have a free education provides for a good education. Is this enough? These are questions that should receive a great deal of attention, especially when educational reform is on national and state political agendas.

Our current way of thinking about equal opportunity and equal educational opportunity is of recent origin. Its modern foundation, however, lies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century liberalism. The liberal ideal emerged as a challenge to inherited wealth and status and the seemingly arbitrary authority that accompanied them. Thus one of the enduring concerns of the liberal ideal of equality has been that historical inequalities not be perpetuated from generation to generation. There is, in effect, an assumption that talent and ability are widely distributed and do not belong only to a privileged class.

Equal opportunity is a term now commonly associated with economic opportunity rather than with political opportunity. Prior to the late eighteenth century it was rare to find educators speaking of the economic benefits of schooling. The coming of the industrial revolution and the decline in importance of the family as the primary economic (production) unit, however, set the stage for greater concern about opportunity. Greater occupational mobility and the emergence of major economic (employing) institutions—corporations and large manufacturing concerns—beyond the family brought to the fore the importance of education to the national economic interest.

Nineteenth-century educational reformers in the United States were aware of the disadvantages under which children of the poor labored. Part of their intent was to offer such children greater opportunity for upward economic mobility. This concern was motivated both by humanitarian reasons and by a commitment to basic capitalist values and a capitalist system of production. The availability of education was the main concern in this early concept of equal educational opportunity. In the early nineteenth century, parents were not required to send their children to school. The role of the school was relatively passive, and the burden for taking advantage of the opportunity for schooling was on the family and the child. The coming of mass elementary schooling followed by compulsory attendance laws activated the school’s role in offering equal educational opportunity.⁷

With the rapid expansion of education at the secondary level in the early twentieth century, it became evident that the common curriculum was out of step with the realities of the occupational futures for most children. Most chil-

dren were not college-bound, and the traditional liberal arts and language-oriented curriculum of nineteenth-century secondary schools lacked relevancy for large numbers of children. Different “children had different occupational futures and equality of opportunity required providing different curricula for each type of student.”⁸ In other words, equal educational opportunity for an individual did not mean the *same* opportunity but opportunity that was fair relative to the type of student. Whether or not this was fair is highly questionable. As we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4, methods for classifying students and tracking them toward certain occupations were highly suspect and remain so.

Most thinking about equal educational opportunity in the first half of the twentieth century focused on providing students with educational opportunities that related to their future occupations. The development of the comprehensive high school with its differentiated curriculum (tracks and homogeneous groups) was seen by many as a way of bringing students of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds together while at the same time differentiating among them for purposes of instruction.

Not until the issue of racial equality was raised and the *Brown* decision was handed down by the United States Supreme Court in 1954 were Americans forced toward some basic reconsiderations of what it means to have equal educational opportunity. It was in this case that the “separate but equal” doctrine (different but comparable schools for different races) was declared unconstitutional. The *Brown* decision represented a fundamental shift in thinking about equality of educational opportunity. Prior to *Brown*, the emphasis had been on the “inputs” or resources of schooling. Gradually, emphasis shifted to the effects (“outputs”) of schooling. Inputs such as teacher and program quality and facilities have remained important concerns for assuring equality of educational opportunity, but the gradual ascendancy of the output view has created a new agenda for educators—for example, competency testing—and has given the problem of educational accountability new prominence.

Rethinking the Ideas of Opportunity and Merit

The concepts of merit and equality of opportunity just described were generally accepted by the American public. This is still the case. Their prominence, however, should not lead us to accept them uncritically. Since the era of civil rights and equity legislation beginning in the early 1960s, there has been renewed debate over the time-honored concepts of merit and equal opportunity and about liberalism as a theory of social justice. We begin our reexamination by looking at the work of American philosopher John Rawls, which expresses the rethinking of basic liberal ideals without abandoning them.

Rawls argued that an *unjust* society is not worth having. Justice, he said, does not depend on particular social norms or particular social purposes established by groups in a society. Even the general welfare of the society cannot override the individual’s right to justice. When speaking of Rawls’s theory, Michael Sandel observes that the rules of social cooperation must be established in such a way that “each person will have the fullest liberty to realize his aims and purposes compatible with an equal liberty for others.”⁹

Even though Rawls's own thinking was very much indebted to the liberal tradition, he made a strong challenge to our usual way of thinking about meritocracy. In his major work entitled *A Theory Justice* (1971), Rawls contended that to allow a "natural" system of rewards to emerge on the basis of individual talent and effort is morally *indefensible*. Even if equal opportunity is present in the sense of formal (legal) defenses against cheating or discrimination, the reward system is unfair, said Rawls. This is so because rewards are made on the basis of talents, characteristics, attitudes, and so forth that are controlled by factors (genetic and environmental) unrelated to an individual's choices. In other words, we do not deserve to be rewarded for characteristics that were an accident of birth. Thus, said Rawls, we must move beyond equal opportunity to a system that compensates or corrects for at least social and cultural disadvantages.

Rawls advocated a concept of sharing talent that assumed that there is a diversity of talents (assets) in the population. The benefits of these ought to be shared, he argued, in the pursuit of common purposes. Strangely, Rawls observed, there is no real basis for a person's deserving something at all. Instead, he said, social institutions set up expectations so that people receive benefits if they fulfill them. The real point of distributing society's benefits is *not* to reward deserving individuals for the characteristics or talents they possess; rather the system used to distribute the benefits is intended to facilitate the development of talents or resources that will serve the common interest.¹⁰

Rawls's theory of justice has come under attack by critics who claim that his idea of sharing would result in the exploitation of individuals having talents by those who do not have them. According to Robert Nozick there is another, less literal, way of thinking about talent and ability. Nozick argues that even though an individual may not *deserve* his or her talents, he or she nonetheless *has* them and is certainly entitled to benefit from them, at least more than anyone else. This is referred to as an "entitlement" theory of benefits. Talents and abilities cannot really be separated from the individual who has them. What is most important, explains Nozick, is the way the benefits came about—the way in which the individual was involved in their acquisition. If the way was just, then the individual deserves the benefits.

Nozick's position is a conservative apology for basing the distribution and worth of rewards and benefits in a society on the value of talents and skills in the free market. What he wishes to preserve is individual choice, and he wishes to make the distribution of benefits come from choices, not from some pattern imposed by government, for instance.¹¹ The benefits that come from an individual's talents and abilities, says Nozick, should go to that individual.

While the foot race provides one example of equity, another one pertaining to merit that may be more meaningful to the reader would be a student applying for a college scholarship. The following is a hypothetical example concerning an application for an academic scholarship. In this case, the scholarship committee is only interested in grade-point average. This being the case, if Student A has a 3.9/4.0 and Student B has a 3.8/4.0, the former will receive the scholarship. A simple solution to a simple problem. However, reflecting on your own experiences in college, do you think grade-point average should be the only factor?

For example, what if Student B participated more in extracurricular activities? Or perhaps Student B had to work two jobs whereas Student A did not engage in any other activity except study. When discussing merit, a key question is, What determines merit and who determines it? In our hypothetical example, if the scholarship committee determines that grade-point average is the only criteria, merit will be based solely on that. However, as in most cases of scholarships, there are multiple criteria and multiple committee members. Subsequently, merit is not often easily defined or determined. One must consider several facets of a scholarship such as academics, extracurricular activities, and letters of recommendation. Also, one must consider who will establish the criteria for merit—faculty, staff, or students?

Because the ideal of merit is central to many educational issues, we should view our commitment to it critically. Some strong objections may be made to the meritocratic ideal in general and to the concept of justice and fairness to which it is linked. These might begin with the challenge that there is no such thing as a free individual who, despite all obstacles, ultimately makes his or her own choices. The challenge here would be that individuality and the supposed freedom accompanying it always arise within some environment.

The argument would continue by pointing out that we are products of a set of circumstances, events, and influences. What we think of as freedom may be only the influence of a particular environment, such as wealthy parents and elite schools. Perhaps we are free only to the extent that the experiences and social and material conditions of our existence allow us to be free. We have only what our environment allows us to have. Under these conditions, the way we behave (our performances, successes, and failures) is very much the product of our environment. Thus children who grow up in an environment of poverty have severe limitations on their freedom of choice compared to those who grow up in an environment of abundance. To claim that we have really accomplished anything on our own is simply an illusion. Most of the credit ought to go to the people and circumstances that made us what we are.

This type of argument is a very basic challenge to the ideal of justice and meritocracy that is commonplace to us. Yet it must be seriously considered, for it shakes the foundations of our educational ideals and policy. There is a basic tension in the ideal of justice when it is understood as part of the tradition of liberalism. The tension may be expressed by the following question: In considerations of justice, which is to take priority, equality or the larger social good? This is a philosophic not a legal question, for it is assumed that equality before the law (fair administration of justice) exists. It is a question every educational institution and system of government must face.

RESPONSES TO EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES

Having set forth some of the basic dilemmas we must face when dealing with questions of individual fairness and social justice, we can now view the problem historically to see how American society worked out these matters in the past. It is important to realize that matters of equality, fairness, and

justice are not simply worked out in the abstract. They are filtered through the realities of history and human behavior. For this reason some historical background is necessary to fully appreciate their significance.

Equality, Race, and Integration

The issues involving the relationships between education and race are a direct outgrowth of the ideas of equality and opportunity. Fueled by long-standing civil rights abuses, issues of equality and race came to the forefront of American education in the 1950s and led to judicial intervention in the schooling process. To understand the recent history of the concept of equal educational opportunity, we must place it within the historical context of racism in the United States.

The psychology of racism is complex, but the facts of racism are easily identifiable and explainable. If blacks in the South had ever been able to show their real strength in numbers at the polls, the process of governance in the South would have been drastically altered. For years, literacy tests, poll taxes, white primaries, gerrymandered voting districts to dilute the black vote, and grandfather clauses had disfranchised blacks and kept political control in the hands of whites. Segregated schooling, and in many cases no schooling for blacks, was a simple extension of the policy of exclusion and disfranchisement in the political arena.

The constitutional mandate to desegregate schools was laid down in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). In *Brown* the Court was faced with an extremely difficult fact-finding situation regarding the psychological effects of racial segregation. The Court concluded that children were indeed deprived of equal educational opportunity by virtue of their segregation. Segregation by race, said the Court, "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." The United States Supreme Court explicitly rejected the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which had stood since 1896, and concluded the "doctrine of 'separate-but-equal' has no place."¹² It should be recognized that this judgment was related not exclusively to schools but to other public facilities as well. The underlying legal premise of *Plessy v. Ferguson* lies in the fact that different races had different facilities and these facilities were to be equal. In reality, these facilities were not.

Not every county or region was affected in the same way by the *Brown* decision. White politicians in so-called black belts of the South were intransigent in their opposition to integration. The United States Supreme Court and the federal judiciary system walked a fine line between pushing too hard, which would have led to widespread violence, and pushing too little, which would have resulted in only token desegregation.¹³

The years immediately following the landmark decision of *Brown* served to highlight the absence of equality of educational opportunity and the miserable performance of public schools in addressing great discrepancies in academic achievement between white and black children. The racism inherent in segre-

gated schools before 1954 persisted in the decade following. Across the South and Southwest, achievement tests in reading showed black youth in the elementary grades lagging behind white youth by one to three and a half grade levels. A similar pattern was apparent in mathematics. The Commission on Civil Rights reported in 1962 that black students lagged one to two grade levels behind white students. Desegregated schools responded to these differences in achievement by “initiating or expanding grouping and tracking systems.” The results were there for all to see: College preparatory tracks were almost all white, while basic tracks were mainly black.¹⁴

In the North, black children had long attended segregated schools that were “systematically inferior.” One researcher estimated that in 1952 “about a fourth of black school children in northern elementary schools and about half in high school were ‘physically integrated.’ ” Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s segregated schooling increased, sometimes as a result of residential segregation but more commonly as a result of gerrymandering school boundaries. The list of cities in which systematic segregation was present was long. The cases of Detroit; Philadelphia; New York; St. Louis; Oak Park, Michigan; Berkeley, California; Portland, Oregon; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Chicago were the most publicized and documented.¹⁵

As in the South, some of the segregation was “by school,” but the more insidious was within. In St. Louis schools all high school students were distributed in one of three tracks. Comparisons of black and white students showed that in predominantly black schools the numbers in the lowest track were six times the number in predominantly white schools. Standardized achievement tests given in the cities mentioned above consistently reported black students lagging one to one and a half grade levels behind white students.¹⁶

Following passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, attacks on segregated schools began anew. Both the Department of Justice and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) took on the task of integration. In the process they offended many recalcitrant local school districts where racism was deeply embedded in community values. These districts often could not demonstrate that they had actually produced a racial mix in their schools.

Meyer Weinberg has pointed out that in the four years following the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act much more desegregation occurred than in the years spanning the period from *Brown* to the Civil Rights Act itself. In the latter years of the 1960s, boycotts, sit-ins, demonstrations, and picketing protested segregated schools in unprecedented numbers. The social drama played out on the stage of desegregation also was accompanied by an important shift in the thinking of the federal courts.

Using the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, *Brown* had forbidden states to compel or authorize segregation of public schools. Yet the reasoning in *Brown* was basically negative in that it forbade the state to force children to attend segregated schools. For years this was interpreted by other courts to mean “state neutrality allowing ‘freedom of choice.’ ” Gradually, however, neutrality shifted to affirmative action. The key case in this important shift in constitutional doctrine was *Green v. County School Board of New Kent*

County (1968). The Supreme Court in this case ruled that school boards have “the affirmative duty to take whatever steps might be necessary to convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch.”¹⁷ *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* (1969) reaffirmed the obligation of every school district to terminate dual school systems.¹⁸ This was followed in 1971 by the famous *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education* case, which spoke specifically to the connection between residential segregation and school segregation. The Court did not allow administrative convenience or residential patterns to interfere with the necessity to achieve fairness.¹⁹

When the course of desegregation litigation made its way to large urban areas—in both South and North—it faced a problem that, although legally similar, was qualitatively and quantitatively different. Patterns of segregated housing and deeply entrenched loyalties to neighborhood schools made pupil reassignment exceedingly difficult. Arguments in favor of the strategy of busing seemed commonsensical but, in fact, had little intellectual or practical merit, since they did not attack the problem of racism at its basic psychological and cultural levels. It was busing as an issue that brought to light the depth of racism in American life.

In 1972, the percentages of black schoolchildren in selected cities attending schools with more than 50 percent black students were New York, 83.5 percent; Los Angeles, 91.9 percent; Chicago, 98.3 percent; Philadelphia 93.3 percent; and Detroit, 92.8 percent.²⁰ One of the most widely publicized failures to integrate schools in a northern city emerged from Judge W. Arthur Garrity’s 1974 finding of intentional school segregation in the city of Boston. The South Boston and Charlestown neighborhoods turned out to be the major problems and represented in stark form the distinct and divisive ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic residential divisions in this historic city.

With the opening of school in September 1974, integration proceeded peacefully in most of Boston, but the pairing of South Boston High (Irish) and Roxbury (black) for purposes of busing led to violence and public expression of racial hatred in these two areas. The violence did not subside quickly and continued into the second year (second phase) of the integration plan, when mandatory busing affected approximately 21,000 students. The seemingly inevitable “white flight” began and continued during the period from 1974 to 1976. Students, indeed, did ride buses, but many also chose (with the support of their parents) absenteeism or enrollment in nonpublic schools as better alternatives.²¹

The years 1974 and 1978 were peak periods for school desegregation cases, but overall there has been a steady decline since 1975. Melvin Jarvis has pointed out that the reason for this probably stems from decisions by federal courts to “relinquish their supervision over the districts which still had suits pending.”²² In effect these decisions meant that the Supreme Court and appellate courts no longer saw a constitutional obligation to be involved.

By the end of the 1970s a general change in the public’s attitude toward integrated schools was observable in the South. In 1959 opinion polls registered a 72 percent white opposition rate to integration, even when only a few blacks

were attending. By 1975 only 15 percent of the whites polled opposed integration. Even when those polled were asked if they objected to integration when a school was “half” black, the opposition rate still dropped from 83 to 38 percent in these years. It is significant, though, that whites overwhelmingly rejected busing as a way to achieve integration. They did so by 75 to 80 percent.²³

The situation in the North, particularly the Northeast, showed continued resistance to desegregation. As in the South, opposition to busing was widespread. A variety of factors contributed to this, including discrimination in location of new schools, resistance to changing “neighborhood” school policy after a segregated school system had developed, and school board failure to adopt proposed integration plans. These factors, however, overlaid major demographic changes that altered the black-white ratios of central cities. Whites increasingly moved to suburbs, and cities in the Northeast became increasingly black. Not all cities, of course, were affected equally by these changes. Some, particularly in the Northwest, had small minority constituencies. These were desegregated easily. In others, white flight was accompanied by black flight—middle-class and professional blacks moving out of the inner city—so that the major problem became poverty, not racism.²⁴

The issue of busing and attempts to desegregate American schools forced Americans to reconsider the purposes of American public schooling. Because busing collided with residential patterns—which were, in turn, the basis for neighborhood schools—school officials, parents, and courts had to consider the basic problem of justice in America and how that ideal was to be reconciled with freedom of choice and community values. Despite the centralization of authority at the state level and large amounts of federal funding for education, the school itself is perceived by many to be an extension of family and community life. As such, it is thought to represent the values embedded in them. (It is interesting that in many cases resegregation within schools occurs once desegregation has taken place.) Historically, the school has paid tribute to the meritocratic ideal with its emphasis on fair play and just rewards. Yet that ideal itself has seldom transcended the community values of which it is a part. In the 1990s, there was a retrenchment concerning busing. Many schools began to go back to being neighborhood schools because of the cost of maintaining city-wide busing.

The history of education for Mexican Americans was marked by many of the same difficulties as for African Americans. Even though “Mexican American” is an ethnic not a racial classification, federal courts, for purposes of education, treated ethnicity in the same manner as race. In *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District* (1970) Mexican Americans were identified as an “ethnic minority with a past pattern of discrimination.” In *United States v. Texas Education Agency* (1972) a federal appeals court, referring to *Brown*, said: “We see no reason to believe that ethnic segregation is any less detrimental than racial segregation.”²⁵

Separate and inferior school facilities, refusal to acknowledge Spanish as a “legitimate” language of instruction, and discriminatory practices in grouping and tracking had been present since the early twentieth century at least.²⁶ In

many instances no schooling was provided for Mexican Americans. The case of Texas is well documented for the twentieth century. Not unexpectedly, says Meyer, "deprivation and failure were built into the Texas public school system." Ability grouping was a persistent feature of public schooling that adversely affected Mexican American children.²⁷

The long history of inequitable treatment and segregation resulting in high secondary school dropout rates and low scores on reading achievement tests was documented in the six-volume United States Civil Rights Commission report titled *Mexican American Education Study* (1971–1974).²⁸ The commission concluded that the education of Mexican Americans had been characterized by

(1) a high degree of segregation, (2) extremely low academic achievement, (3) a predominance of exclusionary practices by schools, and (4) a discriminatory use of public finance.²⁹

Public financing, it said, was discriminatory because it

(1) implicitly assumed that Mexican-American children required no more than Anglo children; (2) guaranteed, nevertheless that Anglo children would receive significantly more from the state; and (3) forced heavy dependence on local property taxes that were incapable of supporting equal, let alone equitable, expenditures.³⁰

EXTENDING BROWN

Funding

Today, virtually no part of the educational process is untouched by some major court decision involving equal opportunity and equity. In fact, virtually every important aspect of school policy has been affected by federal court decisions. Traditionally, federal courts had not addressed educational concerns. Prior to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case, the federal courts addressed fewer than 300 cases. By the 1970s, federal court cases reached their zenith.³¹ Jarvis notes that in the ten-year period from 1973 to 1982, there were at least 1,370 important cases (137 per year) affecting the "organization, administration and programs of the public schools."³² Since then, federal court cases have stabilized and in fact declined, except for church/state issues and the rights of individuals with disabilities, which have increased substantially. This astonishing figure should give pause to anyone considering the degree to which local school systems guide the education of their students. In the succeeding pages we will take a brief historical look at the ways in which litigation has affected dimensions of the equality of opportunity problem other than segregation.

Following litigation over segregation, it took little time for issues of equity to appear that were related to school funding. There was an assault on uneven pupil expenditures within school districts and among school districts within the same state. In *Hobson v. Hansen II* (1971) a federal court addressed the prob-

lem of unequal funding within the Washington, D.C., school district by ordering the following:

Per pupil expenditures for all teachers' salaries and benefits from the regular D.C. budget in any elementary school shall not deviate more than plus and minus five percent from the mean of all elementary schools.³³

Problems with equity in funding were apparent in a number of states. Courts in New Jersey, California, and Connecticut all presumed a relationship between cost and quality. They reasoned that disparities in funding caused disparities in quality and therefore contributed to unequal educational opportunities. Costs and quality were *not* presumed to be causally related by courts in Texas, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Thus, court decisions about equity in funding differed from state to state.

The best known of these cases were *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) in California and *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* (1973) in Texas, where the state system of school financing was challenged. In *Serrano v. Priest* the California Supreme Court decided that the state's system of financing public education discriminated against pupils in property-poor districts. These students, it was determined, did not receive the equal protection of the laws of the state.³⁴

Hopes by plaintiffs challenging unequal funding in Texas, however, were crushed by the *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* decision. Interestingly, it was found in *Rodriguez* that there were inequities in the Texas school financing system. It was determined, however, that these did not violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Court's position was that the state's foundation program (state funding for local schools) provided at least a minimum funding and that no one was completely deprived of educational opportunities.³⁵

From the beginning of the 1980s through the middle of the 1990s, interest groups in Texas, Wisconsin, and Illinois began to question the manner in which funding for public schools was derived. In Texas, the *Edgewood v. Kirby* case (1989) and the *Edgewood v. Meno* case (1995) illustrate the interaction between the courts and legislature that led to a new system of school funding.³⁶

In the late 1990s, the issue of school funding remained contentious in other states. *Brigham v. State of Vermont* (1997) declared Vermont's school funding system unconstitutional. The Vermont legislature then sought to equalize school funding by providing a minimum of \$5,000 per pupil, guaranteed by the state.³⁷ However, questions lingered: What if individual districts wanted to raise more money per pupil? If they did so, would the state funding schema still be constitutional?

On March 24, 1997, in *DeRolph v. State*, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Ohio's system of school funding unconstitutional and in violation of Section 2, Article VI, of the Ohio Constitution, "which mandates a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state." The court provided the following rationale to the state assembly:

By our decision today, we send a clear message to lawmakers: the time has come to fix the system. Let there be no misunderstanding. Ohio's public school

financing scheme must undergo a complete systematic overhaul . . . The funding laws reviewed today are inherently incapable of achieving their constitutional purpose.³⁸

The Ohio Supreme Court required the state to devise a new funding system that would recognize a single statewide system of public education. The court also emphasized that education was to be "placed high on the state budget priorities." The court pointed out that money should not be taken from wealthier communities and given to poor ones. The court gave the legislature one year to create a new and fair system of school funding.³⁹ However, the legislature was not able to meet the court's deadline. In January 2001, the Ohio Supreme Court once again declared the method of school funding unconstitutional and said immediate action must be taken to correct it.

Equity in school funding will continue to be a topic of debate in schools in the twenty-first century. The reason for this is that most schools finance children's education based on an outdated method. Traditionally, school funding has been derived primarily from local property taxes; the next largest contribution comes from the state, and finally federal support. The inherent problem lies in the fact that not all property is of equal value. For example, the property taxes on businesses in Silicon Valley would be far more lucrative to the local school district than the tax base of a host of small family-owned farms in North Dakota.

Bilingual Education

Bilingual education is one of those issues that cuts across America's cultural landscape. At the heart of the issue of bilingual education is the question of power. Like the control of information, the control of language enables control of the socialization process itself. The earliest systemwide attempt at bilingual education in the United States occurred simultaneously with the rapid expansion of common schooling in the nineteenth century. This first attempt was in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1840. Acting in response to political pressure as well as a concern for the assimilation of the children of immigrant German families, the state of Ohio made it lawful to provide German schools for youth desiring to learn German, or English and German together.

The first real revival of bilingual education did not occur until 1961, when Dade County, Florida, instituted a program for Cuban refugees. Two years later, the Ford Foundation supported this effort with a major grant. A significant piece of federal legislation, the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), followed in 1968. A second Bilingual Education Act (1974) was more specific. Instruction was to be given "with appreciation for the cultural heritage of such children" and was to "be in all courses or subjects of study which will allow a child to progress effectively through the educational system."⁴⁰

The judicial test of bilingual legislation came with the Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). This case was originally brought by Chinese students against the San Francisco Unified School District, where approximately 1,800 Chinese students did not receive services to meet their linguistic needs. It

was claimed that the result of instruction in a language they could not understand was a denial of a minimally adequate education. When the case eventually reached the Supreme Court, the Court reasoned that offering the same opportunities for Chinese students as for English-speaking students did not constitute equal treatment. In effect, the students had fewer opportunities because of their language differences.⁴¹

Since *Lau*, the bilingual education movement has encountered resistance because of the expense of bilingual programs, the mixed research results on their effectiveness, and the debate over the extent to which bilingual programs work against the acquisition of proficiency in English. The decision in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981), involving discrimination against Mexican American students in the Raymondville, Texas, Independent School District, did not find discriminatory practices. The Court did, however, find that the school system was not taking appropriate action to help students overcome language barriers.

Attacks on the strategy of bilingual education as a way to provide equal educational opportunity have increased markedly since 1980. Criticisms of the bilingual strategy are not only technical but reflect the stormy history of the assimilation of immigrant groups into the dominant Anglo-American culture.

Several opposing views about bilingual education have surfaced. Some believe that bilingual education threatens the dominance of English. In the 1980s, Senator S. I. Hayakawa proposed an amendment to make English the official language of the United States and to prohibit state and federal agencies from using other languages than English.⁴² Proponents of bilingual education disagreed. This debate raged in the 1990s. California passed Proposition 227, which asserts the state's nonresponsibility to educate undocumented immigrants. The funding issue remains at the core of this debate. It is obvious that California spends a lot of money on education. "Bilingual education in California is a vast industry—about 1.3 million children attend bilingual classes at a cost of more than 5 billion a year. (In the United States 2.6 million students are enrolled in bilingual classes. There is, therefore, a financial incentive to keep the system.)"⁴³ When taxpayers believe their children are not directly benefiting from school taxes, they become disgruntled and often protest (at least in their minds) about the misuse of these educational funds.

Some argue that bilingualism is not even benefiting the students. "In 1997, in the Los Angeles Unified School District, 70 percent of the students are Latinos, and educational levels are low because of underfinancing, overcrowding, busing, and bilingualism. Lack of skill in English, in particular, is a critical barrier to Latino success. Most Spanish-speaking immigrants who come to the United States have low education and skill levels and speak little or no English."⁴⁴ But even the children of immigrants born in the United States do not always acquire proficiency in English, and they drop out earlier than others. So the question arises, If the dropout rate is high anyway, why spend the money? One can see the push against the large expenditures for bilingual education and the exclusion of undocumented immigrants. However, one wonders what will happen to these children who are not admitted to school or provided instruction in their primary language.

Stephen Krashen argues that many of the arguments against bilingual education are “bogus.” He states that bilingual education may prevent students from dropping out, that education has more value in the primary language, and that public opinion is not anti-bilingual education.⁴⁵ The debate will continue to rage as immigration continues to increase in the United States in the twenty-first century.

Students with Special Needs

Like bilingual education, education for the handicapped has been a direct extension of *Brown* and subsequent court decisions involving equal opportunity. We find, again, the courts intervening and determining the course of educational policy. The actual exclusion of an “entire class of children from access to education” was taken up in the landmark case of *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1972). This case challenged a Pennsylvania statute that “treated severely retarded students as ‘incapable of benefitting’ from publicly subsidized instruction.”⁴⁶ The court noted, however, that all children are capable of benefiting from education, even if the result is simply being less dependent on others. The case of *Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia* (1972), which quickly followed *PARC*, extended the right to education to all handicapped children, not just the retarded.

The legislative result of this litigation was the passage of a series of laws elaborating and protecting the right to education of the handicapped. The best known of these was the Education for All Handicapped Act of 1975, better known as PL (Public Law) 94-142. The most critical provision of PL 94-142, the individualized education plan (IEP), was upheld in a 1982 United States Supreme Court decision. Thus, even though it was found that the Hendrick Hudson Central School District did not have the obligation to provide Amy Rowley with a sign language interpreter, the case affirmed that the child’s “individualized education plan (IEP) should be reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade.”⁴⁷ PL 94-142 went further than any previous legislation in *prescribing* how an educational experience should be designed. For this reason, and because it has been a very expensive piece of legislation, its provisions have been much debated.

Legislation continues to have a major impact on the treatment of children with special needs. PL 94-142, renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990, focuses on three distinct factors: (1) the emphasis on the individual/first person as well as changing the term “handicapped student” to “child/student/individual with a disability,” (2) a further distinction of children with autism and traumatic brain injury, and (3) a transitional plan to be included in all students’ IEPs by age 16.⁴⁸

In 1990, PL 101-336, the Americans with Disabilities Act, was passed to provide protection for individuals with disabilities. This was similar to legislation that had been passed in the past in reference to race, sex, and religion. In 1997, PL 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, amended PL 94-142. While recognizing the success of IDEA, the legislation includes these new

amendments: (1) strengthening the role of parents in the educative process, (2) providing ways for greater mediation between parents and educators and providing greater leeway in disciplining students with disabilities, and (3) new funding formulas.⁴⁹

One of the major points of confusion in the special education debate is the interpretation of least restrictive environment (LRE). Some believe restrictive is synonymous with segregation; others believe it includes academic and social interaction with disabled and nondisabled peers.⁵⁰ The passage of a host of public laws during the 1990s in regard to individuals with special needs shows the attempt to integrate those with disabilities into the classroom.

Equality and Equity for Women

It must be remembered that the problem of equity for women has its context in both women's rights and civil rights. Historically, women reformers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone in the 1840s compared the condition of women to that of slaves. The civil rights movement of the 1950s provided an important impetus to women's rights, although the leadership of the two movements was not the same. Antiwar protest and counterculture groups, too, helped to create a climate of liberation. The formation of a national Commission on the Status of Women in 1961 and the subsequent formation of many similar state commissions helped to bring the more conservative element into the women's rights movement. Out of this wave of interest, the National Organization for Women (NOW) eventually emerged as the most powerful organization seeking equality and equity for women.

The chief educational impact of the women's rights movement has been felt through Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. Title IX is to women what the Voting Rights Act (1965) and the Civil Rights Act (1964) are to blacks. It "prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities" receiving federal funding.⁵¹ The purpose of Title IX was to guarantee equal access for women in the academic world and in athletics. As part of the attempt to legislate sex equity, Congress also passed the Women's Educational Equity Act, the purpose of which was to provide funds to eliminate sex stereotyping in educational programs, including vocational education. Amendments to the Vocational Education Act in 1976 also were geared to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping.⁵²

The Nixon administration was slow to enforce Title IX, and it took three years before regulations were approved by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Not until 1982 did the Supreme Court rule on the HEW regulations in *North Haven Board of Education v. Bell*. The issue in this case was whether the statute covered employment. The Court held that the legislation was intended to cover both students and employees in federally funded projects. Significant as this was from an institutional standpoint, the greatest difficulty with the decision was that it was "program-specific." In other words, it applied only in cases where discrimination was found in a federally funded program. The Court, however, did not define "program" and the eventual implications of the case were not clear.⁵³

In addition to Title IX, federal courts have addressed sex discrimination in other contexts, such as single-sex public high schools, admission to special college-preparatory public high schools, and extracurricular activities. Most of these cases were brought before the courts because of alleged violations of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. *Vorckheimer v. School District of Philadelphia* (1976) was a particularly troublesome case because it challenged the prerogative of a school district to operate a single-sex, very selective high school.

The United States Court of Appeals upheld the policy of Philadelphia that permitted such schools, as did the Supreme Court of the United States a year later. Neither court was unanimous, however. The dissenting opinion by Circuit Judge Gibbons argued that the "separate but equal" principle of *Plessy* ought not to be revived to support sexual discrimination. Moreover, said Gibbons, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 prohibited as Congress intended, a dual system of single-sex public schools that violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.⁵⁴

In *Berkelman v. San Francisco Unified School District* (1974) the United States Court of Appeals heard arguments on admission standards to a "preferred" public high school. In this case the San Francisco Unified School District used a double standard for admission to Lowell High School—a standard that used for admission a higher grade-point average for females than for males. The school board justified this policy on the basis of balancing the number of males and females in the high school. The court, however, found that the policy was a violation of the equal protection clause.⁵⁵

In 1978 a United States District Court heard a case involving female participation on an interscholastic basketball team in Yellow Springs School District, Ohio. This case, *Yellow Springs School District v. Ohio High School Athletic Association* (1978), occurred because the school board refused to allow two female students to participate on the Morgan Middle School basketball team. The girls had competed for and won places on the team, but the school board had denied them membership because a rule of the Ohio High School Athletic Association prohibited mixed-gender interscholastic athletic competition. The association threatened to exclude the team from competition unless the females were dropped from the team.

Under this threat the school board removed them and created, instead, a separate girls' basketball team. In its decision, the court concluded that girls "must be given the opportunity to compete with boys in interscholastic contact sports if they are physically qualified."⁵⁶ The court said that separate teams could be satisfactory but could not be used as an "excuse to deprive qualified girls positions on formerly all boy teams, regardless of the sport."⁵⁷ The court concluded:

It may well be that there is a student today in an Ohio high school who lacks only the proper coaching and training to become the greatest quarterback in professional football history. Of course the odds are astronomical against her, but isn't she entitled to a fair chance to try?⁵⁸

In the 1990s, there were several movements toward integrating women's studies programs and nonsexist education to combat sexism. Nonsexist education attempts to inject female perspectives as well as male perspectives throughout the entire school curriculum. Although these movements are underway, several educators acknowledge that there is still a long way to go.

Myra and David Sadker state that, historically, female students have sometimes been "locked and barred" from education. However, today it appears that education is "wide open" for girls to pursue any form of education. But, "[t]oday's schoolgirls face subtle and insidious gender lessons, micro-inequities that appear seemingly insignificant when looked at individually but that have a powerful cumulative impact."⁵⁹ In spite of efforts, inequities still exist between the teaching of males and females.

Equality, Equity, and Quality

The rapid pace of social change in the United States has forced educators to reexamine the relationships of equality, equity, and quality. The so-called choice issue, which we will examine more thoroughly in Chapter 8, has also forced educators to think more about the relationship between quality and parental involvement in schooling. Recently, James Coleman and his associates examined the ways in which community life and school achievement are related in public and private schools.

In his work on families and schools, Coleman focuses our attention on the disruption of American families and its effect on both academic achievement and equal educational opportunity. Says Coleman:

If the problem of the school a hundred years ago was the resistance of strong and inwardly focused families to the school's goals, the problem of today is the passivity of families too weak, broken, or unstable to support the school in its task. The decline in school achievement that has occurred in the United States since the mid-1960s has been seen as a deficiency of the schools. It might, however, be more a result of deficiencies in families as children experience the consequences of marital disruption and other problems of the modern family.⁶⁰

One of the emergent patterns in American family life has been the division of American families into two large groups: those occupied with making money and those occupied with having children. The former, in fact, has become so noticeable that the acronym DINKS (Double Income, No Kids) has been coined. The net result of this uneven distribution of children in American families is that the income available for raising children relative to that available to adults has declined. In short, more children live in poverty than ever before.⁶¹

The negative effects of poverty on academic success are well documented. They can be traced to (1) the discrepancies between the attitudes and values of family socialization and those behaviors required for success in schools and (2) the low level or absence of educational materials in impoverished families. In *Public and Private Schools: The Impact of Communities* (1987), Coleman and Hoffer

document the effect of what they call “social capital” (the norms, social networks, and relationships between adults and children) on school achievement.

In their work comparing Catholic and public schools, Coleman and others also addressed the “social capital” of community life beyond the family. They concluded that the greater success of school attendees in Catholic schools was due to the supportive nature of community life outside the school. In other words, the values and supportive relationships within the community (in this case, church and school community) were extended to life within the school. The most dramatic practical effect of this support, according to the study, was a lower dropout rate for students in Catholic schools.

If one extends the findings of Coleman and associates to matters of educational policy and strategy, one thing, at least, seems clear: Schools must find ways of tapping into or recreating the “social capital” of family and community life. To simply add “school” resources does not address the most fundamental problem of school life. Instead, such things as attentiveness to and personal interest in the welfare of the child must be transplanted into school life in general. These are the intangibles that can often make a positive contribution to greater school success.⁶²

CONCLUSION

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka as well as later court cases involving affirmative action, and the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the Open Housing Act of 1968 launched a revolution in the role of the judiciary in American society. Increasingly, judges departed from their traditional adjudicatory roles to quasi-legislative and policy-making roles through court decrees. As the lines between legislative and judicial roles became more blurred, so did the distinction between individual rights and the collective rights of larger constituencies such as racial and ethnic minorities.⁶³ These trends in American government have been profoundly felt in American education.

Thus far we have seen that the question of justice and its relationship to education covers a wide range of judicial and legislative activity. Since the 1950s, federal and state courts have taken a much more active role in guiding educational policy at all levels. Teachers and administrators have had to be increasingly mindful about whether their behavior in a particular situation might be considered unfair or discriminatory. Virtually no aspect of a teacher’s life today has gone untouched by court decisions and legislation related to civil rights.

The court decisions and legislative activity that have directly affected schools in recent years are extensions of larger philosophic issues that have come to the forefront of American education. The central issues, we have seen, are those of social justice and fairness. These, in turn, are very much related to other fundamental concepts in our culture such as merit, equality, and equal

opportunity. These concepts are guideposts for determining how rewards are distributed to individuals in our society. Each also has an important place in our conception of how education functions in the overall reward system and how community life itself affects education.

NOTES

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² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴ Paulo Freire, *Politics and Education*, trans. Pia Lindquist Wong (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1998), p. 43.

⁵ Glenn W. Fischer, *The Worst Tax? A History of the Property Tax in America* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), p. 212.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ James Coleman, "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity," *Harvard Educational Review* 68 (Winter 1968): 137.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

¹¹ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), Chapter 7, *passim*.

¹² *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 74 Sup. Ct. 686 (1954).

¹³ Harvie Wilkinson III, *From Brown to Bakke: The Supreme Court and School Integration, 1954–1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 76–84.

¹⁴ Meyer Weinberg, *A Chance to Learn: The History of Race and Education in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 98–99.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 102–103.

¹⁷ 391 U.S. 430, 88 Sup. Ct. 1698; as in Arval A. Morris, *The Constitution and American Education*, 2nd ed., American Casebook Series (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1980), p. 763.

¹⁸ 396 U.S. 19, 90 Sup. Ct. 29; as in Morris, *Constitution*, p. 727.

¹⁹ 402 U.S. 1, 91 Sup. Ct. 1267; as in Morris, *Constitution*, pp. 733–741.

²⁰ Wilkinson, *Brown to Bakke*, p. 202.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 203–215.

²² Melvin E. Jarvis, "Current Trends in Federal Court Intervention in Public Education" paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, April 23–27, 1984), p. 20.

²³ Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, *The Politics of Education: Schools in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1982), pp. 260–261.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 261–265.

²⁵ 324 F. Supp. 599; 462 F.2d 848; as in Weinberg, *A Chance to Learn*, p. 174.

²⁶ Weinberg, *Chance to Learn*, Chapter 4.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 147.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 150–151.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 177.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 164.

³¹ Martha M. McCarthy, Nelda H. Cambron-McCabe, and Stephen B. Thomas, *Public School Law: Teachers' and Students' Rights* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), p. 24.

³² Jarvis, "Current Trends," p. 9.

³³ Arthur E. Wise, *Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of the American Classroom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 136. For a survey of the U.S. Supreme Court's activity in educational matters, see E. Edmund Reutter, Jr., *The Supreme Court's Impact on Public Education* (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa and National Organization of Legal Problems of Education, 1982).

³⁴ David L. Kirp, "Law, Politics, and Equal Educational Opportunity: The Limits of Judicial Involvement," *Harvard Educational Review* 47 (1977): 122.

³⁵ Reutter, *Supreme Court's Impact*, p. 166.

³⁶ Allan R. Odden and Lawrence O. Picus, *School Finance: A Policy Perspective*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), pp. 35–36.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 243.

³⁸ The Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, *Basket of Essential Learning Resources for the 21st Century* (Columbus, OH: October 26, 1999), pp. 15–16.

³⁹ The Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, *Preparing Ohio Children for the 21st Century: Public School Reform and School Funding Remedy Proposal* (Columbus, OH: April 1997), pp. 1–7.

⁴⁰ Theodore Anderson and Mildred Boyer, *Bilingual Schooling in the United States* (Austin, TX: National Educational Laboratory Publishers, 1978), pp. 21–24; Herbert Teitelbaum and Richard Hiller, "Bilingual Education: The Legal Mandate," *Harvard Educational Review* 47 (1977): 139–141.

⁴¹ *Lau v. Nichols*, 94 Sup. Ct. 786 (1974).

⁴² Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn, *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 246.

⁴³ Peter Duignan, *Bilingual Education: A Critique* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution, 1998), p. 40.

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⁴⁵ Stephen D. Krashen, *Condemned Without a Trial: Bogus Arguments Against Bilingual Education* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999).

⁴⁶ 343 F. Supp. 279.

⁴⁷ *Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley*, 50 U.S.L.W. 4925, 4932–4933 (U.S. June 28, 1982), 102 Sup. Ct. 3034.

⁴⁸ Mitchell Yell, *The Law and Special Education* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁰ Jean B. Crockett and James M. Kauffman, *The Least Restrictive Environment: Its Origins and Interpretations in Special Education* (Mawah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1999), p. 4.

⁵¹ Reutter, *Supreme Court's Impact*, p. 176.

⁵² "An Interview on Title IX," *Harvard Educational Review* 49 (November 1979): 521.

⁵³ Reutter, *Supreme Court's Impact*, p. 176.

⁵⁴ Morris, *Constitution and American Education*, pp. 829, 832.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 844.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 849.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 850.

⁵⁹ Myra and David Sadker, *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls* (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. ix.

⁶⁰ James S. Coleman, *Equality and Achievement in Education* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), p. 308.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 328.

⁶² Ibid., p. 338.

⁶³ Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: The Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960–1972* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 467–468, 470.

Readings on Equal Educational Opportunity

The readings in this chapter show in chronological order the ideal and practice of equal opportunity in American education. Together they represent a common concern with the problem of inequality and fair opportunity. Their treatment of the varying dimensions of this problem helps us to see its complexity as well as hope for resolution.

In the first selection, Horace Mann, one of the great common school reformers of the nineteenth century, argues the case for equal access to schools. His arguments should be understood in the context of attempts to extend elementary education to all children in this period. As did other reformers of his time, Mann saw opportunity as accessibility. Once access to school was provided, it was an individual's responsibility to make the most of school experiences. Close attention should be paid to Mann's arguments about the relationship between education and individual economic mobility as well as education and public welfare.

Excerpts from the landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) and the special education legislation Public Law 105-17 (PL 94-142 revised, 1997) illustrate the extension of civil rights and due process decisions to groups other than racial minorities. Litigation has been extensive in the area of the handicapped since the early 1970s.

Coleman's essay on "Equal Schools or Equal Students?" reflects the growing concern over whether it is sufficient to talk about equal educational opportunity only in terms of inputs—resources going into the educational system. From the mid-1960s on, educational reformers increasingly thought of opportunity in terms of outputs (performance), not merely inputs. Like earlier reformers, Coleman stresses the power of the school to reshape the lives of children while recognizing the limitations imposed by home and culture. His "modest proposal," however, moves the school into the limelight of social policy.

Professor Molefi Kete Asante, in "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," argues that education needs to place students within the context of their own cultural heritage. Students then will have the opportunity to be able to relate

socially and psychologically to other cultural viewpoints. Afrocentricity provides a cultural frame of reference for students with African heritage. African American students educated in this manner would see themselves as integral participants in the development of knowledge throughout history. Asante justifies this approach by pointing out that the contributions of African Americans in the past to American and world civilization have been overlooked. He explains that when individuals see themselves portrayed in history, they will develop positive self-esteem.

From these readings emerge certain basic questions that deserve further discussion. To what extent do the concepts of equal opportunity and meritocracy belong to the democratic creed? What concept of social justice is democracy committed to? What is the proper balance between state and federal authority in education? Is it possible to reconcile the ideal of equality with the aims of utilitarianism?

HORACE MANN

INEQUALITY IN THE MEANS OF EDUCATION

The inequality in the means of education possessed by the children in the different towns and sections of the State, is a subject of great moment, and not treated of in any former Report . . .

Much has been, and much still continues to be, both said and written respecting that equality in the laws, and equality under the laws, which constitutes the distinctive feature of a Republican government. By abolishing the right of primogeniture, and entails, by the extension of the elective franchise, and in other ways, much has been done towards realizing the two grand conceptions of the founders of our government, viz., that political advantages should be equal, and then, that celebrity or obscurity, wealth or poverty, should depend on individual merit. But the most influential and decisive measure for equalizing the original opportunities of men, that is, equality in the means of education, has not been adopted. In this respect, therefore, the most striking and painful disparities now exist. One source of this difference, indeed, is to be found in the almost unlimited freedom of action exercised by the different towns . . . in appropriating money for the support of schools . . . In this respect, the towns resemble individuals. One parent will make all sacrifices, he will economize in his pleasure, dress, shelter, and even in his food, to save the means of educating his children; while another,—perhaps his nearest neighbor,—will sell the services of his children for a few pence a day, through the whole year, that he may hoard their earnings, or spend them in dissipation . . .

On a broad survey of the State, and an inquiry into the causes which have led to the superior intelligence and respectability of some towns, as compared with others, it will almost uniformly be discovered, that the foundations of their prosperity were laid by a few individuals,—in some cases by a single individual,—in elevating the condition of their Common Schools . . .

No other fact has ever exhibited so fully the extent of obligation which some towns are under to a few individuals, who have had the forecast and the energy, in the midst of difficulties and opposition, to sustain their schools. I have met many individuals, who, having failed to obtain any improvement in the means of education in their respective places of residence, have removed to towns whose schools were good, believing the sacrifice of a hundred, or even of several hundred dollars, to be nothing, in comparison with the value of the school privileges secured for their children by such removal. Still more frequently, when other circumstances have rendered a change of domicile expedient, has this principle of selection governed in choosing a residence.

• • •

For the present, the general remark must suffice,—a remark which, after five circuits made through all parts of the State, after a perusal and careful examination of every Return and Report made by the school committees, and after extensive correspondence and frequent interviews with the friends of education, I feel not wholly incompetent to make,—that, as a general fact, the great work of enlightening the intellect and cultivating the manners and morals of the rising generation, is going forward most rapidly and successfully in those towns whose appropriations are most generous; while, on the other hand, a noncompliance with the requisitions of the law, in employing unapproved teachers, in diverting school moneys to illegal purposes, in resisting a uniformity of books, and in the manifestation of indifference or hostility towards the measures recently adopted for the improvement of the schools, have most commonly been found in those towns whose appropriations look rather to the question, how little money will suffice to escape from penalty or forfeiture, than how much, through the alchemy of this institution, can be transmuted into knowledge and wisdom and virtue.

Here, then, it is obvious, are grounds of wide and permanent distinction, among the rising generation, as it happens to be their good or ill fortune to belong to one place or to another. As one State, where education is neglected and disdained, falls, in its wealth, in its social standing, and in the number of its distinguished men, below another State, where this great interest is fostered and exalted; so must some of our own towns fall below others, in all the elements of prosperity, and respectability, and honor. This, however, is a distinction which does not call upon the less favored portions of the community to curtail the privileges of the more favored, but to strive honorably to elevate themselves to a level with their fellows. It calls upon the more favored, also, by motives which should be all-powerful, to lend a helping-hand,—to practise upon those political principles which regard all men as equals, and upon those Christian principles which regard all men as brethren, in elevating their inferiors to the height of their own standard. All other means devised by which to

approximate the idea of a Republican government, are insignificant when compared with the possession of equal education privileges . . .

The government which should attempt to enforce an equality of external circumstances among men, while it permitted these educational inequalities to exist, would have daily and hourly occasion for the renewal of its work . . . But, if equal opportunities of improvement are offered to all, the responsibility of using or neglecting them, may justly be cast upon each individual. Society does not exhibit a more instructive or salutary lesson, than those inequalities of actual condition which result from an unequal use of equal opportunities.

It was in the hope of seeing the opportunities of education more equally diffused, that I suggested, in a former report, the expediency of encouraging the purchase of a Common School library, for each school district, by the State's granting a small bonus or gratuity for the purpose. As I there intimated, the poorer and more sparsely populated districts will not be likely to obtain this indispensable auxiliary to a good school, without assistance from the government. So far, the result verifies the prediction. There have now been sold in the State, of the library prepared under the superintendence of the Board of Education, about three hundred sets; and, as a general fact, these have been purchased by the more wealthy and populous districts. A few districts, however, form a gratifying exception to this statement; for, though small in numbers, and of moderate wealth, these disadvantages have been counterbalanced by zeal and public spirit, in their members. The number of Public Schools in the State, last year, was three thousand one hundred and three, so that there are now not less than twenty-eight hundred of our Public Schools destitute of a school library . . .

Having now established, beyond the possibility of denial or doubt, the extraordinary and heretofore unrecognized inequalities existing between different towns in the Commonwealth, as it respects the educational advantages they bestow upon their children, the natural course of the argument would lead, at once, to an exposition or development of the consequences which must grow out of this wide departure, on each hand, from a common standard . . .

If it can be proved that the aggregate wealth of a town will be increased just in proportion to the increase of its appropriations for schools, the opponents of such a measure will be silenced. The tax for this purpose, which they now look upon as a burden, they will then regard as a profitable investment. Let it be shown that the money which is now clung to by the parent, in the hope of increasing his children's legacies, some six or ten per cent, can be so invested as to double their patrimony, and the blind instinct of parental love, which now, by voice and vote, opposes such outlay, will become an advocate for the most generous endowments. When the money expended for education shall be viewed in its true character, as seed-grain sown in a soil which is itself enriched by yielding, then the most parsimonious will not stint the sowing, lest the harvest, also, should be stinted, and, thereby, thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold, should be lost to the garner . . .

I have novel and striking evidence to prove that education is convertible into houses and lands, as well as into power and virtue.

• • •

During the past year I have opened a correspondence, and availed myself of all opportunities to hold personal interviews with many of the most practical, sagacious and intelligent business men amongst us, who for many years have had large numbers of persons in their employment. My object has been to ascertain the difference in the productive ability,—where natural capacities have been equal,—between the educated and the uneducated,—between a man or woman whose mind has been awakened to thought and supplied with the rudiments of knowledge, by a good Common School education, and one whose faculties have never been developed, or aided in emerging from their original darkness and torpor by such a privilege. For this purpose I have conferred and corresponded with manufacturers of all kinds, with machinists, engineers, railroad contractors, officers in the army, &c. These various classes of persons have means of determining the effects of education on individuals, equal in their natural abilities, which other classes do not possess.

• • •

No observing man can have failed to notice the difference between two workmen, one of whom,—to use a proverbial expression,—always hits the nail on the head, while the other loses half his strength and destroys half his nails, by the awkwardness of his blows; but perhaps few men have thought of the difference in the results of two such men's labor, at the end of twenty years.

But when hundreds of men and women work side by side, in the same factory, at the same machinery, in making the same fabrics, and, by a fixed rule of the establishment, labor the same number of hours each day; and when, also, the products of each operative can be counted in number, weighed by the pound, or measured by the yard or cubic foot,—then it is perfectly practicable to determine with arithmetical exactness, the productions of one individual and one class as compared with those of another individual and another class.

So where there are different kinds of labor, some simple, others complicated, and of course requiring different degrees of intelligence and skill, it is easy to observe what class of persons rise from a lower to a higher grade of employment.

This too is not to be forgotten, that in a manufacturing or mechanical establishment, or among a set of hands engaged in filling up a valley or cutting down a hill, where scores of people are working together, the absurd and adventitious distinctions of society do not intrude. The capitalist and his agents are looking for the greatest amount of labor, or the largest income in money from their investments; and they do not promote a dunce to a station, where he will destroy raw material, or slacken industry, because of his name, or birth, or family connections. The obscurest and humblest person has an open and fair field for competition. That he proves himself capable of earning more money for his employer, is a testimonial, better than a diploma from all the colleges.

Now many of the most intelligent and valuable men in our community, in compliance with my request,—for which I tender them my public and grateful acknowledgments,—have examined their books for a series of years, and have ascertained both the quality and the amount of work performed by persons in their employment; and the result of the investigation is a most astonishing supe-

riority in productive power, on the part of the educated over the uneducated laborer. The hand is found to be another hand, when guided by an intelligent mind. Processes are performed, not only more rapidly, but better, when faculties which have been exercised in early life, furnish their assistance. Individuals who, without the aid of knowledge, would have been condemned to perceptual inferiority of condition, and subjected to all the evils of want and poverty, rise to competence and independence, by the uplifting power of education. In great establishments, and among large bodies of laboring men, where all services are rated according to their pecuniary value, where there are no extrinsic circumstances to bind a man down to a fixed position, after he has shown a capacity to rise above it—where, indeed, men pass by each other, ascending or descending in their grades of labor, just as easily and certainly as particles of water of different degrees of temperature glide by each other,—there it is found as an almost invariable fact,—other things being equal,—that those who have been blessed with a good Common School education, rise to a higher and a higher point, in the kinds of labor performed, and also in the rate of wages paid, while the ignorant sink, like dregs, and are always found at the bottom.

SELECTIONS FROM *BROWN ET AL. v. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA*

ISSUE: SEGREGATION

OPINION: These cases come to us from the States of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. They are premised on different facts and different local conditions, but a common legal question justifies their consideration together in this consolidated opinion.

• • •

In each of the cases, minors of Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they have been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called “separate but equal” doctrine announced by this Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided substantially equal facilities, even though these facilities be separate. In the Delaware case, the Supreme Court of Delaware adhered to that doctrine, but ordered that

the plaintiffs be admitted to the white schools because of their superiority to the Negro schools.

The plaintiffs contend that segregated public schools are not “equal” and cannot be made “equal,” and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws . . .

Reargument was largely devoted to the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868.

• • •

This discussion and our own investigation convince us that, although these sources cast some light, it is not enough to resolve the problem with which we are faced . . .

An additional reason for the inconclusive nature of the Amendment’s history, with respect to segregated schools, is the status of public education at that time. In the South, the movement toward free common schools, supported by general taxation, had not yet taken hold. Education of white children was largely in the hands of private groups. Education of Negroes was almost nonexistent, and practically all of the race were illiterate. In fact, any education of Negroes was forbidden by law in some states. Today, in contrast, many Negroes have achieved outstanding success in the arts and sciences as well as in the business and professional world. It is true that public school education at the time of the Amendment had advanced further in the North, but the effect of the Amendment on Northern States was generally ignored in the congressional debates. Even in the North, conditions of public education did not approximate those existing today. The curriculum was usually rudimentary; ungraded schools were common in rural areas; the school term was but three months a year in many states; and compulsory school attendance was virtually unknown. As a consequence, it is not surprising that there should be so little in the history of the Fourteenth Amendment relating to its intended effect on public education.

• • •

Our decision . . . cannot turn on merely a comparison of these tangible factors [buildings, curricula, salaries of teachers] in the Negro and white schools involved in each of the cases. We must look instead to the effect of segregation itself on public education.

In approaching this problem, we cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when *Plessy v. Ferguson* was written. We must consider public education in the light of its full development and its present place in American life throughout the Nation. Only in this way can it be determined if segregation in public schools deprives these plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws.

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping

him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

• • •

To separate [children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. The effect of this separation on their educational opportunities was well stated by a finding in the Kansas case by a court which nevertheless felt compelled to rule against the Negro plaintiffs:

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial-[ly] integrated school system.

Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, this finding is amply supported by modern authority. Any language in *Plessy v. Ferguson* contrary to this finding is rejected.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violated the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

JAMES S. COLEMAN

EQUAL SCHOOLS OR EQUAL STUDENTS?

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 contains a section numbered 402, which went largely unnoticed at the time. This section instructs the Commissioner of Education to carry out a survey “concerning the lack of availability of equal

educational opportunities" by reason of race, religion or national origin, and to report to Congress and the President within two years. The Congressional intent in this section is somewhat unclear. But if, as is probable, the survey was initially intended as a means of finding areas of continued intentional discrimination, the intent later became less punitive-oriented and more future-oriented: *i.e.*, to provide a basis for public policy, at the local, state, and national levels, which might overcome inequalities of educational opportunity.

In the two years that have intervened (but mostly in the second), a remarkably vast and comprehensive survey was conducted, focussing principally on the inequalities of educational opportunity experienced by five racial and ethnic minorities: Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, American Indians, and Oriental Americans. In the central and largest portion of the survey, nearly 600,000 children at grades 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12, in 4000 schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, were tested and questioned; 60,000 teachers in these schools were questioned and self-tested; and principals of these schools were also questioned about their schools. The tests and questionnaires (administered in the fall of 1965 by Educational Testing Service) raised a considerable controversy in public school circles and among some parents, with concern ranging from Federal encroachment on the local education system to the spectre of invasion of privacy. Nevertheless, with a participation rate of about 70% of all the schools sampled, the survey was conducted; and on July 1, 1966, Commissioner Howe presented a summary report of this survey. On July 31, the total report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, 737 pages, was made available (Government Printing Office, \$4.25).

The summary of the report has appeared to many who have read it to be curiously "flat," lacking in emphases and policy implications. Much of the same flatness can be found in the larger report. The seeming flatness probably derives from three sources: the research analyst's uneasiness in moving from description to implications; the government agency's uneasiness with survey findings that may have political repercussions; and, perhaps more important than either of these, the fact that the survey results do not lend themselves to the provision of simple answers. Nevertheless, the report is not so uncontroversial as it appears. And some of its findings, though cautiously presented, have sharp implications.

Perhaps the greatest virtue of this survey—though it has many faults—is that it did not take a simple or politically expedient view of educational opportunity. To have done so would have meant to measure (a) the objective characteristics of schools—number of books in the library, age of buildings, educational level of teachers, accreditation of the schools, and so on; and (b) the actual extent of racial segregation in the schools. The survey did look into these matters (and found less inequity in school facilities and resources, more in the extent of the segregation, than is commonly supposed); but its principal focus of attention was not on what resources go into education, but on what product comes out. It did this in a relatively uncomplicated way, which is probably adequate for the task at hand: by tests which measured those areas of achievement most necessary for further progress in school, in higher education, and in suc-

cessful competition in the labor market—that is, verbal and reading skills, and analytical and mathematical skills. Such a criterion does not allow statements about absolute levels of inequality or equality of education provided by the schools, because obviously there are more influences than the school's on a child's level of achievement in school, and there are more effects of schools than in these areas of achievement. What it does do is to broaden the question beyond the school to all those educational influences that have their results in the level of verbal and mathematical skill a young person is equipped with when he or she enters the adult world. In effect, it takes the perspective of this young adult, and says that what matters to him is, not how “equal” his school is, but rather whether he is equipped at the end of school to compete on an equal basis with others, whatever his social origins. From the perspective of society, it assumes that what is important is not to “equalize the schools” in some formal sense, but to insure that children from all groups come into adult society so equipped as to insure their full participation in this society.

Another way of putting this is to say that the schools are successful only insofar as they reduce the dependence of a child's opportunities upon his social origins. We can think of a set of conditional probabilities: the probability of being prepared for a given occupation or for a given college at the end of high school, conditional upon the child's social origins. The effectiveness of the schools consists, in part, of making the conditional probabilities less conditional—that is, less dependent upon social origins. Thus, equality of educational opportunity implies, not merely “equal” schools, but equally effective schools, whose influences will overcome the differences in starting point of children from different social groups.

THE WIDENING EDUCATIONAL GAP

This approach to educational opportunity, using as it does achievement on standardized tests, treads on sensitive ground. Differences in average achievement between racial groups can lend themselves to racist arguments of genetic differences in intelligence; even apart from this, they can lead to invidious comparisons between groups which show different average levels of achievement. But it is precisely the avoidance of such sensitive areas that can perpetuate the educational deficiencies with which some minorities are equipped at the end of schooling.

What, then, does the survey find with regard to effects of schooling on test achievement? Children were tested at the beginning of grades 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12. Achievement of the average American Indian, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Negro (in this descending order) was much lower than the average white or Oriental American, at all grade levels. The amount of difference ranges from about half a standard deviation to one standard deviation at early grade levels. At the 12th grade, it increases to beyond one standard deviation. (One standard deviation difference means that about 85% of the minority group children score below the average of the whites, while if the groups were equal only

about 50% would score below this average.) The grade levels of difference range up to 5 years of deficiency (in math achievement) or 4 years (in reading skills) at the 12th grade. In short, the differences are large to begin with, and they are even larger at higher grades.

Two points, then, are clear: (1) *these minority children have a serious educational deficiency at the start of school, which is obviously not a result of school*; and (2) *they have an even more serious deficiency at the end of school, which is obviously in part a result of school*.

Thus, by the criterion stated earlier—that the effectiveness of schools in creating equality of educational opportunity lies in making the conditional probabilities of success less conditional—the schools appear to fail. At the end of school, the conditional probabilities of high achievement are even *more* conditional upon racial or ethnic backgrounds than they are at the beginning of school.

There are a number of results from the survey which give further evidence on this matter. First, within each racial group, the strong relation of family economic and educational background to achievement does not diminish over the period of school, and may even increase over the elementary years. Second, most of the variation in student achievement lies within the same school, very little of it is between schools. The implication of these last two results is clear: family background differences account for much more variation in achievement than do school differences.

Even the school-to-school variation in achievement, though relatively small, is itself almost wholly due to the *social* environment provided by the school: the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students in the school, and the educational backgrounds and attainments of teachers in the school. *Per pupil expenditure, books in the library, and a host of other facilities and curricular measures show virtually no relation to achievement if the “social” environment of the school—the educational background of other students and teachers—is held constant.*

The importance of this last result lies, of course, in the fact that schools, as currently organized, are quite culturally homogeneous as well as quite racially segregated: teachers tend to come from the same cultural groups (and especially from the same race) as their students, and the student bodies are themselves relatively homogeneous. Given this homogeneity, the principal agents of effectiveness in the schools—teachers and other students—act to maintain or reinforce the initial differences imposed by social origins.

One element illustrates well the way in which the current organization of schools maintains the differences over generations: a Negro prospective teacher leaves a Negro teacher’s college with a much lower level of academic competence (as measured by the National Teacher’s Examination) than does his white counterpart leaving his largely white college; then he teaches Negro children (in school with other Negro children, ordinarily from educationally deficient backgrounds), who learn at a lower level, in part because of his lesser competence; some of these students, in turn, go into teacher training institutions to become poorly-trained teachers of the next generation.

Altogether, *the sources of inequality of educational opportunity appear to lie first in the home itself and the cultural influences immediately surrounding the home; then they lie in the school’s ineffectiveness to free achievement from the impact of the home,*

and in the school's homogeneity which perpetuates the social influences of the home and its environs.

A MODEST, YET RADICAL PROPOSAL

Given these results, what do they suggest as to avenues to equality of educational opportunity? Several elements seem clear:

a) For those children whose family and neighborhood are educationally disadvantaged, it is important to replace this family environment as much as possible with an educational environment—by starting school at an earlier age, and by having a school which begins very early in the day and ends very late.

b) It is important to reduce the social and racial homogeneity of the school environment, so that those agents of education that do show some effectiveness—teachers and other students—are not mere replicas of the student himself. In the present organization of schools, it is the neighborhood school that most insures such homogeneity.

c) The educational program of the school should be made more effective than it is at present. The weakness of this program is apparent in its inability to overcome initial differences. It is hard to believe that we are so inept in educating our young that we can do no more than leave young adults in the same relative competitive positions we found them in as children.

Several points are obvious: It is not a solution simply to pour money into improvement of the physical plants, books, teaching aids, of schools attended by educationally disadvantaged children. For other reasons, it will not suffice merely to bus children or otherwise achieve pro forma integration. (One incidental effect of this would be to increase the segregation within schools, through an increase in tracking.)

The only kinds of policies that appear in any way viable are those which do not seek to improve the education of Negroes and other educationally disadvantaged at the expense of those who are educationally advantaged. This implies new kinds of educational institutions, with a vast increase in expenditures for education—not merely for the disadvantaged, but for all children. The solutions might be in the form of educational parks, or in the form of private schools paid by tuition grants (with Federal regulations to insure racial heterogeneity), public (or publicly-subsidized) boarding schools (like the North Carolina Advancement School), or still other innovations. This approach also implies reorganization of the curriculum within schools. One of the major reasons for “tracking” is the narrowness of our teaching methods—they can tolerate only a narrow range of skill in the same classroom. Methods which greatly widen the range are necessary to make possible racial and cultural integration within a school—and thus to make possible the informal learning that other students of higher educational levels can provide. Such curricular innovations are possible—but, again, only through the investment of vastly greater sums in education than currently occurs.

It should be recognized, of course, that the goal described here—of equality of educational opportunity through the schools—is far more ambitious than

has ever been posed in our society before. The schools were once seen as a supplement to the family in bringing a child into his place in adult society, and they still function largely as such a supplement, merely perpetuating the inequalities of birth. Yet the conditions imposed by technological change, and by our post-industrial society, quite apart from any ideals of equal opportunity, require a far more primary role for the school, if society's children are to be equipped for adulthood.

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE

One final result of the survey gives an indication of still another—and perhaps the most important—element necessary for equality of educational opportunity for Negroes. One attitude of students was measured at grades 9 and 12—an attitude which indicated the degree to which the student felt in control of his own fate. For example, one question was: “Agree or disagree: good luck is more important than hard work for success.” Another was: “Agree or disagree: every time I try to get ahead someone or something stops me.” Negroes much less often than whites had such a sense of control of their fate—a difference which corresponds directly to reality, and which corresponds even more markedly to the Negro's historical position in American society. However, despite the very large achievement differences between whites and Negroes at the 9th and 12th grades, *those Negroes who gave responses indicating a sense of control of their own fate achieved higher on the tests than those whites who gave the opposite responses. This attitude was more highly related to achievement than any other factor in the student's background or school.*

This result suggests that internal changes in the Negro, changes in his conception of himself in relation to his environment, may have more effect on Negro achievement than any other single factor. The determination to overcome relevant obstacles, and the belief that he will overcome them—attitudes that have appeared in an organized way among Negroes only in recent years in some civil rights groups—may be the most crucial elements in achieving equality of opportunity—not because of changes they will create in the white community, but principally because of the changes they create in the Negro himself.

EXCERPTS FROM PUBLIC LAW 105-17, THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1997

(c) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential ele-

ment of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

(2) Before the date of the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142)—

(A) the special educational needs of children with disabilities were not being fully met;

(B) more than one-half of the children with disabilities in the United States did not receive appropriate educational services that would enable such children to have full equality of opportunity;

(C) 1,000,000 of the children with disabilities in the United States were excluded entirely from the public school system and did not go through the educational process with their peers;

(D) there were many children with disabilities throughout the United States participating in regular school programs whose disabilities prevented such children from having a successful educational experience because their disabilities were undetected; and

(E) because of the lack of adequate services within the public school system, families were often forced to find services outside the public school system, often at great distance from their residence and at their own expense.

(3) Since the enactment and implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, this Act has been successful in ensuring children with disabilities and the families of such children access to a free appropriate public education and in improving educational results for children with disabilities.

(4) However, the implementation of this Act has been impeded by low expectations, and an insufficient focus on applying replicable research on proven methods of teaching and learning for children with disabilities.

(5) Over 20 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by—

(A) having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible;

(B) strengthening the role of parents and ensuring that families of such children have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home;

(C) coordinating this Act with other local, educational service agency, State, and Federal school improvement efforts in order to ensure that such children benefit from such efforts and that special education can become a service for such children rather than a place where they are sent;

(D) providing appropriate special education and related services and aids and supports in the regular classroom to such children, whenever appropriate;

(E) supporting high-quality, intensive professional development for all personnel who work with such children in order to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to enable them—

(i) to meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, those challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and

(ii) to be prepared to lead productive, independent, adult lives, to the maximum extent possible;

(F) providing incentives for whole-school approaches and pre-referral intervention to reduce the need to label children as disabled in order to address their learning needs; and

(G) focusing resources on teaching and learning while reducing paperwork and requirements that do not assist in improving educational results.

(6) While States, local educational agencies, and educational service agencies are responsible for providing an education for all children with disabilities, it is in the national interest that the Federal Government have a role in assisting State and local efforts to educate children with disabilities in order to improve results for such children and to ensure equal protection of the law.

(7) (A) The Federal Government must be responsive to the growing needs of an increasingly more diverse society. A more equitable allocation of resources is essential for the Federal Government to meet its responsibility to provide an equal educational opportunity for all individuals.

(B) America's racial profile is rapidly changing. Between 1980 and 1990, the rate of increase in the population for white Americans was 6 percent, while the rate of increase for racial and ethnic minorities was much higher: 53 percent for Hispanics, 13.2 percent for African-Americans, and 107.8 percent for Asians.

(C) By the year 2000, this Nation will have 275,000,000 people, nearly one of every three of whom will be either African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, or American Indian.

(D) Taken together as a group, minority children are comprising an ever larger percentage of public school students. Large-city school populations are overwhelmingly minority, for example: for fall 1993, the figure for Miami was 84 percent; Chicago, 89 percent; Philadelphia, 78 percent; Baltimore, 84 percent; Houston, 88 percent; and Los Angeles, 88 percent.

(E) Recruitment efforts within special education must focus on bringing larger numbers of minorities into the profession in order to provide appropriate practitioner knowledge, role models, and sufficient manpower to address the clearly changing demography of special education.

(F) The limited English proficient population is the fastest growing in our Nation, and the growth is occurring in many parts of our Nation. In the Nation's 2 largest school districts, limited English proficient students make up almost half of all students initially entering school at the kindergarten level. Studies have documented apparent discrepancies in the levels of referral and placement of limited English proficient children in special education. The Department of Education has found that services provided to limited English proficient students often do not respond primarily to the pupil's academic needs. These trends pose special challenges for special education in the referral, assessment, and services for our Nation's students from non-English language backgrounds.

(8) (A) Greater efforts are needed to prevent the intensification of problems connected with mislabeling and high dropout rates among minority children with disabilities.

(B) More minority children continue to be served in special education than would be expected from the percentage of minority students in the general school population.

(C) Poor African-American children are 2.3 times more likely to be identified by their teacher as having mental retardation than their white counterpart.

(D) Although African-Americans represent 16 percent of elementary and secondary enrollments, they constitute 21 percent of total enrollments in special education.

(E) The drop-out rate is 68 percent higher for minorities than for whites.

(F) More than 50 percent of minority students in large cities drop out of school.

(9) (A) The opportunity for full participation in awards for grants and contracts; boards of organizations receiving funds under this Act; and peer review panels; and training of professionals in the area of special education by minority individuals, organizations, and historically black colleges and universities is essential if we are to obtain greater success in the education of minority children with disabilities.

(B) In 1993, of the 915,000 college and university professors, 4.9 percent were African-American and 2.4 percent were Hispanic. Of the 2,940,000 teachers, prekindergarten through high school, 6.8 percent were African-American and 4.1 percent were Hispanic.

(C) Students from minority groups comprise more than 50 percent of K-12 public school enrollment in seven States yet minority enrollment in teacher training programs is less than 15 percent in all but six States.

(D) As the number of African-American and Hispanic students in special education increases, the number of minority teachers and related service personnel produced in our colleges and universities continues to decrease.

(E) Ten years ago, 12 percent of the United States teaching force in public elementary and secondary schools were members of a minority group. Minorities comprised 21 percent of the national population at that time and were clearly underrepresented then among employed teachers. Today, the elementary and secondary teaching force is 13 percent minority, while one-third of the students in public schools are minority children.

(F) As recently as 1991, historically black colleges and universities enrolled 44 percent of the African-American teacher trainees in the Nation. However, in 1993, historically black colleges and universities received only 4 percent of the discretionary funds for special education and related services personnel training under this Act.

(G) While African-American students constitute 28 percent of total enrollment in special education, only 11.2 percent of individuals enrolled in preservice training programs for special education are African-American.

(10) Minorities and underserved persons are socially disadvantaged because of the lack of opportunities in training and educational programs,

undergirded by the practices in the private sector that impede their full participation in the mainstream of society.

(d) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this title are—

(1) (A) to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living;

(B) to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected; and

(C) to assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities;

(2) to assist States in the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;

(3) to ensure that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities by supporting systemic-change activities; coordinated research and personnel preparation; coordinated technical assistance, dissemination, and support; and technology development and media services; and

(4) to assess, and ensure the effectiveness of, efforts to educate children with disabilities.

MOLEFI KETE ASANTE

THE AFROCENTRIC IDEA IN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Many of the principles that govern the development of the Afrocentric idea in education were first established by Carter G. Woodson in *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1933). Indeed, Woodson's classic reveals the fundamental problems pertaining to the education of the African person in America. As Woodson contends, African Americans have been educated away from their own culture and traditions and attached to the fringes of European culture; thus dislocated from themselves, Woodson asserts that African Americans often valorize European culture to the detriment of their own heritage (p. 7). Although Woodson does not advocate rejection of American citizenship or nationality, he believed that assuming African Americans hold the same position as European Americans vis-à-vis the realities of America would lead to the psychological and cultural death of the African American population. Furthermore, if education is ever to be substantive and meaningful within the context of American society, Wood-

son argues, it must first address the African's historical experiences, both in Africa and America (p. 7). That is why he places on education, and particularly on the traditionally African American colleges, the burden of teaching the African American to be responsive to the long traditions and history of Africa as well as America. Woodson's alert recognition, more than 50 years ago, that something is severely wrong with the way African Americans are educated provides the principal impetus for the Afrocentric approach to American education.

In this article I will examine the nature and scope of this approach, establish its necessity, and suggest ways to develop and disseminate it throughout all levels of education. Two propositions stand in the background of the theoretical and philosophical issues I will present. These ideas represent the core presuppositions on which I have based most of my work in the field of education, and they suggest the direction of my own thinking about what education is capable of doing to and for an already politically and economically marginalized people—African Americans:

1. Education is fundamentally a social phenomenon whose ultimate purpose is to socialize the learner; to send a child to school is to prepare that child to become part of a social group.
2. Schools are reflective of the societies that develop them (i.e., a White supremacist-dominated society will develop a White supremacist educational system).

DEFINITIONS

An alternative framework suggests that other definitional assumptions can provide a new paradigm for the examination of education within the American society. For example, in education, *centricity* refers to a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. Centricity is a concept that can be applied to any culture. The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the center of the context of knowledge (Asante, 1990). For White students in America this is easy because almost all the experiences discussed in American classrooms are approached from the standpoint of White perspectives and history. American education, however, is not centric; it is Eurocentric. Consequently, non-White students are also made to see themselves and their groups as the "acted upon." Only rarely do they read or hear of non-White people as active participants in history. This is as true for a discussion of the American Revolution as it is for a discussion of Dante's *Inferno*; for instance, most classroom discussions of the European slave trade concentrate on the activities of Whites rather than on the resistance efforts of Africans. A person educated in a truly centric fashion comes to view all groups' contributions as significant and useful. Even a White person educated in such a system does not assume superiority based upon racist notions. Thus, a truly

centric education is different from a Eurocentric, racist (that is, White supremacist) education.

Afrocentricity is a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. The Afrocentric approach seeks in every situation the appropriate centrality of the African person (Asante, 1987). In education this means that teachers provide students the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts, and history from an African world view. In most classrooms, whatever the subject, Whites are located in the center perspective position. How alien the African American child must feel, how like an outsider! The little African American child who sits in a classroom and is taught to accept as heroes and heroines individuals who defamed African people is being actively de-centered, dislocated, and made into a nonperson, one whose aim in life might be to one day shed that "badge of inferiority": his or her Blackness. In Afrocentric educational settings, however, teachers do not marginalize African American children by causing them to question their own self-worth because their people's story is seldom told. By seeing themselves as the subjects rather than the objects of education—be the discipline biology, medicine, literature, or social studies—African American students come to see themselves not merely as seekers of knowledge but as integral participants in it. Because all content areas are adaptable to an Afrocentric approach, African American students can be made to see themselves as centered in the reality of any discipline.

It must be emphasized that Afrocentricity is *not* a Black version of Eurocentricity (Asante, 1987). Eurocentricity is based on White supremacist notions whose purposes are to protect White privilege and advantage in education, economics, politics, and so forth. Unlike Eurocentricity, Afrocentricity does not condone ethnocentric valorization at the expense of degrading other groups' perspectives. Moreover, Eurocentricity presents the particular historical reality of Europeans as the sum total of the human experience (Asante, 1987). It imposes Eurocentric realities as "universal"; i.e., that which is White is presented as applying to the human condition in general, while that which is non-White is viewed as group-specific and therefore not "human." This explains why some scholars and artists of African descent rush to deny their Blackness; they believe that to exist as a Black person is not to exist as a universal human being. They are the individuals Woodson identified as preferring European art, language, and culture over African art, language, and culture; they believe that anything of European origin is inherently better than anything produced by or issuing from their own people. Naturally, the person of African descent should be centered in his or her historical experiences as an African, but Eurocentric curricula produce such aberrations of perspective among persons of color.

Multiculturalism in education is a nonhierarchical approach that respects and celebrates a variety of cultural perspectives on world phenomena (Asante, 1991). The multicultural approach holds that although European culture is the majority culture in the United States, that is not sufficient reason for it to be imposed on diverse student populations as "universal." Multiculturalists assert that education, to have integrity, must begin with the proposition that all humans have contributed to world development and the flow of knowledge

and information, and that most human achievements are the result of mutually interactive, international effort. Without a multicultural education, students remain essentially ignorant of the contributions of a major portion of the world's people. A multicultural education is thus a fundamental necessity for anyone who wishes to achieve competency in almost any subject.

The Afrocentric idea must be the stepping-stone from which the multicultural idea is launched. A truly authentic multicultural education, therefore, must be based upon the Afrocentric initiative. If this step is skipped, multicultural curricula, as they are increasingly being defined by White "resisters" (to be discussed below) will evolve without any substantive infusion of African American content, and the African American child will continue to be lost in the Eurocentric framework of education. In other words, the African American child will neither be confirmed nor affirmed in his or her own cultural information. For the mutual benefit of all Americans, this tragedy, which leads to the psychological and cultural dislocation of African American children, can and should be avoided.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CHALLENGE

Because it centers African American students inside history, culture, science, and so forth rather than outside these subjects, the Afrocentric idea presents the most revolutionary challenge to the ideology of White supremacy in education during the past decade. No other theoretical position stated by African Americans has ever captured the imagination of such a wide range of scholars and students of history, sociology, communications, anthropology, and psychology. The Afrocentric challenge has been posed in three critical ways:

1. It questions the imposition of the White supremacist view as universal and/or classical (Asante, 1990).
2. It demonstrates the indefensibility of racist theories that assault multiculturalism and pluralism.
3. It projects a humanistic and pluralistic viewpoint by articulating Afrocentricity as a valid, nonhegemonic perspective.

SUPPRESSION AND DISTORTION: SYMBOLS OF RESISTANCE

The forces of resistance to the Afrocentric, multicultural transformation of the curriculum and teaching practices began to assemble their wagons almost as quickly as word got out about the need for equality in education (Ravitch, 1990). Recently, the renowned historian Arthur Schlesinger and others formed a group called the Committee for the Defense of History. This is a paradoxical development because only lies, untruths, and inaccurate information need defending. In their arguments against the Afrocentric perspective, these proponents of Eurocentrism often clothe their arguments in false categories and fake

terms (i.e., “pluralistic” and “particularistic” multiculturalism) (Keto, 1990; Asante, 1991). Besides, as the late African scholar Cheikh Anta Diop (1980) maintained: “African history and Africa need no defense.” Afrocentric education is not against history. It is *for* history—correct, accurate history—and if it is against anything, it is against the marginalization of African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American, and other non-White children. The Committee for the Defense of History is nothing more than a futile attempt to buttress the crumbling pillars of a White supremacist system that conceals its true motives behind the cloak of American liberalism. It was created in the same spirit that generated Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and Hirsch’s *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (1987), both of which were placed at the service of the White hegemony in education, particularly its curricular hegemony. This committee and other evidences of White backlash are a predictable challenge to the contemporary thrust for an Afrocentric, multicultural approach to education.

Naturally, different adherents to a theory will have different views on its meaning. While two discourses presently are circulating about multiculturalism, only one is relevant to the liberation of the minds of African and White people in the United States. That discourse is Afrocentricity: the acceptance of Africa as central to African people. Yet, rather than getting on board with Afrocentrists to fight against White hegemonic education, some Whites (and some Blacks as well) have opted to plead for a return to the educational plantation. Unfortunately for them, however, those days are gone, and such misinformation can never be packaged as accurate, correct education again.

Ravitch (1990), who argues that there are two kinds of multiculturalism—*pluralist multiculturalism* and *particularist multiculturalism*—is the leader of those professors whom I call “resisters” or opponents to Afrocentricity and multiculturalism. Indeed, Ravitch advances the imaginary divisions in multicultural perspectives to conceal her true identity as a defender of White supremacy. Her tactics are the tactics of those who prefer Africans and other non-Whites to remain on the mental and psychological plantation of Western civilization. In their arrogance the resisters accuse Afrocentrists and multiculturalists of creating “fantasy history” and “bizarre theories” of non-White people’s contributions to civilization. What they prove, however, is their own ignorance. Additionally, Ravitch and others (Nicholson, 1990) assert that multiculturalism will bring about the “tribalization” of America, but in reality America has always been a nation of ethnic diversity. When one reads their works on multiculturalism, one realizes that they are really advocating the imposition of a White perspective on everybody else’s culture. Believing that the Eurocentric position is indisputable, they attempt to resist and impede the progressive transformation of the monoethnic curriculum. Indeed, the closets of bigotry have opened to reveal various attempts by White scholars (joined by some Blacks) to defend White privilege in the curriculum in much the same way as it has been so staunchly defended in the larger society. It was perhaps inevitable that the introduction of the Afrocentric idea would open up the discussion of the American school curriculum in a profound way.

Why has Afrocentricity created so much of a controversy in educational circles? The idea that an African American child is placed in a stronger position to learn if he or she is centered—that is, if the child sees himself or herself within the content of the curriculum rather than at its margins—is not novel (Asante, 1980). What is revolutionary is the movement from the idea (conceptual stage) to its implementation in practice, when we begin to teach teachers how to put African American youth at the center of instruction. In effect, students are shown how to see with new eyes and hear with new ears. African American children learn to interpret and center phenomena in the context of African heritage, while White students are taught to see that their own centers are not threatened by the presence or contributions of African Americans and others.

THE CONDITION OF EUROCENTRIC EDUCATION

Institutions such as schools are conditioned by the character of the nation in which they are developed. Just as crime and politics are different in different nations, so, too, is education. In the United States a “Whites-only” orientation has predominated in education. This has had a profound impact on the quality of education for children of all races and ethnic groups. The African American child has suffered disproportionately, but White children are also the victims of monoculturally diseased curricula.

The Tragedy of Ignorance

During the past five years many White students and parents have approached me after presentations with tears in their eyes or expressing their anger about the absence of information about African Americans in the schools. A recent comment from a young White man at a major university in the Northeast was especially striking. As he said to me: “My teacher told us that Martin Luther King was a commie and went on with the class.” Because this student’s teacher made no effort to discuss King’s ideas, the student maliciously had been kept ignorant. The vast majority of White Americans are likewise ignorant about the bountiful reservoirs of African and African American history, culture, and contributions. For example, few Americans of any color have heard the names of Cheikh Anta Diop, Anna Julia Cooper, C. L. R. James, or J. A. Rogers. All were historians who contributed greatly to our understanding of the African world. Indeed, very few teachers have ever taken a course in African American Studies; therefore, most are unable to provide systematic information about African Americans.

Afrocentricity and History

Most of America’s teaching force are victims of the same system that victimizes today’s young. Thus, American children are not taught the names of the African ethnic groups from which the majority of the African American population are derived; few are taught the names of any of the sacred sites in Africa.

Few teachers can discuss with their students the significance of the Middle Passage or describe what it meant or means to Africans. Little mention is made in American classrooms of either the brutality of slavery or the ex-slaves' celebration of freedom. American children have little or no understanding of the nature of the capture, transport, and enslavement of Africans. Few have been taught the true horrors of being taken, shipped naked across 25 days of ocean, broken by abuse and indignities of all kinds, and dehumanized into a beast of burden, a thing without a name. If our students only knew the truth, if they were taught the Afrocentric perspective on the Great Enslavement, and if they knew the full story about the events since slavery that have served to constantly dislocate African Americans, their behavior would perhaps be different. Among these events are: the infamous constitutional compromise of 1787, which decreed that African Americans were, by law, the equivalent of but three-fifths of a person (see Franklin, 1974); the 1857 Dred Scott decision in which the Supreme Court avowed that African Americans had no rights Whites were obliged to respect (Howard, 1857); the complete dismissal and nonenforcement of Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (this amendment, passed in 1868, stipulated as one of its provisions a penalty against any state that denied African Americans the right to vote, and called for the reduction of a state's delegates to the House of Representatives in proportion to the number of disenfranchised African American males therein); and the much-mentioned, as-yet-unreceived 40 acres and a mule, reparation for enslavement, promised to each African American family after the Civil War by Union General William T. Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton (Oubre, 1978, pp. 18–19, 182–183; see also Smith, 1987, pp. 106–107). If the curriculum were enhanced to include readings from the slave narratives; the diaries of slave ship captains; the journals of slaveowners; the abolitionist newspapers; the writings of the freedmen and freedwomen; the accounts of African American civil rights, civic, and social organizations; and numerous others, African American children would be different, White children would be different—indeed, America would be a different nation today.

America's classrooms should resound with the story of the barbaric treatment of the Africans, of how their dignity was stolen and their cultures destroyed. The recorded experiences of escaped slaves provide the substance for such learning units. For example, the narrative of Jacob and Ruth Weldon presents a detailed account of the Middle Passage (Feldstein, 1971). The Weldons noted that Africans, having been captured and brought onto the slave ships, were chained to the deck, made to bend over, and "branded with a red hot iron in the form of letters or signs dipped in an oily preparation and pressed against the naked flesh till it burnt a deep and ineffaceable scar, to show who was the owner" (pp. 33–37). They also recalled that those who screamed were lashed on the face, breast, thighs, and backs with a "cat-o'-nine tails" wielded by White sailors: "Every blow brought the returning lash pieces of grieving flesh" (p. 44). They saw "mothers with babies at their breasts basely branded and lashed, hewed and scarred, till it would seem as if the very heavens must smite the infernal tormentors with the doom they so richly merited" (p. 44). Children and

infants were not spared from this terror. The Weldons tell of a nine-month-old baby on board a slave ship being flogged because it would not eat. The ship's captain ordered the child's feet placed in boiling water, which dissolved the skin and nails, then ordered the child whipped again; still the child refused to eat. Eventually the captain killed the baby with his own hands and commanded the child's mother to throw the dead baby overboard. When the mother refused, she, too, was beaten, then forced to the ship's side, where "with her head averted so she might not see it, she dropped the body into the sea" (p. 44). In a similar vein a captain of a ship with 440 Africans on board noted that 132 had to be thrown overboard to save water (Feldstein, 1971, p. 47). As another wrote, the "groans and soffocating [*sic*] cries for air and water coming from below the deck sickened the soul of humanity" (Feldstein, 1971, p. 44).

Upon landing in America the situation was often worse. The brutality of the slavocracy is unequalled for the psychological and spiritual destruction it wrought upon African Americans. Slave mothers were often forced to leave their children unattended while they worked in the fields. Unable to nurse their children or to properly care for them, they often returned from work at night to find their children dead (Feldstein, 1971, p. 49). The testimony of Henry Bibb also sheds light on the bleakness of the slave experience:

I was born May 1815, of a slave mother . . . and was claimed as the property of David White, Esq. . . . I was flogged up; for where I should have received moral, mental, and religious instructions, I received stripes without number, the object of which was to degrade and keep me in subordination. I can truly say that I drank deeply of the bitter cup of suffering and woe. I have been dragged down to the lowest depths of human degradation and wretchedness, by slaveholders. (Feldstein, 1971, p. 60)

Enslavement was truly a living death. While the ontological onslaught caused some Africans to opt for suicide, the most widespread results were dislocation, disorientation, and misorientation—all of which are the consequences of the African person being actively de-centered. The "Jim Crow" period of second-class citizenship, from 1877 to 1954, saw only slight improvement in the lot of African Americans. This era was characterized by the sharecropper system, disenfranchisement, enforced segregation, internal migration, lynchings, unemployment, poor housing conditions, and separate and unequal educational facilities. Inequitable policies and practices veritably plagued the race.

No wonder many persons of African descent attempt to shed their race and become "raceless." One's basic identity is one's self-identity, which is ultimately one's cultural identity; without a strong cultural identity, one is lost. Black children do not know their people's story and White children do not know the story, but remembrance is a vital requisite for understanding and humility. This is why the Jews have campaigned (and rightly so) to have the story of the European Holocaust taught in schools and colleges. Teaching about such a monstrous human brutality should forever remind the world of the ways in which humans have often violated each other. Teaching about the African Holocaust is just as important for many of the same reasons. Additionally, it underscores the

enormity of the effects of physical, psychological, and economic dislocation on the African population in America and throughout the African diaspora. Without an understanding of the historical experiences of African people, American children cannot make any real headway in addressing the problems of the present.

Certainly, if African American children were taught to be fully aware of the struggles of our African forebears they would find a renewed sense of purpose and vision in their own lives. They would cease acting as if they have no past and no future. For instance, if they were taught about the historical relationship of Africans to the cotton industry—how African American men, women, and children were forced to pick cotton from “can’t see in the morning ‘til can’t see at night,” until the blood ran from the tips of their fingers where they were pricked by the hard boll; or if they were made to visualize their ancestors in the burning sun, bent double with constant stooping, and dragging rough, heavy croaker sacks behind them—or picture them bringing those sacks trembling to the scale, fearful of a sure flogging if they did not pick enough, perhaps our African American youth would develop a stronger entrepreneurial spirit. If White children were taught the same information rather than that normally fed them about American slavery, they would probably view our society differently and work to transform it into a better place.

CORRECTING DISTORTED INFORMATION

Hegemonic education can exist only so long as true and accurate information is withheld. Hegemonic Eurocentric education can exist only so long as Whites maintain that Africans and other non-Whites have never contributed to world civilization. It is largely upon such false ideas that invidious distinctions are made. The truth, however, gives one insight into the real reasons behind human actions, whether one chooses to follow the paths of others or not. For example, one cannot remain comfortable teaching that art and philosophy originated in Greece if one learns that the Greeks themselves taught that the study of these subjects originated in Africa, specifically ancient Kemet (Herodotus, 1987). The first philosophers were the Egyptians Kagemni, Khun-anup, Ptah-hotep, Kete, and Seti; but Eurocentric education is so disjointed that students have no way of discovering this and other knowledge of the organic relationship of Africa to the rest of human history. Not only did Africa contribute to human history, African civilizations predate all other civilizations. Indeed, the human species originated on the continent of Africa—this is true whether one looks at either archaeological or biological evidence.

Two other notions must be refuted. There are those who say that African American history should begin with the arrival of Africans as slaves in 1619, but it has been shown that Africans visited and inhabited North and South America long before European settlers “discovered” the “New World” (Van Sertima, 1976). Secondly, although America became something of a home for those Africans who survived the horrors of the Middle Passage, their experi-

ences on the slave ships and during slavery resulted in their having an entirely different (and often tainted) perspective about America from that of the Europeans and others who came, for the most part, of their own free will seeking opportunities not available to them in their native lands. Afrocentricity therefore seeks to recognize this divergence in perspective and create centeredness for African American students.

CONCLUSION

The reigning initiative for total curricular change is the movement that is being proposed and led by Africans, namely, the Afrocentric idea. When I wrote the first book on Afrocentricity (Asante, 1980), now in its fifth printing, I had no idea that in 10 years the idea would both shake up and shape discussions in education, art, fashion, and politics. Since the publication of my subsequent works, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Asante, 1987) and *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (Asante, 1990), the debate has been joined in earnest. Still, for many White Americans (and some African Americans) the most unsettling aspect of the discussion about Afrocentricity is that its intellectual source lies in the research and writings of African American scholars. Whites are accustomed to being in charge of the major ideas circulating in the American academy. Deconstructionism, Gestalt psychology, Marxism, structuralism, Piagetian theory, and so forth have all been developed, articulated, and elaborated upon at length, generally by White scholars. On the other hand, Afrocentricity is the product of scholars such as Nobles (1986), Hilliard (1978), Karenga (1986), Keto (1990), Richards (1991), and Myers (1989). There are also increasing numbers of young, impressively credentialled African American scholars who have begun to write in the Afrocentric vein (Jean, 1991). They, and even some young White scholars, have emerged with ideas about how to change the curriculum Afrocentrically.

Afrocentricity provides all Americans an opportunity to examine the perspective of the African person in this society and the world. The resisters claim that Afrocentricity is anti-White; yet, if Afrocentricity as a theory is against anything it is against racism, ignorance, and monoethnic hegemony in the curriculum. Afrocentricity is not anti-White; it is, however, pro-human. Further, the aim of the Afrocentric curriculum is not to divide America, it is to make America flourish as it ought to flourish. This nation has long been divided with regard to the educational opportunities afforded to children. By virtue of the protection provided by society and reinforced by the Eurocentric curriculum, the White child is already ahead of the African American child by first grade. Our efforts thus must concentrate on giving the African American child greater opportunities for learning at the kindergarten level. However, the kind of assistance the African American child needs is as much cultural as it is academic. If the proper cultural information is provided, the academic performance will surely follow suit.

When it comes to educating African American children, the American educational system does not need a tune-up, it needs an overhaul. Black children

have been maligned by this system. Black teachers have been maligned. Black history has been maligned. Africa has been maligned. Nonetheless, two truisms can be stated about education in America. First, some teachers *can and do* effectively teach African American children; secondly, if some teachers can do it, others can, too. We must learn all we can about what makes these teachers' attitudes and approaches successful, and then work diligently to see that their successes are replicated on a broad scale. By raising the same questions that Woodson posed more than 50 years ago, Afrocentric education, along with a significant reorientation of the American educational enterprise, seeks to respond to the African person's psychological and cultural dislocation. By providing philosophical and theoretical guidelines and criteria that are centered in an African perception of reality and by placing the African American child in his or her proper historical context and setting, Afrocentricity may be just the "escape hatch" African Americans so desperately need to facilitate academic success and "steal away" from the cycle of miseducation and dislocation.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 2

1. Discuss the major parts of the meritocratic ideal as set forth in Mann's report on the inequality of educational opportunity in mid-nineteenth-century Massachusetts. In so doing, look at the purposes of the meritocratic ideal as well as obstacles to its achievement as he saw them.
2. Discuss the reasoning behind *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, paying particular attention to the relationship between achievement and the psychological effects of segregation.
3. What arguments could be made to support the contention that periodic reevaluation of a student's placement in an educational program should be done for *all* students? What would the major arguments against such a contention be?
4. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Afrocentrism in education. Professor Asante believes that through the teaching of Afrocentrism, self-esteem will be developed in African American students. In developing this self-esteem, will anything be lost in the educational process? Will an Afrocentric curriculum provide African American students the opportunity for a more enriching educational experience? Why or why not?

PART TWO

*Education and
Human Diversity*

Human Diversity and the Difference It Makes

In this chapter we deal with the ways in which schools respond to differences in intelligence, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, and gender. Our concern is general, so we touch on teaching methods only to the extent that they suggest solutions to problems arising from human diversity.

We respond to human differences in three general ways. First, we can ignore the differences. Second, we can subordinate differences to similarities. And third, we can elevate differences to a more important position than similarities. In the last two instances, we frequently associate differences with social roles and status or class positions in a society. The fact of human diversity is so obvious and its influence so prevalent that it is seldom ignored in the planning of school policy, curricula, and instruction. Yet, for all of this, people are seldom satisfied with the ways we deal with human diversity. In this chapter we will be dealing with how diversity (heterogeneity) is seen in relation to homogeneity in the larger society and how differences among human beings are translated into school practice.

The constantly changing features of our population in the United States affect the ways in which human diversity can be accommodated within the major institutions of government, workplace, and school. Try to imagine the difficulty that the approximately 84,000 public schools with a total enrollment of approximately 42 million have in accommodating the following facts, all of which have an impact on students' academic success:

- "In 1997, the high school completion for African-Americans (including a GED or other equivalency) is 74.7 percent. This is down from 77 percent in 1990. In 1997, the high school completion for Hispanics (including GED or other equivalency) was 62 percent up from 57.5 percent in 1990. In 1997, the high school completion of minority women outstripped African-American males by 6 percent and Hispanics by 4 percent."¹
- "In 1997, 1.2 million Hispanic Americans were enrolled in college, up from 680,000 nine years previously. Asian-American enrollment in higher education increased 73 percent from 1988 to 1997, bringing the number of

Asian-Americans enrolled in college to 859,000 in 1997. American Indian students had an increase over the last decade to 142,000 barely 1 percent of all college students."²

- "The poverty rate for the United States dropped to 12.7 percent in 1998, down from 13.3 percent in 1997. The number of poor dropped significantly also, to 34.5 million people, down from 35.6 million people in 1997. The average income for these people was \$6,620. The poverty rates also decreased for Hispanics: 25.6 percent were poor in 1998, down from 27.1 in 1997. The poverty rate for Blacks did not change between 1997 and 1998. At 26.1 percent in 1998, it remained at the lowest level since 1959."³
- "On January 1, 1997, there were 266,490,000 people in the United States. Asian and Pacific Islanders grew by 3.6 percent, Blacks by 1.3 percent, and Hispanics by 3.4 percent, Whites by 0.3 percent."⁴
- "The number of single parents with their own children under 18 years living with them tripled from 3.8 million in 1970 to 11.7 million in 1996 . . . About 7.8 million, or 66 percent of all single parents were White in 1996, but the incidence of one-parent situations is much higher among Blacks than among Whites. Single parents accounted for almost two-thirds (64 percent) of all Black family groups with child present . . . compared with 26 percent among Whites. Mothers accounted for the vast majority of single parents. In 1996, there were about 9.9 million single mothers versus 1.9 million single fathers. In 1970, 85 percent of children lived with both parents, but by 1996 this proportion has dropped to 68 percent."⁵
- "915,900 persons were granted legal permanent resident status in fiscal year 1996, an increase of more than 195,000 over the year before. Mexico was the country of birth of 163,572 immigrants—the most of any country (18.0 percent). Nearly 34 percent of all immigrants were born in Asia. 16.1 percent came from Europe, 34 percent from Asia, and 37 percent from North and South America."⁶

These six descriptions representing some of the basic social, economic, cultural, and demographic facts of the United States are only the tip of the diversity iceberg. Remember that one individual belongs to many groups and that an individual's behavior simultaneously reflects all the groups to which he or she belongs. These group characteristics combined with unique mental, emotional, and physical characteristics result in a bewildering array of behaviors for every individual. This is multiplied millions of times for the entire population enrolled in the nation's schools.

INTELLIGENCE, CLASSIFICATION, AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

In most teacher education courses, discussion about intelligence tests and their uses centers on technical features of intelligence testing. Statistical problems of reliability and validity are better left to courses on testing and measurement

and psychological foundations. We offer a different perspective here. As in the first chapter, matters of social justice and fairness are foremost in our considerations.

The concept of intelligence is far from fixed. Different concepts of intelligence are tied to different theories of the structure of the mind and how it functions. Some emphasize the genetic determinants of intelligence, others emphasize cognitive development, while still others see the mind as an information-processing system much like a computer. Since the early twentieth century the most common approach to the study of intelligence has been the psychometric approach. It was the intelligence test and the concept of IQ that made a scale of numbers the central feature of student classification. When the degree of intelligence of a person is referred to today, it is most often in terms of a number on a scale. Even if the reference is not to a specific number, it is to larger categories such as “above average” or “below average.”

The intelligence *test* developed alongside and was linked to a genetic conception of intelligence. More than any other theoretical conception of intelligence, the genetic explanation has led to intense debates over the fairness of its use. For this reason, it is important to look at the ways intelligence and genetics have been linked together historically and in debates and among educators.

A Historical Perspective

The concepts of intelligence that emerged in the early twentieth century alongside the development of intelligence testing had two competing standards of references: hereditarian and behavioral. This division has tended to dominate our thinking about intelligence for the past two-thirds of a century.

Much of the early work on IQ testing was carried out in an attempt to improve the classification and instruction of “mentally defective” children. It was motivated by the practical concerns of diagnosing and “placing” the feeble-minded and ill behaved. According to Binet and Simon, the purpose of the intelligence scale was “to be able to measure the intellectual capacity of a child who is brought to us in order to know whether he is normal or retarded.”⁷

Binet and Simon recognized that “special” children did not profit much from ordinary schools, but they were also concerned that special schools for these children were not doing their job. They hoped, moreover, that teachers in special schools would be attentive to the economic and occupational prospects for these “special” children.

The central question in this regard, as Binet and Simon viewed it, was “what becomes of the defectives on leaving school, and what percentage [have been placed] in situations with a suitable salary?” “To judge well, to comprehend well, to reason well,” said Binet, “are the essential activities of intelligence.”⁸ It should be remembered, however, that the context for studying intelligence was the school itself. Thus, the standard of reference was progress in school. Binet’s conclusions about the relationship between intelligence and scholastic level were not startling but nonetheless helped to lay the groundwork for the use of IQ as a predictor of academic success. Binet reported a

“remarkable correlation” between level of intelligence and scholastic achievement.

The international interest in the Binet scale of intelligence, the fact that it underwent two revisions only a few years following its initial publication, and its immediate practicality in the area of student classification made it a promising instrument for dealing with the problem of retardation in public schools. Psychologists in the United States were quick to recognize its value.

The broad social significance of applying intelligence testing to the selecting and sorting of the feeble-minded was addressed explicitly by Lewis Terman, author of *The Measurement of Intelligence* (1916):

In the near future intelligence tests will bring tens of thousands of these high grade defectives under the surveillance and protection of society. This will ultimately result in curtailing the reproduction of feeble-mindedness and in the elimination of an enormous amount of crime, pauperism, and industrial inefficiency.⁹

Terman was equally as forceful in his remarks about the gifted. It was a deplorable waste, he said, to let these children of high ability go unidentified and without special treatment. The “welfare of the country” and the progress of civilization depended upon genius. The “handicapping influences of poverty, social neglect, physical defects, or educational maladjustments” have hidden many of the gifted from view, said Terman.¹⁰

He was enthusiastic also about the possibilities for using intelligence tests for grade promotion and for “vocational fitness.” Of the former, said Terman, “it would be desirable to make all promotions on the basis chiefly of intellectual ability.” Of the latter, it was his opinion that research on intelligence would result in identifying “the minimum ‘intelligence quotient’ necessary for success in each leading occupation.” The result would be great savings by industries who presently hire people “not equal to the tasks they are expected to perform.”¹¹ By employing a psychologist, companies could achieve great savings in the long run, said Terman.

As an institution for mass education the school demanded techniques that would help manage large numbers of people. It was not surprising, then, that educators enthusiastically welcomed the Alpha and Beta mass-produced intelligence tests used by the United States Army in 1917. The piloting of the Army intelligence tests was done in the fall of 1917 using four cantonments (85,000 men, including 5,000 officers). Its purposes were classification, selection for positions, and the sorting out of the mentally incompetent. When in 1918 Robert M. Yerkes lectured on the results of this testing, he announced that the uses of mental testing far exceeded the original expectations. In addition to sorting out the feeble-minded, unstable, and incorrigible, the tests were useful in identifying those of superior intelligence, organizing battalions to achieve “uniform mental strength,” selecting personnel for further education, and providing data enabling each man to “receive instruction suited to his ability to learn.”¹²

Like Terman, Yerkes envisioned intelligence testing as a way to rationalize the schooling process. Yerkes’s argument rested on hopes that the school could

be made more efficient by a more systematic and early classification of pupils. It was also justified on grounds of equality of opportunity, he said. Yerkes was aware that early classification by intelligence tests could be construed as undemocratic, but, he claimed, it was in fact exactly the opposite. It was his position that educators were “seriously discriminating against individuals because of our failure to take their characteristics and needs into account.” Said Yerkes:

Equality of opportunity in our schools necessitates classification in accordance with ability, individualized treatment, recognition of limitations and of practical limits of educability, differentiation of courses, and vocational direction and training which shall enable the individual to avoid failure by reason of undertaking the impossible or waste because of the choice of an occupation which makes slight demand upon the ability of the individual.¹³

Following World War I, Terman as well as Henry Goddard continued to pursue the utilization of intelligence testing for grouping individuals by academic ability. In addition, Edward Thorndike of Columbia University developed intelligence tests for university students. In 1926, Carl Campbell Brigham developed the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), one of the early instruments developed for college students.¹⁴ In the 1930s intelligence testing emphasized quantification or, more specifically, the “application of statistical procedures and other rigorous techniques to the analysis of test scores.”¹⁵

Throughout the 1930s and well into the 1960s, group intelligence tests began to be widely used and an accepted method of testing in the public schools. David Wechsler developed several tests during this period. These include the Wechsler Intelligence Scale (WISC) in 1949 and the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI). Though substantially revised, these tests still provide the foundation for the intelligence tests used in public schools today.¹⁶

As the twentieth century drew to a close, newer tests began to replace the Binet and Wechsler tests. Examples include the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ-COG) and the Kaufman Adolescent Battery for Children (K-ABC). The newer tests are more sensitive to racial, ethnic, and gender biases. “But even with these advances, the basic method for measuring a child’s ability remains little different than it was 65 years ago. What has changed far more than the general strategy and format of testing are the fine grained details of the items and, more important, the way the test scores are used.”¹⁷

Intelligence and Heredity

As we proceed with a discussion of intelligence, it should be remembered that debates over the sources of intelligence are often ideological. In other words, the positions people take on the issue are often motivated by social or political views that are much more comprehensive than the issue of intelligence itself. For example, the views of critics of hereditarian theories of intelligence might be shaped by a particular view of justice that sees hereditarianism as undermining any hope of equal educational opportunity and hence a fair distribution of social and economic rewards. Proponents of hereditarianism might view

their position as supportive of a larger educational mission to sort and select talent. This intellectual elite could then be channeled in directions that make it most useful for achieving the social, political, and economic goals established by political and corporate leaders. Whatever side of hereditarianism people line up on, it is highly likely that their choices will be a reflection of the values and purposes they think are legitimate for society and government.

During the 1930s, Carl Brigham, in *A Study of American Intelligence*, promoted the prevailing eugenics theory of the day that upheld the notion of three dominant/distinct European races—Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean. He reported the following: “The test results (referring to the Army IQ tests) as a whole were like a photograph of American culture, so faithfully did they reproduce the social order. Officers scored higher than enlisted men, the native-born scored higher than the foreign-born, less recent immigrants scored higher than more recent immigrants, and whites scored higher than Negroes.”¹⁸ This begins to illustrate the notion that race is linked directly to intelligence. Brigham’s theory is again reflected in the 1960s through Jensen’s work and the 1990s through Herrnstein and Murray’s *Bell Curve*.

In *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Jay Gould reminds us of a commonly misunderstood distinction between the facts of genetic transmission and a hereditarian theory of intelligence. Though genetic codes are inherited, they do not necessarily result in predetermined kinds of behaviors or limitations. Obvious examples are near-sightedness and far-sightedness, which, though inherited, are easily modified. There is, in other words, no inevitable outcome of the inherited condition.¹⁹ Essentially, a child may have the world’s most intelligent parents but absolutely no motivation or desire to learn. The child would thus in the eyes of others fail to measure up to the intellectual abilities of the parents.

A second source of confusion, Gould notes, is that between individual heredity and group characteristics. Intelligence test scales are applied to individuals, of course, and the variations in scores (IQs) show variations among the individuals. To attempt to draw conclusions about differences among groups on the basis of differences among individuals, however, is extremely risky.

The problem Gould finds with the hereditarian theory of intelligence is its focus on a *number* that is supposed to represent something called intelligence. Gould’s attack on the hereditarian fallacy was provoked in part by the work of Arthur Jensen, theoretician, clinician, and psychometrician at the University of California at Berkeley. Jensen’s work is worth examining because he is an able researcher whose published work over the past quarter century has been the object of great controversy and popularization by the mass media.

Jensen has consistently supported the idea that there exists a general intelligence (*g*) that cannot be described in terms of specific content or tasks. He has also supported the arguments for “heritability” of intelligence. Says Jensen:

The heritability of intelligence can only mean that individual differences in IQ and scholastic aptitude are largely a biological, rather than a psychological, phenomenon, and that the main causes of individual differences are the developmental outcome factors already coded in the DNA at the moment of conception.²⁰

Jensen concludes that “successful attempts to alter *g* materially will most probably require biological, rather than purely psychological interventions.”²¹

Jensen made many of his arguments in a well-known essay titled “How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?” published in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1969. It immediately caused a storm of criticism, including charges of racism. He began his essay by challenging what he called the “deprivation hypothesis,” which, he claimed, explains academic failure or “academic lag” on the basis of environmental factors such as “social, economic and educational deprivation and discrimination . . .”²² At the same time Jensen questioned the efficacy of compensatory education programs designed to combat the effects of a “deprived” environment. In a more recent paper given before the American Educational Research Association meeting in 1984, Jensen reiterated the “plain truth,” as he put it, “that compensatory programs have not resulted in any appreciable, durable gains in the IQs or scholastic achievements of those to whom they have been administered.”²³

The relationship between race and intelligence was almost a taboo subject in the 1960s. In the beginning of the subsection titled “Race Differences” in his 1969 essay, Jensen took great care to explain the difference between the “individual” and a “population,” but his discussion of racial differences in intelligence touched a sensitive chord. The context of Jensen’s remarks was the problem of fairness (or unfairness) in “society’s multiple selection process.” The disproportionately lower number of racial minority individuals entering higher-order occupations obviously raised the issue of discrimination. Yet it also pointed to the possibility that there were “real average differences among groups . . .”²⁴

Jensen then went on to cite evidence showing that “Negroes test about 1 standard deviation (15 IQ points) below the average of the white population in IQ . . .” Environmental explanations for these differences in IQ were not adequate, according to Jensen. Genetic differences resulting from a different racial gene pool, he said, would have to be considered as a possible explanatory factor.²⁵

“Like it or not,” said Jensen, “the educational system is one of society’s most powerful mechanisms for sorting out children to assume different roles in the occupational hierarchy.” It is this screening process, he said, that, in fact, helps to create the positive correlation between socioeconomic status and intelligence. Though Jensen allowed that the selecting and sorting process was not “fair in any absolute sense,” he maintained that the “best we can ever hope for is that true merit, given equality of opportunity, [will] act as a basis for the natural assorting process.”²⁶

Jensen’s arguments immediately caused a storm of protest. Critics attacked his research as well as the inferences he drew from it. Scholars and researchers like Jerome Kagan and J. McV. Hunt pointed out that Jensen’s research failed to take sufficient account of the early formative years of a child’s life and thus failed to recognize the important developmental and environmental interactions that influence intelligence. Lee J. Cronbach of Stanford University pointed to Jensen’s misuse of genetic arguments, particularly his suggestions that the “gene pools” of blacks are inferior. Cronbach pointed out that different

environments themselves will produce different findings about the heritability of intelligence.²⁷

Steven Selden has traced the history of student classification as it relates to intelligence testing. He has pointed out that biological determinism of the type that Jensen enunciates has led to many historical abuses of human welfare in the name of equal opportunity. The arguments of men such as Albert E. Wiggam (*The New Decalogue of Science*, 1923), Charles C. Peters (*Foundations of Educational Sociology*, 1924), and Henry C. Goddard (*The Kalikak Family*, 1912), he states, were shaped by their assumptions about inequalities among people and their commitment to a meritocratic system for distributing educational and social benefits. These assumptions, in turn, led to educational policies based on the segregation of exceptionality. Ironically, such policies were defended on the basis of equal opportunity, when it is far more likely that they reinforced already existing inequalities.²⁸ During the 1960s, the civil rights movement brought intelligence testing under scrutiny. Many supporters of the movement felt the tests not only showed ethnic and racial biases but were an invasion of privacy.²⁹

In 1994, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, reignited the debate by Jensen and Brigham that race and intelligence are linked. Subsequently, a public outcry over Herrnstein and Murray's findings was heard. Editorials appeared in print and other popular media. College protests even took place. The authors of *The Bell Curve* maintained that genetics has a strong influence on a person's academic ability, that one race is inferior to another, and that intelligence is also based on class structure. Herrnstein and Murray's work caused such an uproar that a book was written to refute it. The book, edited by Steven Fraser, included works by Stephen Jay Gould and Howard Gardner.³⁰ Both books were voraciously read and vigorously argued.

Debates over the heritability of intelligence have been particularly heated because the idea of genetic determination has such profound implications for how the economic, social, and political systems of a country should be structured. The issues raised by the heritability of intelligence are highly charged with ethical considerations. Intelligence tests have become intertwined with ability grouping. This seems to be most apparent at the secondary level; however, it also exists at lower levels. According to Jeannie Oakes, "Over the past decade, a growing number of local school systems have begun to administer 'readiness' tests to select some five-year-olds for the academic demands of kindergarten, others for a less academic prekindergarten class, and still others to stay home and wait a year."³¹ It can be seen that at the very beginning of a child's education, in some cases before a child even enters the first grade, he or she is subjected to segregation by ability.

One of the questions that the measurement of intelligence and genetic endowment forces us to confront is whether, or how much, knowledge about genetic endowment should be used to control the development and employment of human resources. Though the genetic endowment of an individual is not a matter of his or her choice, the use of knowledge about that endowment is. Its use involves ethical questions.

One might justifiably ask, at this point, “Where do we stand?” and “Why has there been so much concern over genetic endowment and heritability?” The answer is deceptively simple. We wish to know how human diversity may be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. It will not do to simply apply a technical answer to an ethical issue. It is not difficult to classify people or to devise measurements that will be reliable for doing so. What is difficult is to respect human diversity rather than viewing it as an obstacle to greater technical proficiency in the management of human resources. Throughout this chapter we will emphasize the problems schools encounter in dealing with human diversity and suggest how they can respond in a reflective, humane, and just way.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND AMERICAN SCHOOLING

In the first chapter we outlined the problem of justice as it relates to race and racism, including the ways in which federal legislation and federal courts addressed the persistent problems of racism and racial strife. These included the rejection of the “separate but equal” doctrine ensconced in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) with the ground-breaking decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954); the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act; the application of *Brown* to Hispanic minorities in *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District* (1970); the extension of the reasoning of *Brown* to issues of equity in *Hobson v. Hansen II* (1971), *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), and *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* (1973); and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972.

Historically, the term *race* has denoted human groups distinguished by unique physical characteristics and/or cultural differences. Biologically, the term has been used to designate subgroups of the species *Homo sapiens*. These groups are often based on differences in presumed “gene pools” that are shared by reproductive communities. In turn, these groups sometimes have been defined by geographical boundaries. The difficulty of using physical, genetic, and geographical standards of reference for race can be seen in the simple historical fact that estimates by anthropologists on the number of races have ranged from 2 to 200.³²

Because of the difficulties in defining race, it is more useful to speak of race as a legal and cultural concept. The Supreme Court of the United States approved the use of race as a way of classifying human beings in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). As we have seen, the *Brown* case further legitimized “race” as a proper legal term. When dealing with educational issues, however, race as a *cultural* concept is better suited to understanding how people’s beliefs about race affect learning, teaching, and educational policy.³³ Defining race as a cultural concept, for example, allows us to look at how *ethnocentrism* (perceiving one’s own group as superior to other groups of people) leads to stereotyping, social distancing, racism, and, in general, the classification of groups of people into inferior and superior.³⁴

As we have discussed in Chapter 1, equal educational opportunity as a means of achieving social justice has been a persistent theme in American education. The ideal of equal educational opportunity also has created the

expectation that more schooling will “open doors” to minority youth and those from lower socioeconomic groups. Yet the numbers simply do not justify such an expectation. Among African Americans, the gap between middle- and low-income families has increased over the past 20 years. From 1976 to 1988, college enrollments of African Americans declined slightly as did the percentage of those receiving a degree. For Hispanic Americans the drop was more precipitous. For low-income whites, however, college enrollments rose during the same period. Declining availability of student financial aid was a major factor in declining college enrollments for African Americans and Hispanic Americans. No matter what the cause, however, the expectations of equal educational opportunity were not being met.³⁵ However, there has been some improvement. “Since the late 1980s, students of color have increased their total college enrollment by 57.2 percent, which included a 16.1 percent gain during the most recent five years for which data are available. Enrollment among students of color increased 3.7 percent from 1996 to 1997.” Also in 1997, “African-Americans represented 10.7 percent of all college students.”³⁶

If we understand that the hard facts of numbers undercut claims of equal educational opportunity, then it becomes more understandable why so many minority youth do not share the “American dream.” They are alienated from the dream and what it represents. The educational result of alienation is often some sort of openly hostile behavior, such as refusal to abide by school rules or dropping out of school. Alienation also results in “tuning out” (dropping out *in* school). For example, the persistent use of Black English (even when understanding Standard English) may be a modest refusal to submit to the mainstream culture of white America. Chicanos and Cholos who wish to avoid conduct associated with “being white or gringo or quaddie or rich honkie” avoid behaviors associated with the dominant group. Thus participation in classroom discussion, carrying books to class, asking the teacher for help in the presence of other students, and aspiring to higher academic achievement must be avoided in order to maintain one’s group identity.³⁷

Dropping out of school is the ultimate form of resistance; cutting classes is a milder form of protest. Descriptive statistics are plentiful that show high correlations between dropping out of school and factors such as poverty, minority culture, single-parent families, and pregnancies. Describing the characteristics of dropouts, however, does not *explain* dropping out. One way to understand the reasons for alienation and resistance, such as dropping out, is to look at the problem in terms of culture.³⁸ Consider the case of the African American male. Lisa Delpit in *Other People’s Children* makes the following observation: “We live in a society that nurtures and maintains stereotypes: we are all bombarded daily, for instance, with the portrayal of the young black male as a monster. When we see a group of young black men, we lock our car doors, cross to the other side of the street, or clutch our hand bags. We are constantly told of the one out of four black men who is involved with the prison system—but what about the three out of four who are not?”³⁹ Already at a disadvantage in society at large, African American males are further subject to conflict in school.

Polite and Davis hypothesize that the male-oriented culture comes into direct conflict with the “feminized” culture of the school:

One reason commonly mentioned for the alienation and poor academic performance of some African-American males is that they perceive most educational experiences as irrelevant to their masculine identity and development. Furthermore, it is also argued that schools and teachers impose a feminine culture on males that inadvertently induces oppositional behavior. Given these alienating school contexts and consequences, particularly those focusing on gender expectations, many African-American males become both victims and participants in their own educational marginalization.⁴⁰

Literacy, Language, and Culture

Culture is a system of beliefs, behaviors, and ways of expression that constitute our social heritage. It is a “seamless web” of *shared meanings* that give meaning to our experience and give us an identity larger than that of any individual.⁴¹ Culture is part of individual behavior and thought and links us to others who share our culture. For this reason, it is easy to identify cultural *traits* that are unique, defining characteristics of a group. These traits are a source of strength for those who belong to the culture, but the same traits may be the target for prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping by others. For example, in the case of Mexican Americans, there are many whose descendants predate European settlers and also speak only English in their homes. Yet these same people are often confused with “new immigrants” when peers and teachers say, “You sure speak English well.”⁴²

Literacy is probably *the* most fundamental goal of public schooling in the United States. Other social and political purposes—the development of human capital and citizenship—are broader but assume that people are literate. By looking more closely at becoming literate in America, we can bring into focus how cultural diversity affects the larger purposes of education in the United States.

Just as numeracy is more than arithmetic, so literacy is more than decoding skills and reading comprehension. The school inducts the young into literate culture by teaching them to read and write and by conveying the social norms associated with literate culture. The power of literacy is also the power of the system of beliefs that underlies literacy.

In a multicultural society, ethnicity and race are shapers of the meaning of literacy itself. For Puerto Ricans in the United States, for example, the Spanish language signifies their identity as Latinos, thus marking them apart from the majority culture.⁴³ Yet this same mark of identity can be a badge of failure when a *different* language is called a language *deficit*. The point is well made by the story of the first Puerto Rican member of the United States House of Representatives, who recalled his school days in New York City in the 1940s:

I know . . . how amazed all the teachers were at the remarkable improvement of my intelligence quotient as I went from one grade to the other . . . I did not have the heart to tell them that all that happened was that I learned to speak English.⁴⁴

A more extreme example exists for many American Indian children whose cultures “reinforce nonverbal communication, visual/spatial memory, visual/motor skills, and sequential visual memory over verbal skills.” It should not be

surprising that achievement tests conducted in English, a second language for many Indian children, show these children to “score very low on verbal skills.”⁴⁵

Because the policy of public schools is to provide equality of educational opportunity and because becoming literate is one of the major goals of schooling, the child’s first encounter with a reading teacher is crucial to future academic success. In his studies of 5-year-olds learning to read, Gordon Wells has shown that the process of language acquisition in school follows a narrow model of instruction dominated by teacher questions and student response.

This teacher-centered model allows far fewer options for children to use a different language background in school. If the language patterns of the home and the significance attached to literacy are much the same as in school, there is little problem. In many so-called lower-class homes in which nonstandard dialects are spoken, however, there is a great divide between home and school. If the aim of the school is to overcome language deficiencies, the result is ironic because teachers often do not take advantage of the language the child already knows. We know that most children bring a wealth of language experience to school. Rather than using the resources that children already have, however, the strategy frequently is to restrict rather than expand language opportunities.⁴⁶ When we begin with a model of teaching that stresses disabilities, deficits, defects, and deficiencies, we see teaching as corrective. We come to stress what is wrong with the child’s background rather than viewing the child’s background as a resource upon which we can build.

Research on minority-language students has given us some hints on how teachers can best deal with this aspect of human diversity. A follow-up project to a suit filed in 1977 on behalf of 15 elementary school children living in Ann Arbor, Michigan, investigated the way in which the dialect of the children (a black vernacular) influenced opportunities for learning in the classroom. The suit alleged that the teacher’s failure to recognize and accept the fact that the dialect spoken in the home was different from the Standard English of the classroom jeopardized student learning and made children feel ashamed of their language.

On the basis of their study of classroom interaction between teacher and students, the researchers concluded that children use language better in situations in which the dialect is recognized as acceptable. They suggest that teachers use the language competence that children already have to develop other language skills. And they argue that assessment procedures should include proficiency in dialects and/or language other than Standard English. This would allow teachers to have the benefit of this knowledge.⁴⁷

In 1981, at Prescott Elementary School in Oakland, California, the majority of the teachers chose to participate in the Standard English Proficiency (SEP) program. This statewide initiative acknowledged the systematic nature of Black English and said that it could be used to help students learn Standard English.⁴⁸ On December 16, 1996, the Oakland school board passed the Ebonics resolution, which required all schools in the district to participate in the SEP program. The goal was to improve the academic performance of African American students.⁴⁹

There was a public outcry over this decision. Critics stated that teaching Ebonics would be divisive and that encouragement of a black dialect would not help students in the future. Those who advocated Ebonics (also called African American Vernacular English) said that the media perpetuate the notion that students will not learn Standard English, and that Black English would be used to teach Standard English. Advocates insisted that African American language needs to be respected. Perry and Delpit argue that the real debate over Ebonics is not linguistic—it is about culture, power, identity, and control.⁵⁰

The work of Lucas, Henze, and Donato outlines several strategies for dealing with language-minority students. These authors studied students in six high schools that had been recognized for their success in teaching language-minority students. The authors found that these schools “celebrated diversity” by valuing and respecting the minority language. They also found that this respect promoted the “self-esteem necessary for student achievement.” Minority-language students were allowed to speak their “primary language” except when instruction focused on learning English. The schools also offered lower- and advanced-content courses in the primary language and had many extracurricular activities to attract language-minority students.⁵¹

In the six high schools that Lucas and others studied, teachers had high expectations for their language-minority students. The schools also provided bilingual honors courses and assistance in applying for college and financial aid. Bilingual teachers were hired, and teachers were taught the principles of second-language acquisition and cross-cultural communication through staff development programs. Class size was relatively small, ranging from 20 to 25 students. There were academic support programs to help language-minority students make the transition from bilingual classes to mainstream classes taught in Standard English. Parents were also involved through monthly parent nights and early-morning meetings. Finally, teachers were encouraged to give extra time to language-minority students and to participate in community activities in which they acted as advocates for Latinos.⁵²

Clearly a combination of factors is needed to help language-minority students be successful. These range from a respect for different languages and nonstandard English, to high expectations for these students. No matter what the specific strategy, the teacher must view the language of the child as a foundation for language development rather than as a language deficit. Finally, the teacher must act as part of the student’s community—not simply as one more school authority attempting to impose a system of values (including language) on an unwilling learner.

Multiculturalism and Education

To understand the current multicultural and multiethnic movement in education, one must first understand its assumptions about how pupil behaviors are learned and how power ought to be distributed in a democratic society. First, advocates of multicultural education assume that people’s behaviors and their values are culturally learned. To behave is to behave as a member of a particular group. In this sense, what is real to us is what our culture tells us is real. In

its extreme form, this means the individual has little to say about what she or he believes; rather, beliefs and reality itself are culturally determined. Critics of multicultural education are quick to point out that this cultural determinism leaves little room for individually determined values and behavior and assumes that an ethnic or cultural group has a single perspective.

A second set of assumptions held by multiculturalists deals with how power in a society and government should be distributed. Multiethnic education identifies certain major cultural groups—such as African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans—as oppressed or dominated groups who have lacked a “voice” proportional to their numbers in the population. In other words, they are underrepresented in the decision-making processes that affect how they are governed and how their children will be educated.

Political and educational responses to the multiethnicity of American society can generally be divided into three categories or models: cultural pluralism, assimilation, and multiculturalism.⁵³ The first, cultural pluralism, sees a democratic society as one that recognizes the rights of all ethnic groups to exist on an equal footing—politically, legally, and culturally. Individuals within ethnic groups all have the same basic civil rights. Society itself is viewed as a plurality of different groups, each having its own voice and each having a right to socialize its children according to its own values, language, and behaviors. The identity of the individual is an extension of the identity of the group. Schools and curricula, then, ought to express and reinforce ethnic identities depending upon the local population dominant in the school. If no group is dominant, then teachers should work to preserve several ethnic identities in their instruction and curriculum.

According to the cultural pluralism model, teaching should reflect the dominant learning patterns among the ethnic groups represented in the population, and the curriculum should respect the cultural heritage of the same. The curriculum in the cultural pluralism model, Banks observes, should be “culture-specific.” The major goal is to help children function in their own culture and empower them “within the larger civic culture.”⁵⁴

The assimilationist model is rooted in the belief that a common, national civic culture is a prerequisite to the survival of the nation. It assumes a shared set of values that transcend ethnicity—a set of values that, though not universally held, are strong enough to bind people together for mutual survival and happiness. The government itself and the public school are the two most important institutions for transmitting these shared values. Though tolerant of diverse values, the central role of the public school in the assimilationist model is to teach students the skills, knowledge, and values that will allow them to participate in the shared culture. In this model, ethnicity must take a back seat to the preservation of a national civic culture.

Multiculturalism is the third, and most recent, response to cultural diversity in the United States. This model is clearly a compromise position between the assimilationist and cultural pluralist positions. James Banks, a leading theorist in multicultural education, describes the multicultural society as follows:

Individuals would be free to act in ways consistent with the norms and values of their ethnic groups as long as they did not conflict with the overarching national idealized values, such as justice, equality and human dignity.⁵⁵

The role of public schools in the multicultural model is an extension of the ideal itself. Curricula include teaching and learning about various ethnic groups and the shared common culture. As in society, students are in contact with more than one set of values. Teachers, for their part, acknowledge ethnic differences in learning styles among students.

Multiculturalism recognizes the emergent nature of any modern, industrialized society. It is, moreover, a strictly pragmatic response to demographic and cultural change. This is both its strength and its weakness. The multicultural view recognizes the changing relations of political power by accommodating different ethnic groups in relationships of shared power. It also reflects the historical tension between a civic culture and an ethnic culture that has been part of the development of American democracy. From political and philosophic viewpoints then, it is pragmatic.

The glaring weakness of the multicultural model is the absence of a set of principles needed to resolve disputes between ethnic and civic cultures. How these conflicts are to be settled is not spelled out by the multiculturalist, except to say that the abstract and nearly universal principles of justice, fairness, equality, and human dignity should prevail. This answer really begs the question, however, because the particular *applications* of these abstract principles is not specified. Without such specificity, different ethnic groups and the civic culture itself are left to define their own meanings of the principles. When these meanings are in conflict, one is left with no process (except shared power) to resolve the differences. What this means, in effect, is that the resolution of differences is left to the political process.

SOCIOECONOMIC STRATIFICATION, GROUPING, TRACKING, AND EXPECTATIONS

In this section we focus on the relationship of socioeconomic status to the common practices of ability grouping (grouping on the basis of perceived and measured differences in achievement) and tracking (organization of the curriculum by *level* of instruction). About 75 percent of school districts in the United States use ability grouping despite the ruling in *Hobson v. Hansen* (1967) that declared it unconstitutional to group students into fast and slow tracks if these groupings resulted in an “unconstitutional segregation of minority and nonminority students.”⁵⁶ Children come to school from a great variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, ranging from abject rural poverty to suburban affluence. Within and among schools the range of wealth and occupational status represented by students’ families is enormous. Within families, other variables such as number of siblings, single-parent households, and working

mothers make a tangled web for researchers attempting to assess the effects of socioeconomic status on educational opportunity and student learning.

For both teachers and administrators, differences in socioeconomic background are often seen as a problem to be overcome, a challenge to be met. The advice to treat each student as an individual is often compromised by demands for efficiency. Although that is no justification for tracking and ability grouping, given the thousands upon thousands of students in high schools, it is obvious why administrators and teachers practice both, even though these methods of organizing instruction tend to reinforce already existing socioeconomic differences among students.

It is probably safe to assume that the reader of this text has been tracked at one time or another in her or his education. Over 80 percent of high schools today utilize tracking and ability grouping. Many critics of tracking base their argument on racial and ethnic imbalances and other inequitable distributions of minorities in lower tracks. Whites and Asian Americans are overrepresented in higher tracks, and African Americans and Latinos are overrepresented in lower tracks.⁵⁷ Critics argue that being placed in a lower group can have damaging psychological effects. Also, the emphasis on lower-level thinking skills (i.e., memorization) does not prepare students to move to a higher track or adequately prepare them for higher education.⁵⁸

Following the publication of James Coleman and associates' *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966) and Christopher Jencks's *Inequality* (1972), educators became increasingly aware of the ways in which schools operate to preserve already existing socioeconomic inequalities. Jonathan Kozol in *Savage Inequalities* (1990) provides examples that illustrate the great inequities caused by socioeconomic disparities between schools. If the schools do not provide quality education, then students will not be able to break the cycle of poverty. Education is one of the best predictors of occupational prestige. In addition, the higher the socioeconomic level of students' families, the greater is the likelihood that students will graduate from high school and college.⁵⁹

Tracking and ability grouping are the major methods that schools use to select and sort students. For the most part, studies have focused on how tracking and grouping (1) affect opportunities for social mobility among students after they leave school, (2) reinforce the socioeconomic differences that children bring with them to school, and (3) affect academic achievement. Operating within those larger questions, researchers have focused on the problems of the self-fulfilling prophecy and teacher expectations. These were addressed in the now famous study by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson, *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968). In this landmark study of the Oak School, the authors found that "children's gains in IQ . . . were correlated with teachers' perceptions of their classroom behavior." In addition, they observed that:

The more the upper-track children of the experimental group gained in IQ the more favorably they were rated by their teachers. The more the lower-track children of the control group gained in IQ, the more unfavorably they were viewed by their teachers . . . The more intellectually competent these [lower-track] children became, the more negatively they were viewed by their teachers.⁶⁰

Essentially, Rosenthal and Jacobson surmise that if a teacher is predisposed to believe that a student will succeed, then the student will succeed, and if the opposite holds true, the expectation of failure will be upheld.

Ray Rist's work in the early 1970s deepened our understanding of how teacher expectations and academic grouping interact to affect student achievement. In his case study of one class of ghetto children during kindergarten, first, and second grades, Rist characterized teacher-student relations in terms of five propositions. These are useful signposts to better understand how teacher behavior affects student achievement:

1. the teacher has in mind an "ideal type" of student, the characteristics of whom are needed for success in and after school;
2. the teacher subjectively evaluates her students using the "ideal type" and organizes the class into "fast learners" and "slow learners";
3. the teacher gives the majority of her teaching time to the fast learners, but, for the slow learners, emphasizes control of behavior;
4. the teacher's treatment of the two groups becomes increasingly rigidified ("caste-like") and the gap in completion of academic material widens;
5. in the years following the initial grouping, information about past performance is used as the basis for classroom grouping.⁶¹

Rist describes the different behavior of the teacher toward the different reading groups. The acceptable behavior of those in the "middle-class" group (clean, attentive, highly verbal) was reinforced by the teacher. The "lower-class" group (dirty, smelly, low verbalization, and speakers of a dialect different from the teacher's) were abused through ridicule and physical punishment. Both the social and the academic distance among the groups, says Rist, increased to the point that they resembled "castes." Rist's conclusion was that the "system of public education in reality perpetuates what it is ideologically committed to eradicate—class barriers which result in inequality in the social and economic life of the citizenry."⁶²

Numerous studies have built on the work of Rist, though few researchers talk in terms of "caste" today. It is widely assumed, however, that placement by track gives some students academic advantages over others. This is so obvious that it is virtually *prima facie* evidence that students are treated unequally. But does it mean that they are discriminated against? As we saw in Chapter 1 the case can be made that differential treatment is fair treatment because it takes into account the student's weaknesses when instruction and curriculum are being organized.

Whether unequal treatment is discriminatory depends on both the intent and the effects of unequal treatment on the rights and opportunities of the student. Take, for example, a teacher who uses slow-paced instruction and highly structured written work as a technique for controlling students' behavior rather than as a means for overcoming students' weaknesses in basic skills. One suspects that this use of such techniques is discriminatory. If we know that these techniques are a product of stereotyping, that the teacher has relatively low expectations for lower-track students, and that slow-paced instruction leaves lower-track students further and further

behind academically, then we are led to the conclusion that such teacher behavior is discriminatory.

Other patterns of teacher behavior may also be suspect. If teachers of high-track students, compared to teachers of low-track students, give proportionately more instructional time to students and use less time telling them how to behave, then we are suspicious that the differences in instruction between the two tracks are discriminatory. This suspicion is confirmed when students themselves report that they “know” that high track students receive a better education and that low-track students aren’t expected to do as well.

Jeanie Oakes’s *Keeping Track* (1985) is one of the most comprehensive and sobering accounts of the presumptions, fallacies, and effects of tracking in American public schools. In her study of 25 secondary schools, including 229 classes, Oakes examined the effects of tracking on the distribution of knowledge, opportunities to learn, classroom climate, and student attitudes. Her observations led her to conclude that four basic assumptions underlie the pervasive support for tracking found in our schools.

The first assumption is that students learn better when tracked. The supporting arguments are usually that bright students will be held back if grouped with “slow” students and that “slower” students can more easily be remediated if grouped together. The second assumption is that slower students, when tracked, will develop more positive self-concepts and, when mixed with brighter students, will develop negative attitudes toward themselves. Third is the belief that the procedures we use to group students are accurate and fair and “reflect past achievements and native abilities.” Fourth is the assumption that homogeneous grouping allows teachers to accommodate individual differences more easily and makes students “easier to teach and manage.”⁶³

The idea that students learn better when grouped by ability is “simply not true,” says Oakes. There are “mountains of research evidence indicating that homogeneous grouping doesn’t consistently help *anyone* learn better.” Occasionally, it has been found that bright students studying an enriched curriculum learn more when grouped with their peers, but most of the time this is not true. The second assumption about positive self-concept is likewise fallacious. Rather than fostering high self-esteem, homogeneous grouping tends to lower self-esteem. Moreover, students placed in lower tracks are seen by others as less intelligent.⁶⁴

The third assumption, that placements are done in an accurate and fair way, presumes that the standardized test scores used to make placements are valid for such a use. Oakes reminds us that the questions included in these tests are selected for their ability to discriminate among student responses. Many questions that are accurate measures of a student’s knowledge are discarded because too many students answer them correctly. The differences being measured conform to a normal distribution. Test-score differences, however, reflect only a very small proportion of the knowledge needed by the student to “know” the subject. The second point that relates to testing is fairness. Here the preponderance of evidence shows that poor and minority youth perform less well because their language background cannot be easily adapted to the lan-

guage of the tests. Finally, the fourth assumption about ease of teaching and management seems to be valid—that is, if it is assumed that current teaching practices are the only ones that matter. But this is a self-serving justification at best. At worst, it is an excuse for lack of initiative and innovation.⁶⁵

Overall, Oakes finds that the distribution of knowledge between lower- and higher-track students is not only unequal but probably influences opportunities beyond public schooling. High-track students are exposed to knowledge that is highly valued and classifies a person as educated. Moreover, having such knowledge permits greater access to higher education and hence higher social and economic status following school. Skills such as independent and critical thinking, creativity, and questioning are fostered in higher tracks. In contrast, the knowledge and skills taught to lower-track students are not as prestigious and do not facilitate access to higher education and higher-status jobs. Functional literacy, computational skills, the ability to follow directions, and good work habits are “necessary” to success but hardly sufficient to permit access to higher-paying and higher-status jobs.⁶⁶

Besides differences in academic content among tracks, Oakes and others have found that higher-track students get more teaching time and time on task, spend more time on homework, and receive the kind of instruction that motivates students to learn. These latter activities included field trips, research projects, role-playing, narrative or expository writing, and making films or recordings. Activities that focused on active student involvement were noticeably absent in lower tracks. These relative differences between higher and lower tracks, Oakes reminds us, must be placed against a common finding for all tracks—that there was little active student involvement and decision making in learning. Most of the time, all classrooms emphasized “passive activities” such as listening to the teacher, writing answers to questions, and taking tests.⁶⁷

We conclude this section with a study done by Deborah Dillon of an eleventh grade low-track English reading classroom in which 74 percent of the students were black and most were from low-income families. Most students were bused to and from school, and 75 percent participated in the free or reduced-cost lunch program. Dillon reported that the climate of the school was “free from racial or severe behavior problems.” Most parents defined success for their youngsters as receipt of a diploma, and few parents were involved with their children’s instruction.⁶⁸

Dillon studied 17 students, most of whom had low reading ability; the overall instructional reading level varied from sixth to eleventh grade. For purposes of her study Dillon defined teacher effectiveness as the ability to take account of the “backgrounds of [the] low socioeconomic, predominantly black students” and at the same time provide “meaningful experience for low-track remedial readers/writers.”⁶⁹

Several features of this highly effective teacher’s instruction stood out. First, he (Appleby) was genuinely concerned for his students and worked hard to motivate them. His communications skills were excellent, he was confident, and he had a sense of purpose. He controlled his classroom without forcing control on his students, and he treated his students with respect. When

selecting reading material, Appleby matched it to his students' reading levels and interests. When teaching writing, he used a process approach, including keeping journals and peer teaching. It was not, notes Dillon, the "watered-down, skill sheet commonly given to low reading/writing ability level students." The teacher "believed that his predominantly black students learned best when they were asked to listen, discuss, and work together cooperatively."⁷⁰

Appleby allowed students to use their own natural language during lessons, and he transformed his own language to mirror that of his students. This was particularly important for "bridging gaps between [the] background knowledge students have and new concepts and materials they are to learn." The students appreciated and admired Appleby's adaptation of his own language to theirs. He believed that students should learn actively and encouraged them to call out answers and make comments.⁷¹

There is little question that Appleby was a risk taker, confident in his abilities to succeed with these students. He was well informed about current educational research and modified his teaching on the basis of (1) his observations of his students and (2) new information about effective teaching. Yet Appleby could not have been innovative unless he was encouraged and allowed to be a risk taker, to try new teaching styles, and was provided with time to reflect on his triumphs and mistakes. The climate of the school was supportive of him.

Pool and Page in *Beyond Tracking* state: "Tracking promotes 'dumbed-down,' skill-drill, ditto-driven, application-deficient curricula. It contributes to the destruction of students' dreams and the production of low student self-esteem. Even when it is not intended, whole class stratified groupings promote elitism, de facto racism, and classism."⁷² Essentially, placing students in educational tracks limits their future opportunities for education and careers.

GENDER, CULTURE, AND EDUCATION

Historical Perspectives on Sex Roles

Sex and gender have been used to differentiate people in virtually every culture, regardless of geographic location, since the dawn of civilization. Family obligations, work status, property rights, political participation, and educational opportunity have all been defined by sex and gender. During much of the colonial period in America, education for women was very limited, seldom extending beyond reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, there was sharp disagreement over what was an appropriate education for women. In 1787 Benjamin Rush, a famous physician in colonial Pennsylvania, published his "Thoughts Upon Female Education," a companion piece to his "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic" (1786). In a land that had embarked on a great political experiment, both public and private enlightenment were important matters if the new republic called the United States was to succeed. Rush argued that the American woman must be different from her English counterpart. She should have a good knowledge of the basic skills, be acquainted with geography and history,

music and dancing, be able to keep accounts, and have a good Christian instruction so as to model proper beliefs for her children.⁷³

Rush's proposals were not radical, but they did depart from English precedent insofar as they proposed a role for women that would ensure an upbringing of children that would suit them for life in a democracy. Across the Atlantic, Mary Wollstonecraft espoused a more radical view of women in her *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Wollstonecraft acknowledged that a woman's duties were primarily domestic, but she wished to redefine a woman's role in the household. Women should be the intellectual companions of men, she said. Their relationship should not be one of sexual tyranny. Educationally, she supported equality of schooling for boys and girls at the elementary level. Moreover, the expectations for each sex should be equal, she said.⁷⁴

We do not know how most women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries felt about sex differentiation and stereotyping. We do know, however, that as industrialization expanded during the nineteenth century, many young women were absorbed into the workforce outside the home. Women's work was generally low-skilled compared to that of men. Thus in textile and paper mills, for example, women did work for lower wages using skills that were considered beneath those of men.

In the mid-nineteenth century, women were entering the industrial workforce in large numbers, but the "ideal" woman remained a wife and homemaker. In fact the so-called cult of domesticity of the mid-nineteenth century emphasized the mother as the guardian of moral, religious, and cultural values. This nurturing of virtue was accompanied by responsibilities for frugal household management. Manuals, treatises on domestic economy, and agricultural journals all contributed to what Carl Kaestle has called a "veritable crusade." The purpose of the crusade was to dignify womanhood itself.⁷⁵

Education, Women, and Teaching

By the mid-nineteenth century almost as many girls as boys attended elementary school. Actual school enrollments may have been affected by gender, but the overall increase in literacy rates for women in the first 70 years of the nineteenth century suggests that equalization of elementary schooling was taking place.⁷⁶

At the same time that Victorian America was celebrating womanhood through motherhood, other voices and events were attempting to enrich the intellectual life of women. Catharine Beecher and Mary Lyon worked unceasingly to build academies for training teachers. They viewed teachers, especially those moving west, as institution builders, ready to raise public enlightenment to a level worthy of the new democracy. Through Catharine Beecher's National Popular Education Board (NPEB), 250 eastern teachers were placed in western schools during the 1840s and 1850s. In Oberlin College in Ohio, women, including the first black woman to obtain a college education in the United States, were inducted into an intellectual climate that allowed them, in turn, to teach in academies and female seminaries.⁷⁷

On another but related front, Emma Willard was introducing women to mathematics and science at Waterford Academy and Troy Female Seminary in upstate New York. Willard had taught herself geometry, algebra, trigonometry, and conics to a point where she felt confident to teach them to others. Mathematics and science became part of her students' intellectual heritage through Willard's teaching and by attendance at evening lectures at nearby Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The Troy Female Seminary placed many of its graduates in the West and South, as did the Boston's Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Education in the West. This latter society merged with the National Popular Education Board in 1852.⁷⁸

In the larger metropolitan area of Philadelphia, women were also attending lectures on science at the Franklin Institute. This was the case at the Ohio Mechanics' Institute in Cincinnati as well. Though women were not part of the schools for apprentices operated by these mechanics' institutes, they were present in conspicuous numbers at the lecture series on natural and moral philosophy. The exhibitions sponsored at such institutes also typically included articles manufactured at home by women. Admittedly, women were on the periphery of the major purpose of these institutes, but there is no question they took part in acquiring the scientific and technical knowledge offered by this new type of educational institution.

During the nineteenth century, women continued to build a foundation for respectability through teaching. By the twentieth century the names of women who were leaders in the progressive education movement were well known. They included Ella Flagg Young, the first woman superintendent of the Chicago schools, and Margaret Haley, feminist, progressive, and president of the Chicago Federation of Teachers. Julia Richman was the first Jewish woman superintendent of the New York City school system in the early twentieth century. Numbered among educational innovators were Marietta Johnson, founder of the Organic School in 1907; Caroline Pratt, who opened the Play School in 1914; Margaret Naumberg, founder of the Walden School in 1915; and Lucy Mitchell, who founded the Bureau of Educational Experiment (later the Bank Street College of Education) in 1916.⁷⁹

Increased educational opportunities for women led many, in turn, to take up teaching themselves. There, however, they met the same wage discrimination that was present in the larger industrial economy. Women teachers worked for one-half to two-thirds the wages of men. The average weekly salary for women in urban school districts in 1841 was \$4.44, compared to \$11.93 for men. Proportionately, little had changed twenty years later when the figures were \$6.91 and \$18.07, respectively. In rural areas the situation was somewhat better, but female teachers still made only about two-thirds the average salary of men.

These differences in wages between males and females were, in part, an economic measure, not motivated by altruism. But they were also part of a larger strategy to improve the quality of education. By hiring female teachers at low salaries, school boards were able to hire many more teachers than they otherwise could have at male salaries. The result was both the feminization of the teaching force and the improvement of education itself. Ironically, despite the

inequities of the salary structure, women were able to enter teaching at levels of respectability far above those of female domestic servants and operators of industrial machinery. Thus teaching provided paths for upward social mobility and respectability despite inequities in pay.

Women in the Labor Force

Current issues involving gender and education are rooted in the conflict between historically approved roles for women in American society and the emergence of equity issues brought about by feminists and others concerned with the fair treatment of women. As we noted in Chapter 1, federal courts in the United States addressed the problem of fair treatment for women during the 1970s in matters of single-sex public schools, selective school admission standards, and interscholastic sports. Historically, however, the effects of gender discrimination have been far broader than schooling.

Wage discrimination persisted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries throughout the labor force. In the years 1890 and 1900 women in cotton mills, knitting mills, cigar making, and paper mills were paid approximately one-half to two-thirds the average wages of men. In bakeries, breweries, and shoe-making factories, they were paid, on the average, one-quarter to one-half the average wages of men. The proportion of females in the labor force increased from 14.7 percent to 24.8 percent between 1880 and 1910, but about 40 percent of these women “were employed as domestics—maids, cooks, nurses, and laundresses—in private homes.” In the North many of these were recent immigrants; most in the South were black. About 3 million women worked in the northeastern industries of garment making, cigar rolling, laundering, and food processing. These also were mainly immigrants, and few made a living wage.⁸⁰

During the twentieth century, stratification by gender remained a conspicuous feature of the workforce. In the first half of the twentieth century, single women and women from the lower socioeconomic strata were pulled out of the home. Married middle-class women became increasingly isolated in the home. In October 2000, 60.6 percent of women were in the paid labor force.⁸¹ Most of them work in sex-segregated jobs, the largest proportion of which are in service work—the so-called pink-collar ghetto. Far more women today are employed as professionals than in previous generations. Among professionals, however, there is persistent resentment on the part of both females and males. For the latter this is often expressed as sexual harassment motivated by the loss of status in areas of work once thought to be the sole prerogative of males. In the case of females, resentment grows over pay inequities and the constant threat of sexual harassment and assault. Even with the rise of women in the ranks of professionals, women continue to make up about 80 percent of administrative support workers, many of whom are clerical workers.⁸² As recently as 1995, women occupied the majority of gender-stereotyped jobs such as dental hygienists, secretaries, and kindergarten teachers—jobs offering neither high prestige nor high income.⁸³

When employed in blue-collar work, women are more likely to have low or semiskilled positions. Among all workers, women's pay averages about sixty-six percent of men's. If we look at unemployment, job displacement, and poverty, the woman's place is not enviable. Despite great strides within professional ranks, women are usually the first to be laid off during economic slowdowns. In 1999, approximately 27.8 percent of single women who were heads of households lived below the poverty line. This has dire consequences for their children, who, of course, also live below the poverty line.^{84, 85}

Models for Interpreting Gender and Education

Since the 1970s the literature on gender and education has grown impressively. Sex-role stereotyping and sex bias in instruction figure prominently in the literature. Included, also, are the differences between men and women in moral, emotional, and cognitive development and the ways in which women are denied equitable treatment in our major institutions, including schools. As we deal with gender in this chapter, keep in mind that there are several windows through which to interpret gender issues in education.

First, is what Fennema and Ayers call the *assimilation model*. This model assumes that in matters of learning, sex should be largely irrelevant. Differences in genitalia, physique, and physiological processes, though obvious and important in spheres other than education, are not relevant to the substance and the organization of instruction. Rather, the assimilationist argues, for educational purposes, one should view students in an androgynous way. This means no stereotypes and no preconceived beliefs about differences in the ways boys and girls learn. This model includes both masculine and feminine characteristics that are positively valued.⁸⁶

The *deficit model* assumes basic differences between sexes—such as differences in mathematical, verbal, or spacial-relations skills—that are educationally important. The origins of these differences may be genetic or environmental. In either case, however, the obligation of the teacher is to compensate for sex-related deficits. Thus, schools must provide equal educational opportunity by helping children to overcome sex-related deficits.⁸⁷

Like the deficit model, the *pluralist model* assumes sex-related differences. Yet it differs from the deficit model in two important ways. First, it does not associate the word “difference” with “deficit.” Second, it views sex-related differences as cultural (gender) rather than biological (sex). Thus the pluralistic model speaks of male and female cultures rather than simply sex roles. This shift of focus is important because it recognizes maleness and femaleness as having meaning only within the context of shared beliefs (culture). Heterogeneity rather than homogeneity is the ideal of the pluralistic model. Heterogeneity, however, does not imply that females ought to accept male dominance. Instead, it implies that females can learn the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a male-dominated society. In other words, pluralism is acknowledged, but so is the right to the opportunity to participate in the dominant culture.⁸⁸

Finally, the *justice model* assumes both similarities and differences among males and females. This means that in matters in which males and females are the same, there should be equal treatment; but in matters in which they differ, they should be treated differently. The justice model assumes that it is humanness, not maleness or femaleness, that is most important. Sex, race, and ethnicity, for example, should not be relevant to a person's right to the benefits of society (freedom, security, sustenance) because these rights belong to human beings in general, not to a particular *type* of human being. To the extent that being male or female prevents sharing in society's benefits, then it becomes the obligation of government to make such sharing possible by eliminating barriers.

Gender Differences and Sex-Role Stereotyping

On a December afternoon in 1872, Edward H. Clarke, a prominent Boston physician, delivered a guest lecture on female education to the New England Woman's Club. In his initial comments he spoke of a need for increased opportunity for women in higher education and noted that women had the capability for " 'equal eminence of attainment' with men." His remarks that followed, however, set off a debate that by 1905 was characterized by G. Stanley Hall, a leading American psychologist, as a "holy war." What prompted this furor was Clarke's claim that women needed different methods of instruction from men because of their "peculiar" physical organization. The following year Clarke published *Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls*, arguing that if collegiate education for women were identical to that for men it would be a crime against nature. What Clarke was reviving was the age-old claim that women could not "physically withstand the rigors of intellectual training."⁸⁹

Clarke had gone a long way beyond the late eighteenth century when it was necessary for J. Burton to prove that the "female mind is endued with capacities sufficient for the acquisition of knowledge."⁹⁰ But Clarke insisted that physiological differences—different needs for nutriment and sleep and development of the reproductive organs—posed a problem for education. Moreover, he feared that to educate women without paying heed to their physiological differences would weaken the race to the point that "mothers in our republic [would have to] be drawn from transatlantic homes."⁹¹

Julia Ward Howe's reply to Clarke's work was swift and sharp. Said Howe: "His book seems to have found a chance *at* the girls, rather than a chance *for* them. All could wish that he had not played his sex-symphony so harshly, so loudly, or in so public a manner."⁹² Much of Howe's edited work *Sex and Education, A Reply to Dr. E. H. Clarke's "Sex in Education"* (1874) was a refutation of Clarke's "facts" and an assault on his authority in such matters. The last essay by Maria Elmore in Howe's work went to the heart of the matter. In this essay Elmore attacked the assumption that women must be educated to be wives and mothers. This was no more the case, she said, than the necessity for men to be educated to be husbands and fathers. Women's "highest" station may not be "wifehood" or "motherhood." Then Elmore added the final blow against Clarke's argument:

Until men are willing to discuss woman's education in the same way they do that of their own sex, on the broad basis of individual need, individual taste and talent, and the necessity of thorough mental training of all . . . ; until men are convinced that the human being and its needs is paramount in importance, and that sex, with all its relations, is a secondary question . . . ; until, in short, men comprehend that they are not the guardians of women, and have no right to force her to education, or restrain her from the same . . . , every woman . . . will "persistently" and reasonably demand that the final decision in regard to her ability to endure mental or physical strain, her power of study, and her need for the same, shall rest with herself.⁹³

The debate over a special curriculum for women did not disappear, but its force was tempered by expanding opportunities for women in higher education. Still, the question remains today. Currently, there is little talk of the peculiar physiological characteristics of women. Recent work on gender differences, however, raises the debate in a new form. Instead of asking, What is the best curriculum for the "weaker sex", we ask, Are there distinctive patterns of gender development to which educators ought to respond? To ask the question in this way is not necessarily sexist. It is, rather, a way of opening up the issue of whether we can assume models of psychological and cultural development for women that are, in fact, based on studies of males.

Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982) was a major step forward in our understanding of women's psychological and moral development. Gilligan focused on the disparity between women's experience and major theories of psychological development. The disparity, she noted, has generally been interpreted as a "problem" with women's development. "Instead," said Gilligan, "the failure of women to fit existing models of human growth may point to . . . a limitation in the conception of [the] human condition, an omission of certain truths about life."⁹⁴

Many of the differences in male and female psychological development may be traced to differences in relating to other people. It is customary for psychological theorists to associate maturity with individuation—that is, with the development of autonomy, individual responsibility, and the recognition of rights and rules. Children, it is argued, gradually learn to establish priorities by subordinating or excluding some relationships in favor of others. Typically, for example, boys choose up sides for a game by the method of exclusion, rather than inclusion. This type of behavior is seen as normal by most observers of psychological development. Yet the method of exclusion is peculiarly male, having been established as "normal" primarily on the basis of studies of boys.

Gilligan's studies of girls point to an alternative scheme of development. Autonomy, decision making on the basis of rights and rules, and the inclination to order people and things hierarchically are replaced by a world of human connection, not exclusion. This is a world organized around caring and interconnectedness rather than exclusion. As these early differences in female development are played out in young adulthood, it is the female who stresses interdependence and the male, independence. For the male, separation and

independence lead to empowerment, while for the female, connectedness and attachment sustain the human community. Connectedness to others is *given* by the woman rather than *contracted*, as with the male. In matters of rights and responsibilities, male justice and female care may merge when people realize that “inequality adversely affects both parties in an unequal relationship [and] violence is destructive of everyone involved.”⁹⁵

We spent some time with Gilligan’s work because it points up a difficulty much more basic than sex-role stereotyping and sex bias in schooling, both of which are obvious in teacher behavior and the content of many textbooks. Faculty in colleges of education and others studying and teaching about the psychological and moral development of children are the most obvious perpetuators of developmental theories that have an inherent male bias. Moreover, this bias is usually presented to students with scientific objectivity, making it seem as though there is no bias.

The same biases are part of several of the major reform reports of the 1980s. Sara Freedman has pointed out that the Carnegie report titled *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century* presumed a “male model that emphasizes rationality, order, detachment, and the pursuit of profit/power above personal and emotional attachment.” Likewise, Susan Laird points out that the Holmes Group publication titled *Tomorrow’s Teachers* does not see care and empathy as important sensitivities needed by teachers. The model of teaching advocated by these reports does not view teaching from a woman’s perspective. Thus, there is lacking in these two major reform documents a view of the classroom as a “net of relationships with people who care about each other’s learning” rather than simply a classroom of teachers and students.⁹⁶ A similar view is expressed even more forcefully by Tetrault and Schmuck, who note that many of the major reform reports of the 1980s do not deal with gender as a crucial issue. Though these reports acknowledge the necessity for dealing with inequities among racial minorities, language minorities, and handicapped children, there is no mention of gender. It is, as they say, “not a relevant category in the analysis of excellence in schools . . . The goal of excellence does not even have the female student in mind.”⁹⁷

Sex-role socialization and stereotyping begin in infancy through verbal and nonverbal interaction with family members. Infants are socialized to gender through clothing, toys, tone of voice, and reinforcement of gender-specific activities. Socialization gradually becomes stereotyping as girls and boys are taught to exclude “inappropriate” expressions from their behaviors and to include only those identified with their sex. Books, television, movies, popular music, and advertisements teach children how to be women and men. To the extent that sexual stereotyping becomes a basis of discriminatory or prejudicial behavior of one sex toward the other, it is sexist in the same way that race discrimination is racist.⁹⁸

Theories of sex-role socialization attempt to explain gender differences in terms of learning—that is, they explain gender-related behavior in psychological terms. This approach is valuable to the extent that we better understand how children come to behave in gender-specific ways. Yet a psy-

chological explanation of gender-specific behavior does not help us understand very well the *sources* of the behavior. As Margaret Anderson has pointed out, “such a perspective underestimates the influence of . . . institutionalized gender inequality in creating gender roles.”⁹⁹ By looking at how gender differences are actually part of the *structure* of our institutions, we can see more clearly both the sources of inequality and possible solutions to problems of sex discrimination. According to Jeanne Drysdale Weiler,

within the classroom, all girls are unconsciously absorbing lessons about gender through their teacher’s behavior, especially the traditional division of labor (woman as nurturer and disciplinarian, man as “soft” and remote) . . . Participation in such conventional cultures of femininity may ultimately direct and limit girls to future roles of domesticity and motherhood, and may also consign them to the sector of the lowest paying labor market as they cope with the dual burden of paid work and family.¹⁰⁰

Students in most public schools are part of a large network of gender-defined activities. These range from curriculum and classroom organization to staffing. Recently, for example, much has been made of poor female performance on tests of quantitative and analytical skills. These claims, however, must be viewed with great caution. Gender-related differences in mathematical aptitude, for example, are not usually found among elementary school students. We do know, however, that males are encouraged more than females to enroll in mathematics courses. Thus, as students progress from elementary through secondary studies, males and females do not take the same number of courses in mathematics. Gradually, more females than males grow to dislike mathematics, and eventually mathematics becomes the province of men. Much the same pattern is found with computer courses.

The pattern of facts is not in question in the instances mentioned above. What is in question is their explanations. There is, for example, no need to attribute the differences in mathematical aptitude to genetic differences. In fact, the differences are statistically accounted for by the differences in number and level of mathematics courses taken by females and males. Keeping in mind that, for young students, there is usually no sex-related difference in mathematical aptitude, and that males are encouraged more than females to take mathematics courses, we begin to suspect that there are really no innate tendencies to like and achieve well in mathematics. Instead, we suspect that sex-related differences in mathematics are attributable to the way in which males and females are tracked through the curriculum.¹⁰¹ We should be even more suspicious of arguments that males have a better aptitude for mathematics when we realize that teachers tend to misassign girls that have high aptitudes in mathematics. Sorensen and Halliman’s study conducted in 1987 showed that girls with high mathematical aptitudes “were less likely to be assigned to high-ability math groups than boys with similar aptitudes.”¹⁰²

Other structural features of schooling are also gender-related. Patterns of staffing, for example, often reinforce curriculum choices for males and females. More men than women teach in quantitative subject areas, and more women than men teach language arts and foreign languages. In addition, the adminis-

trative hierarchy is dominated by males to the extent that the educational historian David Tyack once labeled the school an “educational harem.”

In textbooks, males frequently dominate the subject matter, particularly in history and in the history of science and technology. Basal reading texts have made some progress toward including females as main characters, but this has been accompanied by an increase in gender-neutral characters, such as talking trees and animals. In effect, then, one strategy of textbook publishers to deal with charges of *sexism* has been to avoid sex.¹⁰³

Classroom methods and teaching strategies also reflect male priorities. For example, even though females mature earlier, have better small motor skills sooner, and are *ready* for learning verbal and mathematical skills at an earlier age than boys, we nevertheless organize instruction to “meet the needs of males who tend to develop at a slower pace.” In addition, the very visible competitive climate of the classroom favors males who very early in life learn that competitiveness is a male trait. Teacher–student interaction also favors males. Teachers tend to call on male students more, and male students generally receive more attention from teachers: “more praise, more time, [and] also more reprimands and harsher discipline.” Females, in contrast, are ignored more, and high-achieving females “receive the least attention of all students.”¹⁰⁴ Janet Montelaro believes there still are many miles to go to achieve equity: “Women’s and gender studies research in education has taught us that our classrooms can be places of hostility for those who are at a disadvantage in the school population because of gender, sexual orientation, race, social class, ethnic background, special abilities or disabilities, or any combination of these factors.”¹⁰⁵ All of these gender-related practices of schools help to reinforce broader social norms that portray women as less deserving, if not actually inferior to men. In this way schools are extensions of the social structure and the politics that created them.

CONCLUSION

We began this chapter by raising the general question of how to deal with human diversity while at the same time maintaining a system of education wherein student needs are fairly considered and rewards justly distributed. We pointed out that human diversity is so obvious that one does not need to demonstrate it. We do not infer from this, however, that human beings have no common traits. Indeed, they do. What matters is how we *deal with* both sameness and differences.

In the case of intelligence, we saw how assumptions about the measurements of intelligence led to questionable practices of grouping students. In the cases of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, and gender we saw the importance of accepting differences as legitimate rather than classifying them as deficits or disadvantages. We saw how racial, ethnic, language, and gender barriers have become part of the structure of schooling and how these barriers reflect and reinforce the same barriers present in the larger society. The general

question that must be addressed here is, What can the school do about such barriers? To answer this question we looked at studies that showed how these barriers can be overcome if they are recognized as barriers in the first place.

Not everyone would agree that ability grouping, tracking, insistence upon Standard English, and stratification by gender are necessarily bad things. Some would argue that it is natural to classify people according to intelligence, race, ethnicity, language, and gender. These same people would cite many historical examples of these classifications as proof of their point. Others might protest such classifications but argue that there is nothing they can do anyway; they can't change all of society, so why bother.

These are powerful emotive arguments that appeal to states of mind experienced by most people at one time or another. Unfortunately, that is all such arguments do—appeal to a state of mind. The same arguments are usually self-serving and do not really address the critical question of what is fair or just. Unless one really wishes to defend discriminatory practices because they *are* discriminatory, then such arguments totally miss the point. They are excuses for inaction rather than logically constructed arguments. Seeking fairness and justice in the way we structure our educational institutions is exceedingly difficult. Moreover, protests against the status quo are not likely to make many friends. Yet one should consider seriously whether one wishes to defend an unjust system simply out of convenience. The stakes of fairness and justice are far higher than those of convenience, for it is in our treatment of others that we define ourselves and the values we stand for. This in itself should give us pause when we consider how we will deal with human diversity.

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Readings on Human Diversity

Each of the essays in this chapter deals with one aspect of human diversity and its effects on the way public schools are structured.

In "Will Tracking Reform Promote Social Equity?" Tom Loveless analyzes the tracking and detracking debate. He illustrates the social and cognitive effects for both proponents and detractors of tracking. Loveless addresses an interesting new phenomenon known as "bright flight," the tendency of those who are gifted to leave a detracked environment to study with those similar to themselves, subsequently creating a tracked system nonetheless.

Imani Perry's reflections on the two very different schools she attended remind us that different schools structure success differently. In large urban schools having large numbers of minority students, the skills and knowledge taught do not foster creative thinking, says Perry. Moreover, the authority structure of the classroom creates a difficult environment for learning for many minority youth. At the root of this difficulty is the basic fact that the school is no longer an extension of the community values that underlie many urban neighborhoods. Perry characterizes the schooling she received at a public school as a blatant form of oppression and inequity.

The cultural pluralism of American society spans the dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic position. The passing of Proposition 227 in 1998 radically altered bilingual education in California. California is an excellent case study in that it shows how one of the most diverse school populations in the country addresses students who do not speak English as a first language. In "How the Reform Agenda Shortchanges English Learners," Maria S. Quezada, Terrence G. Wiley, and J. David Ramirez explore how Proposition 227 has changed and not changed bilingual education.

The final selection in this chapter focuses on the problems of equity and opportunity that result from the ways in which gender differences are structured into the classroom. Pervasive differences (biases) in communications and teacher-student interactions create problems of self-esteem for females. In

"Gender Equity in the Classroom," Myra Sadker and David Sadker highlight the efforts made to achieve fairness in the teaching of boys and girls.

For most of us, what our behaviors mean to others is masked by our own perceptions. To look at our behaviors through the eyes of others is a first step in eliminating the cultural biases embedded in our actions.

TOM LOVELESS

WILL TRACKING REFORM PROMOTE SOCIAL EQUITY?

Can schools support a more equitable distribution of academic achievement by reducing or eliminating tracking? Do low-income students and students of color benefit from detracking? Prominent researchers and prestigious national reports have argued that tracking stands in the way of equal educational opportunity (Oakes, 1985; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Wheelock, 1992; Braddock & Slavin, 1993). Across the country, several states—California, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Nevada—have followed suit by urging, in the name of equity, that middle and high schools move away from tracking and begin grouping students of varying abilities into the same academic classes.

Despite the passionate advocacy for and against this recommendation, the relevant research is ambiguous. With more than 700 studies of tracking in existence, no convincing evidence suggests that tracking has a special, adverse effect on the achievement of African American, Latino, or disadvantaged students. Nor does research show that these students achieve at higher levels in untracked settings (Loveless, 1998; Ferguson, 1998).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The strongest argument for detracking is an indirect one. A few high-quality studies indicate that tracking exacerbates achievement differences by depressing the achievement of students in low tracks and boosting the achievement of students in high tracks (Kerckhoff, 1986; Gamoran, 1987). The most striking finding is from Adam Gamoran's 1987 analysis of a large national data set assembled in the early 1980s, "High School and Beyond." He discovered that the achievement gap between low- and high-track students is greater than the gap between high school dropouts and students who persist in school to graduation. Low-income students and students of color are disproportionately rep-

resented in low tracks. They therefore bear a disproportionate share of the low-track disadvantage, logic follows, and would be the primary beneficiaries from detracking (Oakes, 1985; Oakes, 1990).

The validity of this causal sequence is by no means settled. Indeed, the same logic can be used to justify tracking. Because the widening achievement gap contains at least one positive aspect—gains by high-track students—schools could try to maintain the benefit that tracking brings to high-ability students while launching a concerted campaign to make low tracks more rigorous. Moreover, Gamoran and Mare (1989) conducted another analysis of national data showing that the probability of being assigned to a high track is 10 percent greater for black students than for white students. If true, then black achievement may actually suffer from tracking's abolition.¹

The bottom line is that we must exercise caution in gleaning policy guidance from tracking research. Empirical evidence has yet to verify detracking's benefits. Until we have carefully studied a significant number of untracked schools, we can only speculate about their effect on achievement gaps between various groups of students.

Let's set aside these issues for a moment and assume that the critics are right about a crucial point, that tracking exacerbates achievement differences between high and low achievers. Assume also that tracking's abolition will narrow the gap between students who otherwise would have been in high and low tracks. Is this enough to conclude that widespread tracking reform will promote social equity—that it will help poor, black, and Hispanic students?

Not necessarily. Recent research has uncovered four potential effects of detracking that are counterproductive to achievement. In addition, recently discovered patterns in the reform's implementation—notably, the kinds of schools that are embracing or resisting detracking—threaten to exacerbate rather than ameliorate race and class inequities.

DETRACKING'S LOSERS

One way to narrow the gap between high and low achievers is to boost low-ability students' learning while either holding steady or lowering everyone else's. A study by Argys, Rees, and Brewer suggests that detracking works in precisely this manner. The analysis focused on 10th graders in the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS) sample. When assigned to heterogeneous math classes rather than to low tracks, low-ability 10th graders

¹Lucas and Gamoran (1993) found that the 10 percent advantage is largely an artifact of African Americans attending schools where mean achievement is lower, thereby lowering the requirements for high-track membership. If all high-track students stand to lose from detracking, however, this finding doesn't alter the conclusion that these students will be adversely affected. Kulik (1992) reports a +.87 effect size for gifted students in special classes with an accelerated curriculum. If the achievement of gifted African American students were to drop by this much as a result of abolishing advanced placement courses, it represents a loss more than twice as large as the current black-white test score gap in NAEP.

gained about 5 percentage points on achievement tests. Detracking helped them. Average students, in contrast, lost 2 percentage points from detracking, and high-ability students lost even more, about 5 points (Argys, Rees, & Brewer, 1996). The achievement gap was indeed narrowed, but apparently at the expense of students in regular and high tracks, representing about 70 percent of 10th graders in the United States. Overall, achievement was approximately 2 percentage points lower in detracked schools.

These findings should give tracking reformers pause. African American, Latino, and disadvantaged students are indeed disproportionately assigned to low tracks. But if the Argys finding is accurate, high- and average-track students of all racial and economic backgrounds lose out under heterogeneous grouping. Do we further the cause of equity by lowering the achievement of minority students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are assigned to and excelling in high and average tracks?

BRIGHT FLIGHT

In schools where detracking is controversial, the parents of high-ability students often lobby vigorously against the reform. They may be rationally defending honors classes that help their children, but some analysts detect racism or other bigoted motives (Wells & Serna, 1996; Kohn, 1998). Parents counter that they want their children to be adequately challenged and that they aren't obliged to sacrifice their children's education for an ideological agenda or an unproven educational theory (Rochester, 1998). These parents either flee or threaten to flee schools that are abolishing honors courses; hence, the *bright flight* phenomenon.

Bright flight's impact on schools is fundamentally the same regardless of motive. High-achieving students are a resource that schools cannot afford to squander. High achievers raise schools' test scores; act as role models for other students; and enhance schools' reputations as places of study, thinking, and learning. Moreover, polling data indicate that parents' unwillingness to embrace heterogeneous grouping isn't fueled by racial animus. Research by the Public Agenda Foundation shows that black parents distrust mixed-ability classes as much as white parents do (1994). It's difficult to imagine how any school can benefit by alienating and driving out its best students. In schools where academic achievement is already well below national norms, the effect of bright flight may be truly devastating.

ALGEBRA

Research is unclear on whether tracking's effects vary by subject area. Several studies note that math teachers are resistant to tracking reform (Loveless, 1994; Gamoran & Weinstein, 1998). The middle and high school math curriculum is usually organized hierarchically, with progress through courses predicated on

successful completion of prerequisites. Even within a particular math course, topics build upon one another so that students acquire knowledge sequentially. As a consequence, math teachers are intuitively skeptical of assigning students who can't do basic arithmetic to the same classes as students ready to solve complex algebra problems.

This intuition may be on the mark. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University analyzed NELS data to find out what happened to the math achievement of 8th graders who were grouped in different ways (Epstein & MacIver, 1992). Students in heterogeneously grouped algebra classes didn't learn as much as students in tracked algebra classes. This held true for all ability levels—high, average, and low. In contrast, when survey courses in math were heterogeneously grouped, low-ability students benefitted. Tracking apparently doesn't affect all math courses identically. This finding assumes added importance as the idea of all students taking an algebra course at an earlier age gains popularity. If the finding is valid, then tracking reform may seriously diminish the prospect that universal 8th grade algebra will boost U.S. math achievement.

STATUS DISTINCTIONS

Detracking is a reform associated with egalitarianism. At the extreme, reformers hoisting the flag of egalitarianism seek to eliminate many traditional distinctions that schools make among students, abolishing advanced placement courses and report cards with letter grades, for example, or abandoning class rankings, honor rolls, or the recognition of valedictorians at graduation exercises. Egalitarians are offended that these practices publicly proclaim some knowledge intrinsically more valuable than other knowledge and some youngsters better students than other youngsters.

Extreme egalitarians deplore tracking. They argue that labeling courses *honors*, *college prep*, *regular*, and *remedial* creates indelible status distinctions, publicly separating students into groups of winners and losers. Adding to the unfairness, low-track students are stigmatized, whereas high-track students receive esteem irrespective of their actual performance in class. When these status distinctions correspond to race and class differences in track assignments, critics charge, an ugly element of segregation and exclusion is introduced into the school's social milieu.

What do we know about these assertions? First, evidence is thin that tracking depresses the self-esteem of low-achieving students. James Kulik's meta-analysis of studies on the question actually found a slightly positive effect, albeit statistically insignificant, of tracking on low-achieving students' self-esteem (Kulik, 1992). The mixed-ability classrooms that result from detracking may force low achievers into daily comparisons with their more able peers, conditions hostile to the development of self-confidence. Considering the disproportionate percentage of low achievers who are either minority students or from low-income families, this detracking would redound to the detriment of equity.

A second and potentially more profound problem is the flip side of the stigma argument. Yes, tracking differentially allots status. But we have also known for some time that academic accomplishments compete rather poorly with other status rankings among high school students (Coleman, 1961). When it comes to winning the approval of teenagers, academic success vies with athletic prowess, good looks, knowledge of the latest fashion trends, and even the acting out of antischool sentiments (Bishop, 1989, Steinberg, 1996).

Detracking is often part of a package of reforms that eradicates a series of institutional statements about what is worthy—that curriculum can be differentiated by its complexity and challenge, that one's ticket to college is punched by mastery of a particular body of knowledge, that being a good student is an achievement that schools cherish and hold in high esteem. A strain of egalitarianism believes that all status rankings are evil. But wholly compatible with equity is the notion that status distinctions are a good thing as long as they are awarded fairly and for the right accomplishments.

Consider social equity in this light. Wealthy parents whose children don't receive the right signals in school will probably find and purchase this guidance elsewhere. Parents who attended college themselves will steer their children toward acquiring the knowledge essential for entry to higher education. Other children won't fare so well. If the institutional signposts for academic status are brought down—and a differentiated curriculum is only one of many in education—children from low-income households or with parents who didn't attend college will surely pay the price. And that price will escalate if they attend high schools where advanced placement courses, in the name of equity, have been abolished so that all students can be assigned to generically labeled, untracked classes.

TRACKED AND UNTRACKED SCHOOLS

Even if detracked schools succeed in narrowing the achievement gap between formerly high- and low-track students—and I'm not convinced that they will—these four potential dangers threaten to overwhelm any advantage such a narrowing would represent.

I recently completed a study of tracking reform that raises an additional concern, one pertaining to the characteristics of tracked and untracked schools. At the beginning of the decade, I wondered what effect the detracking movement was having on schools. I wondered what kinds of schools were detracking and what kinds of schools were resisting the reform. From 1990 to 1997, I surveyed middle schools in two states, California and Massachusetts. Both states had earlier condemned tracking for being unfair to poor and minority students and had urged middle schools to reduce or abandon tracking's use. In addition to conducting the surveys, I visited 29 school sites and interviewed more than 250 teachers and principals (Loveless, 1999).

The schools that accepted this recommendation are starkly different from the schools that rejected it. Urban schools, low-achieving schools, and schools

with predominantly low-income populations have supported the reform. Although few of these schools have completely detracked, they extensively use heterogeneous grouping in academic courses and exhibit far less ability grouping than at the beginning of the decade. In sharp contrast, high-achieving suburban schools and schools in middle-class or wealthy communities have given the recommendation a cold shoulder. They are more likely to offer tracked academic classes and eschew heterogeneous grouping.

What's wrong with this? Nothing, if the best wishes and good intentions of state policymakers turn out to be true. But as a colleague, Paul Peterson (1998), pointed out, high hopes and good intentions are rarely in short supply in public policy. They are never sufficient to get bad policy to yield good results. The evidence that tracking reform boosts achievement is thin. Detracking entails risks. Some of society's most troubled schools are shouldering these risks. If detracking produces bad results, already beleaguered schools will suffer the consequences, and suburban and urban schools will diverge even more in their practices. Local educators in California and Massachusetts can't be blamed for these events. State officials, after all, urged them to detrack, and state policy specifically recommends detracking as a means of achieving greater educational equity.

LOOKING AHEAD

The wisdom of tracking reform is an open question. If the beliefs of detracking advocates are borne out, poorly performing schools will experience marked improvement. If the problems identified here surface in reformed schools, educators will see detracking as a mistake.

My closing comments, then, address future research on this reform. We need research of the highest caliber to adjudicate the competing claims in the tracking debate. Studies with random assignment of students to tracked and untracked schools would significantly enhance the quality of evidence on the issue. Designers of large-scale longitudinal surveys should scrutinize their measures of school policies to make sure that they accurately capture the intricacies of tracking. There are gradations to curriculum differentiation, ways that schools can do one thing while saying that they are doing something else, and a litany of other subtleties in schools' grouping practices.

Finally, we must get beyond the current ideological gridlock of the tracking debate, identifying those issues that can be clarified by empirical evidence and those that cannot. The question explored here, whether tracking reform promotes equity in academic achievement, is amenable to empirical research—if we have the courage, that is, to submit our assumptions about tracking and detracking to rigorous, impartial tests. Believing that detracking will positively affect social equity is a reasonable hypothesis. But we must take seriously an alternative hypothesis, that tracking reform will worsen the problems that it is intending to solve.

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IMANI PERRY

A BLACK STUDENT'S REFLECTION ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Which are more effective, private or public schools? This is an age-old question to which many educators and researchers have offered their answers. In this compelling essay, Imani Perry, a fifteen-year-old high school student, offers an interpretation of the differences between her private and public school experience that adds new insight into this question. Perry provides rich examples to support her main argument that, in her experience, public schools deny students their identity as intellectual beings, and repress the intellectual development of minority students in particular. Private schools, however, are culturally isolating for minority students. Perry does not advocate the abandonment of public for private school, but she offers a clear analysis of those aspects of public schools that must be changed if public schools are to serve the needs of minority students. This is an analysis that could only come from a minority student who has experienced both worlds.

My name is Imani Perry. I am a fifteen-year-old Black female who has experienced both private and public education. These experiences have led me to believe there are significant differences between the two types of education that deserve to be acknowledged and resolved by society as a whole.

After ten years in private schools I made the decision to attend a public school. I left because I felt isolated as a person of color. I yearned to have a large, strong Black community be a part of my development. I believed that I would find such a community in the public high school of my city, which is a fairly urban school with approximately 2,600 students, 20 percent of whom are Black.

Despite the fact that I had never been in a traditional public school environment, when I decided to go to one I had certain expectations about the teaching. I assumed that the teaching philosophy would be similar to that of the private schools I had attended. I expected that any teaching differences that did exist would be limited to less sophisticated reading, or a less intense work load. As I quickly learned, the differences were more substantial.

I believe the differences I found in the teaching between the private and public schools that I attended would best be illustrated by several examples of what I encountered. My initial realization of this difference began with an argu-

ment I had with a math teacher over a point value on a test. I felt that he should give partial credit for problems with computational errors rather than procedural errors, or conceptual misunderstanding. I presented this point to the math teacher, who responded by saying math is computation and the theories and concepts of math are only used to compute. I was astonished by this statement. Coming from a school where the teachers' stated goal for freshman math was to begin to teach you how to become a "theoretical mathematician," my entire perception of math was different. Perhaps that emphasis on theoretical math was also extreme; nevertheless, I believe that a good math teacher believes that computation in math should be used to assist in the organization of theories. Computation is a necessary but not sufficient step toward math knowledge. I felt this teacher was probably the product of schooling that did not emphasize the artistic qualities of math. While I could sympathize with his position, I felt that all I loved about math—new ideas, discussing unproved theorems, and developing personal procedures—was being ignored. I withdrew from this course only to find the ideological differences emerged again in my advanced English class at the public school, particularly in essay writing.

In this class, once we wrote a paper—mind you, with no assistance from the teacher—the process ended. We did not discuss papers, receive constructive criticism, or improve them through rewriting. Despite the fact that there was no proofreading assistance offered, 10 percent of the grade was taken off from sentence errors. It seemed as if the teacher assumed we no longer needed to continue developing our writing skills.

In my last school, which had an abundance of excellent essayists, my English teacher would give a detailed description of what he felt about each paper. At points where he felt one deserved praise or criticism, he would make comments in the margin. He would not neglect to correct punctuation errors—such as commas instead of semicolons—but these errors were not the sole criteria for our grades, especially if the writing was good. The emphasis was upon improving intellectual and organizational skills to raise the quality of the writing.

These examples illustrate my belief that my learning environment had changed from a place where thought and theory were emphasized to a place where form and precision were emphasized. The teaching system at the public school appears to assume that at some point in our education, learning and thinking are no longer important. Schooling in this situation becomes devoted to making things look correct. This is in sharp contrast to my private schools, where proper form was something I learned was necessary, but secondary in importance to the content and organization of what is produced.

Because of this difference in the concept of teaching and learning, there is also a difference in what and who teachers consider intelligent. The teaching at the public school has less to do with thinking and processing ideas, and more to do with precision and detail in appearance. Therefore, students who are considered intelligent by the public school faculty possess different skills than those at the private schools I have attended. In the public schools a student is considered intelligent if he or she is well-behaved and hard working. The ability to grasp a subject in its entirety—from theory to practice—is not valued.

For example, in the fall of 1987 there was an academic contest, where my school was competing against other public schools. All the teachers I encountered were very enthusiastic about it. The students who were selected to participate were raised on a pedestal. These students, most of whom were clean-cut and apparently straight-laced, were to serve as our models of very intelligent students. They were drilled in formulas, book plots, and other information for several days a week. It seemed as if the teachers were not concerned with whether the students digested the depth of these subjects and resources as long as the students completed all the reading, memorized the facts, and could repeat the information. The contest was more a demonstration of a memory function than anything else. In my opinion there is nothing wrong with such a contest, but it should be recognized for what it is and is not. One thing it is not is a true measure of knowledge and ability. This was never recognized by the school.

Another example of how a different view of intelligence is manifested in this public school is the school's view of two students whom I know. I will identify them as Student A and Student B. Student B is an intellectual. She reads, is analytical in her discussion and is knowledgeable. Student A is very precise with his homework, answers the patronizing questions the teachers ask ("What color was the horse?" "Black with a white spot!" "Correct!"), and is very "all-American" in behavior and appearance. Student A is considered more intelligent at this public school because he displays skills that are considered signs of intelligence at this school. The intelligence criteria at this school are more related to superficial qualities such as appearance, knowing facts, etc., rather than the intellectual qualities that Student B possesses. Student B displays an ability to learn and write in creative and analytical formats. I left a school where the criterion for intelligence was the student's thought process resulting from the information, for a school where the information was the measure of intelligence.

In reflecting on schooling it is important to realize that all people, including teachers, have biases based on the physical appearances of other people. On the train most people are more likely to sit next to the clean-shaven Harvard freshman than next to the Mohawked, multiple-earringed punk-rocker. In teachers, however, these biases should diminish as they begin to know a student. Unfortunately, in the public school there is an absence of teacher-student contact. Because of this lack of contact there are no criteria by which intelligence can be determined, besides grades, appearance, and behavior. As I mentioned before, the grading system at this school often reflects one's ability to memorize and not one's thinking and analytical abilities. Moreover, since people are biased in their acceptance of different appearances, students who look different are judged differently. The only way they can make up for this difference is to be "well-behaved," and, as I will mention later, the definition of well-behaved is arbitrary.

All these issues I have discussed have very negative effects for students from minority groups, more specifically the Black and Hispanic youths who make up a large percentage of most urban schools. It is those Black and His-

panic students who retain strong cultural characteristics in their personalities who are most negatively affected by teachers' emphasis on behavior, appearance, and respect for authority.

Public schools' emphasis on the teaching of form merely trains students for low-powered or menial jobs that do not require analytical thought. It is evident when most students are discussing what they intend to be that their goals are most often focused toward areas and professions about which they have some idea or knowledge. If in class you've never spoken about how language and colloquialisms are reflections of the society you are studying, you definitely will not be thinking of being a linguist. And if you are only asked to type a paper summarizing the book, rather than writing an analysis of it, the primary skill shown is typing. This should not be the main skill which is emphasized.

The neglect of intellectual development also occurs in higher-level classes, but at least the resources, books, etc., available to students are not altogether lacking in intellectual value. Occasionally these resources will have depth and content, be philosophical, or insightful. But in lower-level classes, where minority students are most often found and where bad textbooks are used without outside resources, the reading has less content, and the point of reading is to perfect reading skills, not to broaden thinking skills or gain knowledge of how the subject is currently affecting us. It is often not possible to broaden your thinking skills or knowledge with the books used in lower-level classes, which are more often stripped of any content. In an upper-level class, if you have a parent who wants you to know the subject in depth, and to think about it, it is possible to do that detached from the school environment, because the subject matter may have content, or have some meaning beyond the words. My high-level sophomore English class read *Moby Dick* as an outside reading. We didn't discuss the symbolism or religious qualities of it, but I am aware of them because I read critical essays and discussed them with my mother. If one is reading a book which has been stripped of meaningful content, it is not helpful to do outside research, because it is lacking in meaning.

Many students from minority groups are being trained only in form and not in creative ways of thinking. This I believe causes disenchantment among students. Upper-class students are not as affected, because of their social class, and their "social responsibility" to be achievers. This is especially true of upper-class students in a public school whose social-class peers are in private schools. But instead of striving to be true learners, they quickly learn how to be good students by being well-behaved. What well-behaved means is always taking the teacher's word as absolute truth and never questioning the teacher's authority. This definition of well-behaved is of course culturally based and can be in opposition to cultures of Black and Hispanic students.

In Black and Hispanic cultures, respect and obedience come and develop with the relationship. Rather than being automatic, respect must be earned. For example, one will occasionally hear a Black child say to a stranger, "You can't tell me what to do, you're not my mother." But at the same time, often one will see Black kids following the orders and rules of an adult friend of the family, whom they would under no circumstances disrespect. In addition, in Black and

Hispanic cultures it appears that adult and child cultures are more integrated than those of other ethnic groups. For example, parties in the Hispanic community will often have an age range from toddler to elderly. Children are often present in the conversation and socializing of adults and are not treated as separate, as they may be in other cultures.

When this relationship is not made between teacher and student, it is not an acceptable educational situation, because the Black and Hispanic students are now expected to respect someone in a different manner than their culture has socialized them to. Often students are not aware of the fact that the demands being placed on them by the relationship conflict with those of their culture. They then show signs of what a teacher views as a lack of the respect that he/she deserves. The student might feel it is just a sign that they do not know the teacher and have no obligation to him or her. Many times I have seen a dumbstruck student of color sent to detention; when asked what he or she did, the student will seriously say that he or she has no idea; perhaps that he or she sucked his or her teeth in dismay, or something of that sort.

Black and Hispanic students have less of a chance at building strong relationships with any teachers because their appearance and behavior may be considered offensive to the middle-class White teachers. These students show signs of what White teachers, and some teachers of color, consider disrespect, and they do not get the nurturing relationships that develop respect and dedication. They are considered less intelligent, as can be seen in the proportion of Blacks and Hispanics in lower-level as opposed to upper-level classes. There is less of a teacher-student contact with "underachievers," because they are guided into peer tutoring programs. Perhaps this is understandable, because the teachers have less of a vested interest in the achievement of students that are not of their community, or have less of an idea of how to educate them. Public school teachers are no longer part of the same community as the majority of their students. The sad part of the situation is that many students believe that this type of teaching is what academic learning is all about. They have not had the opportunity to experience alternative ways of teaching and learning. From my experience in public school, it appears that many minority students will never be recognized as capable of analytical and critical thinking.

In the beginning of this article I spoke about my decision to leave my private school because of feeling isolated. After three months at a large urban public school I found myself equally isolated—intellectually as well as racially. My thinking process has gradually affected my opinions and character. I am in upper-level classes in which there are barely any kids of color, except Asians. Black and Hispanic students have been filtered down into lower-level classes. Most of the students I meet are kind, interesting people whom I like and respect. However, because the environment of the school is one in which ideas are not valued or fostered, I find it difficult to discuss issues with them, because my thoughtfulness has flourished, while others have been denied an opportunity to explore their intellectual development. I am now at a point of deciding which isolation is worse, cultural/racial or intellectual-opinion-based and slightly racial. This is a decision many Black students who have attended private schools

at some time are wrestling to make, a decision that will affect their development, knowledge, and viewpoint of education, and their relationships to educators—those supposed possessors of greater knowledge than themselves.

Afterword: Since the writing of this article I have returned to a private school with the feeling that one's educational development is too much to sacrifice. I now attend a private high school with a strong unified Black community, as well as academic merit. Even though I did not remain at the urban public school, I valued my experience there, mostly because through it I learned one of the most blatant forms of oppression and inequity for lower-class students in American society, and I appreciate the opportunities with which I have been blessed.

MARIA S. QUEZADA, TERRENCE G. WILEY, J. DAVID RAMIREZ

HOW THE REFORM AGENDA SHORTCHANGES ENGLISH LEARNERS

In the past 20 years, U.S. schools have experienced a tremendous influx of students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Every state has experienced this increase, and California, which has the most diverse schools in the nation, has become a bellwether for education policy. In this climate of diversity, the Golden State is spearheading accountability measures and standards-based reform for *all* students. As the push for accountability, standards, and reform intensifies, however, we must carefully analyze policies that dictate a one-size-fits-all solution. This analysis is especially important when the proposed solutions seek to increase the literacy development of diverse learners in a highly politicized educational environment.

The political debate about how best to educate limited-English proficient (LEP) students is far from new. In the midst of this debate and the tremendous educational challenge facing California schools, Proposition 227 passed on June 2, 1998. This new law mandated the virtual elimination of bilingual education programs and called for instruction “overwhelmingly” in English (California Education Code, Section 300). For the two months after its passage, school districts worked feverishly to institute the sheltered English-immersion programs outlined in the Proposition 227 legislation and subsequently delineated by the State Board of Education. Sheltered, or structured, English-immersion programs are taught primarily in English and are based on the notion that students can learn English and then catch up on academic content.

Before Proposition 227 was enacted, fewer than 25 percent of the 1.4 million limited-English proficient students in California actually received some form of instruction in their primary language. For some school districts, the new regu-

lations changed their programs very little. For school districts with successful bilingual education programs, however, the changes were far more challenging and difficult.

THE CRISIS OF INEQUITABLE ACHIEVEMENT

Too many language-minority students are failing in schools today, and there is no question that literacy programs for diverse student populations need reform. Yet, will current national and state reform agendas for the promotion of literacy address the needs of at-risk students in linguistically, culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse settings? The 1998 NAEP data point to a serious concern: the persistence of *differential performance among ethnic and racial groups* (NCES, 1999).

NAEP data on reading achievement for blacks, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans indicate that on the basis of 4th, 8th, and 12th grade comparisons, the performance of these groups continues to lag behind that of whites (NCES, 1999). And the reading performance of California students across all ethnic and linguistic groups continues to lag behind that of most states. Similarly, when California's 1998 Stanford-9 achievement results are disaggregated, the results are comparable to the NAEP findings. Students of color consistently score lower than white students. Moreover, the California data also clearly document that LEP students consistently are the lowest achieving of all students (Hakuta, 1999).

DIVERSE LEARNERS REQUIRE DIVERSE APPROACHES

The persistence of serious inequities in the performance of LEP students, speakers of standard English as a second dialect, and other students at risk of failure continues to be the major litmus test for contemporary literacy reform initiatives. We must ask, Are all students reading on grade level? Can schools put together literacy programs that address the linguistic needs of all students?

The debate in California can be reduced to two arguments. Some policy leaders and educators argue that one approach to literacy instruction fits all students. In contrast, others contend that the problems of diverse learners result from an unequal chance to learn (Kozol, 1991; Weinberg, 1995)—and from a failure to accommodate their needs. Many students at risk of failure, particularly recent immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities, attend schools with unequal resources and poorly prepared teachers (McDonnell & Hill, 1993).

In an effort to address both the literacy problems and the more fundamental problem of inequitable achievement across diverse groups, many states, including California, have launched major reform initiatives, including class-size reduction, standards-based reform, and technology-assisted instruction. These reform efforts, although well motivated, share a common limitation. They prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach (*Rethinking Schools*, 1999).

Consider class-size reduction, for example. This reform has exacerbated the severe shortage of qualified bilingual education teachers in California; it has hardly benefitted LEP students. Standards-based reform aids only students who fully understand and have access to high academic content. Past experience and research indicate that reforms are bound to fall far short of their lofty goals when they fail to consider the special needs of LEP students, speakers of nonstandard dialects of English, and other students at risk of failure.

Education policymakers are ignoring best practices for learners of English as a second language and students for whom standard English is a second dialect. For example, research clearly indicates that language learning is developmental and takes more than just a year or two. Ramirez, Yuen, and Ramey (1991) concluded that students take from four to seven years to attain proficiency levels at which they can learn academic content as well as native speakers of English can.

Yet for LEP students, policymakers most frequently call for sheltered English immersion—an approach that is problematic because it leads to academic deficits. For example, if a 7th grade LEP student tests at the 4th grade reading level on a standardized test, such as the Stanford-9, that student would need to increase 1.6 grade levels each year to catch up with a native English speaker who needs to improve only 1.0 grade level annually. Meanwhile, the LEP student loses academic content while focusing on improving English reading abilities.

To grant local control and flexibility, Proposition 227 left districts to define what sheltered English immersion means in practice—and to decide when students begin literacy instruction in an English-only program. These English-only programs seek to give students survival English skills so that they can transition to a mainstream English classroom after being in the sheltered English-immersion classroom for only one school year. The California legislation asserts that in this short period, students will have attained “reasonable fluency in English.”

The lack of clear, consistent guidelines on how to determine “reasonable fluency in English” and on how to address the literacy needs of students has left California educators in a quagmire, seeking quick solutions. The push for accountability compounds this chaos. The focus on accountability dictates that LEP students meet the same standards and take the same standardized assessments as native English-speaking students—even though they do not have access to the type of instruction that would allow them to meet these standards. In response to state policies, districts have implemented programs that vary greatly in quality (Ramirez, 1999).

APPROACHES THAT VALUE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Constructivist theorists, sociocognitive researchers, and experts on language minority education (Hiebert, 1991) generally agree that any approach that builds on a student’s prior knowledge, including home language and culture, is better than instruction that fails to recognize it. Researchers make similar arguments for speakers of standard English as a second dialect (Wolfram, Adger, and Christian, 1999). Unfortunately, California policymakers are approaching

the education of language-minority students as if the language background of these children does not matter. They assume that the only question about developing literacy is, in an English-only program, which method works better, phonics or something else? The post-Proposition 227 climate no longer recognizes the value of native language instruction.

Aside from the dismissal of native language instruction, many literacy experts do not approach the debate between advocates of skills-based or phonics-only methods and literature-based methods as an either-or issue. For example, the Learning First Alliance (1998), a coalition of national education organizations, has concluded that all children need systematic instruction in phonics *and* exposure to rich literature. Likewise, the National Academy of Sciences has concluded that because reading is such a complex and multifaceted activity, no single method is the answer (August & Hakuta, 1997).

Skills- or phonics-based approaches often ignore important differences between native English-speaking learners and LEP students. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) have noted that native English speakers learn to read words and grammatical structures that they already understand orally. Second-language learners, in contrast, learn to read English by transferring reading skills learned in the native language—and they encounter an inordinate amount of unfamiliar language, even in beginning texts. Moreover, beginning readers who are native English speakers expect to understand the text once they have managed to decode it, but readers who are learning English may not comprehend texts even when they can decode them (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994).

Other potential problems occur when educators use the dominant approaches to teaching literacy. For example, one problem with a skills- or phonics-based approach for LEP students is that even if a student can sound out a word accurately, he or she may not recognize the word because it is not a part of his or her oral vocabulary.

Also, an LEP student who is trying to sound out a word in English may base his or her pronunciation on the same or similar phonemes in the native language. The student is trying to map the language of the text to his or her own speech—something all readers attempt to do. Teachers may try to correct this problem, but the problem often persists as students rely on their prior knowledge about sound-symbol correspondences. When this happens, the reading lesson becomes a pronunciation lesson and neglects comprehension. The teacher attempts to correct the student's pronunciation, assuming that "correct pronunciation," that is, sounding like the teacher, is a prerequisite for students to decode the text (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 89). Similar problems occur for second-dialect speakers (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999).

MEETING THE LITERACY NEEDS OF DIVERSE STUDENTS

Proposition 227 may have changed the way that California schools deliver instruction to students learning English. The law did not, however, change the students in California. They still present the same challenges and opportunities.

When the dust settles, we will not be surprised to find that one-size-fits-all programs and practices are not appropriate for diverse students, because they were politically motivated and enacted without empirical research.

These programs ignore a basic premise of learning theory—that instruction needs to recognize that students learn more when they make connections with content. Literacy programs for diverse students that are structured to include only one part of the total reading process, such as phonics, fail to give these students the context for understanding and deriving meaning from what they are reading. These programs seriously hamper their ability to learn the content needed for full literacy and academic achievement. Educators, therefore, must reflect on their basic assumptions, values, and beliefs about how best to address the linguistic and literacy needs of diverse student populations and not be guided by political gurus or divisive policies.

In the United States, we need to reexamine the views that we have about students who come to school with languages other than English. In our global society, there is certainly value in being literate in languages other than English. We need to know that tapping into students' primary language skills gives us a vehicle for meaningful instruction in content areas while developing their English-language skills. Research about well-implemented bilingual education and dual language-immersion programs (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Lindholm, 1991, 1992) consistently shows increased student achievement for students who participate in these programs. Even those opposed to bilingual education programs acknowledge the effectiveness of these programs. Glenn, for example, supports Canadian and European approaches to bilingual education that feature heritage-language education for minority students (Glenn, 1990; Glenn & LaLyre, 1991). Students can gain literacy in other languages while learning English (Cummins, 1985). If we continue to assume that we should use only English in our classrooms, we will limit educational opportunities for all students instead of expanding them.

If standards and curricular reforms are to spur high *and* equitable achievement for all students, they need to reflect an understanding of the specific linguistic and cultural resources that students bring with them to school, as well as their need to acquire standard English and to learn English language arts. By mandating a one-size-fits-all approach, policies such as Proposition 227 short-change students who are most at risk of school failure and low levels of literacy development. These students will continue to do poorly—until we base policies on an informed understanding of their needs.

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MYRA SADKER, DAVID SADKER, LYNN FOX, MELINDA SALATA

GENDER EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM: THE UNFINISHED AGENDA

*"In my science class the teacher never calls on me, and I feel like I don't exist. The other night I had a dream that I vanished."*¹

Our interviews with female students have taught us that it is not just in science class that girls report the “disappearing syndrome” referred to above. Female voices are also less likely to be heard in history and math classes, girls’ names are less likely to be seen on lists of national merit finalists, and women’s contributions infrequently appear in school textbooks. Twenty years after the passage of Title IX, the law prohibiting gender discrimination in U.S. schools, it is clear that most girls continue to receive a second-class education.

The very notion that women should be educated at all is a relatively recent development in U.S. history. It was not until late in the last century that the concept of educating girls beyond elementary school took hold. Even as women were gradually allowed to enter high school and college, the guiding principle in education was separate and unequal. Well into the twentieth century, boys and girls were assigned to sex-segregated classes and prepared for very different roles in life.

In 1833 Oberlin became the first college in the United States to admit women; but these early female college students were offered less rigorous courses and required to wait on male students and wash their clothes. Over the next several decades, only a few colleges followed suit in opening their doors to women. During the nineteenth century, a number of forward-thinking philanthropists and educators founded postsecondary schools for women—Mount Holyoke, Vassar, and the other seven-sister colleges. It was only in the aftermath of the Civil War that coeducation became more prevalent on campuses across the country, but even here economics and not equity was the driving force. Since the casualties of war meant the loss of male students and their tuition dollars, many universities turned to women to fill classrooms and replace lost revenues. In 1870 two-thirds of all universities still barred women. By 1900 more than two-thirds admitted them. But the spread of coeducation did not occur without a struggle. Consider that as late as the 1970s the all-male Ivy League colleges did not admit women, and even now state-supported Virginia Military Institute fights to maintain both its all-male status and its state funding.

CYCLE OF LOSS

Today, most female and male students attend the same schools, sit in the same classrooms, and read the same books; but the legacy of inequity continues beneath the veneer of equal access. Although the school door is finally open and girls are inside the building, they remain second-class citizens.

In the early elementary school years, girls are ahead of boys academically, achieving higher standardized test scores in every area but science. By middle

school, however, the test scores of female students begin a downward spiral that continues through high school, college, and even graduate school. Women consistently score lower than men on the Graduate Record Exams as well as on entrance tests for law, business, and medical schools. As a group, women are the only students who actually lose ground the longer they stay in school.

Ironically, falling female performance on tests is not mirrored by lower grades. Some have argued that women's grade-point averages are inflated because they tend not to take the allegedly more rigorous courses, such as advanced mathematics and physics. Another hypothesis suggests that female students get better grades in secondary school and college as a reward for effort and better behavior rather than a mastery of the material. Another possibility is that the standardized tests do not adequately measure what female students know and what they are really able to do. Whatever the reason, course grades and test grades paint very different academic pictures.

Lower test scores handicap girls in the competition for places at elite colleges. On average, girls score 50 to 60 points less than boys on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), recently renamed the Scholastic Assessment Test, which is required for admission to most colleges. Test scores also unlock scholarship money at 85 percent of private colleges and 90 percent of the public ones. For example, in 1991 boys scored so much higher on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) that they were nominated for two-thirds of the Merit Scholarships®—18 thousand boys compared to 8 thousand girls in 1991.²

The drop in test scores begins around the same time that another deeply troubling loss occurs in the lives of girls: self-esteem. There is a precipitous decline from elementary school to high school. Entering middle school, girls begin what is often the most turbulent period in their young lives. According to a national survey sponsored by the American Association of University Women, 60 percent of elementary school girls agreed with the statement "I'm happy the way I am," while only 37 percent still agreed in middle school. By high school, the level had dropped an astonishing 31 points to 29 percent, with fewer than three out of every 10 girls feeling good about themselves. According to the survey, the decline is far less dramatic for boys; 67 percent report being happy with themselves in elementary school, and this drops to 46 percent in high school.³

Recent research points to the relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem. Students who do well in school feel better about themselves; and in turn, they then feel more capable. For most female students, this connection has a negative twist and a cycle of loss is put into motion. As girls feel less good about themselves, their academic performance declines, and this poor performance further erodes their confidence. This pattern is particularly powerful in math and science classes, with only 18 percent of middle school girls describing themselves as good in these subjects, down from 31 percent in elementary school. It is not surprising that the testing gap between boys and girls is particularly wide in math and science.³

INEQUITY IN INSTRUCTION

During the past decade, Myra and David Sadker have investigated verbal interaction patterns in elementary, secondary, and college classrooms in a variety of settings and subject areas. In addition, they have interviewed students and teachers across the country. In their new book, *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls*, they expose the microinequities that occur daily in classrooms across the United States—and they show how this imbalance in attention results in the lowering of girls' achievement and self-esteem.¹ Consider the following:

- From grade school to graduate school, girls receive less teacher attention and less useful teacher feedback.
- Girls talk significantly less than boys do in class. In elementary and secondary school, they are eight times less likely to call out comments. When they do, they are often reminded to raise their hands while similar behavior by boys is accepted.
- Girls rarely see mention of the contributions of women in the curricula; most textbooks continue to report male worlds.
- Too frequently female students become targets of unwanted sexual attention from male peers and sometimes even from administrators and teachers.

From omission in textbooks to inappropriate sexual comments to bias in teaching behavior, girls experience a powerful and often disabling education climate. A high school student from an affluent Northeastern high school describes her own painful experience:

My English teacher asks the class, "What is the purpose of the visit to Johannesburg?" . . . I know the answer, but I contemplate whether I should answer the question. The boys in the back are going to tease me like they harass all the other girls in our class . . . I want to tell them to shut up. But I stand alone. All of the other girls don't even let themselves be bold. Perhaps they are all content to be molded into society's image of what a girl should be like—submissive, sweet, feminine . . . In my ninth period class, I am actually afraid—of what [the boys] might say . . . As my frustration builds, I promise myself that I will yell back at them. I say that everyday . . . and I never do it.⁴

Teachers not only call on male students more frequently than on females; they also allow boys to call out more often. This imbalance in instructional attention is greatest at the college level. Our research shows that approximately one-half of the students in college classrooms are silent, having no interaction whatsoever with the professor. Two-thirds of these silent students are women. This verbal domination is further heightened by the gender segregation of many of today's classes. Sometimes teachers seat girls and boys in different sections of the room, but more often students segregate themselves. Approximately one-half of the elementary and high school classrooms and one-third of the coeducational college classrooms that the Sadkers visited are sex-segregated.

As male students talk and call out more, teachers are drawn to the noisier male sections of the class, a development that further silences girls.

Not only do male students interact more with the teacher but at all levels of schooling they receive a higher quality of interaction. Using four categories of teacher responses to student participation—praise, acceptance, remediation, and criticism—the Sadkers' studies found that more than 50 percent of all teacher responses are mere acceptances, such as "O.K." and "uh huh." These nonspecific reactions offer little instructional feedback. Teachers use remediation more than 30 percent of the time, helping students correct or improve answers by asking probing questions or by phrases such as "Try again." Only 10 percent of the time do teachers actually praise students, and they criticize them even less. Although praise, remediation, and criticism provide more useful information to students than the neutral acknowledgment of an "O.K." these clearer, more precise teacher comments are more often directed to boys.

Who gets taught—and how—has profound consequences. Student participation in the classroom enhances learning and self-esteem. Thus, boys gain an educational advantage over girls by claiming a greater share of the teacher's time and attention. This is particularly noteworthy in science classes, where, according to the AAUW report, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, boys perform 79 percent of all student-assisted demonstrations. When girls talk less and do less, it is little wonder that they learn less.⁵ Even when directing their attention to girls, teachers sometimes short-circuit the learning process. For example, teachers frequently explain how to focus a microscope to boys but simply adjust the microscope for the girls. Boys learn the skill; girls learn to ask for assistance.

When female students do speak in class, they often preface their statements with self-deprecating remarks such as, "I'm not sure this is right," or "This probably isn't what you're looking for." Even when offering excellent responses, female students may begin with this self-criticism. Such tentative forms of speech project a sense of academic uncertainty and self-doubt—almost a tacit admission of lesser status in the classroom.

Women are not only quiet in classrooms; they are also missing from the pages of textbooks. For example, history textbooks currently in use at middle and high schools offer little more than 2 percent of their space to women. Studies of music textbooks have found that 70 percent of the figures shown are male. A recent content analysis of five secondary school science textbooks revealed that more than two-thirds of all drawings were of male figures and that not a single female scientist was depicted. Furthermore, all five books used the male body as the model for the human body, a practice that continues even in medical school texts.⁶ At the college level, too, women rarely see themselves reflected in what they study. For example, the two-volume *Norton Anthology of English Literature* devotes less than 15 percent of its pages to the works of women. Interestingly, there was greater representation of women in the first edition of the anthology in 1962 than in the fifth edition published in 1986.⁷

PRESENCE AND POWER

Not only are women hidden in the curriculum and quiet in the classroom, they are also less visible in other school locations. Even as early as the elementary grades, considered by some to be a distinctly feminine environment, boys tend to take over the territory. At recess time on playgrounds across the country, boys grab bats and balls as they fan out over the school yard for their games. Girls are likely to be left on the sideline—watching. In secondary school, male students become an even more powerful presence. In *Failing at Fairness*, high school teachers and students tell these stories:

- A rural school district in Wisconsin still has the practice of having the cheerleaders (all girls, of course) clean the mats for the wrestling team before each meet. They are called the “Mat Maidens.”
- In our local high school, boys’ sports teams received much more support from the school system and the community. The boys’ team got shoes, jackets, and played on the best-maintained grounds. The girls’ softball team received no clothes and nobody took care of our fields. Cheerleaders did not cheer for us. When we played, the bleachers were mostly empty.

Sports are not the only fields where women lose ground. In many secondary schools, mathematics, science, and computer technology remain male domains. In the past, girls were actively discouraged or even prohibited from taking the advanced courses in these fields. One woman, now a college professor, recalls her high school physics class:

- I was the only girl in the class. The teacher often told off-color jokes and when he did he would tell me to leave the room. My great regret today is that I actually did it.

Today, we hope such explicitly offensive behavior is rare, yet counselors and teachers continue to harbor lower expectations for girls and are less likely to encourage them to take advanced classes in math and science. It is only later in life that women realize the price they paid for avoiding these courses as they are screened out of lucrative careers in science and technology.

By the time they reach college, male students’ control of the environment is visible. Male students are more likely to hold positions of student leadership on campus and to play in heavily funded sports programs. College presidents and deans are usually men, as are most tenured professors. In a sense, a “glass wall” divides today’s college campus. On one side of the glass wall are men, comprising 70 percent of all students majoring in chemistry, physics, and computer science. The percentage is even higher in engineering. While the “hard sciences” flourish on the men’s side of the campus, the women’s side of the glass wall is where education, psychology, and foreign languages are taught. These gender walls not only separate programs, they also indicate social standing. Departments with higher male enrollment carry greater campus prestige and their faculty are often paid higher salaries.

These gender differences can be seen outside academic programs, in peer relationships both at college and in high school. In 1993 a national survey spon-

sored by the AAUW and reported in *Hostile Hallways* found that 76 percent of male students and 85 percent of female students in the typical high school had experienced sexual harassment.⁸ What differed dramatically for girls and boys was not the occurrence of unwanted touching or profane remarks but their reaction to them. Only 28 percent of the boys, compared to 70 percent of the girls, said they were upset by these experiences. For 33 percent of the girls, the encounters were so troubling that they did not want to talk in class or even go to school. On college campuses problems range from sexist comments and sexual propositions to physical assault. Consider the following incidents:

- A UCLA fraternity manual found its way into a campus magazine. Along with the history and bylaws were the songs the pledges were supposed to memorize. The lyrics described sexual scenes that were bizarre, graphic, and sadistic.⁹
- One fraternity on a New England campus hosted “pig parties” where the man bringing the female date voted the ugliest wins.¹
- A toga party on the campus of another elite liberal arts college used for decoration the torso of a female mannequin hung from the balcony and splattered with paint to look like blood. A sign below suggested the female body was available for sex.¹⁰

When one gender is consistently treated as less important and less valuable, the seeds of contempt take root and violence can be the result.

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

One of the ironies of gender bias in schools is that so much of it goes unnoticed by educators. While personally committed to fairness, many are unable to see the microinequities that surround them. The research on student–teacher interactions led the Sadkers to develop training programs to enable teachers and administrators to detect this bias and create equitable teaching methods. Program evaluations indicate that biased teaching patterns can be changed, and teachers can achieve equity in verbal interactions with their students. Research shows that for elementary and secondary school teachers, as well as college professors, this training leads not only to more equitable teaching but to more effective teaching as well.

During the 1970s, content analysis research showed women missing from schoolbooks. Publishers issued guidelines for equity and vowed to reform. But recent studies show that not all publishing companies have lived up to the promise of their guidelines. The curriculum continues to present a predominately male model of the world. Once again publishers and authors must be urged to incorporate women into school texts. Teachers and students need to become aware of the vast amount of excellent children’s literature, including biographies that feature resourceful girls and strong women. *Failing at Fairness*¹ includes an extensive list of these resources for both elementary and secondary schools.

NOTES

- ¹ M. Sadker and D. Sadker, *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994). The research for this article as well as the anecdotes are drawn from this book.
- ² Test data were obtained from Educational Testing Service.
- ³ The Analysis Group, Greenberg-Lake, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Women, 1990).
- ⁴ L. Kim, "Boys Will Be Boys . . . Right?" *The Lance*, Livingston High School (June 1993), 32:5.
- ⁵ The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, *How Schools Shortchange Girls: The AAUW Report* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1992).
- ⁶ J. Bazler and D. Simonis, "Are Women Out of the Picture?" *Science Teacher* 57 (December 1990): 9.
- ⁷ W. Sullivan, "The Norton Anthology and the Canon of English Literature." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College English Association, San Antonio, Texas, 1991.
- ⁸ Louis Harris and Associates, *Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Women, 1993).
- ⁹ J. O'Gorman and B. Sandler, *Peer Harassment: Hassles for Women on Campus* (Washington, D.C.: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1988).
- ¹⁰ B. A. Crier, "Frat Row," *Los Angeles Times* (February 9, 1990).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 4

1. Tracking and ability grouping have been a part of American public education since early in the twentieth century. Is there an effective alternative to substitute for tracking and ability grouping?
2. How can the cost of bilingual education be reconciled with the social aspect of not properly educating children whose first language is not English?
3. Discuss how teachers may inadvertently commit acts of oppression in their classrooms. How may these acts be avoided?
4. Explain how the concepts of sexism and racism are similar in both their assumptions and their effects.
5. Discuss ways in which you believe that differences in cultures may be overcome within the context of the classroom.

PART THREE

Schooling and Ideology

Forming a National Character

In Parts One and Two we saw how the concepts of opportunity, equality, and meritocracy have shaped major debates over the process and purposes of schooling in America. It was pointed out that what we think or believe about these concepts shapes our ideas about how children should be treated in school and whether the outcomes of schooling are fair and just. In this chapter we introduce the concept of ideology as a way of further explaining how social and educational policies are guided by systems of beliefs that underlie our educational and social ideals. We examine how belief systems (ideologies) come to shape the way we see schooling and how ideologies are translated into school policies. In Part Four we discuss the public face, or political aspects, of school decision making. In this part we look at the more covert origins of school practices: those that begin with ideas about social justice, equality, and meritocracy.

Ideology, simply defined, is “the body of doctrine, myth, symbol, etc., of a social movement, institution, or class.”¹ In every society ideology functions in two ways. First, ideology is the dominant belief system that explains or justifies the status quo. For example, divine right of kings was an ideology that justified whatever action a monarch might take.

Second, competing ideologies that challenge the status quo can usually be found in any social system. In opposition to divine right of kings, for example, there arose in Europe the ideology of self-determination and self-government. It eventually replaced the ideology that had supported monarchical governments. In turn, it helped to justify the American and French Revolutions and the development of a constitutional monarchy in Great Britain.

The crucial point with regard to an ideological system in any society is how it is established and maintained. This question was first raised by Karl Marx when he claimed that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.”² In other words, the dominant ideology in a society is the belief system that justifies, or legitimates, the position of the ruling class. But why? Certainly those who do not benefit from the status quo would find it to their

advantage to oppose the beliefs that keep them at the bottom. How are we all convinced that one system of belief better serves us than another? Part of the answer is found in the ideological messages received by children in schools.

THE “HIDDEN CURRICULUM”

Does the school operate to produce and reproduce a dominant American ideology? To find out, we look at what has often been called the “hidden curriculum.” To see if schools are in the business of perpetuating the status quo requires looking beyond lists of curriculum objectives, test scores, and dollars spent. Instead, we look at what values, norms, and beliefs (ideology) are taught through the structure of the school day, the instructional materials used, the behavior of teachers, and the school organization itself. These constitute the hidden curriculum—the meanings, beliefs, and truths that students take from the daily routine of schooling.

In 1968 two studies, Philip Jackson’s *Life in Classrooms* and Robert Dreeben’s *On What Is Learned in School*, opened research into school culture in order to study the socialization process. Both writers were concerned with the “daily grind” of school life, but they arrived at contradictory conclusions about “the cultural significance of the humdrum elements of human existence.”³ According to Dreeben, students learned “to form transient social relationships, submerge much of their personal identity, and accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment,” thus making it possible to maintain a “democratic polity.”⁴ For Jackson, in contrast, these very same values helped to teach children how to behave as “members of crowds, as potential recipients of praise or reproof, and as pawns of institutional authorities” in order that they might become the unimaginative “company man.”⁵

As a result of these studies, the attention of researchers was diverted from seeing the outcomes of schooling as merely a set of test scores. Instead, they began to focus on the ideological disposition resulting from schooling—a disposition that helped children fit neatly into a technological, hierarchical, yet democratic society. A consensus has since emerged

[t]hat schools are indeed agencies of socialization and so do more than simply teach subject matter and technical skills . . . what is being hotly debated among educators is not whether the hidden curriculum exists so much as the function and consequences of such a curriculum.⁶

Think about the socialization process with this example: the simple task of moving elementary and secondary students from one class to the next. When a buzzer or bell rings, students get up to move from one classroom to another. If they do not arrive at their rooms on time, they face certain consequences—either reprimand or detention. Essentially, this teaches students the value of time. The value of time will be of paramount importance to students in school and later when they enter the workforce. This example shows that a prospective employer and a school system share similar expectations.

Of course, the ideological consequences, or what are often called the socializing functions of schooling, have varied depending on social need. In what follows we explore the ideological intent and outcomes of public schooling in America.

CREATING AMERICANS

During the American colonial period the ideological messages of schools were not very hidden. One of the early educational statutes in the colonies, the Massachusetts “ould deluder Satan” act of 1647, was specifically designed to prevent Satan’s influence on children. The opening paragraph of the Massachusetts act justified the mandating of reading and writing schools in towns of fifty or more and grammar schools in those of one hundred or more in the following strong language:

It being one chiefe project of that ould deluder, Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknowne tongue, so in these latter times by perswading from the used of tongues, that so at least the true sence and meaning of the originall might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming-deceivers, that learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in the church and commonwealth.⁷

The purpose of the curriculum, which focused on teaching children to read, was to aid in individual salvation and the religious well-being of the colony.

After independence, proposals were put forth for the schooling of children in the new nation. Behind each of them was the intent to mold a new citizen, an American. We can see these sentiments in the writings of American educational reformers and political leaders such as Benjamin Rush, Thomas Jefferson, and Noah Webster. For these men schooling was not merely educating in the sense of transmitting academic skills. More importantly, the purpose of education was to shape a set of attitudes, dispositions, and beliefs (an ideology) designed to support the young nation.

American educators in the late 1700s held that teaching was fundamentally a moral endeavor. If America was to fulfill its promise, it was presumed that the task would fall on the shoulders of the common man. It was crucial that this new citizen be prepared to play his role in this important mission. The idea of citizenship was as much a moral as a civic concept.

For some, like Rush, this meant that schools would have to give students a strong dose of religious education. Rush argued that Protestantism and Americanism were one and the same and that the foundation for education in the new republic was religion. “Without this,” he wrote in 1786, “there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments.”⁸

Jefferson’s educational system, proposed in “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge” to the Virginia legislature in 1779 (reprinted in Chapter 6) separated religion and education. Yet the proposed system of schooling was firmly based on a moral concept of citizenship. Moreover, pupils at all

levels of schooling received education in “democratic principles” so that citizens would fulfill their civic duties and obligations. Jefferson proposed a three-tier educational system that began with three years of common schooling. A selecting and sorting process based on achievement was to reduce the number of students who could proceed to higher levels of learning at public expense. From the common schools a natural aristocracy was to emerge that would be further educated to assume political leadership.

Noah Webster felt the key to Americanization was the standardization of language. His *Grammatical Institute of the English Language, Part I*, first published in 1783, was retitled *The American Spelling Book*. The purpose of the text was to teach children American speech and spelling in a non-British way. But more importantly, the text included stories containing moral lessons. Piety, morality, and patriotism played a leading role. To make certain that no one would miss the moral teachings, the text ended with “The History of the THRIFTY AND UNTHRIFTY” and “A Moral Catechism.”

Schools were explicitly moral agents in the process of nation building. It was expected that teachers would teach by example and be “grave in their manners, gentle in their tempers, exemplary in their morals, and of sound principles in religion and government.” Indeed, the business of schooling was closely attached to the task of governing:

Our schools of learning, by producing our general and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government.⁹

In these late-eighteenth-century examples we see how schools served a particular social and ideological role as well as met individual academic needs. The new nation needed both informed and loyal citizens. As it emerged from a war for independence, still under siege from the British in the North and the Spanish in the Southwest, the building of a secure nation-state was vital. Reflected in both the ideal agrarian democracy of Jefferson and the nationalistic language of Webster was the drive to mold the American citizen.

We also find a broader message here. Schooling in virtually any society is designed to perform a socializing function. It is designed to inculcate in the young the values held in the society at large and, in so doing, to perpetuate the society itself. Thus, schools are always committed to a particular set of values and a particular way of life.

This is often not as simple as it seems. As we saw in Parts One and Two, values are frequently contested, especially when they concern equality and social justice. For example, is it appropriate to socialize students to believe in a meritocratic system when meritocracy may have the effect of keeping political and economic elites in place?

The socialization of children becomes even more problematic in a democratic society. On the one hand there is the drive to maintain the status quo, to hold the society where it is and prepare the citizens and workers to take their place in the current social order. On the other hand there is the promise of democracy in which each generation is empowered to mold society in what-

ever way it sees fit. For example, if minorities or women are at a disadvantage in the culture at large, should the school shape minority or female students to take their given place? Or should schools work to develop in these students the political and social tools they will need to democratically change society? It is this tension that underlies much of the debate over the ideological function of schooling.

HORACE MANN AND THE AMERICAN CREED

By the mid-1800s the United States was relatively secure from external threat. Economic growth was rapid, as was territorial expansion. Already the hopes for the young country were being challenged, however. Waves of immigrants from poverty-ravaged European nations seemed to threaten the emerging American character. The growth of industry brought with it the crowding of many workers into cities, challenging the preeminence of Jefferson's farmer-citizen.

These twin pressures aided the first major push for mass public schooling in the United States and with it a new ideological mission for public education. As the country underwent industrial expansion in the mid- to late 1800s, reformers such as Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, and Abbott Lawrence pushed for public schooling as a way to prevent poverty, establish good work habits, and instill the American creed in a growing number of children from immigrant families. Mann, the first Secretary to the State Board of Education in Massachusetts, felt that education would be the key component in establishing equality of opportunity. In his famous and often quoted *Twelfth Annual Report to the Board of Education* (1848), Mann invoked this vision:

Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men,—the balance-wheel of the social machinery . . . It [education] does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility towards the rich: it prevents being poor.¹⁰

Mann saw a system of universal education as being the key to solving the problems of poverty (see Chapter 6). Workers were to become more productive, thus commanding a higher wage. Schools simultaneously increased the workers' general store of knowledge and, more importantly, inculcated proper values and behaviors. Lawrence, a leading Massachusetts industrialist, echoed Mann's sentiments when he said: "Let your common school system go hand in hand with the employment of your people; you may be quite certain that the adoption of these systems at once, will aid each other."¹¹

Mann and his fellow reformers were centrally concerned with two issues. First, they were appalled by the poverty of industrial towns and wanted to find some way to equalize opportunity so that the poor could rise above their condition. Thus, although the curriculum was made up of reading, writing, and arithmetic, these studies were couched in lessons that stressed hard work, perseverance, self-denial, and promptness. Similar lessons were taught in the popular literature of the day. Later, Horatio Alger novels featured "ragged Dick"

and other young men who moved from rags to riches on the basis of hard work and virtue. The meritocratic ideology was clearly stated in a textbook often used during the period:

If he has good health and is industrious, even the poorest boy in our country has something to trade upon; and if he be well-educated and have some skill in any kind of work, and add to this moral habits and religious principles, so that his employers may trust him and place confidence in him, he may then be said to set out in life with a handsome capital, and certainly has as good a chance of becoming independent and respectable, and perhaps rich, as any man in the country. Every man is the maker of his own fortune.¹²

Like the colonists before them, reformers in the mid-1800s faced a changing and uncertain environment. America, which had been an agrarian nation governed by the rhythm of the seasons and the motion of the sun, was undergoing a fundamental change. Steam had been harnessed and with it came the promise of an industrialized economy. But industrial production necessitated that work be governed by the clock, and that workers become accustomed to artificial, human-devised time divisions. Thus, the second component of the hidden curriculum was the organization of the school with its segmented day, and its bureaucratically organized system of authority and regimented drill. All this helped to prepare the workforce to leave the field for the factory.

Classrooms during this period were structured in a way that would characterize most of public education for the next one hundred years. Barbara Finkelstein examined descriptions of over 1,000 elementary school classrooms of the period 1820–1890 and found that teachers were in nearly total control of the classroom setting. Students were expected to uniformly complete assignments and behave in ways consistent with teacher expectations. Teachers told students “when they should sit, when they should stand, when they should hang their coats, and when they should turn their heads.” Frequently student activities took the form of recitation in reading or writing.¹³

Near the end of the nineteenth century, in 1892, Joseph Rice, a pediatrician-journalist and critic of much of what he saw in education, observed 1,200 teachers in thirty-six cities over a six-month period. He published a series of popular magazine articles depicting teaching as grim, dreary, and mechanical. Perhaps the last term is the most important to this discussion. He described the majority of classroom work as made up of drill, memorization, and busywork done under the teacher’s direction. Typical of his exchange with educators of the day was one with a New York principal whom Rice queried as to whether children were allowed to turn their heads. The response: “Why should they look behind them when the teacher is in front of them?”¹⁴

In both the school structure and the curriculum we see the emergence of a new ideological role for schools. The aim was no longer the one that so concerned Jefferson, Rush, and Webster—to prepare the democratic citizen. The new ideological task was to prepare students to accept their place in an emerging industrial order, a task that was to gain increasing preeminence in the early 1900s. It is critical at this juncture to realize that society, at different times, espouses different beliefs about the purpose of education. This comes about

because of different forces operating in society at various times. One needs to keep in mind that the process of education is always in a state of flux dependent on societal demands, needs, and pressures.

EDUCATING THE WORKER-CITIZEN

The twentieth century was ushered in by technological and industrial advances that threatened the cultural fabric of the republic. Both educators and political leaders looked to the school to resolve major social issues created by the urbanization and industrialization of America. This debate continues today.

The early part of the twentieth century was fraught with contradiction and conflict. With the growth of American industrial power and the parallel increase in national wealth, many perceived growing inequalities of wealth and power. Industrial capitalism was spawning a productive system previously unmatched in human history. Occurring simultaneously with the mass production of goods and the amassing of large fortunes, however, was poverty on a scale larger than previously witnessed. Workers were crammed into city slums and paid minimal wages for long hours of exhausting work. Children were often required to work as many as twelve hours a day for pennies in order to supplement meager family incomes. The Great Depression of the 1930s brought Americans face to face with the weaknesses of the capitalist system. Clearly, something had to be done about these “crimes against humanity” suffered daily by many American workers. For some this meant challenging the capitalist system that gave rise to these conditions. George Counts, a leading educator, summed up the challenge to capitalism this way:

Unless the democratic tradition is able to organize and conduct a successful attack on the economic system, its complete destruction is inevitable . . . This clearly means that, if democracy is to survive in the United States, it must abandon its individualistic affiliations in the sphere of economics [and] insist on two things: first, that technology be released from the fetters and the domination of every type of special privilege; and second, that the resulting system of production and distribution be made to serve directly the masses of people.¹⁵

The hope of Counts (see Chapter 6) and other “social reconstructionists” was that teachers would lead the campaign for economic democracy in the schools, through their teaching, and in the community, through their labor unions.

The increasing contradictions between American political democracy and the economics of capitalism attracted the attention of both social and educational reformers. If the American political system was to become a democracy made up of political equals, clearly the problem of economic inequality, and the resultant political inequality, had to be addressed.

Aware of the conflict swirling about them, educational reformers of the period went to work trying to change individuals rather than the system. The argument, simply put, was that the system worked fine for those with the requisite skills—that is, it offered an equal opportunity to all who were willing and able to take advantage of it. Certainly corruption needed to be eliminated and

trusts “busted.” But these abuses of the system were seen as mere aberrations, a “fly in the ointment” that could be legislated out of existence. On the one hand the strategy was to tinker with the system to get the bugs out. On the other hand, and most important for education, the desire was to improve individuals so that they could take advantage of the equal opportunities offered them. Reformers of the period believed that this dual effort would save both democracy and capitalism simultaneously.

Schools were thus called upon to expand their role in the socialization of children. Rather than become active agents for social change, as Counts and others proposed, teachers were asked to focus on the role of children in the future perfectability of society. Consistent with most reform of the period, the mission of the school was not to “solve inequality—or poverty . . . in the present, but to equalize opportunity for the future.”¹⁶

Children, says Richard deLone, were seen as “bearers of the American dream.” The meritocratic ideology of equal opportunity had, by this time, displaced any broader notion of equality, which seemed unobtainable in the face of disparities in wealth and income. The public agenda was thus made one of providing for “equal educational opportunity” for children in order that they might lift themselves out of poverty and strife. For schools, fairness was defined as opportunity, and the just system of rewards was tacitly agreed to be the system that provided equal opportunity.

As they had been in the mid-nineteenth century, schools were called upon to be a central institution in the struggle to maintain democracy (or at least one version of it) in the face of privilege. The structure of schooling—curriculum, administration, and student classification—was designed to produce one clear and overriding message: America was indeed the land of opportunity, and only personal limitations stood between each individual and success. This meant using the school again as the great panacea for social ills. Educational reformers did little to attack the barriers to political and economic inequality, barriers that the poor, women, and minorities were to find nearly impossible to overcome. Instead, the scenario for educational reform saw the school as a sorting mechanism that rewarded each fairly according to his or her talents.

The Curriculum

The curriculum of the public schools was directed more and more toward preparing students for industrial work. Given the rapid expansion of industry, it seemed logical to many that poverty could be eliminated on an individual basis through work in the expanding productive sectors of the nation’s economy. Schools in the early 1900s came under increasing attack for a curriculum that was not “practical.” They were accused of being preoccupied with “mere scholastic learning” while not equipping students with the tools for making a living. Summarizing and agreeing with this critique was a piece in the March 1911 issue of *Educational Review*:

One hears many protests from the business house, the factory, the farm, and from every form of industry, that the boys and girls come from the schools with

little preparation for work. We are told that the schools have given the children an “education” which does not fit them to earn a living, and which even in some cases unfits them for this desired end.¹⁷

Generated by a perceived need for schools to prepare workers for industrial occupations, a tide of narrow utilitarianism swept over public schooling. In this view the moral and cultural effects of schooling were of secondary importance. Instead, they were seen as side effects of an education that increased efficiency and augmented income. Educators were asked to “drop their platitudes and put the schools in a position of aiding industrial progress.”¹⁸

The business of the school curriculum was to be business, and this was the not-so-hidden curriculum in the first part of the twentieth century. The ability of an individual to succeed in society was enhanced by an education that stressed punctuality, the ability to follow orders, “practical” as opposed to intellectual studies, and an adaptation to a hierarchical, routinized, and standardized social system. Children were indoctrinated into such a system by the organization of the school itself, which came to mirror the industrial model.

Scientific Management and School Administration

Along with demands for a more “practical” curriculum were calls for a more “efficient” educational system. Schools followed the lead of industry toward scientific management and efficiency engineering. To educators committed to scientific management it made sense that if students were to learn industrial values they ought to do so in a school modeled on industrial production.

In industry, the work of Frederick W. Taylor, summed up by him in *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), led to a transformation of the very nature of work and management. Preoccupied by what Raymond Callahan has labeled the “cult of efficiency,” Taylor was devoted to making industrial production as efficient as possible. He engaged in time-management studies, breaking down each job into its constituent parts and attempting to describe in detail each movement of the worker. This prescribed formula, which specified what, how, and when something was to be done, was put in the hands of managers who took over control of the production process.

Arthur Wirth has recounted the tragic side effects of such work organization. Workers became alienated from their work, efficiency did not increase as dramatically as hoped, work became routine and dehumanizing, and the expertise of workers was lost to the workplace. But more important for us is the effect the industrial model had on schooling at the time.¹⁹

The efficiency movement swept rapidly through the public schools. This meant three things for school organization. First and foremost was the drive to organize the school as a workplace along the lines of the efficiency model proposed by Taylor. Educational administrators across the country subscribed to the idea put forth by John Franklin Bobbitt, an influential professor of educational administration, that “education is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails.”²⁰ Thus the process of teaching and learning was to be divided into its smallest parts, every act standardized, coordinated by a fore-

man (or principal), and constantly measured against agreed upon standards of efficiency. This led to calls for devising “test(s) or a system of measuring the work of pupils which will enable us to ascertain a value to any product or result of instruction which any other observer could verify, and to report these values with as great definiteness as is possible—that is, to be scientific in measuring the efficiency of instruction.”²¹

Both instruction and the use of the school building were to meet the highest levels of efficiency. The noted “Gary Plan,” named for the city of Gary, Indiana, attempted to use every classroom every minute of the school day and on weekends. By 1929, this plan, or variations of it, was used in approximately 1,068 school districts affecting over 730,000 pupils in 202 cities. Formulas were developed to measure the efficiency of a school system based on the year-to-year progress of students.

Finally, the teacher–student ratio and time spent on subject matter were also reviewed through the lens of industrial efficiency. Realizing that teachers can lecture to large classes as well as small ones, administrators increased class sizes. This met the goals of scientific management, including more production per worker accompanied by a decrease in costs. Similarly, the costs of “recitations” in various subject matters were computed so that administrators could compare costs among schools. Based on these cost accounting methods, widely disseminated by Bobbitt, superintendents chose the courses to be offered and identified the optimal class size. Seemingly the logic of the workplace was to control the entire process of schooling.

As Larry Cuban has pointed out, instruction continued to reflect the ethos of the workplace. Many schools did embrace the progressivism of John Dewey, whose work and influence will be discussed later in this chapter, but “the dominant pattern of instruction . . . remained teacher centered.”

Motivated by a reasonable desire to overcome political corruption, educational reformers and reformers in other social services turned to the model of industrial capitalism, which seemed so successful. The efficiency-oriented programs mentioned above, and many others like them, were feverishly undertaken. Those who launched them, however, forgot that educating children was not the same as producing steel rails. The ideological messages from such a culture seem relatively clear. First, all social enterprises are best organized along routinized and standardized lines, and authority flows down from the top with orders issued from superiors who expect to be obeyed. Second, the rewards handed out by schools (later to be turned into earning power) will be fundamentally fair and just because they are based on objective measures of student abilities. It is to this last covert message we now turn.

Student Classification

Between 1910 and 1945 the not-so-hidden curriculum was marked by the development of more sophisticated techniques to measure intelligence, sort talent, and track students. In an era that was seemingly relentless in its drive to measure and classify, it made sense that students themselves fell under the quantifier’s gaze. If the curriculum was to prepare workers in an institution

devoted to the “efficient” use of resources, then it was necessary to apply the laws of scientific management to the raw material of schools—children. Bobbitt saw it this way:

[The] fourth principle of general scientific management is: Work up the raw material into that finished product for which it is best adapted. Applied to education this means: Educate the individual according to his capabilities. This requires that the materials of the curriculum be sufficiently various to meet the needs of every class of individuals in the community; and that the course of training and study be sufficiently flexible that the individual can be given just things that he needs.²²

Once the curriculum was diversified, it required an appropriate way to measure and sort students (raw material) as well.

We have seen previously that the development of IQ tests that claimed to be measures of inherited intellectual ability provided the scientific measures needed for tracking students. The testing of intelligence and standardized achievement tests became a central feature of public education. It was thought that students classified according to the results of such tests would receive equal opportunity through differentiated educational programs. The idea was neatly put by Boston’s school superintendent in 1908: “Until very recently, [schools] have offered equal opportunity for all to receive *one kind* of education, but what will make them democratic is to provide opportunity for all to receive such education as will fit them *equally well* for their particular life work.”²³

Tracking based on testing became a common feature of schooling. Students were assigned curricula leading to employment suitable for their aptitudes. Prior to entering the workplace, children could be sorted, ranked, and then instructed in ways that would suit them for a particular brand of work. On the one hand, those with a “motor type of mind, with neither tastes nor ability to abstract intellection,” could be guided to vocational education. On the other hand, “if one is clearly of the intellectualistic type of mind, preparing for a professional career, it may be desirable to give him a maximum of the general studies, and a smaller amount of the concrete activities.”²⁴

The ideal of a unified curriculum gave way to the ideal of differentiating students for predetermined places in the workforce. This desire to treat students as individuals was motivated by a genuine concern among some reformers to meet the needs of students. But when coupled with the curriculum offered, the bureaucratic nature of schooling, and the assumption that intelligence as tested was inherited and thus unchanging, the tracking plans can be seen in a more disturbing light. The supposedly scientific process assured every student an equal chance at educational opportunity, but clearly some students were more equal than others.

An Alternative View

It would be misleading to suggest that all educators accepted the scientific management model for schooling. In fact a broad-based and vital movement led by George Counts, John Dewey, Ella Flagg Young, and others worked to make schools democratic hothouses in which students would gain a genuine

sense of personal political empowerment and teachers might work directly for social change.

Counts was a leader of the social reconstructionists. He and others believed that the fundamental threat to democracy was the concentration of economic and political power. In his best-remembered treatise, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?*, written during the Depression, he wrote forcefully about the economic threat to democracy and compassionately about the toll it was taking on children: "Breakfastless children march to school past bankrupt shops laden with rich foods gathered from the ends of the earth."²⁵

The social reconstructionist solution to the problem of revitalizing American democracy was that teachers become agents of social change. Directly this meant that teachers should organize to support social programs that would expand democracy and alleviate the suffering of the poor. Indirectly, it meant altering the ideological messages of the school. Schools were to inculcate in children the values of egalitarian democracy. Schools were to be "centers for the building, and not merely for the contemplation, of our civilization." They were asked to actively inculcate in children a vision of democracy that ran counter to the meritocratic ideology and put industry to the task of promoting "the welfare of the great masses of the people."²⁶ Perhaps one of the most interesting facets of social reconstructionism was the belief that educational change originated in the hands of the teacher. Teachers had a noble calling. They were to take the lead because they had the future in their hands—the children.

Counts worked most of his life to realize his vision. He believed that teachers represented the interests of all the people, without regard to class, race, or sex. Thus, said Counts, teachers should "seek power and then strive to use that power fully and wisely and in the interests of the great masses of the people."²⁷ To that end he was active in the Progressive Education Association, was a founder of the journal *The Social Frontier*, and helped organize the American Federation of Teachers.

John Dewey was the best known of the educators called the progressives, and his work continues to have a major impact on educational thought. He is, perhaps, the most influential of all American educators. To Dewey, the key task for the school was to rekindle the flames of democracy. He recognized the importance of assisting students to orient themselves vocationally, but his priority remained that of preparing democratic citizens, not merely workers. For Dewey the school was a place where teachers prepared students for democratic living by equipping them with the necessary skills for self-governance.

This put Dewey and other progressives in direct opposition to much of the efficiency-minded reform of the times. For example, Dewey argued against the fragmentation of curriculum, proposing instead an integration of subject matter by topic. He argued that schooling should not be seen as a preparation for specific occupations and that schools should be places where the basis is laid for lifelong learning.²⁸

Dewey's ideas influenced a great many educators and were a major source of inspiration for those who opposed the trend toward organizing schools on a factory model. Educators such as Ella Flagg Young, superintendent of schools

in Chicago, worked to implement Dewey's ideas, much to the dismay of many industrialists.²⁹ Many progressive classrooms reflected Dewey's ideas as children learned through experience, enjoyed an integrated curriculum, and developed critical thinking and decision-making skills.

It is important to note that the progressives' rejection of the meritocratic ideology stemmed from the role they sought for public education. In their minds a just society was a democratic one. To violate democratic principles with the classification of students and the subordination of fairness to efficiency was to abandon the school's finest social role. To prepare democratic citizens was the highest calling of the school, not to be debased by narrow vocationalism.

THE COLD WAR, EQUAL RIGHTS, AND MERITOCRACY

In the late 1950s the Cold War began to overshadow issues of social justice, equality, and democracy in debates about the social role of public schools. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first artificial earth satellite, Sputnik. This event caused widespread concern over the ability of the United States to keep up technologically with its Cold War adversary. But Sputnik was made into a symbol much larger than a mere spacecraft. The real challenge faced was not Sputnik per se but, according to Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, a challenge involving "the very roots of our society. It involves our educational system, the source of our knowledge and cultural values."³⁰

Much of the blame for the United States' inferior space program was placed on the public schools and their inability to produce needed scientists. The popular media were filled with "Johnny" versus "Ivan" stories. Why Ivan could read (write, add, spell, etc.) better than Johnny was America's most widely discussed question.

The educational reforms generated by this public outcry were epitomized by the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, which provided federal aid to promote the improved teaching of mathematics, science, and foreign languages:

The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available. The defense of this Nation depends upon the mastery of modern techniques developed from complex scientific principles. . . . This requires programs that will give assurance that no students of ability will be denied an opportunity for higher education because of financial need; will correct as rapidly as possible the existing imbalances in our educational programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology.

It is therefore the purpose of this Act to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States.³¹

Thus, as national needs shifted, so did the ideological function of the schools. They were to continue to promote equal opportunity, but it was equal opportunity to become a scientist or soldier. Trends in curriculum and instruc-

tion reflected this new role of public education. Additional resources were allocated for the teaching of science and math, new textbooks were developed, and a new wave of testing for scientific and mathematical aptitude was promoted. The federal government would match local districts dollar for dollar in funding. The curriculum was to get back to the basics of science, math, English, and history. In these ways, and others, the schools were expected to help meet national defense needs.

In the years following World War II an unfinished agenda of equal opportunity remained for the schools. While much attention was devoted to the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, a series of historic battles was being fought on the home front. The struggle against racism that was played out on buses and at lunch counters found its way to the schoolhouse door as well.

Until the 1950s one of the major elements of the hidden curriculum was the promotion of white superiority. Although President Harry Truman desegregated the Armed Forces in 1948, blacks and sometimes other minorities were still excluded from school attendance with whites in most parts of the United States, either by law (*de jure*) or simply in fact (*de facto*). With the advent of the civil rights movement, however, this ideological role of public schooling was challenged. The extension of the meritocratic ideology and of equal opportunity to various minority groups became the goal for many school reformers. The major impetus for change began with court-ordered desegregation of schools initiated by the *Brown* decision in 1954. It continued through a variety of legislative and judicial actions that applied not only to racial minorities but also to women, linguistic minorities, and the handicapped.

In the 1960s widespread poverty generated new questions about the social and ideological role of schooling. Dramatically illustrated in Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1962), a work often credited with launching the War on Poverty in the 1960s, poverty seemed not to have been diminished in the least. In a country that pictured itself as the land of opportunity, 40 million to 50 million of its citizens were poor and had little or no hope of improving their lot. In Harrington's words: "until these facts shame us, until they stir us to action, the other America will continue to exist, a monstrous example of needless suffering in the most advanced society in the world."³²

To witness the way in which America responded to the plight of the poor is to witness how deeply ingrained the American meritocratic ideology is. Rather than focus reform on the economic system itself, War on Poverty programs were designed to improve individuals in order that they might better be able to compete for America's bounties. Most prominent among these programs were those grouped under Title I of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Over \$412 million was set aside for a Job Corps (direct training programs), work-training programs (funds to employ young people while they worked toward a high school degree), and work-study programs (funds for the part-time employment of undergraduate, graduate, or professional students from low-income families). All of these programs were designed to increase the individual's "employability"—or merit, if you will—so that he or she would be better able to take advantage of society's opportunities.

The largest educational program of the War on Poverty was project Head Start. This program targeted children who, because of their parents' poverty, risked school failure and, consequently, failure in getting and keeping jobs. Head Start centers were set up throughout the country, primarily in large cities, where parents and their young children gathered to play and learn. The program's concern was "improving the nutrition and health of the children in the hope of increasing their readiness for school."³³ Head Start, along with other educational programs such as Upward Bound (designed to help disadvantaged high school students get a head start on college), was devoted to the idea of preparing youths for a more equal educational opportunity. In this way, argued Senator Hubert Humphrey, we would eliminate or at least greatly reduce poverty:

The facts show that education holds the key to escape from the mire of poverty. An education is the best insurance policy against poverty our youths have. It prevents them from being one-skill workers subject to the ravages of the machine. Education gives people mobility and a variety of employable skills.³⁴

In the 1970s legislation and litigation additionally focused on women, the handicapped, and language minorities with respect to equal opportunity. The histories of all of these programs, Title IX, PL 94-142, and Bilingual Education, were discussed previously in Part One, but it is important to return here to the purposes of these efforts, which are reflected in the excerpts that follow:

(Title IX) No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.³⁵

(PL 94-142) It is the purpose of this Act to assure that all handicapped children have available to them . . . a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs.³⁶

Clearly the legislative agenda was to open up equal opportunity to groups previously discriminated against, as set forth by the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974:

The Congress declares it to be the policy of the United States that all children enrolled in public schools are entitled to equal educational opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, or national origin.³⁷

As public concern with artificial limits to equal access to schools increased, attention also focused on what happened *within* the school. The claim was increasingly heard that due to the bias inherent in textbooks and teacher practices many students were denied equal educational opportunity. It was argued that children were exposed to stereotypical behavior associated with gender and race and were treated in a differential manner according to probable future social status and occupations. Reformers pressured schools to keep step with the culture at large and alter these now rejected stereotypes.

Gender typing and racial stereotyping were blatant in school textbooks. The occupational and social roles portrayed for female characters were drastically limited as compared to those held by males. Such limitations were seen by

critics as “inadequate for female children,” because they included “few of the activities, possible occupational goals, and characteristics which are accorded greater prestige and held higher in esteem in our society.”³⁸ Similar claims were made about the role of minorities in textbooks:

For decades black characters were presented as shuffling, lazy, shiftless, singing, subhumans. Without mind, purpose, or aspirations, blacks danced across the pages of children’s books fostering prejudice and ignorance in the minds of young readers. The only saving grace was that for many years, in the vast majority of children’s books, black characters simply never existed.³⁹

The argument was that such stereotypes and biases operated in opposition to the stated national goals of equalizing opportunities for all. Books for children, it was argued, should be free of stereotypes, biases, and prejudiced treatment:

Reading materials should include more female characters in leadership roles which depict them as intelligent, capable human beings with the ability to create, generate new ideas and resolve problems. Reading materials need to expand the quality and quantity of career roles shown for females.⁴⁰

Similar arguments were made for all minorities.

Attacking the problem of discrimination in textbooks was relatively easy because it was substantiated by research findings. More than any other single factor, textbooks dictate curriculum, so it seemed logical to first attack the problem at that level. And, in fact, important strides have been made in this area, though much is left to be done.

The issue of prejudicial teacher behaviors remained, however, and was not so easily overcome. The issue of self-fulfilling prophecy is evident. When teachers hold a belief or notion about a student, often reflected as a stereotype, the judgment (whether good or bad) often will influence how they perceive a student’s behavior. As more women, minorities (racial and language), and handicapped students entered schools, the practices of teachers toward these groups came under close scrutiny. Ways in which teachers varied their instructional behaviors toward these groups were challenged. For example, students who spoke a variation of standard American English were labeled slow or handicapped. These classifications were challenged by those who argued that there were a variety of American dialects. This led to attempts to remove cultural language biases from testing and teacher evaluations of student work. The goal of some reformers was to aid students in becoming proficient in both their own dialect and standard American English while not depriving them—through criticism of their speech patterns—of an equal educational opportunity. In the 1990s the Ebonics movement strove to achieve this goal by first using Black English as the basis for learning Standard English.

Mathematics education has been the focus of similar efforts toward equal opportunity for women. Given the structure of the American job market, a solid mathematics background provides access to some of the most lucrative employment fields. This includes access to training in engineering, physical sci-

ences, medicine, commerce, and the like. Yet women seem not to succeed in math classes and are thus generally excluded from opportunities to compete in these fields. Only recently has research been devoted to this phenomenon, locating much of its source in the daily practices of teachers and guidance counselors who steer girls clear of math and related coursework.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s great strides were taken in making schools places where students received fairer treatment. Artificial limits on students due to race, class, or sex were challenged and many practices changed. This is not to say that all the problems faced by minorities were solved and that they now have equal opportunity. In fact, some have suggested that the job is only half done and that we need to recommit ourselves to genuine equal educational opportunities for all students.⁴¹ Because many of the *de jure* limits placed on students have been struck down by judicial ruling or mitigated by legislative action, the more pressing issue for those concerned with the social role of schooling is what goes on inside schools. This is where our understanding of the hidden curriculum helps us see the ideological function of schooling. Regardless of the legislative and judicial changes, helpful as they may be, it is the daily actions of the school that will determine what students can do when they leave school. Unfortunately, it seems that day-to-day life in school has been little changed, as a variety of studies point out.

In the 1980s, the Reagan administration sought to instill national character through the return of school prayer. The Reagan administration (1980–1988) upheld three major policies during its tenure: (1) abolishing the Department of Education, (2) initiating a tax credit for parents who paid private school tuition, and (3) returning prayer to schools.⁴² During Reagan's second term, Secretary of Education William Bennett focused his attention on the declining morals and rampant violence in American schools. He called for a return to school prayer and traditional discipline to improve the moral character of American youth. The Christian right supported Bennett, but many education leaders did not. However, some of these same education leaders, such as John Goodlad, did agree with him on the necessity for moral education.⁴³

An interesting outgrowth of this perception of school violence and declining morals in the 1980s and 1990s is that many new home-schoolers believed that schools were no longer safe havens and did not teach morality. Subsequently, home schooling increased dramatically.⁴⁴ Under the Bush administration (1988–1992), America 2000 was enacted. One of its major goals emphasizes that "every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning."⁴⁵ This is similar to the Reagan administration's "Just say no" campaign.

SCHOOLING AND CITIZENSHIP

Throughout this chapter we have presented an argument that schooling both reflects and projects ideological commitments. We have seen how those commitments are reflected in curricular and pedagogic decisions. Throughout

we have seen that the dominant view of American schooling is that it should prepare students to take their places in society, places dependent on each individual's merit.

Certainly, reforms in the 1960s and 1970s called some of these premises into question. They attacked, for example, the whole idea that equal opportunity could exist when many citizens were denied a fair chance at schooling (and hence other social rewards) merely by virtue of race or sex. These challenges led to the removal of artificial barriers to schooling as well as attempts to overcome unfortunate circumstances beyond an individual's control, such as being born into poverty.

Yet the argument is still forcibly made that the covert or hidden curriculum of schooling still sends ideological messages. The school appears to be a neutral system in which each child succeeds or fails due to his or her merits, but it is actually a rigged race. The very structure of the school, particularly its tracking and sorting function, is designed to assure the success of some at the expense of others, and the supposedly scientific objectivity of the system keeps the losers in the race from protesting their poor finish.

Some may argue that the messages that schools send to children about their worth and their place in society are justified. These arguments are tightly linked to the vocational dimensions of public schooling. If indeed schools are primarily to serve as a training ground for future employment, we should, early on, be preparing people for life in the world of work. And the work world is one of ranking and sorting, regimented routine, and taking orders. Certainly we should eliminate artificial barriers, such as race and gender, to success in climbing up the vocational ladder, the argument goes. Aside from that, schools are justified in promoting a meritocratic ideology.

But such an argument only works if we grant that schooling is primarily about preparing workers. As we saw earlier in the chapter, the initial rationale for creating public schools was *not* to prepare workers. Rather, what Jefferson and his peers envisioned was an educational system that prepared citizens for self-governance. Today many educators are returning to that original purpose of public schooling and raising questions about how the hidden curriculum of schooling helps or hinders such an agenda.

Again, most of these issues are raised in terms of the daily life of students in schools. As we saw earlier, this concern with preparing democratic citizens was what caused Philip Jackson to first examine the socialization functions of schools. Today researchers are returning to this issue, asking if the ways children are treated in schools make it possible for them to function as citizens of a democracy.

For example, in Chapter 3 we looked at the practice of ability grouping or tracking and its effect on minority, poor, and female students. As we saw, a disproportionate number of each of these groups of students fell into lower academic tracks, receiving a more limited education. Thus, one argument against tracking is that it unfairly discriminates.

However, a second, perhaps just as powerful, argument can be made that ability grouping also violates the democratic principle of equality—that is, tracking teaches some children they are better, or worse, than others. Students

internalize this belief, as indeed they are treated better (or worse) by adults and peers in the school. When they leave school and enter the public world, young people carry these beliefs with them and are unable to perceive one another as political equals. When one adds to this the research pointing out that there are no academic benefits from tracking, we can see what a potentially antidemocratic practice it is.⁴⁶

Similar arguments could be made about a wide variety of school practices. For example, if a citizen of a democracy needs to be able to ask questions and find information on his or her own, how do we reconcile that need with the fact that most children do nothing more than sit and listen during school? Or, if as citizens we have to be able to cooperate to solve our public problems, how do we reconcile that with most schoolwork being individual or competitive? Further, if citizens of a democracy have to be good decision makers, why do young people in school get so little practice at making decisions?

In effect, we are returning to the questions John Dewey and the progressives asked almost a century ago. Central to all of these issues is the role we expect our public schools to play in our society. If it is one of simple job preparation, then instilling in children an ideology of meritocracy is probably sufficient. But if it is one of preparing citizens who can live in a democratic society with all that that entails, it probably means we need to rethink much of what the hidden curriculum teaches our children. These and other related issues are taken up in the readings that follow.

NOTES

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⁴ R. Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1968), p. 147.

⁵ P. Jackson, "The Daily Grind," pp. 35, 59.

⁶ Giroux and Purpel, *Hidden Curriculum*, p. ix.

⁷ As in David B. Tyack (ed.), *Turning Points in American Educational History* (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell, 1967), p. 15.

⁸ Benjamin Rush, *A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools and the Diffusion of Knowledge in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Dobson, 1786), p. 23.

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- ¹⁷ M. C. Wilson, "Some Defects in Our Public School System," *Educational Review* (May 1911): 238–239.
- ¹⁸ Simon N. Pattern, "An Economic Measure of School Efficiency," *Educational Review* (May 1911): 476–477.
- ¹⁹ Arthur G. Wirth, *Education and Work for the Year 2000: Choices We Face* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers), 1992, pp. 30–36.
- ²⁰ John Franklin Bobbitt, quoted in Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 68.
- ²¹ George Drayton Strayer, "Is Scientific Accuracy Possible in the Measurement of Efficiency of Instruction?" *Education* 34, no. 4 (December 1913): 251.
- ²² John Franklin Bobbitt, "The Elimination of Waste in Education," *The Elementary School Teacher* 12, no. 6 (February 1912): 269.
- ²³ Quoted in deLone, *Small Futures*, p. 62.
- ²⁴ Bobbitt, "Elimination of Waste," p. 270.
- ²⁵ Counts, *Dare the Schools*, p. 30.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 40.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- ²⁸ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).
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Readings on Ideology: Historical Perspectives

In this chapter we review the historical evolution of the ideological functions of schooling in America.

In 1779, Thomas Jefferson wrote “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge,” in which he outlined a plan for public education in Virginia. Although this bill was not adopted, it is considered one of the earliest plans for public education in the United States. It is interesting to note that this bill would have given only free white male children in Virginia access to a common school education. However, not all of those children had the opportunity to pursue education beyond this point. Keep in mind that Jefferson’s major motivation for educating the masses was to produce an educated citizenry that would avoid political tyranny in the future.

Horace Mann, in his 1848 report to the Board of Education of Massachusetts, set the stage for schooling for equal opportunity. His ideas about social justice and equality emphasize the importance of the self-motivation of the individual. The school was to be the place where any, and apparently every, child could rise above poverty. This idea of social justice was to be the foundation on which American public schooling was built.

Carl Kaestle in “Moral Education and Common Schools in America: A Historian’s View” addresses how moral education became the central purpose of the common school. He illustrates the changing role of religion: from a mainstay of teaching moral education in the nineteenth century to its decline in the twentieth century toward a more secular, pluralistic, and morally relative stance. Kaestle presents a conflicting perspective in the present, between local support for traditional sectarian views versus the secular and cosmopolitan ideologies of professional educators and the federal government. The debate is most relevant today, when arguments over what should and should not comprise character education in public schools are hotly debated.

In 1874, the Michigan State Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Kalamazoo school district to obtain public support for a high school. The court ruled

that because Michigan already financially supported elementary schools and colleges, it was being inconsistent by not providing funds for high schools. The Kalamazoo ruling is one of the earliest precedents for public support of secondary education. This case proved necessary to connect Horace Mann's common-school idea with the federal Morrill Land-Grant Act, authored by Congressman Justin Morrill of Vermont, which enabled the public sector to provide support for education from the elementary level through to the university.

In the last selection, George Counts attacks more directly the ideological messages of the schools. Counts was working on two fronts. First, he objected to schools teaching children that capitalism was more important than democracy. He saw these two ideals as incompatible. Second, he objected to those progressive educators who were so child-centered that they were afraid of imposing anything on children. Counts argued that capitalism was clearly in trouble (he was writing during the Great Depression) and that economic concentration threatened democratic rule. He felt that teachers ought to be the most altruistic members of society and that they should help build a new social order by teaching children to value democracy above all else.

In considering the arguments made in these selections, the reader should keep several questions in mind: How do the authors envision a just society? How are these beliefs reflected in the ideological functions they propose for the school? Whose needs is the school to serve in performing these ideological functions? And finally, how are these historical debates still with us today?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

A BILL FOR THE MORE GENERAL DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

Whereas it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shewn, that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes; And whereas it is gener-

ally true that that people will be happiest whose laws are best, and are best administered, and that laws will be wisely formed, and honestly administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the publick happiness that those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance; but the indigence of the greater number disabling them from so educating, at their own expence, those of their children whom nature hath fitly formed and disposed to become useful instruments for the public, it is better that such should be sought for and educated at the common expence of all, than that the happiness of all should be confided to the weak or wicked:

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, that in every county within this commonwealth, there shall be chosen annually, by the electors qualified to vote for Delegates, three of the most honest and able men of their county, to be called the Aldermen of the county; and that the election of the said Aldermen shall be held at the same time and place, before the same persons, and notified and conducted in the same manner as by law is directed for the annual election of Delegates for the county.

. . . The electors being so assembled shall choose the most convenient place within their hundred for building a school-house . . . The said Aldermen shall forthwith proceed to have a school-house built at the said place, and shall see that the same be kept in repair, and, when necessary, that it be rebuilt . . .

At every of these schools shall be taught reading, writing, and common arithmetick, and the books which shall be used therein for instructing the children to read shall be such as will at the same time make them acquainted with Græcian, Roman, English, and American history. At these schools all the free children, male and female, resident within the respective hundred, shall be intitled to receive tuition gratis, for the term of three years, and as much longer, at their private expence, as their parents, guardians or friends, shall think proper.

Over every ten of these schools (or such other number nearest thereto, as the number of hundreds in the county will admit, without fractional divisions) an overseer shall be appointed annually by the Aldermen at their first meeting, eminent for his learning, integrity, and fidelity to the commonwealth, whose business and duty it shall be, from time to time, to appoint a teacher to each school, who shall give assurance of fidelity to the commonwealth, and to remove him as he shall see cause; to visit every school once in every half year at the least; to examine the schollars; see that any general plan of reading and instruction recommended by the visitors of William and Mary College shall be observed; and to superintend the conduct of the teacher in every thing relative to his school.

Every teacher shall receive a salary of _____ by the year, which, with the expences of building and repairing the school-houses, shall be provided in such

manner as other county expences are by law directed to be provided and shall also have his diet, lodging, and washing found him, to be levied in like manner, save only that such levy shall be on the inhabitants of each hundred for the board of their own teacher only . . .

The said overseers shall forthwith proceed to have a house of brick or stone, for the said grammar school, with necessary offices, built on the said lands, which grammar school-house shall contain a room for the school, a hall to dine in, four rooms for a master and usher, and ten or twelve lodging rooms for the scholars.

To each of the said grammar schools shall be allowed out of the public treasury, the sum of _____ pounds, out of which shall be paid by the Treasurer, on warrant from the Auditors, to the proprietors or tenants of the lands located, the value of their several interests as fixed by the jury, and the balance thereof shall be delivered to the said overseers to defray the expence of the said buildings.

In these grammar schools shall be taught the Latin and Greek languages, English grammar, geography, and the higher part of numerical arithmetick, to wit, vulgar and decimal fractions, and the extraction of the square and cube roots.

A visiter from each county constituting the district shall be appointed, by the overseers, for the county, in the month of October annually, either from their own body or from their county at large, which visiters or the greater part of them, meeting together at the said grammar school on the first Monday in November, if fair, and if not, then on the next fair day, excluding Sunday, shall have power to choose their own Rector, who shall call and preside at future meetings, to employ from time to time a master, and if necessary, an usher, for the said school, to remove them at their will, and to settle the price of tuition to be paid by the scholars. They shall also visit the school twice in every year at the least, either together or separately at their discretion, examine the scholars, and see that any general plan of instruction recommended by the visiters of William and Mary College shall be observed. The said masters and ushers, before they enter on the execution of their office, shall give assurance of fidelity to the commonwealth.

A steward shall be employed, and removed at will by the master, on such wages as the visiters shall direct; which steward shall see to the procuring provisions, fuel, servants for cooking, waiting, house cleaning, washing, mending, and gardening on the most reasonable terms; the expence of which, together with the steward's wages, shall be divided equally among all the scholars boarding either on the public or private expence. And the part of those who are on private expence, and also the price of their tuitions due to the master or usher, shall be paid quarterly by the respective scholars, their parents, or guardians, and shall be recoverable, if withheld, together with costs, on motion in any Court of Record, ten days notice thereof being previously given to the party, and a jury impannelled to try the issue joined, or enquire of the damages. The said steward shall also, under the direction of the visiters, see that the houses be kept in repair, and necessary enclosures be made and repaired, the

accounts for which, shall, from time to time, be submitted to the Auditors, and on their warrant paid by the Treasurer.

Every overseer of the hundred schools shall, in the month of September annually, after the most diligent and impartial examination and enquiry, appoint from among the boys who shall have been two years at the least at some one of the schools under his superintendence, and whose parents are too poor to give them farther education, some one of the best and most promising genius and disposition, to proceed to the grammar school of his district; which appointment shall be made in the court-house of the county, on the court day for that month if fair, and if not, then on the next fair day, excluding Sunday, in the presence of the Aldermen, or two of them at the least, assembled on the bench for that purpose, the said overseer being previously sworn by them to make such appointment, without favor or affection, according to the best of his skill and judgment, and being interrogated by the said Aldermen, either on their own motion, or on suggestions from the parents, guardians, friends, or teachers of the children, competitors for such appointment; which teachers shall attend for the information of the Aldermen. On which interregatories the said Aldermen, if they be not satisfied with the appointment proposed, shall have right to negative it; whereupon the said visiter may proceed to make a new appointment, and the said Aldermen again to interrogate and negative, and so toties quoties until an appointment be approved.

Every boy so appointed shall be authorised to proceed to the grammar school of his district, there to be educated and boarded during such time as is hereafter limited; and his quota of the expences of the house together with a compensation to the master or usher for his tuition, at the rate of twenty dollars by the year, shall be paid by the Treasurer quarterly on warrant from the Auditors.

A visitation shall be held, for the purpose of probation, annually at the said grammar school on the last Monday in September, if fair, and if not, then on the next fair day, excluding Sunday, at which one third of the boys sent thither by appointment of the said overseers, and who shall have been there one year only, shall be discontinued as public foundationers, being those who, on the most diligent examination and enquiry, shall be thought to be of the least promising genius and disposition; and of those who shall have been there two years, all shall be discontinued, save one only the best in genius and disposition, who shall be at liberty to continue there four years longer on the public foundation, and shall thence forward be deemed a senior.

The visitors for the districts which, or any part of which, be southward and westward of James river, as known by that name, or by the names of Fluvanna and Jackson's river, in every other year, to wit, at the probation meetings held in the years, distinguished in the Christian computation by odd numbers, and the visitors for all the other districts at their said meetings to be held in those years, distinguished by even numbers, after diligent examination and enquiry as before directed, shall chuse one among the said seniors, of the best learning and most hopeful genius and disposition, who shall be authorised by them to

proceed to William and Mary College, there to be educated, boarded, and clothed, three years; the expence of which annually shall be paid by the Treasurer on warrant from the Auditors.

HORACE MANN

INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF REMOVING POVERTY AND SECURING ABUNDANCE

Another cardinal object which the government of Massachusetts, and all the influential men in the State, should propose to themselves, is the physical well-being of all the people,—the sufficiency, comfort, competence, of every individual in regard to food, raiment, and shelter. And these necessities and conveniences of life should be obtained by each individual for himself or by each family for themselves, rather than accepted from the hand of charity or extorted by poor-laws. It is not averred that this most desirable result can, in all instances, be obtained; but it is, nevertheless, the end to be aimed at. True statesmanship and true political economy, not less than true philanthropy, present this perfect theory as the goal, to be more and more closely approximated by our imperfect practice. The desire to achieve such a result cannot be regarded as an unreasonable ambition; for, though all mankind were well fed, well clothed, and well housed, they might be but half civilized.

• • •

According to the European theory, men are divided into classes,—some to toil and earn, others to seize and enjoy. According to the Massachusetts theory, all are to have an equal chance for earning, and equal security in the enjoyment of what they earn. The latter tends to equality of condition; the former, to the grossest inequalities. Tried by any Christian standard of morals, or even by any of the better sort of heathen standards, can any one hesitate, for a moment, in declaring which of the two will produce the greater amount of human welfare, and which, therefore, is the more comfortable to the divine will? The European theory is blind to what constitutes the highest glory as well as the highest duty of a State. Its advocates and admirers are forgetful of that which should be their highest ambition, and proud of that which constitutes their shame. How can any one possessed of the attributes of humanity look with satisfaction upon the splendid treasures, the golden regalia, deposited in the Tower of London or in Windsor Palace, each “an India in itself,” while thousands around are dying of starvation, or have been made criminals by the combined forces of temptation and neglect? The present condition of Ireland cancels all the glories of the British crown. The brilliant conception which symbolizes the nationality of Great Britain as a superb temple, whose massive and grand proportions are

upheld and adorned by the four hundred and thirty Corinthian columns of the aristocracy, is turned into a loathing and a scorn when we behold the five millions of paupers that cower and shiver at its base. The galleries and fountains of Versailles, the Louvre of Paris, her Notre Dame, and her Madeleine, though multiplied by thousands in number and in brilliancy, would be no atonement for the hundred thousand Parisian *ouvriers* without bread and without work. The galleries of painting and of sculpture at Rome, at Munich, or at Dresden, which body forth the divinest ideals ever executed or ever conceived, are but an abomination in the sight of Heaven and of all good men, while actual, living beings—beings that have hearts to palpitate, and nerves to agonize, and affections to be crushed or corrupted—are experimenting all around them upon the capacities of human nature for suffering and for sin. Where standards like these exist, and are upheld by council and by court, by fashion and by law, *Christianity is yet to be discovered*; at least, it is yet to be applied in practice to the social condition of men.

• • •

But, is it not true that Massachusetts, in some respects, instead of adhering more and more closely to her own theory, is becoming emulous of the baneful examples of Europe? The distance between the two extremes of society is lengthening, instead of being abridged. With every generation, fortunes increase on the one hand, and some new privation is added to poverty on the other. We are verging towards those extremes of opulence and of penury, each of which unhumanizes the human mind. A perpetual struggle for the base necessities of life, without the ability to obtain them, makes men wolfish. Avarice, on the other hand, sees, in all the victims of misery around it, not objects for pity and succor, but only crude materials to be worked up into more money.

I suppose it to be the universal sentiment of all those who mingle any ingredient of benevolence with their notions on political economy, that vast and overshadowing private fortunes are among the greatest dangers to which the happiness of the people in a republic can be subjected. Such fortunes would create a feudalism of a new kind, but one more oppressive and unrelenting than that of the middle ages. The feudal lords in England on the Continent never held their retainers in a more abject condition of servitude than the great majority of foreign manufacturers and capitalists hold their operatives and laborers at the present day. The means employed are different; but the similarity in results is striking. What force did then, money does now. The villein of the middle ages had no spot of earth on which he could live, unless one were granted to him by his lord. The operative or laborer of the present day has no employment, and therefore no bread, unless the capitalist will accept his services. The vassal had no shelter but such as his master provided for him. Not one in five thousand of English operatives or farm-laborers is able to build or own even a hovel; and therefore they must accept such shelter as capital offers them. The baron prescribed his own terms to his retainers: those terms were peremptory, and the serf must submit or perish. The British manufacturer or farmer prescribes the rate of wages he will give to his workpeople; he reduces these wages under whatever pretext he pleases; and they, too, have no alternative but submission or starvation. In some

respects, indeed, the condition of the modern dependent is more forlorn than that of the corresponding serf class in former times. Some attributes of the patriarchal relation did not spring up between the lord and his lieges to soften the harsh relations subsisting between them. Hence came some oversight of the condition of children, some relief in sickness, some protection and support in the decrepitude of age. But only in instances comparatively few have kindly offices smoothed the rugged relation between British capital and British labor. The children of the work-people are abandoned to their fate; and notwithstanding the privations they suffer, and the dangers they threaten, no power in the realm has yet been able to secure them an education; and when the adult laborer is prostrated by sickness, or eventually worn out by toil and age, the poor-house, which has all along been his destination, becomes his destiny.

• • •

Now, surely nothing but universal education can counterwork this tendency to the domination of capital and the servility of labor. If one class possesses all the wealth and the education, while the residue of society is ignorant and poor, it matters not by what name the relation between them may be called: the latter, in fact and in truth, will be servile dependents and subjects of the former. But, if education be equally diffused, it will draw property after it by the strongest of all attractions; for such a thing never did happen, and never can happen, as that an intelligent and practical body of men should be permanently poor. Property and labor in different classes are essentially antagonistic; but property and labor in the same class are essentially fraternal. The people of Massachusetts have, in some degree, appreciated the truth, that the unexampled prosperity of the State—its comfort, its competence, its general intelligence and virtue—is attributable to the education, more or less perfect, which all its people have received: but are they sensible of a fact equally important; namely, that it is to this same education that two-thirds of the people are indebted for not being today the vassals of as severe a tyranny, in the form of capital, as the lower classes of Europe are bound to in the form of brute force?

Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men,—the balance-wheel of the social machinery I do not here mean that it so elevates the moral nature as to make men disdain and abhor the oppression of their fellow-men. This idea pertains to another of its attributes. But I mean that it gives each man the independence and the means by which he can resist the selfishness of other men. It does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility towards the rich: it prevents being poor. Agrarianism is the revenge of poverty against wealth. The wanton destruction of the property of others—the burning of hay-ricks and corn-ricks, the demolition of machinery because it supersedes hand-labor, the sprinkling of vitriol on rich dresses—is only agrarianism run mad. Education prevents both the revenge and the madness. On the other hand, a fellow-feeling for one's class or caste is the common instinct of hearts not wholly sunk in selfish regards for person or for family. The spread of education, by enlarging the cultivated class or caste, will open a wider area over which the social feelings will expand; and, if this education should be universal and complete, it would do more than all things else to obliterate factitious distinctions in society.

The main idea set forth in the creeds of some political reformers, or revolutionizers, is, that some people are poor *because* others are rich. This idea supposes a fixed amount of property in the community, which by fraud or force, or arbitrary law, is unequally divided among men; and the problem presented for solution is, how to transfer a portion of this property from those who are supposed to have too much to those who feel and know that they have too little. At this point, both their theory and their expectation of reform stop. But the beneficent power of education would not be exhausted, even though it should peaceably abolish all the miseries that spring from the co-existence, side by side, of enormous wealth and squalid want. It has a higher function. Beyond the power of diffusing old wealth, it has the prerogative of creating new. It is a thousand times more lucrative than fraud, and adds a thousand-fold more to a nation's resources than the most successful conquests. Knaves and robbers can obtain only what was before possessed by others. But education creates or develops new treasures,—treasures not before possessed or dreamed of by any one.

CARL F. KAESTLE

MORAL EDUCATION AND COMMON SCHOOLS IN AMERICA: A HISTORIAN'S VIEW

I. INTRODUCTION

State-regulated schools are facing another crisis of confidence in the United States. It is both a flagging self-confidence among educators and an erosion of the trust and support of the general public. One of the issues at the heart of this crisis is the schools' inability to engage successfully in moral education. Although American society has changed drastically since the creation of state school systems in the 1830s and 1840s, one major dilemma has remained constant: How do you conduct moral education in the schools of a pluralist country, with no established church and with protected dissent, when almost everyone believes that moral principles must be rooted in some cultural tradition and some transcendent values? This paper explores briefly how American educators and political leaders responded to that question in the early nineteenth century, and how the answers have changed in the recent past.

II. EUROPEAN AND COLONIAL AMERICAN BACKGROUND

American enthusiasts for state common school systems in the 1830s and 1840s often hearkened back to the school efforts of the Puritans. But the early New

From Carl F. Kaestle, "Moral Education and Common Schools in America: An Historian's View", *Journal of Moral Education*, 13/2 (1984), pp. 101-111. Reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd, PO Box 25, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 3UE ENGLAND

Englanders had not provided a viable model of government-sponsored common schooling for a pluralist society. One of the problematic issues was moral education. The historical legacy was that moral education was thoroughly intertwined with sectarian religious education, fostered by the cooperation of church and state. The purpose of elementary instruction was religious. From religion flowed morality in this life and the chance of salvation in the next. Education and literacy were directed squarely at those goals. In Puritan New England children first learned their alphabet from the *New England Primer*, through rhymed couplets. The ABCs meant: "In Adam's fall/We sinned all." "Heaven to find/The Bible mind." "Christ crucify'd/For Sinners dy'd." In Dutch New York the Reformed catechism was recited, and where the Anglicans were predominant, teachers from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel catechized young Anglican colonists, as well as Indians and black slaves, while introducing them to English literacy.

Religion and rudimentary education could be joined even where there was no formally established religion. In the nineteenth century the Prussian government supported Protestant, Catholic and Jewish schools, expecting piety to support patriotism and the monarchy. As in Canada and Holland today, denominational schools existed under state supervision. In England, where there was an established church but also a tradition of protected dissent, government subsidies and philanthropic efforts aided both Anglican and Dissenting charity schools, which served for many decades in lieu of state elementary schools.

In late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century America, prior to the creation of state-regulated common schools, communities displayed a mixture of these arrangements between church, state and education. In rural areas, where the population was more homogeneous, the colonial tradition of religiously based education continued in town schools supported partly by taxes and partly by parental fees. In the large towns like New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston, the English mode prevailed, with diverse charity schooling, some sponsored by churches, some aided by public grants, available alongside independent pay schools. Though these urban situations provided more educational alternatives, individual schools still did not draw a strict line between sectarian doctrine and general moral education. Some Sunday school organizers and Dissenting charity school sponsors (in particular the Quakers) began to develop a policy of non-denominational Protestant moral instruction that was a precursor to later public school educators, but in the early national period, most elementary schools rooted moral instruction in religion, and religion meant the particular doctrines of a religious group.

III. THE CREATION OF STATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN VICTORIAN AMERICA, 1830–1880

The reasons why Americans adopted unified state common school systems are complex. Indeed, they did not do so unanimously or quickly. Many

Americans persisted in their opposition to tax-supported centralized systems for decades. Here let me emphasize the three major factors that enhanced the eventual adoption of common school legislation—republican political thought, native Protestant culture and the development of capitalism. The political thought of the Revolutionary generation centered on republican government, and republican theory urged the necessity of virtue and intelligence both in office-holders and in voters. These concerns caused Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush and Noah Webster to advocate schemes for common schooling devoted to citizenship and a common culture. Americans in general did not share the Founding Fathers' anxieties and therefore did not adopt their unprecedented schemes for state systems of schooling, previously a local and voluntary activity. By the 1840s, however, religious and ethnic diversity had greatly increased. Immigration and denominational splintering gave the common school movement new life. Social leaders in the Northeast, with like-minded contemporaries elsewhere, decided that a determined public effort would be necessary to unify the population and insure proper moral education for the survival of republican government. Linked to a stable government was the orderly development of the economic system. Expansive capitalism and accompanying urbanization carried the threat of disruption and social problems. Many reformers saw common schooling as a source of both discipline and opportunity, a way to enhance stability and fairness simultaneously.

A prerequisite to a unified state system of schools for all was a non-sectarian morality. Horace Mann of Massachusetts was the leading spokesman for such a pan-Protestant approach to moral education, but his views soon became a professional consensus among common school advocates. This was not a secular view. It assumed that moral education required the sanction of religion and that moral education was the most important task of the common school. Therefore, if common schools were to attract the children of all religious sects, a common religious core of belief had to be identified. On the centrality of moral education, Mann said, "The naked capacity to read and write is no more education than a tool is a workman . . . Moral education is a primal necessity." Indeed, Mann said, "so decisive is the effect of early training upon adult habits and character," that if all children "could be brought within the reformatory and elevating influences of good schools, the dark host of private vices and public crimes, which now embitter domestic peace and stain the civilization of the age, might, in ninety-nine cases in every hundred, be banished from the world." These exaggerated claims boomeranged in the late nineteenth century, when schooling proved no panacea for social ills, but in Mann's day, universal, free, common schooling devoted to moral education was untried. It was, in his words, "a new agency, whose powers are but just beginning to be understood," but whose "mighty energies," he believed, were powerful "beyond any other earthly instrumentality" (Mann, 1848).

Many educators asserted and vaguely identified a common religious core from Christianity that they believed could support moral education in common schools. The Reverend Noah Porter (1846, p. 19) wrote:

The people of Connecticut, with scarcely an exception, are of one mind in the belief of the following truths. They believe in moral duties as enforced by the

words and life of Jesus. They believe with Washington, that public morality is best secured by religious faith and religious feeling.

No one, claimed Porter, would object to the use of "simple but fervent prayers and hymns" in public schools. "In these points," he was satisfied, "they can all unite." Brooklyn's chief educator (Superintendent of Common Schools, 1852, pp. 117–18) listed the uncontroversial doctrines as follows: "That there is one God; that we are His creatures, dependent on Him for our mercies, and accountable to Him for our conduct; that we are sinners and need a Saviour; and that One 'mighty to save' has been provided." Eleazar Root, Wisconsin's state superintendent in 1851, nonetheless saw the quest for a pan-Protestant religious base as "attended with great difficulties." Teachers, he said, "must avoid in any way shocking the preconceived sectarian differences of opinion" children have and strive to instill "love of those wholesome truths which form the basis of all religions" (Kuyper, 1980, p. 154). After the Civil War, fledgling Southern school systems faced the same job of drawing all denominations into the pan-Protestant morality. In Virginia in the 1870s Superintendent Henry Ruffner was responding to critics of the "godless" public schools by declaring the schools "handmaidens" of religion, whose texts, teachers and very structure taught morality (Bell, 1930, pp. 443–45). Ruffner's struggle attracted the aid of common school crusader Amory Mayo, who wrote in the *Virginia Education Journal* in 1979 that the "charge of godlessness" was an "insidious assault on the American system of public education," fomented by separatist Catholics, Episcopalians nostalgic for an established church, and philistines who wanted purely vocational education. In fact, insisted Mayo, "extracts from religious writings besides the Bible abound in the schoolbooks, religious hymns are sung, and the character and influence of the teachers is most carefully guarded." Designed to assuage religious critics, Mayo's description of school practice in Virginia also belied the tenuous claim that public school religion was non-sectarian. All around the country, when so-called "universal Christian truths" appeared in classrooms, they often took on the garb of particular Protestant liturgies.

Educators of the nineteenth century believed almost unanimously that moral education required the sanction of religion, but religion was not the only source of morality. Religious, political and economic ideas were overlapping and mutually reinforcing. Each provided maxims for common school textbooks, sermons, domestic manuals and other forms of social commentary. From these three realms were drawn a constellation of social beliefs, each of which in turn could generate a cluster of ethical lessons about human nature and social relations. Among the key propositions were: the sacredness and fragility of republican government, including concepts about justice, individual liberty and consent of the governed; the importance of individual character for social morality; the importance of environment in character development, within certain ethnic and racial limits; the centrality of personal industry in assessing rectitude and merit; the propriety of a respected but proscribed domestic role for women; the sanctity and social virtues of property; the abundance and equality of economic opportunity in America; the superiority of

Protestant culture; and the uniqueness and grandeur of American destiny (Kaestle, 1983).

While the morality generated by these principles looked to politics and economics as well as to religion for sanction, there were no effective challenges to the schools' support of republicanism or capitalism. Over the years there have been debates about citizenship education, with recurring pleas to think of democracy as problem-solving instead of facts and platitudes. There has also been, in addition to a minor strain of anti-capitalist radicalism in America, recurring concern among educators lest schools put too much stress on an individualistic, competitive ethic. But none of this shook the high regard most Americans had for the institutions of democracy and capitalism. The most problematic domain of school morality, certainly, has been religion.

When American educators of the nineteenth century spoke of principles common to all religious denominations, they meant all Christian denominations, and when they said Christian, they meant Protestant. When they asserted the Bible's role in the common school classroom, they meant the King James version, with emphasis on the New Testament. The prayers and hymns they defended as neutral were those that seemed inoffensive to most Protestants. And they consistently rejected the argument of Roman Catholics that Bible reading without comment was a distinctly Protestant practice and therefore sectarian *per se*. It is not surprising, then, that Roman Catholics were the most numerous and persistent critics of the schools' pan-Protestant morality. To the claim of the public schools that their moral instruction was based on "non-sectarian religious fundamentals," Catholics replied: "all Christian morals are founded on dogmas, and have no adequate basis to support them without dogmas" (Kaestle, 1973, p. 152). Afterwards, mid-century Catholics in large numbers went their own educational way, believing that education to be moral must be pervaded by specific, doctrinal religion. They acquiesced in a formal division between secular and religious education in their own schools only in the mid-twentieth century, in the face of financial strains and court decisions encouraging aid along such lines. When the assimilationist Bishop John Ireland had tried such an accommodation to get public financial support in the 1890s, Jesuit theorists winced and a conservative bishop labelled Ireland's scheme to separate religious and secular instruction a "plan for the betrayal of the Christian faith" (Reilly, 1943).

Catholics were not the only Americans who objected to the pan-Protestant moral education of the public schools. From Norwegian Lutherans in Minnesota to orthodox Congregationalists in New England, the reformers' solution of generalized religion found opponents, from the very beginning of the common school movement. A Congregationalist minister charged in Boston that Horace Mann's policies had been to get the Bible out of the school and abolish religious instruction. Specifically, he charged that Mann had proposed a common school library list "which excludes books as sectarian that inculcate truths, which nine-tenths of professed Christians of all names believe, while it accepts others than inculcate the most deadly heresy—even universal salvation." Frederick Packard of Philadelphia, Mann's loudest critic, believed that local majority rule

should determine the religious content of moral education in public schools, instead of Mann's theory, which, Packard charged, "makes natural religion and ethics the basis of the system." As for banning books with sectarian content, Packard said:

neither the Legislature nor the Board of Education can control a district in this matter . . . If I am a Universalist or a Free Thinker, I may vote, and speak against the introduction of the books . . . but so long as the majority of voters in the district see fit to keep the books there, so long I must submit (Culver, 1929, pp. 205–6, 270, 56, 210).

Mann's view prevailed among reformers and in emerging state policies, but the views of men like Packard continued to have much support at the local level. It was no accident that Packard associated distinctive religious instruction with district control, nor that an association of alienated Massachusetts ministers stated in 1848 that proper moral education would be furthered by abolishing the state board of education. Small-scale local control is more conducive to consensus on distinctive cultural and religious instruction. The school reformers' concept was in the reverse direction. They favored a generalized, inclusive curriculum and more centralized state direction. It was a cosmopolitan program, not in the twentieth-century sense of pluralist and secular, but in its desire to integrate a diverse people into a common Anglo-American Protestant culture, into an increasingly complex and interdependent economy, and into a political fabric that needed reinforcement against the strains of sectionalism and factionalism.

The religious aspect of this cosmopolitan common school program was aptly expressed by Horace Bushnell (1853, p. 7) in a formulation warmly approved by Henry Barnard, Connecticut's state school superintendent. Bushnell, an influential Hartford minister, recommended that in order to avoid a massive defection of Catholics from the public schools, they must become less distinctively Protestant. At first, he said, the schools of New England had been based upon a distinct Puritan culture, then they had become more generally Protestant, and now they must try to become more generally Christian.

By the 1880s the cosmopolitan solution and its accompanying ideology had prevailed among American educators and state legislators. Blacks were left out of the cosmopolitan program, and in the South resistance to taxation for state school systems lingered. But despite these exceptions, generalized Protestant Christianity as a basis for public school morality, along with democracy and free enterprise, had become educators' conventional wisdom. Even as advocates of the pan-Protestant solution struggled against remaining sectarian and local resistance, however, some commentators realized that it was insufficiently cosmopolitan. Daniel Coit Gilman (1876, p. 205) wrote that "the chief danger which threatens the common school system is unquestionably the difference of opinion in respect to religious instruction." Disputes over Bible reading recurred throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Among the most famous were the Bible cases of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1869–70 and Edgerton, Wisconsin, in 1890.

The victory of generalized Protestantism was pyrrhic. Educators soon moved toward a more secular notion of school morality. A report in the *Wisconsin*

Journal of Education (1884, pp. 78–79) claimed that “there is a secular morality which is not opposed to religious morality . . . but is the result of human experiences, is recognized by all civilized people, is taught by the philosophers of all nations, and is sanctioned by all enlightened creeds.” William Torrey Harris, commissioner of education in the 1890s, and one of the most influential educators of his day, believed that religion was ultimately essential to morality, but that “it is impossible to make a generalization of Christianity” (Harris, 1903, p. 228). Attempts at non-sectarian religious instruction such as Bible reading in the schools violate the separation of church and state on the one hand, argued Harris, while on the other hand they trivialize religion. A code of moral behavior must be derived from religion, he admitted, but it can nonetheless be taught in schools without reference to religion.

IV. JOHN DEWEY, SCHOOL ETHICS, AND PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

Although Harris’s forthright separation of church and state found many opponents and failed to solve all the dilemmas of school morality, it represented the common-sense accommodation many schools were making in large cities with diverse school populations. For Harris, the source and sanction of morality was still religious; it just could not be properly taught in a public school. A more genuinely secular and self-consciously modern solution developed around the thought of the American pragmatists after the turn of the century. For John Dewey, religion was not needed as a source of morality, whether in or out of school. The sources of moral conduct were to be derived from rational study of human relations and human progress. While Dewey and Harris would probably have agreed that teachers should exemplify and inculcate a set of virtues such as kindness, honesty, tolerance and cooperation, their intellectual and spiritual orientations were utterly different. Dewey and his followers tried to leave the religious battles of the nineteenth century behind and engage school morality in the problems of twentieth-century industrial society. As Robert Michaelsen writes, “at this juncture, what seemed to be needed was a ‘common faith’ which would emerge from the democratic community . . . from life together, not from a transcendent entity or a historical tradition” (Michaelsen, 1970, p. 257).

The problems raised in connection with Dewey’s pragmatism and pedagogical progressivism are numerous, and they have occupied the energies of philosophers and educators for the entire twentieth century. Two sorts of challenges to pragmatism and two recurring complaints against progressive pedagogy relate to the problem of school morality. Dewey’s philosophical pragmatism—in particular its perceived relation between the validity and the utility of beliefs—was attacked by traditional moralists for its moral relativism and by radical social critics for its acquiescence in the status quo. Mortimer Adler, in a slashing attack against the secularization of morality, wrote that “religion cannot be regarded as just another aspect of culture, one among many human occupations, of

indifferent importance along with science and art." "Without the truths of philosophy and religion," he charged, "democracy has no rational foundation" (Kennedy, 1950, pp. 74–75). Quite in contrast with Adler's assertion of religious absolutes and his defense of democracy, Reinhold Niebuhr criticized Dewey's pragmatism in 1932 for the "romantic overestimate of human virtue" implicit in the faith that social morality could be improved through teaching inquiry, participation, and reason. "Conflict is inevitable, and in this conflict power must be challenged by power . . . No class of industrial workers will ever win freedom from the dominant classes if they give themselves completely to the 'experimental techniques' of the modern educators" (Kennedy, 1950, p. 62). Dewey had heard this line of criticism since World War I. Randolph Bourne, a devoted follower disillusioned by Dewey's support of America's entry into the War, wrote that "there was always that unhappy ambiguity in Dewey's doctrine as to just how values were created, and it became easier and easier to assume that just any growth was justified and almost any activity valuable so long as it achieved its ends"; "To those of us who have taken Dewey's philosophy almost as our American religion, it never occurred that values could be subordinated to technique" (Kennedy, 1950, p. 48). Whether this was a fair criticism of Dewey's pragmatism or not, Niebuhr and Bourne raised a new question relevant to school ethics, quite apart from the religious issues. It would arise in the 1960s as it had in the 1930s—should the public schools support the status quo of America's government, economic system, foreign policy and social relations? In times of national crisis and national doubt this question causes sparks. At other times lay people and educators tend to assume that schools should take society as it is and teach moral values that are not pointedly hostile to existing institutions.

Dewey's pedagogical ideas, or what passed as his ideas in practice, were criticized on grounds that they were permissive and culturally relativist. His emphasis on process rather than preconceived outcomes and his emphasis on the child's interest, sometimes exaggerated by his followers, led to the charge that Progressivism was permissive. The futility and downright silliness of a one-sided focus on the child were epitomized in the cartoon of the plaintive pupil asking the Progressive teacher in the morning, "Do we have to do whatever we want to do again today?" Cultural relativism was implied in the Progressives' rejection of the old notion that schools should teach and advocate an official, superior culture in dialect, literature and manners. They tried instead to persuade teachers to meet the culture of the community, the family and the street halfway and respect it as the child's culture. This brought on not only the brickbats of classicists and other people inside the world of high culture, but also the resistance of some working parents whose concept of proper schooling it violated. In Greenwich Village an Italian mother complained to the people running a Progressive experiment in the public schools, "we send our children to school for what we cannot give them ourselves, grammar and drill . . . We do not send our children to school for group activity; they get plenty of that in the street" (Ware, 1935, p. 343).

Dewey responded over the years to the charges against pragmatism as morally groundless or acquiescent and to the criticisms of Progressive

education as permissive and culturally relativist. Always reluctant to specify desired outcomes of education, he denied that he saw technology and science themselves as ends. In fact, his educational works make clear that he believed in many specific values that were at least as discrete and concrete as the moralisms of the nineteenth century, among them cooperation, tolerance, truth, participation and respect. Quietly disowning much of what Progressive education had become, Dewey never intended pedagogy to deteriorate into mere child-centeredness or classroom permissiveness. The problem of relating the child and the teacher, the growing individual with the accumulated knowledge of the past, was not a dualism that could be solved by erasing one of the sides. For Dewey morality was more than statements of ideals or a sacred text to give moral propositions authority. Children must learn about the processes and the institutions that can give real expression to "ideal values which dignify and give meaning to life." "Not all who say Ideals, Ideals, shall enter the kingdom of the ideal, but only those who know and who respect the roads that conduct to the kingdom" (Kennedy, 1950, pp. 49–53).

It became a tradition to blame Dewey for permissiveness and mental shoddiness in the schools. President Eisenhower typified the reaction of the late 1950s when he advised educators "to abandon the educational path that, rather blindly, they have been following as a result of John Dewey's teaching." The Editor of *Life Magazine* (1959) wrote as follows:

Until the arrival of Dewey and his disciples, American schools had the stated objective of educating individuals in an inherited and enlarging body of learning. Confident of their own established values in ethics, law and culture, the old-fashioned teachers deliberately set out to pass down these values . . . Dewey and his disciples revolted against the certitude, which had indeed grown more than a little ossified in its teaching methods. But history records no more egregious case of throwing out the baby with the bath.

These indictments not only mistook what Dewey had himself said but also exaggerated the impact of Progressive pedagogy in the schools. Most children in the 1920s, 30s and 40s were not in schools like the Progressive experiments of Greenwich Village, and most schoolchildren were not being told to do whatever they wanted to do, nor were their teachers or textbook writers cultural relativists. The aspect of "Progressivism" that gained the greatest hold on schools had to do with administration and classification, not with pedagogy. In Muncie, in the 1930s, the Lynds (1937, pp. 204, 206, 241) found that the schools were "conservatively progressive," dominated by ideas of efficiency and administrative innovations. In "the struggle between quantitative administrative efficiency and qualitative goals in an era of strain," they concluded, "the big guns are all on the side of the former."

Despite the chorus of complaints against John Dewey, a rather standard and uncontroversial moral education existed in most tax-supported schools of mid-twentieth-century America. It consisted of a litany of values more or less synonymous with the Boy Scout pledge, backed by a diffuse quasi-religious national faith, and, depending on local community values, Bible reading and

selected religious exercises. There was much slack between national discussions and local practice and much lag between educators' pronouncements and classroom implementation. McGuffey's readers were gradually succeeded by Jim, Judy, Spot and Puff, but the morality plays were similar, and most small communities maintained the tradition that a teacher's conduct in the community, as in the classroom, had to be exemplary. This was what moral education was about. Controversy or alternatives rarely entered the moral world of the school, and American diversity was acknowledged only to give an erroneous picture of American harmony. This indeed flowed from the logic of the nineteenth-century cosmopolitan solution. If Puritan is too narrow, try Protestant; if Protestantism offends, broaden to become Christian; if Christianity alienates, mute spirituality in a secular faith for the schools. The strategy was to be inclusive by being uncontroversial.

For better or for worse, it worked. Publicly supported schools garnered general allegiance. In most periods they have enjoyed good public support, and most parents, including many non-Protestants, have sent their children to public schools, partly because they were free, of course, but also partly because they were inoffensive or even philosophically attractive. It is hard to imagine a strategy that would have been more successful in building an inclusive system. Yet the cosmopolitan solution of the nineteenth century contained the seeds of major discontent. Not only did it alienate those who believed that school morality should be more central and more anchored in a distinctive religious view, but, on the other hand, it never escaped its roots in a white, middle-class, Anglo-American, Protestant tradition, and this was increasingly noted and resisted by Americans who were not part of the tradition.

V. THE FEDERAL PHASE OF THE COSMOPOLITAN SOLUTION: 1960–1980

Events in the past 20 years have introduced some quite new elements into the question of moral education and common schools. Among the most notable developments are the intervention of the federal government, an unprecedented diversification of learning materials, and a perceived decline of moral and intellectual standards in the schools. A diverse range of critics has reacted strongly to these developments, leading to a reconsideration of the future of common schooling.

What changed the schools was not John Dewey or Progressive education. Moral relativism and pedagogical permissiveness made little headway in the schools in Dewey's day. Neither local school boards nor nationally known educators were headed in that direction. In the 1920s, the leading advocates of the "child-centered school" admitted that the vast majority of schools were subject-centered and that the child-centered movement was tiny. When Jerome Bruner wrote *The Process of Education* in 1959, he was trying to persuade educators and curriculum makers to substitute inquiry and process, which Dewey had emphasized, for rote learning and fixed truths, which Dewey had opposed.

Charles Silberman, in his 1970 investigation, *Crisis in the Classroom*, wrote in terms reminiscent of the complaints of Joseph Mayer Rice in the 1890s. Like Rice, Silberman discovered that classes were organized rigidly, children sat passively, bored by platitudes, encouraged to be docile and submissive, and made to engage in memorization and other mechanical tasks. To be sure, there had been an earlier twentieth-century “transformation of the school” (Cremin, 1961), but it consisted most significantly in the increasing percentage of children attending high school. This expansion increased the diversity of children and led to the differentiation of curriculum for different groups and the expansion of the curriculum, partly guided by the slogan of “teaching the whole child.” It did not lead to a diversification of viewpoint in texts or a significant change in the schools’ ethical stance toward American society, individual character, or the cultural basis of morality. American history was still an unfolding of democracy and a demonstration of the nation’s unique destiny. Civics teachers avoided controversy, and parents supported schoolteachers’ efforts to teach children discipline, the rewards of hard work, respect for adults, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

These characteristics were not unusual. Most nations’ schools in most periods have been ritualistically patriotic, authoritarian and devoted to a laundry-list of character-building virtues. What is noteworthy is how in recent years new elements have rippled these apparently timeless features of state-supported schools and how disturbing this has been to a variety of critics. One of the key factors is the increased involvement of the federal government. In deciding a series of religious cases, federal jurists have developed a line of thinking about the separation of church and state that underlines a secular definition of public education. Decisions about religious exercises in state schools and financial aid to parochial schools have reinforced the notion that one can distinguish between secular and religious education and that governments may fund only secular education. The secularization of common schools had been developing long before the 1960s, and the prayer decisions did not suddenly end religious exercises in all local schools. In fact, many communities blithely ignored the cases. When a team of researchers selected four midwestern towns in 1968 to study variations in compliance with the Bible and prayer cases (Dolbeare and Hammond, 1971, p. x), they discovered that “almost every conceivable religious practice seemingly existed in every community, and with no public concern. It became disconcertingly clear,” they said, that they “could not research the role of public opinion in compliance with a Supreme Court edict if there was neither compliance with, nor public opinion about, the edict.” Instead, they reported, “we began to ask how failure to comply was so prevalent and so easy to maintain with impunity.”

Despite the seeming immunity of local districts to central directives against which they are united, the court cases on religion and the schools have had both a symbolic and a concrete legal effect for people at the local level. The reiteration of the necessarily secular nature of public schooling has come during a resurgence of fervent religious participation, underscoring for many the inadequacy of publicly funded education and the disjunction between local values

and federally interpreted constitutional values. More specifically, however, the cases have given a weapon to individuals who protest religious exercises in school settings where such exercises are approved by most community members. A recent example is the uproar in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, when a dissenting parent's complaint prompted the state attorney general to rule that prayers by the high school football team were unconstitutional (*New York Times*, 1980).

A second broad, federal thrust has been in civil rights and affirmative action—the effort to integrate racially segregated schools, to support compensatory learning programs for the poor, to promote the cause of minority cultures, the equality of women, and the rights of special education students. The ideology that guided these developments—the ideology of the federal government and of progressive liberalism—was a new version of the cosmopolitan solution to common schooling. It was in advance of much local sentiment. The new cosmopolitanism was continuous with the old in its effort to make schools more genuinely inclusive, and in its efforts to make good on the old ideals of equality of opportunity and integration into a larger community, which had been promised but not produced by the nineteenth-century state systems. But where nineteenth-century educators had asserted that the chief aim of common schooling was moral education—and even their Progressive descendants of the mid-twentieth century had stressed the ethical socialization of the “whole child”—the emphasis of the 1960s was cognitive: it was on schooling for equal achievement, for pay-off, as well as education of the talented, guided by the new heady curricula of the Bruner generation. While moral education had receded as an educational goal because of pressing cognitive goals, two other developments also affected the schools' approach to moral authority. The potential for a more genuine cultural pluralism flowed from the attention to minority rights. The ideal and the reality of cultural pluralism made educators in the more heterogeneous school settings re-examine some of the comfortable assumptions of an ethnocentric morality. The virtues of manliness, competitive individualism, standard English, future orientation, and Anglo-Saxon superiority could no longer be taken for granted. At the same time, in response to demography, minority politics, the youth culture of the late 1960s, and trends within the curriculum materials field, there appeared in many schools (some well off the beaten track) a new diversity of textbooks and learning materials. Jim and Judy found a new kid named Holden Caulfield on their block. Textbook publishers produced a token acknowledgment of the black experience. Progressive school boards introduced sex education, minority studies and more electives, while librarians gradually acquired more controversial materials in their collections (O'Neil, 1981).

Nineteenth-century cosmopolitan reformers had attempted to draw everyone into a highly self-confident and didactic moral culture based on Anglo-American Protestantism. They tried to achieve commonness through conversion, but their faith became increasingly bland as they muted its particular cultural identity. The cosmopolitanism of recent years responded to the charges of ethnocentrism on the one hand and blandness on the other by introducing a smorgasbord of diverse and controversial materials in a context of pluralism, relativism and permissiveness. When asked “How do you conduct moral

education in the schools of a pluralist society when almost everyone believes that moral principles should be rooted in some cultural tradition and some transcendent values?" the new federal cosmopolitan responded: we must undergo a new rigorous secularization and a vigorous diversification of viewpoints. While we do this, continued the prescription, we must make moral education an everyday experience by integrating our schools, mixing the races, the sexes, the language groups and the handicapped, all in a genuinely cosmopolitan setting.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the nineteenth century, moral training in the schools was rooted in Protestant religion, a set of Anglo-American social beliefs, and a confidence in the justice of democracy and free enterprise. It provided a "common" school culture, a basis for national economic and cultural integration. But it represented varying degrees of injustice to groups outside the dominant native Protestant group, and its pan-Protestant approach to the question of religion and morality was simply too narrow. By the latter third of the twentieth century, the moral training recommended by many professional educators was characterized by rational, relativist and secular concepts. Where these concepts prevailed, public school morality escaped the problem of Protestant hegemony and bias; but it alienated many people who still believed in a union of generalized Christian religion with the three Rs, those who believed that the schools' version of moral training represented a secular culture that was hostile to doctrinal Christianity. The same critics believed that the diversity of curricular materials expressed aimlessness and that some of the reading materials were morally harmful to children. This is where Americans stand today. The particular issues involving moral education and common schools have changed over the hundred years since the old Victorian cosmopolitan solution gained ascendancy. But the essence of the solution has remained the same: the schools must remain inclusive by being ever more cautiously uncommitted to a particular religious or ethnic culture.

What perspective can this historical sketch bring to the present consideration of ethics and the public schools? Historians are good at invoking a healthy sense of *déjà vu*, and one might here remember Frederick Packard flaunting to Horace Mann the notion that no state school board could tell a district what books to use. Packard's heart would have been warmed by the frustrated Wisconsin researchers who found that no schools in their sample were complying with the Supreme Court prayer decisions. Similarly, the Oak Ridge football team, informed of the attorney general's ban on prayers at athletic events, did their pre-game calisthenics the next Saturday in the shape of a cross—and then prayed. New ideas pressed upon local majorities are often successfully resisted, in 1980 as in 1840. Yet seemingly heretical innovations or prohibitions may filter in as uncontroversial practice a generation later. One might argue, then, that tax-supported schools have weathered criticism in many cycles, that the dilemmas about ethics education in a pluralistic society cannot be answered definitively, and that the present sense of crisis in education will pass. Large swings

of policy and rhetoric are not always matched by corresponding changes in children's experience in school. Some of the more inflamed controversy is about issues that are important symbolically to parents but may have little impact on the ethical training of children in schools. Much moral training has to do with the structure of schools as institutions, the kinds of teachers attracted to public education, and the relationship between family and school.

Nonetheless, there have been real changes in the presentation of moral education in many public schools, particularly in the past 15 years, and the symbolic issues are of no less importance to the future of common schooling just because they are symbolic. The present disaffection is therefore profound and potent. Protestants who judge the schools' moral education inadequate join with large numbers of Roman Catholics alienated on similar grounds; to these groups are uncomfortably aligned some of the pedagogical and ideological liberal critics of the past 15 years, who advocate publicly subsidized alternatives in order to foster pluralism, participation and freedom from a rigid, unresponsive, public bureaucracy. The opposition takes theoretical comfort from free-market theorists who are intrigued by the possibility of competitive entrepreneurial schooling. The potential coalition is not only politically powerful but wields some telling criticisms of state schooling.

An assertive and progressive federal ideology exacerbated the inherent problems of the cosmopolitan solution for common schooling. This happened in a context of resurgent religion, with a social intensity uncommon today in the West, while at the same time social commentators bemoaned the schools' slow progress toward their new goals of integration and opportunity. A system founded on the centrality of moral education lost that mission, alienating many middle-Americans. Then it apparently failed to achieve the cognitive, cultural and social goals on a highly publicized agenda. This combination of problems has distracted or disillusioned people from the task of redefining and reviving the public schools' necessary role as inculcators of civic responsibility, moral education and cultural understanding.

The cosmopolitan solution to public schooling appears to be in trouble. Answers about how we shall conduct moral education in the public schools, along with answers about how we shall restore community, provide equality, and improve quality, are central to a restoration of confidence and morale in the public schools. What promises to be a prolonged reconsideration of public education is already underway. It comes at a time when resources for innovation are scarce. Nonetheless, the consequences of failure could be profound, indeed, historic.

In view of the increasing cultural diversity of the American population and the constitutional developments of the past 25 years, educators cannot simply turn back the clock to recapture a viable basis for moral education. The task for the 1980s is, instead, a continuing and self-conscious adjudication of local and cosmopolitan values. A historical perspective underscores the difficulty of this task. It will take creativity to reach local consensus, and it will take new innovations in shared governance between local, state and federal educators in order to reconcile the traditional common school goal of moral education with the pluralistic reality of late twentieth-century America.

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SUPREME COURT OF MICHIGAN

EXCERPTS FROM THE KALAMAZOO CASE (1874)

Headnotes. The right of school authorities in union school districts of this state to levy taxes upon the general public for the support of high schools, and by such taxation to make free the instruction of children in other languages than the English, is sustained.

A school district which has assumed to possess and exercise all the rights and franchises of a regularly organized corporation for thirteen years, with entire acquiescence of everybody, is not liable to have the regularity of its organization, or of the legislation under which it acted, called in question thereafter in a merely private and collateral suit.

Opinion. The bill in this case is filed to restrain the collection of such portion of the school taxes assessed against complainants for the year 1872, as have been voted for the support of the high school in that village, and for the payment of the salary of the superintendent. While, nominally, this is the end sought to be attained by the bill, the real purpose of the suit is wider and vastly more comprehensive than this brief statement would indicate, inasmuch as it seeks a judicial determination of the right of school authorities, in what are called union school districts of the state, to levy taxes upon the general public for the support of what in this state are known as high schools, and to make free by such taxation the instruction of children in other languages than the English. The bill is, consequently, of no small interest to all the people of the state; and to a large number of very flourishing schools, it is of the very highest interest, as their prosperity and usefulness, in a large degree, depend upon the method in which they are supported, so that a blow at this method seems a blow at the schools themselves. The suit, however, is not to be regarded as a blow purposely aimed at the schools. It can never be unimportant to know that taxation, even for the most useful or indispensable purposes, is warranted by the strict letter of the law; and whoever doubts its being so in any particular case, may well be justified by his doubts in asking a legal investigation, that, if errors or defects in the law are found to exist, there may be a review of the subject in legislation, and the whole matter be settled on legal grounds, in such manner and on such principles as the public will may indicate, and as the legislature may prescribe.

Complainants rely upon two objections to the taxes in question, one of which is general, and the other applies only to the authority or action of this particular district . . .

It is not disputed that the dissemination of knowledge by means of schools has been a prominent object from the first, and we allude to the provision of the ordinance of 1787 on that subject, and to the donation of lands by congress for the purpose, only as preliminary to what we may have to say regarding the action of the territorial authorities in the premises.

Thus stood the law when the constitution of 1835 was adopted. The article on education in that instrument contained the following provisions:

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The system adopted by the legislature, and which embraced a university and branches, and a common or primary school in every school district of the state, was put into successful operation, and so continued, with one important exception, until the adoption of the constitution of 1850. The exception relates to the branches of the university, which the funds of the university did not warrant keeping up, and which were consequently abandoned. Private schools to

some extent took their place; but when the convention met to frame a constitution in 1850, there were already in existence, in a number of the leading towns, schools belonging to the general public system, which were furnishing instruction which fitted young men for the university. These schools for the most part had been organized under special laws, which, while leaving the primary school laws in general applicable, gave the districts a larger board of officers and larger powers of taxation for buildings and the payment of teachers. As the establishment and support of such schools were optional with the people, they encountered in some localities considerable opposition, which, however, is believed to have been always overcome, and the authority of the districts to provide instruction in the languages in these union schools was not, so far as we are aware, seriously contested. The superintendent of public instruction devotes a considerable portion of his annual report for 1848 to these schools, and in that of 1849 he says: "This class of institutions, which may be made to constitute a connecting link between the ordinary common school and the state university, is fast gaining upon the confidence of the public. Those already established have generally surpassed the expectations of their founders . . ."

GEORGE S. COUNTS

DARE THE SCHOOL BUILD A NEW SOCIAL ORDER?

If we may now assume that the child will be imposed upon in some fashion by the various elements in his environment, the real question is not whether imposition will take place, but rather from what source it will come. If we were to answer this question in terms of the past, there could, I think, be but one answer: on all genuinely crucial matters the school follows the wishes of the groups or classes that actually rule society; on minor matters the school is sometimes allowed a certain measure of freedom. But the future may be unlike the past. Or perhaps I should say that teachers, if they could increase sufficiently their stock of courage, intelligence, and vision, might become a social force of some magnitude. About this eventuality I am not over sanguine, but a society lacking leadership as ours does, might even accept the guidance of teachers. Through powerful organizations they might at least reach the public conscience and come to exercise a larger measure of control over the schools than hitherto. They would then have to assume some responsibility for the more fundamental forms of imposition which, according to my argument, cannot be avoided.

That the teachers should deliberately reach for power and then make the most of their conquest is my firm conviction. To the extent that they are permitted to fashion the curriculum and the procedures of the school they will

definitely and positively influence the social attitudes, ideals, and behavior of the coming generation. In doing this they should resort to no subterfuge or false modesty. They should say neither that they are merely teaching the truth nor that they are unwilling to wield power in their own right. The first position is false and the second is a confession of incompetence. It is my observation that the men and women who have affected the course of human events are those who have not hesitated to use the power that has come to them. Representing as they do, not the interests of the moment or of any special class, but rather the common and abiding interests of the people, teachers are under heavy social obligation to protect and further those interests. In this they occupy a relatively unique position in society. Also since the profession should embrace scientists and scholars of the highest rank, as well as teachers working at all levels of the educational system, it has at its disposal, as no other group, the knowledge and wisdom of the ages. It is scarcely thinkable that these men and women would ever act as selfishly or bungle as badly as have the so-called "practical" men of our generation—the politicians, the financiers, the industrialists. If all of these facts are taken into account, instead of shunning power, the profession should rather seek power and then strive to use that power fully and wisely and in the interests of the great masses of the people.

This suggests, as we have already observed, that the educational problem is not wholly intellectual in nature. Our Progressive schools therefore cannot rest content with giving children an opportunity to study contemporary society in all of its aspects. This of course must be done, but I am convinced that they should go much farther. If the schools are to be really effective, they must become centers for the building, and not merely for the contemplation, of our civilization. This does not mean that we should endeavor to promote particular reforms through the educational system. We should, however, give to our children a vision of the possibilities which lie ahead and endeavor to enlist their loyalties and enthusiasms in the realization of the vision. Also our social institutions and practices, all of them, should be critically examined in the light of such a vision.

The important point is that fundamental changes in the economic system are imperative. Whatever services historic capitalism may have rendered in the past, and they have been many, its days are numbered. With its deification of the principle of selfishness, its exaltation of the profit motive, its reliance upon the forces of competition, and its placing of property above human rights, it will either have to be displaced altogether or changed so radically in form and spirit that its identity will be completely lost. In view of the fact that the urge for private gain tends to debase everything that it touches, whether business, recreation, religion, art, or friendship, the indictment against capitalism has commonly been made on moral grounds. But today the indictment can be drawn in other terms.

Capitalism is proving itself weak at the very point where its champions have thought it impregnable. It is failing to meet the pragmatic test; it no longer works; it is unable even to organize and maintain production. In its present form capitalism is not only cruel and inhuman; it is also wasteful and inefficient. It has exploited our natural resources without the slightest regard for the

future needs of our society; it has forced technology to serve the interests of the few rather than the many; it has chained the engineer to the vagaries and inequities of the price system; it has plunged the great nations of the earth into a succession of wars ever more devastating and catastrophic in character; and only recently it has brought on a world crisis of such dimensions that the entire economic order is paralyzed and millions of men in all the great industrial countries are deprived of the means of livelihood. The growth of science and technology has carried us into a new age where ignorance must be replaced by knowledge, competition by cooperation, trust in providence by careful planning, and private capitalism by some form of socialized economy.

Already the individualism of the pioneer and the farmer, produced by free land, great distances, economic independence, and a largely self-sustaining family economy, is without solid foundation in either agriculture or industry. Free land has long since disappeared. Great distances have been shortened immeasurably by invention. Economic independence survives only in the traditions of our people. Self-sustaining family economy has been swallowed up in a vast society which even refuses to halt before the boundaries of nations. Already we live in an economy which in its functions is fundamentally cooperative. There remains the task of reconstructing our economic institutions and of reformulating our social ideals so that they may be in harmony with the underlying facts of life. The man who would live unto himself alone must retire from the modern world. The day of individualism in the production and distribution of goods is gone. The fact cannot be overemphasized that choice is no longer between individualism and collectivism. It is rather between two forms of collectivism: the one essentially democratic, the other feudal in spirit; the one devoted to the interests of the people, the other to the interests of a privileged class.

The objection is of course raised at once that a planned, coordinated, and socialized economy, managed in the interests of the people, would involve severe restrictions on personal freedom. Undoubtedly in such an economy the individual would not be permitted to do many things that he has customarily done in the past. He would not be permitted to carve a fortune out of the natural resources of the nation, to organize a business purely for the purpose of making money, to build a new factory or railroad whenever and wherever he pleased, to throw the economic system out of gear for the protection of his own private interests, to amass or to attempt to amass great riches by the corruption of the political life, the control of the organs of opinion, the manipulation of the financial machinery, the purchase of brains and knowledge, or the exploitation of ignorance, frailty, and misfortune. In exchange for such privileges as these, which only the few could ever enjoy, we would secure the complete and uninterrupted functioning of the productive system and thus lay the foundations for a measure of freedom for the many that mankind has never known in the past. Freedom without a secure economic foundation is only a word: in our society it may be freedom to beg, steal, or starve. The right to vote, if it cannot be made to insure the right to work, is but an empty bauble. Indeed it may be less than a bauble: it may serve to drug and dull the senses of the masses. Today only the members of the plutocracy are really free, and even in their case

freedom is rather precarious. If all of us could be assured of material security and abundance, we would be released from economic worries and our energies liberated to grapple with the central problems of cultural advance.

Under existing conditions, however, no champion of the democratic way of life can view the future with equanimity. If democracy is to be achieved in the industrial age, powerful classes must be persuaded to surrender their privileges, and institutions deeply rooted in popular prejudice will have to be radically modified or abolished. And according to the historical record, this process has commonly been attended by bitter struggle and even bloodshed. Ruling classes never surrender their privileges voluntarily. Rather do they cling to what they have been accustomed to regard as their rights, even though the heavens fall. Men customarily defend their property, however it may have been acquired, as tenaciously as the proverbial mother defends her young. There is little evidence from the pages of American history to support us in the hope that we may adjust our difficulties through the method of sweetness and light. Since the settlement of the first colonists along the Atlantic seaboard we have practiced and become inured to violence. This is peculiarly true wherever and whenever property rights, actual or potential, have been involved. Consider the pitiless extermination of the Indian tribes and the internecine strife over the issue of human slavery. Consider the long reign of violence in industry, from the days of the Molly Maguires in the [eighteen-]seventies down to the strikes in the mining regions of Kentucky today. Also let those, whose memories reach back a dozen years, recall the ruthlessness with which the privileged classes put down every expression of economic or political dissent during the period immediately following the World War. When property is threatened, constitutional guarantees are but scraps of paper and even the courts and the churches, with occasional exceptions, rush to the support of privilege and vested interest.

This is a dark picture. If we look at the future through the eyes of the past, we find little reason for optimism. If there is to be no break in our tradition of violence, if a bold and realistic program of education is not forthcoming, we can only anticipate a struggle of increasing bitterness terminating in revolution and disaster. And yet, as regards the question of property, the present situation has no historical parallel. In earlier paragraphs I have pointed to the possibility of completely disposing of the economic problem. For the first time in history we are able to produce all the goods and services that our people can consume. The justification, or at least the rational basis, of the age-long struggle for property has been removed. This situation gives to teachers an opportunity and a responsibility unique in the annals of education.

In an economy of scarcity, where the population always tends to outstrip the food supply, any attempt to change radically the rules of the game must inevitably lead to trial by the sword. But in an economy of plenty, which the growth of technology has made entirely possible, the conditions are fundamentally altered. It is natural and understandable for men to fight when there is scarcity, whether it be over air, water, food, or women. For them to fight over the material goods of life in America today is sheer insanity. Through the courageous and intelligent reconstruction of their economic institutions they

could all obtain, not only physical security, but also the luxuries of life and as much leisure as men could ever learn to enjoy. For those who take delight in combat, ample provision for strife could of course be made; but the more cruel aspects of the human struggle would be considerably softened. As the possibilities in our society begin to dawn upon us, we are all, I think, growing increasingly weary of the brutalities, the stupidities, the hypocrisies, and the gross inanities of contemporary life. We have a haunting feeling that we were born for better things and that the nation itself is falling far short of its powers. The fact that other groups refuse to deal boldly and realistically with the present situation does not justify the teachers of the country in their customary policy of hesitation and equivocation. The times are literally crying for a new vision of American destiny. The teaching profession, or at least its progressive elements, should eagerly grasp the opportunity which the fates have placed in their hands.

Such a vision of what America might become in the industrial age I would introduce into our schools as the supreme imposition, but one to which our children are entitled—a priceless legacy which it should be the first concern of our profession to fashion and bequeath. The objection will of course be raised that this is asking teachers to assume unprecedented social responsibilities. But we live in difficult and dangerous times—times when precedents lose their significance. If we are content to remain where all is safe and quiet and serene, we shall dedicate ourselves, as teachers have commonly done in the past, to a role of futility, if not of positive social reaction. Neutrality with respect to the great issues that agitate society, while perhaps theoretically possible, is practically tantamount to giving support to the forces of conservatism. As Justice Holmes has candidly said in his essay on *Natural Law*, “we all, whether we know it or not, are fighting to make the kind of world that we should like.” If neutrality is impossible even in the dispensation of justice, whose emblem is the blindfolded goddess, how is it to be achieved in education? To ask the question is to answer it.

To refuse to face the task of creating a vision of a future America immeasurably more just and noble and beautiful than the America of today is to evade the most crucial, difficult, and important educational task. Until we have assumed this responsibility we are scarcely justified in opposing and mocking the efforts of so-called patriotic societies to introduce into the schools a tradition which, though narrow and unenlightened, nevertheless represents an honest attempt to meet a profound social and educational need. Only when we have fashioned a finer and more authentic vision than they, will we be fully justified in our opposition to their efforts. Only then will we have discharged the age-long obligation which the older generation owes to the younger and which no amount of sophistry can obscure. Only through such a legacy of spiritual values will our children be enabled to find their place in the world, be lifted out of the present morass of moral indifference, be liberated from the senseless struggle for material success, and be challenged to high endeavor and achievement. And only thus will we as a people put ourselves on the road to the expression of our peculiar genius and to the making of our special contribution to the cultural heritage of the race.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 6

1. If Jefferson's bill for education had been adopted by other states and utilized today, how would Jefferson's vision differ from the reality of the current American public educational system? What would the strengths and weaknesses be?
2. Whose ideas would you say have the greatest influence on public education today—Jefferson's, Mann's, or Counts's? In what specific ways do you see their influence present today?
3. Kaestle illustrates how moral education during the twentieth century began to emphasize a pluralistic, morally relative stance. In the twenty-first century is this approach toward moral education still valid? There are current educational interest groups that believe religion should have a presence in teaching character education in schools today. Examine the validity of their arguments.

Readings on Ideology: The Classroom and the Curriculum

In Chapter 6 we laid some of the historical foundations for debates over the ideological functions of schooling. Not until the middle of the twentieth century, however, was serious investigation launched into the nature of these functions. Schools were places where the context of the school day taught students as much as the content of the curriculum.

Jean Anyon looks at the nature of schoolwork to find ideological messages children receive. In the differentiation of schoolwork for students of different socioeconomic backgrounds she finds a strong ideological bias toward the preparation of children for predetermined work roles. Her conclusion, simply put, is that schools often implicitly say to children that they will work where their parents worked and should be prepared for that role. Walter Parker finds a similar ideological function in many of the current reforms offered for the schooling of poor, inner-city youth.

At first glance such schooling might appear to run contrary to the equality-of-opportunity ideology that has traditionally guided American education. However, if we accept ideas of social justice that give priority to the meeting of individual “needs,” these practices do seem to make sense. Each child is tracked at the level ostensibly best suited to his or her needs and thus has an equal opportunity to succeed. Success or failure in such a system is merely a function of individual merit.

Kenneth Sirotnik’s essay suggests that we look beyond the issue of tracking to the treatment of all students to find ideological messages. The passive instructional techniques and lackluster classrooms faced by many students (Sirotnik’s sample includes over 1,000 classrooms) seem designed to teach political apathy. Sirotnik asks if this is what we really want from our schools.

TheodoreSizer, in “No Two Are Quite Alike,” states that schools are built around the assumption that all children should be treated alike. According to Sizer, students in our educational system are essentially characterized in two ways—by age and by grade level. He advocates that educators look at children

as individuals. The individualization of the curriculum would enable teachers to personalize students' coursework to meet individual wants and needs.

As the reader considers the disturbing arguments and evidence in these sections, several questions should be kept in mind. What are the various sources of ideological messages that children might get from school? What is the content of the messages—that is, what are children being led to believe? Are there consequences beyond the school of these messages—for students and society? Are there desirable ways for teachers to project alternative messages about social justice and equality and their relationship to democracy?

JEAN ANYON

SOCIAL CLASS AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF WORK

Scholars in political economy and the sociology of knowledge have recently argued that public schools in complex industrial societies like our own make available different types of educational experience and curriculum knowledge to students in different social classes. Bowles and Gintis,¹ for example, have argued that students in different social-class backgrounds are rewarded for classroom behaviors that correspond to personality traits allegedly rewarded in the different occupational strata—the working classes for docility and obedience, the managerial classes for initiative and personal assertiveness. Basil Bernstein, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michael W. Apple,² focusing on school knowledge, have argued that knowledge and skills leading to social power and regard (medical, legal, managerial) are made available to the advantaged social groups but are withheld from the working classes, to whom a more “practical” curriculum is offered (manual skills, clerical knowledge). While there has been considerable argumentation of these points regarding education in England, France, and North America, there has been little or no attempt to investigate these ideas empirically in elementary or secondary schools and classrooms in this country.³

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THE SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS

With the above discussion as a theoretical backdrop, the social-class designation of each of the five schools will be identified, and the income, occupation, and other relevant available social characteristics of the students and their parents will be described. The first three schools are in a medium-sized city district in northern New Jersey, and the other two are in a nearby New Jersey suburb.

The first two schools I will call *working-class schools*. Most of the parents have blue-collar jobs. Less than a-third of the fathers are skilled, while the majority are in unskilled or semiskilled jobs. During the period of this study (1978–1979), approximately 15 percent of the fathers were unemployed. The large majority (85 percent) of the families are white. The following occupations are typical: platform, storeroom, and stockroom workers; foundrymen, pipe welders, and boilermakers; semiskilled and unskilled assembly-line operatives; gas station attendants, auto mechanics, maintenance workers, and security guards. Less than 30 percent of the women work, some part-time and some full-time, on assembly lines, in storerooms and stockrooms, as waitresses, barmaids, or sales clerks. Of the fifth-grade parents, none of the wives of the skilled workers had jobs. Approximately 15 percent of the families in each school are at or below the federal “poverty” level;⁴ most of the rest of the family incomes are at or below \$12,000, except some of the skilled workers whose incomes are higher. The incomes of the majority of the families in these two schools (at or below \$12,000) are typical of 38.6 percent of the families in the United States.⁵

The third school is called the *middle-class school*, although because of neighborhood residence patterns, the population is a mixture of several social classes. The parents’ occupations can be divided into three groups: a small group of blue-collar “rich,” who are skilled, well-paid workers such as printers, carpenters, plumbers, and construction workers. The second group is composed of parents in working-class and middle-class white-collar jobs: women in office jobs, technicians, supervisors in industry, and parents employed by the city (such as firemen, policemen, and several of the school’s teachers). The third group is composed of occupations such as personnel directors in local firms, accountants, “middle management,” and a few small capitalists (owners of shops in the area). The children of several local doctors attend this school. Most family incomes are between \$13,000 and \$25,000, with a few higher. This income range is typical of 38.9 percent of the families in the United States.⁶

The fourth school has a parent population that is at the upper income level of the upper middle class and is predominantly professional. This school will be called the *affluent professional school*. Typical jobs are: cardiologist, interior designer, corporate lawyer or engineer, executive in advertising or television. There are some families who are not as affluent as the majority (the family of the superintendent of the district’s schools, and the one or two families in which the fathers are skilled workers). In addition, a few of the families are more affluent than the majority and can be classified in the capitalist class (a partner in a prestigious Wall Street stock brokerage firm). Approximately 90 percent of the children in this school are white. Most family incomes are between \$40,000 and \$80,000. This income span represents approximately 7 percent of the families in the United States.⁷

In the fifth school the majority of the families belong to the capitalist class. This school will be called the *executive elite school* because most of the fathers are top executives (for example, presidents and vice-presidents) in major United States-based multinational corporations—for example, ATT, RCA, City Bank,

American Express, U.S. Steel. A sizable group of fathers are top executives in financial firms in Wall Street. There are also a number of fathers who list their occupations as “general counsel” to a particular corporation, and these corporations are also among the large multinationals. Many of the mothers do volunteer work in the Junior League, Junior Fortnightly, or other service groups; some are intricately involved in town politics; and some are themselves in well-paid occupations. There are no minority children in the school. Almost all the family incomes are over \$100,000, with some in the \$500,000 range. The incomes in this school represent less than 1 percent of the families in the United States.⁸

Since each of the five schools is only one instance of elementary education in a particular social class context, I will not generalize beyond the sample. However, the examples of schoolwork which follow will suggest characteristics of education in each social setting that appear to have theoretical and social significance and to be worth investigation in a larger number of schools.

SOCIAL CLASS AND SCHOOLWORK

There are obvious similarities among United States schools and classrooms. There are school and classroom rules, teachers who ask questions and attempt to exercise control and who give work and homework. There are textbooks and tests. All of these were found in the five schools. Indeed, there were other curricular similarities as well: all schools and fifth grades used the same math book and series (*Mathematics Around Us*, Scott Foresman, 1978); all fifth grades had at least one boxed set of an individualized reading program available in the room (although the variety and amounts of teaching materials in the classrooms increased as the social class of the school population increased); and, all fifth-grade language arts curricula included aspects of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.⁹

This section provides examples of work and work-related activities in each school that bear on the categories used to define social class. Thus, examples will be provided concerning students’ relations to capital (for example, as manifest in any symbolic capital that might be acquired through schoolwork); students’ relation to persons and types of authority regarding schoolwork; and students’ relation to their own productive activity. The section first offers the investigator’s interpretation of what schoolwork *is* for children in each setting and then presents events and interactions that illustrate that assessment.

Working-Class Schools

In the two working-class schools, work is following the steps of a procedure. The procedure is usually mechanical, involving rote behavior and very little decision making or choice. The teachers rarely explain why the work is being assigned, how it might connect to other assignments, or what the idea is that lies behind the procedure or gives it coherence and perhaps meaning or signifi-

cance. Available textbooks are not always used, and the teachers often prepare their own dittos or put work examples on the board. Most of the rules regarding work are designations of what the children are to do; the rules are steps to follow. These steps are told to the children by the teachers and are often written on the board. The children are usually told to copy the steps as notes. These notes are to be studied. Work is often evaluated not according to whether it is right or wrong but according to whether the children followed the right steps.

The following examples illustrate these points. In math, when two-digit division was introduced, the teacher in one school gave a four-minute lecture on what the terms are called (which number is the divisor, dividend, quotient, and remainder). The children were told to copy these names in their notebooks. Then the teacher told them the steps to follow to do the problems, saying, "This is how you do them." The teacher listed the steps on the board, and they appeared several days later as a chart hung in the middle of the front wall: "Divide, Multiply, Subtract, Bring Down." The children often did examples of two-digit division. When the teacher went over the examples with them, he told them what the procedure was for each problem, rarely asking them to conceptualize or explain it themselves: "Three into twenty-two is seven; do your subtraction and one is left over." During the week that two-digit division was introduced (or at any other time), the investigator did not observe any discussion of the idea of grouping involved in division, any use of manipulables, or any attempt to relate two-digit division to any other mathematical process. Nor was there any attempt to relate the steps to an actual or possible thought process of the children. The observer did not hear the terms *dividend*, *quotient*, and so on, used again. The math teacher in the other working-class school followed similar procedures regarding two-digit division and at one point her class seemed confused. She said, "You're confusing yourselves. You're tensing up. Remember, when you do this, it's the same steps over and over again—and that's the way division always is." Several weeks later, after a test, a group of her children "still didn't get it," and she made no attempt to explain the concept of dividing things into groups or to give them manipulables for their own investigation. Rather, she went over the steps with them again and told them that they "needed more practice."

In other areas of math, work is also carrying out often unexplained fragmented procedures. For example, one of the teachers led the children through a series of steps to make a 1-inch grid on their paper *without* telling them that they were making a 1-inch grid or that it would be used to study scale. She said, "Take your ruler. Put it across the top. Make a mark at every number. Then move your ruler down to the bottom. No, put it across the bottom. Now make a mark on top of every number. Now draw a line from . . ." At this point a girl said that she had a faster way to do it and the teacher said, "No, you don't; you don't even know what I'm making yet. Do it this way or it's wrong." After they had made the lines up and down and across, the teacher told them she wanted them to make a figure by connecting some dots and to measure that, using the scale of 1 inch equals 1 mile. Then they were to cut it out. She said, "Don't cut until I check it."

In both working-class schools, work in language arts is mechanics of punctuation (commas, periods, question marks, exclamation points), capitalization, and the four kinds of sentences. One teacher explained to me, "Simple punctuation is all they'll ever use." Regarding punctuation, either a teacher or a ditto stated the rules for where, for example, to put commas. The investigator heard no classroom discussion of the aural context of punctuation (which, of course, is what gives each mark its meaning). Nor did the investigator hear any statement or inference that placing a punctuation mark could be a decision-making process, depending, for example, on one's intended meaning. Rather, the children were told to follow the rules. Language arts did not involve creative writing. There were several writing assignments throughout the year, but in each instance the children were given a ditto, and they wrote answers to questions on the sheet. For example, they wrote their "autobiography" by answering such questions, as "Where were you born?" "What is your favorite animal?" on a sheet entitled "All About Me."

In one of the working-class schools, the class had a science period several times a week. On the three occasions observed, the children were not called upon to set up experiments or to give explanations for facts or concepts. Rather, on each occasion the teacher told them in his own words what the book said. The children copied the teacher's sentences from the board. Each day that preceded the day they were to do a science experiment, the teacher told them to copy the directions from the book for the procedure they would carry out the next day and to study the list at home that night. The day after each experiment, the teacher went over what they had "found" (they did the experiments as a class, and each was actually a class demonstration led by the teacher). Then the teacher wrote what they "found" on the board, and the children copied that in their notebooks. Once or twice a year there are science projects. The project is chosen and assigned by the teacher from a box of 3-by-5-inch cards. On the card the teacher has written the question to be answered, the books to use, and how much to write. Explaining the cards to the observer, the teacher said, "It tells them exactly what to do, or they couldn't do it."

Social studies in the working-class schools is also largely mechanical, rote work that was given little explanation or connection to larger contexts. In one school, for example, although there was a book available, social studies work was to copy the teacher's notes from the board. Several times a week for a period of several months the children copied these notes. The fifth grades in the district were to study United States history. The teacher used a booklet she had purchased called "The Fabulous Fifty States." Each day she put information from the booklet in outline form on the board and the children copied it. The type of information did not vary: the name of the state, its abbreviation, state capital, nickname of the state, its main products, main business, and a "Fabulous Fact" ("Idaho grew twenty-seven billion potatoes in one year. That's enough potatoes for each man, woman, and . . ."). As the children finished copying the sentences, the teacher erased them and wrote more. Children would occasionally go to the front to pull down the wall map in order to locate the states they were copying, and the teacher did not dissuade them. But the observer never saw her refer to the map; nor did the observer ever hear her

make other than perfunctory remarks concerning the information the children were copying. Occasionally the children colored in a ditto and cut it out to make a stand-up figure (representing, for example, a man roping a cow in the Southwest). These were referred to by the teacher as their social studies "projects."

Rote behavior was often called for in classroom work. When going over math and language art skills sheets, for example, as the teacher asked for the answer to each problem, he fired the questions rapidly, staccato, and the scene reminded the observer of a sergeant drilling recruits; above all, the questions demanded that you stay at attention: "The next one? What do I put here? . . . Here? Give us the next." Or "How many commas in this sentence? Where do I put them . . . The next one?"

The four fifth-grade teachers observed in the working-class schools attempted to control classroom time and space by making decisions without consulting the children and without explaining the basis for their decisions. The teacher's control thus often seemed capricious. Teachers, for instance, very often ignored the bells to switch classes—deciding among themselves to keep the children after the period was officially over to continue with the work or for disciplinary reasons or so they (the teachers) could stand in the hall and talk. There were no clocks in the rooms in either school, and the children often asked, "What period is this?" "When do we go to gym?" The children had no access to materials. These were handed out by teachers and closely guarded. Things in the room "belonged" to the teacher: "Bob, bring me my garbage can." The teachers continually gave the children orders. Only three times did the investigator hear a teacher in either working-class school preface a directive with an unsarcastic "please," or "let's" or "would you." Instead, the teachers said, "Shut up," "Shut your mouth," "Open your books," "Throw your gum away—if you want to rot your teeth, do it on your own time." Teachers made every effort to control the movement of the children, and often shouted, "Why are you out of your seat??!!" If the children got permission to leave the room, they had to take a written pass with the date and time.

The control that the teachers have is less than they would like. It is a result of constant struggle with the children. The children continually resist the teachers' orders and the work itself. They do not directly challenge the teacher's authority or legitimacy, but they make indirect attempts to sabotage and resist the flow of assignments:

TEACHER: I will put some problems on the board. You are to divide.

CHILD: We got to divide?

TEACHER: Yes.

SEVERAL CHILDREN: (Groan) Not again. Mr. B., we done this yesterday.

CHILD: Do we put the date?

TEACHER: Yes. I hope we remember we work in silence. You're supposed to do it on white paper. I'll explain it later.

CHILD: Somebody broke my pencil. (Crash—a child falls out of his chair.)

CHILD: (repeats) Mr. B., somebody broke my *pencil*!

CHILD: Are we going to be here all morning?

(Teacher comes to the observer, shakes his head and grimaces, then smiles.)

The children are successful enough in their struggle against work that there are long periods where they are not asked to *do* any work but just to sit and be quiet.¹⁰ Very often the work that the teachers assign is “easy,” that is, not demanding and thus receives less resistance. Sometimes a compromise is reached where, although the teachers insist that the children continue to work, there is a constant murmur of talk. The children will be doing arithmetic examples, copying social studies notes, or doing punctuation or other dittos, and all the while there is muted but spirited conversation—about somebody’s broken arm, an afternoon disturbance the day before, and so on. Sometimes the teachers themselves join in the conversation because, as one teacher explained to me, “It’s a relief from the routine.”

Middle-Class School

In the middle-class school, work is getting the right answer. If one accumulates enough right answers, one gets a good grade. One must follow the directions in order to get the right answers, but the directions often call for some figuring, some choice, some decision making. For example, the children must often figure out by themselves what the directions ask them to do and how to get the answer: what do you do first, second, and perhaps third? Answers are usually found in books or by listening to the teacher. Answers are usually words, sentences, numbers, or facts and dates; one writes them on paper, and one should be neat. Answers must be given in the right order, and one cannot make them up.

The following activities are illustrative. Math involves some choice: one may do two-digit division the long way or the short way, and there are some math problems that can be done “in your head.” When the teacher explains how to do two-digit division, there is recognition that a cognitive process is involved; she gives several ways and says, “I want to make sure you understand what you’re doing—so you get it right”; and, when they go over the homework, she asks the *children* to tell how they did the problem and what answer they got.

In social studies the daily work is to read the assigned pages in the textbook and to answer the teacher’s questions. The questions are almost always designed to check on whether the students have read the assignment and understood it: who did so-and-so; what happened after that; when did it happen, where, and sometimes, why did it happen? The answers are in the book and in one’s understanding of the book; the teacher’s hints when one doesn’t know the answers are to “read it again” or to look at the picture or at the rest of the paragraph. One is to search for the answer in the “context,” in what is given.

Language arts is “simple grammar, what they need for everyday life.” The language arts teacher says, “They should learn to speak properly, to write busi-

ness letters and thank-you letters, and to understand what nouns and verbs and simple subjects are." Here, as well, actual work is to choose the right answers, to understand what is given. The teacher often says, "Please read the next sentence and then I'll question you about it." One teacher said in some exasperation to a boy who was fooling around in class, "If you don't know the answers to the questions I ask, then you can't stay in this *class*! [pause] You *never* know the answers to the questions I ask, and it's not fair to me—and certainly not to you!"

Most lessons are based on the textbook. This does not involve a critical perspective on what is given there. For example, a critical perspective in social studies is perceived as dangerous by these teachers because it may lead to controversial topics; the parents might complain. The children, however, are often curious, especially in social studies. Their questions are tolerated and usually answered perfunctorily. But after a few minutes the teacher will say, "All right, we're not going any farther. Please open your social studies workbook." While the teachers spend a lot of time explaining and expanding on what the textbooks say, there is little attempt to analyze how or why things happen, or to give thought to how pieces of a culture, or, say, a system of numbers or elements of a language fit together or can be analyzed. What has happened in the past and what exists now may not be equitable or fair, but (shrug) that is the way things are and one does not confront such matters in school. For example, in social studies after a child is called on to read a passage about the Pilgrims, the teacher summarizes the paragraph and then says, "So you can see how strict they were about everything." A child asks, "Why?" "Well, because they felt that if you weren't busy you'd get into trouble." Another child asks, "Is it true that they burned women at the stake?" The teacher says, "Yes, if a woman did anything strange, they hanged them. [sic] What would a woman do, do you think, to make them burn them? [sic] See if you can come up with better answers than my other [social studies] class." Several children offer suggestions, to which the teacher nods but does not comment. Then she says, "Okay, good," and calls on the next child to read.

Work tasks do not usually request creativity. Serious attention is rarely given in school work on *how* the children develop or express their own feelings and ideas, either linguistically or in graphic form. On the occasions when creativity or self-expression is requested, it is peripheral to the main activity or it is "enrichment" or "for fun." During a lesson on what similes are, for example, the teacher explains what they are, puts several on the board, gives some other examples herself, and then asks the children if they can "make some up." She calls on three children who give similes, two of which are actually in the book they have open before them. The teacher does not comment on this and then asks several others to choose similes from the list of phrases in the book. Several do so correctly, and she says, "Oh good! You're picking them out! See how good we are?" Their homework is to pick out the rest of the similes from the list.

Creativity is not often requested in social studies and science projects, either. Social studies projects, for example, are given with directions to "find information on your topic" and write it up. The children are not supposed to

copy but to “put it in your own words.” Although a number of the projects subsequently went beyond the teacher’s direction to find information and had quite expressive covers and inside illustrations, the teacher’s evaluative comments had to do with the amount of information, whether they had “copied,” and if their work was neat.

The style of control of the three fifth-grade teachers observed in this school varied from somewhat easygoing to strict, but in contrast to the working-class schools, the teachers’ decisions were usually based on external rules and regulations—for example, on criteria that were known or available to the children. Thus, the teachers always honor the bells for changing classes, and they usually evaluate children’s work by what is in the textbooks and answer booklets.

There is little excitement in schoolwork for the children, and the assignments are perceived as having little to do with their interests and feelings. As one child said, what you do is “store facts up in your head like cold storage—until you need it later for a test or your job.” Thus, doing well is important because there are thought to be *other* likely rewards: a good job or college.¹¹

Affluent Professional School

In the affluent professional school, work is creative activity carried out independently. The students are continually asked to express and apply ideas and concepts. Work involves individual thought and expressiveness, expansion and illustration of ideas, and choice of appropriate method and material. (The class is not considered an open classroom, and the principal explained that because of the large number of discipline problems in the fifth grade this year they did not departmentalize. The teacher who agreed to take part in the study said she is “more structured” this year than she usually is.) The products of work in this class are often written stories, editorials and essays, or representations of ideas in mural, graph, or craft form. The products of work should not be like everybody else’s and should show individuality. They should exhibit good design, and (this is important) they must also fit empirical reality. Moreover, one’s work should attempt to interpret or “make sense” of reality. The relatively few rules to be followed regarding work are usually criteria for, or limits on, individual activity. One’s product is usually evaluated for the quality of its expression and for the appropriateness of its conception to the task. In many cases, one’s own satisfaction with the product is an important criterion for its evaluation. When right answers are called for, as in commercial materials like SRA (Science Research Associates) and math, it is important that the children decide on an answer as a result of thinking about the idea involved in what they’re being asked to do. Teacher’s hints are to “think about it some more.”

The following activities are illustrative. The class takes home a sheet requesting each child’s parents to fill in the number of cars they have, the number of television sets, refrigerators, games, or rooms in the house, and so on. Each child is to figure the average number of a type of possession owned by the fifth grade. Each child must compile the “data” from all the sheets. A calculator

is available in the classroom to do the mechanics of finding the average. Some children decide to send sheets to the fourth-grade families for comparison. Their work should be “verified” by a classmate before it is handed in.

Each child and his or her family has made a geoboard. The teacher asks the class to get their geoboards from the side cabinet, to take a handful of rubber bands, and then to listen to what she would like them to do. She says, “I would like you to design a figure and then find the perimeter and area. When you have it, check with your neighbor. After you’ve done that, please transfer it to graph paper and tomorrow I’ll ask you to make up a question about it for someone. When you hand it in, please let me know whose it is and who verified it. Then I have something else for you do that’s really fun. [pause] Find the average number of chocolate chips in three cookies. I’ll give you three cookies, and you’ll have to *eat* your way through, I’m afraid!” Then she goes around the room and gives help, suggestions, praise, and admonitions that they are getting noisy. They work sitting, or standing up at their desks, at benches in the back, or on the floor. A child hands the teacher his paper and she comments, “I’m not accepting this paper. Do a better design.” To another child she says, “That’s fantastic! But you’ll never find the area. Why don’t you draw a figure inside [the big one] and subtract to get the area?”

The school district requires the fifth grade to study ancient civilization (in particular, Egypt, Athens, and Sumer). In this classroom, the emphasis is on illustrating and re-creating the culture of the people of ancient times. The following are typical activities: The children made an 8mm film on Egypt, which one of the parents edited. A girl in the class wrote the script, and the class acted it out. They put the sound on themselves. They read stories of those days. They wrote essays and stories depicting the lives of the people and the societal and occupational divisions. They chose from a list of projects, all of which involved graphic representations of ideas: for example, “Make a mural depicting the division of labor in Egyptian society.”

Each child wrote and exchanged a letter in hieroglyphics with a fifth grader in another class, and they also exchanged stories they wrote in cuneiform. They made a scroll and singed the edges so it looked authentic. They each chose an occupation and made an Egyptian plaque representing the occupation, simulating the appropriate Egyptian design. They carved their design on a cylinder of wax, pressed the wax into clay, and then baked the clay. Although one girl did not choose an occupation but carved instead a series of gods and slaves, the teacher said, “That’s all right, Amber, it’s beautiful.” As they were working the teacher said, “Don’t cut into your clay until you’re satisfied with your design.”

Social studies also involves almost daily presentation by the children of some event from the news. The teacher’s questions ask the children to expand what they say, to give more details, and to be more specific. Occasionally she adds some remarks to help them see connections between events.

The emphasis on expressing and illustrating ideas in social studies is accompanied in language arts by an emphasis on creative writing. Each child wrote a rebus story for a first grader whom they had interviewed to see what

kind of story the child liked best. They wrote editorials on pending decisions by the school board and radio plays, some of which were read over the school intercom from the office and one of which was performed in the auditorium. There is no language arts textbook because, the teacher said, "The principal wants us to be creative." There is not much grammar, but there is punctuation. One morning when the observer arrived, the class was doing a punctuation ditto. The teacher later apologized for using the ditto. "It's just for review," she said. "I don't teach punctuation that way. We use their language." The ditto had three unambiguous rules for where to put commas in a sentence. As the teacher was going around to help the children with the ditto, she repeated several times, "Where you put commas depends on how you say the sentence; it depends on the situation and what you want to say." Several weeks later the observer saw another punctuation activity. The teacher had printed a five-paragraph story on an oak tag and then cut it into phrases. She read the whole story to the class from the book, then passed out the phrases. The group had to decide how the phrases could best be put together again. (They arranged the phrases on the floor.) The point was not to replicate the story, although that was not irrelevant, but to "decide what you think the best way is." Punctuation marks on cardboard pieces were then handed out, and the children discussed and then decided what mark was best at each place they thought one was needed. At the end of each paragraph the teacher asked, "Are you satisfied with the way the paragraphs are now? Read it to yourself and see how it sounds." Then she read the original story again, and they compared the two.

Describing her goals in science to the investigator, the teacher said, "We use ESS (Elementary Science Study). It's very good because it gives a hands-on experience—so they can make *sense* out of it. It doesn't matter whether it [what they find] is right or wrong. I bring them together and there's value in discussing their ideas."

The products of work in this class are often highly valued by the children and the teacher. In fact, this was the only school in which the investigator was not allowed to take original pieces of the children's work for her files. If the work was small enough, however, and was on paper, the investigator could duplicate it on the copying machine in the office.

The teacher's attempt to control the class involves constant negotiation. She does not give direct orders unless she is angry because the children have been too noisy. Normally, she tries to get them to foresee the consequences of their actions and to decide accordingly. For example, lining them up to go see a play written by the sixth graders, she says, "I presume you're lined up by someone with whom you want to sit. I hope you're lined up by someone you won't get in trouble with." The following two dialogues illustrate the process of negotiation between student and teacher.

TEACHER: Tom, you're behind in your SRA this marking period.

TOM: So what!

TEACHER: Well, last time you had a hard time catching up.

TOM: But I have my [music] lesson at 10:00.

TEACHER: Well, that doesn't mean you're going to sit here for twenty minutes.

TOM: Twenty minutes! OK. (He goes to pick out an SRA booklet and chooses one, puts it back, then takes another, and brings it to her.)

TEACHER: OK, this is the one you want, right!

TOM: Yes.

TEACHER: OK, I'll put tomorrow's date on it so you can take it home tonight or finish it tomorrow if you want.

TEACHER: (to a child who is wandering around during reading) Kevin, why don't you do *Reading for Concepts*?

KEVIN: No, I don't like *Reading for Concepts*.

TEACHER: Well, what are you going to do?

KEVIN: (pause) I'm going to work on my DAR. (The DAR has sponsored an essay competition on "Life in the American Colonies.")

One of the few rules governing the children's movement is that no more than three children may be out of the room at once. There is a school rule that anyone can go to the library at any time to get a book. In the fifth grade I observed, they sign their name on the chalkboard and leave. There are no passes. Finally, the children have a fair amount of officially sanctioned say over what happens in the class. For example, they often negotiate what work is to be done. If the teacher wants to move on to the next subject, but the children say they are not ready, they want to work on their present projects some more, she very often lets them do it.

Executive Elite School

In the executive elite school, work is developing one's analytical intellectual powers. Children are continually asked to reason through a problem, to produce intellectual products that are both logically sound and of top academic quality. A primary goal of thought is to conceptualize rules by which elements may fit together in systems and then to apply these rules in solving a problem. Schoolwork helps one to achieve, to excel, to prepare for life.

The following are illustrative. The math teacher teaches area and perimeter by having the children derive formulas for each. First she helps them, through discussion at the board, to arrive at $A = W \times L$ as a formula (not *the* formula) for area. After discussing several, she says, "Can anyone make up a formula for perimeter? Can you figure that out yourselves? [pause] Knowing what we know, can we think of a formula?" She works out three children's suggestions at the board, saying to two, "Yes, that's a good one," and then asks the class if they can think of any more. No one volunteers. To prod them, she says, "If you

use rules and good reasoning, you get many ways. Chris, can you think up a formula?"

She discusses two-digit division with the children as a decision-making process. Presenting a new type of problem to them, she asks, "What's the *first* thing you'd *think*? Craig?" Craig says, "To find my first partial quotient." She responds, "Yes, that would be your first decision. How would you do that?" Craig explains, and then the teacher says, "OK, we'll see how that works for you." The class tries his way. Subsequently, she comments on the merits and shortcomings of several other children's decisions. Later, she tells the investigator that her goals in math are to develop their reasoning and mathematical thinking and that, unfortunately, "there's no *time* for manipulables."

While right answers are important in math, they are not "given" by the book or by the teacher but may be challenged by the children. Going over some problems in late September the teacher says, "Raise your hand if you do not agree." A child says, "I don't agree with sixty-four." The teacher responds, "OK, there's a question about sixty-four. [to class] Please check it. Owen, they're disagreeing with you. Kristen, they're checking yours." The teacher emphasized this repeatedly during September and October with statements like "Don't be afraid to say you disagree. In the last [math] class, somebody disagreed, and they were right. Before you disagree, check yours, and if you still think we're wrong, then we'll check it out." By Thanksgiving, the children did not often speak in terms of right and wrong math problems but of whether they agreed with the answer that had been given.

There are complicated math mimeos with many word problems. Whenever they go over the examples, they discuss how each child has set up the problem. The children must explain it precisely. On one occasion the teacher said, "I'm more—just as—interested in *how* you set up the problem as in what answer you find. If you set up a problem in a good way, the answer is *easy* to find."

Social studies work is most often reading and discussion of concepts and independent research. There are only occasional artistic, expressive, or illustrative projects. Ancient Athens and Sumer are, rather, societies to analyze. The following questions are typical of those that guide the children's independent research. "What mistakes did Pericles make after the war?" "What mistakes did the citizens of Athens make?" "What are the elements of a civilization?" "How did Greece build an economic empire?" "Compare the way Athens chose its leaders with the way we choose ours." Occasionally the children are asked to make up sample questions for their social studies tests. On an occasion when the investigator was present, the social studies teacher rejected a child's question by saying, "That's just fact. If I asked you that question on a test, you'd complain it was just memory! Good questions ask for concepts."

In social studies—but also in reading, science, and health—the teachers initiate classroom discussions of current social issues and problems. These discussions occurred on every one of the investigator's visits, and a teacher told me, "These children's opinions are important—it's important that they learn to reason things through." The classroom discussions always struck the observer as quite realistic and analytical, dealing with concrete social issues like the following: "Why do workers strike?" "Is that right or wrong?" "Why do we have

inflation, and what can be done to stop it?" "Why do companies put chemicals in food when the natural ingredients are available?" and so on. Usually the children did not have to be prodded to give their opinions. In fact, their statements and the interchanges between them struck the observer as quite sophisticated conceptually and verbally, and well-informed. Occasionally the teachers would prod with statements such as, "Even if you don't know [the answers], if you think logically about it, you can figure it out." And, "I'm asking you [these] questions to help you think this through."

Language arts emphasizes language as a complex system, one that should be mastered. The children are asked to diagram sentences of complex grammatical construction, to memorize irregular verb conjugations (he lay, he has lain, and so on . . .), and to use the proper participles, conjunctions, and interjections in their speech. The teacher (the same one who teaches social studies) told them, "It is not enough to get these right on tests; you must use what you learn [in grammar classes] in your written and oral work. I will grade you on that."

Most writing assignments are either research reports and essays for social studies or experiment analyses and write-ups for science. There is only an occasional story or other "creative writing" assignment. On the occasion observed by the investigator (the writing of a Halloween story), the points the teacher stressed in preparing the children to write involved the structural aspects of a story rather than the expression of feelings or other ideas. The teacher showed them a filmstrip, "The Seven Parts of a Story," and lectured them on plot development, mood, setting, character development, consistency, and the use of a logical or appropriate ending. The stories they subsequently wrote were, in fact, well-structured, but many were also personal and expressive. The teacher's evaluative comments, however, did not refer to the expressiveness or artistry but were all directed toward whether they had "developed" the story well.

Language arts work also involved a large amount of practice in presentation of the self and in managing situations where the child was expected to be in charge. For example, there was a series of assignments in which each child had to be a "student teacher." The child had to plan a lesson in grammar, outlining, punctuation, or other language arts topic and explain the concept to the class. Each child was to prepare a worksheet or game and a homework assignment as well. After each presentation, the teacher and other children gave a critical appraisal of the "student teacher's" performance. Their criteria were: whether the student spoke clearly, whether the lesson was interesting, whether the student made any mistakes, and whether he or she kept control of the class. On an occasion when a child did not maintain control, the teacher said, "When you're up there, you have authority and you have to use it. I'll back you up."

The teacher of math and science explained to the observer that she likes the ESS program because "the children can manipulate variables. They generate hypotheses and devise experiments to solve the problem. Then they have to explain what they found."

The executive elite school is the only school where bells do not demarcate the periods of time. The two fifth-grade teachers were very strict about

changing classes on schedule, however, as specific plans for each session had been made. The teachers attempted to keep tight control over the children during lessons, and the children were sometimes flippant, boisterous, and occasionally rude. However, the children may be brought into line by reminding them that "It is up to you." "You must control yourself." "You are responsible for your work." You must "set your priorities." One teacher told a child, "You are the only driver of your car—and only you can regulate your speed." A new teacher complained to the observer that she had thought "these children" would have more control.

While strict attention to the lesson at hand is required, the teachers make relatively little attempt to regulate the movement of the children at other times. For example, except for the kindergartners the children in this school do not have to wait for the bell to ring in the morning; they may go to their classroom when they arrive at school. Fifth graders often came early to read, to finish work, or to catch up. After the first two months of school, the fifth-grade teachers did not line the children up to change classes or to go to gym, and so on, but, when the children were ready and quiet, they were told they could go—sometimes without the teachers.

In the classroom, the children could get materials when they needed them and took what they needed from closets and from the teacher's desk. They were in charge of the office at lunchtime. During class they did not have to sign out or ask permission to leave the room; they just got up and left. Because of the pressure to get work done, however, they did not leave the room very often. The teachers were very polite to the children, and the investigator heard no sarcasm, no nasty remarks, and few direct orders. The teachers never called the children "honey" or "dear" but always called them by name. The teachers were expected to be available before school, after school, and for part of their lunchtime to provide extra help if needed.

The foregoing analysis of differences in schoolwork in contrasting social class contexts suggests the following conclusion: the "hidden curriculum" of schoolwork is tacit preparation for relating to the process of production in a particular way. Differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices, emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work. School experience, in the sample of schools discussed here, differed qualitatively by social class. These differences may not only contribute to the development in the children in each social class of certain types of economically significant relationships and not others but would thereby help to *reproduce* this system of relations in society. In the contribution to the reproduction of unequal social relations lies a theoretical meaning and social consequence of classroom practice.

NOTES

¹ S. Bowles and H. Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

² B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*, Vol. 3. *Towards a Theory of Educational Transmission*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); P. Bourdieu and J. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977); M. W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

³ But see, in a related vein, M. W. Apple and N. King, "What Do Schools Teach?" *Curriculum Inquiry* 6 (1977): 341–58; R. C. Rist, *The Urban School: A Factory for Failure* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973).

⁴ The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines *poverty* for a nonfarm family of four as a yearly income of \$6,191 a year or less. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1978* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), p. 465, table 754.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Money Income in 1977 of Families and Persons in the United States," *Current Population Reports Series P-60*, no. 118 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 2, table A.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ This figure is an estimate. According to the Bureau of the Census, only 2.6 percent of families in the United States have money income of \$50,000 or over. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Report*, Series P-60. For figures on income at these higher levels, see Smith and Franklin, "The Concentration of Personal Wealth, 1922–1969." A report on work in progress at the Urban Institute. Presented to the American Economic Association (University Park, PA: Urban Institute), 1973.

⁸ Smith and Franklin, "Concentration of Personal Wealth."

⁹ For other similarities alleged to characterize U.S. classrooms and schools but which will not be discussed here, see R. Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968); P. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968); and S. Sarasan, *The Culture of School and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1971).

¹⁰ Indeed, strikingly little teaching occurred in either of the working-class schools, and this naturally curtailed the amount that the children learned. Incidentally, it increased the amount of time that had to be spent by the researcher to collect data on teaching style and interaction.

¹¹ A dominant feeling, expressed directly and indirectly by teachers in this school, was boredom with their work. They did, however, in contrast to the working-class schools, almost always carry out lessons during class times.

WALTER C. PARKER

THE URBAN CURRICULUM AND THE ALLOCATING FUNCTION OF SCHOOLS

One hears more frequently now the suggestion that inner-city schools serving predominantly poor and minority children ought to have a curriculum different from that of other schools. The suggestion is at least in part a response to

From Walter C. Parker, "The Urban Curriculum and the Allocating Function of Schools," *The Educational Forum* 49, no. 4 (Summer 1985): 445–450. Reprinted by permission.

renewed cries from other quarters for a common curriculum for all.¹ The rationale often advanced for a special curriculum for inner-city youth is that these students are so unique in their goals, life styles, and orientations toward school, especially when compared to their economically advantaged counterparts attending suburban schools, that what they learn in school ought to be unique, too. The suggestion stems from what I believe is a perfectly appropriate belief that schools should recognize and respond to individual and group differences among students rather than present a single, monolithic curriculum that is oblivious to the diversity among students. It is important, however, that educators strive for both the goal of individualization in education and another goal of equal importance, namely, equal access to knowledge. Pursuing individualism at the expense of equal access to knowledge can result in diversified curricula that, whether intentionally or fortuitously, maintain existing social, political, and economic arrangements.

A central dilemma in an industrial democracy is the disjuncture between the sanctioned ideology of equal opportunity for vertical mobility, well represented by the log-cabin-to-White-House mythology, and the limited number of actual opportunities in the upper reaches of organizational hierarchies.

Democracy asks individuals to act as if social mobility were universally possible; status is to be won by individual effort, and rewards are to accrue to those who try. But democratic societies also need selective training institutions, and hierarchical work organizations permit increasingly fewer persons to succeed at ascending levels. Situations of opportunity are also situations of denial and failure.²

While the prevailing belief in equal opportunity encourages individual aspirations to make it to the top, or at least to move up on the socioeconomic ladder, numerical realities in occupational hierarchies render upward mobility an impossibility for everyone. Consequently, an industrial democracy has the dual challenge of motivating achievement through effort while simultaneously maintaining the hierarchic order by denying access to many. The American dream is promoted *as though* it could be granted to all even though, clearly, it cannot. Sociologists point to the "dissociation between culturally instilled goals and institutionally provided means of realization,"³ and argue that this dissociation is a structural source of individual failure, anomie, and, potentially, rebellion.⁴ This structured discrepancy becomes all the more apparent as industrial democracies move toward what Bell called a "post-industrial" model, one where natural resources and growth are recognized as limited.⁵

As recognized limits to growth put a more visible ceiling on the promise of vertical mobility for all, the gap between individual aspirations and their achievement is underscored.

Now a generation is growing up with the dawning knowledge that in the future there may well not be enough affluence to go around. Many bright young people (dismayed by the prospect that "the best of times" are passing into history) are likely to be less motivated. This is because their future-focused role image leaves them with an image of living with limited opportunity in a world that demands voluntary frugality. "Why work when there's so little

to gain?"—some feel now that the "carrot" of personal gain is of reduced influence.⁶

These words of Shane remind us that the school reflects the larger society and, more to the point, the school *serves* it. Any conception of schooling, any educational philosophy, will inevitably have to come to grips with the question: "Should the school develop young people to fit into present society as it is or does the school have a revolutionary mission to develop young people who will seek to improve society?"⁷

Either way, the school's relationship to the larger society is certainly not a neutral one. Freire makes the point more explicit.

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the "practice of freedom"—the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.⁸

One of the most important services the school has been expected to provide in the industrial era is the management of the discrepancy between aspiration and denial, that is, the monitoring of vertical mobility within the larger society. As Waller pointed out as early as in 1932, this is accomplished by a "sorting process" in which a few students "are carried by the express elevators of prep schools which do not stop below the college level,"⁹ a few others drop out of school early and are allocated to the lowest status ranks in the occupational hierarchy, and the rest are sorted within and among schools. Applying the concept of Goffman,¹⁰ Clark referred to the process of sorting students into the lower ranks as the "cooling out" function.¹¹ His analysis of junior colleges found an elaborate system for cooling out transfer students, who aspire to entry into a four-year college following a successful two-year stint at a junior college, into terminal students whose higher education will end after, if not before, the two-year junior college program.

The concept of "cooling out" is appropriate here because the management of the aspiration and denial dilemma is analogous to the classic *con game* in which the cooling out of the *mark*, who is the person conned by a con artist, by a *cooler*, a confederate of the con artist, is critical to the whole scheme. The cooler's job is to befriend the mark and keep him or her from calling the authorities or in some other way blowing the whistle on the con game. This is called "cooling out the mark."¹² Similarly, in school, those who are denied their aspirations must be skillfully handled so as to mollify them and adapt them to failure while the structural inevitability of their failure is concealed from them. Their disappointment is to be reduced through the provision of alternatives, counseling, and consolation. Above all, the less successful have "to be made to feel that their failure to attain was a personal failure and not the failure of the system."¹³ This reduces their inclination to inveigh against the system that first raised their aspirations only to shut the door.

Comparing the status-allocating function of schools to a con game may seem extreme, but the structural similarities are undeniable. It is unlikely that

schools will soon forfeit their control over this process, and perhaps, as some argue, it is done most fairly by the school. Consider the alternatives:

If one's station in life is not to be earned through achievement in school, how else should it be earned? Should it be assigned by some form of ascription, by birth or heritage? Should differences in status be denied? To us, the first seems unfair and the second—unrealistic.¹⁴

The questions before educators considering a special curriculum for inner-city students are these: Given the allōcating function of schools, would not a separate inner-city curriculum cool these students into the lower ranks? Given, further, the disproportionate number of poor and minorities in inner-city schools, would it not perpetuate current inequities?

Needless to say, there are apparently effective inner-city schools whose students are predominantly from poor and minority families. For example, George Washington Carver High School in Atlanta has received a good deal of attention from Congress, the press, and scholars.¹⁵ But at what are such schools effective? Perhaps at production of students with marketable, vocational skills, but, if that were the case, should we be happy about their success? Is this really *good* news? Are not these students being cooled out? Jackson, too, noted that one might cheer Carver's success if one were to take a *realistic* view of status differences in society, acknowledging the perennial presence of poor people and poor conditions. But,

the realistic view carried to its logical conclusion says that things are not only as they *must* be, but as they *should* be, that they in fact represent some kind of social justice. Given their "place" in society or (less portentously) in the light of what they are going to wind up doing as adults, students like those attending Carver really do not *need* any more or any better schooling than they get. Or such youngsters really cannot *handle* any more or any better educational fare than a school like Carver offers. The quality of their schooling fits them as individuals. From here it is only a short step to the argument that students like those at Carver get the kind of education they *deserve*.¹⁶

Many people have advocated this "realistic" view over the years, and often to sympathetic ears. In fact, none other than John Locke suggested a special curriculum in separate schools for "the children of laboring people (who) are an ordinary burden to the parish."

In order therefore to the more effectual carrying on of this work to the advantage of this kingdom, we further humbly propose that these schools be generally for spinning or knitting, or some other part of the woollen manufacture, unless in other countries [that is, districts] where the place shall furnish some other materials fitter for the employment of such poor children; in which places the choice of these materials for their employment may be left to the prudence and direction of the guardians of the poor.¹⁷

Were Locke's proposal advanced today in the United States, it would no doubt shock most educators into a rebuttal of the most righteous indignation. Jackson has imagined the reaction:

Why the very *idea* is close to criminal. The thought of forcing children of laboring people to attend schools to learn how to diddle with bobbins and keep the floor swept clean, while the children of the well-to-do are taken on nature walks and have music lessons and begin the study of French in the third grade—and such gross inequities supported by tax dollars to boot—why it's downright unjust. It's unfair. It's undemocratic.¹⁸

Is it any less “undemocratic” to create a special curriculum for inner-city students which accepts tacitly both the existing status hierarchy *and* the allocating function of schools, and then proceeds matter-of-factly with the cooling of these youth into their respective *places*? Now that equal access to schools has become more of a logistical problem than an ideological one, educators must turn with what Maxine Greene calls “wideawakeness”¹⁹ to the problem of equal access to knowledge *within* schools.²⁰ This is no mere logistical problem; it is ideological and political as any. The recognition of the aspiration and denial dilemma faced by this democratic society and of the cooling out function currently performed by schools will open the issue of status allocation to public debate. This is not going to be an easy debate, but surely it deserves a public forum.

NOTES

¹ Mortimer J. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), and *Paideia Problems and Possibilities* (New York: Macmillan, 1983); Carnegie Foundation, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Charles W. Eliot's argument for a college preparatory curriculum for all high school students in *Charles W. Eliot and Popular Education*, ed. Edward A. Krug (New York: Teachers College Press, 1961).

² Burton R. Clark, “The ‘Cooling-Out’ Function in Higher Education,” *American Journal of Sociology* 65 (May 1960): 569–576.

³ Clark, *ibid.*, p. 569.

⁴ Robert K. Merton, “Social Structure and Anomie,” in *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957).

⁵ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁶ Harold G. Shane, “Some Educational Consequences of Contemporary Social Disorientation,” in *Bad Times, Good Schools*, ed. Jack Frymier (West Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Pi, 1983), p. 38.

⁷ Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 35.

⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 15.

⁹ Willard Waller, *The Sociology of Teaching* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967).

¹⁰ Erving Goffman, “Cooling the Mark Out: Some Aspects of Adaptation to Failure,” *Psychiatry* 15 (November 1952): 451–463.

¹¹ Clark, “The ‘Cooling-Out’ Function.”

¹² Goffman, “Cooling the Mark Out.”

¹³ Sally Geis, Jill Hilton, and William Plitt, “School Reform: Catching Tigers in Red Weather,” *Educational Studies* 7 (Fall 1976), p. 249.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹⁵ Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, “Portraits of Exemplary Secondary Schools: George Washington Carver Comprehensive High School,” *Daedalus* 110 (Fall 1981): 17–37; Philip W. Jackson, “Secondary Schooling for Children of the Poor,” *Daedalus* 110 (Fall 1981): 39–57; Alonzo A. Crim, “A Community of Believers,” *Daedalus* 110 (Fall 1981): 145–162.

¹⁶ Jackson, "Secondary Schooling," p. 54.

¹⁷ John Locke, quoted in Jackson, "Secondary Schooling," pp. 54–55.

¹⁸ Jackson, "Secondary Schooling," p. 55.

¹⁹ Maxine Greene, *Landscapes of Learning* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1978).

²⁰ Equal access to knowledge is one of the themes developed by John I. Goodlad in *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983), and discussed in "Access to Knowledge," *Teachers College Record* 84 (Summer 1983): 787–800.

KENNETH A. SIROTNIK

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET: CONSISTENCY, PERSISTENCY, AND MEDIOCRITY IN CLASSROOMS

Since the turn of the century, we have seen educational configurations ranging from the one-room little red schoolhouse to the thirty-five plus student classroom complexes in highly institutionalized, densely populated, urban environments. We have seen fashionable philosophies of pedagogical practice, including traditional/fixed curricula approaches, progressive/experiential methods, open classroom/individualized learning systems, inquiry-driven/inductive learning techniques, and the ever-present back-to-basics tonic, most recently with a competency-based twist. We have seen all this within a rapidly evolving social context consisting of an industrial revolution, two world wars (and a number of undeclared ones), and an astounding technological revolution only in its infant stage of development.

Yet, what we have seen and what we continue to see in the American classroom—the process of teaching and learning—appears to be one of the most consistent and persistent phenomena known in the social and behavioral sciences. To put it succinctly, the "modus operandi" of the typical classroom is still didactics, practice, and little else.

Historically, this observation can be verified by wading through the literature on classroom processes. For example, in a groundbreaking four-year study of secondary classrooms in the early 1900s, Stevens (1912) generated statistics in terms of teacher talk percentages, types of questioning, and classroom interactional configurations. She remarks: "The fact that one history teacher attempts to realize his educational aims through the process of 'hearing' the textbook, day after day, is unfortunate, but pardonable; that history, science, mathematics, foreign language, and English teachers, collectively are following in the same groove, is a matter for theorists and practitioners to reckon with" (p. 16).

More recently, Hoetker and Ahlbrand (1969) reviewed the literature on the so-called "recitation" syndrome. In study after study, with great variety in observational method, and with either "thick" descriptions of a few classes or

"thin" descriptions of many classes, teacher lecturing or total class work on written assignments continue to emerge as the primary instructional patterns. (Other reviews can be found in Amidon and Hough, 1967; Dunkin and Biddle, 1974; and Peterson and Walberg, 1979.) Similarly, Goodlad and Klein looked behind the classroom door in the late 1960s and found that these patterns were among "the most monotonously recurring pieces of data" that they gathered (1970, p. 51).

Ten years later, these patterns were once again revealed in "A Study of Schooling" directed by Goodlad.¹ In the 1976–1978 school years, Goodlad and his associates collected data in over 1,000 elementary and secondary classrooms. The present article is based primarily on observational data from this study.

Assuming that these didactic patterns are old news to astute observers of the educational scene, what, then, are the purposes of another article discussing these findings? First, it is important to document empirically this pedagogical trend up to the 1980s. Hopefully, complacency has not yet prevented us from still being shocked—perhaps even shocked into action—when we see, once again, what goes on in schools and classrooms in the United States.

Second, it is important to begin the next step, namely, to raise some serious questions regarding the ways we educate students—questions which arise from a substantial body of empirical data. This discussion will be clearly value-based, growing out of the belief that the mastery of basic skills should not be the only goal of the teaching–learning process. Developing the capabilities for self-reflection, creativity, interpersonal communication, and social and political analysis, for example, should be equally important. From this perspective, I have used the term "mediocrity" in the title of this article to convey the narrowness of what goes on in classrooms in light of what could (and ought to) happen. My hope is that my article will stimulate continued critical inquiry by both researchers and practitioners into the phenomena we call teaching and learning.

SAMPLE, PROCEDURES, AND OBSERVATIONAL SYSTEM

A Study of Schooling was based on the assumption that improving schools requires knowing what is happening in and around them. We focused on collecting *contextual* data on commonplaces such as teaching practices, content, physical environment, resources, use of time, communication, decision making, goals, and the implicit (or "hidden") curriculum. These data were obtained from multiple sources (teachers, students, administrators, observers, and parents) in a hierarchy of contextual domains (the individual or personal domain, the class or instructional domain, the school or institutional domain, and the schooling or societal domain).

Included in the data base are observations of 129 elementary and 887 secondary classes (362 junior high and 525 senior high). Classes in each elementary school were randomly sampled at each grade level; in secondary schools, classes were randomly sampled to represent each of eight major subject areas.²

The 38 schools (13 elementary, 12 junior high or middle, and 13 senior high) represent a purposive, nationwide sample with systematic variation in such factors as school size, economic status of the community, race/ethnicity of the student body, and geographic characteristics. (See Overman, 1979, for a complete description of the methodology used in *A Study of Schooling*.) Although the data base is not suitable for strict statistical generalization to all schools in the country, it is sufficiently representative to serve as a rich source for exploratory data analysis and heuristic speculation.

Each class was usually observed by one trained observer on three different occasions (full days at the elementary level and full periods at the secondary level) during the two-week period devoted to the observational phase of the study.³ These data were accumulated into a single observational protocol for each classroom. Aggregating the results for each class serves to increase the validity of the data by increasing generalizability of the observations over time. Interobserver reliability was assessed for a subsample of the classes and found to be generally adequate (Sirotnik, 1981a).

The observational system was quite complex and has been more comprehensively described elsewhere (Giesen & Sirotnik, 1979). Briefly, the system was a modified version of that developed at the Stanford Research Institute by Stallings and her associates for the evaluation of Project Follow Through (Stallings & Kaskowitz, 1974). For the present study, there were four primary modifications: (1) it was generalized for use at both elementary and secondary schooling levels; (2) variables were separated out by course content; (3) variables were separated out by classroom *context*—instruction, behavior control, routines, and the remainder, labeled “social”; and (4) a daily summary section was included in each observation.

The data presented in this article come from the four major sections of this modified system: physical environment inventory (PEI), daily summary (DS), classroom snapshot (CS), and five-minute interaction (FMI). The PEI is designed to record the architectural arrangement of the classroom, seating and grouping patterns, furnishings, and materials and equipment. The DS provides an overview of the space and materials available as well as the decision-making processes of students and teachers.

The CS and FMI sections are considerably more complicated. The classroom snapshot provides information about what each adult (usually a teacher) and student in the classroom is doing, the size of student groups (if any) and the nature of the activities in progress at a given moment. These data can be transformed into percentages which represent the likelihood of finding students, at any given time, involved in designated activities, with or without the teacher, in one or more grouping configurations.

The five-minute interaction portion of the observation record is a more continuous accounting of how time is spent in the classroom, which focuses on the teacher and the interactive process between teacher and students. These data yield estimates of the percentage of class time various teacher–student interactional configurations occur—that is, *who* (teacher or student) is doing *what* (questioning, lecturing, correcting, responding, and so forth) to *whom* (teacher

or student), *how* (for example, verbally, nonverbally, with positive affect, with guidance), and in what *context* (instruction, behavior control, routines, or social). Twelve FMI and CS records at the secondary level and forty-eight FMI and CS records at the elementary level were accumulated in the observation protocol for each classroom.

FINDINGS

Although we were aware of the documented patterns noted in the literature reviewed above, we were still startled by the paucity of variation in the observational results, both within and across schools. For example, in the elementary classes observed, we estimate that, on the average, just under 3 percent of the instructional time that the teacher spent interacting with students involved corrective feedback (with or without guidance). At the secondary level, this estimate is less than 2 percent. Moreover, the dispersion of class estimates around these means is minimal, ranging from 0 to 8 percent at the elementary level and 0 to 14 percent at the secondary level. Thus one of the most touted pedagogical features of classroom instruction—immediate corrective feedback—rarely occurs in our sample of classrooms during the three full observations recorded.⁴

Physical Environment and Daily Summary Data

From the PEI data, we find that approximately 95 percent of the classrooms observed are self-contained, with a capacity for thirty to thirty-five students. Eighty percent or more of the secondary classes have no adjacent, usable space; over 70 percent of the elementary classrooms can be similarly described. Seating typically consists of a combination of fixed and moveable chairs. Eighty percent of the junior high classes and nearly 90 percent of the senior high classes have no learning centers, compared with 60 percent of the elementary classes. Two-thirds of the elementary classes appear to have some alteration of their physical environment, such as plants, area rugs, and unusual bulletin board displays. At the secondary level, over half of the junior high and two-thirds of the senior high classes have little or no such elaboration of the basic four-wall classroom environment.

In the Daily Summary, only the variables relating to locus of decision making had sufficient interobserver reliability for further analysis. Nearly 100 percent of the elementary classes are entirely teacher-dominated. Moreover, the junior and senior high school classes are highly teacher-dominated, averaging nearly 90 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

Five-Minute Interaction Data

At both elementary and secondary levels, approximately 75 percent of class time is instructional, while most of the remaining time is spent on routines such

as preparation for instruction, roll-taking, and cleanup. For example, the typical senior-high class period averaged 57 minutes in length in which roughly 43 minutes are spent on instruction, 12 minutes on routines, and the remaining 3 minutes on discipline, control, and miscellaneous social interactions. Nearly 70 percent of the total class time involves verbal interaction or “talk,” mostly in the instructional context. Particularly interesting is the ratio of teacher-to-student talk. Approximately half of the verbal interaction time is devoted to teacher talk, mostly to either individual students or the entire class. Less than a fifth of the time involves student talk. Teachers, therefore, “out-talk” students by a ratio of nearly three to one.

If 70 percent of the class time involves teacher–student verbal interaction, how is the remaining time spent? Since our observation system was designed to focus on teachers, we can only account for their remaining time. Approximately 20 percent of their time is equally divided between working alone (usually at their desks) or monitoring and observing students. The remaining 10 percent of the average teacher’s time is spent on such activities as moving around the classroom and responding nonverbally to students.

Scanning the array of teacher-to-student interactions, we find that barely 5 percent of the instructional time is spent on direct questioning—questioning which anticipates a specific response like “yes,” “no,” “Columbus,” or “1492.” Less than 1 percent of that time is devoted to open questions which call for more complex cognitive or affective responses. As noted above, corrective feedback is rarely observed, particularly at the secondary level. Providing corrective feedback in combination with additional information designed to help students understand and correct their mistakes is almost nonexistent. In fact, reinforcement of any kind is rarely noticed, whether in the form of specific, task-related acknowledgment and praise or general support and encouragement. Moreover, less than 5 percent of teachers’ time is spent responding to students, which, as will be seen shortly, is less than the percentage of time students are observed initiating interaction with the teacher.

In contrast to teacher-to-student interactions, the array of student-to-teacher interactions reveals that the modal interaction, that is, the most frequently occurring single interaction, is one of the students *responding* to the teacher. This occurs roughly 15 percent and 10 percent of the time at elementary and secondary levels, respectively. None of the remaining student-to-teacher interaction categories accounts for more than 5 percent of class time. In summary, the modal classroom patterns consist of (1) the teacher explaining or lecturing to the total class or to a single student, asking direct, factual questions, or monitoring students; and (2) the students ostensibly listening to the teacher or responding to teacher-initiated interaction.

What kind of visible effect is present during these teacher–student interactions? Our data suggest little or none. Interactions defined as noticeably positive would include comments like “I love this subject,” “You did a good job,” “Wow,” and such behavior as shared laughter and overt enthusiasm. Noticeably negative interactions would include “That’s a stupid thing to do,” “Go sit in the corner,” crying, or yelling. According to these definitions, less than 3 per-

cent of classroom time can be characterized as either positive or negative, regardless of the level of schooling. In other words, the affect present over 95 percent of the time can best be described as neutral.

Snapshot Data

The data derived from this aspect of the observation system both support and augment the foregoing results. Each snapshot “locates” all individuals present in the classroom at a given moment. This is accomplished by the simultaneous consideration of three facets: (1) the *activity* in progress (such as preparing for instruction, lecturing, discussion, or nontask behavior); (2) the *directorship* of the activity (teacher working with students, students working cooperatively on a common task, or students working independently); and (3) the *grouping* configuration (a single student, small, medium, or large groups, or total class). When the data are aggregated and converted to percentages, they represent the likelihood of students being found in each configuration. As such, these values are not as easily interpretable as the five-minute interaction percentages since they do not represent a continuous accounting of classroom time. They can be most useful, however, for making *relative* comparisons. That is, the magnitudes of the actual percentages themselves are less interesting than the contrasts they suggest between the modal classroom configurations and those involving relatively few students.

When the results for the activity facet are summarized across the directorship and grouping facets, the activities involving the most students alternate between working on written assignments or being lectured to, depending on the schooling level. The mean percentages of students involved in the explain/lecture activity range from just under 20 percent at the elementary level to just over 25 percent at the senior-high level. Conversely, working on written assignments steadily decreases from nearly 30 percent at the elementary level to 15 percent at the senior-high level. Routine activities either preparatory to or following instruction also involve a relatively large number of students. In fact, the likelihood of student involvement in noninstructional activities increases from over 15 percent in elementary classes to over 20 percent at the senior-high level. The only other secondary school activity which accounts for a relatively high proportion of student involvement (roughly 15 percent) is the practice of psychomotor skills, primarily in art, vocational, and physical education classes. Thus, it is evident from the data that most students can be found in the more “traditional” and “passive” learning activities, whether these involve practicing psychomotor skills in physical education classes or, its analogue, working on written assignments in English classes. The likelihood of students participating in other activities such as discussion, simulation, role playing, and demonstration is less than 8 percent. And these are activities which are ordinarily viewed as less traditional and more enriching, as well as more demanding, since students participate more actively in their own learning process.

These findings are echoed in the overall results for the directorship and grouping facets of the snapshot data. According to the directorship data, over 50 percent of the students, regardless of grade, are directed by the teacher. Over 33 percent are found working independently, usually on the same assignments, and only 10 percent or less are ever found working cooperatively on an assignment. According to the grouping configuration data, nearly 67 percent of the elementary students and 75 percent of the secondary students work as a total class. Less than 5 percent are found working individually and less than 10 percent are found working in small group configurations.

Finally, taking all three facets into account illuminates the findings even further. The modal three-facet configuration is clearly that of the teacher explaining or lecturing to the total class. Students working independently on written assignments in larger groups, or as a total class, is the second most typical configuration. Ranking third is the configuration of the teacher and total class involved in general routines, such as cleanup or preparation.

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Discussion

Some years ago, Andy Warhol made a series of films portraying life events in the actual time frame they occurred—for example, six and one-half hours of a person sleeping. In his film *The Haircut*, we see what seems like hours of interminable sameness—a close-up of a man's face and head with little or no expression and the hands and tools of a barber at work. At one point the man twitches—not a big twitch—but, relative to what has been going on, a noticeable momentary change in countenance. The audience cheers in nearly hysterical relief from the accumulated boredom and strain of rationalizing their stay in the theater.

If Warhol were to have made a film of the typical American classroom, the data we just reviewed might easily have been the script. We would watch the secondary classroom scene unfold, fifty-seven minutes during which a hint of affect would be a cause for celebration—positive affect would be nice, but even negative would suffice, as a welcome change from the flat affective neutrality pervading the screen. If it were a physical education class, we would break out in applause were the teacher to actually spend time helping students perfect their baseball swing instead of monitoring whatever physical activities were in progress. If it were a science class, we would cheer wildly were the teacher to demonstrate the effects of air pressure and vacuums instead of explaining them or monitoring the class as students worked independently on their written assignments. Similar scenarios and positive audience response could be played out in other subject areas—small group poetry reading and discussion sessions in an English class, role-play simulations of civil liberty suits in a social studies class, and so forth.

What if we were forced to view the movie from the standpoint of the student? Depending upon the time frame, the film could run 330 minutes for the typical 6-period day, 495 hours for the typical 90-day semester, over 40 continuous 24-hour days for the typical school year. In all, typical secondary students

play out their 6-year role involuntarily, subordinately, and in a physical setting that usually translates to no more than a 4-foot square of space per person including desks, tables, and so on. The scenario for elementary classes and students is nearly the same, if not more uneventful, considering how little variety is offered in course content beyond the three Rs. Placing observations such as these in a time perspective is not new. It was done far more eloquently fifteen years ago by Jackson (1968). His commentary on classroom life was based on over 1,000 hours of observation in a few elementary classrooms. As it turns out, he was also accurately portraying a few hours of observation of over 1,000 elementary and secondary classrooms nearly two decades later. The remainder of this paper will briefly discuss these findings from two perspectives, one narrower and one broader.⁵

The Narrower View

What we have seen portrayed in the observational data might be labeled either “good news” or “bad news,” depending upon which brand of research on teaching you happen to prefer. The good news is that this monotonous scenario of teacher talk to total class and student work on written assignments is consistent with the recommendations emerging from current research on effective teaching practices: increasing quantity of schooling, specifically time-on-task or academically engaged time, raises scores on achievement tests. The roots of this line of research can be traced through the work of Carroll (1963), Wiley (1973), Bloom (1976), and a host of others. (See the reviews by Rosenshine and Furst, 1971; Rosenshine, 1979; Denham and Lieberman, 1980; and Frederick and Walberg, 1980.) This research is useful in at least two respects. First, it reaffirms some fundamental premises implicit in our common form of pedagogy—didactics and practice. In particular, it reinforces the connection between concerted teacher–learner effort on specific skills and test scores which measure the attainment of these skills. Second, and more importantly, this research focuses attention on the complexity of mastery learning in the ordinary classroom setting and may eventually lead to more definitive studies of viable teaching strategies (see Stallings, 1980).

Unfortunately, the bad news is that time-on-task research may have also diverted attention from critical instructional variables such as discussion, demonstration, questioning at higher cognitive levels, praise, reinforcement, student decision making, and positive affective climate. These are practices which we rarely observed in our study, but which are valued teaching strategies by many educators and researchers and are correlated positively with achievement outcomes in many empirical studies.

Peterson (1979), in noting the empirical basis for a more comprehensive view of useful instructional practices, also recognized the cyclical nature of the orientation of research on teaching as it alternates between the “soft” (open, indirect, nontraditional, and inductive) and the “hard” (closed, direct, traditional, deductive) modalities of teaching. This dichotomy becomes particularly destructive as it feeds into the popular cry of “back to the basics” whenever education is in trouble. Witness the decline in achievement test scores since the

late 1960s. Ironically, whether guided by Jackson's (1968) observations at the beginning of the decline or by those suggested in our data, navigating back to the basics should be easy. We never left.

Clearly, it is the *quality* more than the quantity of schooling which best serves as an educational and research focus. Quality of schooling includes not only time-on-task, but time *well spent*. It also includes, however, time spent on teaching practices such as encouragement, corrective feedback with guidance, small group discussions, individualization, and students' involvement in their own education; but not idle praise, corrective feedback without guidance, rambling verbal interactions, busy work as a control device, or token student decision making. Considerable research has been done which supports the former instructional practices. An incomplete but illustrative list includes the following work: Anderson (1970), Bossert (1979), Good, Biddle, and Brophy (1975), Johnson (1981), Moos and Moos (1978), Morrison (1974), Ripple (1965), Slavin (1977), Soar and Soar (1979), and Walberg (1977).

The literature, therefore, suggests an array of teaching practices—some observed frequently and some rarely observed—which enhance student learning. But we have very little evidence suggesting how these practices can be combined given the variety of classroom exigencies encountered by the ordinary teacher. Research on teacher practices in the *context* within which they occur is a high priority if we are to continue the quest for an applied science of teaching. (See, for example, Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Doyle, 1977; Goodlad, 1975; and Tikunoff, 1979.)

The Broader View

Having focused on research in which achievement outcomes are the *sine qua non* for judging effective teaching practices, the foregoing perspective may convey the impression that schooling is unidimensional in purpose—that the *raison d'être* of schools is to provide instruction in basic skills of required subject matters. We might label this solid academic grounding as the "intellectual" function of schooling. But, in fact, schools fulfill a host of other functions, ranging from delivering glorified daycare services to providing a forum for the solution of societal problems such as racial segregation.

A thorough delineation of the functions of schooling would require explicit definitions within a historical and philosophical framework. Readers are advised to consult Goodlad (1979) for just such a presentation. It will suffice here simply to use the term "function" generically with appropriate modifiers. For example, advertised goals in curriculum guides, perceptions of what goes on in schools, and proclamations of what ought to go on could be classified, respectively, as the stated, apparent, and ideal functions of schooling. This discussion will focus on the apparent and ideal functions of schooling as the people who are involved in schooling—teachers, parents, and students—see them.

For this purpose, it is useful to summarize additional data from *A Study of Schooling*. We asked approximately 1,300 teachers, 8,500 parents, and 15,000 students what they thought to be the single most emphasized function of their

school and, also, which function *should* be the most emphasized. Respondents were provided four alternative choices representing the stated function categories found in virtually all formal curriculum documents at the state, district, and school levels (Klein, 1980). These categories are intellectual development (as defined above); personal development (building self-confidence, creativity, ability to think independently, and self-discipline); social development (helping students learn to get along with other students and adults, preparing them for social and civic responsibility, and developing their awareness and appreciation of our own and other cultures); and vocational development (preparing students for employment, developing skills necessary for getting a job, developing an awareness of career choices and alternatives).

It should be clear from the results in Table 1 [renumbered from the original] that intellectual development is usually the single most emphasized apparent or ideal function. Equally revealing, however, is the substantial number of persons who view functions other than the intellectual as of primary importance. In fact, more high school students chose the vocational development category to be ideally more important than intellectual development. Of particular interest is the shift in primary importance from intellectual development to the other functions as the teachers, parents, and students shift from the apparent to the ideal perspectives. (See Overman, 1980, for more detailed analyses of these data.)

The important contrast here is between what teachers, parents, and students see as the apparent and ideal functions of schooling and what can be inferred from our observational data as the apparent functions of schooling. Making these inferences is a speculative process which the reader can engage in

TABLE 1. Teacher, Parent, and Student Views of the Single Most Emphasized Apparent and Ideal Functions of Schooling^a

		<i>Function</i>							
		Intellectual		Social		Personal		Vocational	
Level & Data Source		Apparent	Ideal	Apparent	Ideal	Apparent	Ideal	Apparent	Ideal
Elementary	N ^b								
Teachers	278	78.5	48.9	12.2	14.0	6.1	33.5	3.2	3.5
Parents	1653	68.9	57.6	13.6	9.3	11.4	24.5	6.0	8.6
Students	1565	61.4	47.1	11.1	13.8	11.9	17.3	15.5	21.8
Junior High									
Teachers	392	64.4	46.7	16.3	13.9	8.7	29.3	10.7	10.1
Parents	5099	56.3	51.1	19.5	9.5	11.2	21.1	13.0	18.2
Students	4655	64.1	38.0	11.7	13.4	11.2	18.3	13.1	30.3
Senior High									
Teachers	653	52.2	45.6	18.0	9.9	6.8	29.7	23.0	14.8
Parents	3961	43.1	46.5	19.0	8.7	10.2	19.3	27.8	25.5
Students	6727	61.6	27.3	10.2	15.9	13.2	25.6	14.9	31.1

^aTable entries are percentages.

^bAverage number of respondents.

as well as I. Further, it is easier to make these inferences when they are grounded in empirical studies based upon commonly accepted student outcome criteria, such as achievement test scores. Thus, it is easier to make inferences regarding the intellectual function of schooling in light of the research on teaching which was discussed in the previous section. But we do not have commonly accepted student outcome criteria in the personal, social, and vocational functions. Nor do we have research which sorts out the more promising instructional strategies to achieve these outcomes. In fact, nearly all the research on teaching practices has focused on what 50 percent or more of the teachers, parents and students in our sample do *not* see as the primary function of schools—namely, intellectual development.⁶

Nevertheless, the inconsistencies between what people want and what goes on in classrooms suggest a host of questions and reflections:⁷

Do we want an educated, informed and participating citizenry? If so, how does this square with the time spent on social studies at the elementary school (about 5 percent of a school day), or the time spent in active discussion, simulation, and role play in secondary social studies classes (9 percent of a class period)? Are we looking at the roots of the kind of national apathy that sends a leader to the White House with an overwhelming majority vote from an underwhelming minority of the eligible voting public?

Do we want philosophers in the literal meaning of the word—people who value continuing their education beyond school, who might even enjoy learning and who can identify their educational needs as they arise? If so, how does this square with the degree of positive affect, encouragement, praise, and guidance students experience in the classroom (less than 3 percent of classroom time)? If children are not encouraged to learn, what will people do with increasing amounts of free time as technology escalates in exponential proportions?

Do we want people who can intellectually contribute to society or benefit from what society has to offer? Are independent and creative thinking valuable assets for solving pressing societal problems? If so, how does this square with the number of opportunities for decision making offered to students (about 5, 10 and 20 percent in elementary, junior and senior high, respectively), and the extent of innovative teaching practices requiring the active involvement of learners (approximately 8 percent)?

The point is this: the record of classroom experience presented in the data is very much out-of-sync with the wishes of both the providers and recipients of education.

The final irony, of course, is that in systematically deemphasizing the social, personal and vocational functions of schooling, we are communicating subtle messages to students. Consider again the modal classroom picture presented here: a lot of teacher talk and a lot of student listening, unless students are responding to teachers' questions or working on written assignments; almost invariably closed and factual questions; little corrective feedback and no guidance; and predominantly total class instructional configura-

tions around traditional activities—all in a virtually affectless environment. It is but a short inferential leap to suggest that we are implicitly teaching dependence upon authority, linear thinking, social apathy, passive involvement, and hands-off learning. This so-called “hidden” curriculum is disturbingly apparent.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It would be a grave mistake to interpret what I have reported and commented upon as an indictment of teachers and schools. There are exceptional schools and teachers quite atypical of the aggregated profiles presented here. But fundamental and pervasive changes cannot occur without restructuring societal values and priorities. With sufficient reorganization and endowment, schools can become more viable hosts for teacher–learner activities, and teachers can become more effective when trained properly, treated as professionals, and rewarded appropriately (see Goodlad, 1984).

The purpose of this article, however, has been to raise questions about what goes on in classrooms grounded in comprehensive, empirical inquiry—not to provide answers. We have seen that schools have changed little since we and those before us were there. What have changed, and what continue to change, are the economic, social, and political realities of the society in which we live. Schools and the people who care about them must be responsive to these changes. As Toffler (1974) has noted:

Education . . . is not just something that happens in the head. It involves our muscles, our senses, our hormonal defenses, our total biochemistry. Nor does it occur solely within the individual. Education springs from the interplay between the individual and a changing environment. The movement to heighten future-consciousness in education, therefore, must be seen as one step toward a deep restructuring of the links between schools, colleges, universities and the communities that surround them. (p. 13)

I suspect “future shock” has been upon us for some time. If we do not unplug ourselves from the “mediocrity” of our educational circuitry, we will never achieve a working correspondence between what we see in classrooms and what we want for our children.

NOTES

¹ More detailed information on A Study of Schooling can be found in the series of four sequential articles published in the *Phi Delta Kappan*. The first in this series, Goodlad, Sirotnik, and Overman (1979), includes a conceptual overview, the sample design, and the types of data collected. Additional information on the curriculum, student experience, and adult experience components of the study can be found, respectively, in Klein, Tve, and Wright (1979), Benham, Giesen, and Oakes (1980), and Bentzen, Williams, and Heckman (1980).

² These subject areas included English/reading/language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts, foreign language, vocational/career education, and physical education.

³ Four time periods (forty to sixty minutes each) were purposively sampled from each elementary class "day" to maximize the observation of instruction in the basic subject areas. Thus, the observed proportion of instructional time reported is likely to be an overestimate.

⁴ A considerable number of tables are required to present even the minimal amount of data necessary to form an adequate frame of reference against which to interpret the relative presence or absence of various classroom processes. These tables are included in the technical report upon which this article is based. I will highlight the trends in these tables, reserving comments for the next section. However, in the interest of space, the tables themselves are omitted but with strong encouragement to readers to supplement what follows with the data presented in the technical report.

⁵ A more in-depth treatment of these and other issues including recommendations for school improvements will be found in Goodlad (1984).

⁶ I am not suggesting that the research focused on intellectual development has been a waste of time. Personally, I believe that intellectual development is the most important function of schooling. But I also believe that instructional strategies can be developed and implemented which emphasize important goals in the other function categories.

⁷ Inferences of this type are fundamentally normative and reflect implicit values and beliefs. In my view, further systematic inquiry into these and similar issues requires active recognition of the connection between educational practice and the prevailing cultural-political interests. A critical theoretical analysis of this sort is approached in the work of Apple and King (1977), Apple (1979), and Giroux (1981) and would not be incompatible with the data presented here.

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THEODORE R. SIZER

NO TWO ARE QUITE ALIKE

People differ. Thank goodness they do. How boring the world would be if we were all the same—clones, predictable in our progression through life. Much of the progress of humankind has come because of the restlessness of persons who have stepped beyond the predictable mold. The differences among us have provided the pepper upon which modern society depends.

Those of us who have made our careers in secondary education are daily confronted with a cacophony of difference. Yesterday's little, dutiful William is today's sprawling, sloppy BillyBoy. The noisy kid over there used to be a quiet cherub. The shy, intense girl over here used to be fascinated with science but today seems fascinated with nothing at all. The distracted, tough-talking kid in

the corner used to be a bouncy little boy endlessly looking for attention. Hormones cause sprouting of all sorts, the sprouts changing not only how an adolescent looks, but also how that adolescent perceives himself or herself. The dutiful in October become the rude in April. The gigglers of September become the sirens of May.

So has it always been. The load is heavy on each young person to decide which mask to wear for which audience, which ideals to care about, what to believe in and whom to believe, what to aspire for, or even whether to “aspire” at all. No one wants to be a clone. We have our role models, but each of us wants to be someone special. We insist upon our difference, and it is right that we do so. Without difference, our culture and our economy would shrivel. Without citizens who feel that each has something special to offer, we would have a culture without vitality.

A RIGID SYSTEM

Ironically, for a century, secondary schools in the United States have been built on the assumption that all children should, save those at the carefully defined “special” margins, be treated more or less alike.

Students are categorized by their ages. You were born in June 1985, you are 14 now, so you are a 9th grader. If you were born in December, you are an 8th grader, still in middle school. That is, unless you are in a school district with different cut-off dates.

Grade level counts, socially and academically. There is 9th grade social studies and 10th grade history. There is honors history, but you have to be a 10th grader to get into it. Yes, a few 10th graders take AP classes along with 11th and 12th graders, exceptions that prove the rule. Age relentlessly counts. Anything special beyond that is a matter of exceptional negotiation.

If you are a 10th grader in Massachusetts, you take the MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) tests. If you had been born but a few months earlier, you took that test last year. The MCAS is administered in a rigorously consistent way to all students of a certain grade, this in the name of fairness. Of course, one student may feel ill on examination day. Another might be intellectually adept but less able to express that power in a timed, carefully channeled testing routine than in another sort of setting. Yet another glories in the orchestrated, hushed pressure that the testing site reflects, a seriousness often lacking in class discussions. However, such differences make no dent in the testing “instrument.” One size fits all; one score makes or breaks one’s reputation.

The hold of age grading on the consciousness of the education system is ferocious. The metaphor of steps on a ladder dominates: Learning is always to be a sequential act, block building on block. One must travel up those stairs. There must be no “social promotion.”

There is, of course, logic in some of this. You cannot do well at calculus without algebra. It is unlikely that you will create a persuasive 10-page essay

unless you can craft a persuasive paragraph. However, such sequencing does not always hold in every field, most obviously in the arts. And sometimes people leapfrog, seemingly serendipitously—a student “gets” a connection among characters in a play, a proof in mathematics, a sophisticated legal argument arising from a historical incident. Such a student doesn’t fit in.

The traditional high school confines itself in other ways, including pigeonholing the members of its staff. All of us have specialties. I am a teacher of mathematics. I am a counselor. I am a Dean of Students. I teach physical education and coach lacrosse. I teach art. No one of us, save the students and the librarian, is to express and be held accountable for a general education—even as a “general education” is the ultimate goal for the students. As a science teacher, I do not have to show any interest, much less competence, in the arts; indeed, I can be audibly contemptuous of them.

The school routines through which the student passes reflect this confinement. Little has much to do with anything else. Success at high school is measured by an accretion of scores in subjects taught largely in isolation from one another. A student can have a personal style or a consuming interest as long as it fits the prescribed pattern, but there is precious little room for the student who might harbor interests not reflected by a particular school’s division of faculty labor. Again, in many schools, exceptions are made. They remain exceptions, however. Unless an aggressive student or his or her parents or an influential teacher pushes for an exception, nothing happens. There is little incentive for intellectual idiosyncrasy or social idiosyncrasy.

AUTHENTIC OPTIONS

Does this sound familiar? There are explanations for each piece of the enormously complicated comprehensive high school. Ironically, one reason for the complexity is to accommodate “individual differences”—to make various curricular paths (however age graded and compartmentalized) available for students to match with their likely destinations in life. The school decides the worthy options to be available for all students and then counsels each one (usually advisors who carry loads of 100 to 300 students do this) to take what appears to be the most sensible path. Each path is carefully demarcated and usually age graded (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985).

Something for everybody is the ideal of the U.S. high school. But options are different from personalization, from taking each young person where he or she is and imaginatively using that understanding. Personalization requires knowing each young person well. If we can achieve that goal, then flexible options among programs make sense. However, options offered without knowing the students well are not authentic options at all.

We all understand this poignantly when we fall ill. If our physician does not know our condition well, how can he or she prescribe a proper treatment?

By the same token, if our counselor does not know our minds and dispositions well, how can he or she prescribe a likely regimen?

Facing up to the rigidities of high school is fiercely difficult work. It is not that most educators do not know that “whole school change,” especially at the secondary level, is compellingly needed. It is because everything important in a school affects everything else that may be important. When one tries to refashion one part of a school, most other parts unravel. As a result, most reform efforts avoid that prospect and settle for tinkering, often very imaginatively, at the margins—a revised course here, an alternative program there, great gobs of professional development.

However, such tinkering never gets to the heart of the matter, especially if the goal is to know each student well and to use that knowledge in shaping and directioning that young person’s education.

REALISTIC STUDENT LOADS

I cannot teach students well if I do not know them well. Each of my adolescent students is in the midst of a growth spurt and the struggle for independence that characterizes every person’s route from childhood to adulthood. Each is a complex and evolving human being. Each learns in a somewhat different way; there are discrete “styles” and “intelligences,” Robert Sternberg (1997; 1999), Howard Gardner (1983; 1999), and others tell us; their research squares with our experience in classrooms.

How many young people can I know and serve well at once? Assume that I meet with my students in groups each day, this absorbing the majority of my school-time hours. How many minutes a week, either sandwiched amid regular obligations into the school day or spent after school and at home, do I need to read and comment on each student’s work and, periodically, to meet with him or her one-on-one? What would happen if I, on average, set aside 10 minutes a week for each student for this personal attention? That works out to an hour a week for every six students. If I have 120 students, that’s 20 hours. Impossible.

If I have 50 students, that’s a bit more than eight hours a week. Let’s say that I, on average, see each student and his or her work every other week. That brings the load down to between four and five hours a week, assigning an hour (in snippets of time, at school or at home) each day to “personalization.” Given my other obligations, that is a stretch, but, if I am reasonably experienced, an acceptable one.

But, I think, that is impossible! I then look at the number of students in my (typical) high school for each full-time equivalent professional staff person. It is 14:1. Given that ratio, I conclude, 50:1 for each teacher is possible, at least arithmetically. However, everyone at school is now working flat out. Something has to give. The only recourse is to simplify the school; to narrow its options; streamline its routines; and increase the number, authority, and responsibility

of classroom teachers. But won't these narrowed options decrease the possibility of "personalization"? They will only if we do not define "personalization" as access to a set of free-standing separate programs.

A choice clearly emerges. "Personalization" can be a student's choice among a variety of special programs, but that forces most teachers to carry loads in excess of 100 students. Or "personalization" can start with loads half that size in a school where we can accommodate adaptations to individual needs within a simple, common program.

A Hobson's choice? Not necessarily. Paradoxically, simple, focused schools can provide more opportunities for individual students than can the more typical comprehensive high school.

TIME AND SCALE

So I have my 50 students. I see them daily in groups, usually in classes of 15 to 25. My homeroom is largely drawn from this same group. I *know* these young people. They are not quick studies before me, two-dimensional characters. I hope to know their minds and dispositions well, so well that I can sense a change in mood, from engaged to disengaged, or from loneliness to joining in with friends—or whatever—when such appears to emerge.

"Knowing" young people this well results (perhaps paradoxically) in the realization that I never know them well enough: They are too complicated and changeable for that. To help me get the fuller picture, I need, at the least, the counsel of teachers who share these same kids. That means time to talk with those teachers and time to coordinate approaches to help each of the students and their families.

Impossible? It is possible if the design of the school is simple—and thus flexible—and common to all. Time for "talk about our kids" needs to be part of the schedule. If it is not, such talk will rarely happen.

THE AUTHORITY TO ACT

All this "personalization" will come to naught if I and my colleagues who share students do not have the authority to act upon our conclusions about an individual or a group of students. Within the basic course of study (one kept sufficiently flexible to allow individual variations), we have to control our time and that of the students. Our decisions have to stick.

If we must always ask for permission or refer every change to higher authorities, there is no "personalization." The people providing the permission are those who, in fact, know the affected students the least. Higher authorities can monitor us (that is, surely, part of their job), and they can help us when we need help (also a part of their job). However, if we cannot control our own piece of turf within our school, we cannot readily act upon judgments arising from "personalization."

COMPLEXITY WITHIN SIMPLICITY

Few Americans would disagree with the proposition that each child should be exposed to the worlds of language, science, mathematics, the arts, and history. Within each discipline are a plethora of topics to study. A number of equally engaging topics cut across the disciplines. There is much to learn, far more than time to learn it. Further, we forget most of what we “cover” in school, retaining only that which we use or fragments that appeal to us. The important residue is an understanding of how a discipline works and habits in its use.

Understanding something—and being able to use it in unfamiliar situations—takes time. Engendering the habit of its use requires enough engagement with a discipline, on one’s own terms, to be so persuaded of its efficacy that its use becomes almost second nature. Beyond the rudiments, what, in particular, one studies is less important than that it sparks legitimate interest in each learner. Without such interest, most adolescent students will not engage (and do not deeply engage, even as they may appear dutiful and as they may churn out “work” that gives evidence of immediate, limited engagement but not understanding).

My task as a teacher is to cajole each learner into an essential discipline both on the terms of that discipline and on the student’s terms. I must interest the student in something that the society deeply believes is important and that the individual adolescent also senses—or can be persuaded to sense—is important. I must ram what is essential down the kid’s throat and at the same time pander to his or her immediate interests.

To be successful at this, I must settle on some crucial common knowledge—reading *Romeo and Juliet*, watching *West Side Story*, and studying mid-20th century south Asia and the late 20th century Balkans, for example—as a way of addressing human conflict. Concurrently, I must find any and all means to gather into each student’s consciousness and conscience a conflict that may deeply move that child, asking him or her to write about it, argue about it, understand it. If such a ploy works, it is an easy step, for example, to the reasons for and the design of democratic governments, including bills of rights. There are crucial connections here within history and the humanities. With different material, there are analogous ones in every domain. From the connections that I the teacher push forth and those that may energize a student can come serious learning.

Such activity takes time, more time than allotted in most high schools, where coverage is king. Grotesque coverage—Cleopatra to Clinton by April 1, three Shakespeare plays in six weeks, evolution as one of 36 chapters in an eight-pound biology textbook—is a recipe for teacher frustration, academic trivialization, and student detachment. Yes, we all “covered the material.” We passed the test at the end. But, if such were ever given, we could not pass that test 18 months from now, and we could not explain what the purpose of the time we had earlier spent together might be. For most—all save those engaged by the standardized lesson—the time would have been largely wasted.

Give me the smallest defensible number of the absolutely most critical matters, disciplines, and skills that I should teach. Give me time, autonomy, supportive colleagues, and few enough students so that I can understand each one well enough to tailor some of my teaching to him or her—and I will show you students who perform well, today and tomorrow.

A simple program allows complex learning. A simple program makes possible the adaptations in teaching that arise from authentic personalization.

It is inconvenient that students learn in different ways and that they are attached to differing enthusiasms. But, unless we face up to that inconvenience, we will not teach well.

PROGRESS BY PERFORMANCE

If strict age grading flies in the face of the commonsense experience of teachers and researchers, what is to replace grade levels? The only alternative is progress by performance. It means an individual educational plan for each student, not just the “handicapped” or the “precocious.”

This approach is as difficult to accomplish as it is easy to embrace. Its practice demands that the school be clear on the shape, standards, and character of the “performance” and on the basis upon which such performance will be judged. Being clear on this is very hard and very unfamiliar work for teachers. We are more used to “U.S. History up to the Civil War” in the 10th grade or “Physics” in the 12th grade. The state frameworks or district curriculums are usually an amalgamation of “content” and “skills” to cover over a defined period of time. They rarely address—beyond necessarily constricted standardized paper-and-pencil tests—how the student expresses mastery or uses that mastery over time.

Further, few schools insist on the regular “cross grading” of papers by staff. In most schools, each teacher is assessment king in his or her classroom. “Cross grading”—the collective assessment of pieces of work by a variety of teachers, students, and parents—is very rare. So if a *B* does not mean the same to Ms. Schmidt as it does to Mr. Saginaw, what does a *B* at their school really mean? If Ms. Schmidt and Mr. Saginaw don’t take the time to tune their standards, inequitable fuzziness will be the rule.

There must be agreement on what a student puts forth for consideration of the quality of his or her “performance,” agreement that participants and outsiders constantly monitor. For obvious reasons, the students and their guardians must also understand the criteria for this performance. When “What is good enough?” is a question on the table, all sorts of issues emerge. Is what is appropriately good enough for Jose precisely the same as what is good enough for William? If not, how can the same ultimate standard be applied to different expressions of that standard (for example, Jose depending heavily on written work and William using oral and artistic devices)?

Personalization—meaning fundamental fairness arising from the differences among students—requires the expression of common, general “stan-

dards" in a variety of forms. Creating such standards is difficult work, far more difficult than saying that "high standards" are to be assessed by one "instrument" in one way and at one time. Time has to be made for it—the same sort of time that each of us prays happens among our physicians when they caucus to decide on a treatment for our disease.

LEADERSHIP TO PERSONALIZE LEARNING

A school or school system that resolutely accepts the lively but annoying diversity among its students must break away from many deeply ingrained notions about the keeping of school, from One Best Curriculum to One Best Test to One Best Schedule. Something far more complex and more fluid must take their places. Schools must adapt to the legitimate differences among students; these adaptations will themselves be in constant flux.

Idiosyncrasy is an obvious fact: Those of us who are parents of at least two children and who thereby see daily the variety of energies and enthusiasms emerging from the same gene pool and kitchen table are keenly aware of that. But accommodating those realities within a school system designed to be universal in its routines is intellectually very demanding and politically very dangerous work.

Some will find the implications of "personalization" so unsettling as to be far-fetched. Nothing can come of it, they will say. But today something is coming of it, most usually in small schools at the edges of big systems or in autonomous small-schools-within-big-buildings. Nothing that I have suggested is not being tried somewhere. And where the trying has gone on long enough, the results are beginning to show where it counts—on what is happening to the graduates of schools that have "personalized" (Meier, 1995).

Those of us who are struggling with personalization will be the first to say that the work is as difficult as it is unfamiliar and that the trade-offs necessary to get the time to do the job well are nerve-racking. At its heart, "personalization" implies a profoundly different way of defining formal education. What is here is not the delivery of standard instructional services. Rather, it is the insistent coaxing out of each child on his or her best terms of profoundly important intellectual habits and tools for enriching a democratic society, habits and tools that provide each individual with the substance and skills to survive well in a rapidly changing culture and economy.

It can be done. It is being done, however against the traditional grain.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 7

1. Anyon and Parker both suggest that the “hidden curriculum” of schooling serves some students better than others. Who seems to be best served by the “hidden curriculum” and how? What questions of justice and equality does this phenomenon raise?
2. Discuss what Sirotnik feels are the hidden messages of schooling regarding students’ future political life. What conditions in the classroom help send these messages?
3. What do you see as possible outcomes of the “hidden curriculum” for student learning? Which is more important for student outcomes, the hidden or the formal curriculum?
- 4.Sizer believes that personalizing the students’ educational experience would be more rewarding. What is the likelihood that this approach will be adopted? How would school size, number of students in a classroom, and scheduling impact Sizer’s goal of individualized/personalized curriculum?

PART FOUR

Schooling and Politics

Bureaucracy and Control in Education

In Part Three we focused on the socialization function of schooling. As we saw, the hidden curriculum is always a topic of debate among people of opposing opinions and goals. How these debates are resolved in the realm of school politics is the topic we explore in Part Four. We will see, in other words, the ways in which beliefs about social justice, equality, and meritocracy are turned into actual school practice.

Perhaps you have heard it said that it is too bad that politics have to interfere with schooling. In fact, as we point out later, school reformers have often based their efforts on an appeal to depoliticize the schools. As noble as this sentiment may seem, it hides more than it reveals. Pause for a moment to consider the alternatives to making public policy through politics. Would we perhaps prefer some type of coercion or dictatorial control of our educational decisions—one central authority that would determine the entire curricula for every child in our nation's public schools? Politics is a practical reality in any school system. Different perspectives, needs, and pressures will always manifest themselves in how, what, and why things are taught. In fact, arguments to remove politics from schools are usually a device to limit the number of people involved in school politics or decision making.

WHO RUNS THE SCHOOLS?

The culture, curriculum, and administration of the U.S. educational "industry" did not simply arise as a product of a general consensus on how schools should operate. Rather, continuing political debates have been waged over alternative conceptions of public schooling that grew from competing views of the socialization function of schooling. The key to understanding these debates is an awareness of the growing bureaucratization of schools and the various movements designed to limit the power of such bureaucracies.

When we look at the role of bureaucracy in modern government and in educational politics, the first point to be made is that it is probably impossible to run any government without some type of bureaucratic structure. A society or political entity must have ways to act consistently and to meet continued needs. Otherwise, a society would grind to a halt while attempting to make even the simplest of decisions. Every demand would be seen as original, requiring long periods of study and debate before responding. One function of a bureaucracy is to make regular responses to recurring events. In one sense, then, our objections to the bureaucratization of modern life are ill founded. However, this should not be used as an argument for overlooking many of the basic tensions and contradictions between bureaucratic *administrative* structure and democratic *decision-making* structure.

Debate over the centralization of authority has a long history in American politics. The American Revolution was waged against a royal bureaucracy. Jeffersonian democracy was in part an attempt to resist the continuation of bureaucratic rule from colonialism to constitutionalism, and Jacksonian democracy was similarly a populist campaign against the perceived excesses of "big city" bureaucrats. Since the great common-school reforms of the mid-nineteenth century, educational politics in this country have often revolved around issues of democratic versus bureaucratic control and power. This dichotomy is inherent in all school systems. People often say "We are fighting the bureaucracy" and "We need to cut through all this bureaucratic red tape." But what is meant by *bureaucracy*?

A wide variety of definitions have been offered by social scientists. Of most use to us in discussing school politics is one offered by Carl Friedrich:

The six elements of a bureaucracy . . . fall naturally into two groups. Three of them order the relations of members of the organization to each other, namely, centralization of control and supervision, differentiation of functions, and qualification for office (entry and career aspects), while three embody rules defining desirable habit or behavior patterns of all the members of such an organization, namely, objectivity, precision and consistency, and discretion.¹

We can see easily all of those characteristics in the school system. The school is governed by a hierarchy with power flowing from a central office (superintendent). He or she oversees individuals in specific, differentiated positions (principal, teacher, and so on) who attain their positions and advance in status by gaining appropriate certification. The process of schooling itself is carried out without respect to personal characteristics such as race and sex (objectivity), in a consistent manner across schools (use of same textbooks, for example), and with discretion exercised by those with authority (limited access to student records and evaluations of staff). Certainly there is much here with which no one would disagree. Why should teachers, for instance, worry about ordering cleaning supplies, and why should we not treat students somewhat objectively?

Yet some of the characteristics of bureaucracy operate to concentrate power in the hands of a few, a situation antithetical to democracy. For example, why

should decisions on textbooks and curriculum flow down from the top? It would make more pedagogical sense to put such decisions in the hands of teachers and students who are in the classroom. Neither does it make much sense to differentiate functions to the point where a school principal never sees the inside of a classroom.

A series of more fundamental questions may also be raised. Do the qualifications commonly established for entry into a bureaucracy (state licensing requirements for teachers) really establish that someone is qualified to teach? Should we indeed treat all individuals objectively? What about students (perhaps *all* students) with special needs? Is it possible to be consistent and precise in education, a field dealing exclusively with human beings in all their complexity? How much privacy or discretion should be allowed in such a public process as educating a community's children?

In an educational bureaucracy, the following analogy is useful for understanding how perspectives vary. Administration and faculty view education from different ends of a telescope. Although both parties are looking at education *per se*, their views are somewhat different because of differing perspectives. When a teacher looks through the telescope, he or she sees students with diverse backgrounds, varied academic abilities, and the need for a classroom management plan. When a superintendent looks through the same telescope, he or she sees funding, test scores, and community relations. Both the teacher and the administrator can acknowledge each other's perspective, but often each has his or her own priorities, and this difference in viewpoint can cause misunderstanding across the spectrum.

When we ask these questions and at the same time consider the bureaucratic structure within which educators function, we begin to better understand school politics. The conflict between democratic and bureaucratic control has been part of political debates in all spheres of American life. In education this underlying conflict has often been overlooked because attention is focused on debates over local versus state or national control, the authority of school boards versus school superintendents, the legitimacy of teacher unions, the role parents should play in educational decision making, and the role students should have in school decision making. Each of these debates reflects the most important feature of school politics: the continuing bureaucratization of schools and the political challenges to that trend.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1840–1880

We have to go back to the early 1800s to find a time in which schooling was relatively free from bureaucratization. Small one-room schoolhouses could be found in the majority of communities. These were usually maintained by one itinerant teacher or headmaster who was responsible for all elements of the school's functioning. In rural areas constituencies were usually neighboring families who "would bond together and sponsor such schools and educational activities as they collectively deemed proper."²

"Local" interests still dominated in the control of schooling through the Civil War. Beginning in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, however, efforts increased to make the state more responsible for public education. Accompanying this trend was the development of state-level bureaucratic structures that gradually came to control the licensing of teachers and the guidelines within which schools were allowed to operate. This is not to say that a bureaucratic organization was necessarily evil or the only option available. In fact, Michael Katz has pointed out that four models of school organization competed for supremacy in the first half of the nineteenth century: paternalistic voluntarism, corporate voluntarism, democratic localism, and incipient bureaucracy.³ The central question that emerges from the study of this period is, Why did the bureaucratic model eventually triumph?

As was illustrated in Part Three, Horace Mann and other common-school proponents saw the spread of public education as crucial to the development of a national character. From the standpoint of these educational reformers, however, the central purposes of education could not be left to the chance of voluntarism (paternalistic or corporate) or to the caprice of democratic localism. Although the main actors in the common-school movement generally endorsed the social and moral goals of the voluntarists (uplifting of character, inculcation of virtue, cultural homogenization), they felt, in general, that a system left entirely to local control could never grow to the scale required or be staffed by professional educators. Moreover, the ideal of democratic localism stood in direct opposition to the aims of those committed to greater state authority in education.

The conflict between democratic localism and incipient bureaucracy was over the fear of democratic rule, the "unique" demands of urban education, and the desire of educators to increase the authority of the school in the child-rearing process. School reformers were suspicious of the populist notion of democracy, which, they believed, could lead to a majority forcing its educational views on a minority. Such a system could lead, they claimed, to abridging "the liberties of parents by forcing them to choose between submitting their children to alien points of view" or enrolling their children in expensive private schools.⁴ Of course, this left unanswered the questions of whether democratic localism actually functioned in this manner and whether governance by educational officials at the state or city level would be any less likely to infringe on the liberties of parents. But it was the beginning of the argument that justified centralizing educational authority.

Urban school reformers argued that the ideal of democratic localism might work in rural areas but could not meet the demands of competing interests in urban areas. (It was one of the ironies of school development in this period that the argument for bureaucratic organizational structures was applied to rural areas shortly after its successful establishment in urban areas.) Urban education, with its large and heterogeneous population, had to be centrally organized and the operation of schools removed from petty partisan bickering. Also, given the ethnic diversity of the urban area, it was thought vital that immigrant children be weaned away from the alien cultures of their parents. As we saw in

Part Three, the values necessary for success in a developing industrial society were often assumed to be absent in the alien cultures of the urban poor. Thus it was vital to deliver control of the school into the protective sphere of the professional educator and prevent it from falling into the hands of the poor.

The hallmark of bureaucratic reform was centralization. Through the replacement of small district school boards by citywide boards and the establishment of a single central high school in each city, control over schools was gradually assumed by a small cadre of educational professionals. Direct, participatory democracy in education was replaced by a limited system of representation designed to put schools above politics. By the last decade of the nineteenth century the expert advice of professionals began to dictate the educational agenda as school systems expanded to the point where only a full-time professional had the time and knowledge required to manage the increasingly complex social institution called the school.

The basic elements of the American educational bureaucracy were taking shape. Control and supervision were put in centralized offices, and for the first time administrative and teaching roles were separated. The call went out for the professional training of teachers, and the search was on for a pedagogical science that would include objective, standardized, and precise rules for teaching. Power over the educational system was increasingly centralized, and decisions were gradually removed from the realm of democratic action. Bureaucratic organization worked to replace political action.

Educational statesmen in the mid-nineteenth century were salesmen for centralization and bureaucracy, and their efforts set the stage for the creation of a common, standardized system of schools. Most important, they established the notion that the state was responsible for the education of the child and that the teacher operated *in loco parentis*. This concept, which differed from the colonial notion of schools as an extension of families, was a critical precondition for the evolving state and professional control of schools.⁵ Thus we see that the nineteenth century brought about a shift from decentralized control to a more centralized bureaucratic structure of education. Increases in school population due to immigration, standardization of education, and the enforcement of teaching standards contributed to this shift.

RATIONALIZING THE BUREAUCRACY: THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

It would be a mistake to assume that the entire pattern of school bureaucratization was set by the end of the 1800s. But the preconditions were there for the ascendancy of bureaucratic politics and control.⁶ During the first third of the twentieth century, bureaucratic control was finally rationalized—that is, it was made to seem the only possible way to manage the growing public school system.

Previously we pointed out how the expansion of schooling coincided with the growth of modern manufactures and led to a hidden curriculum highly

dependent on the values of modern industrial capitalism. Additionally, a management structure was used that attempted to emulate that of business. Parallel to both of these trends was an attempt to restructure school politics to eliminate participatory decision making. This further shift in education decision making was accompanied by the increasing complexity of urban schools, the growth of the educational profession, and the fear of an increasing immigrant population's effect on democratic institutions.

With the consolidation of both rural and urban school systems, the complexity of schooling increased to the point where a bureaucratic organizational form seemed the only practical possibility:

As the organization of urban education became more complex, schools were increasingly divorced from the communities they served, and laymen had progressively less power to influence school policy. In turn, schoolmen themselves gained augmented power to run the school as they saw fit, with little or no reference to the actual requirements of the community.⁷

In rural settings "the locus of power over rural schools was transferred from community leaders to administrators, and from amateurs to professionals."⁸

The continued professionalization of teachers and administrators further consolidated the power and control of educators over the system. The tasks of schooling became more specialized. Educators took on a differentiated array of responsibilities, each seemingly more esoteric than those before. Increasingly there was a call for more carefully trained teachers and administrators. This reflected the organization of work life in general and the emphasis placed on scientific management, scientific measurement, and scientific pedagogy. The first professional degrees in educational administration were offered, and the numbers of "normal schools" for the exclusive purpose of preparing of teachers increased. As educational systems became more complex, it was increasingly clear that only professionals could manage them effectively. The final push to rationalize school bureaucracy was thus directed at closing off public participation in educational decision making.

The limits put on democratic participation at the turn of the century were carefully presented in the image of depoliticizing school decisions. School boards were reduced in size. Election to these smaller boards was on a citywide (as opposed to a ward or district) basis. Politics, however, were *not* removed from decisions about schooling. Rather, election by citywide vote diluted ethnic, minority, and working-class input. The funds required to carry on election campaigns were usually only available to economically well-established candidates.

Many reformers felt that it was precisely the personal characteristics displayed by the ethnic, minority, or working-class population that should be eliminated in school. Preventing them from controlling school boards was necessary to this purpose. The "public interest" thus established was a system of school politics created to allow elite social and business groups to control school policy. The result of these political maneuvers was democratic elitism. As Joel Spring argues:

This notion is a winner-takes-all view that believes the democratic process should be organized to give the majority of voters the right to select those who are best able to represent everyone's interests. Since, it is assumed, other voters don't really know what is in their best interests, elections must be structured so that only the best candidates can present themselves to the voters. This view of democracy was the goal of the campaign to "keep the schools out of politics."⁹

The bureaucratization of the early twentieth century had profound and lasting effects on the shape of schooling in the United States. First, it made education seem so complex as to be nearly unalterable or at least untouchable by ordinary citizens:

Viewed from above such a system seemed a rational model of scientific management; viewed from the teachers' perspective it often seemed hermetic and autocratic; viewed from the outside, it often seemed so complex and opaque as to be hard to influence.¹⁰

Second, school systems seemed to build up an immunity to innovation and change. A bureaucracy thrives on rule-governed behavior with uniform patterns of action. This may suffice for an institution charged with *implementing* policy, but when such a structure dictates the *making* of policy, spontaneity and originality are often stamped out. Finally, all of these changes worked to close off schools from democratic control—or, as argued above, to depoliticize them. What this actually meant was that schools came under the political power of business and social elites who, along with the educational professionals, defined the schools' political agenda. Thus it was necessary to convince "a whole range of fellow professionals that education should be depoliticized, if by that one means not that educators should always agree, but that lay people should be kept at arms' length. This might be called the politics of lay acquiescence."¹¹ In short, political control shifted from the lay public to the professional. This was done in the name of depoliticalization.

THE GROWTH OF FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Continued concern over the weakening of the uniquely American idea that local communities should control the local schools has most recently focused on the perceived federal takeover of education. The claim is that local school districts are overrun with rules and regulations from the federal government that severely limit the range of local decision making. While widely believed, this argument is much too simplistic to explain the way in which local communities do or do not control their schools.

Until the 1950s the federal government played a very small role in educational politics. Federal involvement in education had been confined to the granting of land for state colleges and the allocation of modest sums of money to vocational education. The Constitution had implicitly left education to the states, a prerogative that states closely guarded.¹² Attempts to develop a consensus in Congress for general aid to public education had failed repeatedly since being first introduced in 1870 amid fears of a "federal takeover."

In the 1950s the federal government was virtually forced to intervene in the bitter conflict over school desegregation. The federal response to this crisis was clearly based on the constitutional mandate to protect equality of rights for all citizens; it was not intended to revise the structure of the school bureaucracies. Although this and subsequent federal interventions were often in opposition to prevailing local or state beliefs, they seldom challenged the bureaucratic structure of school politics. On the contrary, they depoliticized a variety of very hotly contested issues.

Federal education programs, termed “categorical aid,” were targeted to specific categories of students or programs. First-generation “categoricals,” such as NDEA (the National Defense Education Act), were largely aimed at the general student population. Funds were to be spent, within designated programs, as the local school saw fit. This was to change with federal aid programs in the 1960s and 1970s.

The two flagships of categorical aid in the past thirty years have been aid to educationally disadvantaged children in low-income areas and aid to handicapped students. Criteria for need were established, and schools were given specific instructions as to how to meet such needs. Both programs were prompted by a concern with issues of social justice and equality—the kinds of issues we focused on in Part One. But acceptance of the funds invited more detailed federal intervention in the operation of the local school. The large amounts of money associated with these programs were usually incentive enough to encourage the tolerance, if not the willing acceptance, of federal regulation.

Although federal involvement in public education did not significantly change the general direction of the politics of schooling, some specific directions of educational policy were very significantly changed by the new federal role. Its greatest impact was in the area of discrimination. Between the “carrot” of federal funds and the “stick” of court action, local districts were forced to abandon their most blatant practices of exclusion as applied to racial, ethnic, and language minorities; women; and the handicapped. However, all of this occurred within the confines of accelerated bureaucratization, resulting in the depoliticizing of significant social issues.

Perhaps the clearest example of this pattern is seen in the outcomes of PL 94-142. This legislation came about as a result of intense lobbying by the parents of handicapped children who felt the needs of their children were not being met. Parents did not trust local school officials to change their practices and appealed first to the courts. As we have seen, the *PARC* decision extended the equal protection clause of the Constitution to handicapped children. PL 94-142 attacked discrimination against handicapped students and led gradually to greater integration of such students into the regular classroom, because it mandated placement of handicapped students in the least restrictive environment possible. As judicial mandates were translated into legislation, the federal government was lobbied by interest groups that still did not trust either state or local officials. Lawmakers relied heavily on court decisions for objectives and procedures. This produced an extensive body of law and regulation with tightly specified proce-

dures, including an individualized education plan (IEP) for *each* child covered within the law. In addition, qualifications for professionals in the field were defined, and student classifications were carefully spelled out.

The result, whether by design or accident, was the concentration of power in the hands of a relatively few bureaucrats at federal, state, and local levels who made decisions about how to educate a particular segment of the population. A cadre of professionals having specific qualifications then undertook to follow a carefully delineated set of procedures, objectively and consistently, in meeting student needs. The very individuals (parents) who had worked so diligently to change the way the handicapped were treated were now often prevented by professionals from influencing their children's education. This occurred even with legal safeguards protecting parents' rights to consent to options for treatment offered to children. In this way federal intervention followed the pattern of bureaucratization, sometimes replacing a local bureaucracy with a state or federal one, but more often merely transferring power to another group of local professionals.

It is important to remember that much federal intervention was called for by local groups of parents dissatisfied with the inability of the local school bureaucracies to meet the needs of minorities, women, and the handicapped. It is true that the federal government has altered the way in which local schools are run, and there is no denying that local school officials spend a great deal of time meeting requirements to qualify for federal support. Underlying the surface issues, however, is a more important dynamic. Given the historic evolution of school politics, there is no reason to believe that local schools (particularly urban ones) would have proceeded in any other way if left to their own devices. That is to say, the real issue in local school politics is not external intervention in local school affairs but the bureaucratic local governance structures that violate the ideal of local democratic control.

OPPOSING BUREAUCRATIC GROWTH

It would not be fair to say that bureaucratization proceeded apace without conflict. Opposition was especially pronounced in rural areas where local leaders were perceived as "far closer and more responsive to the concerns of rural parents than either the policymakers at the state capitol or the business-oriented urban administrators could ever be."¹³ Of course, this is not to say that local, decentralized authority was always democratic in nature. Class, ethnic, and racial biases existed in small communities, and power was often held by a small group of local elites. The argument, however, was over who should control the education of a community's children, where power should lie, and how much room there should be for community control.

There were also educators in the Progressive era who fought against the drive to make schools into factory-style bureaucracies. As would be expected, they were the same individuals who opposed the ethos of scientific management.

John Dewey was one of the leaders of the fight against the bureaucratization of schools. Dewey, it will be recalled, believed that the ideological function of the school should be to promote the democratic values of equality and participation. To him the top-down management of a “democratic” school was a contradiction in terms. The very organization of the school should be consistent with its social ends. Schools should operate like a small democracy, argued Dewey, for only then will students genuinely understand what it means to live in a democratic society.¹⁴

Dewey’s ideas about school organizations and politics were put into action by Ella Flagg Young, superintendent of schools in Chicago from 1909 to 1915. She worked to open up Chicago’s schools to more localized control. In particular, teachers were given greater authority over the daily decisions made in the school. On her retirement from the superintendency she summed up her vision for schools:

In order that teachers may delight in awakening the spirits of children, they must themselves be awake. We have tried to free the teachers. Some day the system will be such that the child and teacher will go to school with ecstatic joy. At home in the evening the child will talk about the things done during the day and will talk with pride. I want to make the schools the great instrument of democracy.¹⁵

While Young and Dewey focused on the internal workings of schools, George Counts directed his attention to community politics. Most importantly, his *Social Composition of School Boards* (1917) demonstrated clearly the control of school politics by small elite cliques in most cities. His argument was that political reform in general did not genuinely *remove* politics from school business. Rather, it limited *access* to school politics to the monied and social elite.

Teacher unions also developed as a way to counteract the authority of central control. Led by teachers such as Margaret Haley in Chicago, unions were formed to extend teachers’ rights to negotiate their wages and working conditions. Even the NEA, which began as a professional association run by school administrators, turned to collective bargaining in the 1960s as a tool to combat growing bureaucratic control of schools. Teacher unions, however, have developed their own bureaucracies and have at times supported as well as opposed the growing centralization of school control.

Yet these protests did not change the direction of school politics. Scientific management and the narrowing of access to participation in educational decision making were made to seem both inevitable and legitimate. The influence of the movement to professionalize and depoliticize schooling can be traced in large part to the fact that it operated “in concert politically, ideologically, and programmatically with the most powerful forces in America, the economic and political elites that were transforming the ways in which society conducted its business in both public and private.”¹⁶ Although opposition and protest kept organizational alternatives alive, the dominant form of school politics was bureaucratic and professional. We turn now to the school choice movement, the most recent challenge to the bureaucratization of schools.

SCHOOL CHOICE AND LOCAL CONTROL

Throughout this chapter we have stressed two ways in which local control of schooling has been eroded. Reformers in the early twentieth century were able to narrow greatly the possibilities for public activism by eliminating partisan, ward-based school board elections and reducing the number of board seats. Ellwood Cubberley, writing in 1916, argued for school boards to be reduced in size and described what he considered the ideal situation:

[A] body small enough to meet around a single table and discuss matters in a simple, direct and business-like manner, under the guidance of a chairman who knows how to handle public business, and take action as a whole, is very desirable. If the board confines itself to its proper work, an hour a week will transact all of the school business which the board should handle. There is no more need for speeches or oratory in the conduct of a school system than there would be in the conduct of a national bank.¹⁷

Thus, in the movement for public education we see a narrowing of public control over schools. Schools were to be run by a *particular segment* of the public in a community.

The second way in which local control was abridged was through the drive for the professionalization of education. The growth of school bureaucracies that we have been tracing put decisions in the hands of administrators and curriculum experts rather than parents and teachers. Citizen participation in school affairs is limited by the belief that “professionals operating as technical experts in their public service area make decisions that are value free and apolitical.”¹⁸

Finally, there is the abridgment of local control by what David Cohen has called the “private government: that wide variety of private agencies that carry out public business.”¹⁹ Among these are lawyers, testing services, textbook publishers, and educational researchers. At issue here is the amount of control these individuals and corporations exercise over public schooling while being politically accountable to no one. For example, what democratically elected official oversees the production of textbooks to be used in a local school district? Local control of textbooks is lost to what is rapidly becoming, *de facto*, a national curriculum. The same can be said of businesses such as the Educational Testing Service (ETS), whose Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) is often required of high school students for college admission. ETS may produce tests that have little relation to what a local school district hopes to accomplish with its students, but the district must accede to the dictates of the test makers if its students are to go to college.

The issue is whether the primary interest of these businesses (to make a profit) can genuinely reflect and serve popular public interests. If not, how are such corporations to be held in check? Their form of political power—the control over schooling’s agenda and the belief in apolitical expertise—has done more to limit local control than federal intervention has.

In response and reaction to these trends and growing concern over the quality of public education (see Part Five), parents and educators have mounted two recent challenges to school politics “as usual.” The first is the school choice movement, encompassing a wide variety of plans to empower parents and students to choose their own schools. The second is the movement to decentralize educational decision making, thereby empowering local school people to choose the way their school will be run.

Parental Choice

Since the early 1960s there have been calls to allow parents to choose their children’s school. The free market, it was imagined, would regulate student and parent choice. Students would supposedly flock to good schools, and attendance would dwindle at poor ones. A form of “voting with your feet” would replace school politics.

The earliest proposal to organize such choice was in the form of vouchers. Under this system every parent would be provided with an educational voucher equivalent in value to what is spent yearly on his or her child’s education. The parent could then use this voucher to pay tuition at any school or approved educational agency.²⁰

During the 2000 presidential election, debate over the use of educational vouchers was a key issue. Al Gore, the Democratic presidential candidate, consistently opposed educational vouchers. He believed that they undermine public education by taking funds away from the schools. George W. Bush, the Republican candidate and eventual winner, favored the use of vouchers to be applied toward private education. As reflected in the 2000 American presidential election, the issue of educational vouchers followed its traditional pattern at the national level as being a partisan issue.²¹

The strengths and weaknesses of the voucher proposal have been hotly debated. Al Ramirez argues that “vouchers are about politics, not about improving education. Vouchers will be an educational life preserver for a small percentage of poor students who are stuck on sinking educational ships. However, the current voucher strategy does nothing to address the needs of those youngsters who must stay behind.”²² Advocates point out that educational vouchers have been successfully implemented, allow parental choice, and hold schools accountable by making them more competitive. Vouchers, they say, also encourage private enterprises to participate in improving the quality of education. Successful programs have been implemented in Milwaukee, San Antonio, Dayton, Ohio, and New York City.²³

It is interesting to note that President George W. Bush nominated Roderick R. Paige to be his Secretary of Education. Subsequently confirmed by the Senate, Dr. Paige, formerly superintendent of the Houston public schools, is a strong proponent of public schools but deviates from the party platform on educational vouchers. Dr. Paige has not shown much support for voucher programs.

A similar proposal uses tuition tax credits to enhance parental choice. Under this proposal parents may deduct from their federal income tax a percentage of the private school tuition they pay. The goal here is to subsidize choice for parents who might otherwise be unable to afford it. The Reagan and first Bush administrations both endorsed tuition tax credits and parental choice.

Perhaps one of the strongest arguments against tax credits is that they primarily benefit the wealthy. Although everyone would be entitled to write-off private tuition in the form of tax credits, this credit must be put into its appropriate context. Suppose a private school charges a tuition rate of \$10,000 a year. If student A's family earns \$25,000 a year, they would have a difficult time accumulating the tuition money and meeting other expenses (such as mortgage payments) throughout the year. If student B's family earns \$125,000 a year, it would be easier for them to pay the tuition charge and reap the benefit of the tax credit at the end of the year. They would receive the credit in the form of reduced taxes or a refund.

John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe's *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* has captured public attention by issuing a renewed call for parental choice.²⁴ This work is a direct attack on the bureaucratic nature of schooling. The authors argue that good schools are the schools that have the fewest administrative restraints. They are places where educators are free to develop flexible approaches to teaching and learning.

Based on James Coleman and Thomas Hoffer's study of private versus public schools,²⁵ Chubb and Moe see the superior results of private schooling as a product of the democracy of client power. The good school, they say, has to avoid becoming entangled in bureaucratic rules and regulations so that it can quickly meet the demands of its clients—parents and students. When clients cannot choose, schools become unresponsive, and bureaucracy rather than demand dictates school policies. Thus, Chubb and Moe propose a modified voucher plan in which every certified school would receive a scholarship or payment for each student enrolled.

Plans for choice similar to this are currently in operation. In Minnesota students can choose to attend any public school. In New York City and Milwaukee all high schools are part of an open-enrollment plan whereby students apply to the public high school and are admitted according to established criteria. Attempts have been made to include private schools in its choice plan. In the late 1990s, New York City launched the School Choice Scholarships Foundation (SCSF) which awarded 1,300 scholarships to low income children grades 1–4 to transfer to private schools. The results have been mixed.²⁶

The issue of school choice raises fundamental issues of equality of opportunity, equity, and empowerment. Many who advocate greater parental choice in schooling believe that public schools have failed to deliver on their promises of equal opportunity and quality schooling. Three fundamental assumptions seem to underlie school choice.

First is the assumption that parents know what is best for their children. In this argument choice is seen as autonomy and empowerment in making

decisions about one's offspring. The issue is dramatically illustrated in the New York City school system. The city plans to launch an experimental program of specialized magnet schools, but many fear that local control will be lost in the process. The previous case of Joseph Fernandez, former New York City school chancellor, is fresh in parents' minds. Fernandez was deposed as a result of public outcry against his attempt to offer a multicultural curriculum that taught tolerance for homosexual lifestyles. Many of the 32 community districts that make up New York City opposed such a value-laden curriculum on the grounds that it interfered with the prerogatives of parents to determine school curricula.

The second assumption underlying school choice is that there really are available options. The existence of educational options means that we have to abandon the idea that there is one best way to educate children and to organize schooling. This notion, of course, challenges the view of the last half-century that standardization of curriculum and outcomes is desirable. The challenge to standardization lies behind the idea of school-based or site-based management. The practical effect of the challenge is to redistribute power away from central administration toward school building administrators and teachers.

The third assumption behind the choice movement is that choice will lead to excellence, that competition among schools will lead to better schools. This assumption is crucial to the privatization movement. Believers in the privatization of public schooling are convinced that if public schools are forced to attend to management and financial practices more carefully, they will make schooling more cost-effective.

The privatization movement has proceeded slowly over the past decade but is receiving greater attention as the decay of urban school systems becomes more dramatic. Education Alternatives leads in privatization efforts and Wittle Communication and Sylvan Learning Systems are close behind. The case of Baltimore's Harlem Park Community School will be watched closely because it is one of several sites turned over to Education Alternatives to run for profit. The company moved immediately to lower custodial and administrative costs by reducing the average pay of custodians and teacher aids. To avoid bureaucratic snafus in accounting, the company also contracted with a major accounting firm. The growth of privatizing public education is evident, however, its cost-effectiveness is unproven.²⁷

A mix of pedagogical strategies are being tried in the Harlem Park Community School, including the use of computers, small-group instruction, individual tutoring by teachers and teacher aids, and field trips. None of these things are new *per se*, but taken together they create a different climate from the old talk-and-recite methods. Short-range results have been an average advance of .88 grade levels among the 4,800 students in the schools. The company estimates that another two to three years will be necessary for a more thorough assessment of its methods.²⁸

No matter how they are designed, critics charge, none of these plans for overcoming the bureaucratic control of schools solves the problem of choice and equity. For example, Coleman's findings that private schools do better than

public schools in educating children (a study on which Chubb and Moe base their case) have been widely challenged. If we look more closely at his results, we find that private school students come from families with higher socioeconomic status (SES) and higher educational attainment levels than do students in public schools. In fact, with students of the same SES, public schools do just as well as private schools. Critics of choice thus ask, What will prevent the newly “privatized” schools from merely excluding the hard-to-teach children? Will private schools, free from bureaucratic controls, simply exclude those students who are now protected from discrimination on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, language, or handicapping condition? In fact, this is precisely what happens in cities with open-enrollment plans. Parents wait in lines for hours to get their child a seat in a prestigious school, and other schools are seen as “dumping grounds” for whoever is left.²⁹

The answer to limiting the bureaucratic control of schools most likely includes some element of choice. If an individual cannot opt out of a system, he or she has no choice but to accept the will of those who administer the system. This is especially true of large bureaucratic systems like public schools where the decision makers (federal and state officials, test and textbook publishers, for example) are not subject to direct, democratic control. Choice without adequate concern for equity can only make a mockery of our public commitment to an equal education for all.

Unlike private schools, public schools have a commitment to serve *all* children: They have the obligation to provide an equal educational opportunity to all. Such a commitment is simply not present in private schools. The impact of vouchers and tuition tax credits would, say their critics, undermine the public school commitment to equal educational opportunity. The reason is simple. Funding for public schools would decline, thus undermining their capability to honor their commitment to *all* children. Public education is made possible only by the commitment of large segments of the population to the ideal that democratic government is best preserved by providing, at public expense, the means to educate the citizenry to govern itself. The means themselves are public funds to support schooling accessible to all children. Public funding, controlled by the public, for public enlightenment, to serve the public interest, has been a time-honored formula for public education.

In response to demands for schools to be more politically responsive on the one hand and to provide a more adequate and equitable education on the other, a new movement for reforming school politics has emerged. We turn now to the resurgence of local control.

Local Control

After two decades of teacher strikes, underfunded schools, and growing public distrust, the people of Chicago were ready for a change. Politics as usual were not providing an excellent or equitable school system. Chicagoans’ frustration, displayed in marches on Springfield, the Illinois state capital, resulted in perhaps the most radical political restructuring of schools to date.

In 1989, in return for increased school funding, the Chicago public school system was divided into nearly 600 separate school districts—each school being its own district. Now, schools are governed by a local school council with elected representatives of teachers, parents, and community members. The council is empowered to spend the school's budget, write the school curriculum, and hire and fire the school principal. This is the most dramatic example of the push for decentralizing school control and moving toward what is often referred to as site-based management.

A similar plan, tied to changes in the funding of public schools, was passed by the Kentucky state legislature in 1990. Under this plan schools are free to develop their own strategies to meet state educational goals. Each school must have its own site-based management council, made up of teachers and parents with decision-making powers.

The growth of charter schools contributes to the decentralization of schools. In 1991, Minnesota passed the first state charter school law. A decade later, the growth of these alternative educational institutions continued to rise. Charter schools differ from traditional public schools because they are operated independently of the local school district. Charter schools usually are formed by a group of teachers and/or parents who see the need to create an alternative or specialized course of study. Charter schools continue to receive public funding and to some extent meet standards prescribed by the state.³⁰

Advocates contend that charter schools promote competition and improve the quality of public education. Others contend further that more educational experimentation and innovation occur in charter schools. Successful implementation of charter schools has occurred in California and Michigan. Most notably Arizona has 351 charter schools that germinated a statewide free market in education.³¹

Some of the concerns regarding the creation of charter schools include the education credentials of people forming these institutions. Their ability to effectively manage the charter schools and their competence to understand federal, state, and local legislation affecting children in these schools are also grave concerns.³²

Like calls for parental choice, the push toward site-based management arises from a concern for educational reform. Frustrated with the ability of large bureaucracies to respond to the needs of students, many parents, teachers, and administrators see site-based management as a way to circumvent overly restrictive policies and regulations. Local school councils are usually empowered to make all the daily decisions about a school as long as they stay within a district- or state-approved budget and curriculum guidelines.

The push for more local control in some ways complements the calls for parental choice. It is only when schools have the ability to develop their own "personalities," to be different and to excel, that parents actually have a choice. As local-control advocates point out, choosing between several schools that all have the same structure and curriculum is no choice at all.

More importantly, advocates of restructuring the political control of schools see such moves as giving *every* school the tools needed for reform and improvement.

Rather than allowing a few good schools to attract the most easily educated students, the argument here is to improve every school. Although even the most committed advocates of site-based management do not see it as improving every school, they do argue that it at least gives all schools the chance.

Time and the politics of schooling will tell if these proposals for more local control will work. As educators in Chicago are finding out, the established school bureaucracy is very powerful, and on occasion even teacher unions oppose such restructuring. As we saw with education at the turn of the twentieth century, there is still concern that these local approaches will be very parochial in their treatment of curriculum. There are also evolving issues of power in moving to more localized school control. For example, the Chicago and Kentucky plans differ in their allocation of power to parents and teachers. In Chicago, parents hold a majority in school councils; teachers run them in Kentucky.

Regardless of the outcome of these debates, one thing seems clear: The credibility of bureaucratic control of schools is exhausted. Once individuals or local groups have the power to choose and/or run schools, it seems highly unlikely that they will voluntarily relinquish that authority. What we do not know yet is how immovable the existing bureaucratic structure is and what shape the alternatives will take.

SCHOOL POLITICS AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

In the discussion of local school governance we have seen how the bureaucratic structure of school administration profoundly affects educational politics. Decisions about who should be educated and how that should occur have been narrowly limited to those with claimed expertise or public prestige and standing. This has been the logical consequence of a long trend to depoliticize educational issues. However, the issues are really as political as ever. They still require decisions that affect, for good or ill, the social fabric of each community's life. Yet the decisions are often made by a small minority who are in only a very limited way subject to public control. There is little, if anything, that might be called democratic about an arrangement in which a closed administrative structure has supplanted open decision making. Under these circumstances, issues of fairness, opportunity, and equality are decided by the ideological parameters within which educational bureaucrats operate.

There have been two consequences of this trend. The first can be seen in the continuing roller-coaster ride that public support for (and criticism of) schools has taken. As we will point out in Part Five, the history of public schooling has been fraught with public dissatisfaction and proposals for change. There are a wide variety of causes for this, and it is important to note that all of our major public and private institutions have gone through similar crises of faith.

One persistent concern of the public, of parents in particular, has been the inaccessibility of the schools. Parents often find schools and educators to be

unresponsive to their concerns and demands. When children then perform in an unacceptable way (for example, when they do not learn to read, write, or compute, or fail to secure employment upon graduation) the schools bear the brunt of the community's wrath.

Additionally, as schools (rural ones in particular) become more removed from local control through consolidation, the level of fiscal support for them decreases. It is easier to vote against a tax levy for a school in the neighboring county than for one down the street. School professionals, by isolating themselves from the general public in order to increase their power, may be, paradoxically, reducing their power. As competition over the public purse becomes more intense, schools will need a wide range of allies. Those allies will not be coming from a public that feels it is called upon only when funds are needed and has little access to decisions about programs.

The second consequence of the trend to depoliticize educational issues has been the failure to represent the interests of children, the consumers. Since children cannot vote, who will protect their interests? G. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson observe:

Children suffer an obvious liability within democratic politics: they cannot vote, and many of them cannot even speak on their own behalf. Instead others speak for children in public. In fact, despite a wistful view that children's issues should be above politics and that family issues should remain private, there is no dearth of interest groups and professionals speaking for children.³³

What this has meant is that children's interests are represented only when they match the interests of another interest group.

The most central failure of the bureaucratization of school politics is the lack of a voice for students. They are assumed to behave as passive consumers of a product they are not allowed to choose. Even indirect influence, through their parents, is often denied to them. The fragmentation and professionalization of schooling has proceeded apace, often with little regard for the needs of children.

The political agenda for schools, though often claimed to be guided by concern with "what's best for kids," is actually guided by concern over what's best for powerful interest groups. These include business, teachers, and various levels and agencies of government. The schools are seen as an instrument to be used in achieving a goal not necessarily linked to the welfare of children. As Grubb and Lazerson so pointedly put it:

It has become impossible to justify public spending on schools that are challenging, enjoyable places for children; only the demonstration of future benefits—in cognitive skills, in reduced delinquency and crime, above all in earnings differentials—is regarded as a legitimate argument.³⁴

As with many of the issues discussed in this book, the bureaucratization and depoliticizing of school politics are products of general cultural trends. Solutions to the problems presented need to be found in the larger public domain. But this does not absolve public schools of their responsibility to address these challenges in their own right. In particular, the question before

public education is how an institution supposedly dedicated to the perpetuation of democracy can be so undemocratic in its own organization. Unless this paradox can be resolved, the claims that educators make about preparing young people to be fully participating citizens in our democracy will continue to sound hollow at best, hypocritical at worst.

NOTES

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Readings on the Politics of Schooling: The Centralization of Control

How did the modern, centralized, bureaucratic, and supposedly depoliticized organization of schools come about? What historical forces gave rise to modern school organization? We begin to explore this question with an 1893 piece by Andrew Draper, the superintendent of Cleveland City Schools. In the article we can see all of the themes that were to emerge in the campaign to depoliticize and centralize school government. Draper argues that universal suffrage leads to weak educational leadership and thus requires the narrowing of the power of school boards, the reduction of their numbers, and the election of all board members as members at large rather than by wards to ensure the election of those who are above politics. We can also hear the request for the bureaucratization of school governance in Draper's call for the specific division of functions and a clear-cut chain of command. Draper's work set the stage for school governance reform over the next five decades.

John E. Deasy in "Moving from Oversight to Insight" describes his journey from school principal to superintendent. Along the way he features those integral figures who create an educational community: students, teachers, parents, administrators, and school board members. And he ponders the question, How can a host of diverse groups with often conflicting interests be accommodated to create a harmonious relationship within an educational community?

If educational change is to take place, effective leadership must be present. Gerald N. Tirozzi in "The Artistry of Leadership" places the principal at the forefront of this endeavor. Tirozzi analyzes features of the rapidly changing landscape of education: testing, demographic shifts, student needs, technology, staffing needs, and resource allocation. A principal must not only keep pace with change but improve the quality of his or her preparation. In order to successfully operate in the twenty-first century, well-qualified leadership is fundamental.

The last two selections, by Alan Peshkin and Joel Spring, point out the modern-day consequences of the Draper model. In a careful look at school governance in Mansfield, a small American town, Peshkin describes the

nature of school organization and explores how one town gets what it wants. He points out some of the paradoxes faced by schools in towns like Mansfield. His study presents an important example of how, in a relatively homogeneous community, political power is structured around schooling. Further, it makes apparent how the political structure legitimizes a particular ideological role for schools.

The politics of large city schools in Cincinnati, Ohio, is the focus of the selection by Joel Spring. Spring traces the history of the Cincinnati School Committee, a private group of businessmen who worked to control the makeup of the city school board. He calls the type of school governance found in Cincinnati "democratic centralism"; his term is useful for explaining school politics in other cities also. Indeed, the process of electing a school board to govern the schools is democratic in that it is open to all eligible voters and candidates. However, due to the political structures established at the turn of the twentieth century, access to a position on the ballot is, in fact, centrally controlled.

In considering the politics of schooling as displayed in these readings, the reader may find the following questions helpful: What was behind the claim that professional control of schooling would lead to the depoliticizing of school governance? Who stood to gain from the so-called depoliticizing of schooling? What was the political agenda of those behind school centralization, that is, what was their political intent?

ANDREW S. DRAPER

PLANS OF ORGANIZATION FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES IN LARGE CITIES

Of all the unsolved and troublesome problems in government which present themselves to the minds of thoughtful Americans, the most prominent is that of municipal administration in large cities. The news editors, the magazine writers, the good people in the literary and scientific clubs, the great body of honest voters throughout the country, discuss it perennially, and then vote so ineffectually that the worst elements of society control the governments of the great cities of the republic. It is a suggestive fact that the only real progress in the direction of municipal reform has been made through the imposition of limitations upon the common suffrage, through taking away authority from the representatives of the people, through the centralization of power and responsibility in fewer individuals, and through statutory requirements and prohibitions upon public officers. It will continue to be so. Unintelligent voting is not wholly responsible, nor is intelligent voting the cure, for all maladministration

From Andrew S. Draper, "Plans of Organization for School Purposes in Large Cities," *Educational Review* (June 1983): 1-4, 13-16.

in municipal affairs. If honest voters will vote only for proved men for city officers, if in all that pertains to municipal business they will be guided by business principles rather than by political preferences, the problem of municipal reform will become solvable; but even then the larger the city the greater will be the necessity for statutory plans of organization which centralize responsibility and direct and limit official action.

As cities increase in population, and even out of proportion to the advance in population, the volume of municipal business enlarges, the magnitude of the transactions becomes more and more appalling, the subjects presented more and more involved, the temptations become greater, and dishonesty more and more difficult of detection. As it becomes more and more imperative to have strong men, experienced men, and honest men to manage the business of great cities, it also becomes, for obvious reasons, more and more difficult to secure them upon the basis of an unrestricted suffrage. It is therefore meet that the best thought of the country should be turned, as it is turned, to plans for the government of cities.

And what is true of municipal business in great and growing cities is true in still larger degree of their school business. The proper education of the children is infinitely more important than even the management of the street, fire, and police departments of such cities. And in view of the marked extent to which our people are congregating in cities, it is well for us to remember that if the public school system is to hold the confidence and esteem of the country it must hold the confidence and esteem of the cities, and to do that it must bear fruits worthy of confidence and esteem.

The most important public work of any community is providing and managing the means of popular education. The people may neglect municipal business, and the penalty is the plundering of the city treasury. In time, mismanagement and thievery become intolerable, there is a municipal revolution, the house is cleaned, a boodler or two indicted, the loss struck off, the plan of city government remodeled, and quiet and comparative indifference once more resume their sway. The people may neglect the schools and permit them to be despoiled by thievery or degraded by place hunters, and the penalty is not only a plundered treasury, but a low and almost irredeemable tone of moral and intellectual life. Defective municipal organization and maladministration of municipal business can benefit only a very small number of individuals, while they affect the pockets and arouse the indignation of the multitude. Defective school organization and maladministration in school affairs are not only more far reaching and deadening in their influences but more subtle and insidious in their manifestation. School boards lay larger claims to character, fitness, and disinterestedness than aldermanic boards, and, as a rule, they are far more respectable and responsible. Occasionally they loot the treasury, but more commonly they do what is not technically so criminal, but what is in effect really worse. The circumstances press them hard, the wrongs they do or suffer to be done are not so deep, their friends and not themselves get the benefits, they fail to appreciate, or they deceive themselves about the harm that flows from their acts. The chief element in

school expenditures is the wages of the teachers. In the entire country this one item amounts to \$88,000,000 annually. Of course the people want to share in the distribution of this fund, and the less competent they are for the service, the more intense is the desire for a share in the fund. Incompetency creeps in, and once in can scarcely be put out. The people do not understand what the incompetency of the teacher means, or how it burdens school work; and, competent or incompetent, the teacher has a large hold upon popular sympathy. The result is deadening and disastrous. Under such circumstances, the standard of popular education becomes low, and the intellectual life of the people of the city lacks purity, virility, and power. Little is demanded of, and not much given by, the schools. There is little strength and no growth. The more intelligent will not patronize them, and the whole structure of public education is weakened and falls into disrepute. Even those who have been in them become indifferent to them. And when the people, the body of the citizenship of the country, high and low, rich and poor alike, are without affection for, or come to lack confidence in, the public schools, the circumstances will be hard and the outlook very much obscured.

So here is the pressing question of the day in public school work, one which goes to the very life of the system. It will be solved, *because* it is one which goes to the life of the system . . .

In the meantime, it is incumbent on us to understand the general principles upon which the good government of the schools in great cities rests, and to declare the lines upon which reforms must proceed.

In my opinion these are the following:

First. The elimination of politics from the selection of school boards. Dr. Philbrick rightly characterized this point as "the supreme educational problem," but we shall not cease hoping that it may be solved. Special school elections and appointments by public officers do not offer a complete solution, but are certainly in that direction. Much depends upon the state of public sentiment, which should at least demand the complete elimination of politics from school administration, if not from school elections; and no opportunity for asserting the principle should be lost.

Second. Small school boards with members representing the whole city and not wards or districts.

Third. The complete separation of school administration from municipal business. This is imperative. Laws which put the schools at the mercy of a board of aldermen are unsound in principle and deplorable in their operation. Even the determination of the sum to be levied for school purposes should not be left to a common council, which, by legislation and by usage, has come to represent, and has become representative of, interests not in harmony or sympathy with school administration. If there is a finance board or tax commission which receives estimates from all sources and finally determines the amount to be levied, it is not so objectionable that the school estimates should go with the others to this board, for such a board may be assumed to be independent of all special interests and representative of the best sentiment of the whole city. But the only sound rule is that school admin-

istration shall be entirely independent of municipal business. The two do not rest upon the same foundation; the power which manages each proceeds from entirely different sources, and the object and purposes of each have nothing in common.

Fourth. The school system of a great city must not only have an autonomy of its own, but its administration must be departmentalized. Material affairs should be entirely separated from the work of instruction. Officers must have ample authority, be properly paid for services of high grade, and held to personal accountability. If there is cause for complaint, there should be a place to make the complaint, and an officer who can neither shift nor shirk responsibility. The Cleveland plan, which creates a salaried officer directly responsible to the people for the proper care of all their school property, and for the proper management of all the business affairs of their school system, is, in that regard at least, very nearly ideal. It is economical and businesslike. It will secure a responsible man, and it will insure the alert and careful administration of business interests. All subordinates and employees are amenable to him and to him alone. The man will not only have responsibility, but he will have independence and self-respect as well. On the other hand, the superintendent of instruction should not be burdened with any of the material interests of a great school system or with keeping records or accounts relating thereto; but he should be chosen with special reference to the work of instruction, and in that department should likewise have full authority, be given ample assistance, and charged with complete responsibility. Such responsibility is well-nigh overwhelming. To secure a teaching force numbering hundreds or thousands of individuals, all of whom are capable and have individuality and teaching power, and so to organize them as to get the best results from each, and then to lead and train them so that there will be harmony, enthusiasm, growth, and continually increasing power, is a great undertaking; but under proper conditions it is not altogether impossible of accomplishment. Where teachers are appointed by school boards or committees or members thereof, or by ward or district trustees, its accomplishment is impossible. If superintendents are only allowed to nominate, and nominations are to be confirmed by a board or committee, other elements than the fitness of the candidate will of necessity be taken into consideration. If a superintendent cannot dismiss teachers, or change them about, as exigencies may require and experience suggest, without being obliged to advise with and secure the approval of boards or members who are looking for votes, or who are anxious to please friends, and who have no appreciation of the importance and delicacy of the questions involved, he will not do it at all. Every teacher knows that this is so, and every teacher knows why it is so. Every teacher knows also that there is no danger of his doing too much in the right direction. This is no reflection upon superintendents. To expect otherwise would be to expect more than that of which human nature is capable. Comparatively few men have all the elements which adapt them to such service, and those who have can accomplish their undertaking only when given a position of such power, responsibility, and dignity, as will give them

the undisputed right of leadership, and will command the respect of their associates and subordinates and of the body of the people.

These are the lines, as it seems to me, upon which reforms in the administration of the school systems of great cities must proceed. Such reforms should proceed more easily when we remember that schools do not belong wholly and alone to the communities in which they exist, but are parts of a State system which derives its existence and character from State legislation; and that the whole subject is one which claims the attention of all the reformers and the foremost statesmen of the country: for it is one which goes not alone to the material well-being, but to the intellectual life and the public security of the city, the State, and the republic.

JOHN E. DEASY

MOVING FROM OVERSIGHT TO INSIGHT: ONE COMMUNITY'S JOURNEY WITH ITS SUPERINTENDENT

June weather can vary dramatically in the Rhode Island town where I have served as a school administrator for the past eight years. A rainy, cold day may be followed by intense heat and humidity the next day, and as the school year draws to an end, the mood in the schools can mirror the weather's unpredictability.

In 1994, a year before I moved from the high school principalship to the superintendency, those June days proved especially volatile. Throughout the school, anxious talk centered on the upcoming annual town meeting, at which voters would decide on our budget. At stake were not just the supplies, books, and equipment we needed badly as the school population grew but, in many cases, our very jobs.

Town meetings have been an annual tradition in this New England community since Colonial times, and as our town has grown past the 35,000 mark, those meetings typically attract nearly 1,000 people to the high school gym. There, arguments take place in an atmosphere not unlike a Roman forum. People on both sides of an issue address the crowd from the microphone in the front of the room, and eventually the moderator calls for a voice vote.

Though the idea is based on the simplest of democratic notions, the meetings themselves can be contentious and acrimonious—and the hottest issue of all is usually the school budget, which makes up 80% of the tax rate. Hurling insulting invective about the superintendent, the school committee, and even the students, citizens insist on having their say, and meetings typically go well into the night. Demoralized by the incivility of the scene, school administrators, teachers, and parents in our town look on in disbelief and dismay as their carefully wrought budget falls under the community's axe.

Deasy, John. "Moving From Oversight to Insight: One Community's Journey with Its Superintendent" in *Phi Delta Kappan* 82(1), September 2000. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Sadly, 1994 was no different—except that school politics had become so polarized and the citizenry so angry at school leadership and officials that, when town meeting night came, nearly 3,000 people pressed into the room to have their say. In a scene of almost unbelievable tension, they voted massive cuts in the school budget. At one point—remembered ever since by this community as the nadir of its civic discourse—a speaker refused to leave the mike and was actually wrestled to the ground and carried off by police.

I drove home from that town meeting stunned, both by what I had just witnessed and by what I knew was coming next. What had we come to that our community could be so alienated and disconnected from the work our schools were doing? What could we as leaders do to change it?

I hoped that the central district leadership would be asking the same question before the next Monday, when our building administrators and staff members would gather at their regular monthly meeting and hear the fate of the programs and staffing we had so carefully planned during the year. We would need a collaborative and very thoughtful approach—on the part of the district, the building principals, the teachers, and the community leaders—to put our budget and our priorities back on track after that devastating failure.

But the Monday meeting only made matters worse. Without acknowledging our need to be included in any solution, the central office presented the assembled principals with the cuts it would now carry out—in everything from supplies to personnel to reform initiatives. We were not asked for our input on these decisions; they were announced as a routine agenda item, coming, incongruously, after such vital business as reviewing the monthly meeting calendar and going over the summer maintenance needs that we all knew would never be completed without funding.

In the year following that dreadful June meeting, a number of dramatic personnel changes occurred in the district's leadership. The superintendent retired, the assistant superintendent left for a state-level position, and the personnel director resigned. After careful consideration, I applied for the position of superintendent. Not fully realizing the challenge that lay ahead or the personal implications of such a dramatic change in employment, I naively thought I could offer the district a different perspective on leadership. The acrimonious environment that hung over the district did not deter my resolve that things must be different from now on. The community clearly expected change, yet there was considerable doubt that an "insider" could deliver both a shift in culture and a change in practice.

Once named to the position and eager to build the capacity of our community to collaborate on school improvement, I set about putting the necessary ingredients in place. Town officials, school administrators, church leaders, board members, teachers, parents, and students would all have to become part of this effort if we were going to ensure that nothing like those past events would be repeated. My dream was to craft a culture in which all members of our community would exercise professional courage in order to provide students in our schools with the best education possible. This meant a student-centered system, in which all decisions, from personnel to finance,

would need to meet the test of being “best for children,” not simply comfortable for adults.

The work has been intense, difficult, and at times very risky. We crafted a district vision and mission, then developed a set of measurable goals and objectives and gave the community annual reports on the progress we were making toward them. We examined students’ work and numerous measures of achievement in order to construct a plan of action to close gaps associated with wealth, gender, race, and ethnicity. We devised a new and rigorous way of evaluating our performance as professionals and holding ourselves accountable to the community and the families we serve. I continually placed the issues before the public and simply explained that they would not go away and that it was our obligation to develop a means to improve our schools by addressing those concerns.

Now, four years later, the dream is becoming real. Town meetings average 40 minutes, and for several years citizens have approved our school budgets by unanimous vote. Once wary of and hostile to school administrators and board members, town officials now accompany us on twice-yearly retreats at which we examine data about student achievement, look closely at student work, and plan for the improvement of teaching, learning, and our school facilities. We have moved from those early meetings filled with tension and anxiety to our current meetings punctuated with laughter and conviviality and filled with respectful and thoughtful dialogue.

In November 1999, we celebrated what may well be a high point in our town’s history, when citizens voted by the biggest margin ever to pass our community’s (and the state’s) largest school bond for new construction and renovation.

The school board has undergone a similar transformation. Instead of spending its time and energy on political fights, it has set out to gain greater understanding of the teaching, learning, and assessments our schools need if we are to improve student achievement. The focus of board meetings alternates between dealing with routine business and developing members’ understanding and capacity. Among other things, board members have used their meetings to look collaboratively and publicly at student work, to participate in text-based discussions with school administrators, to talk with students about what works best for their learning, and to evaluate through thoughtful dialogue which reform initiatives to pursue.

Perhaps the most stunning example of the board’s new approach came when its members actually sat down—in public session—to take Rhode Island’s new state assessments mandated for all eighth-graders, the New Standards Reference Examinations. When I first proposed this to the board, members reacted with skepticism and even alarm. Who would score the test, they asked, and how public would the results be? Reassured that the purpose was for them to gain insight into the students’ experience, they took a brave step in agreeing to the experiment.

The conversations that followed were remarkable, as school board members came to terms with exactly what their youngsters faced in these very rigorous exams. “It’s no longer enough for a student just to get the right answer,”

one board member observed. “They have to demonstrate and apply what they know.” To have such dialogue take place in public session permanently impressed the students, teachers, and parents who witnessed it. And it dramatically changed the board’s operational style, decision-making methods, and beliefs about assessment and accountability.

Just as dramatic a change has occurred in the monthly meetings that bring together the superintendent, central office administrators, and building administrators. Here again, we now alternate between our business meetings (held every other month) and those focused on developing our leadership capacity (held monthly, for half a day). Over the years we have come to regard this latter time as sacred to our work; everyone agrees to arrive on time and avoid interruptions, and we do no routine business in this setting. Instead, we spend time collaboratively assessing student work against a benchmark the district has developed. Members also present their own work to the group in the form of artifacts and evidence; they describe their questions and struggles and seek support, suggestions, and critiques from their colleagues.

Such work may seem risky, but we have agreed that no part of it will in any way appear as part of our annual performance evaluations. And it has paid off in increasingly rich, challenging, and trusting relationships. I vividly recall one veteran principal describing to the group a struggle to change the culture of a faculty. The artifacts in this presentation included grievances filed against the principal, letters of complaint from parents, critical newspaper articles, and hurtful memos from teachers on the staff. Though painful to witness, the experience drew us together and moved us deeply.

Even more important, we all learned something from it. I, for example, learned that my frequent presence in this principal’s building, which I had assumed would convey my staunch support, in fact caused the school’s faculty to question the principal’s motives for change. Were the new ideas mine, his staff wondered, or the principal’s own? At the moment in the session when the group discussed its suggestions, it took great courage, I believe, for participants to openly criticize my actions, but this was yet another payoff of the trust we had built together.

In many situations like this, our community has come together to struggle with difficult and often painful problems. But we have also seen remarkable success in the areas of student achievement, high standards, professional development, and the funding necessary to support them. In retrospect, I believe that we have accomplished this by an important shift in the way we operate—from a paradigm of oversight to one of insight.

Just as students cannot thrive and achieve in places where they are not known well, schools cannot thrive and improve unless their leaders, policy makers, and community know the system well. This collaboration requires risk, struggle, and thoughtful discourse—and providing the opportunities and conditions in which these things can safely happen has been my guiding mission as the central office leader. Rather than seeing my job as a powerful and directive management position, I see it as providing support for developing

professional, collaborative communities. In our town, insight has proved more powerful in the end than oversight ever was.

GERALD N. TIROZZI

THE ARTISTRY OF LEADERSHIP: THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Leadership is much more of an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible signs of artful leadership are expressed ultimately in its practice.

—MAX DE PREE, *LEADERSHIP IS AN ART*

What if Michelangelo had failed? What if his formal and informal training had not been adequate? What if he had fallen short of producing a lasting treasure? His creative genius would have gone unacknowledged, and millions of people would have been robbed of his art. Would the world have survived? Of course. Would our appreciation for art and the richness it bestows on us be somehow diminished? Probably.

As Michelangelo must have stood at the half-finished point of each of his masterpieces, envisioning the work in its entirety and understanding the magnitude of the task ahead, so too must we look at the profession of education generally and the school principalship specifically. What areas need to be reworked or totally redone? Are principals and teachers helping students to transform themselves into “masterpieces” or merely hoping that another artist will come along to re-sculpt the work? What are the consequences if we fail in our endeavor? Certainly the results will be more profound than a failure by Michelangelo.

Our education system is not a masterpiece, though we have the collective skills to make it so. It is a continual work in progress, respecting the reality that children learn in different ways. Without an understanding of the challenges ahead, a willingness to change, and an eye to encouraging each student to become a “masterpiece,” schools fall far short in preparing today’s students for tomorrow’s complex and changing world.

At the dawn of this millennium, the challenges for secondary schools and principals in the United States include changing demographics, schools and curricula that are inappropriately designed for today’s adolescents, principals trained to be managers rather than instructional leaders, and a dramatic shortage of qualified candidates willing to take on the principalship.

Few Michelangelos are appearing in school leadership positions. And even if one hundred or more existed, such pockets of creative genius in a school here

Tirozzi, Gerald N. “The Artistry of Leadership: The Evolving Role of the Secondary School Principal” in *Phi Delta Kappan* 82 (6), February 2001. Reprinted by permission of the author.

and a school there would be insufficient. The challenge to our collective genius is to unveil the treasures *within all students in every school*. Each principal will have to answer the question, Did my leadership make a difference in improving the academic achievement and social and emotional well-being of students? And if that question is to be answered affirmatively, secondary school principals will have to acquire new and different skills.

The principal—the instructional “artist in residence”—establishes a climate for excellence, puts forth a vision for continuous improvement in student performance, promotes excellence in teaching, and commits to sustained, comprehensive professional development for all staff members. The principal ensures that curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment of student progress are coherent components in the teaching and learning process. In short, the principal engages herself or himself as an instructional leader.

NEW SKILLS FOR A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Creating lasting treasures requires a vision of the finished work and an understanding of the medium to be used. Long-range decisions we make today must anticipate what the future will bring. To understand the skills required of principals in the 21st century, we must examine the projected changes in the educational landscape and how those changes will affect the principal’s role and vision.

The U.S. population and the school-age population will be changing dramatically during the first quarter of the 21st century. *Secondary Schools in a New Millennium: Demographic Certainties, Social Realities*, a report prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals by the renowned demographer Harold Hodgkinson, offers important considerations for school administrators who are visionary in their approach to school reform.¹ Such visionaries truly understand the reality that merely responding to the status quo will not be sufficient for tomorrow’s schools. Understanding and assessing the demographic, social, economic, and educational trends on the horizon—and abandoning a commitment to the status quo—will make possible a successful transformation of America’s secondary schools. Several themes discussed in the report reveal areas in which principals will need new skills and a new mindset:

- *School-age population.* Hispanics and Asians will constitute 61% of the nation’s population growth by 2025, which in turn will dramatically change the makeup of the school-age population. A significant percentage of students will enter our secondary schools speaking a language other than English. School leaders must be prepared to develop the instructional methods, provide the materials and programs, and develop the teaching force necessary to meet the needs of this diverse group of students. Offering some combination of English-language instruction with content instruction in a language that students understand will not be a matter for debate. It will be an absolute necessity!

- *Transience.* Forty-three million Americans move every year. How can schools effectively develop continuity when the students who start in September leave mid-year and new students transfer into the school? As the report points out, the states with the highest percentages of students graduating from high school and being admitted to college are states with stable populations, while the most transient states have the lowest percentages of students graduating from high school and being admitted to college. Do reform efforts take into consideration the pronounced effects of a constantly changing student body?
- *New buildings.* School construction will be an ongoing issue, but the focus will be on “new” areas. Population growth during the next 15 to 20 years will shift from the “beltway suburbs” to “edge cities.” Over the next 20 years, Hodgkinson concludes, “the greatest demand for school construction will be in communities that have not even been named yet!” What about existing schools? Hodgkinson reports that, “generally, schools in a district are in about the same shape as the worst third of residential housing, and as housing and schools get older, less money is put into their maintenance or refurbishment. Estimates are that as many as one-third of school buildings will be in serious need of major repair.” He further notes that a significant number of secondary schools built within the next few years will be half-full or closed in 10 years. While we are experiencing and will continue to experience a major increase in secondary enrollment over the next decade, preschool and elementary enrollments will decline. Visionary leaders, take note: our building plans must take these enrollment shifts into consideration.
- *Aging population.* As the nation’s fastest-growing bloc of voters, the elderly will have greatly expanded power in the school finance arena. The consequences for school leaders will become clear as they attempt to pass school budgets and school bond issues. Leaders must consider new and creative ways, beyond the traditional parent outreach, to engage “seniors” in school life and programs.
- *Virtual learning.* Technology can dramatically alter course delivery. In at least two states, the “virtual high school” is already a reality. School leaders must be aware of new technologies and be able to decipher the implications for curriculum and instruction. At the same time, schools must not ignore a student’s personal growth and development—a socialization process that transcends the Internet. Important socializing experiences—the football game, the yearbook, and the school dance—cannot be replaced by technology. As Hodgkinson comments, “It is hard to imagine a ‘virtual first kiss,’ an event of importance to everyone’s education.”

Technology is a powerful tool with great potential to enhance teaching and learning, but if not used properly or under the direction of knowledgeable teachers, it can simply become an “electronic workbook” for students—or, as one researcher has put it, “a slate without the dust.” In addition to leading the

discovery of new ways to challenge students, principals must have the skills to balance the need for technology with other resource requirements. As Clifford Stoll warns in *High Tech Heretic*, there is great danger in cutting other resources to buy computers. Stoll blasts the enormous investments being made in classroom computers and cautions that the enthusiasm for this technology has similarities to earlier excitement about the transformational potential of television and radio in the curriculum. Consider Thomas Edison's 1922 prediction: "The motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system . . . In a few years it will supplant largely, if not entirely, the use of textbooks." Or the 1945 prediction that the "portable radio receiver will be as common in the classroom as is the blackboard. Radio instruction will be integrated into school life as an accepted educational medium."²

Principals will need to have the skills to weigh in on technology purchasing decisions and the vision to understand both the potential of technology and the pitfalls of using it inappropriately. They must ensure that students have adequate face-to-face interaction to ward off the isolation that Hodgkinson predicts, and they must remain vigilant about the dangers of overreliance on any medium.

- *Testing.* High-stakes tests may drive—and even become—the curriculum. In this era of high-stakes testing in the name of accountability, Hodgkinson questions the need to invest significant resources in test development "because test results can be predicted so well from household income and parent level of education." One could infer that the money might be better spent targeting those schools or students who already demonstrate the greatest academic needs and reallocating funds from test development and implementation to classroom-based support and resources.
- *Staff requirements.* Two million new teachers must be hired during the next decade, largely in middle-level schools and high schools. Regrettably, whenever a teacher shortage occurs or is anticipated in this country, qualifying factors for certification and licensure are generally lowered rather than raised. If this occurs, school leaders must stand tall and be a collective voice for quality and excellence in teaching.
- *Resource allocation.* There is one nonteaching employee for every paid teacher in our public schools, a reality any other nation would find shocking, Hodgkinson notes. As we look to reduce class size, expand preschool and early childhood programs, and extend the school year for staff and students—all of which will require more teachers in classrooms—we continually lament the lack of necessary financial resources. In reality, the implementation of these desired initiatives is contingent not so much on finding additional financial resources as on using personnel resources more effectively. As Hodgkinson observes, "By cutting nonteaching staff by only 20%, you could add 250,000 teachers to our schools!" Inherent in this observation is a challenge to school administrators to analyze the allocation and assignment of school district personnel—and to address

the critical question of the extent to which the nonteaching staff supports the teaching and learning process *in the classroom*.

CHANGING ADOLESCENTS

Demographics aside, adolescence itself has changed since the time when the idea of the high school was developed, yet schools have stayed the same. In *Jefferson's Children: Education and the Promise of American Culture*, Leon Botstein notes:

The American high school was designed for fifteen- to eighteen-year-olds who were children only beginning their journey to adulthood. It is now filled with young adults of the same age . . . One does not need to be a professional psychologist to recognize that the way in which one deals with a prepubescent youngster is quite different from the way in which one deals with one in the early stages of puberty.³

Botstein points to historical analyses that show that the “average age for the onset of puberty in the late nineteenth century [when high schools became the dominant mode of secondary education] was substantially higher than it is today . . . The average age of menstruation was between fifteen and sixteen. In the late 1990s it has fallen to thirteen.”⁴

According to Botstein, adolescents have changed considerably even in the last 30 years, but educators have not noticed. “We don’t bury our dead in coffins built in the sixteenth century, because they would be too short,” he argues, yet we attempt to educate students with a curriculum, program, school day, teachers, and building that are equally obsolete. Botstein concludes that we need to dramatically revamp grades 6 through 10 and eliminate grades 11 and 12. He proposes that juniors and seniors should be in colleges, community colleges, and work-related internship experiences that have a greater potential to be stimulating and motivating.

Though adolescence has changed, many teachers enter classrooms with a pedagogical knowledge base that hasn’t changed since the 1960s. One area in which principals need to be informed—and that they need to stress to teachers—is the latest brain research and how it applies to teaching and learning. Consider, for example, the following points raised by Pat Wolfe and Ron Brandt.

- “The brain changes physiologically as a result of experience. The environment in which a brain operates determines to a large degree the functioning ability of the brain.”⁵ The implication for principals and teachers: schools and classrooms that excite and challenge students and promote their creativity greatly support learning.
- “IQ is not fixed at birth.” Intelligence is capable of growing throughout our lives.⁶ This information leads to the conclusion that tracking, stereotyping, profiling, and holding low expectations for students are all misguided policies.

If we are not aware of such considerations, we will fall into the trap Goethe cautioned against: “Treat children as they are, you make them worse—treat

them as they potentially could be, you make them better." A majority of teachers, on a daily basis, go to their "easels" and paint children in the image in which they see them rather than capturing the essence, beauty, and talent that the children possess. The "tyranny of low expectations" permeates their artistry!

A PROFESSION IN CRISIS

While the teacher shortage has been clearly recognized, there has been near silence on the lack of qualified candidates applying for the principalship. The principalship has accumulated increased responsibilities without the incentives needed to attract high-quality candidates. A 1998 survey completed by the Educational Research Service (ERS) for the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals provides evidence of a shortage of qualified school leaders.⁷ According to the study:

- About half of the surveyed districts reported a shortage of qualified candidates for the principal positions they had attempted to fill. This shortage was present among all types of schools (rural, urban, suburban) and among all levels of vacancies (elementary, junior high/middle, and high school).

The most frequently mentioned barrier to attracting applicants was that, compared to the job responsibilities, the compensation was not sufficient. The stress of the job and the time demands that come with a principalship were also cited as discouraging factors. Other comments from the respondents included: societal problems (e.g., poverty, lack of family support) make it difficult to focus on instruction; testing/accountability pressures are too great; the job is viewed as less satisfying than it had been previously; inadequate funding is available for schools; continuing bad press/public relations problems for the district place pressure on principals; principalships and assistant principalships lack tenure.

- Increasing the number of minorities in management positions has been a challenge, especially in urban districts, and will become a major issue in the next decade. As the nation's minority student population grows, it will be imperative to have more minority role models in the principalship. It is equally important to have minority principals in white-majority suburban and rural communities. The suburban and rural students need to relate to teachers and principals who reflect the diverse population of the real world.

So why is there such a shortage of qualified school leaders? A 1999 report from the National Association of State Boards of Education provides further insights.⁸

- The principal's job has become more complex and demanding.

- Growing student populations, retirements, and decreasing numbers of applicants are creating significant shortages in some districts and regions.
- Principal training, support, and professional development are largely inadequate and not up to the task of producing the capable principals we need.
- States lack a coherent vision and system for developing and retaining high-quality principals.

The bottom line is that not only is it difficult to attract qualified candidates, but the training that candidates receive from administrator preparation programs is often inadequate, and ongoing professional development is episodic at best. Many university preparation programs for school administrators are not closely aligned with the instructional and real-world demands principals face, and the use of post-certification development programs is the exception rather than the rule. The profession must insist that colleges and universities preparing school administrators provide more rigorous coursework and intensive internships.

Only one-fourth of the districts surveyed by ERS reported the existence of a program to recruit and prepare aspiring principals. Furthermore, just under half of the districts have a formal induction or mentoring program for new principals. A recent paper commissioned by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) contrasts the situation in education with that in other professions:

Unlike the common practice of the corporate world and the military, where there are systematic and continuous initiatives to grow and develop a management cadre that can take on greater and greater responsibilities and succeed at each step along the way, education makes no such careful investment of resources in its future leaders. Rather it sends a signal to its freshly minted novice managers that once they have been assigned their first administrative position, serious attention to their professional development has concluded.⁹

We must raise the bar of expectations for school leaders. While significant challenges reside in administrator preparation programs, increasing the qualifications of candidates and of those already working as principals will require work at many levels of the continuum of leadership education. Several steps can be taken to ensure that principals-to-be and current principals will acquire the skills necessary for the 21st century:

1. Transform principal preparation programs in higher education—which are generally woefully lacking and often staffed by individuals who have very little, if any, experience in school leadership.
2. Provide an intensive induction/mentoring program for all new school administrators.
3. Commit substantial funds to comprehensive, sustained professional development.
4. Establish a national or state school leadership academy with a commitment similar to that found in our military academies.

5. Institute a national board for recognizing exemplary principals, building on the model of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The system, as envisioned by the NPBEA, would closely parallel National Board certification for teachers, which focuses not on establishing minimum standards for beginning teachers but on encouraging novice and existing teachers to grow “into highly accomplished practitioners.”

In the meantime, we must be vigilant to ensure that “grow-your-own-principal” and alternative certification programs being ushered in to address the shortage provide the profession with candidates who meet high standards. Unfortunately, it appears that while we are raising the accountability bar with highstakes testing, we are lowering the standards for entry into teaching and the principalship. If one principal is not properly trained and up to the task of leadership, it will have a damaging effect on hundreds of students—an unacceptable thought. Multiply those hundreds of students by several thousand times, and one can readily see the impending problem society faces with a shortage of qualified school leaders who possess the will and conviction to make a difference.

BUILDING A NEW ROLE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The principals of tomorrow’s schools must be instructional leaders who possess the requisite skills, capacities, and commitment to lead the accountability parade, not follow it. Excellence in school leadership should be recognized as the most important component of school reform. Without leadership, the chances for systemic improvement in teaching and learning are nil.

The principal’s role must shift from a focus on management and administration to a focus on leadership and vision—on facilitating the teaching and learning process. “Successful transformation,” notes John Kotter of the Harvard Business School, “is 70–90 percent leadership and only 10–30 percent management.”¹⁰ Arguably, the management responsibilities of a school principal are important, but these are not the major reasons for which principals were put on this Earth. A predilection for management keeps the cafeteria and the buses running smoothly, but it accomplishes little, if any, transformation. Conversely, a commitment to leadership helps principals adapt to significantly changing circumstances. It defines what the future should look like, aligns staff members with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen.

As the general public, legislative bodies, corporate leaders, and parents demand—and expect—improvement in student achievement, the schoolhouse will be the site of scrutiny and analysis. As the accountability movement pervades our education system, the principal ultimately bears the major responsibility for a school’s success. School-based accountability takes on even greater significance for high schools as more states implement exit examinations for students. Teachers must be held accountable for improved student performance in their respective classrooms. But only the collective effort of teachers who share high expectations for students, rigorous standards, aligned curricula,

and a commitment to all students' learning allows for overall sustained improvement. In effect, school reform cannot be episodic, one classroom at a time. Real change and real accountability depend on a whole-school reform agenda with a systemic plan that ensures continued interaction among faculty members at all levels and across disciplines. A principal's fate will be determined not by the accomplishments of individual teachers or students but by the achievement of a total student body.

Within each school, there must be a continuity of purpose and a commitment to excellence. Establishing this climate and preparing teachers for the "age of accountability" requires enlightened leadership. The principals of tomorrow's secondary schools will not be recognized and rewarded solely for their managerial skills—they will be recognized as leaders of curricular change, innovative and diversified instructional strategies, data-driven decision making, and the implementation of accountability models for students and staff. In this new environment principals will:

- set the tone for their buildings;
- facilitate the teaching and learning process;
- provide leadership and direction to their schools' instructional programs and policies;
- spend significantly more time evaluating staff and mentoring new teachers;
- sustain professional development for themselves and their staff members; and
- nurture personalized school environments for all students.

In a nutshell, the successful school principal of the future will be the individual who raises academic standards, improves academic achievement for all students, and provides support and assistance to the faculty. The enlightened principal, which the schools of tomorrow will demand, will strive to create a continual sense of urgency in his or her school and, if necessary, elevate the urgency to the status of an educational crisis, especially as related to such issues as:

- low expectations for students;
- poor achievement results;
- inequalities between affluent and poor schools; and
- teacher quality.

The visionary/enlightened principal will also encourage his or her community to revisit a number of issues.

- Why do we have a 180-day school year? Why is the school day six hours long? Why are classes only 45 minutes long? Why do high school students start classes so early when research tells us that adolescents would do much better in school if they started at a later time?
- Why do we begin offering foreign language courses in the middle or high schools when research tells us that we need to start in the primary and preschool years?
- Why do we provide little, if any, time for teachers to engage in intellectual discourse during the school day?

- Why do only 22% of our eighth-grade students take algebra, when over 98% of eighth-graders in Korea, Japan, and Singapore take it?
- Why do we build large middle schools and senior high schools, which are highly impersonal, when we know that students in these age groups need highly personalized, smaller settings?
- Why do we continue to allow teachers to teach subjects in which they have earned neither a college major nor minor?
- Why do we assign 125 to 150 students to a teacher and expect him or her to individualize instruction?

The principal must provide leadership, else the journey of school reform is given over to those who will continue to ride the “dead horse” of meaningless school change. The message is clear: The horse is dead. Please dismount.

STANDARDS FOR PRINCIPALS

Specific skill sets that principals must acquire to help them handle these issues are outlined in the standards of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and are available on the Web at <http://www.ccsso.org/standrds.html>. As the concept of school leadership has evolved from a more managerial orientation to one that focuses on instructional leadership, the definition of the qualities that principals should demonstrate has also evolved, with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) leading the way. The NASSP has developed a set of “21st-Century School Administrator Skills,” which are closely aligned with the ISLLC standards. (These skills are detailed in the “21st-Century School Administrator Skills Self-Assessment and Observer Assessment,” which can be downloaded from <http://www.principals.org/training/04.html>.)

The NASSP offers several assessment and development programs based on this new set of skills. “Selecting and Developing the 21st-Century Principal” is a contemporary assessment tool that can help identify or develop effective school leaders. It is designed to measure leadership potential by diagnosing behavioral strengths and developmental needs of prospective principals. The NASSP Developmental Assessment Center (DAC) is an assessment program designed specifically for development, with emphasis on establishing (or revising) a personal plan for career advancement. DAC provides current administrators with specific information about their strengths, warns them of potential pitfalls, and suggests development possibilities they can use to build the skills they need to be effective school leaders.

THE FINISHING TOUCHES

The vision for the completed “educational masterpiece” is beginning to take shape. We know that a key element is the principal. Without “well-qualified, motivated leaders in every school, reform will succeed sporadically and the

goal of having all students in every school and district able to meet high standards will be threatened.”¹¹

Our next step is to ensure that well-qualified candidates assume these leadership roles. The political environment, the shortage of highly qualified candidates desiring to become principals, and the call for increased accountability have provided a window of opportunity for advocates of school leadership. The level of effort dedicated to filling these roles with well-qualified principals will determine the status of school leaders in school reform—either as a cadre of collective leadership genius or as the managers of a process that leads to more of the same.

In *Leadership Is an Art*, Max De Pree notes that “the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality.”¹² The time has come for America’s principals to define a new reality for America’s schools, a reality embedded in a belief that all—and all means *all*—children can learn to high levels. Leadership is *not* a spectator sport. It is reserved for participants. The time has come to put the principal’s leadership brush to the canvas to paint a vision of what tomorrow’s schools can and will be. The beauty of the finished canvas—equity and excellence for all children—will truly be a masterpiece.

NOTES

¹ Harold Hodgkinson, *Secondary Schools in a New Millennium: Demographic Certainties, Social Realities* (Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2000).

² Clifford Stoll, *High Tech Heretic: Why Computers Don’t Belong in the Classroom and Other Reflections by a Computer Contrarian* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), pp. 35–36.

³ Leon Botstein, *Jefferson’s Children: Education and the Promise of American Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 82.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Pat Wolfe and Ron Brandt, “What Do We Know from Brain Research?,” *Educational Leadership*, November 1998, p. 10.

⁶ Wolfe and Brandt, p. 11; and Robert Sylwester, *A Celebration of Neurons: An Educator’s Guide to the Human Brain* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1995).

⁷ Educational Research Service, *Is There a Shortage of Qualified Candidates for Openings in the Principalship?: An Exploratory Study* (Alexandria and Reston, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1998).

⁸ „NASBE Study Group on School Leadership, *Principals of Change: What Education Leaders Need to Lead Schools to Excellence* (Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education, 1999).

⁹ David Mandel, “Recognizing and Encouraging Exemplary Leadership in America’s Schools: A Proposal to Establish a System of Advanced Certification for Administrators,” submitted by Paul Houston for National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Columbia, MO, 2000, p. 5.

¹⁰ John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), p. 26.

¹¹ NASBE Study Group, p. 5.

¹² Max De Pree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: Dell, 1989), p. 11.

ALAN PESHKIN

WHOM SHALL THE SCHOOLS SERVE? SOME DILEMMAS OF LOCAL CONTROL IN A RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Local control of their schools provides American communities with a substantial measure of freedom to teach what they wish. And who will gainsay the right of local communities to determine how and by whom their children will be educated?

Yet, adherence to the principle of local control can result in controversial educational policy. Through conformity to the will of the local community, schools may teach bigotry in place of tolerance or contempt for learning in place of the love of it. And who then is well served? The community? The students? The nation? Consider the case of Mansfield.¹

Corn and soybean fields make an island of Mansfield village. Here, in the heart of America's agricultural Midwest, live 1,500 people. Few of them are farmers. Some run stores, others do maintenance for the village, still others teach school. Because there is no local industry, the majority of working villagers commute to the factories of Stanton, twenty-five miles away.

Around the town, in an area of seventy-five square miles, live another 800 people—mostly farmers and their families. In common with the villagers they patronize the stores, attend the churches, and pay their taxes in Mansfield. Some exercise considerable influence, for the farm families of the community are also its residents of longest standing and hold offices in local organizations. Hence they bring their own concerns to bear on the lives of the villagers.

Together the residents of the village and of the countryside make up the Mansfield community. It is a modestly prosperous one; the median family income in 1970 was \$9,500, which exceeded somewhat the median for the state as a whole. At the same time, only 5.6 percent of the residents had an annual income of less than \$3,000, the poverty level designated for the 1970 census. Mansfield is also a homogeneous community. None of its residents is black, and nearly every one was born in the United States to English-speaking parents.

Like American communities of all sorts, Mansfield supports a school system. There are two schools in the district: an elementary school consisting of kindergarten through sixth grade, and a secondary school—Mansfield High School—consisting of seventh through twelfth grade. In 1973, the system enrolled 500 students and employed thirty-five teachers.²

These were the characteristics of Mansfield and its school that had drawn my interest. Initially I had gone there to investigate the relation between school and community in a rural setting.³ The study of rural schooling has been relatively neglected in recent decades; and yet, with the continued growth of urban society, small-town life has increasingly become an endangered species. Of late, small towns located near places of work have attracted migrants from the cities,

refugees from the discontents of urban life. Because Mansfield has not had the housing to accommodate many urban migrants, it has retained the features of rural life that I had come to study.

For two years, then, and with the help of six research assistants, I directed fieldwork in Mansfield, studying the high school and the community that supports it. We began with the school, interviewing teachers, school board members, and students; attending classes, school-sponsored events, teachers' meetings, school board meetings; reading through school documents of all sorts.⁴ From the school we turned to the community, interviewing the mayor and the village board, whose meetings we also attended. We took part in local church and organizational activities. I myself lived in Mansfield during most of the second year of fieldwork. Like any Mansfielder I shopped, paid my bills, maintained a bank account, and frequented the post office there. Yet, though I lived and worked in the community steadily for a year, though I associated daily with Mansfielders, they for their part continued to regard me as a visitor. I remained the professor who had come to conduct research. Perhaps it was because they knew I did not plan to stay, perhaps because I had not brought my family. In any case, I was never viewed as a member of the community, not even as a sometime resident. For Mansfielders maintain a vital and exclusive *sense of community*, and that sense may be crucial to maintaining the community itself.⁵ Hence my study, which had started as a general inquiry into the relation between Mansfield and its high school, came to center on the role of the high school in maintaining Mansfield's sense of community and, conversely, on the interest of the community in maintaining Mansfield High School.

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THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE SCHOOL BOARD

Superintendent Tate welcomed me and my project to Mansfield, promised and delivered his full cooperation, and stipulated only that we do nothing to disturb the routine of the school. This condition on our work embodied a concern of considerable importance to him and to the school board. A substantial part of a teacher's esteem depends on his capacity to maintain order. The school leadership recently was pleased to learn of the resignation of an otherwise good teacher who "couldn't cut the mustard with the kids" (keep them quiet).

At the time my study began, Tate had been at Mansfield High School for twenty-one years, five as a coach and industrial arts teacher and sixteen as superintendent. Though not of local origin, nor in fact of rural background, he was most comfortable with country life. He had been content to confine his career to Mansfield despite job offers from larger school systems. In their turn, Mansfielders and the school board were very pleased with him; he became a person of consequence in community life and an accepted agent of community values in his capacity as educational leader. The school board, guardians of the community, trusted him on matters of fact and judgment, secure in the knowledge that he served their interests.

The seven-member board was presided over by a Mansfield-born farmer. Five of the other six members also were native Mansfielders and farmers, notwithstanding that most school district residents work in factories and live in town. In fact, over the twenty years this school board has existed, the president has always been a farmer and at least five of seven members have been Mansfield-born farmers.⁶ Because school board elections generally inspire a good turnout—about two hundred of a possible seven hundred eligible voters—the “right” candidates continue to get elected. (The right candidates are those without the kind of “axe to grind” that might disturb the status quo.) The credentials of the newest board member were his status as a native and the well-known fact that he loved Mansfield and had a deep regard for its traditions. He replaced a man of demonstrated skill, a six-year veteran on the board who had lived in Mansfield only ten years.

One year after my study began, Superintendent Tate died. This misfortune required the school board to undertake a task they had long dreaded—selecting a new superintendent. They assembled in special session one hot August week to interview five candidates. Afterward, as they sat together to make a choice, their desiderata emerged.

“Should we talk about Hagedorn to see why we don’t want him?”

“Yes, let’s get the feeling of the board on him. I believe we have better men. Not quality-wise, though. He could handle the job and the P. R. [Public Relations]. I don’t think he’s the type we’re looking for.”

“I hate to say it, but his physical appearance is against him. You need to call a spade a spade.”

“He’s not stable like some of the others.”

“I’m afraid he’d be the butt of behind-the-back jokes.”

“He’s carrying far too much weight. That’s a strain on the heart.”

“He was tired. A man that size gets physically tired. We shouldn’t kid ourselves. Image is very important. That size is against him.”

“The next one is Dargan.”

“I was impressed, but I feel he is too big for our town and school. His ideas are for the city, for bigger schools. We’re not ready for all that.”

“I felt he would probably be anxious to start a lot of things I don’t know if we’re ready for. He’s definitely for a nongraded system. He said he’d start slow but he wanted it pretty bad. Knocking down walls scares you just a bit.”

“I was impressed. But then we had more fellows in. We learned more about this nongraded idea. He would be a pusher, I’m sure.”

“He had too many ideas to start off with. You need to see what a school has before jumping in.”

“I thought he might be a little slow with discipline problems.”

“I saw dollar signs clicking around in my head when he talked. He may be too intelligent for this community. He may talk over the heads of the community.”

“Another thing. He was emphatic about four weeks’ vacation.”

“Salary-wise he asked for the most.”

“Well, this Dargan, he said he wanted to come to a small community. I think he may want to bring too many ideas from the city with him. He may be more than we want.”

"What did you like about Morgan? These next three are a hard pick."

"He gave a nice impression here, I believe, of getting along with the public and the kids. This impressed me more than anything."

"To me he talked generalities."

"He had a tremendous speaking voice. He's young."

"His voice got very nasal at the end when he got relaxed."

"He wouldn't stay."

"He's on his way up."

"I believe he'd be a forceful individual."

"Take this other man, Rogers. I had a feeling about him. He said, 'If you hired me and I accepted it . . . I don't think he's too anxious for the job.'"

"I can see why he was offered a job selling real estate. He's got the voice. He'd have your name on the line. I'm inclined to believe he'd talk himself out of most situations. Getting down to brass tacks, he spoke in generalities. He admitted he didn't know too much about new things in education. We need more specific answers."

"More or less this leaves us with Reynolds."

"He's the man to put on top."

"I'd hate to pick any one of the top three over the others."

"Both Reynolds and Rogers said that they have no hours. They work by the job. Reynolds worked his way through college."

"He was on ground floor as far as salary goes."

"And he's country."

After rejecting candidates for adverse physical appearance and for holding city and big-school ideas, they selected Reynolds, who worked hard like a farmer, would settle for a "reasonable" salary, and was "country"—a designation that had never before been mentioned as a criterion for selecting their new superintendent, or anything else, for that matter. Perhaps it should have been self-evident that no one could be chosen superintendent of schools in Mansfield who did not appear "country," the board's shorthand description of a suitable candidate for their rural-dominated, traditionally oriented school district.

TEACHERS AND THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

The central fact characterizing Mansfield's teachers is their small-town origin. Of the eighteen teachers in the high school, six had fathers who farmed; but ten were born and raised in or around towns of under 2,000, three in towns of under 4,500, four in towns of under 15,000, and only one in a city of 800,000. Indeed, the teachers not only grew up in small towns; they generally studied at the smallest of the state universities, Central State,⁷ and after graduation taught in schools very much like the ones they themselves had attended. From all indications they are at home in Mansfield; when asked about their ideal place to live, 75 percent indicated a preference for towns of 4,500 or less.

To get some idea of teacher views about education, we asked what changes they would like to see made. They generally confined their responses to the

redress of particular grievances. A few wanted a new building; others, a chance to teach only their special subject, better discipline, more vocational courses, or less money spent on athletic programs. Most frequently they wished to eliminate poor teachers, the “dead weight” who had been in the system for too many years. There were no grand schemes, no innovations proposed by the group, 81.7 percent of whom had agreed that one of the most important things in Mansfield was its good school system.

The apparent comfort of the teachers with the education they provide may be attributed to their own upbringing in communities much like Mansfield and their generally expressed satisfaction with small-town life. The reasons for this satisfaction strikingly accord with those offered by Mansfield’s adults and students—the security, absence of anonymity, open doors, friendliness, and uncrowded feeling of living in a slower-paced atmosphere. “We’ll be here when we die, I’m sure,” said Mrs. Adams, a native Mansfielder. “I can’t imagine living anywhere else,” concluded Mr. Shirley, an adopted Mansfielder.

Some teachers held modest expectations about what the school could accomplish but acknowledged their hope of reaching at least one or two students in a serious way. None was truly doubtful about his own and his colleagues’ opportunity to do something of value. Mr. Thompson, the biology teacher, noted that teachers tended to maintain a close relationship with students and parents. Because of the intimacy of this small, stable community, some teachers admitted to being less than objective in their judgment of students. One suggested that Mansfield teachers are “more lenient because we’re more familiar with [students] and their families,” meaning by this that the teachers are “not as strict academically as maybe we should be.” Yet Mansfield would hardly have it otherwise. “The schools are just about what the people want,” observed Mr. Shirley. “They do what they are expected to do.” In this Mr. Cahill concurred. “The high school does a better than average job of socializing the students for this community.”

On entering high school, the children of Mansfield’s farmers and factory workers are given a handbook. Like so many other documents cluttering the drawers of Mansfield and other schools, this one contains a mixture of specific statements to guide the behavior of the students (for example, regulations that relate to the prom, detentions, driving one’s car at noon) and more general, usually unread, statements. The handbook’s list of “General Behavior Principles for Students” suggests how Mansfield’s educational leaders believe students should behave. The attention of students is directed to:

- Regular attendance
- Punctuality in all matters
- Careful preparation and learning of assignments
- Orderly classrooms
- Courtesy
- A relaxed but business-like atmosphere
- Acceptance of the authority of teachers
- Pride and concern for school property

- Personal appearance
- The desire to be a contributing member of society

These are norms that reflect an emphasis on social control. Clearly, the ideal student is one who would make life easy for teachers and administrators.

A further clue to the nature of a school is provided by its objectives. To be sure, statements of objectives often originate in requests from outsiders (the state visiting team, for example) and serve only ceremonial purposes. Teacher and student conduct in class tells more about the academic experience than do statements of objectives, but the latter may be valuable for suggesting not so much what really happens in schools as what ideals undergird the behavior of its educators.

The most recent occasion to prepare objectives was provided in 1972 by the State Office of Instruction's request that each school system prepare a document called "Goals for Tomorrow." Excerpts from the document that was submitted to the state are included below.

A. The Instructional Program

Provide for such quality education that should help every student acquire to the fullest extent possible for his mastery of a good basic education and to open further channels of study to him as an adult . . .

B. Suggested Student Goals (Desired Learner Outcomes)

- I. Develop growth in their ability to think rationally, to express their thoughts clearly, and to read and listen with understanding.
- II. Develop salable skills . . .
- III. Develop the ability and desire to understand the rights and duties of a citizen of a democratic society, and to be diligent and competent in their performance of their obligations as members of the community and citizens of the state, the nation, and the world.
- IV. Acquire good health habits . . .
- V. Develop a better understanding of the methods of science and man's environment . . .
- VI. Develop areas of concern that include responsibility, honesty, self-respect, justice, courtesy and kindness, discrimination between right and wrong, respect for individual differences, obedience to parents, and respect for authority and laws. [An earlier version of this goal included "loyalty, patriotism, and nondiscriminatory behavior," but was omitted from the final statement submitted to the state office.]
- VII. Provide opportunities to develop their capacities to appreciate beauty in literature, art, music, and nature.
- VIII. To provide opportunities to learn to use leisure time well and budget it wisely . . .

When we compare Mansfield's "Goals for Tomorrow" with those prepared by other schools from neighboring districts of approximately the same size, we find many similarities. A number of broad categories dominate the goals of all the school districts: (1) basic skills, (2) vocational training, (3) consumerism, (4) leisure time, (5) democratic citizenship, (6) health, (7) the arts, (8) thinking

ability, (9) family, and (10) personal qualities. In addition to these shared categories, however, are several which Mansfield omits from its lists, as either oversights or ideas to which Mansfield is not committed. For example, a number of school systems, usually somewhat larger ones, mentioned that they planned to enable each student to: “develop . . . the ability to identify problems and to apply clear, critical, reflective, and creative thinking . . . to reach their solutions”; “develop an awareness of the history, influence, and interrelationships of all cultures”; “be . . . acquainted with his rights and responsibilities . . . as a member of a pluralistic society”; “develop intellectual curiosity and eagerness for lifelong learning.” My impression is that in Mansfield these latter goals are not so much disapproved as they are unimportant; they do not occupy the foreground of concern.

In contrast, the provision of “a good basic education” is of major concern. It is mentioned under the Instruction Program and voiced frequently by Mansfield’s school board members and administrators. It is one of three fundamental points that bear on the academic aspects of the school. The second is the development of “salable skills,” listed under Suggested Student Goals, and the third is the provision of courses that will enable students to attend post-secondary institutions.

The emphasis on the “basics” is not readily observable in the classroom. It is used more as a slogan, a conventional way of affirming that the board and administration do not concern themselves with lofty intellectual goals, that they do not have pretensions of sophistication, and that they mean to keep down the costs of schooling—for money spent on the basics is by definition money well spent. Mansfield’s investment in the development of “salable skills” is evident in the variety of courses offered in home economics, business education, industrial arts, vocational agriculture, and auto mechanics.

Notwithstanding the curriculum-oriented meetings held in preparation for state and North Central Association visitations, Mansfield teachers neither plan nor coordinate the value orientation of their instruction. To be sure, they attempt cooperative planning when a subject has a sequential basis—English, for example. But there is no party line, no deliberate effort to endorse a particular view of religion, politics, patriotism, or community. Perhaps no such efforts are necessary if the process of selecting teachers and administrators has already ensured their suitability for service in Mansfield. In any case, the classroom behavior of Mansfield’s teachers rather consistently displays the value orientation of the school board and the community. But other sorts of aims that go unstated in Mansfield’s official documents also go unpursued in its classrooms. There, the discourse, while often provocative, is not distinctly critical or reflective. Examinations tend to focus on recall. And traditional American attitudes toward God, country, and self-reliance are manifest and unchallenged, as we see in many different classes.

U.S. History

For most of the lesson, two students took the part of female slaves, one owned by a cruel master and the other by a kind master. Following this

presentation the class discussed blacks in contemporary America, a vocal group taking the position of “ship ‘em back to Africa,” angered by what they believed to be the especially favorable treatment blacks get in jobs, sports, and education.

STUDENT A: Okay, this is actual fact and I can prove it. There was this basketball player, he was colored, and in high school at Bradlow High. He made a D average and he tried to pass an examination to get into college. He couldn’t make it at State so he goes to a school where they’ve got a lot of blacks and he makes it, makes it all the way through school. He had a D average in high school taking simple courses like how to cook or something. He hooked up with a junior college in Detroit that was all black; then he went to a major college and made it all the way through. Now he’s making big money. Now do you think that’s fair? Now there might be white kids, but they’re not going to get the same opportunity.

TEACHER: Don’t you think that a natural-born basketball player that was white wouldn’t get the breaks too?

STUDENT A: No.

STUDENT B: I know a few that haven’t and are just as good.

STUDENT C: Yeah, you take all the major sports and you see the ratio of white to colored in those. The coloreds outnumber ‘em.

STUDENT D: Yeah, they’re better.

TEACHER: Okay, this is the idea of the pendulum swinging back and forth that we were talking about yesterday at the end of the hour. Think about this just a little bit. No matter what we’re talking about—it could be anything, campus riots or whatever—usually it’s like a pendulum. Things are usually far off to one end, then they swing far off to the other end before they eventually get back to the middle. Now I’m not saying that everything is exactly fair that happens to blacks today, but think about the pendulum. One time it was way over here—unfair, today maybe it’s over here, being a little bit unfair the other way. Maybe tomorrow it will be back here in the middle.

STUDENT A: I doubt it.

English

This sophomore English class has been discussing “Julius Caesar” for some time. On introducing the play, the teacher had announced that there was much “parallelism” between it and the events of the day, so that it is not surprising that she frequently digressed, holding fast her students’ attention in the process.

TEACHER: At the time she [Cleopatra] married Caesar it probably was a political advantageous thing. See, it was at the time of the triumvirate. All right. I think I told you—this is clear off subject—but I told you about being in the audience listening to a talk the other night about this young woman’s life in Tunisia. Well, she was telling us about the married situation. The

bride and the bridegroom in Tunisia never see each other. They don't even know who it is until the day of the wedding.

STUDENT: Oh.

TEACHER: Don't say "oh." This is a country custom. So how do we know that *this* wasn't a type of prearranged thing for political power, for political solidity, see, in Rome. From where we're talking [pointing to a map] here's Rome. And right down here is Tunisia. We're talking about a country that is not native black. We're not talking about African natives, we're talking about a civilized nation. And it isn't African yet . . .

STUDENT: How come she [Cleopatra] was supposed to marry her brother? It says this brother was the one she was supposed to marry.

TEACHER: To solidify the kingdom so that they wouldn't have any outsiders. We still don't understand. We can't in 1973, in our Christianity, understand how these people could do this. But what did I tell you yesterday? I don't condemn them for their barbaric attitude, for their un-Christian-like acts. I condemn you for not living Christianity when you have a chance to do so. I think it is more dangerous for us, in our nation, than it was for them . . . Well, let's go on. We're procrastinating. You people can get me off the subject . . . Until all the facts are in, we are in a very precarious position in this nation right now. They tell me that it will be before the first of the year before Mr. Ford will be confirmed or not confirmed as Vice President of the United States. We are without the Vice President as of the very hour that Spiro Agnew resigned.

STUDENT: Do you think he should have done that?

TEACHER: Oh, I tell you . . . there is one thing that nobody will get me to do.

Nobody will ever get me to say that I am guilty of anything unless I am guilty of it. So with the philosophy that I have, I cannot believe that Spiro Agnew is anything but guilty, regardless of what he said.

STUDENT: I think he is, too.

TEACHER: But I'll tell you this. Unless you people start standing up when you are guilty of something—take your quinine medicine, stomach it, and puke it back up—until you learn you are responsible for that which you do, we are going to be in trouble in this nation. We've got to look to you people for the future leaders. You must learn to say, "I made a mistake." And don't look at somebody else for your scapegoat and your savior.

STUDENT: Isn't that what Russians are wanting to happen? For us to destroy ourself?

TEACHER: Why, I think this has to be true. That's right. I honestly believe it. If they can just keep things stirred up, and get us suspicious, and keep using everybody as a scapegoat and a fall guy, then we are just playing into their hands. They are just going to show the world that the capitalistic world cannot rule itself.

Biology

Mr. Thompson opened his lesson by asking what the earth was like at its beginning. His students did not know. So he undertook a long presentation about the

conditions on earth that led to the emergence of life. This is a delicate subject in Mansfield, one that Mr. Thompson characteristically approached with caution.

A few years ago there were some scientists working on this theory that simulated the conditions at the time of the beginning, or what might have been present at the time that life began on earth. They had a bunch of ammonia gas. Any of you ever smelled ammonia? Pretty pungent, right? Methane gas is a type of natural gas, or gas out of swamps or coal mines. They had that. They had a small amount of oxygen and they replicated the other conditions on earth. And you know what? They did discover a new organism that was capable of living under those conditions. But this still doesn't take away the possibility that this was under the guidance of some super-being. Maybe this is the way that life evolved. The thing we don't know is: Was the earth always spinning at the same rate that it is today? Was it always spinning around on its axis every twenty-four hours day and night? Or was there a time when it took, in the beginning of life, or the beginning of the earth, a year or 1,000 years to go around? The Bible talks about the earth being made or the world being made in what? Seven days. What was the length of the days back then in the Bible? I don't know. I don't think the Bible ever says. Supposedly on earth, according to all the things that we can find, there were exceedingly cold periods and warm periods. Fossils indicate that this pattern of rotation and this pattern of planning was not necessarily the same as it is today. Even if we go back to many years before the birth of Christ—this is such a short period of time in comparison with the age of the earth—we have really no way of discovering or judging how or rather under whose directorship life originated. We have fossil remains. Maybe life didn't originate here.

Later in the semester, Mansfield adults expressed disapproval of the statement in "Goals for Tomorrow" that promoted the study of science. They believed it would encourage the teaching of evolution. Judging from Mr. Thompson's performance, their fears were groundless.

Outside School

At Mansfield High School, sports and extracurricular activities more than hold their own in competition with academic matters. Indeed, at times they almost overwhelm academics.⁸ Football practice begins before school opens in fall and the final baseball game is not played until May. In between falls an avalanche of athletic events played by varsity and junior varsity teams, male and female, spurred on by the cheerleaders who are backed up by the pep club.

No less overwhelming are the money-raising activities of clubs and classes, which introduce students to American voluntarism through magazine and newspaper subscription drives, bake sales, cake walks, car washes, soup suppers, ad infinitum. Each day students are thus drawn out of their classrooms and the school by a round of events which provide the main school attraction for many students and a major source of recreation for the community. Mansfield High School's balance of curricular and extracurricular activities appears to serve Mansfielders well. They are not distressed with what could be interpreted by some critics as a disproportionate investment of student and educa-

tor time, money, and energy in nonacademic pursuits. From their perspective, Mansfield High School, like a good shoe, fits Mansfield.

PARENT AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

In the absence of a formal survey of what Mansfielders want their school to accomplish and whether they believe they get what they want, we must depend on several different indicators of the community adults' agreement with the teachers' assessment of schooling in Mansfield. Data from 239 Mansfield adults, representing perhaps one-third the number of families in the school district, show that 69 percent believe Mansfield has a good school system (7 percent disagreed and 23 percent neither agreed nor disagreed). This fairly high figure,⁹ the paucity of complaints presented at school board meetings or to the administrators, the dearth of responses (less than thirty) to the superintendent's invitation to react to the new "Goals for Tomorrow" (sent to every boxholder in the school district), the disbanding of the PTA some years ago—all suggest that the community is essentially satisfied with its school system. These facts do not indicate parental apathy so much as an absence of contentious issues. The parents clearly are interested in education. In 1969 they voted to build a new grade school; in 1975 they voted to increase their education tax levy at a time when that was a rare occurrence; and throughout each year they demonstrate their affection for the high school by attending its many activities—from football games to the Christmas program to the graduation exercises. In two recent years, more than 40 percent of the school district population attended *each* of the football team's five home games.

I conclude, accordingly, that while Mansfield adults might be unhappy with a particular teacher, a losing football season, or some incident, they are basically content with what they perceive the school to be doing to Mansfield's youth, with the shape, though not necessarily with every detail, of their children's education. Thus, when a teacher observed that the school gives the community what it wants, her judgment appeared sound.

Students basically join their parents in affirming their esteem for Mansfield High School and Mansfield. A recent class of graduating seniors was interviewed to explore their views.

Some of the college-bound students entertained thoughts of eventually moving away from the community, though not to towns either too distant from or even much larger than Mansfield.¹⁰ Places like Chicago and St. Louis appeared attractive in the way that a fantasy does. ("You know, having never lived there [Chicago] it's kind of the ideal place right now." This same student, now at college, is homesick and hopes to transfer to a school closer to Mansfield.) Seldom, however, did seniors refer to settling in places much larger than Auburn (approximately 5,000); even Stanton (approximately 100,000) is too large. In fact, as of fall, 1972, more than 50 percent of the seven hundred graduates from the period 1947 to 1972 lived in Mansfield or the surrounding twenty-

five-mile region which constitutes the effective home area for all resident Mansfielders—the area where they shop, date, get medical attention, and seek recreation. Those few seniors who perceived Mansfield school and community as providing unduly restricted social and academic opportunity were more than matched by many others who feared the dangers and seeming anonymity of larger places, and even doubted that they could master driving in city traffic. They were reasonably realistic about what Mansfield offered, though less so about urban schools and communities.

In their characterization of Mansfield, the seniors show the impact of having grown up in a small rural setting. Some express a desire to get out (“seems like people who stay in Mansfield don’t get anywhere”) and others express pleasure at staying home. Wayne reflects the distress of many adults who oppose the possible consolidation of Mansfield High School into one large county school. He shares the sentiments of Elmer, who better than most students conveyed the special quality of life in Mansfield as experienced by those who belong. Elmer felt that “deep down the people of Mansfield care for everybody. I think that it’s really a good town . . . that everybody cares for each other and . . . if something big came up . . . everybody would join in and help each other.” These views, frequently expressed by community adults, are not shared by all Mansfielders, but they represent a salient characteristic of life in the town.

Teachers, as previously indicated, acknowledged that they were “not as strict academically as we should be.” Students also acknowledged this fact but did not seem troubled by it. Both teachers and students implicitly concur in a level of academic expectation they find comfortable. Even capable students fail to perceive value in the more abstract aspects of education, and their speech often reflects a casual style that has its counterpart among the adults. (“You’re not supposed to use ‘ain’t,’ but I say it all the time.”) With the exception of Maryann, who meant to maximize the academic possibilities of high school and got encouragement to do so from her father, students disdain the need for hard work, even if one hopes to achieve acceptable high grades—that is, to make the B honor roll. Wayne, now a university student, admits he could have worked harder, but, he observes, “Who wants to sit at a book for each class an hour a night? It’s no fun. There are too many other things going on.” Mike imagines that the people who get As stay at home so much they don’t learn to communicate with others, rationalizing his own modest efforts with the thought that “there is more to life besides grades.” Marge finished near the top of her class but regrets, as she contemplates her questionable preparedness for college, that she did not try harder. “It wasn’t that important to me,” she concludes. And students in the National Honor Society are accused of putting on airs. “They act like they’re higher than everybody else,” says Helen, who preferred fun to study and settled for being on the B honor roll rather than seeming a “real brain.”

From the views of these seniors, it seems that the school experience offers more than students without college plans want, but no more than the college bound want to work for. Somewhere between these modest points Mansfield’s

teachers pitch their intellectual tents, accommodating themselves to a level of aspiration that threatens few.

LOCAL CONTROL AND ITS DILEMMAS

Community control of the schools flourishes in Mansfield. The community's elected school board chooses a superintendent who selects the teachers and supervises the operation of the schools. If the board trusts him, as it trusted Superintendent Tate, then it often rubber-stamps his decisions, confident that he knows what the community wants. Nevertheless, though it defers to his expertise, the board also keeps an eye on his work. And this is the evident, the officially constituted machinery of community control in Mansfield.

Yet, as we have seen, a great deal of the machinery is neither evident nor officially constituted. Such features of Mansfield High School as the level of academic expectation that guides classroom practice and the relative importance of curricular and extracurricular activities are also determined by the local community, though not by deliberate choice. When we asked board members and administrators directly about their criteria for selecting teachers and instructional materials, they did not mention maintaining the community and its values. They said they preferred teachers who had both curricular and extracurricular strengths, liked children, and were good disciplinarians. Not until the school board met to select a superintendent did someone voice a criterion that explicitly reflected the community's ethos. He is "country," they said of Reynolds. Judging from recent appointments to the teaching staff, the board liked to hire local people, though its members did not acknowledge that they gave preference to such persons. After the meeting at which Reynolds was chosen superintendent, one board member regretted that the ideal person for the job could not apply because he lacked the appropriate credentials. This ideal person happened to be a local man, now working elsewhere in the state.

Mansfield's educators do not decide the level of academic discourse in classrooms or the relative importance of academic and nonacademic matters. Rather, the prevalent academic standards are determined by the district's hiring practices and are put into effect as those whom the board has hired interact with one another, the students, and the parents of the community. The result is an academic posture well suited to the concerns of a small rural community.

School policy is not calculated to promote this outcome. To be sure, there are policy statements in several district documents, but they are consulted only in exceptional cases (involving, for example, expulsion) and are couched in typically grand language. One item in the board's *Rules, Precedents, and Procedures* explicitly requires the sort of congruence between school and community that we have been discussing: "The teacher should have a respectful attitude toward the standards and the accepted patterns of behavior of the community in which he is employed." But the fact that teachers actually possess a respectful attitude is attributable not to this regulation but to the process

of recruitment and selection. Mansfield's teachers do not need to be taught what behavior is acceptable in Mansfield.

Over the years there has been little active participation by the community-at-large in educational policy making. Nothing has arisen to demand it. The community itself has not changed much. The migration rates during most of this century have been moderate, and many local families have remained in residence from generation to generation. Like-minded people replace one another on the school board, and they comfortably reflect the school district's stability. Hence factional dispute is rare and particular instances of displeasure with the school can be dealt with informally. A telephone call to one of the board members, or a remark in the restaurant or the post office, is sufficient.

Whatever its benefits, the close fit between school and community in Mansfield results in four dilemmas.

Although the school experience of Mansfield students does not preclude occupational and educational success, it is still comparatively limited. In other school districts, parents, students, and teachers place more emphasis on academic achievement and press for more resources to be directed toward intellectual goals. Consequently, there are children in the state and nation who are taught better mathematics and science, and who are better informed about their nation's political and economic complexities. Mansfielders strive to hire, not the best teacher in an intellectual sense, but the teacher who will best serve Mansfield. This is an important distinction. They would dismiss as unsuitable teachers who were "too intelligent for this community" and therefore "more than we want," just as they dismissed the candidacy of Dargan for the superintendency. Thus the first dilemma: If education is thought best when it attempts to maximize the intellectual potential of a child, then Mansfield High School may be faulted; but if under the conditions of places like Mansfield the schools contribute to a sense of personal identity and low alienation,¹¹ then something of possibly compensating value has been gained. I suggest that Mansfield's children do not have educational opportunities equal to those available in larger cities and their suburbs. They are denied equal opportunity not because of their race, religion, or national origin, but rather because they are being schooled in the prevalent ethos of Mansfield. Yet if different standards were instituted for academic performance, the selection of educators, and the balance between academic and nonacademic activities, Mansfield High School would no longer suit its community. Such standards would have to be imposed from the outside, for they find little support in Mansfield. Indeed, they might threaten the community.

The close fit discussed here promotes generational stability in Mansfield. Neither by learning nor by aspiration are the community's children sharply distinguished from their parents. Their shared feelings about where to live and what to believe suggest a second dilemma: In Mansfield, maximizing intellectual achievement and high intergenerational stability are probably incompatible.

Though Mansfield has no black residents, it sustains anti-black sentiment and thus socializes its children into attitudes that conflict with national ideals. No school policy supports this sentiment, but the school is a forum for its

expression and its reinforcement by peers. This points to a third dilemma: Mansfield's harmonious relation of school and community is maintained at the cost of compromising some national ideals. In this dilemma, *particularism*, in the form of the local community's sense of the good, is pitted against *universalism*, in the form of the nation's sense of the good—both of which inspire essential activity, the former to human dignity and the latter to national unity.¹² Plainly, the interests of any individual community may differ from those of the nation as a whole. It is unpleasant, however, to contemplate a national society so insecure that it cannot believe itself the richer for its subgroup enclaves, each with its own identity. Yet if the outlook of some subgroups became dominant, then social justice and national integration would be threatened.

These dilemmas of local control suggest that there is no good social organization without a boundary to its goodness. That local autonomy has limits was made clear by the 1954 desegregation decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. Thus, at the same time that we see virtue in the intimacy of Mansfield school and community, we must be prepared to appeal to principles of justice and equality and condemn what we have praised if the price exacted by their harmony is judged intolerable. Who is to judge? And when is it to be declared that the cost of goodness for some has become intolerable for others? These are especially complex and controversial questions. For example, F. A. Rodgers (1975) discusses the pre-integration high school in North Carolina. He concludes that, as a result of desegregation, not only did many black educators lose their jobs, but the black community lost a critical factor in the facilitation and development of its political and social activities. Rodgers's doubt about the outcome of the 1954 Supreme Court decision suggests that one may question whether or not local community gains and losses should take priority over national ideals.

Rodgers's conclusions bring us to the final dilemma. To those with roots in Mansfield's past, to those who resonate with their little school's special balance of academic, athletic, and other nonacademic activities, school reorganization is anathema.¹³ Yet, reorganization is an increasingly likely solution to the problems of the Mansfields of America, as lower enrollments necessitate the closing of classes and small schools fall victim to declining economies of scale. "Over my dead body" was the response of a Mansfielder to consolidation. He is one of many who react to the proposed loss of their school with a passion comparable to that of people who feel that their cultural survival is in jeopardy when their native language is threatened. The continued existence in Mansfield of a school that can contribute to subgroup maintenance, to the integration of its community, is inversely related to the application of two universalistic principles: fiscal rationality, which argues for school reorganization; and academic excellence, which supports the employment of educators and promotes curricular reform that would not be suitable for Mansfield as presently constituted. These principles are espoused by educational organizations ranging from state teachers' unions to state school board associations.¹⁴ They are therefore strongly supported. Countervailing arguments are just beginning to gather force among diverse groups which urge resistance to the increasing scale of contemporary society.

I have tried to resist the allure of romanticism here. Mansfield is not a paradise either to me or to those of its inhabitants who for different reasons remain outside the charmed circle of acceptability. It is a community in a psychological sense and, like all such communities, somewhat exclusive. While not everyone does feel or can feel he belongs there, I find Mansfield appealing because it is able to embrace, to attach, those who, in a manner of speaking, will submit to it. Believing that such rewards are uncommon, I value places where they are available.

With its particular brand of instruction, its ideological orientation, and its stress on sports and money-raising activities, Mansfield High School is not a school for everyone or everyplace. Given local control, it was not meant to be, nor could it be. But it does belong in Mansfield. As one teacher observed after reflecting on the school's strengths and weaknesses, "I guess it's as good a school as you can expect Mansfield to have." Under circumstances of local control, her comments are essentially accurate. She did not intend to be patronizing. As a native of the area, she knew what kind of school the desires and expectations of Mansfield's adults would support. Given the people, the school is appropriate.

Based on external perspectives, Mansfield High School may be judged more harshly than my comments suggest. But as I assured my Mansfield hosts, I had not come to conduct an evaluation. I planned, rather, to examine the relationship between school and community in a rural setting. I found the relationship to be mutually beneficial. The two are joined in the maintenance of an American subgroup which I do not see as prototypical for all of us, which is flawed, but which is worth treasuring—if the price paid by Mansfield and the nation is not too high.

In 1975, at the height of the resistance to busing in Boston, a journalist reported the bitter observations of a former Bostonian:

"I'll never forgive them for this. Forcing me out."

"Why?" I asked. "Most people who have the money *want* to live in the suburbs."

"You could never understand," he said. "I'm a townie. I lived all my life in Charlestown. You know, we got something special here. There's only one Bunker Hill in the whole country." (Klein 1975, p. 82)

And they've got something special in Mansfield, too. Keeping that something special depends upon whom Mansfield High School serves.

NOTES

¹ To preserve the anonymity of my informants, the name of their community has been altered, as have all other names.

² Since 1967, enrollment in the school district has declined each year. In 1975, the salary offered a beginning teacher was \$8,336 and the maximum teacher salary was \$13,144. (For the state as a whole, in 1974, the median salary for a beginning teacher with a B.A. was \$8,400 and the median maximum salary \$14,350.) On the basis of *effort rank* (which is the correlation between a district's potential wealth, as measured by its assessed valu-

ation per pupil, and the degree to which it draws upon its wealth for the support of its schools, as measured by its total tax rate), Mansfield is an above-average school system.

³ In many respects, this study is in the tradition of such earlier community studies as West (1945), Vidich and Bensman (1958), Lynd and Lynd (1929), and Hollingshead (1959). The first three focus on the community, and schooling is an essential but subordinate concern of these studies; the fourth centers on the school, but views schooling chiefly through the concept of social class. Though my own fieldwork encompassed the entire community, I intended to center my inquiry on the school, considering its function within the community.

⁴ In approaching the school, we moved very slowly to establish ourselves as unthreatening observers who would participate upon request in the life of the school but whose prime interest was in finding out about the school in all its aspects. We believed it important to establish that we had not come to evaluate the quality of instruction or administration. In time our data collection came to include: (1) observing and tape recording lessons; (2) interviewing all of the teachers and school board members, and many of the students; (3) reading student diaries; (4) analyzing documents such as statements of course objectives, teacher-made tests and student homework, school board policy statements and minutes, etc.; (5) administering a questionnaire. We attended all school events, teachers' meetings, and school board meetings. We moved into the community through introductions provided by the superintendent. There we met and interviewed the mayor and his village board. We attended village board meetings, collected all available documents, and became part of community life through participation in local church and organizational activities. Data collection culminated with the administration of a questionnaire, which was followed up by in-depth interviews. These were the formal activities. But since I lived in Mansfield during most of the second year of fieldwork, I was an informal participant as well. Because I did not bring my family, I was unable to learn about the community through their experiences.

⁵ Maclver and Page define *sense of community* as "common living with its awareness of sharing a way of life as well as the common earth" (1961, p. 10). As a result of "sharing a way of life," a subgroup has developed in Mansfield whose members share "some common quality that makes them distinguishable from other members of a major group to which they belong" (*Webster's Third International*, s.v. "subgroup"). To be sure, the Mansfielder is readily recognized as an American, but the outcomes of growing up in Mansfield and places like it differ from those produced in other social settings in the United States.

⁶ The grade and high schools were organized into a unit district about twenty years ago.

⁷ This is a neighborhood-type institution which serves, though not exclusively, small-town graduates in the central part of the state.

⁸ The investment in sports is substantial, certainly consonant with the level of expenditure made by other schools in Mansfield's athletic conference. One hears grumbling about an overemphasis on sports, but at no time did teachers state that they were deprived of what they needed for instructional purposes. Mansfield considers itself a football town, turns out in large numbers for most athletic events, but by no means neglects the school's musical and dramatic events. The school's laboratory equipment acceptably serves the needs of biology (the only required science), chemistry, and physics, which is occasionally offered depending on enrollment. Mansfield High School has one laboratory for all of its science courses.

⁹ According to a 1971 Gallup Poll (1972, p. 17) conducted in communities of 2,500 or less, 64 percent were satisfied with their children's education; 26 percent were not, and 10 percent did not know. Comparable statistics for the nation as a whole were 60, 20,

and 12 percent. I cite these figures with diffidence since, unlike the Gallup Poll election outcomes, I am uncertain of their accuracy for the groups they supposedly represent. Moreover, I did not ask if people in Mansfield were pleased with their children's education, but if they thought the school system was one of the most important things in Mansfield.

¹⁰ From 1947 to 1972, approximately 40 percent of all graduates continued their education after graduation. In the 1947–65 period, for which the data are most complete, 46 percent of the graduates in the top half of their class were living in or around Mansfield as of 1972. This group includes most of those who attended college.

¹¹ These data are not fully persuasive, but they tend to confirm my sense of Mansfielders' low level of alienation, particularly among the mainstream vis-à-vis non-Mansfielders (see Table 1...).

¹² See Fein's (1971) excellent book for further discussion of universalism.

¹³ Reorganization, while much discussed, is not necessarily imminent. Many residents fear that their high school will be consolidated with the other county schools to create one large system. Their shrinking enrollments and the disposition of educators to prefer larger systems suggest that Mansfielders' fears have some warrant.

¹⁴ See the *Illinois Education News* (February 1975) section on school reorganization which shows the heads of the Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Association of School Boards favoring the universalistic principles that support school reorganization.

TABLE 1. The Alienation of Mansfielders Compared with That of a National Sample^a

Item ^b	Population Sampled	Responses (in Percentages)		
		Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
1. Nothing is worthwhile anymore.	Mansfield adults	15.0	7.9	74.4
	Mansfield students	8.2	23.5	68.1
	U.S. adults	43.3	—	55.9
2. People can't be trusted ^c	Mansfield adults	17.5	12.5	67.3
	Mansfield students	25.4	28.6	41.3
	U.S. adults	56.1	4.3	39.5
3. I can count on someone to help me when I'm in real trouble.	Mansfield adults	75.2	9.1	14.2
	Mansfield students	64.7	19.7	15.2
	U.S. adults	24.0	—	75.1

^aFor Mansfield adults *N* = 239; for Mansfield students *N* = 157. The national sample *N* of 1484 is taken from the N.O.R.C. publication, *National Data Program for the Social Sciences*.

^bItem 1 is from N.O.R.C., July 1974, p. 44; item 2 is from July 1975, p. 75; item 3 is from July 1974, p. 46. The wording for N.O.R.C. and my items is almost identical. I asked additional questions on the alienation dimension but could not find comparative data which would put them in perspective. For example, "I'm satisfied with the respect I get from other people"—87.8 percent of the adults and 71.0 percent of the students agreed; "I feel somewhat apart even when I'm among friends"—59.7 percent of the adults and 57.2 percent of the students disagreed.

^cThis question was asked in the spring of 1974, when the Watergate affair was daily headline news. Students and the national sample may well have been reacting to these events.

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THE STRUCTURE OF POWER IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM: A STUDY OF CINCINNATI SCHOOL POLITICS

Various studies in the history of urban schools have explored how the governance of them has come under the political control of elite business and professional groups. In the United States, the dominance of such groups came after and was the consequence of the reform of large school systems during the early part of the twentieth century. Despite the evidence of previous studies, the methods used by these groups to retain their control are not well documented and understood. The Citizens School Committee (CSC) controlled the politics of Cincinnati schools from the early 1920s until the late 1960s and is typical of the organizations that dominated educational politics in many large American cities at that time. Correspondence obtained recently by the Cincinnati Historical Society sheds new light on the working of the Citizens School Committee and upon the variety of methods used by the leaders of the business and professional community to control the politics of a large city school system. The research reported here rests on the documents of the Citizens School

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Committee and also upon interviews conducted with many of the participants who made the politics of education in Cincinnati schools of that time. These informants participated on the understanding that their comments would be used in this study.

The significance of this research is not limited to Cincinnati, for it provides a model that explicates the techniques of control elite groups use to dominate school boards and their politics. It describes further how these elites control relationships with school administrators and the flow of information between the school system and the public. The power brokers in Cincinnati were, moreover, more than local bosses; they were as well leaders of national and international corporations. One key figure who worked behind the scenes, Neil McElroy, was president of Procter & Gamble and served in the 1950s as chairman of the White House Conference on Education and was Secretary of Defense.

In another perspective, this research reveals the political consequences that flowed from early twentieth century urban school reform in the United States. Most studies of this reform movement agree that changes in school board elections and the rationalization of school administration allowed for professional and business domination of urban schools.¹ There is some disagreement about the issue of class politics. Most studies picture the changes as resulting from an upper-class desire to take power over the school system away from lower and middle classes. A recent study has pictured this reform movement as a struggle between middle-class professionals and traditional business elite. The argument is that autonomous middle-class professionals "may have brought about urban educational reform without any close identification on the part of the reformers with the interests of either business leaders or workers."²

With regard to the above debate, my research shows that urban school reforms did not allow professionals and business leaders to continue their domination of school politics. What it cannot show is whether the reform movement permitted the upper class to usurp the power of the lower class members and professionals who sought their own places in the power structure. My research does argue that the reform movement enabled the business and professional communities to perpetuate their power over the schools. Of particular importance is the continued control and active participation in urban school politics by heads of major national and international corporations.

The control exerted by these corporate leaders was made possible by a reform movement which was premised on the idea that traditional political processes should be separated from educational systems. The key phrase used over and over again during the early reform era was: "Keep the schools out of politics." In practice this meant keeping political parties and politicians out of school board elections. The elimination of these traditional means of access for citizen participation in government created a vacuum which was filled by supposedly nonpolitical civic organizations. While these business-dominated civic organizations waved the flag called "Keep the schools out of politics," they moved to nominate and finance their own candidates to school boards. Because membership in these civic organizations required individuals to have a background in business, the abandonment of traditional party machinery for nomi-

nation and campaigning made it more difficult for non-business and professional types to be elected to school board positions.

In addition, there were changes in the methods of election to urban school boards which made it difficult for the citizen without strong organizational and financial backing to be elected. The changes, as has been shown by other historians, were the reduction of the size of school boards and citywide elections as opposed to election by district. Election by districts made it easier for the average citizen to be elected because campaigning was limited to a small geographic area. Elimination of election by district required the candidate to have the financial and organizational resources to campaign throughout the city.³

When the above changes began to take place in urban areas around the country in the early part of the 20th century, the average citizen found it increasingly difficult to gain access to school board membership. Without the possibility of backing from the established political parties, the average citizen found it almost impossible to gain the organizational and financial support required to conduct a successful election campaign covering an entire urban school district.

When elite business and professional groups began to dominate and control school boards they did so in the name of the "public interest." They claimed to know what was in the best interest of the educational system and the education of the child. Their claim to knowledge of the public interest in education was based on the assumption that those in society who had the most education and were successful in life had the most knowledge about educational needs and goals.

In another publication, I have labeled this way of representing the public interest as "democratic elitism."⁴ This notion is a winner-takes-all view that believes the democratic process should be organized to give the majority of voters the right to select those who are best able to represent everyone's interests. Since, it is assumed, other voters really don't know what is in their best interests, elections must be structured so that only the best candidates present themselves to the voters. This view of democracy was the goal of the campaign to "Keep the schools out of politics."

Another way of understanding democratic elitism is to compare other concepts of representation in education. For instance, democratic localism in the 19th century and community control in the 20th century were premised on the idea that all members of the community should be directly involved in the decision-making process in education. Rather than have an elected board of education to represent individual interests, it was felt in both of these cases that direct participation and decision making at open meetings were the best means of representing the individual. Indeed, since the leaders of the community control movement of the '60s and '70s believed that boards of education represented only elite, racist groups, they concluded that the only way to incorporate the viewpoints of racial minority groups in the governing structure of schools would be to change fundamentally the procedure that determined those structures.

Even if one rejects direct community control of schools and accepts school boards composed of elected representatives, one does not have to reject also the

notion of community participation. One can structure school board elections for community representation of viewpoints by an elected school board; there does not have to be a rejection of the notion of maximum participation. One can structure school board elections for maximum representation by increasing the size of boards, electing by district, and allowing a full range of political party participation. Here the goal is to present the voters with a full range of candidates so that they can choose the candidate they feel best represents their interests. This, of course, was the model rejected by democratic elitism. And in the case of Cincinnati and other urban centers, the abandonment of this model of democratic representation allowed for elite business and professional interests to control school politics.

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THE METHODS OF CONTROL

The central mechanism of control by the Citizens School Committee was its nominating committee, which made the decisions about who would be sponsored and financed in school board elections. Membership on the nominating committee was limited and carefully selected from leading members of the Cincinnati community. The primary source of evidence for the workings of this group comes from documents made available for the 1950s and 1960s and, consequently, is limited to that time period.

The most important person in selecting members of the nominating committee was Ewart Simpkinson, a local insurance executive, who firmly believed that the key to a good school system was getting the top or best people on the school board. He would later claim to know very little about board educational policy or education "matters" and never considered that knowledge important in regard to his success in school affairs. His philosophy was that all you needed were the top people to take charge of an organization and its success was guaranteed. And by the top people he meant those who were successful in the business and financial communities. It was this type of person Simpkinson wanted on the nominating committee and the school board.⁵

An example of Simpkinson's strategy and civic philosophy can be found in a 1954 letter to Ralph Lazarus, a member and later Chairman of the Board of Directors of Federated Department Stores, inviting Lazarus to be a member of the nominating committee. Federated Department Stores is a major national retail chain composed of 20 divisions including Bloomingdale's, Abraham and Straus, Bullock's, and I. Magnin. Simpkinson wrote Lazarus, "It is important for us to have top quality membership because our job is to select and persuade high-grade citizens for this responsible work in our city." The letter listed the other members of the nominating committee which included executives from important national and local businesses. Listed were Jacob Davis of the Kroger Company, Albert Heekin, Jr., of the Heekin Can Company, Robert Shetterly of Procter & Gamble, Harry Olden of Cincinnati Sheet and Metal Company, and Mrs. George Moyer, representing the P.T.A., the League of Women Voters, and

the Women's City Club. In the letter the business affiliation of each member of the nominating committee was clearly specified.⁶

While almost all members of the nominating committee were businessmen, Simpkinson did try to have representation from different constituencies within the city. For instance, in the collection of documents from the Citizens School Committee there is an undated list of 17 possible members of the 7-member nominating committee. Simpkinson had divided the 17 into 7 categories labeled Catholic, Colored, Jewish, Western Hills, Business-Industry, Professors, and Women. These were categories Simpkinson considered important to the Cincinnati community, but they did not all receive representation on the nominating committee. The category Western Hills referred to an area of Cincinnati that was mainly Catholic and considered uninvolved in civic affairs. The categories of Catholic and Colored were special problems for the Citizens School Committee and will be discussed in more detail later in the essay.⁷

The methods used by the nominating committee to select candidates to the school board were explained in a 1949 letter from Simpkinson to Homer Lunken. The letter was stamped confidential and included the following instructions, "Each one of the committee has a similar sheet and we are to rate these candidates in the four columns from one to ten giving first choice ten points." In addition, the letter stated, "It was the unanimous agreement that we would present four candidates and that we would endorse any of the present incumbents who desire to be reelected with the exception of Mr. Becker."⁸

In essence, the rating scale of the nominating committee replaced the democratic process of the ballot box since virtually all candidates of the Citizens School Committee were elected. One major exception was Mr. Becker in Simpkinson's letter to Lunken. Becker had held his position on the Board of Education for twenty-six years from 1934 to 1960 because of support from the large Catholic community in Cincinnati and the Citizens School Committee resented him for it. They felt, however, there was little they could do to remove him because of the possibility of raising the ire of the Catholic community. In a letter that served as a formal report of the Nominating Committee in 1949, Simpkinson wrote, "In the light of Mr. Becker's record on the board, we do not feel that we can recommend his endorsement, but . . . because our opposition to him may involve some religious misunderstanding we do not recommend a campaign for or against him by the Citizens School Committee."⁹

While nominating and financing candidates was one important strategy for controlling board membership, another was the appointment by the Board of Education of a person to fill an unexpired term of a resigning member. This method allowed the Board of Education and the Citizens School Committee to circumvent completely any democratic processes. This was the method the Citizens School Committee hoped to use to get a black candidate on the Board of Education.

By the end of the 1950s, with the national struggle for civil rights it became obvious to the Citizens School Committee that they needed to get a representative of the black community on the Board of Education who would share the values and views of the business leaders of the community. As one member of the Citizens School Committee wrote Simpkinson in 1959, "I think we will be

faced with the decision of having to nominate someone from the minority community in this next election . . ." For this purpose Simpkinson had appointed to the nominating committee a local black physician, Charles Dillard. In 1959 the nominating committee membership included Charles Dillard along with Rueben Hays, chairman of the board of the First National Bank of Cincinnati; Walter Beckjord, chairman of the board of Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company; Kelly Siddall, administrative vice president of Procter & Gamble; Mary Schloss, the wife of the president of Kahn's Meat Company; Edward Wagner, president of Wagner's Sons Co.; and Arthur M. O'Connell, vice president of Thomas E. Wood Co.¹⁰

No minority candidate was nominated by the Citizens School Committee in 1959, but a beginning was made in the search for the "right" black candidate. In 1961 another attempt was made to nominate a minority candidate. In a letter to Carlton Hill, the president of the Fifth-Third Union Trust Co., Simpkinson wrote, "The public does not yet realize that we are going through a fairly critical period of this phase of the Citizens School Committee activities. Having Dr. Dillard on the nominating committee two years ago was the first time a negro candidate had ever been on this committee." Simpkinson explained the continuation of the search for a minority candidate, "Having the counsel and advice of Dr. Clarke this time made it possible to develop [sic] a good list of prospects from the negro community and it was very significant that your committee was ready to endorse one of these candidates . . ."¹¹

While no minority candidate was nominated in 1961 there was consideration given to using the strategy of appointment as opposed to election. Simpkinson outlined this strategy in another 1961 letter to the head of Fifth-Third Union Trust Company. Simpkinson explained to Carlton Hill, "If we should endorse a colored person we can be reasonably sure that there might be a white candidate run independently and if he were a good one our candidate might well be defeated." The strategy suggested by Simpkinson was, "If a colored person were put on the Board of Education by appointment and then endorsed by us he would have a much better chance of being elected and he would feel more welcome and we might be able to get a more effective person."¹²

The method of appointment did not have to be used when finally in 1964 the nominating committee selected its first black candidate, Calvin Conliffe, for the Board of Education. Conliffe was more representative of the corporate elite in the Citizens School Committee than of the local minority community. When Conliffe was elected in 1964, he was an engineer, inventor, and manager for the General Electric Company.

Probably the most interesting use of appointment as a means of avoiding the democratic process occurred with the death of the board president Fred Heinold in 1959 and the resignation of the vice president Edwin Becker in 1960. These two incidents not only illustrate the methods of control used by the Citizens School Committee, but also the anti-Catholic feeling shared by some of these corporate leaders.

When Fred Heinold, physician and president of the Cincinnati School Board for 19 years, unexpectedly died of a heart attack during a trip to Cleve-

land in 1959, Ewart Simpkinson, chairman of the Citizens School Committee, quickly wrote the vice president of Procter & Gamble, Kelly Siddall, "This is a [tragedy], but it also gives us a golden opportunity to get someone on the Board of Education without a competitive election." The chairman of the Citizens School Committee emphasized in his letter to the vice president of Procter & Gamble that, "Whomever we advise the Board of Education . . . that name is guaranteed election. This means that we can get the caliber of man who would be possibly unavailable if he had to run under a competitive public election." Siddall, the vice president of Procter & Gamble, was vice chairman of the nominating committee of the Citizens School Committee. The chairman of the committee, Walter Beckjord, the chairman of the board of the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company, was out of town at the time of Heinold's death and Simpkinson's sense of urgency led him to contact immediately the next person in charge. In a "P.S." at the bottom of the letter, Simpkinson wrote, "Someone from the Procter & Gamble organization would be ideal if you could make the suggestion."¹³

Besides a concern about finding a replacement to serve on the board, a member of the board had to be selected to take over Heinold's job as president. Heinold had kept a tight grip on the board's presidency throughout the 1950s. According to tradition the vice president should be the next in line for the position, but that happened to be the Catholic board member Edwin Becker. Not only should the job have been Becker's by tradition, but also by virtue of his 26 years of service on the board.

But Becker was not elected to the board presidency and he resigned from the board in 1960 charging the other board members with strong anti-Catholic bias. In his letter of resignation he claimed that he had been approached by his fellow board member, Samuel Todd, and was informed that the other board members had met without his presence and had decided that he should not be president. Becker also stated, "When I asked what the reason was, Mr. Todd very frankly stated 'because of your religion.'" Todd then stated that they would allow him to be interim president if he promised not to stand for re-election.¹⁴

Those most actively opposed to Becker becoming president were Citizens School Committee nominees Stanley McKie and Charles Westheimer. At the time they were serving on the board, Stanley McKie was president of Weil, Roth and Irving, a firm specializing in municipal and corporate bonds, and Charles Westheimer was a partner in the stock brokerage firm of Westheimer & Company. The other board members had selected Stanley McKie to succeed Heinold. In his letter of resignation, Becker stated that, "Mr. McKie and others said that because of the bigotry existing in the community, to have a Catholic as President of the Board of Education would handicap the public schools . . ." He also stated, "Mr. Westheimer expressed the idea that there was definitely a great deal of prejudice in the community against a Catholic becoming President of the Board of Education."¹⁵

The public reply by the other board members included the brief reference to Becker's charges. They stated "improper reporting of the confidences of a private conference are not actions of a person who is sincerely interested in the

welfare of the schools. Time will, in our opinion, prove that the majority of the Board has made a wise selection."¹⁶ Concern about Becker's religion certainly played a part in some of the public reaction. The school board member who led the delegation to inform Becker that he would not be head of the board was a friend of both Todd and Simpkinson. His views of the events are seen in this letter to Samuel Todd where he wrote, "Congratulations on your well-deserved election as vice-president of the Cincinnati Board of Education and on your strong stand with reference to Mr. Edwin Becker . . . I do not believe that we can afford to give purse-string control of public school money to any person or group that is not committed to strict separation of Church and State." The writer viewed the school board drama as a struggle between a Protestant majority and a Catholic minority. He wrote that the event "does give me the opportunity to say something in behalf of the great Protestant majority who are tired of seeing a minority expressing their own bigoted views, and by minority pressure making attempts to thwart the majority-held views of United States citizens." Across the top of the copy of the letter sent to Simpkinson, head of the Citizens School Committee, was penned the note, "And, Sink, (Simpkinson's nickname) the same compliment goes to you—Bob."¹⁷

In a letter to Joseph Bertotti, Manager, Education Relations and Support, General Electric Company, Simpkinson outlined how the Citizens School Committee exerted control over the events following Heinold's death and Becker's resignation. In Simpkinson's version, Becker's charge of religious bigotry was not correct. Simpkinson wrote Bertotti explaining the sequence of events: "One of our endorsed candidates died in the Fall, just prior to election, and inasmuch as there was no competition to our own slate the five signers of the petition circulating committee were suddenly responsible for replacing Dr. Heinold's name on the ballot with a new candidate." And, Simpkinson stated with a certain air of self-congratulation, "We, fortunately, had a strong Nominating Committee and Board of Directors and came up with an outstanding candidate, who is a young and capable lawyer."¹⁸ The Citizens School Committee's choice to replace Heinold was attorney Louis Schwab, who among other things was a director of Southern Ohio National Bank, Williamson Co., Verkamp Corp., Hawley-Monk Co., Rookwood Oil Terminals, Inc., and Marvin Warner Co. Schwab's ties to education and the Citizens School Committee went back to his grandfather, Dr. Louis Schwab, who also was appointed to the Cincinnati School Board back in 1915 and died while still a member of the board in 1926.¹⁹

In terms of a replacement for Becker, Simpkinson told Bertotti that Becker had unfortunately brought up the issue of religion but, "However, the School Committee felt that because of the large percentage of Cincinnati's population, also represented by Mr. Becker, that if we could get a capable person to fulfill his place from that group it would be a desirable thing to do. His public statement threw a cloud on the situation and made it embarrassing for someone else from his group."²⁰ The "capable" Catholic selected by the Citizens School Committee was attorney J. Vincent Aug. The political maneuvers that swirled around the board after Heinold's death illustrate the attempt of the Citizens School Committee to balance their power with the realities of the Cincinnati

community. The search for an acceptable Catholic and minority candidate was an attempt to achieve a balanced community representation without threatening the values of the community elite. Representation from the Catholic and black communities was considered necessary to avoid major community conflict which would threaten the power of those in control. But the achievement of this goal meant a manipulation of democratic processes during elections for the Board of Education and for positions within the board structure.

Some of this manipulation occurred behind the scenes with the president of Procter & Gamble, Neil McElroy, as the actor. While the formal and public display of power was through the nomination, financing, and control of school board members, the informal relationships were built on friendship, informal lunches, and meetings. It was in these informal contacts that McElroy played an important role. Simpkinson hinted at the importance of this informal structure in a letter to Richard Peake of the General Electric Company: "I hate to bother you on this School Committee Board member matter but I think this is a perfect spot for a couple of your higher echelon men. We get into politics only indirectly but do get behind the scenes in an interesting way."²¹

In an interview with Roger Crafts, an active member of the Citizens School Committee in the 1950s and the president of the organization in the late 1960s, McElroy was placed at the center of the Cincinnati power structure in the 1950s. "Those were," Craft said, "the Neil McElroy days."²² Besides McElroy's relationship to the local power structure, he also served as chairman of the White House Conference on Education in 1955 and Secretary of Defense in the Eisenhower administration.

As Crafts describes the period, business leaders would informally gather with Neil McElroy to decide educational and other civic issues. Crafts said, "They would go to lunch and discuss a particular program. If they would decide what to support, Neil McElroy would just point his finger at Zimmer from the Gas & Electric Company, Lazarus from Federated Department Stores—right around the table saying your share is \$6,000, your share is \$5,000 . . ."²³

McElroy indirectly described this process in an interview for *U.S. News & World Report* in 1955.²⁴ The lengthy interview was a result of McElroy's chairmanship of the White House Conference on Education. In response to the question, "Educators are a little busy to be setting standards aren't they?" McElroy responded in terms of Cincinnati. McElroy argued that educators could not set standards without public support. "In our particular community," he said, "thanks to the fact that in Cincinnati there's been no political influence on the school board or the school system in any way—and then, too, partly, I guess, because people in Cincinnati think it's important to have a good school system—they've put up the money when they had to put it up, and a lot had been requested." In contrast to Cincinnati, McElroy argued there were many communities that did not receive public financial support because of the actions of the board members or the superintendent.

If one believes that the political process is the most important element of democratic control, one could interpret McElroy's statement in the context of democratic elitism. From this perspective, McElroy's statement meant that elite

control of the Board of Education, or “no political influence,” resulted in a board and superintendent who could inspire public confidence and move electors to vote for tax levies and bond issues. The further complication of McElroy’s statement is that more democratic control of [the] board of education results in conflict between board members and the superintendent. Such conflicts would result in undermining public confidence and making electors unwilling to vote for increased financial support of the schools.

The interviewer for *U.S. News & World Report* also asked why business had begun to take a strong interest in education. In considering McElroy’s reply one is tempted to imagine a discussion of the value of education to business at one of McElroy’s decision-making businessmen’s luncheons in Cincinnati. McElroy told the interviewer, “I believe . . . that unless a good quality of education is offered to the young minds of this country, business itself has a substantial loss to sustain. It has a loss to sustain in the quality of the people that they are training to be their executives.” In addition, there was another relationship between business and education. As McElroy stated, “as both the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have shown, the higher the grade of education, the greater the consumption rate of products—which is of obvious interest to business.” In other words, education is good for business because it trains workers and consumers.

It would be difficult to measure the degree of influence Neil McElroy exercised over the Citizens School Committee and the educational system. It is apparent that he was a much respected member of the Cincinnati business community. Evidence of that respect is found in Simpkinson’s statement that serious consideration was given in the late 1950s to a proposal to use McElroy’s face as a model for a statue of Cincinnatus that was to be placed on the riverfront in Cincinnati. The project was never completed, but the thought was important.²⁵

The relationship between McElroy and the Citizens School Committee is reflected in correspondence related to another kind of control—the control of information between the schools and the public. This control was to be accomplished by the creation of a private foundation which became the Greater Cincinnati School Foundation. This idea was outlined by Simpkinson in a letter to Neil McElroy in 1954. Simpkinson explained to McElroy that a committee of the Citizens School Committee had argued in a report that the organization had done a “good job in respect to obtaining fine candidates for the Board of Education . . . but the liaison work of informing the public concerning the public schools and their activities left much to be desired.” The solution was “to activate the Citizens School Foundation to do the liaison work and the continuing of public education, etc., and that the present Citizens School Committee Board shift over to the Foundation . . .” Simpkinson went on to argue that a major advantage would be that they could “secure sustaining funds from corporations or individuals on a tax-free basis . . .”²⁶

A letter sent to all members of the Citizens School Committee in 1955 described the relationship between the foundation and the committee as “really sister organizations and there is a great need for both of them, and the

work that both of them do—the Committee in election work, and the Foundation in study and interpretation of education policies.” The letter explained how the directors of the Citizens School Committee had decided to develop the foundation because of tax advantages. The letter clearly stated that, “Our Board of Directors as a group is the nucleus of the Citizens School Foundation . . .” It was urged that all members of the Citizens School Committee become members of the foundation.²⁷

The name adopted for the foundation was the Cincinnati School Foundation and its first president was Charles Sawyer, who had just returned from Washington where he had served as Secretary of Commerce in President Harry S. Truman’s administration. The chairman of the fund-raising drive for the foundation was Milton J. Schloss, the president of Kahn’s Meats. His wife, Mary Schloss, was recording secretary of the Citizens School Committee and treasurer of the Cincinnati Foundation. In the 1970s Mary Schloss would be elected to the Board of Education.

The plan was for the Citizens School Committee to control elections to the board and for the foundation to influence school policy and communicate policy to the public. The first major task assumed by the foundation was to develop a policy with respect to the teacher shortage of the 1950s. This issue had been a major topic of concern at the White House Conference on Education chaired by Neil McElroy, at Cincinnati School Board meetings since the end of World War II, and by local teacher associations.

The approach of the Cincinnati School Foundation to the teacher shortage problem was in many ways best described as condescending and not reflective of a belief that teachers were real professionals. The plan of the Cincinnati School Foundation was to stage a Teacher Recognition Day which would reward teachers with appreciation and supposedly attract other people to the ranks of teaching. The chairman of the first Teacher Recognition Day in Cincinnati was Charles Sawyer, the president of the foundation.

The plan embodied in Teacher Recognition Day encouraged citizens of the city to invite a teacher home for dinner. Following the dinner everyone was to attend the Cincinnati Garden, which had been taken over by the foundation for the night, and watch a performance of the Hollywood Ice Revue. In their interviews, Ewart Simpkinson and Roger Crafts said they got a feeling after the event that teachers did not appreciate Teacher Recognition Day. Simpkinson said that teachers felt the plan was condescending toward teachers. Crafts claimed that while the plan had little effect on solving the teacher shortage, it did launch the foundation into the arena of educational policy.²⁸

While controlling membership on the board and determining educational policy through the foundation were important elements in the structure of power, there was also the issue of the actual control of the internal workings of the school system. As heads of major businesses, leaders of the Citizens School Committee and the Board of Education were restricted in the actual amount of time they could devote to school matters. This limitation meant that they had to rely heavily upon educational administrators in the system. This dependence made the selection of the superintendent an act of primary importance in

controlling the system. From the standpoint of the community elite, the superintendent had to be strong and reflect the values and views of the elite.

In addition, superintendents relied upon the support of the elite community to assure their control and power. Wendell Pierce, Superintendent of Schools in 1963, wrote a public response to the question, "How do you account for the stability of the Cincinnati Public Schools?" In it, he emphasized the cooperative arrangement between the Citizens School Committee, the school administration, and the Board of Education. Pierce's reply claimed that, "The team operation which has existed for many years between the total staff, the administration, and the Board of Education has been possible because, for the last fifty years, the Citizens School Committee has played a major role in the selection of board members and in implementing a city practice of keeping the school system out of politics."²⁹

The relationship between community elites and school administration has to be understood in the context of the relationship between the educational reform movement which made it possible for elite groups to take charge and the professionalization of educational administration. During the early part of the 20th century, as several historians have noted, the development of elite control of urban schools occurred at the same time that school administrators began to model themselves after business managers and assumed more and more control of the internal workings of the educational system.³⁰ It is difficult to determine whether this shift occurred because business-dominated boards of education tended to select those who acted like themselves or because school administrators consciously or unconsciously used businessmen as a model. After the creation of small boards and the professionalization of educational administration, school boards became less interested and active in curriculum development, teacher selection, student evaluation, and staff management. The results of the reform were thus ironically at odds with its rhetoric that had argued that superintendents were to manage the school system with minimum interference from the board, only after the board of education had established general educational policy.

In Cincinnati there was established a system of mutual support between the Citizens School Committee and the superintendent. In the 1921 school board election, Superintendent Condon actively campaigned for the candidates supported by the Citizens School Committee. When a resolution was introduced at the September 26, 1921, board meeting condemning this action, Condon responded, "I want to repeat . . . that it was my duty . . . to advocate election of the candidates who represented the non-partisan control of education, for, to my mind, there is no greater issue involved in the administration of education than this: Keep the schools out of politics; keep politics out of the schools."³¹

Superintendent Condon also gave expression to the ideal relationship between a board of education and a school administration in a report to the Board of Education in 1923 after a trip across the country inspecting educational systems. In his report he identified those characteristics which made one school system superior to another. He told the board, "the best schools are

likely to be found where there is the clearest recognition of what constitutes executive and administrative responsibility, with the Superintendent and his staff in charge of the administration of educational policies clearly and distinctly responsible to the Board of Education . . . but unhampered in the execution of educational plans and policies which have been approved." Condon told the board that where he saw this relationship between the board and superintendent there was "peace, harmony, good understanding . . . and good results. Where this relationship did not exist there was controversy, misunderstanding, and a general level of distrust."³²

School board proceedings reflected the ideal relationship advocated by Condon. During the 1920s there was very little controversy at school board meetings. In fact, there was very little discussion of educational matters. Board proceedings contained endless pages of the drama of real estate deals and bond issues. School board members began to take on all the characteristics of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*.

During the 1920s school board members did not function according to the model of board members determining educational policy and administrators administering that policy. What board members primarily discussed and determined were real estate deals, the handling of bond issues, and the issuance of building contracts. These were lawyers and businessmen of the 1920s who seemed to measure their success in terms of capital expansion and financial management. Words were not lost in discussions of educational policy, but were concentrated in the realm of fine legal and financial phrases.³³

What emerged from the 1920s was a definition of roles which protected the power of the superintendent and allowed school board members to feel comfortable playing roles which fit their everyday lives. Of course, this division of powers did not mean a complete retreat by board members from educational issues, but it did mean that one of the most important decisions to be made by board members was the selection of the superintendent.

So when I interviewed Ewart Simpkinson, who served as head of the Citizens School Committee during the 1950s, one of the questions that kept haunting me was where the leaders of these large corporations could find the time and energy to participate actively in the control of school affairs. From Simpkinson's perspective the key was the selection of the superintendent. In other words, all that was required was a superintendent who reflected the values of the elite members of the board.³⁴

A concern about selection of the superintendent surfaced during the 1955 school board campaign when candidate Homer Toms claimed that a member of the executive board of the Citizens School Committee had told him that the committee's ticket was designed to pack the board to control the selection of the next superintendent. Toms had been a member of the Citizens School Committee for ten years prior to the election. His break with the group during the election led him to seek support of the local Republican Party, which was also concerned with the issue of elite domination. George Eyrich, the chairman of the local county Republican Central Committee, charged that the Citizens School Committee was a "self-appointed group" that, because of its "manipulation of

candidates," should not be "entrusted with the future composition of the school board."³⁵

The involvement of the Republican Party in the campaign caused the Citizens School Committee to wave the banner that said keep politics out of the schools. Hiding behind this banner, the Citizens School Committee never denied the concern about controlling the selection of the superintendent. The Citizens School Committee simply issued a public statement saying, "We particularly recognize the achievements of our superintendent, Dr. Claude V. Courter, and if, as our opponents state, it is necessary that a successor to Dr. Courter be selected in two years, we and our candidates would hope that Dr. Courter's successor carry on with the same policies and in the same manner as Dr. Courter."³⁶

The hope that Courter's successor would carry on his policies implied support for the Citizens School Committee. Superintendent Courter claimed in an interview that, "The major contribution of the Citizens School Committee was its steadfast ability to recruit School Board candidates who were not subservient to any political party or boss . . . Across the years, the Citizens School Committee has so consistently selected well-qualified Cincinnatians as its nominees that they literally pre-empted the field." The interviewer concluded that Superintendent Courter's "personal support of the Citizens School Committee was steadfast during his administration as Superintendent of the Cincinnati Public Schools."³⁷

The close relationship between the Citizens School Committee and the superintendent was one important element in the total structure of control of the Cincinnati school system. The elements of that control included the nominating and financing of school board candidates, informal contacts between elite members of the business community, the establishment of a foundation to control the flow of information between the school system and the public, and the appointment and control of school administrators. The key to the success of this control was the limitation of community representation through an election structure based on nonpartisan and at-large school board elections.

In fact, it was the issue of limited representation that eventually caused the demise of the Citizens School Committee. The origin of the issue of representation was the defeat in 1966 of operating levies for the school system. In response to the defeat of these levies a new organization was created, Cincinnatians United for Good Schools, to investigate school and community relationships. The membership of this organization was similar in terms of elite nature to that of the Citizens School Committee. The chairman of Cincinnatians United for Good Schools was John R. Bullock, an attorney with the prestigious law firm of Taft, Stettinius, and Hollister, and the secretary-treasurer was Clint Pace, manager of Community Affairs and Shareholder Relations for Procter & Gamble.³⁸

The Cincinnatians United for Good Schools hired both Ronald Campbell, at that time dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Chicago, and the Midwest Administration Center of the University of Chicago to conduct a survey of the Cincinnati schools. In their report delivered in 1968 they spoke directly to the issue of the limited representation of the Citizens School Commit-

tee. The report stated, "Traditionally, the Citizens School Committee, a non-partisan organization which has existed since 1914, has been the principal sponsoring group for school board candidates." But, in a recommendation that was obviously critical of the Citizens School Committee, the report argued, "If the Citizens School Committee be retained, its membership should be broadened to include representatives from many other segments and organizations of the city. The purpose of the Citizens School Committee should be to get wide participation in selecting broadly representative, able, and devoted citizens for school board membership."³⁹

Besides calling for broader representation within the Citizens School Committee, the survey report recognized that the heart of the problem was the structure of school board elections and the report recommended that, "Cincinnati and other major city districts in Ohio may wish to join in seeking to amend the law to permit 9 to 11 board members, the majority elected at large and the remainder from subdivisions of the city."⁴⁰

While nothing concrete was done about changing Ohio law, there was a move to throw open the doors of the Citizens School Committee to greater community participation. This period of the 1960s was, of course, one in which black communities in most urban areas were making greater demands for participation in the decision-making processes. The Citizens School Committee had, as mentioned earlier, controlled the entry of minority representation on the school board by carefully nominating a black candidate they felt reflected their values.

With demands from the black community and the recommendations of the school survey, the Citizens School Committee in 1969 adopted a new constitution under the leadership of Roger Crafts, a faculty member in the Medical School of the University of Cincinnati. The new constitution created an essentially new organization composed of individual members and delegates from 31 organizations that supposedly represented the major segments of Cincinnati. In a letter to Ewart Simpkinson, the former head of the Citizens School Committee, Crafts explained, "This reorganization was undertaken to permit more complete and representative community participation in the nomination of candidates for the Board of Education; it was undertaken with the conviction that the Board must be able to listen to and be heard by all segments of the community and that this liaison with the community can be insured only through election of a slate nominated by a broadly-representative Citizens School Committee—nominated to represent not a minority, not even a majority, but all of the children and parents in our School District."⁴¹

The irony of the situation, according to Roger Crafts, was that as the representation within the organization broadened, the business elite withdrew financial support from the organization and at a meeting in the law offices of Taft, Stettinius, and Hollister formed a new organization to nominate school board candidates called the Better Neighborhood School Committee. The name of the organization reflected a more conservative approach to school desegregation than that being expressed by the new, more broadly based Citizens School Committee. Without elite support the Citizens School Committee

floundered and the Better Neighborhood School Committee became the new vehicle for elite support.⁴²

An important lesson to be learned from the collapse of the Citizens School Committee is that the problem is not with the structure of these organizations but with election laws which allow for continued elite control of school systems. To understand this issue it is important to discuss it in the framework of the more general political science literature dealing with representation and methods of election.

NONPARTISAN AND AT-LARGE ELECTIONS

As we have seen in the above account of Cincinnati, the cry of "Keep the schools out of politics" meant giving control to elite forces within the urban community. One of the important findings in the literature of political science is that nonpartisan elections are really partisan in their results. Willis Hawley argues, in one of the most complete studies of the issue, *Nonpartisan Elections and the Case for Party Politics*, that nonpartisan elections create a partisan bias in favor of Republicans. In Hawley's words, "What is referred to here as the Republican benefit thesis rests in part on the notion that Republicans enjoy a 'natural party organization' outside formal party structures."⁴³ What this means is that Republicans receive greater support from business and professional groups and that it is easy for these organizations to slip into the role of a political party.

Hawley tested the Republican bias thesis by analyzing elections in 88 cities employing nonpartisan ballots in local elections. He concluded from this analysis that nonpartisan elections did enhance the chances of Republicans being elected. But this situation was not true in every case. The most important factors to differentiate between cities experiencing a partisan bias to nonpartisan elections was size and social class. In terms of city size, Hawley found that cities over 50,000 had a definite partisanship resulting from nonpartisan elections. Hawley wrote with regard to social class and size, "The data presented thus far provide support for the general proposition that nonpartisanship facilitates the election of Republicans in large cities and in those with a relatively high proportion of persons who are unemployed, of low income, of low education, and in low-status occupations."⁴⁴

What the above finding implies is that if one wants greater representation on school boards in large cities, one would want to replace nonpartisan elections with partisan campaigns and give active encouragement to the participation of political parties. Without active involvement of political parties, civic organizations and informal business ties assume the dominant role. As Hawley emphasizes, and as history demonstrates in Cincinnati, participation in community organizations is determined by class, with those of high class making most of the decisions.

I conclude from my study that, if partisan elections were allowed in cities like Cincinnati there would be a broader representation of the local citizenry on boards of education. Experience verifies this conclusion in cases where cities

have changed from at-large elections to elections by district. The evidence we have on this issue comes from the several cities that have made such a switch in election procedures during the last decade. Probably the most famous case occurred in Dallas, Texas, where a court order forced broader representation on its city council.⁴⁵

For many years Dallas was governed the way the Cincinnati school system was controlled. With at-large elections a small group of leading business and professional men were able, through an organization similar to that of the Citizens School Committee, to control elections to the city council. They, like Cincinnati, even responded to the civil rights movement of the early 1960s by nominating what they viewed as a safe black candidate. When court action forced abandonment of at-large elections for election by district, the elite group lost its strangle hold on the city's elections and a broader representation of the population in terms of race and socioeconomic class began to be elected. The same phenomenon occurred in San Francisco after voters forced a change to an election by district system.⁴⁶

One can go through a steady review of the political science literature to prove that partisan elections by district give a broader representation of the population than nonpartisan elections at-large. But in the end the real question is whether broad representation is desirable. Historically, those who have demanded elite control have viewed the majority of the population as not having the ability to make "good" decisions regarding education. The same argument is true of those who claim that professionals should control education because they know what is in the best interests of the child.⁴⁷

Both the elite and the professional arguments contain a partial rejection of the democratic process and also a lack of understanding of the importance of democratic control of a government educational system. One of the real dangers of a government-operated school system is that the political and social values taught in the system give primary support to one group over another. In our society it is very important who controls the content of the knowledge that schools distribute.

The history of American education is punctuated by racism and an emphasis upon teaching the values of the business community. This phenomenon is not accidental, but rather is directly related to the traditional lack of minority control and representation in education; it is directly related also to the traditional control that local elite business groups have over education. One of the important effects of federal intervention in the schools in the 1960s and 1970s was that it countered traditional elite control of the schools and forced local recognition of the problems of poor and minority groups. One can almost portray the phenomenon of the 1960s as a struggle between the national liberal elite and the local elite over the control of the schools. With the Reagan era we might be witnessing a greater emphasis on control by the local elite.

The issues go beyond just the consideration of one social group controlling the schools in its own interest. It also involves the actual political content of schooling. There were 19th-century concerns that a single political ideology would come to dominate the schools. The hope was that democratic control

would assure a representation of all the political values of a community in the educational system. In this manner the schools would not serve a single political interest.

If one of the goals of the educational system is to produce a democratic citizen, then one must certainly criticize a governance system that contradicts the democratic values of community participation and representation. In our current system these values have become part of what I call a managed democracy. Community advisory groups are organized by the school system as part of the plan of educational management. The fact that these advisory groups have to be organized says something very important about the nature of school boards. Since these school boards are not representative of the community, educational managers must find other mechanisms like advisory groups to determine community desires and interests. But, of course, there is an important difference between a citizen's advisory group and an elected board of education, and that important element is formal political power which will allow the exercise of control over the system as opposed to an educational administrator determining what should be done with community input.

I would argue that a school system that is to truly reflect democratic values must be governed in a democratic manner. This is important in terms of the political and social values in the system and in terms of the power of one social group over another. It seems quite clear what must be done to assure greater democratic control of the schools. The issue is not simply local control because this can mean control by a small local elite. This is the danger of the present argument for returning power to the local level. What is required is a change at the local level to assure broader community representation so that local control does not mean control by a small handful of local people.

The key to a more democratic political process in terms of representation in urban areas is the restructuring of school board elections so that they are partisan and by district. In terms of school board size there is another important issue. On the one hand, one could argue for increasing the size of the school board so that the number of districts could be increased and their size reduced. This certainly would broaden representation. On the other hand, increasing the size significantly could make the actual operation of boards of education more cumbersome. The answer to that situation is to begin the dismantling of large urban school districts and to create smaller independent school systems that could be subdivided into smaller districts. The smaller the political unit the easier it is for the individual citizen to participate. In concluding, I argue only that if school systems are to teach and reflect democratic values they must function in the context of democratic control.

This essay does not explore the relationship between political power and the content of education. One can hypothesize that the political structure of education determines the content of education. If this is true, then one can argue that the curriculum becomes a function of the direct and indirect control of local power brokers. One response to this argument could be that curriculum decisions are also made at state and federal levels. In the situation discussed in this essay, the local power brokers are tied directly to state and national power

structures. This is particularly true of Procter & Gamble's president, Neil McElroy. Another argument could be that the real curriculum decisions are made by local school administrators. But one needs to realize that the local power structure plays a dominant role in the selection of the superintendent. It is easy to argue that a more democratic control of the schools could mean a more democratic control of the curriculum.

NOTES

¹ A general discussion of the political changes that made this control possible in the 20th century is found in Joseph Cronin, *The Control of Urban Schools* (New York: Free Press, 1973), pp. 39–123; Joel Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 85–90, 128–35; and David Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 126–67.

² David N. Plank and Paul E. Peterson, "Does Urban Reform Imply Class Conflict? The Case of Atlanta's Schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1983), p. 168.

³ See references in note 1.

⁴ Concepts of representation and democratic elitism in education are discussed in Joel Spring's *Educating the Worker-Citizen* (New York: Longman, 1980), pp. 105–35.

⁵ Taped interview with Ewart Simpkinson, December 16, 1981.

⁶ Ewart Simpkinson to Ralph Lazarus, July 15, 1954, Box 2, Citizens School Committee, Manuscripts Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society).

⁷ "Nominating Committee Board of Education," Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

⁸ Ewart Simpkinson to Homer Lunken, February 9, 1949, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

⁹ Ewart Simpkinson to Evans DeCamp, April 5, 1949, Box Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹⁰ Charles Judd to Ewart Simpkinson, October 9, 1959, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, and "Committee to Recommend Candidates," January 5, 1959, Box 2, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹¹ Ewart Simpkinson to Carlton Hill, undated, Box 4, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹² Ewart Simpkinson to Carlton Hill, April 17, 1961, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹³ Ewart Simpkinson to Kelly Siddall, October 20, 1959, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹⁴ *Cincinnati School Board Proceedings*, January 4, 1960, pp. 3–5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁷ Robert Weber to Samuel Todd, January 5, 1960, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹⁸ Ewart Simpkinson to Joseph M. Bertotti, February 19, 1960, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

¹⁹ Companies headed by Schwab in 1959, who has continued to play an active role in business in the Cincinnati community.

²⁰ Simpkinson to Bertotti, *op. cit.*

²¹ Ewart Simpkinson to Richard Peake, March 11, 1959, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.

- ²² Taped interview with Roger Crafts, December 21, 1981.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ "Interview with Neil McElroy," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 1, 1955, pp. 78–84.
- ²⁵ Interview with Ewart Simpkinson, December 16, 1981.
- ²⁶ Ewart Simpkinson to Neil McElroy, May 4, 1954, Box 2, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.
- ²⁷ "Teachers Recognition Day," 1955, p. 2, Box 2, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.
- ²⁸ Simpkinson and Crafts interviews, *op. cit.*
- ²⁹ Wendell Pierce, October 4, 1963, Box 3, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.
- ³⁰ Raymond Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
- ³¹ Cincinnati Board of Education Proceedings, September 26, 1921, pp. 5–7.
- ³² Cincinnati Board of Education Proceedings, January 8, 1923, pp. 16–19.
- ³³ The extensive involvement of the Board of Education in the bond market in the 1920s and subsequent debt in the 1930s caused a survey team sponsored by the federal government to recommend that the board not issue any more bonds. *Survey Report of the Cincinnati Public Schools Made by the United States Office of Education at the Request of the Cincinnati Board of Education and the Cincinnati Bureau of Governmental Research* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Bureau of Governmental Research, 1935), pp. 456–57.
- ³⁴ Simpkinson interview, *op. cit.*
- ³⁵ "GOP in School Board Battle; Attacks Citizens' Committee," *Enquirer*, November 8, 1955, p. 18.
- ³⁶ "Bahlman Replies to Attack on Citizen Group's Ticket for Seats on School Board," October 13, 1955, p. 3.
- ³⁷ Erwin, p. 97.
- ³⁸ The Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, Report Cincinnati School Survey, August 1968, pp. xii–xiii.
- ³⁹ Ibid., pp. 99–101.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 101.
- ⁴¹ Roger Crafts to Ewart Simpkinson, October 13, 1969, Citizens School Committee, Manuscript Collection, Cincinnati Historical Society.
- ⁴² Interview with Roger Crafts, *op. cit.*
- ⁴³ Willis D. Hawley, *Nonpartisan Elections and the Case for Party Politics* (New York: J. Wiley, 1973), pp. 22–23.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 84.
- ⁴⁵ A discussion of Dallas and San Francisco in comparison to Cincinnati can be found in Howard Hamilton's *Electing the Cincinnati City Council* (Cincinnati: Stephen Wilder Foundation, 1978), pp. 22–35.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ See Spring, *Educating the Worker–Citizen*, pp. 105–35.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 9

1. Analyze Draper's strategy for depoliticizing school politics. Is this strategy reflective of the local school systems in proximity to your university? In particular, whom do you believe should be in charge of the schools?

2. What are the dilemmas of local school control that Peshkin points out? How do you suggest they might be resolved?
3. In Cincinnati, how did the school political "machine" develop? What groups were excluded from this process and why?
4. How does ideology figure into school politics? What are the ideologies behind the various models of school control discussed in this chapter?
5. What is the role of the superintendent? How would the superintendent's view of educating children differ from the view of the classroom teacher?
6. What are the positive and negative impressions of principals? According to Tirozzi, leaders need to be well prepared and highly motivated. Would you be a good candidate for a principalship? Why or why not?

Readings on the Politics of Schools: Choice and Change

In Chapter 9 we looked at how the current nature of school politics developed. In particular, we pointed out that bureaucracy is the defining feature of the organization of most school systems. The readings in this section challenge “business as usual” and propose alternatives that emphasize individual choice.

Denis Doyle’s essay on vouchers and tuition tax credits is an overview of the historical and political contexts within which those reforms have been proposed. Doyle reminds us of the ways in which the concepts of equity, freedom, and social utility merge in the movement toward privatization. The essay also reminds us of some aspects of public education—professional insensitivity to public opinion, centralization, and inefficiency—that recently have led to broad public criticism of U.S. schooling. Doyle concludes his essay by pointing out that the tax credit issue is not simply a tax issue. Rather, it is an education issue that “goes to our political and social core.” It is, in short, an issue of the extent to which public and private interests are compatible.

Barbara Miner in “Why I Don’t Vouch for Vouchers” argues that those who support vouchers do so for the reason of school accountability. She believes, however, that vouchers create school inequities, promote segregation, and do not adequately deal with the issue of the separation of church and state. One of Miner’s fundamental questions is, Should the United States have two separate, distinct school systems, one private and the other public but both supported by tax dollars? She also asks several germane questions about the admission of students to private schools, the teaching of religion, and the accountability that is demanded of public (but not private) schools.

The next two pieces look at recent attempts to alter the politics of schooling by introducing parental choice plans. John Chubb is coauthor of the Brookings Foundation report that put choice plans once again on the public agenda. In his essay he argues that parental choice will force schools to improve as consumers, in effect, vote with their feet. Deborah Meier, a principal of a school in New York’s Harlem neighborhood where school choice is practiced, is an

advocate of choice, but she is anxious to point out its pitfalls and difficulties. Of central concern to Meier is how such plans ensure an equitable education for all students.

During the 1990s, the charter school movement became a controversial approach to educational reform, and it continues to be a shaping force in the twenty-first century. In "Beyond the Schoolhouse Door: How Charter Schools Are Transforming U.S. Public Education," Bruno V. Manno, Chester E. Finn, Jr., and Gregg Vanourek analyze the nature of charter school reform, the evolution of the movement, reactions for and against, and some of the early impacts of the movement. Charter schools are on the rise because many parents, educators, academics, and other interest groups believe that public education is not serving the needs of all schoolchildren.

The question of equity, of course, is one of the key questions to consider when looking at plans to alter public school governance through the introduction of school choice plans. We must ask ourselves whether we are merely seeing attempts to make it possible for a few students to get an outstanding education or whether these plans benefit all children.

DENIS P. DOYLE

TUITION TAX CREDITS AND EDUCATION VOUCHERS, PRIVATE INTERESTS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

Tuition tax credits or tuition vouchers are far removed from most of what educators think about—curriculum, teacher licensing, minimum standards, school finance reform, classroom management, and government regulation. Rather, tax credits and vouchers raise fundamental questions about the relationship of schooling to the larger society: the tension between professional and parent, and the role and place of values in education. Finally, and most important in a democratic republic, they force us to re-examine the tension between equality and liberty. This, of course, is precisely why they are controversial. If vouchers or tax credits were simply a device to administer education differently, there would be discussion but not impassioned debate. To see why this is the case, we must return to the beginning.

Over the past 50 years, the line that distinguished the public sector from the private has been blurred. Health care, housing, food and nutrition programs, Social Security, and unemployment compensation are all infused with large measures of public funding. In the case of schooling, however, there has been a strong historical commitment to universal free education, and public funding for private elementary and secondary education has been off-limits. There are

From Denis P. Doyle, "Tuition Tax Credits and Education Vouchers, Private Interests and the Public Good." Reprinted with permission from *The College Board Review*, no. 130 (Winter 1983–84): 7–11. Copyright © 1984 by College Entrance Examination Board, New York.

some public subsidies of a minor nature: Gifts to private schools are tax deductible, and private school property is exempt from real estate tax. While these tax forgivenesses are thought to stimulate philanthropy and reduce school costs, their effects are modest.

The current debate about tuition tax credits or education vouchers renews the old question about how and where the line between the public and private sector should be drawn. And it raises two major issues: The extent to which private schools should receive government aid, if at all, and the extent to which such aid might lead to government control of private schools.

The issues are of special interest to economists and political scientists because there is no *a priori* reason to believe that government must own and operate the means of production to provide public goods or services. Government may as easily—or even more easily—provide funds and let the private sector satisfy public program objectives. In this vein, state governments do not build their own highways or public buildings: The lowest bidder does. Similarly, Medicare recipients are not required to “spend” their Medicare funds in public hospitals.

The reason for this is obvious enough. At its most elevated it is what Charles Schultze of the Brookings Institution calls the public use of private interest. At a more prosaic level, it recognizes that different people have different tastes and different preferences. In this formulation, choice is a virtue, one that should be satisfied.

Now, if parental choice in education is to be increased, short of wholesale reconfiguration of the public sector, the most obvious device is government funding of private schools. Three principal options are available—direct aid to institutions, education vouchers for individual students, or “negative” transfer payments through the tax system in the form of tax credits. The court has repeatedly struck down direct funding of private institutions as unconstitutional because the vast majority of them have religious ties. But vouchers might pass constitutional muster, as indeed tax credits have recently done in *Mueller v. Allen*.

As well, there is the possibility of public scholarships and loans, or what Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan calls “the baby BEOGS” program, in which the eligibility floor for the basic educational opportunity grants would drop to primary and secondary education. The advantages of such a program would be several. Because eligibility is based on income, it would go only to the truly needy. If it were designed properly, public school children could use the program for supplemental or enrichment activities. And perhaps most important from an economic standpoint, because it would reach only a fraction of the children in private schools (unlike tax credits which would reach everyone who pays taxes), tuition would not be driven up in an amount equal to the tax credit. Unfortunately, there seems to be no constituency for such a program: It is clearly odd man out in any discussion of aid to private schools.

At this juncture it is important to stress that the growing interest in private school aid plans is not because of the Reagan administration, but because of a persistent shift toward private education in the recent past. As the number of school-age children continues to decline, the number of children enrolled in private schools is increasing. By 1986, for example, the National Center for Education

Statistics predicts a 12 percent increase in private school enrollments, from 5 million to 5.6 million children. Yet as recently as three years ago, the best available data suggested continued private school decline. Bruce Cooper and his colleagues, in the most recent issue of the *Teachers College Record*, report that their data reveal a trend line that points to 15 percent private school enrollment by 1990.

Indeed, we are witnessing a remarkable historic transformation. For years, as private education grew progressively weaker, the clamor for aid became more shrill. But it fell on deaf ears. As recently as 1977, Senator Moynihan's stirring defense of aid to private schools in *Harper's Magazine* was titled "The Federal Government and the Ruin of Private Education." His thesis was simple: Without aid, private schools would languish and even disappear. But today, it is clear that the system in danger is not private schools. At risk today is a faltering public system. In fact, one interesting way to frame the question is in traditional public policy terms: The justification for public intervention in a private market is real or threatened market failure. Today we see growing "privatization" of education because of public sector market failure. Public schools fail to satisfy an ever-larger segment of the population.

For the first time in recent history, then, there is a realistic possibility of public aid to private schools, not because they are weak, but because they are strong. Ironically, public support could then be the Achilles' Heel of private education, for just as the power to tax is the power to destroy, the power to provide aid is the power to control. And if private schools were to become subject to public control, they would lose their unique character.

It is becoming clear that aid to private schools may become as important a public policy issue in the 1980s as civil rights was in the 1960s, and it is more than a curiosity that these two issues are bracketed by two major studies conducted by James Coleman. In the first Coleman report in 1966, his central finding was that what makes a difference in education is the student body, not the building, curriculum, level of funding, or organization. This finding was used to justify and encourage the end of racial isolation.

The second and most recent Coleman report, however, presents us with striking evidence that certain things do matter, that in fact there are differences between good and bad schools, and the differences make a difference. That this finding should be surprising is in itself a surprise, because discerning teachers, students, and parents have always known that some schools are better than others, and all things being equal, it is better to go to a good school than a bad one. If there are quality differences among schools, it is no longer a matter of indifference as to which school one goes. And someone must choose: a parent, a student, or a bureaucrat. In fact, Coleman finds that in certain circumstances private schools do a better job academically than comparable public schools. Thus, Coleman, who provided arguments on behalf of compulsory busing for 15 years, now provides a rationale for choice.

While vouchers and tax credits are frequently discussed in the same breath, there are some differences worth noting.

In modern times, vouchers were first seriously proposed by Nobel laureate and conservative economist Milton Friedman. (John Stuart Mill, ever the

libertarian, supported vouchers most enthusiastically. Afraid that public schools would be used to “standardize” children, he wrote what remains as vouchers’ most stirring defense.) In the late 1960s, vouchers were adopted as a war-on-poverty strategy by democratic socialist Christopher Jencks in the closing days of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society. The task of implementation fell to the Nixon administration, but vouchers quietly faded under President Gerald R. Ford, sinking without a trace under President Jimmy Carter. Given President Ronald Reagan’s interest in the subject, however, it now appears that the report of the death of vouchers was premature.

What is it we know about vouchers? Are they so much snake oil, a threat to our system of free public education, or might they trigger revitalization and rejuvenation of a faltering public enterprise?

Although there are no elementary and secondary school voucher systems in this country, the federal government did sponsor voucher research for nearly a decade. After several years of planning, in the spring of 1971 a serious effort was made to launch a series of five multi-year voucher demonstration projects under the aegis of the old Office of Economic Opportunity. But even the idea of a demonstration project was viewed as so radical that only one school district in the nation accepted federal funds to serve as a demonstration site. The project, tried in the Alum Rock Union school district in San Jose, California, was severely limited, making it difficult to form judgments about vouchers in general.

For example, because of California constitutional constraints, no private schools joined the Alum Rock project and no teachers’ jobs were at risk, so there is no real information on what might happen in a more “competitive” education market. In addition, poor children received extra-value vouchers to provide the resources to give them enrichment programs and to make them “attractive” to schools. Finally, schools could not charge more tuition than the value of the voucher. Nevertheless, the project was surrounded by intense anxiety and extensive publicity.

Why anxiety and publicity? Because of the explosive word *vouchers*. If Alum Rock had been presented as an open-enrollment experiment, it would enter the annals of forgotten federal projects. But in a “voucher” experiment, emotions ran so high that the local teachers’ associations disaffiliated from the statewide association for the first year of the project. For vouchers, taken seriously, represent a measured assault on the status quo. They assert that private decisions are better than public, that parents know as much about the welfare of their children as educators, that choice and diversity are to be preferred to the “common core” of the existing system. Thus, even though the Alum Rock project was an attenuated voucher system, the actors in the project—teachers, parents, administrators, school board members—behaved as though it were a real test of the concept. This intensity of reaction in a carefully controlled demonstration project provides some insight into the emotional and political reactions that discussion of vouchers provokes.

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, in a moment of prescience observed more than a decade ago that the voucher omelette, once made, cannot be unscrambled. And that is the essence of the

issue. This homespun comment on the federal government's attempt to experiment with vouchers was precisely on target. There are two reasons that Shanker's observation was correct and anxiety ran high in Alum Rock—and why no other school district would try vouchers, even with the promise of sizable federal funds. First, education is not a game. It is a serious business. Johnny and Suzie each go around once. The sequence from kindergarten to postgraduate school is not something to be tampered with lightly. The stakes are real, and they are high. Parents know it, and teachers know it.

The second reason is more profound but less obvious. Education is embedded in a political process. Any enterprise that commands more than one-half of most state budgets and is the principal activity of local elected officials is up to its neck in politics. It may not be partisan, it may not be ideological, but it is a central part of the ebb and flow of the political process. And no one is going to be able to “experiment” with a system that requires political actors to relinquish voluntarily their responsibility and control. Imagine asking a teachers' union leader, an elected school board official, an appointed public school superintendent, a mayor or city councilmember to step aside for five years to permit a government agency to pass out vouchers and watch what happens.

Any decision to go forward with vouchers, then, cannot be defended or justified as research and development. If vouchers are tried at all, they will be tried as a serious policy alternative to the way in which schooling is financed in this country, not as an experiment or demonstration program.

What is the prognosis if a voucher system is adopted, and does research offer any guidance? Unfortunately, the only honest answer is, “It all depends.” It depends on what kind of voucher system is installed, whose purposes it is designed to serve, and what the longer-term unanticipated consequences turn out to be. This is so because there is no single voucher system: Vouchers may be lightly or closely regulated; they may permit wide latitude for parental choice; and they may permit or discourage out-of-pocket supplemental payments for more than the value of the voucher. To illustrate, return to Alum Rock. Conceived of in the heyday of the War on Poverty, it was a last great power-to-the-people program. Parents would reassert their rightful place, the argument ran. Using vouchers, they would choose from among diverse offerings what was best for their children. Teachers and administrators would assume their proper role as providers of service, not as management and workers in a public monopoly.

What really happened? As the superintendent ruefully described it, “power devolved from the board to the superintendent, bypassed the principals, and stopped with the teachers, never reaching the parents.” What had begun as a parent-power program became a teacher-power program. And why not? Teachers have the organizational skills, the occupational opportunity, and the professional incentives to run voucher schools according to their lights. Parents, with other demands on their time, were only too happy to leave school decisions to the professionals.

In the 1980s the question of vouchers cannot be raised without at the same time raising the question of tax credits, but the question of tax credits is even more problematic than vouchers because there is very limited experience with

them in the field of education. As a generic concept, economists, liberal as well as conservative, view tax credits as a device to stimulate socially desirable behavior that would otherwise be subject to sluggish demand. Energy tax credits are a case in point. A home-owner taxpayer who weather-strips, insulates, or installs storm windows can reduce his federal tax liability by as much as \$300. California taxpayers who install solar heating devices can claim a handsome credit on their state income tax as well. Similarly, working parents of young children can claim a daycare tax credit against their federal tax liability.

In each case the credit is designed to stimulate and reward behavior that serves the public good. In the case of education, however, the subject of tax credits raises second-order issues directly. While supporters and opponents agree that tax credits would stimulate demand for private education, they disagree strongly about the desirability of such an effect. Opponents, for example, see tax credits as an elitist raid on the treasury and a threat to public schools, while supporters see them as a response to a pluralistic society in which private education deserves public assistance.

While it is hard to imagine a simpler or more direct system of government support for elementary and secondary private schooling—the whole transaction takes place on individual tax forms—its potential impact on the relationship between the public and private sector is not as clear. Suppose, for example, a credit of \$500 were available for every full-time student, kindergarten through postgraduate degree candidate. A family with two students in private school paying tuition of \$500 per year for each child could claim a \$1000 credit, and so on, up to the limit of the family's tax liability and the actual expense of schooling.

For many families, education tax credits would significantly reduce their income tax liability, but for the very poor or the very rich who escape taxes—those with no qualifying education expenses and those who send their children to public schools, there would be no benefit. But for the taxpayer with qualifying education expenses, tax credits would represent a boon.

Although tax credits might drive up tuition, they would have no direct effect on the way most private schools are organized and operated. As private, not-for-profit corporations, private schools are already subject to internal revenue service scrutiny, and tax credits should not materially affect the status quo. As it is, in most jurisdictions, private schools are lightly regulated: They may organize as they wish; they may hire, fire, pay their staff as they will (and the market permits); they may select students on their own terms; and they may offer any curriculum, including religious instruction, that they think appropriate.

The principal policy question raised by tax credits is the extent to which they would influence behavior. Would more and different children attend private school if tax credits were enacted? It is difficult to predict. The larger the tax credit, the greater the prospect that large numbers of children would move to private schools. Like the self-fulfilling prophecy of the Laffer Curve, which predicts zero revenue at both zero and 100 percent tax rates, small tax credits would have almost no effect on behavior, while a 100 percent credit would presumably produce a major impact. At what point in the size of the tax credit behavior begins a change no one can forecast with certainty.

A recent study, just concluded by the staff of the National Commission on School Finance, has assembled some extraordinarily interesting data on this question. Based on a household sample, preliminary evidence suggests that fairly substantial movement to private schools would occur even with a small tax credit, and that the movement would be heaviest among low-income, minority families, precisely the audience education reformers are most concerned with.

This, of course, should come as no surprise: Upper-income, majority families have long enjoyed the luxury of choice, and as the poor would emulate the rich in other areas, so would they with education. As well, middle-class minorities, when income is controlled for, are equally or over-represented in private schools. Given the choice, there is every reason to believe that poor minority students would at least consider the option encouraged by vouchers or tax credits.

Adding credence to this view is Gallup Poll data on attitudes toward education. Asked to assign schools a letter grade, two strong trends emerge among respondents for more than a decade. First, residents of towns and villages still give their public schools good marks: To them, at least, small is beautiful. Second, that group of the population that consistently gives public schools their lowest marks are inner-city blacks. Without old-boy networks and family fortunes to inherit, inner-city minorities have more riding on good education than any other members of American society.

The final bit of information from the Gallup Poll is the consequence of a most curious but revealing question: Would you favor a voucher system? In 1983, for the first time in history, more than 50 percent of the respondents reported that they would.

Taken together, then, there is every reason to believe that vouchers or tax credits would have exactly the effect one expects: Private school enrollments would increase and public school enrollments would decrease. There is a fine bit of irony in this because proponents of tax credit and voucher schemes have got themselves in a very difficult tangle: To moderate the opposition (particularly the professional education associations), they have argued that there would be little or no switching to private schools. The public schools would be safe. To argue this way is a course of desperation. First, it doesn't for a minute convince public school supporters: they are in a perfect panic about losing students. Second, it exposes supporters of these public aid schemes to charges that public aid is simply a windfall to those families who already have their children enrolled in private schools.

It is interesting that these research findings should converge with these policy views in 1984, because it is inconceivable that the Congress will support tax credits as they have been presented in this economic environment; no one is willing to vote for even bigger deficits, which is what tax credits represent in their present incarnation.

The argument that would make tax credits financially palatable makes them politically unacceptable: Credits will save money. But they will do so only if some large number of children transfer from public to private school. And so

long as the value of the tax credit is less than the cost of keeping the student in public school, there will be savings.

Thus, the argument that could gain supporters worried about spiraling deficits and increasing government outlays is the same argument that will give the education associations apoplexy.

An altogether different policy question is raised by vouchers, and that is the extent to which private schools would come under some measure of public control. Even in the most lightly regulated voucher system, a voucher bureaucracy would be empowered to police it. One of the principal events in the Alum Rock project was the transformation of the existing public school bureaucracy into a voucher bureaucracy to oversee and operate the new system. Tax credits, on the other hand, would leave the status quo intact. Because a tax credit is claimed by checking a box on a form and completing the necessary arithmetic, government's role would be limited to additional tax clerks. In fact, tax credit legislation will be heard by the tax committees rather than education committees of the state legislatures or Congress. If enacted, it will be administered by tax rather than education departments.

It is this remarkable simplicity that makes tax credits so attractive to private elementary and secondary school supporters. In contrast to the complexity and intrusiveness of voucher systems, tax credits are straightforward, easy to understand, and easy to use.

While vouchers and tax credits differ in important ways, together they raise profound questions about the role of government in educating elementary and secondary school-age children. As a society we provide substantial public funding for both public and private postsecondary education. The question before us today is whether or not public support should be provided for private elementary and secondary education as well.

The claims and counterclaims about tax credits and vouchers cannot be put to rest by the presentation of objective evidence, because the decision that policymakers will be asked to make goes beyond the purview of social science. It goes to our political and social core: Should private values and private organizational forms be encouraged, or should our social and political energies continue to be directed toward public institutions? Is private virtue consonant with public virtue? The question raised by tax credits and vouchers is at once that simple and that sweeping.

BARBARA MINER

WHY I DON'T VOUCH FOR VOUCHERS

The principal was being fired, teachers were leaving, the school was in upheaval. At the time, I was a reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal*, covering a parents' meeting on the controversy.

Miner, Barbara. "Why I Don't Vouch for Vouchers" in *Educational Leadership* 56(2), October 1998. Reprinted by permission of the author.

I never made it to the meeting. Lawyers stood in my way. They said it was a private school and reporters were not welcome. End of discussion. I was angry but found out the lawyers were right. Shutting a reporter out of a parents' meeting is illegal in Milwaukee public schools. But private schools operate by different rules.

I was reminded of the incident when the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled last June that Milwaukee's voucher program does not violate the constitutional separation of church and state. For now, low-income students in Milwaukee will be able to use public vouchers to attend private and religious schools.

End of discussion? Not this time. The court decision has not resolved the controversy over vouchers. It has merely opened up a Pandora's box of new issues.

PROBLEMATIC POLICY

Milwaukee began providing vouchers for private schools in 1990. The program initially was limited to a small number of low-income children at a handful of nonreligious schools. The court ruling allows the program to expand to as many as 15,000 children attending private and religious schools. Cleveland has a similar program.

Although still small in size, voucher programs are becoming the educational buzz of the day. On the federal level, the rhetoric of vouchers has been used to justify such initiatives as tuition tax credits. In addition, there are several privately funded voucher programs. If a voucher proposal is not yet available in your state, just wait. Vouchers are coming your way.

Everyone knows there are problems with achievement and accountability in our public schools. But the best response is to make the public schools more accountable, not to use tax dollars to subsidize private schools with minimal public accountability. Do we really want to set up two separate school systems, one private and one public, yet both supported by tax dollars?

The U.S. Supreme Court must ultimately decide whether public vouchers for religious schools violate the separation of church and state. Constitutional issues aside, voucher proposals raise important questions. Here are just a few.

Just Because Something Is Legal, Is It Good Public Policy?

It's not mere coincidence that the term *private* is so often followed by the phrase *Keep Out!* Private schools, like private roads, private beaches, and private country clubs, don't have to answer to the public.

What does it mean when private schools that get public dollars don't have to follow the same rules as public schools? The answer is particularly important in Milwaukee because 100 percent of a voucher school can be funded by vouchers—the schools aren't required to have a single student who privately pays tuition—and the school still gets to call itself "private." Under Milwaukee's voucher program, participating schools

- Do not have to obey the state's open meetings and records laws.
- Do not have to hire certified teachers—or even to require a college degree.
- Do not have to release information on employee wages or benefits.
- Do not have to administer the statewide tests required of public schools.
- Do not have to publicly release data such as test scores, attendance figures, or suspension and drop-out rates. The only requirement is a “financial and performance evaluation audit” of the entire voucher program to be submitted to the legislature in the year 2000.

Will Vouchers Be Used to Further Segregate Our Schools?

Families send their children to private schools for many reasons. But one of Milwaukee's dirty little secrets is that some white parents use private schools to get around desegregation efforts. In Milwaukee, the public schools are approximately 60 percent African American. At Divine Savior/Holy Angels and Pius XIth High Schools, only 3 percent of the students are African American. At Milwaukee's most elite religious high school, Marquette University High School, 5 percent of the students are African American. Some religious elementary schools in Milwaukee do not have any African American students. The issue also goes beyond race. Will vouchers further stratify our schools along religious lines?

Will Private Schools Weed Out “Undesirable” Students?

Private schools can control whom they accept and the terms upon which students stay enrolled. The Milwaukee program, which is far better than most voucher proposals, has two safeguards: The schools are to select voucher students on a random basis, and they may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. One problem, however, is enforcement. Who ensures that the rules are followed? More important, controversy has erupted over whether the voucher schools must follow other requirements of Wisconsin public schools—for example, that they not discriminate on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. One of the most contentious issues in Milwaukee involves students with special educational needs, who account for about 15 percent of public school students. Voucher proponents argue that the private schools don't have the money for special education students, thus the Milwaukee Public Schools must serve them.

Milwaukee voucher schools have also used more subtle means to select their students. Some set parental involvement requirements, for instance. Perhaps most important, private schools can expel students, for both academic and discipline reasons, without adhering to the rights of due process. Will voucher schools be able to do likewise?

In one telling incident in Milwaukee in 1995, an African American student was asked not to return to the elite and private University School after she crit-

icized the school as racist in a speech before her English class. She filed suit on grounds of freedom of speech. She lost. Federal Judge Terrence Evans wrote,

It is an elementary principle of constitutional law that the protections afforded by the Bill of Rights do not apply to private actors such as the University School. Generally, restrictions on constitutional rights that would be protected at a public high school . . . need not be honored at a private high school.¹

How Can the Public Oversee Religious Schools Without Stepping on Religious Principles?

Under the First Amendment, the government is not to “entangle” itself in the running of religious institutions. As a result, however, religious schools can fire teachers who violate deeply held religious principles—such as a gay teacher or a teacher who supports the right to abortion. What will happen with religious schools that receive public vouchers? Will they be able to teach that homosexuality is a sin, that creationism is superior to the theory of evolution, that corporal punishment keeps children in line, that birth control violates the law of God, that the Jews killed Christ, or that there is no God but Allah?

Can the Marketplace Solve the Problems of Our Public Schools?

Some voucher supporters are guided by the admirable desire to provide individual opportunities for low-income children in urban areas. The moving forces behind vouchers, however, have a more specific ideological agenda. In essence, voucher proposals assume that privatization and the marketplace—in other words, the dismantling of the institution of public education—hold the key to education reform.

But in what other social arena—whether health care, housing, food, or jobs—has the marketplace equitably and adequately provided services? We live in the bastion of free enterprise, the richest, most powerful country in the world. Yet one-quarter of our nation’s young children live in poverty, and millions go hungry and homeless.

Under the rules of the marketplace, some people live in cardboard boxes and some people have vacation homes on Cape Cod. Some take the bus, some drive brand new BMWs. In the marketplace, money doesn’t talk. It shouts. Is that our vision for public education?

Further, the marketplace values individual choice and decision making over collective responsibility for the common good. If we look to private schools and parental choice to solve complicated problems of school reform, we distort the purpose of public education. We are “saving” a few children while giving up on the majority who will remain in public schools.

Up to 15,000 children will be allowed to use public money to attend private and religious schools in Milwaukee this fall. With the voucher worth almost \$5,000 a pupil, as much as \$75 million in taxpayers’ money will be taken from

the Milwaukee Public Schools and given to private schools—with minimal public accountability.

It may be legal. But is it a good idea?

NOTE

¹ Editorial, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* (September 10, 1995).

JOHN CHUBB

MAKING SCHOOLS BETTER: CHOICE AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

I'd like to begin this article by providing a broad overview on what I think is wrong with American schools and what I think would make a difference.

Most of you are familiar with the state of American education. Just to give you some basic statistics, for roughly 20 years from the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s, the SAT scores of American students dropped sharply. Although scores have been going up for the last few years, they've recently stalled. Our students still are well behind where they were in 1965.

In addition, the dropout rate in the United States is about 25 percent. That is to say, 25 percent of our students are not finishing high school on time. In many of our large cities only half of the students finish high school on time.

Comparing the United States to countries around the world is even more depressing. In math and science, U.S. students rank dead last in any comparison with students from nations that are our leading competitors. The top five percent of students in the United States achieve at the same level as the middle student in the Japanese system.

There is a bit of good news. For the last five years, Americans, mostly at the state level, have been trying very hard to turn things around. The amount that has been done is remarkable. Five years ago, when reports began to come out suggesting various ways to improve our nation's school systems, a lot of skeptics said we could never find that much money. But in those five years or so we have spent far more money than any of the skeptics thought possible.

Between 1981 and 1986 expenditures per pupil for elementary and secondary education went up 40 percent. In real terms we now spend four times as much per child as we did in 1950. In the first half of the 1980s, teachers enjoyed larger salary increases than any other occupational group in the country. Their average salaries are still arguably too low, \$29,000 per year, but they have gone up very quickly. We've also spent a good deal of money to reduce the size of classes.

There has been a crackdown on teacher incompetence. Teachers are being asked to take more tests, to demonstrate that they are able. There has been a crackdown on student underachievement. Graduation and promotion requirements are being boosted around the country.

This is very heartening because it is unusual for our political system to act so forthrightly. Americans are taking the problem seriously. Unfortunately, the prospects that these reforms will make much of a difference are not very good. This is doubly discouraging because we may be wasting a rare political opportunity to really do something.

Why am I willing to say that what has been taking place is not likely to make much of a difference? The reasons are reflected in the study I did entitled "What Price Democracy?" It is an analysis of the largest, most comprehensive data set ever assembled on American high schools and their students. I would like very briefly to summarize the study, its basic conclusions, and the implications for reform.

This study included 500 randomly selected high schools nationwide, public and private. Within these high schools it included the principals, 12,000 teachers, and 12,000 students. We've never before had, in this country, a data set that puts together such detailed information on both students and the schools that they've attended. Large studies usually concentrate on either schools or students. We've combined the two.

The other thing that is virtually unique about this data set is that the students were examined not once, but twice. They were examined when they began high schools as sophomores, and again when they graduated. Thus we were able to study not simply changes in the levels of student achievement over time, but how a particular group of students progressed.

We focused on one major issue, academic achievement. Some will argue that schools are trying to accomplish a lot of other things as well. But the thing that we care about is academic achievement. We used five tests: math, science, reading, writing, and vocabulary, and combined the results into a comprehensive measure of student achievement between sophomore year and graduation.

After determining which students were achieving and which were failing, we sought to uncover the sources of success or failure. First came a bit of bad news: the most important determinant of how students achieve is their aptitude. Bright kids learn more in high school than kids that aren't so bright. There is a certain amount of student achievement that is beyond the reach of school reformers.

But the good news is that the second most important determinant of how well students do is the school they attend. The skeptics of the 1960s and '70s, who doubted that schools could make a difference, were wrong. Schools make a big difference. They are marginally more important than the influence of parents. They are far more important than the influence of peer groups.

The next question naturally is, "What makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful schools?" Let me begin by telling you what doesn't make a difference. Neither expenditures, teacher salaries, class size, graduation requirements, the amount of homework assigned, or any other individual

school policy that we looked at matters. There was no correlation between student achievement and any of the variables on which school reformers have been concentrating so much time, effort, and money. That is why there is very little reason to believe that school reform, as it is proceeding, is going to work.

What will work? For any of you who are involved in management, the answer may seem pretty obvious. The thing about schools that really seems to matter is how they're organized. To begin with, good and bad schools have different goals. The schools that are succeeding, whether with poor students or the best students, consciously focus on academic achievement. If you ask personnel in these schools what their goal is, they will say, "academic achievement," or "academic excellence." People in schools that aren't doing so well say things like "the basics," "occupational training," or "citizenship." These goals may well be important. But if you want achievement the school has to focus on achievement.

I should also say that clarity and consensus about goals are as important as what you call the goal. The thing that distinguishes successful schools is that there is a real consensus within those organizations about what they are trying to achieve, whether they say, "the basics," or "academic excellence." We asked a random sample of 30 teachers in each school what were the priorities of the school. In the good schools, they agreed on the priorities. In the unsuccessful schools, there was a great deal of disagreement. Other school researchers have said that successful schools have a mission. That appears to be true. The schools in our survey that were succeeding consciously focused on one purpose.

Another important aspect of organization was leadership. The principals of successful and unsuccessful schools were as different as night and day. Successful schools were led by principals who the teachers said had a vision, knew where they wanted the school to go, and knew how to take the school in that direction. These are standard qualities of strong leadership. Also, the principals in the good schools were educationally oriented and thought of themselves as educational leaders, not administrators.

When we asked principals of unsuccessful schools why they became principals, they would say things like "I prefer administration to teaching." When asked what their long-term goals were, unsuccessful principals were much more likely to say, "I want to get out of the school, move up into the central office and rise in the administrative hierarchy."

In the successful schools, the principals wanted to stay in the schools. When you asked them why they became principals, they were more likely to say, "Because I wanted to take control of the school. I wanted to control personnel, I wanted to control policy." They wanted to lead, not merely to manage.

The other profound organizational difference was that in successful schools the sense of professionalism, independence, and responsibility for one's work was enormously higher. Teachers and principals in the successful schools were true professionals. Those in unsuccessful schools weren't professionals at all. The teachers in successful schools had more independence, they participated more extensively in school decisions, and they had more influence over those decisions.

Within their classrooms they were free to tailor their practices to the needs of the students. Any educator will tell you that this is important because education is not a science but an art. It requires discretion, not prescription. In the successful schools, teachers had discretion. To us, the concept that best summarized the difference between the successful and unsuccessful school organizations was that of a team. In successful schools, the organization was held together by consensus and cooperation, not primarily by rules and regulations. The unsuccessful school looked like a classic bureaucracy, held together primarily by rules and regulations—a hierarchy, not a team at all.

If strong leadership, clear goals, professionalism, and team spirit are what is important, how do you instill these somewhat elusive qualities in a school? Can it be done at all?

Many state legislatures believe that it can be done by sending teachers and principals to classes. There may be some management consultants who believe that it can be done that way. But if you look around the country at successful school organizations, it doesn't appear that formal management training accounts for much.

We took a careful look at what accounts for effective organization. The key determinant, more important than anything else, turns out to be autonomy. Successful schools were relatively independent of external influence by administrators: superintendents, central office bureaucrats, and union officials. A school that was free to chart its own course was much more likely to develop effective organization and thereby breed academic achievement.

Principals who had greater influence over curriculum, instruction, discipline, and especially hiring and firing, put together effective organizations. It doesn't take much insight to figure out why. If you're a principal and you get to determine who teaches in that school and what the school's resources are, you are much more likely to trust the members of the organization, which, after all, you assembled. You are more likely to treat them as members of the team and grant them the autonomy they need to do their jobs. If you don't have control over personnel, you're less likely to treat people as if they're team members. You distrust them. You believe there is going to be conflict and you regulate. Soon you have an organization that is held together not by a common vision but by rules and regulations, that is, a bureaucracy.

If autonomy from external control appears to be the key factor, the final question is where do you find autonomy? How do you get it?

You don't often get it in the public sector. In the public sector, autonomy arises only under exceptional circumstances: usually in schools outside of an urban area, where the students are already performing well and the parents are affluent and involved. In other words, in the public sector you get autonomy and good organization in those places where right now you don't need it because they are doing well.

In the cities, in schools that are failing, autonomy is decreasing. These schools are victims of a vicious cycle in which poor performance leads to demands that politicians do something, and politicians demand that administrators crack down. The politicians and administrators have only a limited

number of levers to pull. They begin regulating. That regulatory, bureaucratic attitude seeps into the schools, further undermining performance, leading to more complaints and more regulation. The process is one in which succeeding crises lead to endless layers of regulations and broods of bureaucrats to see that they are carried out. The public sector does not provide autonomy for bad or mediocre schools, and therefore bad public school systems typically get worse.

If you don't find autonomy in public schools except under unusual circumstances, you almost always find it in private schools, including religious schools. Private schools are more autonomous and, all things being equal, have more effective organizations and perform better than public schools.

Why are private schools so autonomous and why do they develop these effective school organizations without anyone teaching them how to do it? The reason is really very simple. Private schools have to attract clients. They have to get parents and students to come to school. One way that you do that and keep parents and students happy is to ensure that decisions are made at the level of the individual school, which is where the parents and students confront the system. You are forced in the private sector to delegate and to decentralize because that is the surest way to give parents and students access, keeping them happy and helping the schools meet their needs.

In the public sector, the people who run the schools must please not only parents and students who are, at least to some extent, trapped in the system, but also various interest groups: the unions, politicians and so forth. Were the people who run public school systems to delegate and decentralize, and provide real autonomy, they might not be able to satisfy these other groups. So in the public sector they centralize. But the private schools have no captive clients. The competition for clients leads the schools to concentrate on pleasing students and parents, and therefore to decentralize and make decisions at the level of individual schools.

I want to close with an anecdote that really brings this home. It illustrates the difference between organization in the public and private sectors in New York City and other urban areas.

Several months ago I was called by a reporter who wanted to know about our research. In the course of explaining about autonomy, I told him that in New York City they have an enormous central office bureaucracy, staffed by 5,000 people, which is tremendously overbearing and leaves the principals with very little influence over their schools. I contrasted this with the Catholic school system in New York City, which despite the church's reputation for hierarchy has only 50 people in its central office, though the system has almost a quarter of the students the public schools have. He took those numbers down and a month later they sent me the galleys of the article so I could check the quotes. I saw all these numbers and thought, "5,000 versus 50! I better double check," because those figures had come from other sources.

I called the personnel office of the city school system and said, "I have a simple question: How many people work in the central office of the New York City school system?" The first person I reached had no idea, nor did the second or third, but they all promised to transfer me to someone who did.

Thirty-five minutes and many transfers later, I got to a person who said, "Yes, I do know the number, but if you want to know, you'll have to put your request in writing, send it through proper channels and we'll get the information back to you in a month."

Well, I pleaded and explained the circumstances and finally I was put in touch with someone who had the authority and the number. And he told me it wasn't 5,000, it was 6,000.

Now I needed to find out the number for the Catholic school system. I got someone in that central office and said, "I need some basic facts. I need to know the number of students in your school system." She told me. "I need to know the number of teachers in the school system." She told me. "I need to know the number of schools in the system." She told me. So I said, "The last thing I need to know is how many people work in the central bureaucracy of the Catholic school system in New York City."

And she said, "I'm sorry, we don't keep that kind of data."

"Well," I said, "would you have any idea? Is there any way you could get the number for me?"

And she said: "Just a minute—I'll count them." And she counted. There are 25. Twenty-five people running a school system that's a fifth to a quarter of the size of the public school system.

Public and private education are organized in an enormously different fashion. Those differences in organization account for all of the differences between the performance of public schools and private schools and most of the differences between good public schools and bad public schools.

The message for reformers is very simple. If you want schools to be organized more effectively and to teach more successfully, you must give them autonomy. But as any public school administrator will tell you, you can't just turn over a school to principals and teachers without holding them accountable in some way. You've got to provide autonomy without losing accountability. And once public school administrators begin thinking about accountability, they think about tests and rules and regulations and before you know it the autonomy is gone.

The only way to provide autonomy without losing accountability is to go to a different system of accountability. A top-down system will not work. You must build a system of accountability to parents and students rather than to politicians and administrators.

It works in the private sector. Private schools are held accountable to their constituency through the process of competition and choice. Similarly, the surest way to get autonomy and accountability into the public school system is not through regulation or spending, but through a mechanism of choice. There are many ways in which choice systems can be set up. Vouchers, open enrollments, magnet schools, and others. And one of the best ways to see it in operation is to observe the good works of District 4 of the New York City school system. They made it work despite the 6,000 bureaucrats, the 16 offices and the 22 steps. And, as the song says, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere.

DEBORAH W. MEIER

CHOICE CAN SAVE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Before deciding to go down in history as a war President, George Bush called himself our "education President," announcing ambitious goals to make American schoolchildren first in the world by the year 2000. These goals were applauded by politicians, educators and corporate leaders across the political spectrum. America's future itself, they all declared, is at stake, but, unlike the gulf war, they believe this future can be bought cheaply.

The conservatives have the answer: choice. It's a solution, they note, that doesn't require throwing money at schools. And furthermore it's politically correct. The marketplace, they remind us gloatingly, will cure what a socialistic system of schooling has produced: the miseducation of our young. The most articulate and contentious proponents of marketplace choices in education are John Chubb and Terry Moe, whose articles, speeches and book, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*, have sparked widespread debate. But this is not merely a battle of words. A number of localities and several states have initiated systems of choice, often using Chubb and Moe's data to support their programs. While Chubb and Moe contend that they favor public education, what they mean is public funding for education. Public institutions are their enemy. They make no bones about it: Private is good, public is bad. Private equals enterprising, public equals stifling bureaucracy and destructive political influence.

The original right-wing challenge to public education, vouchers for private schools, went down to a resounding defeat. The newest star on the right, choice, is both a more powerful challenger and a more interesting one. Because progressives are on the defensive, their concern with equity leads them to attack choice reflexively as inherently elitist (naturally, it has few friends among educational bureaucrats either). This is, I believe, a grave mistake. The argument over choice, unlike the one about vouchers, offers progressives an opportunity. After all, it wasn't so long ago that progressive educators were enthusiastically supporting schools of choice, usually called "alternative schools." However, those alternatives were always on the fringe, as though the vast majority were doing just fine, thanks. We now have a chance to make such alternatives the mainstream, not just for avant-garde "misfits" and "nerds" or those most "at risk."

Americans have long supported a dual school system. Whether schools are public or private, the social class of the students was and continues to be the single most significant factor in determining a school's intellectual values and how it works. The higher the student body's socioeconomic status, the meatier the curriculum, the more open-ended the discussion, the less rote and rigid the pedagogy, the more respectful the tone, the more rigorous the expectations, the greater the staff autonomy. Numerous studies have confirmed a simple fact:

The primary factor in determining the quality of schools (as well as programs within schools) is not whether they are public or private but who attends them. Changing this is what education reform is all about. What we need are strategies for giving to everyone what the rich have always valued. After all, the rich have had good public schools as well as good private schools. If we use choice to undermine public education, we will increase the duality of our educational system. If we want to use it to undermine the historic duality of our schools, the kind of plan we adopt is more important than choice advocates like Moe and Chubb acknowledge.

When I first entered teaching, and when my own children began their long trek through urban public schools, I too was an unreconstructed advocate of the strictly zoned neighborhood school. I knew all about choice, a favorite tactic of racists escaping desegregation. There were even moments when I wished we could legally outlaw any selective public or private institutions, although I could readily see the risks—not to mention the political impossibility—of doing so. That's no longer the case. My change of heart has personal overtones: I've spent the past sixteen years in a public school district in East Harlem that has pioneered choice, and I have founded a network of small schools of choice in that community: the Central Park East schools. All of District 4's schools are small, largely self-governing and pedagogically innovative. They are schools with a focus, with staffs brought together around common ideas, free to shape a whole set of school parameters in accord with those ideas.

It would have been impossible to carry out this ambitious agenda without choice. Choice was the prerequisite. It was an enabling strategy for a District Superintendent, Anthony Alvarado, who wanted to get rid of the tradition of zoned, factory-style, bureaucratically controlled schools that has long been synonymous with urban public schooling and replace it with a different image of what "public" could mean. The District 4 way was deceptively simple; it required no vast blueprint, just a new mindset. Within ten years, starting in 1974, District 4 totally changed the way 15,000 mostly poor Latino and African-American youngsters got educated without ever pulling the rug out from under either parents or professionals. The words "restructuring" and "reform" were never used—this was, after all, the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Superintendent sidestepped resistance by building a parallel system of choice, until even its opponents found themselves benefiting from it.

To begin with, Alvarado initiated a few model schools open to parental choice, locating them within existing buildings where space was available. He sought schools that would look excitingly different, that would have a loyal, if small, following among families and would have strong professional leadership. Alvarado and his Alternate Schools director, Sy Fliegel, gave such schools extraordinary support in the form of greater flexibility with regard to staffing, use of resources, organization of time, forms of assessment and on-site advice and counseling. Wherever possible, they also ran interference with Central Board of Education bureaucracy. When people in the "regular" schools complained of favoritism, Alvarado and Fliegel assured them that they'd be favorites too if they had some new ideas they wanted to try. Some even

accepted the challenge. Each year, more schools were added. They generally started with a few classes and the largest grew to no more than 300 students. Some stayed as small as fifty. Within half a dozen years most of the students in the middle and junior-high grades were attending alternative schools, and each district building housed several autonomous schools.

Schools were no longer equated with buildings. Where there had been twenty-two schools in twenty-two buildings, in less than ten years fifty-one schools occupied twenty buildings (along with two housed in a nearby high school). Only then did the Superintendent announce Stage Two: Henceforth no junior high would serve a specific geographic area. All families of incoming seventh graders would have to choose. The district provided sixth-grade parents and teachers with lots of information to assist them in their choice, although probably word-of-mouth was the decisive factor (as it is in private schools). Sixteen neighborhood elementary schools remain intact, with space reserved first for those living within the designated zone, but Alvarado promised that parents were free to shop around if space existed. In addition, the district supported the creation of twenty alternative elementary schools, eight of them bilingual. As a result, the neighborhood elementary schools became both smaller and, in effect, also schools of choice. Alvarado even enticed a former independent elementary school to enter the public sector, leaving intact its parental governing board.

A majority of the new schools were fairly traditional, although more focused in terms of their themes (such as music, science or journalism) and more intimate and family-oriented due to their small size. Size also meant that regardless of the formal structure, all the participants were generally informally involved in decisions about school life. Most of the schools were designed by small groups of teachers tired of compromising what they thought were their most promising ideas. As a result there was a level of energy and esprit, a sense of co-ownership that made these schools stand out. They developed, over time, differences in pedagogy, style of leadership, forms of governance, tone and climate. A few schools (such as the three Central Park East schools) used this opening to try radically different forms of teaching and learning, testing and assessment, school/family collaboration and staff self-government. In this one small district, noted only a decade earlier as one of the worst in the city, there were by 1984 dozens of schools with considerable citywide reputations and stature, alongside dozens of others that were decidedly more humane, where kids found it hard to fall through the cracks and teachers were enthusiastic about teaching. A few were mediocre or worse; one or two had serious problems. The consensus from the streams of observers who came to see, and those who studied the data, was that the change was real and lasting. What was even more important, however, was that the stage was set for trying out more innovative educational ideas as professionals had the opportunity to be more directly involved in decision making. It was not a cost-free idea, but the added expense was small compared with many other heralded reform efforts; it was less than the cost of one additional teacher for every newly created school.

If this were the best of all possible worlds, the next ten years would have been used to launch Stage Three. The district would have studied what was and

was not happening within these fifty-three small schools, examined more closely issues of equity, tracked their graduates over time, studied the families' reasons for making choices and looked for strategies to prod schools into taking on tougher challenges. The Central Board would have worked out ways to legitimize these "wildcat" schools while also encouraging other districts to follow a similar path. Under the leadership of Alvarado's successor, Carlos Medina, District 4 launched Stage Three. But it was not the best of all worlds, and the district found itself on the defensive for reasons that had nothing to do with education in the fifty-three schools. As a result, Medina's efforts to move ahead were thwarted, and new leadership hostile to choice was installed. Today, in 1991, District 4 stands once again at a crossroads, with new sympathetic leadership both within the district and at the Central Board, although badly hobbled by the threat of draconian budget cuts. That the fifty-three schools have survived the past few years in a system that not only never officially acknowledged their existence but often worked to thwart them is a tribute to the loyalty and ingenuity that choice and co-ownership together engender.

While the District 4 story suggests that choice is fully compatible with public education and an efficient vehicle for setting in motion school reform, it is foolhardy not to acknowledge that in the political climate of the 1990s choice runs the risk of leading to privatization.

However, it's not enough these days to cry out in alarm at the possible demise of public education. If public schools are seen as incapable of responding to the demand for wholesale reform, why should we expect the public to resist privatization? Maybe private schools aren't much better, but if public education has proved so inept at meeting the challenge, if it has had such a poor history of serving equity or excellence, it's easy to see the lure of privatization. Given this history, why not just let the chips fall where they may?

The question is a good one. If we want to preserve public education as the norm for most citizens then we'd better have important and positive reasons for doing so, reasons that are compelling to parents, teachers and the broader voting public. To do so we must make the case that the rationale for improving education goes far beyond the problem employers face in recruiting sufficient number of competent and reliable workers or our chagrin at finding the United States at the bottom in test scores for math and science. At least as important is the role education plays as a tool in reviving and maintaining the fabric of our democratic institutions. While public education may be useful as an industrial policy, it is *essential* to healthy public life in a democracy. The two go together, and never has this been clearer than it is today. If we cannot make a convincing case for this, we will see our public schools dismantled in one way or another, either by a misused choice or by erosion and neglect as funds dry up for public education and private schooling becomes the norm for those who can afford to opt out. The status quo plus cosmetic changes won't save public education, at least not in our major urban areas.

The alternative to privatization is good public education, and choice is an essential tool in the effort to create such education. It is the necessary catalyst for the kind of dramatic restructuring that most agree is needed to produce a far better educated citizenry. Virtually all the major educational task forces, for

example, agree that dramatic changes will require removing the stifling regulations that presently keep schools tied to outmoded practices, to doing things in lockstep. They agree that if we want change, we'll have to put up with non-conformity and some messiness. We'll have to allow those most involved (teachers, administrators, parents) to exercise greater on-site power to put their collective wisdom into practice. Once we do all this, however, school X and school Y are going to start doing things differently. How then can we ignore personal "tastes"? Besides, it's a lot easier to undertake difficult innovations successfully if teachers, parents and students are in agreement.

We can't expect the marketplace, public or private, to stimulate this kind of reform magically. Private schools as an example of the market at work aren't very inspiring when it comes to innovation. They may encourage livelier educational practice, but in general they are as convention-bound as public schools. They mostly differ in an invidious way, much like their public school sisters. There's a hierarchy among them, based mostly on how choosy the school can be about whom it accepts. The fact that the choosiest schools attract higher status families and select only the most promising students insures their success; replication, by definition, is impossible. Their value lies in their scarcity. This kind of marketplace has led not to innovation but to imitation on a steadily watered-down basis, appealing not so much to different "tastes" but to different means and expectations. The dual system has remained alive and well in the private sector. But if the marketplace is not a magical answer, neither, experience suggests, can we expect that forced change from the top down will work. What results from such bureaucratically mandated change is anger and sabotage on the part of unwilling, unready parents and professionals as well as the manipulation of data by ambitious bureaucrats and timid administrators. The end result: a gradual return to the status quo.

To improve education for all children will require more than one simple cure-all. It requires a set of strategies. For starters, federal, state and local initiatives can stimulate districts to adopt one or another variation of the District 4 story: providing incentives to districts to break up their oversized buildings and redesign them into many small schools, easily accessible for families to choose from. Once we think small, we can even imagine locating new schools in other available public and private spaces, near workplaces as well as residences, in places where young people can interact with adults going about their daily business. While no system of rules and regulations can insure equity, public policy can assure that resources are fairly allocated. It can go further by establishing guidelines that promote appropriate social, ethnic, racial and academic diversity.

We'll also need a better quality of information if we want to promote long-range school change. We'll need a public that is not confused by misleading data or quickly discouraged by the absence of dramatically improved statistics. Who knows today what the definition of a high school dropout is or what "reading on grade level" means? We'll need to place less reliance on standardized high-stakes testing systems. Good lay information will encourage the kind of lively, even contentious, dialogue about the nature and purpose of education that is so badly needed. Choice offers no guaranteed solution to these concerns, but the existence of clear and coherent alternatives encourages such debate.

Similarly, greater school-based autonomy goes well with choice. School-based management itself does not trigger innovation, but it offers a much better audience for such innovation. Empowered faculties and families are better able to hear new ideas and less likely to sabotage them. Innovation no longer appears threatening. School-based management combined with the idea of small schools of choice allows both parents and teachers to embrace new ideas even if they cannot convince all their colleagues or all the school's parents. Furthermore, once we set loose those who are already eager to "restructure," it will be easier to encourage successive waves of innovators and risk takers. While R&D in education can't take place in labs separate from real life, as it can in most industries, no one wants to be a guinea pig. Creating a school different from what any of those who work in the system are familiar with, one that runs counter to the experiences of most families, is possible only if teachers, parents and students have time to agree on changes and a choice on whether or not they want to go along with them.

Since school officials, like parents, are naturally conservative and reluctant to change their habits, we don't need to sign them all up at once. What's needed first is a range of models, examples for teachers and the public to scrutinize and learn from. Credibility will require a critical mass of such schools; at this stage it is hard to know how many. But we can go only as fast and as far as those who bear the burden of change can tolerate. Putting more money into schools does not guarantee success but it can accelerate the pace of change. Of course, taking money out slows down the possibilities for change too.

In short, choice is necessary but not sufficient. There's something galling about the idea that you're stuck in a particular school that's not working for you unless you are rich enough to buy yourself out of it. Still, if it worked for most students, we'd put up with it, but it doesn't. What's not necessary is to buy into the rhetoric that too often surrounds choice: about the rigors of the marketplace, the virtues of private schooling and the inherent mediocrity of public places and public spaces. By using choice judiciously, we can have the virtues of the marketplace without some of its vices, and we can have the virtues of the best private schools without undermining public education.

BRUNO V. MANNO, CHESTER E. FINN, JR., GREGG VANOUREK

BEYOND THE SCHOOLHOUSE DOOR: HOW CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE TRANSFORMING U.S. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Charter schools are the liveliest reform in American education. Before these unconventional public schools vaulted into the spotlight in the mid-1990s, education reform in the U.S. was nearing paralysis—stalemated by politics

and interest groups, confused by the cacophony of a thousand fads and pet schemes working at cross purposes, and hobbled by most people's inability to imagine anything very different from the schools they had attended decades earlier. Enter charter schools in 1991, a seedling reform that grew into a robust tree, then a whole grove. The trees are still young, and the grove attracts its share of lightning strikes. But it is steadily expanding and mostly thriving.

Today, there are charter laws in 36 states and the District of Columbia, with nearly 1,700 charter schools in 32 states and D.C., enrolling some 350,000 students. Perhaps even more significantly, the charter phenomenon has begun to reach well beyond the boundaries of these individual schools and the people directly affected by them. It is transforming some school districts and communities, figuring in larger political struggles, and leaving its tracks on American education as a whole. It turns out that these schools represent a fundamental overhaul of the assumptions and power structures of U.S. public education. Even if charter schools do not come to dominate our education system, the idea they embody has powerful implications for the entire enterprise of public schooling.

In what follows, we briefly delineate the nature of a charter school, identify and discuss four stages in the evolution of the education establishment's reaction to charters, and sketch some of the charter movement's early impacts at the district, state, and national levels.

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

A workable starting definition of a charter school is "an independent public school of choice, freed from rules but accountable for results." A charter school is a new species—a hybrid with important similarities to district public schools, with some of the prized attributes of private schools, but with crucial differences from both.

As a public school, a charter school is open to all who wish to attend it (i.e., without regard to race, religion, or academic ability), is paid for with tax dollars (no tuition charges), and is accountable for its results to an authoritative public body (such as a school board, state agency, or public university) as well as to those who enroll and teach in it.

Yet charter schools are quite different from standard-issue public schools. Most are distinguished by four key features: they can be created by almost anyone; they are exempt from most state and local regulations and are essentially autonomous in their operations; they are attended by youngsters whose families choose them and staffed by educators who choose to work in them; and they are liable to be closed by the public authority that authorizes them if they fail to produce satisfactory results.

Charter schools also resemble private schools in two important particulars. First, they are independent. Although answerable to outside authorities for their results, they are free to produce those results as they think best. They are self-governing institutions with wide-ranging control over their

own curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, internal organization, and much more. The second similarity is that nearly all of them are schools of choice. Nobody is assigned against his or her will to attend (or teach in) a charter school.

Charters are, quite simply, redefining and reinventing what is meant by “public education.” Traditionally, Americans have defined a public school as any school run by the government, managed by a superintendent and school board, staffed by public employees, and operated within a public-sector bureaucracy. In this familiar sense, a public school is not very different from a public library, a public park, or a public housing project.

Charters make it possible for us to consider a different definition: a public school is any school that is open to the public, paid for by the public, and accountable to public authorities for its results. Such a school need not be run by the government. Indeed, for purposes of its “publicness,” it does not matter who runs the school, how it is staffed, or what its students do between 9 A.M. and 10 A.M. on Tuesdays.

In short, charter schools are part of a big idea: public education in which elected and appointed officials play a strategic rather than a functional role. Charter schools allow public support of schooling without governmental provision of schools.

RESPONDING TO THE CHARTER MOVEMENT

This approach is an enormous change, of course, and one not welcomed by many who have spent their lives and formed their views within the traditional public education system. Their response, at least at first, has rarely been cordial. But it is worth examining. Our research has identified four stages in the evolution of the education establishment’s reaction to charters. Most are evident at the local level, but they also have counterparts in state capitals and on the banks of the Potomac.

- Stage 1: Stop them cold. Prevent charter schools from opening.
- Stage 2: Keep them few and weak. Burden charter schools with so many limits and regulations that their numbers remain small and those that do start have scant autonomy.
- Stage 3: Outdo them. Compete with charter schools in order to minimize the number of children leaving district schools for charter schools.
- Stage 4: Accept and make use of them. Put the charter idea to work for the system’s own purposes, as research and development sites or as a framework for innovations in the district.

Stage 1: Stop Them Cold

Efforts to block charters entirely are manifest in moves to derail enabling legislation and (less often) in the use of judicial strategies. Perhaps the most vivid

example of stopping a charter law from being enacted can be seen over the past few years in the state of Washington.

In 1995, after the lower house of the state legislature had passed a strong charter law that died in the state senate, James and Fawn Spady—two successful, energetic, and extremely dedicated activist parents living near Seattle who were deeply frustrated with the local public schools—drafted a ballot initiative to allow for “independent public schools” launched by certified teachers. The state’s major teacher union, the Washington Education Association (WEA), and the Democratic Party opposed it. The Spadys failed to get the necessary 180,000 signatures for the November ballot, but they tried again the following year and obtained more than 195,000 signatures.¹ In addition to the two teacher unions, opponents this time included the state PTA, the state’s business leadership, the League of Women Voters, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Northwest AIDS Foundation.

The Spadys’ initiative (I-177) was defeated at the polls, 64% to 36%. But foul play was involved. The state’s Public Disclosure Commission found numerous legal violations by the WEA, including the failure to disclose more than \$400,000 in secret donations from the National Education Association (NEA), illegal transfers of money, and the formation of an unregistered political action committee. In early 1998, WEA and NEA officials settled with the state, paying a fine of \$430,000 and acknowledging that they had broken the law, though claiming it was unintentional.²

In 1997 and 1998, the Spadys tried yet again. Although Gov. Gary Locke, a Democrat, and the state legislature passed a budget that included \$5 million for charter schools and a charter bill cleared the house, that bill was unable to get to the senate floor for the third year in a row—and then for a fourth. The WEA used its considerable political muscle to persuade every Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee to oppose the measure.

As we write, in early 2000, the Washington legislature is once again weighing the charter idea. The Spadys are prepared to mount another ballot initiative if the measure fails. We note, though, that, even when a legislature enacts a charter law, it might not amount to much. That is, the law might be a weak measure that severely limits the number of schools allowed or grants little autonomy to them.

Moreover, once a charter law is passed, opponents try other tactics to stop charter schools from opening. For example, judicial strategies involving state constitutional challenges to charter laws have been mounted in California, Colorado, Missouri, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Wisconsin.³

Once the law is on the books, the action typically moves to the local level, where there have been innumerable rejections of charter school applications by school districts. An unusually contentious battle has raged for several years in the affluent northwestern suburbs of Chicago. Marilyn Keller Rittmeyer, a public school educator, doctoral candidate, and mother of five, joined a group of other suburban moms who started meeting in 1995. Over the course of a three-year period, their charter proposal was rejected 15 times by their own and other

nearby school boards. The determined group of founders eventually appealed to the Illinois State Board of Education, which finally approved the charter request. After many more ups and downs, the school opened in September 1999.

Stage 2: Keep Them Few and Weak

Once the first charters appear, their foes do not go gently into the night. If they cannot stop charters altogether, they challenge them one by one, burdening them with restrictions and red tape. This “re-regulation” can be accomplished by statutory amendment, by executive order, or by judicial fiat. Sometimes opponents even make use of zoning headaches, restricted access to retirement systems, or just plain harassment. For example, the Massachusetts legislature (briefly) required that charter school board members submit detailed data on personal income, investments, debts, and property holdings, even though local superintendents and district school committee members were under no such obligation.⁴ This requirement has since been relaxed.

Some opponents seek to co-opt the movement, tolerating the term “charter schools” but seeking to ensure that they are run very much like regular public schools, complete with union contracts, uniform pay scales, limited curricular or fiscal independence, and similar handicaps. We think of these as Potemkin-style charter schools, displaying the façade but benefiting from little of the reality.

Charter Opponents. We observe continuing—and ever more sophisticated—hostility toward the charter idea from several directions, especially from teacher unions, school boards, and superintendents. But not all charter critics are motivated by politics or malevolence. We also see plenty of anxiety concerning such legitimate issues as jobs, accountability, and the future of public education.

The initial reaction to charter schools on the part of national, state, and most local teacher unions was defiance—more than a little ironic, considering how much the late Albert Shanker had to do with developing and promulgating the charter concept. When the first charter proposal appeared in Minnesota in 1991, the unions, recognizing the fundamental power shift that it entailed, rose up in vigorous opposition. The Minnesota Education Association called the proposal “a costly hoax,” predicted that charter schools “may turn out to be the biggest boondoggle since New Coke,” and asserted that they are “just plain bad public policy.”⁵

The national unions were similarly scathing at first. In time, however, they modified their positions, though their newfound tolerance for the charter concept is wrapped in conditions and limitations. In 1996, the AFT asserted that charters must have local school board approval, that their employees must be covered by the district bargaining agreement, that they must hire only certified teachers, and that private schools must not be allowed to convert to charter

status.⁶ The NEA made similar demands. Still, both unions have launched pilot charter projects of their own. The NEA has initiated schools in Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Arizona, and California.⁷ The AFT has worked through local affiliates to create partnerships with a few charter schools in such locales as Texas, California, and New York. Of course, both unions are doing their best to organize charter teachers.

The self-interest of the unions is clearly on the line, and it is risky for them to stonewall the charter movement. A 1998 NEA study of charter teachers revealed overall satisfaction and “reasonably high” morale.⁸ By a three-to-one margin, those surveyed would choose to teach in a charter school again. When asked why they chose a charter school, their most frequent response was “freedom to teach the way I want.”⁹

Sixty-eight percent of the charter teachers reported no local union involvement in their schools, with this number mushrooming to 89% in start-up charters. Seventeen percent admitted on a union-sponsored survey that “no teacher union association or involvement” was one of the reasons they opted to teach in a charter school.¹⁰

Most state affiliates of the national teacher unions remain adamant in their opposition to strong charter laws. Local school boards and administrators continue to obstruct individual schools during the authorization and renewal processes. Examining the Massachusetts scene, researchers Tom Loveless and Claudia Jasin witnessed bitter reactions from host districts and communities to the emergence of charter proposals. Typically, they report, a local district forecasts huge financial losses as a result of charter-induced pupil flight. Then the district threatens “the elimination of art and advanced placement classes, possible teacher layoffs, reductions in sports programs, the closing of after-school services, and an end to tutoring programs.”¹¹

In New York City, Rudy Crew, then schools chancellor, teamed up with Randi Weingarten, head of the powerful United Federation of Teachers, to oppose Gov. George Pataki’s 1998 charter bill. The governor played hardball, however, threatening to veto a much-wanted legislative pay raise if lawmakers did not pass a charter bill. Even then, the well-organized opponents forced significant concessions, including a cap of 100 new schools for the entire state, half of them to be sponsored by the charter-averse Board of Regents.

Other Foes. Sparring with unions, school boards, and superintendents would seem to be fisticuffs enough, but the charter boxing match also entails fending off jabs from teacher colleges, advocacy groups, competition-wary private schools, and assorted critics. For example, although the state legislature authorized the University of North Carolina to sponsor charter schools, the university president advised his campuses not to get involved. When the faculty of the University of California at San Diego voted against basing a college-prep charter school for low-income students at that campus, the provost of the university’s Thurgood Marshall College nearly resigned in dismay, creating a furor on campus. Eventually, the school was approved, and it opened in September 1999.

Numerous criticisms of charter schools have appeared in the media.¹² While it is indisputably valuable to have any reform strategy scrutinized by careful journalists and thoughtful analysts, most critiques of charter schools have been obsessed with the handful of bad apples in the barrel and have been inattentive to the far larger number of successful schools and satisfied clients.

Many observers also exaggerate their claims. A charter school study conducted by Amy Stuart Wells and her UCLA colleagues was billed by its publicists as “the most in-depth study of charter schools ever conducted,” though it presented case studies of only 17 charter schools in a single state (California) and included interviews at just 22 regular public schools. Its sweeping—and, we believe, unwarranted—conclusion was that “the charter school reform movement, at least in California, has failed to live up to many of the claims put forth by its proponents.”¹³

Most attacks on charter schools come from the left—featuring charges of elitism, inattention to diversity, neglect of the disabled, and other equity issues. But some critics can be found on the right as well. They contend that, whatever its merits, the charter school movement saps energy from the voucher movement and other truly free-market alternatives. Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman, for example, has this to say about charter schools: “I believe that charter schools are at best an unstable halfway house on the road to effective parental choice. They do provide a wider range of alternatives to some parents and in this way introduce some competition on the demand side. But they remain government institutions subject to control by the educational establishment.”¹⁴

Fair-Weather Friends. Charters also suffer from the transient affections of fair-weather friends: people who appear hospitable when the sea is calm and the sailing is easy but turn their backs on the charter movement when the water starts to get choppy.

President Bill Clinton is something of a fair-weather friend, often singing the praises of charter schools while declining to do battle on their behalf with his own federal bureaucracy or with the established education interest groups. As *The Economist* noted in 1997, the Administration’s charter policy “points in the right direction, but it is sadly timid,” presumably as a result of anxiety about offending key allies and supporters.¹⁵

Indeed, the federal government’s stance toward charters can fairly be termed schizophrenic. On the one hand, all manner of senior officials routinely take to the bully pulpit to praise charter schools, citing them as examples of educational excellence, innovation, and accountability. Yet the federal government has also placed charters in most of the same regulatory straitjackets it uses for conventional schools. By forcing charter schools to conform to the myriad requirements of special education law, for example, Washington officials are missing a golden opportunity to welcome innovation and improvement in that lumbering (though well-intentioned) program.

Race has also caught the attention of enforcers at the Office for Civil Rights and the Justice Department. The latter has gone to court in South Carolina and

Louisiana, citing 40-year-old school desegregation orders to prevent the launching or conversion of charter schools (including several designed for at-risk and minority youngsters). The government is demanding racial composition data in advance of a school's approval.¹⁶

Beyond the Schoolhouse Door. Despite the roadblocks and potholes, the charter movement has gained considerable momentum and is now having ripple effects on school systems, communities, and debates about reforming public education. These ripple effects are what most education reformers hope will result from the charter movement. We classify them in two ways: outright competition—a tug of war over pupils and resources—and a district embrace—using charters to achieve the district's own ends.¹⁷

Stage 3: Compete with Them

The main reason that the U.S. Postal Service now provides overnight delivery is competition from Federal Express and other commercial services that came into being because the post office could not be counted on to get a letter to its destination the next day. A similar phenomenon can be observed in public education in some communities, thanks to charter schools and other forms of school choice. Competition busts monopolies and triggers change. It does this by changing the system of incentives and rewards. Ted Kolderie comments, "In the charter strategy, incentives are central . . . Without the dynamics that make performance necessary, the system will remain inert, unable to generate internally the will to do the hard things that excellence requires."¹⁸

Lansing, Michigan, has seen a burst of charter activity in recent years, and initially the district lost 1,000 of its 19,500 students. In response, the district undertook an aggressive marketing plan that included local television ads during the 1998 Winter Olympics.¹⁹ The school system in Mesa, Arizona, has been advertising its own education options in movie theaters and in the Yellow Pages. But the most notable district responses to competition go well beyond ads. "In order to survive," comments Kent Matheson, former superintendent of schools in Flagstaff, Arizona, "we had to quit our whining and do a better job ourselves." His system added full-day kindergarten and several magnet schools. His successor attempted (but failed) to woo an award-winning charter school back under the system's roof.²⁰

Other districts are also developing new options for "customers" who might otherwise defect to charter schools. Douglas County, Colorado, did this with a program for gifted and talented students. So did Battle Creek, Michigan, which created two new schools in 1998 in partnership with the Edison Project as a response to three charter schools that also opened that year. Superintendent Mike Bitar acknowledges that the charters put the district "in a different kind of position right now. We do have to be more assertive about marketing our schools."²¹

Nor is it unknown for district leadership to be changed in response to competition. After little Queen Creek, Arizona, lost a third of its elementary pupils

to a new basics-centered charter school, it fired its superintendent and began infusing more phonics into its reading curriculum.

An Arizona analysis suggests that such competition has made a positive difference for district schools in the state with America's liveliest charter program. The study sorts district responses into low-cost efforts (e.g., marketing tools that explain district services to parents) and costlier moves that actually change the available services (e.g., starting a full-day kindergarten program). While the mere whisper of charters may trigger the former, the authors contend that "only direct competition from charter schools pushes districts to adopt high-cost reforms. Further, positive achievement results are most apparent in the lower-performing districts. This is in sharp contrast to the fears of many school choice opponents, who believe that competition will harm poorly performing schools."²²

Not every district reaction is coherent, though, much less positive. "I saw a lot of chaos, a lot of confusion, and a lot of controversy" in Arizona, comments charter scholar Eric Rofes, "but I also saw districts that were responding."²³

Rising customer consciousness is also palpable in Massachusetts. Even Boston had to take notice of the charter movement, since five of the state's first 15 charter schools were located there. Within months, the district and its teacher union launched a "pilot schools" project that waived regulations and contract provisions for participating schools. This opportunity led staff members at Fenway Middle College High School to return their newly granted state charter and become a Boston pilot school instead.²⁴ Famed school reformer Deborah Meier left New York City for Boston in order to open her own pilot school there.

Are such competition-engendered district responses good for children? Harvard economist Caroline Hoxby says yes. Her research (based on the degree of choice that families have between school districts) finds that competition boosts achievement and efficiency:

An increase of one standard deviation in the degree of choice among districts causes a small (and statistically significant) improvement in student achievement. Students' reading and math scores improve by about 2 percentile points . . . However, an increase of one standard deviation in choice among districts causes a large improvement in schools' efficiency . . . An increase in choice improves student achievement even while accomplishing substantial cost savings. The implications for schools' productivity (the ratio of student achievement to dollars spent) are powerful.²⁵

Stage Four: Accept Them

Savvy districts can achieve their own purposes with the help of charter schools, creating schools not possible under the usual ground rules, using them as labs to test innovations, or employing them as part of a broader reform strategy. The new Montessori school in Mesa was proving difficult to staff because of state certification requirements, but the charter law enabled the district to cut through that red tape. Houston contracted with Thaddeus Lott, director of the

innovative Wesley Elementary School, to operate Wesley and several nearby schools as a charter cluster, partly to liberate him from the district's own bureaucratic burdens. Lott now reports directly to the Houston superintendent. He says that the charter "allows us to feel like we're not committing a crime by doing things differently."²⁶

The San Carlos Charter Learning Center, California's first charter school, was created by the district "as a research and development site for the San Carlos School District whose successful innovations will be transferable to other schools in the district," according to Superintendent Don Shalvey. In her 1997 visit to the school, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton aptly compared the San Carlos approach to "test kitchens . . . [that help us] learn from each other and . . . get to scale in the sense that we know what works [and can then spread these ideas] to every school."²⁷

Some of the charter innovations first cooked on the San Carlos stove are now part of the district menu—e.g., personalized learning plans, thematic instructional units, multi-age classrooms, and technology-based instruction. The charter has also brought new flexibility to district hiring policies and the ability to outsource some education services. For example, one school now contracts with the city recreation department for physical education services. Shalvey told us, "No doubt about it. The charter school was the spark for much of the instructional innovation that has gone on in the district."

Sometimes a charter school that was not intended as a site for R&D ends up serving that purpose. This happened in Lowell, Massachusetts, where Lowell Middlesex Academy had been an alternative program for high school dropouts that was run in conjunction with the local community college. After enactment of charter legislation, the college converted the Academy to an autonomous charter high school. This success led the district to contract with the community college to start an alternative program for middle school youngsters who posed major discipline problems—a sort of in-district charter modeled on the Academy.

Yet another example can be found in Boston. Sarah Kass, co-founder of City on a Hill, told us about her school's warming relationship with the Boston Public Schools:

We have found the Boston Public Schools increasingly open to collaboration and have launched several important teacher-driven collaborations. Most significantly, our federally funded Urban Calculus Initiative is a collaboration exploring how we can prepare more urban youths to study calculus in high school. We believe that collaboration with the public school system will be most beneficial to the students of Boston and to the long-term professional development of teachers.

The union is learning from the charter experience in Houston, too. Observes Gayle Fallon, president of the Houston Federation of Teachers,

We've learned that sometimes small is better. You can carve a large school into small units that work a lot better for a lot of kids. I've also learned something that I always believed to be true: if you give people who are normally disenfranchised an opportunity for input into a program, they'll not only design a

good one, they'll also work harder than anyone can imagine to make it work. Saturdays, too. As long as we're careful not to do charters for the sake of charters, we can get positive results.

The charter-as-test-kitchen approach has limits. It assumes that the basic structures and power relationships of the familiar school system will remain intact, not be transformed by the charter phenomenon. It allows a small number of charter schools to operate in their own little realms, discovering and disseminating if they can, but not changing the ground rules.

A district's use of the charter opportunity can also be purely utilitarian, a mechanism for getting something it couldn't otherwise accomplish. For example, after a bond issue failed, the Nacogdoches, Texas, district and Stephen F. Austin University devised a way to use the state's charter law to add a much-needed elementary school by converting the privately operated campus lab school into a charter. Down on the coast, one of the most successful charter schools in Texas is negotiating whether it will join the Corpus Christi school district, serving families on an offshore island that the system had long refused to provide with its own school. After island residents took matters into their own hands and created a charter school (including construction of three buildings), the new district superintendent invited them to reaffiliate. Instead of an "open enrollment" charter answerable directly to the state, under the proposed new arrangement, the school will become a "campus charter" moored to the district.

But traffic flows in both directions. Gayle Fallon notes that a Texas district may play the charter card to ease the threat that a school will go directly to the state and thereby subtract pupils and dollars from the district. She observed that some of Houston's "regular" public schools "are turning into charters, especially at the elementary level. We had 19 'internal' charters last year [1996–97] and more now. But they don't always work well. The bureaucracy tends to revert to business as usual. A few have decided to leave the system and seek a state 'open enrollment' charter."

There are also a few charter districts. Kingsburg, California, where an entire K–8 district has gone charter, illustrates this approach, as does the little town of Cartersville, Georgia. Superintendent Harold Barnett told us that this is a way to accomplish three purposes: "I was hoping we'd release a burst of energy from our educators, improve academic performance, and increase parent involvement. We've been able to do all three things. And the culture of parent involvement we've created has helped the schools be much more responsive to the public we serve."

THE IMPACT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

District-Level Effects. Initial studies suggest that, more often than not, charter schools are having an impact on their surrounding districts. Rofes of Humboldt State University has studied the effects of charter schools on districts and documented the response in 25 communities, located in eight states and the District

of Columbia.²⁸ His empirical work generally supports the anecdotal evidence. Here is Rofes' catalogue of initial impacts on districts that can be traced to charter schools:

- the transfer of students and the money that follows them to charter schools;
- the loss of particular kinds of students to niche-focused charter schools;
- the permanent departure of "disgruntled" parents and the temporary departure of others (who move back and forth between charter and regular schools);
- changes in the morale and attitudes of district staff; and
- central office planning problems and shifts in administrative responsibilities (e.g., staff members are given additional responsibilities for charter schools).

Five of the 25 districts that Rofes examined experienced strong effects: significant loss of students and money plus at least two of the other four effects listed above. Seven districts felt moderate effects: some loss of students and money and at least two other effects. Four districts acknowledged mild effects: a small loss of students or money and up to two other effects. Nine claimed that charter schools had produced no effects. Large urban districts were less likely to feel the impact of charters, which is not surprising, since they are so big and sluggish that they are apt to be least responsive to competition.

Distinguishing between "impacts" and "responses," Rofes found the following examples of the latter—instances in which districts changed their own behavior as a consequence of charter schools:

- opening schools organized around a specific philosophy or theme;
- creating "add-on" programs, such as after-school programs or all-day kindergartens;
- offering more diverse activities or curricular resources;
- outsourcing services through contracts with private providers; and
- public relations and marketing campaigns to attract new parents or win old ones back.

A study of charter school effects on 49 districts, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, reached similar conclusions, identifying two major reactions to charters: districts see them as a competitive challenge or threat (similar to our stage 3 reaction) or as an opportunity to advance reform and change the way the district operates (similar to our stage 4 reaction).²⁹

Change comes slowly, though. A 1998 Massachusetts study examined how charter operators and district-based educators view the sharing of innovations. Most charter people believe that it is not specific school practices that should be replicated but the "mindset" of their schools—i.e., the focus on designing programs for every child to succeed and on enlisting the commitment of the entire community. But most noncharter educators see structural and attitudinal barriers to replicating what charter schools do. These barriers range from the financial and organizational constraints facing district schools to the resentment that accompa-

nies loss of revenue to charter schools and the perception that charters have caused their communities to polarize. Attitudinal barriers are the hardest to overcome.³⁰ Still, the Massachusetts researchers concluded, "Overall, the educational effects of charter schools on district schools have been positive or neutral."³¹

How will this play out? Nobody can be sure. We are fairly bullish. The evidence in hand suggests that vigorous and credible competition activates significant changes in monopolistic environments.

State-Level Effects. Charters are also beginning to trigger change in the terms and the vocabulary of the education reform debate at the state level. Though these schools are barely a blip on the radar screen in most states, at least in terms of raw numbers, they have disproportionate symbolic and political importance. For example, William Windler, a senior consultant with the Colorado Department of Education, has documented the ways in which his state's charter movement "has benefited the state's entire public education system."³²

After the Texas State Board of Education awarded 41 "open-enrollment" charters to schools in early 1998 (in addition to the 19 that were already operating), board chairman Jack Christie said, "This is a large step in the bold experiment to create competition and excellence in the [Texas] public school system." An even larger step was taken in September 1998 when the state board okayed an additional 85 open-enrollment charters. Today, Texas boasts 167 operating charter schools (143 of them approved by the state and 24 by local districts).

Charter schools also help illuminate other education policy issues. For example, states currently face an acute dilemma with regard to school finance: should money continue to be directed through categorical programs and targeted to special groups or populations, traveling from one bureaucracy to the next with each jurisdiction peeling off its overhead and adding its rules? Or should money flow from state authorities to families, following students to the schools of their choice? The charter movement pushes in the latter direction. In Massachusetts and most of Arizona, for example, state money for charter pupils follows them directly to their schools, with no intervening agency. Arizona's charter schools played a key role in that state's move to child-centered capital funding for all schools. In early 1999, the California State Board of Education approved a plan to provide direct funding from the state to its charter schools for most operational expenses, bypassing the district bureaucracies.

Meanwhile, the charter laws themselves are also changing. In California, the legislature was confronted with 1.2 million signatures on a petition to place an initiative on the ballot that would greatly liberalize the state's charter law. Bowing to the inevitable, the legislature amended the law itself, lifting the cap on the number of charters allowed, authorizing state and county boards of education to grant charters denied by local school boards, and requiring districts to make empty facilities available to charter operators.³³

The saga in California did not end there. During the 1999 legislative session, the California Teachers Association backed an amendment to the charter law that would have imposed collective bargaining requirements on all charter schools. The California Network of Education Charters (CANEC), a

professional association of charter operators, led a fight to stop what it viewed as an attempt to restrict the freedom of charter schools. As part of its long-term effort to be vigilant against additional efforts to restrict charters, CANEC employs a full-time director of government relations and an advocacy coordinator.

National Effects. Echoes from the charter movement are also audible along the banks of the Potomac. Senior federal officials—and candidates—often talk about charters, usually in warmly positive terms. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley has said, “The charter school movement represents what is best about American education—a willingness to change, to be impatient, to demand excellence, and, at the same time, a deep, abiding commitment to the democratic principles that define public education.”³⁴

Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), once described as “clueless about charter schools,”³⁵ has now eagerly enlisted in the charter movement. After describing the “chaos in governance” faced by U.S. public schools, he proposed “a bold answer: let’s make every public school in this country essentially a charter school . . . with decentralized control, site-based management, parental engagement, and high levels of volunteerism.”³⁶ This perspective is echoed by others, including Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, who would “‘charterize’ all urban schools.”³⁷

On another front, the Education Commission of the States, established more than 30 years ago as an organization to provide interstate planning for education leaders, has issued a report on school governance that recommends two approaches to changing the way American public schools are run. According to David Osborne, the reinventing government guru, the second approach (which he favors) would lead to “a public education system in which *every* school is a charter school.”³⁸

Charters have even begun to figure in debates about the major federal education aid programs, all of which were designed to serve school systems rather than individual schools (much less individual students). It has not gone unnoticed that charters tend not to get their “fair share” of the aid dollars. Both the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Research Service have attested to this fact, and some members of Congress would like to do something about it.³⁹ It’s far from certain that this will happen—it could mean a wholesale restructuring of complex formulas and eligibility assumptions—but charter schools are at least prompting consideration of the possibility.

REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION?

Both charter enthusiasts and opponents tend to depict these schools as a revolutionary change, a policy earthquake, an unprecedented and heretofore unimaginable innovation. Such colorful rhetoric dramatizes for advocates the historic significance of their crusade. Those opposed use such terminology for the opposite purpose: to slow this reform’s spread by scaring people into seeing

it as risky and unproven. Both groups are probably standing too close to the objects they are describing.

Viewed from a few inches away, charter schools *do* represent sharp changes in the customary patterns and practices of today's public school systems. But with even a little more perspective, we readily observe that charter schools embody three familiar and time-tested features of American education.

First, charter schools are rooted in their communities, the true essence of local control of education, not unlike the village schools of the early 19th century and the one-room schoolhouses that once dotted the landscape. They are much like America's original public schools in their local autonomy, their community ties, their accountability to parents, and their need to generate revenues by attracting and retaining families. Creatures of civil society as much as agencies of government, charter schools would not have caused Alexis de Tocqueville to raise an eyebrow.

Second, charter schools have cousins in the K-12 family. Their DNA looks much the same under the education microscope as that of lab schools, magnet schools, site-managed schools, and special focus (e.g., art, drama, science) schools, not to mention private schools and home schools. Much the same, but not identical. The Bronx High School of Science is selective, while charter schools are not. Hillel Academy and the Sancta Maria Middle School teach religion, while charter schools cannot. The Urban Magnet School of the Arts was probably designed by a downtown bureaucracy and most likely has carefully managed ethnic ratios in its student body, whereas most charter schools do not. Yet the similarities outweigh the differences.

Finally, these new schools reveal a classic American response to a problem, challenge, or opportunity: institutional innovation and adaptation. In that respect, they resemble community colleges, which came into being (and spread rapidly and fruitfully) to meet educational needs that conventional universities could not accommodate. As an organizational form, then, charter schools are not revolutionary. They are part of what we are and always have been as a nation.

NOTES

¹ In Washington, citizens can place measures before the electorate on the statewide ballot or place before the legislature initiatives that, unless enacted by the legislature without amendment, then go on the ballot. The Spadys shifted from the former approach to the latter, partly to avail themselves of the extra six months that this gave them to gather signatures. Facing strong union opposition again, the house passed an alternative bill, but the senate was willing to adopt only a weak charter law with tight caps on the number of schools, severe funding disadvantages, and a feeble appeals system. The Spadys and their allies rejected that Faustian bargain, and so the question went directly to the voters.

² "No Excusing WEA Election Violations," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 3 March 1998, p. A-8.

³ In Missouri, the suit is still pending. The other court cases have led to decisions upholding charter laws.

⁴ "An Onerous Rule for Charter Schools," *Boston Globe*, 3 March 1998, p. A-10.

⁵ Joe Nathan, *Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunity for American Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), p. 99.

⁶ American Federation of Teachers, *Charter School Laws: Do They Measure Up?* (Washington, DC: AFT Educational Issues Department, 1996).

⁷ This project is being independently evaluated (via site visits and case studies) by a team of researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition, SRI International is conducting focus groups at the NEA charter sites as part of a two-year project.

⁸ Julia E. Koppich, Patricia Holmes, and Margaret L. Plecki, *New Rules, New Roles? The Professional Work Lives of Charter School Teachers* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1998), p. iv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. iv, 23. More than one response was possible.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 31.

¹¹ Tom Loveless and Claudia Jasin, "Starting from Scratch: Political and Organizational Challenges Facing Charter Schools," *Educational Administration Quarterly*, February 1998, p. 23.

¹² See, for example, Thomas Toch, "The Education Bazaar," *U.S. News & World Report*, 27 April 1998, pp. 36–37; Michael Winerip, "Schools for Sale," *New York Times Magazine*, 14 June 1998, p. 42; and Cece Todd, "Guinea Pigs," *Mesa Tribune*, 23 August 1998, pp. A1, A11.

¹³ Amy Stuart Wells, *Beyond the Rhetoric of Charter School Reform: A Study of Ten California School Districts* (Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, 1998), pp. 7, 14–15. See also "Charter Schools Not Yet Living Up to Promises, Report Says," press release, UCLA Charter School Study, 3 December 1998, p. 1. For a response, see Gary Hart, quoted in Nick Anderson, "Study Doubts Charter School Success Claims," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 December 1998; memorandum from Eric Premack, UCLA Charter Study, Institute for School Reform, Sacramento, 4 December 1998; and "Give Them a Chance: Study Condemns Charter Schools Too Soon," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 7 December 1998, an editorial that questioned the study's "sweeping generalizations" and concluded: "We are all for a fair evaluation of charter schools once they have had time to demonstrate their worth. This preemptive strike in the guise of a study hardly qualifies."

¹⁴ Milton Friedman, personal correspondence with the authors, 25 November 1998.

¹⁵ "Schools at the Top of the Hill," *The Economist*, February 1997, pp. 27–28.

¹⁶ Clint Bolick, "Bill Lann Lee's War on Charter Schools," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 March 1999, p. A-23. See also "Charter Hypocrisy," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 October 1999, p. A-26; and Anita Hodgkiss, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, "We're All for Charter Schools" (letter to the editor), *Wall Street Journal*, 29 October 1999, p. A-19.

¹⁷ Bryan C. Hassel, *The Charter School Challenge: Avoiding the Pitfalls, Fulfilling the Promise* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pp. 128–43, presents a similar perspective, suggesting that charter schools might make an impact on the school system through three mechanisms. First, they might serve as laboratories . . . Second, charter schools might serve as competitors to school districts. Third, charter schools might, over time, simply replace district schools as the primary purveyors of public education" (p. 250).

¹⁸ Ted Kolderie, *A Major Education Reform—The Charter Idea: Update and Prospects* (Minneapolis: City Innovation, 1995), pp. 3, 5. See also Hassel, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Liz Wyatt, "Schools Compete for Pupils, Funding," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, 28 June 1998, p. 4-A.

²⁰ Kelly Pierce, "Charters' Growth Shows No Sign of Slowing," *Arizona Republic*, 7 March 1999.

²¹ Wyatt, pp. 1-A, 4-A.

²² Robert Maranto, Scott Milliman, and Frederick Hess, "Does Public Sector Competition Stimulate Innovation? The Competitive Impacts of Arizona Charter Schools on Tradi-

tional Public Schools," unpublished paper, 1998. For anecdotal information on Queen Creek and Mesa, see "Resistance Is Futile," *The Bellwether*, Goldwater Institute, Phoenix, AZ, 8 September 1998.

²³ Pierce, op. cit.

²⁴ Larry Myatt and Linda Nathan, "One School's Journey in the Age of Reform," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1996, pp. 24–25; and Linda Nathan and Larry Myatt, "A Journey Toward Autonomy," *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1998, pp. 278–86.

²⁵ Caroline M. Hoxby, "Analyzing School Choice Reforms That Use America's Traditional Forms of Parental Choice," in Paul E. Peterson and Bryan C. Hassel, eds., *Learning from School Choice* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), pp. 133–35.

²⁶ Tyce Palmaffy, "No Excuses," *Policy Review*, January/February 1998, p. 19.

²⁷ Remarks of the President and Mrs. Clinton, San Carlos Charter Learning Center, 29 September 1997, available on the Web at <http://sccll.sancarlos.k12.ca.us>.

²⁸ Eric Rofes, *How Are School Districts Responding to Charter Laws and Charter Schools?* (Berkeley, CA: Policy Analysis for California Education, 1998); see also idem, "The Catalyst Role of Charter Schools," *School Administrator*, August 1999, pp. 14–18; and David Osborne, "Healthy Competition: The Benefits of Charter Schools," reprinted in *Selected Readings on School Reform* (Washington, DC: Fordham Foundation, 1999), pp. 36–39.

²⁹ John Erikson and Debra Silverman, with Paul Berman, Beryl Nelson, and Debra Solomon, *Charter Schools: A Challenge or an Opportunity? The Impact of Charter Schools on Districts* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

³⁰ Amy Stuart Wells' study of California charter schools arrived at similar findings. Wells found that there are seldom "mechanisms in place for charter schools and regular schools to learn from each other" and that "educators' belief that charter schools have an unfair advantage inhibits competition that would, in theory, force improvements." But she concludes—incorrectly, we believe—that "competition and cooperation . . . are at odds with each other . . . [and] that choice and competition often lead to greater stratification." Wells, pp. 54–58.

³¹ Rosenblum Brigham Associates, *Innovation & Massachusetts Charter Schools* (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Education, 1998), p. 26.

³² William Windler, "Colorado's Charter Schools: A Spark for Change and a Catalyst for Reform," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1996, pp. 66–69.

³³ Robert C. Johnson, "California Reaches 'Historic' Charter Schools Agreement," *Education Week*, 6 May 1998.

³⁴ Richard W. Riley, "Strengthening Education Through Innovation and Public School Choice," remarks to the National Charter School Conference, Washington, DC, 4 November 1997.

³⁵ Jon Keller, "Kerry Is Clueless About Charter Schools," *Boston Globe*, 26 August 1998, pp. 5–6.

³⁶ Press Release, Office of Sen. John Kerry, Northeastern University, 16 June 1996, pp. 5–6.

³⁷ Hugh Price, "Urban Education: A Radical Plan," *Education Week*, 8 December 1999, pp. 44, 29.

³⁸ David Osborne, "Make 'Em All Charter Schools," *Washington Post*, 14 November 1999, p. B-3; see also idem, "Healthy Competition."

³⁹ From the General Accounting Office in Washington, DC, see the following: *Charter Schools: Issues Affecting Access to Federal Funds*, September 1997; *Charter Schools: Recent Experiences in Accessing Federal Funds*, March 1998; and *Charter Schools: Federal Funding Available but Barriers Exist*, April 1998. See also *Charter Schools: State Developments and Federal Policy Options* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1997).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 10

1. Discuss the extent to which capitalist free enterprise is compatible with the historic vision of American democracy. Relate this discussion to the purposes of American public education.
2. Contrast the ideas of education as a public good and as a private good to be consumed. Pay particular attention to the purposes of each and how these purposes are related to the source of funding.
3. Whose vision of public school choice do you feel is the most consistent with public education for all Americans, that of Chubb or Meier? Which do you feel has the best chance of changing the way schools operate?
4. If private schools receive public financial support, should they be held to the same academic and social standards as public schools? If private schools receive public financial support, will private schools be able to maintain their uniqueness?
5. The charter school movement in the United States is on the rise. Does this means of educational reform undermine public education, or does it enhance it through competition?

PART FIVE

*Schooling and
Social Change*

Reforming the School: Past to Present

In previous chapters we have talked in some detail about the relationships among the ideology of meritocracy, student classification, equal opportunity, the school bureaucracy, the politics of school control, and the purposes of education in a democracy. We saw that all of these have affected in fundamental ways how students are treated and how they are socialized into the culture of the school as well as the larger culture around them. Three of the major concerns we have stressed in connection with this process of socialization have been fairness, equality, and opportunity. Repeatedly, we have seen how the meritocratic ideal embodies certain assumptions about what is fair or just. We have seen, as well, how that ideal functions as an ideology to prescribe certain patterns of behavior that many students and teachers have come to accept uncritically. Now we extend these concerns to recent proposals for reform that have received comprehensive news coverage and created a new reformist climate. As we did in previous chapters, we give a historical overview so that the current proposals may be better understood.

In the history of educational reform in the United States certain recurring themes have dominated the concerns raised by educators and lay people. Educational reformers from the late eighteenth century to the present, for example, have repeatedly examined the role of schooling in the civic and economic welfare of the nation. The civic concern tended to dominate prior to 1850. The economic concern received increasing attention during the last half of the nineteenth century and remains a priority. When one thinks of reform, one ought to address the Spencerian question “What knowledge is of most worth?”—meaning, “What should students be taught?” It is important to remember that what “knowledge is of most worth” depends on the time and place. For example, one hundred years ago, educators chose vocational education as the knowledge of most worth. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, technology is the knowledge of most worth. It must be remembered that whatever society deems to be most relevant (or of most worth) will be implemented in education through reform.

The efficiency of public schooling has also emerged periodically as an issue. As a general concern, efficiency became ascendant in the latter half of the nineteenth century and reached its peak with the “cult of efficiency” in the early twentieth century. The creation of large, bureaucratically run urban school systems helped set the stage for lay critics who accused educator/bureaucrats of mismanagement, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability for public funds. Thus the issue of inefficiency in schooling often became a political issue and remains today part of the larger concern with accountability and whether schools are meeting their obligations to students, community, and the nation.

The development of education as a profession over the past 150 years also has been the setting for ongoing battles over what knowledge is of most worth. This same professionalization has led to continuous conflict between the lay public and professional educators who control the schools.

Certain key periods, or historical watersheds, in American school reform can give us a historical perspective on the reform movement of the late twentieth century. The period between 1893 and 1918 was the first of these. The third was the decade of the 1950s. Between these two periods—in effect, from the end of World War I to the end of World War II—lay the extensive reform movement called progressivism and the more radical reform proposed by reconstructionists.

This chapter deals only in summary fashion with the widespread reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, because these two decades were dealt with extensively in Chapter 1. You may wish to return to that chapter to refresh your memory.

A QUARTER CENTURY OF COMMITTEES, 1893–1918

During the twenty-five years between 1893 and 1918, three major reports appeared that helped to shape the structure and policies of American elementary and secondary schools through World War II. The first of these was issued in 1895 by the so-called Committee of Fifteen, formed in 1893. This report dealt with the “correlation of studies” at the elementary level, teacher qualifications and training, and the organization of city school systems. The second report was published in 1893 by the National Educational Association on the recommendation of the National Council of Education, a unit of NEA. Known as the Committee of Ten, among its more notable features was the continued prominence of intellectual discipline as the leading idea underlying the unity of secondary school studies. The third report was the published findings of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. In this “Cardinal Principles” report of 1918, intellectual discipline took a back seat to preparation for life. The pressures of large numbers of children from immigrant families and the commitment to mass education led the committee to reevaluate the purposes of American education. The members of these committees composed the elite of American higher education. Charles Eliot, then president of Harvard University, led the Committee of Ten. Let us now address these committee reports in-depth. Keep in mind the context of the time and that the demand for change reflected the pressures of the era.

A subcommittee of the Committee of Fifteen prepared a report on the “correlation of studies” that emphasized the link between curriculum design and the psychological nature of the child. The report recommended, for example, that each branch of study be arranged to suit the natural progress of the child. Studies were also to be arranged so that the level of study would match the “maturity” of the pupil. The committee’s recommendation that studies be correlated with the “civilization into which the child is born” reflected a common expectation for schools.¹ This is somewhat similar to today’s early childhood terminology of developmentally appropriate practice.

The number one priority of language studies in the primary grades was evident in the report. Such studies were advocated for both their general academic utility and their usefulness in mental discipline. The subcommittee also attempted to shift the emphasis from memorization to meaning and language. Grammar retained its place in the curriculum because it was seen as useful for disciplining the mind. The committee pointed out, however, that the formal teaching of grammar left much to be desired. Members were unanimous in their belief that grammar was “overstudied.”²

Teacher training and teacher qualifications took twenty pages of the report. The most critical issue addressed by the report in this regard was the ongoing debate about the extent and place of academic studies in the curriculum. The committee argued that liberal arts colleges with teacher preparatory departments were, in effect, engaging in a type of compensatory academic training and were inferior to schools whose entire curriculum was professional. Academic work had its place, but that was in relation to practice and application. The answer to the supposed conflict between academics and pedagogy was to have both, not in the training school itself but in sequence. Academic qualifications ought to precede pedagogical training, said the committee.³

Though the Committee of Fifteen did important work for the cause of better elementary instruction, its task was easy compared to the one that faced the Committee of Ten for Secondary School Studies. TheodoreSizer has pointed out that the confusion over content and duration of secondary school studies at the turn of the century was such that the task faced by the Committee of Ten was to “make order out of the widespread chaos in secondary education.”⁴ In fact, what the committee was faced with was the problem of *defining* what education should be offered by high schools.

In the mid-nineteenth century two types of schools were the mainstays of secondary-level education in the United States: the Latin grammar school and the academy. The Latin grammar school had long been a major college preparatory institution. The classical languages formed the core of the curriculum. Grammar schools served very few students, however, and academies filled an important gap for those who sought secondary-level education but did not wish to go to college. The academies were both college preparatory and terminal. They often allowed a classical language emphasis in their curricula so that students might be prepared for college entrance; however, modern languages and a variety of practical courses were introduced—commerce, navigation, bookkeeping, and surveying, among others. The report of the Committee of

Ten was an attempt to synthesize the curricula of the academy and the Latin grammar school.

The Committee of Ten recommended four tracks of study: classical, Latin–scientific, modern languages, and English. There was, however, great similarity in these tracks, especially through the first two years. One of the committee’s reasons—avoiding early specialization—has a very modern ring to it: “The wisest teacher, or the most observant parent, can hardly predict with confidence a boy’s gift for a subject which he has never touched.”⁵

The committee correctly saw the dilemma posed by the dual purpose of secondary schooling in late-nineteenth-century America. Preparing students for college was expected, yet this was not the major purpose of public secondary education. The committee noted explicitly that “the secondary schools of the United States, taken as a whole, do not exist for the purpose of preparing boys and girls for colleges.” Thus a curriculum “for national use” must be able to accommodate those for whom the secondary level was terminal.⁶

In 1918 the *Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education* (the “Cardinal Principles” report) was issued. In the report the idea of citizenship was broadly construed to allow the emergence of a new concept of the mission of secondary public schooling. The committee took note of the rapid economic, social, and demographic changes that characterized American society in the early twentieth century. It observed that “secondary education should be determined by the needs of the society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated, and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available.”

The main objectives of education were defined in terms of a democratic ideal. Individual and society, said the “Cardinal Principles” report, were to “find fulfillment each in the other.” To implement the major objectives the committee made recommendations for curriculum reform as well as for the reorganization of the schooling process itself.

Each of the reports addressed problems that affected fairness, equality, and opportunity in American education. Their recommendations, most of which were eventually implemented, helped to structure school life and the expectations of teachers, parents, and administrators. The scientific study of children became the basis for restructuring curriculum according to axiomatic truths about how children learned, developed, and behaved. Thus the professionalization of curriculum making was accompanied by specialized knowledge that gradually left the layperson outside the sphere of decision making. The scientific basis for theorizing about curriculum also placed professional decisions about the curriculum outside the reach of many interested parties external to the school proper.

Both the “grouping” of elementary children and the restructuring of secondary education provided greater differentiation within the curriculum and at the same time helped to manage a culturally diverse student population under one roof. To do this required a more complex, bureaucratic administrative structure. It also required commitment to an ideal of equal educational opportunity that stressed the necessity of differentiated instruction in providing that

opportunity. Thus, by the third decade of the twentieth century schools had created systems of student classification and career guidance that offered students blueprints of their futures.

THE PROGRESSIVES, 1900–1950

Led by John Dewey, George Counts, Harold Rugg, William Heard Kilpatrick, and others, the progressive movement was the center of education debate throughout the first half of the 1900s. As we have seen in earlier chapters, progressives worked to reform both the ideological and the organizational structures of the school. Although it is impossible to say that all progressives argued for a particular plan of action, it is possible to point to one unifying theme in their work: democracy.

Unlike the business interests that worked to mold the schools on an industrial model, the progressives saw schooling for work as only a secondary mission at best. The school was to concern itself primarily with the task of equipping students with the tools necessary for self-governance. As we saw earlier, the progressive camp was made up of both liberal progressives and social reconstructionists. We consider both of these in more detail here.

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of progressivism was its child-centeredness. Despite the efforts of some mid-nineteenth-century reformers, children continued to be treated as miniature adults. Many educators did not heed the recommendation made by the Committee of Fifteen that studies should be correlated with child development. Thus, it was still common to teach in a way that assumed children would learn through simple exposure to subject matter.

Many of the progressives' ideas about education were based on developments in child psychology. Through the work of G. Stanley Hall and Arnold Gesell, educators became sensitized to the interrelations between maturation, readiness, and motivation. The argument was that the learning environment was of primary importance and should be molded to meet the needs of the developing child.

The argument was most clearly put by John Dewey in his volume *Experience and Education* (1938). Children learn, said Dewey, as we all do—through experience. The task of the teacher is to order and organize meaningful classroom experiences that draw from the child's environment and utilize information from the academic disciplines. For example, rather than lecture children about mathematics, teachers could teach the subject matter through a sequence of activities. Cooking, for example, involves not only math but reading (recipes), social studies (where foods come from), and science (the application of heat).

The interrelatedness of the academic disciplines was crucial for the progressives. Harold Rugg argues in *American Life and the School Curriculum* (1936) that the fragmentation of curriculum worked against any ordered understanding of the world. He produced a curriculum that attempted to combine the

disciplines of history, geography, sociology, economics, and political science into a program of studies that would bring students to a greater awareness of events that transformed modern civilization. Rugg and the progressives were of the opinion that the starting point for the curriculum was not the learning of facts in the various subject matters. Rather, students should start with a realistic problem of individual and social life and then grapple directly with the problem using facts as they become relevant.

These methods and curricula were a direct attack on the “traditional” school, which relied on direct instruction and recitation. The progressive argument was that such regimented instruction did not motivate children to learn. To stress goals far in the future, such as one’s lifework or higher education, was too far removed from the child’s experience. Rather, drawing from the child’s own experience, problems could be presented and raised that would require ordered inquiry and the use of facts for their solution.

Perhaps the most telling of the progressive attacks on traditional schooling was the charge that it did not prepare students for active, democratic citizenship. The progressives suggested that schools modeled on the factory (with bureaucratic, top-down forms of management, a tightly controlled curriculum, and widespread testing) yielded passive citizens ill prepared for democratic life. Having spent so much time in an autocratic institution, adults were not ready for self-governance.

True to their belief in learning by and through experience, the progressives tried to organize schools that taught democracy directly. These schools were characterized by experiential learning and interdisciplinary curricula. Students were asked to be active problem solvers, and group work was stressed as a way of teaching cooperation. Classroom rules arose from the whole group as a function of the activity in which students were engaged.

The progressives did not say that children were to proceed with no guidance from adults. The teacher played the part of the senior member of the culture in the classroom. She carefully chose from the variety of student experiences the ones to use in class. She helped guide the decision-making process through unfamiliar waters, and she was an available source of information for students. As students became more adept at problem solving, the teacher could be less obtrusive and become primarily a source of expert opinion and advice. In no case was the student abandoned without the protection of the teacher.

Historians of education have had difficulty in estimating the extent to which public school teachers implemented progressive techniques of instruction in their classrooms. Undoubtedly, implementation varied greatly. Yet even the Denver school system, with superintendent Jesse Newlon committed to progressive ideas, devoted only a small proportion of its teachers and classes to progressive practices.

Where the commitment was strong, teachers practiced an interdisciplinary approach to subject matter. They also planned lessons *with* students and took into account the expressed needs of students. Motivation replaced punitive measures. Overall, however, the sobering fact was that at the secondary level most instruction and classroom activities were initiated by the teacher. Thus,

the traditional teacher-centered classroom remained intact. At the elementary school level, student-centered and teacher-centered instruction were more in balance so that teacher–pupil interaction in the classroom was more of a two-way street.

Even though progressive influence was limited, it is one of the great ironies of educational history that proponents of “basics” or “traditional” education found the progressives to be at the root of all that is wrong with public education. Indeed, perhaps if the progressives had had greater influence, today’s concerns over student motivation and achievement might never have arisen. By the 1950s the progressives had come under attack for a system of schooling they attempted to reform.

In some respects the progressives continued the reforms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, in their embracing of scientific child study, they made every effort to propel the trend forward. Curricular reform itself received added impetus by progressive attempts to create interdisciplinary studies. Yet the progressives were also wary of the excesses of the “cult of efficiency” and worked to avoid the unbridled commitment to social utility as the primary goal of public schooling. They were utilitarian, to be sure, in the sense that they saw the place of vocational studies in the curriculum. Yet they also saw the necessity for restoring cooperative, democratic decision making to school life. They grappled continuously with the problem of restoring a balance between the civic and economic expectations for schooling in America.

In the long run, progressivism failed in American education, not because it lacked conviction or was poorly conceived, but because it failed to heed its own best advice—that decision making, in order to serve democratic purposes, must *be* democratic. Progressivism, like so many reforms, became the prerogative of an elite. Although it successfully challenged traditional methods of instruction and the relevancy of many traditional subjects, progressivism fell victim to a growing bureaucratic structure with which it was not entirely unsympathetic. It failed ultimately to reconcile the demands of efficiency with the demands of democracy. It was torn, as was American society, between the ideal of meeting the legitimate needs of every individual and the goal of securing the national welfare. We struggle with the legacy of progressivism today because the same conflicts have gone unresolved.

“BASICS” AND CONSERVATISM IN THE 1950s

Many of the arguments heard frequently in the reform reports of the late 1970s and 1980s are direct descendants of the educational conservatism of the 1950s. Concerns with quality instruction in the “basics,” the place of the liberal arts in the curriculum, the efficient use and development of human capital, and the issue of excellence versus equality were familiar themes that spanned the fifteen-year period following World War II.

Among the many voices calling for educational reform in the 1950s, the most articulate was Arthur Bestor. Bestor’s *Educational Wastelands* brought

educational conservatism and the liberal arts tradition to the forefront of educational debate. In his attack on anti-intellectualism and "life adjustment" education, Bestor singled out professional educationists as liable for the deterioration of American public schooling. Lack of direction, said Bestor, had produced the "mediocre showing of our public high schools."⁷

Bestor's major contention was that the purpose of schooling is to teach students the "power to think." Intellectual discipline was the foundation for that goal. Educators, argued Bestor, were "professionally obligated to oppose anti-intellectualism, no matter how powerful a majority it may command." In the headlong rush to meet the "needs" of students, he continued, educationists absolved themselves of any responsibility for the intellectual content of schooling.⁸

Educational Wastelands was followed quickly by *The Restoration of Learning*. Here Bestor continued his attack on anti-intellectualism in American education by castigating the "interlocking directorate of professional educationists." They had failed, he said, to provide an intellectually stimulating environment for would-be teachers, and they abused their power to silence their critics.⁹

Bestor's defense of liberal education and intellectual discipline rested squarely on the grounds of social utility. To a lesser extent, the liberal studies could also be defended for their economic utility. The argument for the latter was simply that the basic core of liberal education was the foundation for future professional or occupationally related studies. The argument for the social utility of the "basics" rested on the commitment of the American republic to a highly literate electorate. This commitment had been built on the generic (basic) studies and inspired by a liberal arts curriculum.¹⁰

The place of the "basics" in schooling drew the attention of other outspoken critics during the decade of the 1950s. This concern was often expressed in the context of dissatisfaction with professional educationists and their use of power. For some critics, such as Albert Lynd in his *Quackery in the Public Schools*, the concern took the form of a layman's crusade against incompetent bureaucrats.¹¹

In a far more deliberative and reflective tone, Clifton Fadiman also spoke of the basics in the public school curriculum. Basic education, argued Fadiman, rests on the assumption that there are certain generic subjects that underlie both more complex subject matters and "self-terminating" subjects such as specific manual or vocational skills. Fadiman spoke of the fruits of his own conventional basic education as follows:

[It] taught me how to read, write, speak, calculate, and listen. It taught me the elements of reasoning and it put me on to the necessary business of drawing abstract conclusions from particular instances . . . It provided me with great models by which to judge my own lesser performance. And it gave me the ability to investigate for myself anything that interested me, provided my mind was equal to it.¹²

Cold War politics played an important role in the educational reform reports of the 1950s. The cultivation of the intellectually gifted seemed an urgent matter as the beginnings of the space race took shape. The problem of

technological change and obsolescence made increased investment in human capital imperative if the international competitive edge of the United States was to remain sharp. Among the various critical appraisals of public education was that prepared by Admiral H. G. Rickover in 1959 for the House Committee on Appropriations and published subsequently in 1963 as *American Education—A National Failure*. Public schooling, said Rickover, suffered from “no clear-cut educational philosophy with firm objectives.” The major symptom was low scholastic achievement; the course of action to remedy the situation was “some kind of machinery to set national scholastic standards which may serve local communities as a yardstick.”¹³

Like other conservative critics of the 1950s, Rickover advocated renewed emphasis on the liberal arts. Such studies, he thought, would restore a sense of identity with the country and a desire “to be publicly active” that once characterized preindustrial, rural Americans. Rickover’s romanticizing of the past was linked to a sobering appraisal of current international tensions. Our “contest with the totalitarians,” said Rickover, required us to be informed and free to face our thoughts critically. Public schooling itself, he observed, is “letting us down, at a time when the nation is in great peril.”¹⁴

Amid calls for greater efficiency in the educating of America’s talent, James Conant came to the defense, though not uncritically, of the comprehensive high school. He, too, was concerned with the weaknesses of programs for the academically gifted. His solution, however, lay with the reform of the comprehensive high school.

Conant studied and tabulated inventories for twenty-two schools. Generally what he found were weaknesses in foreign language instruction and special programs for the academically talented. Conant found most high schools successful in promoting a “democratic spirit.” As a preface to his twenty-one recommendations for the improvement of secondary education, Conant observed that as a rule the talented student “is not being sufficiently challenged, does not work hard enough, and his program of academic subjects is not of sufficient range.” It is not possible to review all of Conant’s recommendations here, but the highlights included the elimination of “tracks” (college preparatory, vocational, commercial), the use of ability grouping, a core program of the basic disciplines, greater time spent on English composition, elective programs for the academically talented, required science courses, provision for third- and fourth-year language study, and a course in social studies in the twelfth year. Developmental reading programs and vocational education programs were also recommended.¹⁵

It has been pointed out that the renewed interest in educational reform, including the identification and efficient use of human resources, was, in part, an outgrowth of the intensely competitive international climate of the 1950s. Educationally, economically, and politically the nation was at war with the Soviet Union. There was anxiety over the capability of the nation to respond to technological changes. In the midst of this difficult period came a report of the Special Studies Project, *The Pursuit of Excellence and the Future of America* (1958). The report acknowledged that the Soviet Union was “not the ‘cause’ of the crisis.” “The cause of the crisis,” the report continued, was “our

brehtaking movement into a new technological era." Said the report: "The U.S.S.R. has served as a rude stimulus to awaken us to that reality."¹⁶ The thrust of the report was to alert the lay public and public officials to the "constant pressure of an ever more complex society against the total creative capacity of its people."¹⁷

The search for talent should begin early, said the report. Large-scale testing programs were reviewed approvingly by the Study Project. The Study Project eschewed the use of a single test to assess academic ability but recommended that "the general academic capacity of students should be at least tentatively identified by the eighth grade as the result of repeated testings and classroom performance in the elementary grades." The report went on to recommend a differentiated curriculum for different levels of talent. To ensure that these students—"our most gifted, most talented and most spirited youngsters"—receive the very best, we must acknowledge their gifts and "dedicate ourselves to the cultivation of distinction, and a sense of quality."¹⁸

The resurgence of interest in the liberal arts and the quality of basic skills taught in the public schools in the 1950s paralleled the generally conservative political environment of the period. Critics of education saw the triumph of the educationists as the abandonment of America's intellectual heritage. But they saw, also, the erosion of lay authority in education. In short, they were extremely critical of the growth of bureaucratically controlled decision making. It is worth a reminder that the most vocal critics of educationism were those in positions of leadership in government and universities. Their resentment of the educationists' control of public education was obvious and probably signaled concern with their own loss of input into the process. Overall, then, it is important to understand that critics of progressivism were not necessarily representing the lay public. The educational debates of the 1950s were very much debates between two elites, each competing for the allegiance of the public.

It is obvious that one of the most powerful appeals made by critics of the educationists was to the necessity for identifying talent more efficiently. This need was explained in terms of the Cold War and national security. Overall, the appeal was made in terms of greater social utility and the meritocratic ideal. For the social utilitarian, it will be remembered, meritocracy was simply an efficient way of achieving the best (and most just) distribution of rewards. The reform proposals of the 1950s generally saw the two ideals of meritocracy and social utility as serving the larger national good.

THE CURRENT WAVE OF REFORM

Between the conservative proposals for reform in the 1950s and the 1980s lay the massive social and political reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. Recall from Chapter 1 that these reforms had their source in the ideal of equal opportunity and the right to due process guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. During a twenty-five-year period, these rights were gradually extended to minority groups. Those who championed the idea of

equal opportunity generally accepted intact the concept of meritocracy, even though the concept of equal educational opportunity itself shifted its emphasis from an “input” model to an “output” model that judged equality of opportunity not on the basis of what students were offered—equal facilities, teachers, or curriculum—but on the basis of skills and knowledge acquired by students. By the mid-1970s *equity* had replaced *equality* as the major reform word. This shift was significant because it connoted a movement away from an egalitarian democratic ideal. Issues of equity (such as funding) paralleled closely issues of quality. Thus by the latter 1970s equity and quality were often considered together, particularly in the area of school funding. The question most often asked by courts in this regard was not whether funding was equal but whether it was equitable. Equitable, as it often turned out, was interpreted as what was necessary (minimal) for a quality education. The merging of the equity and quality issues helped to set the stage for the reform proposals of the 1980s.

The opening of the 1980s saw the smoldering fires of educational debate rekindled. Fanning the fire of parental and public discontent were a series of reports spotlighting a continuing decline in student academic performance on a variety of measures and calling for a reaffirmation of basic education. These reports were not uniform in their recommendations, nor were they unanimous in their interpretation of what ails public schooling. A series of competing claims have been made about the present and future role of schools.

The Pressure for Change

Many of the reports on educational failure take the crisis in the economy as their starting point. Just as the launching of Sputnik crystallized educational criticism in the 1950s, the decline of the economy in the 1970s gave impetus to many of the most widely circulated reports of the 1980s. For example, President Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education opened its report with the following statement:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world.¹⁹

Or, as a follow-up report issued by the Educational Commission of the States put it:

Today . . . our faith in change—and our faith in ourselves as the world’s supreme innovators—is being shaken. Japan, West Germany, and other relatively new industrial powers have challenged America’s position on the leading edge of change and technological innovation. The possibility that other nations may outstrip us in inventiveness and productivity is suddenly troubling Americans.²⁰

Much of the criticism of schooling voiced in the 1980s cited the “liberalization” of the curriculum as causing the general decline in school quality. Mortimer Adler saw curricular alternatives or electives as “sidetracks” that would “always lead a certain number of students to voluntarily downgrade their

education."²¹ Both John Goodlad and Ernest Boyer found fault with the idea that schools should be all things to all people.²² The National Commission on Excellence in Education put the problem as follows:

Secondary school curricula have been homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose. In effect, we have a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main course.²³

Public discontent with schooling forces us to ask, What factors of school performance can be associated with this trend in declining public regard for schools? Many agree that it is simplistic to blame schools for all academic failures of children. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence to suggest that students achieve less today academically than they did just over a decade ago. Scores on the Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT), generally believed to be a measure of the overall academic ability of college-bound seniors in the United States, declined from 1967 to 1998. In 1967, average verbal and math scores were 543 and 516, respectively. In 1998, verbal and math scores were 505 and 512, respectively.

Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1982 indicated an across-the-board decrease in mathematical knowledge since 1972 and a decrease in reading skills among older students since 1970. Added to this are claims that about 13 percent of American 17-year-olds are functionally illiterate, that science achievement among high school students has decreased, and that nearly all tests of achievement reveal an academic decline over the past ten years. However, the high school dropout rate in the United States between 1970 and 1997 fell from 4,670,000 to 3,708,000, or 12.2 percent of the total high school enrollment, to 9.1 percent.²⁴

Back to Basics

The first major response to this education crisis was the "back-to-basics" movement. Like Arthur Bestor and the Council for Basic Education in the 1950s, advocates of this position argue that schools are failing because they do not give rigorous instruction in the generic subjects.

The government's recommendations for responding to this "dismal" state of affairs in public education, spelled out in *A Nation at Risk*, are similar to those offered by Fadiman and Rickover in the 1950s: All curricula should include more focus on the educational basics (the basics now include social studies and computer science, however); grading standards, entrance admission scores for colleges and universities, and textbook rigor should all be increased; more time should be spent in school as well as on homework; teaching quality should be increased and payment should be based on a merit scheme; and educational leaders at the local, state, and federal level should become more effective leaders for change and reform. As educational reform moved into the 1990s, four major components of reform came to the forefront: vouchers, charter schools, open enrollment, and home schooling.

As we have observed throughout this book, schooling is usually seen as a means to a larger social end. Recent reports have continued this tradition by viewing schools as both the cause and the cure of economic and international weakness in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, in 1990 the nation's governors and President Bush issued a "summit report" on education that included, among others, the following goals:

- Students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography.
- U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
- Every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The rationale for such goals, clearly stated in the report, was to reclaim the U.S. role as an economic world leader.

In the 1991 Economic Report of the President, the lament is heard again that "primary and secondary education in the country does an inadequate job of producing [skilled] workers."²⁵ However, as David Cohen has argued, perhaps this is much too simple a formula. Referring to what he calls the "Toyota problem," Cohen points out that "since the 1890s we have thought of the schools as a chief means for making America more productive, more efficient, more competitive" (Cohen's article is reprinted in Chapter 12). He continues:

This is an idea that becomes increasingly problematic the deeper one digs into the relationship between education and productivity, yet few seem inclined to question the notion that schools are responsible for the many failures of General Motors, or Ford, or Chrysler. It is odd, since schools were never praised for causing earlier successes in that industry.²⁶

Despite Cohen's reservations, much of the current reform debate focuses on preparing the young for work. The launching of Sputnik caused national concern about the level of scientific knowledge in American society and prompted increased attention to science education. In the 1970s and 1980s the issue was no longer science but technology. As with the concern over science in the 1950s, the expressed concern over technology was not one of public or democratic control of technology. Rather, the issue was seen as the general populace's lack of technological expertise, which, critics said, led to a decline in our national productive capacities. This problem would only be resolved, it was claimed, when job-seekers had the technological skills that would make them suitable for the workplace. The issue, said these critics, was not to control technology but to adapt to it. From the National Science Board, for example, came the following:

Already the quality of our manufactured products, the viability of our trade, our leadership in research and development, and our standards of living are strongly challenged. Our children could be stragglers in a world of technology.

We must not let this happen; America must not become an industrial dinosaur.²⁷

It is valuable to note how similar those claims sound to the near hysteria generated by our Cold War competition with the Soviet Union.

In the 1990s, the administrations of both George H. Bush and William J. Clinton developed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, which was widely supported by Congress. Lamar Alexander, Secretary of Education in the Bush administration, announced the plan in 1991. The influence of Goals 2000 can be seen in the setting of national and state standards on almost every important aspect of public schooling, including course content, standardized exams, and the certification/licensure of teachers.²⁸ The federal government has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to improve public education. Some see a standardization of American public education as a good thing, but Stephen Arons argues that “ordinary persons should . . . act outside of politics as usual, should re-constitute American education by removing the power of government to manipulate the freedom of mind and spirit”—by having communities that respect each other’s differences in choosing which education best suits their needs, not the needs deemed important by the government.²⁹

It is clear that the reforms argued for in the back-to-basics reports are being implemented. Students now spend slightly more hours in high school core courses than they did more than a decade ago. States have set forth more stringent curriculum guidelines; some states, such as Georgia, have gone so far as to mandate the entire K–12 curriculum statewide. Students are taking more tests, and Ohio and some other states require passing test scores before graduation. In fact, increased testing is perhaps the single largest change in American schools. On average, 2.5 standardized tests are administered per student per year!

Whether the reforms suggested will bring about the results desired seems to be a matter of faith. References are made to our historic commitment to education and the “strength” of the American people. The continuing American belief that schooling can resolve any and all social problems, however, seems to be the basis for the reforms offered. The important question not addressed by these reports is whether schools *should* take on the task of improving national productivity. Is this part of the mission of the school? We turn now to a group of reports that have raised this question anew.

The Purpose of the Schools

Mortimer Adler, Ernest Boyer, John Goodlad, William Bennett, and E. D. Hirsch have challenged some of the assumptions commonly made about the purpose of public schooling. Rather than concern themselves with how schools might more adequately meet the demands of a changing workplace or the nation’s military needs, these authors challenge the very notion that schools should prepare students for particular social roles. As Boyer puts it:

Clearly, education and the security of the nation are interlocked. National interests must be served. But where in all this are the students? Where is the recog-

nition that education is to enrich living individuals? Where is the love of learning and where is the commitment to achieve equality and opportunity for all?³⁰

The problem with much recent reform is that it takes for granted the continuation of schooling's current role—the provision of occupational skills. Goodlad points out that reliance on standardized test scores is perhaps “the most serious bar to understanding or improving our schools” because they tell little about the actual condition of schools. But of course the focus on such scores does make sense if they are seen as part of the ticket to the job market that schools must provide.³¹

Adler's, Boyer's, and Goodlad's critique of schooling raises the issue of whether it is possible to have everything for everyone in the schools. It goes beyond this, however. In fact, all three argue that it is not desirable for schools to attempt to do all they have been charged with. The educative function of schools is squeezed out as schools “take over what has traditionally been the responsibility of families, churches, and other institutions charged with the well-being of youth.”³² “Less is more” seems to be the central argument of each of these reports—an impression borne out when we examine their proposals for reform.

Adler, Boyer, and Goodlad all argue for a single, one-track curriculum for schools, though they part company in other respects. Adler's clearly stated goal is equal education for all children, meaning more than the same quantity of schooling. “All children, with no exceptions, are entitled to the same quality of education.” Adler's position is based on a commitment to meeting our common needs of earning a living, being a citizen, and leading a good life, in a common fashion. Thus, basic schooling for all is to be general and liberal, not specialized or vocational.³³

Boyer argues for a similar simplification of the curriculum. In his study of high schools, he has found what he calls an “unwritten, unspoken contract between the teachers and the students: Keep off my back, and I'll keep off yours.” Merely more time in school will not in any way alter this arrangement. Boyer argues instead for more substance in the curriculum, focusing on the seemingly self-evident propositions that “what is taught in school determines what is learned.”³⁴

Boyer proposes, as does Adler, a single program for high school students. The focus of this program is to meet what Boyer believes to be the four essential goals of public schools: (1) developing in students the abilities to think critically and communicate effectively, (2) developing in students an understanding of our shared cultural histories, (3) preparing students for work, and (4) helping students fulfill social and civic obligations through community and social service. Boyer believes these goals can be obtained for all students only when “the current three-track system—academic, vocational and general—[is] abolished.”³⁵

Goodlad goes well beyond the recommendations of both Adler and Boyer by beginning with the premise that support for the autonomy of individual schools should be the focus of school reform. Given clear and articulate goals from the state and assurance by the school district that all children will be dealt

with in an equitable manner, the local school should be left alone to construct the curriculum. This reform effort is to be guided by two general principles:

First, the provision of general, not specialized, education is the role of primary and secondary education. Consequently, the answers to deficiencies must arise out of questions pertaining to what constitutes a general education for all—not college entrance requirements, on one hand, and job entry requirements, on the other. Good general education is the best preparation for both.³⁶

Like Boyer and Adler, Goodlad argues that much of what schools currently do should be relegated back to the community at large. “Education,” Goodlad suggests, “is too important and too all encompassing to be left only to schools.”³⁷ Education, all three argue, should be interwoven into the very fabric of the community—the home, church, civic club, and workplace. In order for schooling to reassume a primarily educative function, the community must be willing to shoulder many of the tasks now carried out by schools. The important place given to the community in these proposals has not made them immune to criticism. Adler’s position has been attacked for its assumption that there exists a high-status knowledge the mere exposure to which can elevate the quality of social life. And although Boyer and Goodlad argue that more of the school’s functions should be taken over by the community, they have been criticized for their seeming reluctance to specify the “what” and “how” of such a proposal.

In the 1990s, essentialist arguments were put forth by William Bennett and E. D. Hirsch. Both advocate a standardized curriculum as well as the teaching of morals and values. William Bennett, Secretary of Education under Ronald Reagan, is today a vocal proponent for parental choice (vouchers and tax credits), accountability, the rigorous study of subject material, and the teaching of values.³⁸ Reflecting on education, he states that “the fundamental problem with American education today is not lack of money; we do not underspend, we underproduce.”³⁹

In *Body Count*, Bennett graphically illustrates the violent state of affairs in the United States. He believes that the United States’ drug and crime problems can be directly related to its “moral poverty.” Bennett defines moral poverty as “the poverty of being without loving, capable, responsible adults [i.e., teachers and parents] who teach the young right from wrong.” Children who lack these adults cannot feel the joy of accomplishment or remorse when they do something wrong.⁴⁰ Bennett advocates the teaching of values in schools to overcome this “moral poverty.” He is the author of several popular books, such as *The Book of Virtues*, *The Children’s Book of Virtues*, and *The Moral Compass*, emphasizing the teaching of values and morals.

Another conservative reformer is E. D. Hirsch, who wrote the best-selling *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (1987), in which he recommends that students be steeped in the classics of the Western tradition. In *The Schools We Need* he states:

Improving the effectiveness and fairness of education through enhancing its content and commonality has more than an educational significance . . . But an

equally important contribution of the truly common school would be the strengthening of universal communication and a sense of community within the public sphere. In the long run, that could be the common school's most important contribution to preserving the fragile fabric of our democracy.⁴¹

Hirsch's and Bennett's conservative approach toward education reflects a reform movement that is attempting to teach the youth of America a common core of knowledge and moral values that everyone will share.

In 2001, Roderick R. Paige became Secretary of Education in the George W. Bush administration. Bush advocated the use of educational vouchers during the presidential election campaign. Dr. Paige in the past had shown little support for the use of vouchers. However, President Bush and Dr. Paige did agree on the use of standardized testing. While Bush was governor of Texas, the state implemented statewide standardized testing, and Roderick Paige, then superintendent of the Houston public schools, enthusiastically supported it. The Bush administration plans to encourage federal legislation would require states to develop annual tests for students.

Texas, New York, Ohio, and many other states have adopted standardized testing, but many oppose its use. Many opponents believe that standardized tests measure only the deviation in socioeconomic status. Alfie Kohn warns: "A rise in scores may be worse than meaningless: it may actually be reason for concern. What matters is how that change was brought about and what had to be sacrificed to make it happen."⁴² If the majority of the time is spent on test preparation, what must be left out of the curriculum? What do students lose as a result?

We must now return to the issue of what schools should do—what their purposes are. If society accepts the idea of equality, should we continue with a multitrack school system? How democratic can a society be that provides unequal education? Where does the allegiance of the school lie: with the individual student, the civic culture, the workplace, the military?

RESTRUCTURING THE SCHOOL

The most recent school reform movement looks seriously at the purpose of schooling. These reformers explicitly reject the factory model of schooling examined in Part Three and the ideological messages discussed in Part Four. Instead of being places just to prepare students for work, they argue, schools should be primarily concerned with preparing young people to be citizens and community members. To do this, these school reformers have proposed "restructuring" the schools.

There is no clear, widely accepted definition of what it means to restructure a school. Yet there is wide agreement about why we should restructure. The first justification for restructuring schools is simply low student achievement. There is no reason to assume that if students are not achieving now, merely doing more of the same (as back-to-basics advocates argue) will change this

pattern. Thus, it is argued that we need to change the very ways we teach if we are going to meet students' needs.

The second justification for restructuring has to do with the "hidden curriculum" of schooling. Organizing schools like factories makes sense only if we believe that the only function of schooling is to sort children for the world of work. If our agenda is to prepare children to become citizens, then we should rethink how we socialize children through the structures of the school.

Finally, school restructuring is also undertaken with an eye toward equity. Perhaps at one time, when schools did not serve all children, our school structures worked. Today, as we try to be more inclusive and to confront the multiple problems of poverty and family disruption that many children face, perhaps we need to find new ways to connect with our students.

Drawing from these and other agendas, advocates of school restructuring attack the three central pillars of the school's organization—time, size, and governance—and the ways in which schools are funded. These efforts, which often operate in tandem, are aimed at rethinking the taken-for-granted assumptions that for years have dictated the ways in which schools are run.

In terms of time, size, and governance perhaps the most adventuresome proposals have come from the Coalition of Essential Schools, directed by Ted Sizer.⁴³ Sizer and his colleagues have built a network of hundreds of schools around the principle that the key task of the school is to help young people use their minds well. To that end, teachers must work with fewer students for longer periods of time. Here the goal is to have teachers and students take on more projects, engage in cooperative learning, and delve deeper into the subject matter. The rationale behind this effort is that doing a few things well is better than covering multiple topics at a shallow level.

To facilitate such personalization of education, Coalition schools have worked on breaking large schools into smaller schools, organizing schools-within-schools, keeping groups of elementary students together with a teacher or a teaching team over a number of years and grades, and using advisory systems with teacher/advisers working with small groups of children for several years. The goal is to move away from the assembly-line treatment of children and provide for more human contact within the school. Of course, in so doing, the governance of the daily life of the classroom, a topic discussed in Part Four, must also be turned over to the individual closest to the learning process, the classroom teacher.

The funding of public education is also undergoing scrutiny. Earlier we discussed voucher plans that are mainly targeted at individual consumers of education. A much larger change in the funding of schools is going on that challenges the very way we pay for public education. Historic reliance on property taxes to pay for schools has led to great disparity in the money spent on children in schools from district to district. In some states students in one district receive over five times the resources of students in a neighboring district. The challenges to such funding patterns have rested on concerns of equity, as discussed earlier. Most of these challenges are going on in the courts and have led to large-scale changes in school funding in states such as Kentucky, Michigan, and West Virginia.

All of these attempts to restructure schools are based on beliefs about what schools should do. We cannot separate our beliefs about the mission of the public school from how students are taught or how schools are funded. What and how we teach, how equitable our funding of schools is, and how young people are treated in school all ultimately reflect what we believe the mission of public education is. Thus, the debate today about the structure of public education is ultimately about the structure of public life. Benjamin Barber in an essay about school reform reminds us of this:

The logic of democracy begins with public education, proceeds to informed citizenship, and comes to fruition in the securing of rights and liberties. We have been nominally democratic for so long that we presume it is our natural condition rather than the product of persistent effort and tenacious responsibility. We have decoupled rights from civic responsibilities and severed citizenship from education on the false assumption that citizens just happen. We have forgotten that the “public” in public schools means not just paid for by the public but procreative of the very idea of a public. Public schools are how a public—a citizenry—is forged and how young, selfish individuals turn into conscientious, community-minded citizens.⁴⁴

Barber’s words take us back to where we started in this examination of the beliefs that drive our system of public education. Although it is too early to tell how the debates over public education will turn out, it is certainly possible to be well aware of the conceptions of justice and the ideological beliefs that drive each position. Perhaps David Tyack and Larry Cuban best synthesize educational reform in America:

Faith in the power of education has had both positive and negative consequences. It has helped to persuade citizens to create the most comprehensive public schooling system in the world. Americans have used discourse about education to articulate and instill a sense of common good. But overpromising has often led to disillusionment and to blaming the schools for not solving problems beyond their reach.⁴⁵

NOTES

¹ National Education Association of the United States, *Report of the Committee of Fifteen on Elementary Education* (New York: American Book, 1895), pp. 40–42.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 50, 51.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴ Theodore R.Sizer, *Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. xi.

⁵ National Education Association, *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies* (New York: American Book, 1894), pp. 43, 47–48.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷ Arthur E. Bestor, *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Schools* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953), pp. 7–8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 43, 46–47.

- ⁹ Arthur E. Bestor, *The Restoration of Learning: A Program for Redeeming the Unfulfilled Promise of American Education* (New York: Knopf, 1956), p. 79.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 29.
- ¹¹ Albert Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950), pp. 14, 19, 57, 281.
- ¹² Clifton Fadiman, "The Case for Basic Education," in James D. Koerner (ed.), *The Case for Basic Education: A Program of Aims for Public Schools* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1959), pp. 6, 10–11.
- ¹³ H. G. Rickover, *American Education—A National Failure: The Problem of Our Schools and What We Can Learn from England* (New York: Dutton, 1963), p. 3.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 26, 32.
- ¹⁵ James B. Conant, *The American High School Today* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 113.
- ¹⁶ *The Pursuit of Excellence and the Future of America*, Panel Report V of the Special Studies Project (New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 28.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 10–13.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31, 33.
- ¹⁹ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 5.
- ²⁰ Education Commission of the States, Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, *Action for Excellence* (Washington, DC: Education Commission of the States, 1983), p. 13.
- ²¹ Mortimer Adler, *The Paideia Proposal* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), p. 21.
- ²² John Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984); Ernest Boyer, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).
- ²³ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, p. 18.
- ²⁴ *Statistical Abstract of the United States: The National Data Book*, 119th ed. (Washington, DC: Department of Commerce, 1999), p. 191.
- ²⁵ George H. Bush, *Economic Report of the President* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), p. 121.
- ²⁶ David K. Cohen, "... the condition of teachers' work ..." *Harvard Educational Review* 54, no. 1 (February 1984): 12.
- ²⁷ National Science Board, *Educating Americans for the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: National Science Foundation, 1983), p. v.
- ²⁸ Stephen Arons, *Short Route to Chaos: Conscience, Community, and the Re-Constitution of American Schooling* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), p. 5.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- ³⁰ Boyer, *High School*, p. 5.
- ³¹ Goodlad, *A Place Called School*.
- ³² Boyer, *High School*, p. 63.
- ³³ Adler, *The Paideia Proposal*, p. 4.
- ³⁴ Boyer, *High School*, p. 84.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282.
- ³⁶ Goodlad, *A Place Called School*, p. 292.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- ³⁸ William J. Bennett, *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children* (New York: Summit Books, 1992), pp. 55–70.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- ⁴⁰ William J. Bennett, John J. Dilulio, Jr., and John P. Walters, *Body Count: Moral Poverty . . . and How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 13–14.

- ⁴¹ E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *The Schools We Need: And Why We Don't Have Them* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p. 238.
- ⁴² Alfie Kohn, "Fighting the Tests: A Practical Guide to Rescuing Our Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (January 2001): 350.
- ⁴³ See Theodore R.Sizer, *Horace's School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992).
- ⁴⁴ Benjamin R. Barber, "America Skips School," *Harper's* (November 1993): 44.
- ⁴⁵ David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 3.

Readings on Educational Reform

We begin our look at educational reform with two pieces critical of the official reform agenda. First is David Cohen's essay on the nature of teachers' work. Cohen suggests that much of the argument over reform is moot. What is more genuinely the problem with society is not schooling, he says, but large-scale economic and political problems. By looking solely at the schools, we do little or nothing to change these problems, and thus genuine reform does not occur. Cohen goes so far as to suggest that what we often see as a school failure—lack of academic challenge, creativity, and individuality—may actually be school success. If reformers are primarily concerned with how schools fit children into society, Cohen suggests, they may have little to worry about: Schools are doing that quite well.

The next selection is by Susan Ohanian, a former elementary school teacher. Her fear is of increased bureaucratization, standardization, and mechanization of teaching and learning. She sees the strength of schooling in the skill and craftsmanship of the teacher and worries that a great deal of that is being lost. Like Dewey and Counts before her, she locates the real hope for educational change with the people who are most concerned with children in schools—teachers themselves.

To move from critique to proposals that offer an alternative to the government's reform agenda, we begin with John Dewey's essay "Democracy and Education." Writing in 1903, Dewey laid out a philosophical foundation for much of the work being undertaken by reformers today. We find that tradition in the next three essays. The first is George Wood's survey of schools that are restructuring the way they educate young people. In "Teaching for Democracy" Wood explores how educators attempt to make schools more like communities, to make schoolwork more purposeful, and to link student work with the world outside the school walls. Dennis Littky, the principal of a school involved with Sizer's Coalition, goes even more in-depth about what it takes to restructure a school. Then, in "Becoming Good American Schools," Jeannie Oakes, Karen Hunter Quartz, Steve Ryan, and Martin Lipton address democ-

racy and the nature of the school environment. They explore the fundamental contradiction between an American culture that advocates democratic ends for its schools but resists the democratic means with which to achieve them.

Educational reform has been the subject of a continuing debate in America since the late nineteenth century, and the landmark study *A Nation at Risk* (1983) ensures that reform of American education will continue to be a major issue well into the twenty-first century. In "What Does It Mean to Say a School Is Doing Well?" Elliot Eisner addresses the rationalization for educational reform movements. He asks what the outcomes of these reform movements have been and what we lose when we implement these reforms.

Some questions about school reform may come to mind as you read these pieces. How do modern calls for reform reflect the efforts of previous generations? What conception of social and individual justice runs through each reform, and how is it reflected in the proposals that are being made? What is the potential of any of these reforms for altering the pattern of schooling in the United States?

DAVID K. COHEN

THE CONDITION OF TEACHERS' WORK

When I was in graduate school I picked up the historical habit. I have never been able to shake it. So, as I read the reports in this latest round of school criticism, I kept asking what was new. I made a list.

As befits an historian, I found little new. One thing that may be new is the acknowledgment, in a few of the reports, that social justice for minorities and the poor is a legitimate concern for schools. This perspective was largely absent from the last great paroxysm of worry over the quality of U.S. high schools, during the fifties. I do not say that the concern is great now, but it is at least part of the debate.

Something else that seems pleasantly new, in some responses to the reports, is the worry that, in prescribing remedies for school problems, the critics may confuse quality with quantity—asking for more courses, longer school days and years, and the like. For most of the twentieth century, American education has been notable for its passionate embrace of the idea that quantity is quality. A little hesitation about this is a novelty, one to be cherished.

My list of what is old is much longer . . . At the end of the sixties, in the middle of the fifties, throughout the forties, during the thirties, and even in the twenties, schools received much free advice. Giving it is a national pastime, and the local tax bill is probably the ticket of admission. Nor is it new that in this latest frenzy about education we try to steer the creature by its tail—by devising

national standards, by prescribing new courses and curricula, by declaiming doom and destruction from Washington. Some of that does work, of course, but it is a little discouraging to see Americans once again acting as though they believe that is the answer.

Something else that is not new is the notion that the schools must—and can—solve the Toyota problem. We have not always had Toyotas, but schools have long had the problem of improving productivity, or efficiency, or both—or at least schools have long thought they had that problem. Since the 1890s we have thought of the schools as a chief means for making America more productive, more efficient, more competitive. This is an idea that becomes increasingly problematic the deeper one digs into the relationship between education and productivity, yet few seem inclined to question the notion that schools are responsible for the many failures of General Motors, or Ford, or Chrysler. It is odd, since schools never were praised for causing earlier successes in that industry.

Nor is it new that education is considered essential—especially by its fiercest critics and detractors. These critics oddly assign schools even greater tasks than the ones they attack schools for not achieving. One wonders if the schools, or the country, have the capacity to make good on the promises. Education is always more essential in our arguments than in our appropriations. One regular result has been that schools pay for earlier promises in recriminations launched by later generations of amnesiac critics.

Another old-but-good element in the debate is the argument about quality and equality. For as long as Americans have been trying to construct a public secondary school system we have chewed on this bone. The terms in which we argue it today are not that different from the terms in which we argued it twenty or sixty years ago, though many minorities have managed to claw their way into the system and the argument, and that is new. But we still see education as the place where America has to make that big trade-off; when we worry about quality we want to trade equality away.

Finally, it is not new that we hear so little from people who work in schools. Where are the teachers' voices?¹ Their absence eases the official debate; it subtracts many complications from the argument; it avoids many difficulties that cannot be solved by a new curriculum requirement, another test, or merit pay. But if this makes life easier on the commissions, it has a dreadful simplifying effect on what Americans learn about schools from these reports.

One feature of life in schools that therefore is generally overlooked is the condition of teachers' work.² The reports acknowledge that something is wrong with instruction, but they focus on fixes: merit increases (for selective inspiration), better pay (to attract better people), and the elimination of methods courses. Some of these ideas are worth action, or serious discussion, but consider the condition of teachers' work in high school. Teachers must face five classes of twenty-five or thirty kids, each day. And they must face many kids who see no point in studying much, or at all. Teachers must deal with 150, or 180, or 200 kids a day, five days a week—many of them kids who do not want much education.

Now teaching is a trade in which one can only succeed if one's students succeed. It is not like baking bread, where part of the satisfaction lies in turning out

a good loaf—even if another part lies in someone else’s use of the bread. If one’s students do not do well, or do not even want to do well, how can a teacher do well? Or gain much satisfaction, or self-respect? High schools are littered with teachers’ answers—their accommodations to these conditions—but we hear little of their dilemmas in the official debate. Teachers’ salaries are a scandal, but instead we hear of merit pay; teachers’ education should be improved, but instead we hear of stiffening graduation requirements for students; teachers’ workloads should be adjusted to include more time for their own learning, preparation, and collaboration, but instead we hear more of adding required courses for students, and thus more courseload for teachers. Stiffer graduation requirements and more courses will multiply teachers’ problems, but they will not add to the teachers’ resources for solving those problems. There are several fundamental problems with the existing conditions of teachers’ work, but most of these reports have neither taught us much about them, nor have they proposed solutions that would help. Indeed, many of the solutions they propose, if implemented, would only further stretch existing resources. In the name of solving problems these proposals would exacerbate them.

Another problem in teachers’ work concerns commitment. Learning in classrooms requires a serious commitment, not only by a teacher but also by a student. Actually, more than the commitment of a single student is wanted, because students learn in classrooms, in large groups. Mutual commitment in class groups is a *sine qua non* of good education. Will is at least as important as wit. Yet one rudimentary fact of life in high schools is the lack of such commitment in many, many classrooms. There one finds flat, arid, wasted hours.³

Why?

One reason is that much school attendance is driven by compulsion. Students attend school because the law tells them to; because school staves off unemployment or the thin work often found in what we term the service sector; because keeping kids in school protects many adult workers in a precarious economy; because parents want the child care, and so on. Many attend because everyone else does, because in the absence of much else for kids to do that is valuable, school is the scene, the place to be, the place to see your friends and find a little action. Legal and economic compulsions, and the social pressures that they have generated have helped to turn high schools into social centers for otherwise unoccupied adolescents. It is a great help to parents, to the police, to many adult workers, and to those who make public policy. Kids like it, too.

There is little encouragement for *education* in all this, however. Such reasons for going to school erode the commitment required for thoughtful work. A few teachers who labor in such circumstances persist and succeed. Most give in. For many teachers it is easy—they were educated in circumstances just like this and know nothing else. For others, the accommodation is painful. But one way or another, most teachers and students accommodate to the realities of life in high schools: they entertain each other; they do busywork; they have modest classes organized around a bits-and-pieces approach to learning—a few facts here, a date there, a list of phrases, a splintered dialogue of partial sentences. Many people enter teaching because they like kids, because they want to be helpful. In the

face of the astonishing workloads and apathetic audiences they still want to be helpful, to like the kids and be liked by them. Indeed, in one sense, they *must* be helpful. Everyone is there, and has to be; there are few alternatives for many kids, and no reasons for them to work hard. What is more, the schools have made great promises: education will make us all productive and enlightened, harmonious and prosperous. To turn kids out of school—to flunk or expel them—because they do not work, to fill the streets with those whose interest in school has little to do with education, would be to withdraw those promises, to admit that schools cannot do all they have agreed to do. It would weaken the schools' claims on our attention, and on the public purse, and it would erode whatever sense of professional potency educators have. So something must be done to keep everyone inside and to keep them reasonably happy. High school teachers and students are quite good at this. They can work it out. They accommodate well to the reality of school, making life together mostly decent and sometimes genuinely compassionate—and generally undemanding.

American high schools are thus caught in a trap partly of their own devising. Nearly everyone eligible by age is present, but many have no good educational reason to be there; no jobs await, or no jobs with serious educational requirements; and many institutions calling themselves colleges and universities lie just beyond, available for the mere price of a high school diploma, whatever one's grades. They are in fact increasingly available, as the number of potential students shrinks. Some of the causes of this trap lie beyond the schools' control, but the schools have embraced every assignment. They have promised a usable education for all, productivity, political awakening, social skills, and solid academic preparation. No tasks have been turned down, no demands rejected. Schoolpeople have struggled to devise a curriculum that would have something for everyone. They have tried to find ways to interest the uninterested and spark the uncommitted.

I do not argue that good education is absent. Work in the honors and advanced placement classes is generally good, almost surely better than it was three or four decades ago. Work in some vocational classes is solid, demanding, and bears on real skills. And some special needs classes have been brought out of the closet and turned into places where teachers care and children learn. In each of these cases, though, there are sources of commitment outside the school, reasons to learn that make sense. What about kids without such reasons? Most schools do not succeed in their efforts to find something for them. Learning is not easy, often it is not fun. The curriculum for kids in the middle—neither specially talented nor specially problematic—is a species of desert; it is decent, often friendly, but mentally parched. So it is too, for many kids at the bottom. But there is really no reason to do it differently, neither a strong demand to take the promise of a good education for all seriously, nor the wherewithal to do it. That would require a labor market that works, a popular respect for learning that has no economic reason, and a higher education system hungrier for serious work than for bodies.

There is little in the reports about such things. The commissions chose instead to consider schools. Schools are easier to reform than the economy, easier

to hold responsible than great corporations, easier to criticize than the colleges and universities that house many of the critics and staff their report-writing. The commissions speak, therefore, of adding requirements to the curriculum, of giving more tests, of lengthening the school day. The schools suffer from a lack of commitment, but they are doctored with the materials of compulsion.

Why then do we say the schools are a failure? Really they are a great success. Indeed, their failure is their success. Many kids for whom there are no jobs are taken care of for a few years. Many kids for whom work holds no challenge and little promise of productivity can put it off for a few years. Many kids who do not know what to do can find a little something. Many adult workers are protected and parents relieved of responsibilities. Many kids who will go on to undemanding institutions of higher education are gently prepared for the life that awaits them. None of these successes requires good education, and several of them are positively hostile to it. They are the successes of a society which does not need secondary education that is both universal and universally sound—or does not think it needs such education. Until the critics see that the failures they decry are really evidence that the schools are succeeding, they have little hope of doing good, and some potential for mischief.

NOTES

¹ I exempt from this comment the academic studies that happened to be published recently, most notably Philip Cusick's *The American High School and the Egalitarian Ideal*; Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's *The Good High School*; and John Goodlad's *A Place Called School*. They are not commission reports, and while they have much to teach us about schools, they are not part of the official argument.

² I draw here on my association with "A Study of High Schools," directed by TheodoreSizer, and on the field research and discussions carried on in that project.

³ On this point, see Cusick's book, cited above, and Sizer's book, *Horace's Compromise*.

SUSAN OHANIAN

HUFFING AND PUFFING AND BLOWING SCHOOLS EXCELLENT

The good gray managers of the U.S., the fellows who gave us Wonder Bread, the Pinto, hormone-laden beef wrapped in Styrofoam, and *People* magazine—not to mention acid rain, the Kansas City Hyatt, \$495 hammers, and political campaigns—are now loudly screaming that we teachers should mend our slothful ways and get back to excellence. I would invite the corporate leaders, the politicians, and the professional consultants to climb down from their insular

From Susan Ohanian, "Huffing and Puffing and Blowing Schools Excellent," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66, no. 5 (January 1988): 316–21. Reprinted with permission.

glass towers before casting any more stones of censure at, or even advice about, my lack of excellence in the classroom. Life in the Eighties is complicated. All of us are, in Thomas Hardy's words, "people distressed by events they did not cause." There is no reason for teachers alone to shoulder the blame.

The various commissions and task forces on educational excellence seem to exemplify one of those laws of human nature; you can tell what a community thinks of you by the committees you aren't asked to join. All of this education commission razzle-dazzle is nothing new; it constitutes just one more in a long, histrionic string of repudiations of teacher savvy and sensitivity. When national leaders decide that it's time to find out what's going on in the schools, they convene a panel of auto dealers and their fellow Rotarians. Individually, these folks are undoubtedly witty, astute, and kind to cats. Collectively, they produce a lot of bluster and blunder; their notions of reform are, at best, spongy. They say, in effect, "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your schoolhouse excellent."

Would that they could. But most schoolhouses are built of brick, and, though the people behind those brick walls may listen to a little corporate whistling in the dark, adding a course in computer literacy here and one in consumer math there, they remain impervious to real change, especially since no real change has been called for. If you want real change, you must talk to teachers, maybe even listen to them. For without teachers, real change will never happen.

I confess to feeling about most committees the way Lord Palmerston felt about delegations: they are "a noun of multitude, signifying many but not much." In line with this description, the multifarious state-of-education groups have employed the popular "ready, fire, aim" approach—relying not on the firsthand observations of teachers and students but on the collated reports of other report writers. I propose a national lottery for education consultants. Instead of listening to pronouncements from every state, county, block party, and gathering of the Moose, why not choose just one? We could then syndicate the banalities of this lone lucky consultant and be done with it.

As things now stand, the U.S. would be better served if these commissions and task forces developed a master plan for getting rid of Astroturf and saving the spotted bat, a species as endangered as the science teacher. The education community is ill-served by their unilateral advice pacts. One can't help but wonder why our corporate brethren don't go off and figure out how to run an airline or a steel mill. Not that we teachers wouldn't welcome them into our classrooms. I'm sure that any teacher in the land would extend an invitation to any member of the many commissions on excellence to come to the classroom and show him or her how to make efficient use of school time on the day before Halloween, during a snowstorm, on the morning after an X-rated movie on cable television, during the first half hour after a child vomits in class, or immediately after the school nurse checks the group for head lice.

I can glean a few crystal moments from my own years in the classroom, but I suspect that the pestiferous pedagognosticians will have a hard time fitting my treasured moments on their graphs of excellence: watching a scruffy, smelly, foul-mouthed 16-year-old emerge from six months of solitary Scrabble-

playing to write a letter to a dictionary publisher; seeing a deaf child understand a knock-knock joke for the first time; sharing gravestone rubbings; judging an ice-cube-melting contest; publishing a 45-page student anthology of cat stories. I can almost claim that I never made a curriculum I didn't like—at some particular time, for some particular child. And that's my problem: all I can offer are particulars. When the one-size-fits-all, spray-and-use planners gather together, I run for cover. Any good teachers will tell you that a curriculum or an instructional approach can't be standardized and remain effective, even within a single classroom. There's always that child who needs something different.

In my first year of teaching, one of my ninth-graders refused to read *Silas Marner*. Wishing I had had the guts to refuse to teach that particular novel, I gave him a different book. I figured I had enough troubles without carrying the added weight of failing someone for saying no. In my more optimistic moments, I even hoped that this particular ninth-grader was exercising literary taste.

As I look back on that incident 18 long years ago, I marvel that I had the good sense to avoid that battle. It is fairly easy to see now that *Silas Marner* was not worth bloodshed or even tears, but I marvel that I sensed it then. The burdens of teaching are heavy; the joys, fleeting. Occasionally, good judgment and even excellence can be recognized in retrospect, but in the classroom you usually just hope that you can get through the day without having to apologize for anything.

We are ill-served by the present hardening of the categories, the separation of academic life into the real subjects and the frills. To hear some people tell it, a herd of basic skills escaped from the schoolhouse a few years back, apparently chased away by frivolous, fuzzy-headed electives. Now, if our economy, national security, and petrochemical lifestyle are to dominate, we need corporate help in corralling the wayward critters once again. Balderdash. All of this basic skills rumble-bumble is a smokescreen; whenever folks bring it up, check to see what they're selling. Mom, apple pie, two cars in every garage, and basic skills. Who could possibly be against such things?

People who talk about basic skills are expressing, of course, not a theory but a mood. Calling for a return to basic skills has the moral imperative of eating turnips; it is akin to the plaintive cry for law and order. Sure, we all want peace and quiet, a chicken in every microwave, and everybody reading at grade level. But these are weasel words, as easy to pin down as a whirling dervish.

Discussing absolute curriculums for high school is about as productive as talking about best diets or sharing theories on how to restrain proliferating zucchini. For all their technological pizzazz, our mandarin advisors don't seem to understand that you simply do not educate children by the same methods employed to build rockets or harvest tomatoes.

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I dropped out of high school English teaching (the first time) after just one year. Outside the school, students were terrorizing subway passengers, buying and selling dope, having babies. Inside, we gave departmental exams on Tennyson. Even when I did manage to figure out ways to supplement the

curriculum, I had to sneak in early so that I could steal ditto paper and other supplies. Not to mention staying up until midnight weeping my way through 150 themes and my survival plans for the next day. In the ensuing two decades things have gotten not better, but steadily worse.

I wonder if concerned commission members and community leaders have any notion of just how debilitating it is for teachers, having figured out what to teach and even how to teach it, to then be forced to beg, borrow, and steal—and mostly do without—basic supplies. I wonder if the report writers have ever been in charge of a classroom for which it takes two weeks to secure enough chairs for the students. And even then the teacher has to fight hard to convince the janitor that leftover eighth-grade chairs simply won't do for fourth-graders. I know a lot of teachers who would cheerfully give up their copies of the reports on excellence for a ream of paper, a handful of #2 pencils, or a box of staples that fit the stapler.

As I look back over nearly two decades of teaching, I am rather amazed that my goal has remained constant since my second day: to help students believe not only that they have the skill to read but that they might actually *want* to read one day. My teaching career began midway through someone else's lesson plan, and I still have nightmares about that first day—that gruesome moment when I told the students to open the text to the next selection, "Hiawatha." I was out on the pavement that same afternoon, scouring bookstores for used paperbacks. I sensed that I had to encourage students to read for their own information and pleasure, and I carefully watched their choices so that I could find out where to go next with them. When I could steal enough ditto paper, I typed up selections from some of my own favorites for us to read together. It may surprise those who are convinced that "excellence" must be imposed from above to know that the students' favorite literature was my laboriously typed excerpt from *The Once and Future King*. Interspersed with this rather eclectic curriculum was "real" school—the stuff of departmental exams and blue-ribbon commission recommendations.

Once, while I presented for my supervisors a required lesson on *Julius Caesar*, a belligerent girl (whose attendance had improved dramatically since the appearance of self-chosen books) steadfastly read her novel. My department chairman leaned over and whispered to her, "Don't you think you should put that book away and pay attention to the teacher?" "Who the hell are you?" demanded the girl. "If she wants me to put it away, let her tell me." She went back to her book, and I continued my performance. Later, it was hard to convince my boss that the girl's devotion to that book was an excellent moment for me, much more valid than my gyrations on *Julius Caesar*. Six weeks previously she had claimed that she "hated reading." Wasn't this progress? Do 100% of the students have to play the game? Her very presence in my class was a victory of sorts, and she was not, after all, painting her nails; she was reading.

Ten years later and hundreds of miles away, the students had changed but the official expectations had not. An investigator from the state education department complained because all my students were reading different books. He dismissed the fact that delinquents, dragged into our alternative

program by truant officers and probation officers, were reading at least half an hour every day, with the query, "What major work do your sophomores read?" He was uncomfortable with and even hostile toward a classroom filled with Dick Francis, S. E. Hinton, Thomas Thompson, John McPhee, Edward Abbey, James Thurber, fix-it books, almanacs, sports and car magazines, and the *Daily News*. He was not placated by the fact that the *New York Times* was also in the room, as were copies of standard classics of literature. He wanted workbooks that focused on skills and 30 copies of *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Our Town*. We could have gotten away with Paul Zindel, if we'd had 30 copies. Experts on how schools should be run make it easier for teachers to pose clever comprehension questions about different drummers than to respect them.

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Stan dropped out of high school the day he turned 16 because he "hated the damn bells, always making you stop what you're doing to go someplace else." Stan found a job as a carpenter's assistant in a Neighborhood Youth Corps program; by all accounts, he was clever, industrious, and dependable. That's what his boss told me, and I certainly found him to be all those things in the GED class the Corps required Stan to attend. He whizzed through all the GED sections except math. Although his common sense made him efficient at estimating, approximating, and making good guesses, Stan refused to learn the finer points of multiplication and long division.

It may be fitting and proper that a student who won't cooperate to the extent of learning long division should be denied any sort of high school seal of approval. But, if that is the way it's going to be, we should stop requiring such bureaucratic seals of approval for carpenters' assistants.

As Stan said when the Corps fired him for refusing to take any more classes in math, "All I ever wanted to do was work." If we are going to require college degrees for jobs that people once handled without an eighth-grade education, let us admit our reason: we are much more concerned with delaying entry into a glutted job market than with striving for excellence in education.

But the writers of reports on school reform don't know about Stan. Theirs is a too-narrow outlook on education—concerned with the dearth of foreign-language proficiency among incoming college freshmen, but not with the increasing numbers of young women who must drop out of school because they are pregnant or with the disaffected youths who neither need nor want a college prep curriculum. I am disappointed that the commissions and task forces did not examine the lives of these students. But then, I'm prejudiced. I think that the needs of children should take precedence over the needs of Harvard and even over the needs of General Motors.

The reports on school reform imply that, if we teachers would just become more efficient and use class time more wisely, our students would score better on standardized tests, measure up to the Japanese in auto production, or whatever. What the writers of these reports fail to acknowledge is that in teaching, as in baseball, all moments are not of equal value. You have to put up with a lot of foul balls in the classroom.

Of *course* we need to evaluate teachers. But the current systems, which approach teacher evaluation with a meat inspector's outlook, are doomed to failure. Evaluating teachers is not like grading eggs or beef. We need to encourage the proliferation of a variety of teaching styles, instead of setting up only two acceptable categories: Grade A and Grade B.

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Maybe it is time for a doctoral student or a governor's aide to examine the fact that teachers, by and large, are decidedly unenthusiastic about the idea of merit pay. We aren't scared off by so-called standards; we are distressed by the fact that teachers are once again being told how to do their job by people who have never done it. Merit pay will reward once again the politician and the showman among us. Expertise is too easy to fake. The Duke of Wellington once remarked that he liked the Order of the Garter because there was "no damned nonsense about merit" connected with it. If the state legislators and other politicians are so interested in rewarding merit, let them go first. If all teachers were paid a decent wage, maybe the notion of merit pay could be buried in the nearest landfill, along with all the other deadly sludge.

No one intimately involved in a classroom can appreciate the subtle interplays, the minute changes that take place among people in that setting—and, when things go very well, between a student and a text or an idea. So, when we are told to get ready for the lessons-by-appointment that are arranged every six months and duly noted in our personnel files, we go for the grand slam. Most of us can do this on schedule (and we have contracts stipulating that no one dare try an unscheduled visit), but lessons-by-appointment don't reveal tidily pom about our real strengths and weaknesses over the 180-day season. It always amazed me that students ham up such lessons as much as their teachers, cooperating in the production of show-and-tell tinsel for the benefit of visiting administrators. For 50 minutes twice a year, we all pretend that school is what everybody outside the classroom claims it should be. No student even asks to go to the bathroom.

After a while I stopped playing this game of gray-flannel excellence. I decided, "They want to evaluate me? Well, let them see me in action"—which is often, to the unknowing eye, very close to inaction.

So my boss—the one who gets to lay down policy, write curriculum guidelines, and consult, no doubt, with important people from education commissions—sat in my classroom while three seventh-graders read joke books to one another, four students read notes I had written to them and wrote replies, two students quizzed each other for a social studies test in some other teacher's class. Charlie (left behind from the previous class) remained asleep, Sharon announced she was in love and got a pass to the library to find some poems honoring the event, Raymond picked up his novel where he had left off the day before, and Jack went through his daily litany about "not doing no friggin' work in this friggin' school." Interestingly, on another occasion, when I did perform a "show" lesson for an administrator, Jack played his role of model student. But since I wasn't faking it this time, neither did he.

A good teacher makes important decisions. Does Charlie need his sleep more than he needs reading? Do certain students need a review of social studies more than they need punctuation? A good teacher savors watching youngsters read joke books, when a few months earlier they refused to believe that books could ever be funny or worth sharing. A good teacher needles the obnoxious to get to work and encourages the light-hearted to view the library as a storehouse of infinite resources.

But after 10 minutes of this, my boss couldn't stand it any longer. She gathered up her agendas and her checklists and announced, "I'll come back when you are teaching." I noted that she'd been sitting across the table from Ron, who had gotten a good start on writing a poem. Three times he had called me over for help. I had nudged him to reexamine the sense of a metaphor, persuaded him to stop going for the easy rhyme, and helped him locate the thesaurus when he decided he needed a big word—one that "nobody else would know." I thought Ron's work nothing short of miraculous, but you won't find any record of these magic moments in my personnel file.

Even for the best of practitioners and observers, the teachable moment is fleeting; if you don't have a good eye, you are likely to miss it. Despite the claims of the mastery-learning crew and others of their ilk, teaching, like truth, is never pure and rarely simple. Too many expert witnesses mistake fluff and flutter for consequence. I figure that the only way to teach is well, and just how you do it is your own damn business. If my style doesn't fit on somebody else's checklist, too bad. We teachers must not be railroaded into pretending that we should be responsible for managing the timing and flow of education as efficiently and regularly as assembly-line workers produce toasters. We don't have to jump every time someone else rings a bell.

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The various commission and task force reports released a flood of public sentiment for improving our schools—and a lot of cynicism in the faculty room. We knew what would happen. The flurry of public interest would soon be displaced by the next day's headline, and we teachers would be left with the nasty residue—the slush and slime of still more negative messages about how we do our jobs. The reports were so neat and precise, so self-confident in their delivery. And now here we sit in what has been portrayed as a very sloppy profession, never sure from one moment to the next that we are doing more good than harm. We are ill-served by cheap shots from the corporate and political remittance men and their consulting mercenaries whose words are akin to a nasty swarm of blood-sucking mosquitoes. Their bites may not kill, but they sure don't help us do our job.

I wish that the members of those commissions and task forces could realize how frustrating it is for us teachers to be pursued like horse thieves. There are so many witnesses for the prosecution on how we measure up in the classroom: the bus driver, the newspaper reporter, the mayor, the colleague across the hall. And now the professors and politicians are at it again. Teachers, it seems, are never acquitted. The best we can hope for is a hung jury.

Part of the problem is that we have no special skills, no secret rites all our own. Just about anybody can teach a lesson or two—perhaps even cope for a

week or a month or a year. A few might even do it well. But the real test is to stick with teaching 10 years or more and *still* do it well, maybe even get better at it. Teaching, done well, can drive you crazy. I have taught for 18 years, 16 in the public schools, and I don't think I had one single comfortable day in the classroom. There is always that tension that you'll miss something important, fail to respond correctly to a student's unspoken need. Thirty years after the fact, my sister is still pained and even intimidated by an English teacher's red-penciled comment on her theme. I worry about how my students will remember me in 30 years. We don't teach a child for just one year; our message lingers for a lifetime. God knows, the temptation is always there to react badly to innumerable provocations: wacky kids, fetid curriculum guides, maggot-brained bureaucrats, sanctimonious reports on excellence.

I like to write about my crystal moments in teaching. The savoring of these times is, I think, what keeps me going. But the call in the current wave of education reports for greater efficiency in the classroom helped me realize that my exuberant vignettes are misleading. Maybe some folks get the impression that I spent 16 years passing efficiently from one crystal moment to another.

Forget efficiency. Not enough attention is paid to the lag time in schools, the interminable length of some of those days. Thomas Boswell writes that a typical baseball game "is primarily dead time begging to be condensed. Any game that has more than a dozen key moments is one whale of a game." He might have been describing teaching—except that we have even more dead time. Any school *year* that has more than a dozen key moments is one whale of a year. Like baseball, teaching needs to develop a system for rewarding what Boswell describes as "a phlegmatic stability—a capacity to endure long aggravation and ignore many losses and embarrassments." Have any of the good consultants come up with a checklist to assess a teacher's response to embarrassment and aggravation?

There is, of course, an important difference between teaching and baseball: we teachers usually don't know when we've scored a run. Often we realize only months or years later that something we did might have been important, might have made a difference. Too often, we never know.

This fact was brought home to me a few years ago, when I was asked to write an article on discipline. I was singularly unenthusiastic. I don't know anything about discipline and don't care anything about discipline, I told myself. Only my disgust with all the wretched writing on the subject—plus my overweening desire to see my name in print—led me to agree to do the article. And then a fantastic thing began to happen: as I read other people's tomes on discipline, as I began to observe my own classroom routines and recall incidents from past years, fairly clear patterns began to emerge. Not only did I find that I have pretty strong convictions about discipline, but I decided that I had reacted rather well to some difficult circumstances in my own classrooms.

Thus my work as a writer helped me discover my craft as a teacher. But most teachers don't have this luxury. Ordinarily, teachers have neither the time nor the inclination to pause and reflect on what they do day after day, year after year. Maybe they're too tired from dodging missiles launched by the outside

hordes. Certainly the system seems to be set up to keep teachers isolated, lonely, and defensive.

My own school district, for example, no longer lets anybody go out of town for professional purposes—not even if they pay their own expenses. No conventions, no seminars, no workshops, no chance to meet other professionals. I can't figure out if the people in charge keep us isolated more because they are scared we will *say* something or scared we will *hear* something. This is not to say that my district is not at the forefront of the excellence movement. Officials bought multiple copies of the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education and offered them free to any teacher who would write a summary for the board of education. The pity is that we would have learned more about excellence had we been allowed to visit our classrooms right in our own buildings. But no one in charge believes that teachers can learn excellence from other teachers, especially not their own colleagues. Excellence is something that travels 'round the country first-class, on a 747. And if you can't afford first-class excellence, it will eventually be packaged and available by mail. But always, always, words about excellence in your classroom come from somewhere else.

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Enough of the phenomenology of excellence. Let's look at specifics. Our august advisors offer us fearful choices: four years of English or ignominy, more science and math or the collapse of the American dream. What the fellows spouting this doom fail to acknowledge is that it matters little if Johnny takes two years of English or six, if his teacher cannot do the job right. If ever an impossible task exists in this land, it is that of the high school English teacher.

To avoid being forced back into a high school English classroom, I fought local administrators, the union, and state certification officials. After 16 years of teaching and 48 graduate credits beyond my M.A. in English, I filled my summer with the dreaded course requirements for primary teachers rather than face "Horace's compromise." It is one thing to dream the impossible dream; it is quite another to be overrun by students and curriculum mandates. Until such time as union leaders or district administrators are willing to recognize and admit that merely mortal English teachers, given responsibility for 100-plus students, can do little more than herd the flock, I will find something else to do.

A lot of pompous words are circulating these days about something called scientific literacy, and something else is snowballing along under the name of computer literacy. Writers of the current wave of reports insist that requiring another year of science, another year of math, and a few months of computers will somehow keep us in the forefront of the technological revolution, ensuring a rising GNP, and so on. But does another year of the same old stuff really make sense? Most often, more of the same merely produces more of the same. The prestigious panels seem intent on fostering endurance, not excellence. They count minutes-on-task but ignore crucial questions of content.

Not to mention connections. If those panel members had bothered to talk to students, they would have uncovered a recurring complaint: nothing makes sense. Students don't see how given courses connect, either to their own lives or to other courses. I'm not talking about "relevance"—about teaching biographies

of rock stars or cash-register math. I'm talking about showing students that learning can enrich their lives.

A rather rigid sequence of courses makes sense for a student who's headed for Harvard. Surely, however, such phenomena as the complex topics researched by winners of the national science competition and swelling enrollments in Advanced Placement classes attest to the availability of traditional academic challenges for those who are ready to accept them.

But what about the others? Do they really need to sit in more math classes, grinding out more solutions to problems on mortgage interest rates for homes they can no longer afford? Does algebra really teach these students to think? Does the inclined plane hold the secrets of the modern industrial state? I suspect that the number of people whose lives might be enriched by knowing about vectors or studying French is extremely small—smaller by far than the number whose lives might be enriched by listening to Vivaldi. Unfortunately, I did not notice any reports extolling the virtues of Vivaldi in our schools. Art, music, and physical education (as contrasted with brute competition) have traditionally been given short shrift by our educational planners. Maybe this is because what students get out of an art class is less readily available to the scorekeepers. It's hard to know at a glance if national art appreciation is up or down by 1.43% in any given year.

I know that science is important. So are music and art and good books and skilled carpentry. Then what is this nonsense about getting rid of high school electives? Since when do U.S. students forfeit individual freedom when they enter the hallowed halls of high school?

I think of my own high school days, when my counselor kept reminding me that home economics was a requirement for graduation and I kept on signing up for music theory—even after they refused to give me any more “credit” for the course. Just before my senior year, my mother begged me to give in. “All they do in home ec is make white sauce,” I complained. She pointed out that I didn't know how to make white sauce, but I took music theory for the fourth time anyway. I was corresponding with professors from across the U.S. on the theoretical necessity for the triple flat, and I could not be bothered with white sauce.

This story has two points. First, despite official requirements, I graduated on schedule. I doubt that most experts on education would have deemed my high school an excellent one, but the people in charge of my school—to their everlasting credit—knew when to look the other way. More important, they allowed me to pursue an interest that had no resale value. Even some of the professors of musicology with whom I was corresponding indicated that they thought it outrageous that a high school curriculum should deal with such esoterica. I didn't bother to explain that my teacher hadn't included triple sharps and triple flats in his lesson plans. In fact, he did not know that they existed. But he introduced me to music theory and honored my desire to travel narrow paths. When he couldn't answer my question about the triple flat, he suggested that I write the letters.

And that is where the important learning took place. I learned that it's okay for a person in charge to admit to not knowing everything; I learned that letters

put the wisdom of the world in your mailbox; I learned that experts sometimes disagree. I also learned that the most satisfying learning comes when you do it simply because you want to. The course content doesn't matter. With teacher savvy, student cooperation, and a little luck, such excellence can occur in history class, in biology, in shop—anywhere.

High school should be a time of exploration, of trying on different hats—not a time of cramming oneself into a corporate mold. If Harvard wants its freshmen to have two or three or six years of a foreign language, that's fine. But it's not enough reason to make everyone else take two or three or six years of a foreign language too. The attitudes that students carry away with their diplomas are much more important than their SAT scores. If students can learn how to learn during their first 12 years of school, then anything is possible for them later on, and we teachers can feel that we have done our job. But if all that we give our students is more of the same—discrete facts disconnected from meaning or purpose—then we are in trouble.

We must be ever wary of wasting some youngster's life just because of a dubious notion that a rigorous, regimented curriculum will help restore to the U.S. a better balance of trade. As Nobel-Prize-winning economist Paul Samuelson once noted, man does not live by the GNP alone. At best, the recommendations of the commissions and task forces on school reform are hallucinatory; at worst, they are soul-destroying. Let us teachers not succumb to the temptation of asking what we can do for General Motors; let us continue to ask only what we can do for the children.

JOHN DEWEY

DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

Modern life means democracy, democracy means freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness—the emancipation of mind as an individual organ to do its own work. We naturally associate democracy, to be sure, with freedom of action, but freedom of action without freed capacity of thought behind it is only chaos. If external authority in action is given up, it must be because internal authority of truth, discovered and known to reason, is substituted.

How does the school stand with reference to this matter? Does the school as an accredited representative exhibit this trait of democracy as a spiritual force? Does it lead and direct the movement? Does it lag behind and work at cross-purpose? I find the fundamental need of the school today dependent upon its limited recognition of the principle of freedom of intelligence. This limitation appears to me to affect both of the elements of school life: teacher and pupil. As to both, the school has lagged behind the general contemporary social movement; and much that is unsatisfactory, much of conflict and of defeat, comes

from the discrepancy between the relatively undemocratic organization of the school, as it affects the mind of both teacher and pupil, and the growth and extension of the democratic principle in life beyond school doors.

The effort of the last two-thirds of a century has been successful in building up the machinery of a democracy of mind. It has provided the ways and means for housing and equipping intelligence. What remains is that the thought-activity of the individual, whether teacher or student, be permitted and encouraged to take working possession of this machinery: to substitute its rightful lordship for an inherited servility. In truth, our public-school system is but two-thirds of a century old. It dates, so far as such matters can be dated at all, from 1837, the year that Horace Mann became secretary of the state board of Massachusetts; and from 1843, when Henry Barnard began a similar work in Connecticut. At this time began that growing and finally successful warfare against all the influences, social and sectarian, which would prevent or mitigate the sway of public influence over private ecclesiastical and class interests. Between 1837 and 1850 grew up all the most characteristic features of the American public-school system; from this time date state normal schools, city training schools, county and state institutes, teachers' associations, teachers' journals, the institution of city superintendencies, supervisory officers, and the development of state universities as the crown of the public-school system of the commonwealth. From this time date the striving for better schoolhouses and grounds, improved text-books, adequate material equipment in maps, globes, scientific apparatus, etc. As an outcome of the forces thus set in motion, democracy has in principle, subject to relative local restrictions, developed an organized machinery of public education. But when we turn to the aim and method which this magnificent institution serves, we find that our democracy is not yet conscious of the ethical principal upon which it rests—the responsibility and freedom of mind in discovery and proof—and consequently we find confusion where there should be order, darkness where there should be light. The teacher has not the power of initiation and constructive endeavor which is necessary to the fulfillment of the function of teaching. The learner finds conditions antagonistic (or at least lacking) to the development of individual mental power and to adequate responsibility for its use.

1. *As to the teacher.*—If there is a single public-school system in the United States where there is official and constitutional provision made for submitting questions of methods of discipline and teaching, and the questions of the curriculum, text-books, etc., to the discussion and decision of those actually engaged in the work of teaching, that fact has escaped my notice. Indeed, the opposite situation is so common that it seems, as a rule, to be absolutely taken for granted as the normal and final condition of affairs. The number of persons to whom any other course has occurred as desirable, or even possible—to say nothing of necessary—is apparently very limited. But until the public-school system is organized in such a way that every teacher has some regular and representative way in which he or she can exercise judgment upon matters of educational importance, with the assurance that this judgment will somehow affect the school system, the assertion that the present system is not, from the internal standpoint, democratic seems to be justified. Either we come here upon some

fixed and inherent limitation of the democratic principle, or else we find in this fact an obvious discrepancy between the conduct of the school and the conduct of social life—a discrepancy so great as to demand immediate and persistent effort at reform.

The more enlightened portions of the public have, indeed, become aware of one aspect of this discrepancy. Many reformers are contending against the conditions which place the direction of school affairs, including the selection of text-books, etc., in the hands of a body of men who are outside the school system itself, who have not necessarily any expert knowledge of education and who are moved by non-educational motives. Unfortunately, those who have noted this undemocratic condition of affairs, and who have striven to change it, have, as a rule, conceived of but one remedy, namely, the transfer of authority to the school superintendent. In their zeal to place the center of gravity inside the school system, in their zeal to decrease the prerogatives of a non-expert school board, and to lessen the opportunities for corruption and private pull which go with that, they have tried to remedy one of the evils of democracy by adopting the principle of autocracy. For no matter how wise, expert, or benevolent the head of the school system, the one-man principle is autocracy.

The logic of the argument goes farther, very much farther, than the reformer of this type sees. The logic which commits him to the idea that the management of the school system must be in the hands of an expert commits him also to the idea that every member of the school system, from the first-grade teacher to the principal of the high school, must have some share in the exercise of educational power. The remedy is not to have one expert dictating educational methods and subject-matter to a body of passive, recipient teachers, but the adoption of intellectual initiative, discussion, and decision throughout the entire school corps. The remedy of the partial evils of democracy, the implication of the school system in municipal politics, is in appeal to a more thoroughgoing democracy.

The dictation, in theory at least, of the subject-matter to be taught, to the teacher who is to engage in the actual work of instruction, and frequently, under the name of close supervision, the attempt to determine the methods which are to be used in teaching, mean nothing more or less than the deliberate restriction of intelligence, the imprisoning of the spirit. Every well graded system of schools in this country rejoices in a course of study. It is no uncommon thing to find methods of teaching such subjects as reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic officially laid down; outline topics in history and geography are provided ready-made for the teacher; gems of literature are fitted to the successive ages of boys and girls. Even the domain of art, songs and methods of singing, subject-matter and technique of drawing and painting, come within the region on which an outside authority lays its sacrilegious hands.

I have stated the theory, which is also true of the practice to a certain extent and in certain places. We may thank our heavens, however, that the practice is rarely as bad as the theory would require. Superintendents and principals often encourage individuality and thoughtfulness in the invention and adoption of methods of teaching; and they wink at departures from the printed manual of study. It remains true, however, that this great advance is personal and informal.

It depends upon the wisdom and tact of the individual supervisory official; he may withdraw his concession at any moment; or it may be ruthlessly thrown aside by his successor who has formed a high ideal of "system."

I know it will be said that this state of things, while an evil, is a necessary one; that without it confusion and chaos would reign; that such regulations are the inevitable accompaniments of any graded system. It is said that the average teacher is incompetent to take any part in laying out the course of study or in initiating methods of instruction or discipline. Is not this type of argument which has been used from time immemorial, and in every department of life, against the advance of democracy? What does democracy mean save that the individual is to have a share in determining the conditions and the aims of his own work; and that, upon the whole, through the free and mutual harmonizing of different individuals, the work of the world is better done than when planned, arranged, and directed by a few, no matter how wise or of how good intent that few? How can we justify our belief in the democratic principle elsewhere, and then go back entirely upon it when we come to education?

Moreover, the argument proves too much. The more it is asserted that the existing corps of teachers is unfit to have voice in the settlement of important educational matters, and their unfitness to exercise intellectual initiative and to assume the responsibility for constructive work is emphasized, the more their unfitness to attempt the much more difficult and delicate task of guiding souls appears. If this body is so unfit, how can it be trusted to carry out the recommendations or the dictations of the wisest body of experts? If teachers are incapable of the intellectual responsibility which goes with the determination of the methods they are to use in teaching, how can they employ methods when dictated by others, in other than a mechanical, capricious, and clumsy manner? The argument, I say, proves too much.

Moreover, if the teaching force is as inept and unintelligent and irresponsible as the argument assumes, surely the primary problem is that of their improvement. Only by sharing in some responsible task does there come a fitness to share in it. The argument that we must wait until men and women are fully ready to assume intellectual and social responsibilities would have defeated every step in the democratic direction that has ever been taken. The prevalence of methods of authority and of external dictation and direction tends automatically to perpetuate the very conditions of inefficiency, lack of interest, inability to assume positions of self-determination, which constitute the reasons that are depended upon to justify the régime of authority.

The system which makes no great demands upon originality, upon invention, upon the continuous expression of individuality, works automatically to put and to keep the more incompetent teachers in the school. It puts them there because, by a natural law of spiritual gravitation, the best minds are drawn to the places where they can work most effectively. The best minds are not especially likely to be drawn where there is danger that they may have to submit to conditions which no self-respecting intelligence likes to put up with; and where their time and energy are likely to be so occupied with details of external conformity that they have no opportunity for free and full play of their own vigor.

I have dwelt at length upon the problem of the recognition of the intellectual and spiritual individuality of the teacher. I have but one excuse. All other reforms are conditioned upon reform in the quality and character of those who engage in the teaching profession. The doctrine of the man behind the gun has become familiar enough, in recent discussion, in every sphere of life. Just because education is the most personal, the most intimate, of all human affairs, there more than anywhere else the sole ultimate reliance and final source of power are in the training, character, and intelligence of the individual. If any scheme could be devised which would draw to the calling of teaching persons of force of character, of sympathy with children, and consequent interest in the problems of teaching and of scholarship, no one need be troubled for a moment about other educational reforms, or the solution of other educational problems. But as long as a school organization which is undemocratic in principle tends to repel from all but the higher portions of the school system those of independent force, of intellectual initiative, and of inventive ability, or tends to hamper them in their work after they find their way into the schoolroom, so long all other reforms are compromised at their source and postponed indefinitely for fruition.

2. *As to the learner.*—The undemocratic suppression of the individuality of the teacher goes naturally with the improper restriction of the intelligence of the mind of the child. The mind, to be sure, is that of a child, and yet, after all, it is mind. To subject mind to an outside and ready-made material is a denial of the ideal of democracy, which roots itself ultimately in the principle of moral, self-directing individuality. Misunderstanding regarding the nature of the freedom that is demanded for the child is so common that it may be necessary to emphasize the fact that it is primarily intellectual freedom, free play of mental attitude, and operation which are sought. If individuality were simply a matter of feelings, impulses, and outward acts independent of intelligence, it would be more than a dubious matter to urge a greater degree of freedom for the child in the school. In that case much, and almost exclusive, force would attach to the objections that the principle of individuality is realized in the more exaggerated parts of Rousseau's doctrines: sentimental idealization of the child's immaturity, irrational denial of superior worth in the knowledge and mature experience of the adult, deliberate denial of the worth of the ends and instruments embodied in social organization. Deification of childish whim, unripened fancy, and arbitrary emotion is certainly a piece of pure romanticism. The would-be reformers who emphasize out of due proportion and perspective these aspects of the principle of individualism betray their own cause. But the heart of the matter lies not there. Reform of education in the direction of greater play for the individuality of the child means the securing of conditions which will give outlet, and hence direction, to a growing intelligence. It is true that this freed power of mind with reference to its own further growth cannot be obtained without a certain leeway, a certain flexibility, in the expression of even immature feelings and fancies. But it is equally true that it is not a riotous loosening of these traits which is needed, but just that kind and degree of freedom from repression which are found to be necessary to secure the full operation of intelligence.

Now, no one need doubt as to what mental activity or the freed expression of intelligence means. No one need doubt as to the conditions which are conducive to it. We do not have to fall back upon what some regard as the uncertain, distracting, and even distressing voice of psychology. Scientific methods, the methods pursued by the scientific inquirer, give us an exact and concrete exhibition of the path which intelligence takes when working most efficiently, under most favorable conditions.

What is primarily required for that direct inquiry which constitutes the essence of science is first-hand experience; an active and vital participation through the medium of all the bodily organs with the means and materials of building up first-hand experience. Contrast this first and most fundamental of all the demands for an effective use of mind with what we find in so many of our elementary and high schools. There first-hand experience is at a discount; in its stead are summaries and formulas of the results of other people. Only very recently has any positive provision been made within the schoolroom for any of the modes of activity and for any of the equipment and arrangement which permit and require the extension of original experiences on the part of the child. The school has literally been dressed out with hand-me-down garments—with intellectual suits which other people have worn.

Secondly, in that freed activity of mind which we term "science" there is always a certain problem which focuses effort, which controls the collecting of facts that bear upon the question, the use of observation to get further data, the employing of memory to supply relevant facts, the calling into play of imagination, to yield fertile suggestion and construct possible solutions of the difficulty.

Turning to the school, we find too largely no counterpart to this mental activity. Just because a second-hand material has been supplied wholesale and retail; but anyway ready-made, the tendency is to reduce the activity of mind to a docile or passive taking in of the material presented—in short, to memorizing, with simply incidental use of judgment and of active research. As is frequently stated, acquiring takes the place of inquiring. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the sort of mind-activity which is encouraged in the school is a survival from the days in which science had not made much headway; when education was mainly concerned with learning, that is to say, the preservation and handing down of the acquisitions of the past. It is true that more and more appeal is made every day in schools to judgment, reasoning, personal efficiency, and the calling up of personal, as distinct from merely book, experiences. But we have not yet got to the point of reversing the total method. The burden and the stress still fall upon learning in the sense of becoming possessed of the second-hand and ready-made material referred to. As Mrs. Young has recently said, the prevailing ideal is a perfect recitation, an exhibition without mistake, of a lesson learned. Until the emphasis changes to the conditions which make it necessary for the child to take an active share in the personal building up of his own problems and to participate in methods of solving them (even at the expense of experimentation and error), mind is not really freed.

In our schools we have freed individuality in many modes of outer expression without freeing intelligence, which is the vital spring and guarantee of all

of these expressions. Consequently we give opportunity to the unconverted to point the finger of scorn, and to clamor for a return to the good old days when the teacher, the representative of social and moral authority, was securely seated in the high places of the school. But the remedy here, as in other phases of our social democracy, is not to turn back, but to go farther—to carry the evolution of the school to a point where it becomes a place for getting and testing experience, as real and adequate to the child upon his existing level as all the resources of laboratory and library afford to the scientific man upon his level. What is needed is not any radical revolution, but rather an organization of agencies already found in the schools. It is hardly too much to say that not a single subject of instrumentality is required which is not already found in many schools of the country. All that is required is to gather these materials and forces together and unify their operation. Too often they are used for a multitude of diverse and often conflicting aims. If a single purpose is provided, that of freeing the processes of mental growth, these agencies will at once fall into their proper classes and reinforce each other.

A catalogue of the agencies already available would include at least all of the following: Taking the child out of doors, widening and organizing his experience with reference to the world in which he lives; nature study when pursued as a vital observation of forces working under their natural conditions, plants and animals growing in their own homes, instead of mere discussion of dead specimens. We have also school gardens, the introduction of elementary agriculture, and more especially of horticulture—a movement that is already making great headway in many of the western states. We have also means for the sake of studying physiographic conditions, such as may be found by rivers, ponds or lakes, beaches, quarries, gulleys, hills, etc.

As similar agencies within the school walls, we find a very great variety of instruments for constructive work, or, as it is frequently, but somewhat unfortunately termed, “manual training.” Under this head come cooking, which can be begun in its simpler form in the kindergarten; sewing, and what is of even greater educational value, weaving, including designing and the construction of simple apparatus for carrying on various processes of spinning, etc. Then there are also the various forms of tool-work directed upon cardboard, wood, and iron; in addition there are clay-modeling and a variety of ways of manipulating plastic material to gain power and larger experience.

Such matters pass readily over into the simpler forms of scientific experimentation. Every schoolroom from the lowest primary grade up should be supplied with gas, water, certain chemical substances and reagents. To experiment in the sense of trying things or to see what will happen is the most natural business of the child; it is, indeed, his chief concern. It is one which the school has largely either ignored or actually suppressed, so that it has been forced to find outlet in mischief or even in actually destructive ways. This tendency could find outlet in the construction of simple apparatus and the making of simple tests, leading constantly into more and more controlled experimentation, with greater insistence upon definiteness of intellectual result and control of logical process.

Add to these typical modes of active experimenting, various forms of art expression, beginning with music, clay-modeling, and story-telling as foundation elements, and passing on to drawing, painting, designing in various mediums, we have a range of forces and materials which connect at every point with the child's natural needs and powers, and which supply the requisites for building up his experience upon all sides. As fast as these various agencies find their way into the schools, the center of gravity shifts, the régime changes from one of subjection of mind to an external and ready-made material, into the activity of mind directed upon the control of the subject-matter and thereby its own upbuilding.

Politically we have found that this country could not endure half free and half slave. We shall find equally great difficulty in encouraging freedom, independence, and initiative in every sphere of social life, while perpetuating in the school dependence upon external authority. The forces of social life are already encroaching upon the school institutions which we have inherited from the past, so that many of its main stays are crumbling. Unless the outcome is to be chaotic, we must take hold of the organic, positive principle involved in democracy, and put that in entire possession of the spirit and work of the school.

GEORGE H. WOOD

TEACHING FOR DEMOCRACY

What does it mean to educate for democracy? What do schools look like when they focus on students as citizens and neighbors rather than as test-takers and employees? To find out, I have spent the past three years in the classrooms of teachers who see their task first and foremost as nurturing the skills, attitudes, and values necessary for democratic life. These visits have taken me to schools in rural Georgia, New Hampshire, and Ohio; to the cities of New York and Milwaukee; and to the suburbs of Chicago. In every case, these schools are guided by a sense of the democratic mission of public education.

This mission manifests itself in a variety of ways. It can be seen in how adults and young people are treated, how the physical environment is utilized, and how instruction is organized, for example. While there are differences among schools, each and every teacher and school exhibited several common characteristics that can guide us as we work to teach for democracy.

SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS AS COMMUNITIES

We take for granted that our schools are communities, when, in fact, they are merely institutions that can become communities only when we work at it. But, with proper attention to all the individuals within the school, we can create an

experience for students that demonstrates what it means to be a compassionate, involved citizen. For it is only within a community, not an institution, that we learn how to hold fast to such principles as working for the common good, empathy, equity, and self-respect.

I investigated techniques of community building in each school I visited. At Harlem's Central Park East Secondary School, every student is attached to an advisor. Fifteen students are assigned to a teacher/advisor for two years. These advisors become the point of contact for students and parents with the school. Each group of students meets in advisory for more than three hours a week to discuss academics and personal problems, plan social gatherings (each advisor takes a yearly trip to a college outside of the city), write in their journals, and sometimes just study. Each advisor looks after his or her students for two years, filling out progress reports, meeting with parents, and just being there when a youngster needs a shoulder to cry on.

Thayer Junior and Senior High School in Winchester, New Hampshire, has a similar advisory system. Each teacher (including the principal) meets with seven to ten students at the start of each school day, just to check in. Then, once a month, individual meetings of an hour or longer are scheduled to discuss school and personal issues. Throughout their Thayer careers, students will have only two advisors in six years—one for the two years of junior high, one for the four years of high school. The purpose of advisory at Thayer is the same as Central Park East's; to connect every young person with the school.

At Chauncey Elementary in Ohio, students develop a sense of community through their Primary Forum. Every Monday morning the 1st and 2nd grade students and teachers gather in the multipurpose room just to celebrate being together. The session begins with a presentation—maybe someone's grandparent has been on a trip, or a visitor has biked around the country, or a student has made a discovery. Teachers take the time to deal with students' concerns and needs: how to solve shoving on the slide, how to get more paper towels for the restroom, or how to find a new best friend for someone whose neighbor moved away. Before they depart, all participants sing a rousing *Happy Birthday* for all who have birthdays that week, and other triumphs are duly noted and cheered. Then out the door go 70 or so smiling children, hand in hand, ready to face the world with their friends.

Children at Chauncey also spend two years with the same teacher, to make sure that every child has the time to connect with the classroom, feel a part of all that goes on, and have the time it takes to succeed in school. Hubbard Woods School in Winnetka, Illinois, uses similar strategies. There, multi-aged classrooms, teachers staying with kids for several years, and the pairing of older children with younger members of the school community for support and guidance—these are the norm, not the exception. Further, at both schools (and at Central Park East and Thayer) there is no ability grouping or tracking. Children learn in mixed, cooperative groups.

In their efforts to create a genuine community, each of these schools makes the time and space for every child to find a meaningful role in the classroom and school. To build community among young people and adults of differing personal histories, these schools discover ways to create a common history for

them in the school—Central Park East’s and Thayer’s advisories, Chauncey’s Primary Forum, and the multi-aged and heterogeneous groups in Hubbard Woods. And, as one student at Central Park East put it, it works: “Our school, we think of it as our community. We know we need to work together. Even if we don’t like one another we get over that because we want to work together.”

PURPOSEFUL SCHOOL WORK

The moment you step into these schools, you know something special is going on. The first clues are visual. It might be that the halls are full of student projects and art work. Or the absence of posted rules carefully spelling out what one can or cannot do. Or brightly painted murals where one would usually see drab, industrial-strength-green cinder block. Then there are the materials—*not* textbooks—that spill out of every corner of the building. Primary classrooms are brimming with children’s books, blocks, string, cardboard scraps, plants, animals, rocks, paints, and assorted theater props. For older children, there is hands-on equipment—tape recorders, cameras, science apparatus, good novels, charts and graphs, and objects of art.

Walk down the hall and notice the physical set-up of these rooms. It’s hard to find one with the desks all lined up in straight rows, presided over by a lectern and a chalkboard full of notes. Instead, desks, or just as likely tables, are arranged in small groups throughout the room. Teachers and students have created work spaces for different tasks: an easy chair or two for reading, a table with materials for writing, a darkroom built in a spare corner, or just plain open space for gathering as a group.

Then notice the kids. Moments after you enter the school, they want you to know this is a special place. One child takes you by the hand to show you her painting on the wall. Another offers to read to you from his journal. A high school boy, decked out in a T-shirt proclaiming his favorite heavy-metal band, shares with you an interview he’s just finished with an 80-year-old bluegrass musician. First graders offer to reach you a book, and they bring their favorite, the one they just wrote and illustrated. A shy 16-year-old explains her science project which involves an inventory of plant and animal species in the forest next to the school. Her not-so-shy friend then proceeds to whisk you out the door so you can see for yourself the rare specimen they found the day before.

Observe the work going on. Seldom is it quiet, and it’s not often teacher-centered either. Children are doing things, not just watching someone else. Learning is not a spectator sport in these schools. You will find class meetings going on, with kids planning the next class project or working out class rules. They are more likely to be working in groups than alone, collaborating to solve a difficult math problem or gathering historical information for a presentation. They are busy writing as they produce their own books, newsletters and newspapers, or videotapes. Or they are very carefully putting the finishing touches on a display of what they have learned about houses, trees, the solar system, Steinbeck, geometric equations, or the Constitution.

The best-known example of this type of work goes on in Eliot Wigginton's high school classroom in Rabun Gap, Georgia. It is here that for nearly 25 years students have turned out the *Foxfire* books and magazines. These books (and now videos, radio programs, and musical recordings) are more than a collection of interviews with Appalachian elders. They are ways of helping students acquire a wide variety of academic skills doing something that really matters—creating a product that will entertain and enlighten thousands of people. “What we do has to be good,” asserts one of Wig’s students, “because people count on us to get it right.”

This ethos of excellence also permeates Bill Elasky's 6th grade classroom in Amesville, Ohio. Three years ago a chemical spill in a local creek launched Bill's kids into becoming experts in water quality testing. Seizing on the moment, Bill and his students met with environmental experts, researched and purchased a chemical testing kit, and sampled all the tributaries to the local watershed. Their classroom became one of the more trusted sources of tests for private wells, and they began producing radio public service announcements on how to maintain safe water supplies. Not to be outdone, students in subsequent years produced a book on the way people use math in their daily lives (complete with interviews, charts, tables, and photographs all done by kids) and built a nature study area for use by all students in the district. These projects cover subject matter in a much more powerful way than any textbook ever has.

Rather than just cover material, these projects help kids see that what they do does matter. For example, the students in Richard Cargill's English class at Willow Brook High School in Villa Park, Illinois, built on the environmental issues raised in his class by convincing local grocery stores to go back to using paper bags rather than the new plastic variety. They also exposed the illegal draining of a nearby wetland and persuaded the school to build a nature area rather than drain land for another athletic field. As Bill Elasky says, “I want kids to see that they can make a difference now, not just in some far off future.” Can there be any doubt that this is where the tools of democratic citizenship are developed?

CONNECTIONS TO THE OUTSIDE

Schools with a civic mission open their doors to the world around them. This is how they keep the school community from closing in on itself and how they show their young people the needs and possibilities that will confront them when they leave school.

At Fratney Elementary in Milwaukee, to organize the curriculum, teachers use schoolwide themes that connect the school to its neighborhood. For example, the school year opened with a study of the school's “Riverwest Neighborhood.” Students conducted scientific studies of the river, studied the arts from various community museums and artisans, interviewed local residents, and read books from the local library about the area. Throughout the year, students' thematic work was based on the experiences of the residents of this integrated neighborhood of African-, Hispanic-, and Oriental-Americans.

Marcia Burchby, who teaches with Bill Elasky in rural Amesville, Ohio, finds the source of much of her 1st grade curriculum in the world around her school. Stop by the school any Thursday and her room will be empty. You'll find Marcia and her 6-year-olds wandering through town surveying housing types, hunting dinosaur bones, or following a creek to its origin while making an inventory of local wildflowers. Starting from these local origins the curriculum reaches out to the world beyond Amesville, but it is always grounded in the daily experience of the students.

Beyond using the world outside the school as a curricular resource, students at Central Park East provide services to that world: every student spends one morning a week in a community service project. You'll find these young people writing for community newspapers, conducting tours of local museums, assisting in daycare centers, and attending to patients in hospitals or residents of nursing homes. The point of these experiences is not to provide job skills but, as one of the community service coordinators puts it, to "show our kids that they can contribute now. And they are all capable of understanding the difference they can make."

In both learning from and working in their own communities, young people take the first step toward productive, engaged democratic citizenship. When their work begins in a genuine and secure community, when the skills they gain empower them to make a difference, the final and logical step is to make sure the walls of the school are porous enough to allow for a genuine engagement with the world in which our children live. To be a site of democratic education is to be a school where the community genuinely is the classroom.

RECLAIMING THE DEMOCRATIC VISION

These are just a few examples of what the best of our schools are doing to nurture and develop the attributes of democratic citizenship in our future neighbors. These schools are laboratories where democracy is experienced, not museums where it is just observed. I am happy to report that these kids do just fine on standardized tests of achievement. But more important, the young people in these schools will leave knowing what it takes to be an engaged, democratic citizen. They will have the ability to use academic skills to make a difference in the world; a sense of the importance and value of their contribution to their community; a commitment to fundamental democratic values such as equity, justice, and cooperation; and the self-confidence tempered with empathy that it takes to act on behalf of the common good.

The schools I have described are public schools in ordinary circumstances. They suffer from the same funding and political problems every American school has. However, what they do have that makes them extraordinary is a vision—a vision that is clear in everyone's mind and that guides virtually everything that goes on in the school, a vision of students as citizens. It is a vision we need to reclaim and proclaim if we are ever to teach for and reach democracy.

DENNIS LITTKY

CARING AND RESPECT: KEY FACTORS IN RESTRUCTURING A SCHOOL

Here's the situation: I'd just been named principal of a 300-student, rural junior-senior high school and was taking a tour of the building. The school was old and run down and in appalling physical condition. My first impression as I walked along the drab, institutional corridors was that if I were a student I wouldn't be there unless I had to be—unless the law required it.

Everywhere paint was peeling; the windows were cracked and broken. Every surface was dirty and broken: the floor, the walls, the ceilings. The cafeteria was in the worst condition: gaping holes in the tabletops, some of them measuring 2 feet in diameter; broken chairs; stained or missing ceiling tiles; graffiti on the walls and scratched into the tabletops by bored hands; layers of floor wax over years of accumulated dirt. Even the main office and the principal's office were no exceptions with their torn carpeting, peeling paint, and cracked windows. The impression was the same: drab and uninviting.

I sat down at my desk and was contemplating how to tackle this problem when a 17-year-old boy walked in and said he wanted to talk to me. He told me he was there only because his mother had made him come. He had dropped out of school that year and was drinking. He was down on everything, particularly school and himself. We talked for a while, and I learned he was a self-taught artist. So I asked, "If I could get you a job painting a mural in the school, would you take it?" He said yes.

I called the regional vocational rehabilitation coordinator and asked her if there was any money available to pay this boy to paint the school. She said there was. The next day the boy was back at school surveying the cafeteria wall he had been given to paint, choosing the colors, planning out the design. The subject he settled on was a huge white Pegasus, with flowing mane, ready to take flight. He showed me the design, and I told him I thought it was great. The work began. Every day that summer he painted. When the Pegasus was done, and it was magnificent, he started on the rest of the cafeteria walls, cleaning, repainting, then finishing them with bright geometric graphics. Meanwhile, a crew of students and the new custodian were replacing all the ceiling tiles, making new plywood tabletops, painting the lockers, repairing the windows and, in general, scrubbing and polishing the place.

Throughout the summer people gathered at the cafeteria windows to watch progress on the mural. Bets were made, even among school board members, that the painting wouldn't survive the first day of school. Not only did it survive that first day, but it's still there today, unblemished, nine years later.

The boy returned to school that fall buoyed by daily accolades from his classmates and teachers. As part of his coursework, he painted two more murals—one at the entrance and another in the gymnasium. The following

year, he attended Greenfield Community College, majoring in art. His work has served as a model for other students and every year since, at least one mural has been designed and painted by a student.

This example illustrates what I believe is one of the most important elements of an effective school: a solid structure aimed at caring and respect. Such a combination, however, might suggest an anomaly under the conventional definitions of the words “structure” and “caring.” There is a tension between them. Structure conjures up images of institutions: solidity, uniformity, discipline, the rigorous application of procedures, rules, standards. Caring suggests sympathetic attention to the individual: subjectivity, malleability, warmth.

A STRUCTURE WHICH INSTITUTIONALIZES CARING

At first blush, the notions of caring and structure may seem at odds with each other. In many respects, I suppose it's fair to say they are, which may underline the complexity (though not the impossibility) of restructuring a school into a caring, responsive, alive place. Often when we consider how best to structure secondary schools, we crave large-scale solutions: a re-vamped curriculum, a re-designed school day, re-defined roles for faculty and so forth. The notion of caring is taken for granted: of course good teachers care about their students; good students care about getting an education; a good principal cares about the well-being of the school community. Why do we need to structure or institutionalize caring?

Making caring an active, on-going and consistent part of any school requires work and diligence. To be effective, such a process must penetrate all levels—administration, school board, teachers, students and community. Everyone must participate. Often that means restructuring attitudes. For example, how do you deal with a superintendent who swears up and down that he respects teachers, but who consistently fails to ask them for their input on matters that directly affect them? How do you deal with a teacher who complains about how unresponsive his students are and takes it out on them by issuing punishments, like doubling their homework load, popping surprise tests, or holding them for detention? Both cases are ironic. The superintendent probably genuinely believes he respects his teachers, but his behavior says he doesn't. The teacher probably genuinely cares about his students and wants them to be responsive, but his behavior says he doesn't.

In both cases, it seems easy enough just to say, “Hey, if you want to show your teachers that you respect them, give them some control,” or, “If your students are unresponsive in your classroom, maybe it's the way you're teaching. Maybe you're not doing enough to engage them in the learning process; maybe you're spending too much time lecturing and not enough time coaching.” On paper, the remedy is simple—in reality, it is very difficult. To change the structure, all (or most) of the players in the structure have to be able and willing to change themselves; to change attitudes, a solid new structure must be in place. It's the old chicken and egg conundrum. So, what's the secret? What's the key

to implementing change effectively? For the remainder of this paper, I will draw upon my personal experiences at Thayer Junior and Senior High School to demonstrate some of the steps we have taken to restructure the school, always with the goal of heightening the level of caring and respect exercised at all levels.

That brings me back to the anecdote at the beginning of the paper and how that ties in with efforts to structure caring and respect. Here's a boy who was down on himself, down on life and all of a sudden somebody in a position of authority told him the school needed him and gave him a wall, a 7-by-30-foot school wall, to do with as he wanted. It was his responsibility; he knew that whatever he painted would be on display for everyone—his family, his classmates, his teachers—to see. He knew that if he succeeded, he would do it himself. He would have ownership in the school and pride. Indeed, through the efforts of one boy, the school was a cleaner, brighter, more inviting place to be. The endeavor went a long way toward helping build that young man's self-esteem and also made a very important statement to anyone passing through the halls. When school reopened in September, students and teachers entered a different building and a different school. The physical changes plainly showed that somebody cared enough about the school to clean it up. That physical evidence helped clear a path for the more important message: that the school system cared about its people.

The physical condition of the building, however, was not the most significant problem facing Thayer High School in 1981; it was just one of the most visible. The dismal school building was symptomatic of deeper, more serious problems lurking in the school. The most important task was to pinpoint the source of those problems and to work to remedy them quickly. The changes had to be in place for the start of school; they had to be dramatic and very visible. Students had to know unequivocally that things were different, that school was not a place to avoid or a system to beat, but a place that played a crucial role in their future.

I met with anyone associated with the school—parents, students, administrators and teachers. I did a lot of talking and a lot of listening. The image of the school was deplorable. It was a common joke around the region that if you couldn't spell you must have attended Thayer. Tension was everywhere: between students and teachers, parents and school, administration and teachers, and on and on. It wasn't as if the teachers had not been working hard the year before; they had been. The problem was with the big structures, the hapless leadership, and the lack of a unified aim or plan. Though many staff members toiled diligently and had good ideas, their energy was scattered as it didn't fit into any kind of masterplan. The teachers had the energy and the desire, but without an organization to support and use that energy, the school foundered.

The condition of the school, its reputation and the tension all had to be remedied within the constraints that came with being a poor, rural school. Winchester's welfare rate was the highest in the county, and the unemployment rate double that of the state as a whole. Because there were few industries in the community and because state aid to education in New Hampshire was the

lowest in the country, the local taxes needed to support the schools were disproportionately higher for Winchester's residential property owners. Ironically, a community that was the least able to afford it had some of the highest taxes in the state. Whatever programs or resources were sought had to be culled from somewhere other than the local taxpayers' pocketbooks. The task was to learn how best to use ourselves, the community and others—how to beg, borrow and inspire help and enthusiasm for the school.

I made a public statement to the community that Thayer would be the best junior-senior high school in New Hampshire. It would never have the most kids going to college or the highest SATs, but it would be the most appropriate school around. Appropriate meant that we would provide an education meeting the needs of the rural Winchester students and get the school and the students out of the trap of "just getting by." At that point, most of the students and staff had settled into a pattern of just muddling through. Individual attention to students' needs, abilities, desires, and goals was practically non-existent. There was no concerted effort to try to help students know their own strengths or an effort to build on them. Exceptions to this rule were rare and couldn't be handled well in the *laissez faire* system that existed . . .

TRACKING DOWN THE PROBLEMS

Throughout that first summer, I . . . met individually with all the teachers. I asked all of them what worked and what didn't work, and what were their personal strengths and weaknesses, their goals, ambitions, and dreams. I asked everyone what they would change in the school.

Ideally, it would have been best to meet as a group with the teachers to work out the changes together, but unfortunately, the short time between my hiring and the start of school made that difficult. So I put together a laundry list of problems that needed tackling, based on all those interviews and meetings, and then built a schedule. This was the list of problems:

- Students' disrespect for teachers and each other.
- Students only taking the minimum number of courses required by the state.
- Conflicts caused from 12-year-olds mingling with 18-year-olds, and by high school teachers being required to teach at the junior high level.
- Poor condition of the building.
- High rate of absenteeism.
- Large numbers of dropouts.
- Students hanging out on Main Street during school hours.
- Students lacking future plans.
- Not enough college-bound graduates.
- Students and teachers fearing for their safety at school.
- Poor image in the community.

These problems could be traced to two fundamental issues: a poorly structured school day and a lack of respect. Changing the schedule, by far the easier

of the two tasks to accomplish, had far-reaching implications that helped lay the groundwork to build respect. Under the old structure, students had unruly, aimless schedules that often left them with too much time on their hands. That contributed to the overall apathy which took the form of absenteeism, dropouts, discipline problems and vandalism. While it might be relatively easy to change the schedule and get students on a purposive educational track, apathy would continue to flourish if something weren't done to heighten respect. That required changing something much more elusive: people's attitudes.

All fingers couldn't be pointed at the students either. If students believed the administration and teachers don't value them as individuals and don't treat them with respect, how can the administration and staff expect respect from the students? If the community has little regard for the school, how can the students be expected to respect it? Students need to know it's their school, too, that they have ownership in it, that they can make a difference. The murals by the 17-year-old were a demonstration of that attitude of mutual respect. The school respected the youth enough to call upon him to undertake an important project and the youth took the project seriously enough to do a good job. That, in turn, improved the appearance of the building as well as the attitudes of those who spent time in it. It also helped set the tone for the changes in how classes were chosen, scheduled and taught. Without that structuring, the problems might have been eased, but they could never have been eliminated. A poorly structured school day guaranteed certain problems would continue.

The schedule is one of the most important structures in the school. It determines when a student goes to class, what classes are available, the possibility of setting up alternative programs, combined classes, and scheduling student conferences and staff meetings. If the schedule supports and facilitates the school's goals, the task of teaching relevant, engaging and meaningful courses is greatly eased. Scheduling and class content should be a main focus of discussion for everybody. It is the basis for everything that is going on in the school. Often, though, the schedule is something that many principals take for granted, and toss out to a guidance counselor to draw up.

The problem at Thayer was very simply that the majority of students had too much time on their hands. Students had little incentive to load up their days with classes if they could get by with only taking two or three and fill the rest of the day with study halls. Study halls provided students excuses not to do anything academically and all the freedom they wanted to act up. If a student dropped a class, there was always a study hall to take its place. Teachers dreaded supervising study halls, and those students who wanted to use the time productively had to do it in the midst of mayhem.

So, study halls were eliminated. I called the New Hampshire Department of Education to find out the minimum number of hours a school had to be in session daily, and was told 5 1/2. I shortened the day to that exact time, my theory being that at present we weren't doing school very well for 6 1/2 hours, so we'd be better off spending less time, but doing it well. Individual class time was extended from 45 minutes to an hour, and the number of periods were cut from 8 to 5. Because of the fewer class periods, all teachers agreed to teach all five periods. The school day lasted from 8:50 A.M. until 2:40 P.M., freeing up

enough time before and after school to hold teachers' meetings and student conferences. Teachers were able to spend more time concentrating on improving class content and helping individual students and less time playing the role of custodian or policeman.

The minimum state graduation requirement was 16 credits: four in English, two in social studies, one in math, one in science, one in gym and the remainder in electives. I increased the graduation requirement at Thayer to include additional math and science credits. Although I don't think that just adding courses guarantees anything, in this case it was the simplest way to get students involved in the curriculum.

The bell system was also eliminated, except to signal the start and end of the school day. This had many positive effects, such as eliminating the chance of a bell rudely interrupting a good classroom discussion at precisely the wrong moment. It also eased the crunch of students and chaos at class change, because all 300 students did not flood the hallways at exactly the same moment. The junior high classes (which are housed in the same building as the high school) were organized on a different time schedule from the high school, thus easing traffic flow. Teachers were also able to dismiss students when they were finished with their business (within a 5-minute period), rather than be abruptly interrupted at an inopportune moment. The absence of bells also acknowledged that people knew how to tell time and didn't need to be reminded every hour.

NEW STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS

That first summer, I also met with all the high school students for at least 30 minutes each. The overt reason for the conferences was to become acquainted with the students and to set up their schedules. The less obvious reason was to learn from them what their needs were. As administrators, we can sit around and think about what children need to know to equip themselves for life after graduation. Sometimes we might hit it right; at other times, though, we might completely overlook something very important.

One thing that became clear to me is that high school is especially important for non-college bound students because it is their last connection with formal education; it is our last chance to help a student be a self-learner for life. If a student is not going to college, then we must look at the high school curriculum in a different manner. The curriculum must prove itself useful for life, not for what we think colleges want. We want to prepare students to achieve, to produce, to reason, to be happy, to be responsible, to communicate. We want to develop the desire for continuous learning in all of our students. We want all of our students to choose a place in life, not be forced into one because they lack the skills or energy.

Schools must be sensitive to the tremendous physical, emotional, and intellectual upheaval adolescents face; a school's structural composition must reflect that sensitivity and be responsive to those needs. Again, we're talking

about the structure of respect and the structure of caring interaction. Students need to feel that school is a safe place, a place where they won't be punished indiscriminately, where the rules are clearly stated, as are the consequences of violating them. Rules of discipline at Thayer were few: No smoking, drinking, drugs, or physical violence. If there was a violation, parents were notified, and the students might be suspended from school for a period of time. Often, parents and child were asked to come to school for a conference to discuss the behavior problem and to work together to solve it. That solution might be in the form of a contract with the parents, the student and the school: "I agree to control my temper and not lash out at others. If I violate this, I will be suspended for five days." The effort was always to make it clear to the student that what he or she did was wrong, not that he or she as a person was wrong. Again, the intent is to say to the student, "I respect you as person, but I won't tolerate this misbehavior."

Students need to feel that school is a place where their strengths and energies are nurtured and applauded, where they matter as human beings, where they have control of themselves and their successes. Beyond the traditional academic curriculum, several structures were put into place to try to meet the wide variety of needs the students had. Here's a sample of some of the major programmatic and structural additions.

Advisory System

Terri, a Thayer High junior, entered my office at 7:20 one morning. "Doc," she said quietly, "I have to tell you something." I knew by the tone of her voice it was something very serious. "I'm pregnant," she said. I gripped the edge of my chair. Terri was one of my advisees. We had been working together and talking since she was a freshman and had developed a mutual respect and friendship for each other.

I didn't express my approval or disapproval. My job was to support Terri in any way I could and help her to continue to get an education. We talked and talked and talked and eventually worked out a plan that would make that possible. "I don't think I would have stayed in school if it wasn't for him," Terri says now, "cause I just felt like everyone was going to alienate me and make it weird, and he told me they would look at me as a person. He just stood behind me and pushed me." When her daughter, Elizabeth, was born, Terri was the president of the junior class and an honor roll student for the first time. As a senior, she was again class president, was accepted at a paralegal school, and plans to become a lawyer.

Adolescents need consistency and stability in their communications with adults. Often, schools whisk students through the day in a series of 45-minute periods, rarely allowing students and staff much of a chance to get to know one another. Rarely is there anything built into the program to allow children to look at the total picture of what is happening to them and to have guidance and support in the process. The advisory system provides such a touchstone. Every teacher is designated as an academic advisor to a small group of students, a

person who will help those students develop a planned program of study over the years, a person who provides consistency, support, and advocacy for the child.

Each morning, advisors meet with their groups for about 10 minutes, much like a homeroom system. The time is used to make announcements, discuss school issues, share things that have been happening to members of the group, plan group functions, take attendance, discuss current events, and, in general, provide a pleasant, calm beginning to the day.

The half hour before school starts in the morning is often used for individual meetings between advisor and advisee. The private meetings, about 10 for each student a year, are used to help plan the students' schedule, to talk about classroom progress, personal problems, or whatever else might come up. Advisors are friends, counselors, and advocates for students in all school situations. They provide the main link between parents and the school; they act as sounding boards for the students' ideas or as ombudsmen in helping the child work out a problem with a teacher, parent, or peer. As one student put it, "My advisor is not just my advisor; he's my friend." The advisor is responsible for knowing enough about his or her advisees to make proper recommendations to parents and teachers about the child. If a crisis emerges, the advisor is there to speak out on the student's behalf and to try to provide a more complete perspective of the child.

The structure is also there so the student can talk seriously and openly to an adult. The structure doesn't make any demands on the student to develop a deep interpersonal relationship with an advisor; it simply gives the student assurance that there is an adult who will listen. The point is that without this structure, communication is limited and so, therefore, are understanding and trust. In a crisis, two people cannot suddenly develop trust. It must be built beforehand. The advisory system helps make that possible.

The advisor also serves as a friend and link to parents. The advisor is the one who reviews the quarterly progress reports that are sent home. Teachers send all grades and comments about a student to that child's advisor and also meet frequently with advisors to talk about an individual student's progress. The advisor then collates and reviews the information, and passes it along to the parents. The bi-annual parent conferences also give parents, advisors and students an opportunity to develop the best educational experience possible for the child. The fact that each advisor is there to help his advisees succeed in school leads to real individualized instruction. Consider a situation in which a classroom teacher was working successfully with a majority of his class. In most cases, one would say he was a successful teacher. However, what about the minority of students who aren't involved? Those students can take their frustrations to their advisor and, together they can work out a solution to the problem. The advisor, in turn, makes the teacher aware of that student, focusing the teacher to constantly work to make the class appropriate for all students. Whether the solution to the problem is a tutor, an alternative program, or just a modification of the existing structure, the advisor, teacher and student work together toward a solution.

Some advisors plan activities outside of school. One advisor, for example, has taken his group skiing, out to eat at a fancy restaurant, and to a symphony. Having the advisory system as a part of the school structure helps students understand that there is a system available for them to work out problems, to plan, and to be understood. This, in itself, is a good exercise in developing problem solving skills.

For example, during an incident involving the theft of some granola bars from the school, three students were sent to my office as suspects. I knew there were more than three students involved, but I didn't know who. The three in my office refused to tell. I asked again, and one student said, "I want to see my advisor," sounding much like an arrested man demanding to see his lawyer. The advisor was notified and he and the student talked together in another room. When the two returned, the advisor told me the names of the others involved in the theft. The student felt comfortable telling his advisor and the advisor served as an advocate for the student.

Getting the teachers to accept the added responsibility of an advisory system might seem problematical at first. But if teachers truly care about students and understand the merits of the system, they will quickly find that their time with students is made more meaningful and productive as a result of the system. From the beginning, I involved teachers in working out the specifics of the advisor program. That gave them ownership in the process and a solid share in its success. Of course there will always be teachers who buck the idea and resist participation. Those teachers are tactfully told that they must fulfill the minimum requirements of the program, or they won't be teaching at Thayer.

Life After Thayer

One of the most important things I learned from those first meetings with students was that very few Thayer students knew what they were going to do upon graduation and many hadn't even thought about it. Enter a new course: Life After Thayer.

The once-a-week class, taught by several teachers, was mandatory for seniors and was graded on a pass or fail basis. Its basic function was to expose seniors to careers in and out of town, to study relevant social issues they might encounter as adults, and to teach them practical life skills, such as apartment hunting, handling budgets, bank accounts and interviews. But beyond that, and in some ways more importantly, it created a safe environment for students to talk about serious, pressing or personal concerns. The classes were small, about 8 to 10 students each, and were organized by gender. Over the years, students have come to expect that LAT is a class in which they can talk about nearly anything they want and not feel threatened that the information will leave the room or that they'll be graded on it. If students attend class, they receive passing grades.

The LAT class I teach has less instruction from me than from the students. I try to sit back and let the students decide what the topic will be that day and then let them go with it. If they want to know something practical, I can help

them. If they want to talk about careers, sex, or relationships, they can. Each week we have topics we want to discuss that help students think about their lives now and after Thayer. Here are some of the questions students have asked that served as the basis for classroom discussions:

"If we can dream it, why can't it happen in real life?" "I need to talk about the Marines. Should I go or not? I'm confused." "Can we talk about Bobby? You know he won't be graduating with us now that he put himself in a drug and alcohol rehab center."

Last year, James, one of the boys in my LAT class, came in exasperated by a junior high school boy he was tutoring. "I can't believe how hard it is to teach. I hope I wasn't as bad as that when I was Richard's age. Was I?" He was. Like Richard, when James was in 8th grade he had drinking and behavioral problems and wasn't doing well in school. We talked about those old times and how far he had come. "What happens over the years?" James asked. "Why couldn't I know then what I know now? How come it took me so long?"

I responded, "You should be thankful you are beginning to understand yourself now and be happy it's happening when you are 18, not when you're 28 or 38."

Apprenticeship Program

The more I talked to students, the clearer it became that all the students' needs could not be met within the existing school. Thayer lacked the staff, the materials, and the money to provide the broad range of courses and experiences the students needed. The traditional curriculum just didn't inspire every student to get excited about school, nor did it meet the expectations of some of the highly motivated to gifted students. So the teachers and I began looking outside the school and into the community for help. That triggered the apprenticeship program.

The nursery school in town was called: "How many students can you take?" The elementary school and the retirement center were contacted, and a junior high tutorial program was set up. More and more students signed up and before long we had 65 high school students out of 225 working at apprentice sites. As the word spread, people stopped me in the street or called the school asking, "What are these apprentices? Could I have one?" The list grew—the beauty shop got involved, as did the gas station, the insurance company, the bank, the power equipment store, the local newspaper.

Even with all this enthusiasm, however, such experience-based programs may risk being miseducative. To try to prevent that from happening, the school (with help from a grant) employed a full-time director to oversee all the apprenticeships. The director was in constant contact with the site supervisors to make sure the students were performing satisfactorily and to work with the supervisors in making the student's apprenticeship a productive learning experience. The director made frequent visits to the various sites and required that students keep a weekly journal of their activities and what they had learned from them. In a few situations, the school determined that a particular appren-

ticeship was not a healthy learning environment and those apprenticeships were terminated.

The structure of the apprenticeship program had many of the virtues of a work/study program, but few of the drawbacks. It put students in a different learning environment where they could get a true taste of the work-a-day world and all that means. For example, it meant writing a resume and interviewing for the position; it meant learning the value of punctuality, following a dress code (if the business had one), working, and meeting a schedule. Although students weren't paid, they still had to perform to the employer's expectation or risk being fired. But the apprenticeship program did much more than that.

The program allowed students to explore careers they were interested in, to see those careers from the inside out and to roll up their own sleeves and give it a try. Students who were thinking about enrolling in nursing school, education, or secretarial school could spend an hour every day for a semester finding out exactly what it would mean. In some cases, it sealed a student's desire; in other cases, it told students this was not what they wanted to pursue. The students had to keep daily journals of their experiences which were checked by English teachers for grammar, content, and creativity. Students were also required to prepare a semester project utilizing their knowledge and skills (which could take the form of an in-depth paper, public presentation, or other demonstration).

Each student in the apprentice program worked with a site supervisor, someone in a career who agreed to work with the student, monitor the student's performance, and be in close contact with the school. Many site supervisors owned businesses; some were highly educated, some highly skilled, but all had expertise and something to teach.

Over the years, the program has been highly successful in appealing to a broad range of students and answering a broad range of needs. For example, we hooked one student, who was a computer whiz who quickly mastered everything we had to offer at school, up with the math and computer department at a local college, where he could also receive college credit. Another student was really foundering in school. His grades were bad, and so was his attitude about school. He and his advisor met to discuss the problem and try to work out a curriculum that would keep him in school. When his advisor learned he was interested in autobody work, he suggested the student contact the owner of the autobody shop in Winchester and see if he could organize an apprenticeship. Excited, the boy immediately called the body shop.

The site supervisor let the student watch all phases of the business and then gave him small jobs to do. Eventually, he loaded him with books and pamphlets about autobody work, which the boy devoured, and sent him to an out-of-town workshop. One day a car was brought in that had been severely damaged in an accident. The owner told the boy to take a section of the car and do the repair work. And he did. Another time, the owner of the body shop said he was swamped with work and was getting farther and farther behind and desperately needed help. So he asked the student to do a couple of major repair jobs on his own, figuring that even if they had to be done over again he would

still be further ahead. Much to his delight, the jobs were completed perfectly. That semester, the student made the honor roll for the first time.

There are dozens and dozens of stories like these: students on the brink of dropping out or bored by school who were turned on and turned around by an apprenticeship. Of course not all apprenticeships are wildly successful; sometimes students are fired (itself a good learning experience), and sometimes the experience just adds another dimension to a student's curriculum, but doesn't cause any bells or whistles to go off.

INTEGRATING THE CURRICULUM

The Dovetail program, the two-week exploratory, and team teaching were all efforts to integrate the curriculum and open up the learning process for students. One of the unfortunate messages communicated to students through the traditional 50-minute classroom structure is a sense of disconnectedness. Math has no connection to English, history has no connection to science, and so on. Instead, each class is packaged neatly into the 50-minute structure, and, at the sound of the bell, gears must be shifted for another neatly packaged 50-minute course that has nothing to do with anything else. Since that's not how life actually operates, schools should be places where connections are made and where children are taught to constantly think in those terms.

The Dovetail program was an effort to take a holistic approach to the entire curriculum. Four teachers ran the program—three full time and one part time—and about 50 students were admitted with their parents' permission. Dovetail became a school within-a-school, where the entire school day was dedicated to learning not by subject, but by project, with each project incorporating as many aspects of learning as possible. The teaching team was made up of a math, science, and English teacher and a versatile aide. Those teachers worked together constantly to develop forums for learning. One of the first projects was to build a post and beam house in the style of the early Winchester settlers. The project incorporated math, architecture, science and history and required extensive research of the building techniques and architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition, students had to keep daily journals about their activities. The journals were graded for content, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and creativity. When the building project was finished, the house became their classroom.

Another project involved exploration of a nearby cemetery. Students, under the guidance of a teacher-historian, researched the names of the deceased to find out what roles these people played in the development of the region. The project involved trips to the library, the archives, and the registrar of deeds. The students took rubbings of the stones, analyzed the artwork and the religious and poetic embellishments, and later conducted an archeological dig of an historic area close to the cemetery.

Students spent hours sitting through the information at the registrar of deeds office, and developed a genuine fascination for the history of the area.

One of the unforeseen consequences of the experience was the creation of a new bond with a teacher, who before was viewed as hardnosed and boring by the students. Instead of the straightbacked lecturer clad in skirt, jacket and wearing a bun on her head, they saw her in action, wearing blue jeans, walking happily through mud to point out a bit of history and working side-by-side with them. They discovered she had a wealth of knowledge on the history of the area, and the more excited they became about the project, the more they learned from her, and the more they respected her.

The Two-week Exploratory was a major work in the regular curriculum. The idea of working together in integrated teams came from a teacher and was embraced by the rest of the staff, which worked for a half day on planning in randomly organized teams. That spawned new ideas and more enthusiasm for the endeavor, which eventually turned into the "Two Week Project." For two weeks, all regular classes were suspended, and students and teachers became intensely involved in one of 11 cooperatively-designed two-week courses devised and taught by teams of teachers.

The Exploratory was intended to give teachers an opportunity to team teach, work at integrating the curriculum and break down the barriers of a six-period day. Each team was made up of three teachers from three different disciplines. Each team then devised a course that would draw on the expertise of each member, and give the students necessary work in such basic skills as reading, writing, computing, and critical thinking. Breaking down the barriers of the six-period day became structurally simple—each team was responsible for its students all day.

Course options ran the gamut: a re-enactment of the original settlers' journey into Winchester, a health education course of adolescent girls, a course that studied the interrelatedness of art, architecture and nature.

Teaching basic and essential skills became the focus of the program: emphasizing reading, writing, speaking and problem solving through a variety of themes and projects. Whether students were creating inventions or studying the poetry of Emily Dickinson, the endeavor required students to speak and write clearly and to think logically through a problem. Students were evaluated on their exhibition of these basic skills in a number of forms—public speeches, personal journals, or demonstrations.

"Who Art Thou?" the course on nature, architecture and fine arts, allowed 7th and 8th graders to explore the Clark Art Institute and the Boston Fine Arts Museum, and take those impressions back to Winchester with them to study the local architecture. Then students translated those observations into their own oil painting, wax sculpture, or post-and-beam model. One student wrote, "In regular class they tell us and tell us, but here *we* discovered it."

Because of that project, teachers began incorporating team teaching in the regular classrooms. Teachers working together tend to improve their classroom planning, preparation and success. And by looking at one course from the perspective of teachers in two different disciplines, the students are constantly making connections they might have missed under the traditional structure. Several years ago we started formally organizing ourselves for team teaching in all grades. Next year we will be teaming at all grades.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The most important resource a school has is its teachers. All the creativity, energy, and good ideas possible will get a school nowhere if there isn't cooperation among the staff members and between the staff and the administration. The school as a whole must embody energy, creativity, and productivity, and in the end, the school's sum will be far greater than its parts.

Cooperation takes hours and hours of working together. Innovations can't be forced from high up in the administrative hierarchy if a project is to succeed. The ideas have to come from the teachers. People will work harder if their ideas are the ones they're trying to carry out. An administrator telling the teachers what they're going to do is only communicating how little respect he or she has for the staff. Besides, no administrator alone will ever come up with as many good ideas, plans, and procedures as a group of hardworking, highly respected teachers.

We constantly have to ask: How can we better share our resources? Where can we go for more? What kind of new curriculum is possible? Are we doing what we're doing well, and, if so, how can we make it better? Finding answers to these questions gives a school life, and with constant self-questioning, it will grow.

It starts with strong leadership. Without it, little or no restructuring will take place. The leader, typically the principal, prepares the climate for change. He or she looks at the big picture and then works with the staff, students, administration, community and school board to develop a common vision. But by no means does s/he call all the shots or impose her or his will on everyone else. Restructuring is a process that involves everyone. The more people involved in coming up with creative solutions to problems, the more good ideas there will be to work with. The more responsibility is given out, the more responsibility is assumed. When everyone has a stake in the process, everyone wants to see it through. That's the theory, anyway. The reality is not nearly as slick as all that—less like a supercharged locomotive and more like an ornery mule. The process requires incredible patience, persistence, stamina and hard work. It also takes guts and a good sense of humor.

JEANNIE OAKES, KAREN HUNTER QUARTZ, STEVE RYAN, MARTIN LIPTON

BECOMING GOOD AMERICAN SCHOOLS: THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIC VIRTUE IN EDUCATION REFORM

Sarah Chatsworth did not expect to become a martyr. Ben McCall did not set out to be a hero. Fred Antouli did not think his tendency to be a renegade would become his leadership "style." Then these three principals became entangled in school reform. Now, some 10 years later, Sarah has been fired, Ben

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has attained national recognition and has a fine new job, and Fred continues to battle convention and bureaucracy on behalf of his students. We can learn much from their efforts to transform their schools.

Sarah, Fred, and Ben are three of the 16 principals we came to know in our nearly decade-long study of school reform. Like most of the other educators, policy makers, community members, and parents we met in the course of that study, these three found very compelling a vision of school reform that emphasizes the public good and aims to make schools effective in more than the narrow sense of raising students achievement scores. This vision led them and the teachers at their schools to craft new structures and practices that were intended to make their schools deeply educative, socially just, caring, and participatory. Their efforts proved enormously difficult, their successes only partial. Together, the experiences of these schools raise questions that lie at the core of America's efforts to reform its public schools.

- Why and how do schools struggle for both civic virtue and individual freedom in our complex multicultural society?
- How do schools make sense of contradictions inherent in their reforms?
- How does this sense-making process affect implementation?
- How might education policies better address the cultural and political forces that shape and constrain school improvement?

The confrontations of Sarah, Fred, and Ben with these reform questions illuminate the considerable achievements and painful setbacks that we saw in most of the 16 schools we studied. With these questions, we sought to understand what contemporary reform reveals about our culture's ongoing struggle for goodness in its public schools and in children's lives. And although the lessons we have learned may not smooth the reform path, they certainly point out many treacherous spots along the way.

The 16 schools we studied were engaged in a particular reform—the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's middle-grades reform effort as outlined in *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. However, the challenges they faced are not unique either to the schools implementing *Turning Points* reform or to the middle grades. Echoing the principles of most large-scale reform initiatives, *Turning Points* seeks to create community-like schools that foster meaningful engagement with ideas, as well as with caring people, diverse environments, and democratic processes. The eight primary recommendations for reform proposed by *Turning Points* are:

- creating small, respectful communities for learning,
- teaching a core of academic knowledge,
- ensuring success for all students,
- empowering teachers and administrators,
- preparing teachers for the middle grades,
- fostering young adolescents' health and fitness,
- reengaging families in the education of young adolescents, and
- connecting schools with communities.

Many of these hallmarks of *Turning Points* reform are reminiscent of John Dewey's thinking about schools and take from Dewey his strong sense that democratic principles must guide the reform process as well as its ends. But in our study, we found that such an agenda invariably aroused fundamental contradictions in an American culture that embraces democratic ends for its schools but resists the democratic means from which the ends cannot be separated.

The cultural and political contradictions we saw threatened such reform at every turn. *Turning Points* reforms enticed many educators and local and state policy makers toward civic virtue—that is, in the direction of policies and practices that characterize the public good as embodied in a citizenry that can come together across differences and solve common problems in a democratic sphere. But these reformers were blindsided by the contested meanings of the common, public good.

Many Americans—typically the most advantaged and powerful—take the common good to mean an aggregate of the actions of self-interested individuals who are free to be guided by such marketplace values as competition and the accumulation of social and material resources. For them, school reform would bring quite different policies and practices—specifically, ones that allow individuals to exercise their preferences, maximize their private and unequal resources, and compete effectively. So, although the goals of reforms often met with initial agreement, the harmony soon dissipated amid suspicion that enacting the means of reform would help some and would diminish the schooling benefits of others.

These contradictions make especially clear the limits of technical and rational approaches to framing and implementing school reform policies. Reforms that were meant to advance civic virtue galvanized interest, pressure, and some support, but they barely touched (and often provoked resistance from) powerful cultural and political opponents. Because the prevailing reform rhetoric and strategies were largely silent with regard to the cultural and political dimensions of the changes they sought, few educators and fewer members of the community had opportunities to learn how to engage in the broad social struggle that genuine reform entails.

Thankfully, the frustrating experiences of these schools also bring us important insights about how educators and communities that are committed to fostering public virtue can create better American schools. We found remarkable changes in schools—and some equally remarkable student responses to them—that resulted from the efforts of reform leaders and communities to infuse into daily practice (in American revolutionary John Adams' words) "a positive passion for the public good." Developing such positive passion, it turned out, was usually painful, often exhilarating, and always critical. These schools offer the steady reminder that fundamental school reform is an essentially human process whereby teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members come together to think respectfully but critically about what they value.

THREE SCHOOLS TACKLE AN AMBITIOUS AGENDA

In 1989, Sarah Chatsworth won the principalship of affluent, white Verbena Middle School, largely because of her reputation in Vermont as a “futurist” and an expert on middle schools. Her hiring fit Verbena’s proud tradition of staying at the forefront of progressive schooling. Built in 1967 as an “open” school, Verbena’s classrooms have only three walls and open onto common hallways that converge in the school’s unwallled library. Over the years, most of the school had gradually shifted toward a more structured approach. However, the school’s 20-year-old alternative program, called the Logos Team, still set the standard for progressive middle-grades education in the state. Verbena’s 300 students are among the state’s very highest achievers.

Ben McCall couldn’t be more different from Chatsworth. A former English teacher, McCall did not see himself as a cutting-edge reformer; he stayed in middle schools simply because he loved the life. He was a passionate advocate for kids as well as the funniest man in the world—sitting caged inside a rented dunking machine to earn quarters at school fund-raisers. He was the coolest principal ever when he took off on his motorcycle trip across the Midwest each summer. McCall had been principal of all-white Inland Junior High, serving three prosperous Illinois suburban towns, when, at the end of the 1980s, shrinking enrollments and a fiscal crisis forced Inland to merge with West Junior High. West served the sprawling district’s African American neighborhoods. That these families were largely middle class did little to quell white fears. Even in the mid-1990s, some whites called the West neighborhoods “the ghetto” and warned visitors not to drive there. In the white neighborhoods, a volunteer group (whose members called it a “neighborhood watch,” while others called it a “vigilante group”) patrolled the neighborhoods on the lookout for “trouble-makers,” and some educators worried about “crack babies” in the schools. McCall’s task was to create a new school for 700 seventh- and eighth-graders in a dilapidated and overcrowded building, where black youngsters and white youngsters would come together for the first time.

Fred Antouli, a scrappy former coach, is the longtime principal at James Madison Middle School in Massachusetts. Madison was built in the 1920s to serve both affluent white and blue-collar “ethnic” families. By the mid-1980s it served students from low-income neighborhoods, public housing, and temporary homeless shelters near the school. About half of the students were of color, and a third had first languages other than English. In spring 1987, Madison became the city’s first magnet junior high school. However, its reputation as the site of a rape and a shooting kept white families away. That same year, the school gave 590 suspensions to its 575 students, attendance hovered around 67%, and teachers averaged nine sick days. One teacher put it bluntly, “Nobody was coming to school. Teachers weren’t coming. Kids weren’t coming, and when kids got there, they were getting thrown out.” Antouli’s task was to bring a “burning building” under control.

Verbena, Inland, and Madison were among the first schools to participate in their states’ reform projects, funded by the Middle Grades Schools State

Policy Initiative of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The initiative aimed at fundamentally transforming middle-grades schools in line with the reforms outlined in Carnegie's *Turning Points*.

Sarah Chatsworth set the reform ball rolling at Verbena in 1991. Using the school's Logos Team as a model, she and the highly skilled faculty reorganized all students and teachers into heterogeneously grouped, multi-age teams and developed integrated curricula, portfolio assessments, and advisory groups. They sought to combine high expectations with a nontraditional structure and child-centered teaching to create a rich educative environment.

Ben McCall launched Inland's reform by attacking the school's system of tracking students into separate classes—a system that depended on highly questionable judgments of students' abilities and resulted in considerable racial segregation. With five tracks in math, three in language arts, and two in reading, the school's structure was so rigid that students rarely mixed for such untracked subjects as foreign language, science, and social studies. Because McCall required that all teachers teach some low-level classes, most were eager to eliminate them. Politically, the change also made sense since, in his words, "The bottom has very little political clout, and you're cutting them loose. It's like you set these kids free."

Nevertheless, McCall moved carefully. One teacher recalled that, as students moved out of the low-level classes and into regular classes, McCall was "smart enough not to let us know who they were." At the end of the first grading period, teachers were told the identity of the former "basic" kids. There was surprise that most of the students were doing quite well. By the early 1990s, McCall and the Inland faculty were well on the way with detracking, and they had reorganized the school into teams. Teachers began using cooperative learning, interdisciplinary curricula, and portfolio assessment. They researched and taught one another about learning styles and multiple intelligences; many brought multicultural content into classrooms.

Fred Antouli targeted both physical and educational deterioration at 70-year-old Madison. He hired 80 students to spend one summer painting the school, and he pressed the art teacher to frame the front door of the three-story brick building with "Welcome to Our School" in more than a dozen languages. She and her students painted the interior walls with dramatic murals; they created a huge, colorful map of the world on the pavement of the interior courtyard (Madison's only outdoor space). The faculty adopted teaming, block scheduling, and mixed-ability grouping. They mainstreamed 80% of the school's special education and bilingual students onto "regular" teams. Each team controlled its own schedule, met during common planning time, and in most cases engaged students in long-term interdisciplinary units, some of which led to extensive community service projects.

STRUGGLING FOR CIVIC VIRTUE

High academic achievement and a safe, orderly campus were important reform objectives for all three principals and their staffs. At Verbena and Inland,

Chatsworth, McCall, and their faculties understood the unspoken agreement that high achievement test scores were a prerequisite to pushing ahead with reform and that reform would be allowed to continue only as long as scores remained high. Like many affluent Americans, Verbena parents demanded evidence of high test scores to help them feel confident that their children would gain entry to the best colleges and follow their family's path to high incomes and status. One Verbena school board member shared what he saw as the prevailing parental attitude: "I want mine in the top 5%, and if you give me a standardized test, I can pump the scores. I know how to work the system. My parents did it for me, and I will have my kid in Stanford." For these parents, working the system meant ensuring their children's competitive edge within a familiar structure of test-driven instruction.

Inland's affluent white families were not so different. Maintaining solid test scores was essential in reducing community and district suspicions that the school's nontraditional practices would lower performance. McCall and his faculty also knew that Inland was being watched closely by its racially charged community to make sure that the new, student-centered way of doing things didn't breed unruliness or worse. "We gotta get the test scores up; gotta get those test scores up" was McCall's refrain.

For Antouli and his Madison Middle School faculty, safety was the most pressing community concern. Test scores had been so low for so long that there was little to lose with reform.

STRUGGLING TO EDUCATE

Each school had its core of tradition-minded faculty members who favored approaches that matched their images of middle-schoolers as large elementary students who needed developmentally appropriate, fun, and engaging instruction in basic facts and simple skills. Each school also had another group of faculty members who saw their students as miniature high school and college scholars who needed highly structured instruction in the academic disciplines. Teachers who were firmly committed to one of these camps generally resisted not only the other camp but middle-grades reforms as well.

However, each of the three schools also had faculty members who recognized the powerful capacity of middle-schoolers to respond to an educative learning environment guided by a vision of civic virtue. These teachers welcomed reform suggestions that young adolescents could become lifelong members of democratic communities of problem solvers. In some cases, college coursework and staff development workshops had primed these teachers to be receptive to the reforms. Often, their own years of experience convinced them that conventional transmission teaching (lively or dull) that sequenced bits and pieces of content did not work well with their students. Some of these teachers had developed independently an educative approach to teaching and learning that was engaging and fun even as it challenged students to delve deeply and reflectively into significant problems that crossed traditional disciplinary lines.

This group of faculty members took readily to *Turning Points* and to the prospect that the educative practices they valued might become part of the teaching and learning culture—the mainstream—at their school.

At Verbena, for example, Chatsworth and the faculty worked to create and sustain classrooms in which students learned together across ages, skill levels, and subjects. They integrated curricula around themes, often including students in the planning. For example, the theme of origins grew from students' own questions about themselves, the world, and the nature and relevance of history and science. Activities within the theme included questions concerning the creation of the universe, life on Earth, civilization, and more. The teachers often found themselves teaching together and making relevant links between their particular subject specialties and other disciplines. The math department adopted *Math in the Mind's Eye*, a curriculum that asks students to approach mathematics as a way of looking at and functioning in the world, instead of as a paper-and-pencil skill learned in school. Day-to-day instruction became rooted in active learning strategies, and some teachers encouraged students to share responsibility for their own and the class's curriculum and activities. Revealing her profound conversion to participatory engagement in learning, one teacher told us, "It's really important that . . . we are no longer [exclusively] the disseminators of knowledge."

STRUGGLING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The three schools also strove to be places where difference was not seen as a problem or an abnormality to be managed. As at most of the 16 schools we studied, many faculty members were solidly committed to the principles of racial equality and fairness, and they struggled with discrimination, inequality, and injustice. Not surprisingly, these were also schools that showed concern for gender fairness, and they questioned and challenged many of the commonly accepted "limits" that schools place on special education students. They tried to change their curricula and structures to expand access, provide extra support when needed, and improve relations among diverse groups of adults and children.

For example, McCall and Inland's faculty attacked the racial issues at the school head-on. This is partly why they pushed so hard on detracking. Community hostility was acute, and the principal worried about riots. Together, he and his newly merged faculty established a program called *From Neighbors to Friends* that consisted of a series of informal social gatherings, games, and trust-building activities to engender a close community of diversity. Moms—black and white—became a familiar part of the school landscape. Inland didn't hide its conception of a good school as a socially just place. As McCall put it, "That's one of the things I've learned: if you believe it, write it down and put it on the wall . . . in the johns." (Signs throughout the school now proclaim that "different is not deficient.") He wanted to rid the school of what he called an arrogant belief that some students' capabilities are limited: "All kids have great potential. Who the hell are we to decide who gets access to what learning?" McCall and

the Inland teachers believed that their struggle went beyond ensuring the civil rights of low-income and racial-minority students. As McCall explained, they were also fighting for the betterment of themselves as individuals and society in general: "The struggle is not about blacks; it's about us. It's about what we as humanity will do to each other and will tolerate. That's why I get passionate about this stuff; I get excited about this stuff. This is where it's at."

STRUGGLING TO CARE

Verbena, Inland, and Madison also tried to build close connections among educators, children, parents, and the neighborhood. They attempted to make the schools themselves communities that students belong to and help sustain. They worked hard to provide for many of their students' social and health needs and to make their schools safer and more welcoming.

Madison's compassionate adults, for instance, expended enormous energy providing social support to students and their families, much like the settlement house schools of a century ago. They developed before- and after-school recreation programs and a full-scale, subsidized breakfast and lunch program. Madison's nurse counseled students about "social problems that they don't tell you about right away," including their parents' drug and alcohol problems and their own neglect. She referred students for pregnancy testing and to mental health agencies. Madison faculty members and the probation department often joined forces to work with those in legal trouble.

Fred Antouli also forged personal ties with his school's minority neighborhood. Home visits had fundamentally altered his view of students' lives, and he encouraged teachers to follow his example. Many did. According to Antouli: "It's not the best neighborhood, but it's not the worst either. It's what you make it. I go outside. I walk the streets. I walk the streets on Saturdays and Sundays and stuff like that, just so people know who you are around the streets. I think people look at strangers, and they say, 'What's he doing here?' But if they see someone they know . . ."

On weekends, Antouli worked with the Community Minority Cultural Center, a 25-year-old group of African Americans and Hispanics. Madison provided Saturday programs at the center, where some teachers volunteer and many Madison students participate. Antouli also initiated an annual free spaghetti dinner (with himself as cook) to entice reluctant parents into the building; after three years, he was serving more than 750 attendees at his annual dinner. He was proudest of his efforts to create a welcoming, accepting, and responsive community that was increasingly tolerant of racial, ethnic, and language differences.

STRUGGLING TO PARTICIPATE

The schools also worked to make decisions democratically. Chatsworth convened a "transformation" study group of 25 community members, teachers,

and administrators, paying much attention to developing a process through which difficult school and social issues could be discussed openly. Working with the Verbena teachers was pretty straightforward—at least in the beginning. Unlike teachers who make trying anything new a battle, most of these teachers viewed the sweeping reform effort in their school as part of their professional duty. As Chatsworth told us, “They may be busy, they may be frenetic, they may be tired, they may not want any more on their plates right now, but they are not resistant to change.” She engaged the transformation study group in reading and talking about research, including the literature on corporate change. She used change ideas familiar in the business world. She hired a high-priced corporate consultant to help the community and the faculty understand how to “shift paradigms and embrace transformation.”

McCall’s relentless and inspirational energy galvanized the Inland faculty, and many teachers eagerly discussed and debated the school’s mission. Because everyone saw him as a regular guy whose rhetoric came from the heart, he could challenge people and even make them nervous without alienating them. He set up regular Friday morning breakfasts at which the teams of teachers took turns hosting one another and having fun. Most important, he used these breakfast sessions to engage faculty members in talking seriously, if informally, about their efforts to change. His theory? “You want to change the school? Change the norms. Change the group norm. Get people infected with the disease that you want them to have.” He worked to win parents over and succeeded with many—through tireless, face-to-face contact. He took every opportunity for dialogue about how they could, together, create a community that reflected a passion for all of Inland’s students.

In contrast to Chatsworth and McCall, Antouli realized that a deliberative process wasn’t a good match with his impatient and abrasive style, although he knew that a participatory process was necessary. So he named well-liked home economics teacher Rose Athens (who’d grown up in the neighborhood and had attended the school) to lead the reform process within the building. After spending a year examining Madison’s problems, seeking best practices, visiting model programs, and selecting a school theme, Athens and her team of teachers recommended housing students and teachers in small clusters and emphasizing communication arts. Meanwhile, Antouli accompanied a social worker on her rounds to students’ homes to solicit parents’ help with attendance and discipline. He says that parents “got sick of my face.” Although his car was stolen repeatedly and he was shocked by what he saw, the visits energized him.

RESISTANCE FROM INSIDE AND OUT

So much in the culture of these schools and their districts worked against reform. The three schools had to respond to a glaring spotlight of local public attention, district office skepticism, and jealousy from other building administrators. Sometimes, even those who were at the core of the reform—in the state projects, for example—could act in ways that slowed or obstructed the reform.

Policies, technical support, and resources frequently carried unanticipated and unhelpful consequences. Nevertheless, the schools did not shrink from pressure to demonstrate that reform works.

In various ways, each school provided this proof. Verbena's already high test scores held steady. Inland's early years brought minor ups and downs in test scores and considerable and painful political fallout. But, happily, the building stayed calm. Finally, in the 1994–95 school year and again in 1996–97, Inland showed clear achievement gains in writing, math, reading, and science. For two years running, all the eighth-graders passed the admissions test for college-prep mathematics at the senior high school. At Madison, both teacher and student attendance increased dramatically—among students, to about 95%—and student behavior showed amazing improvement. By 1994, test scores had reached the state's average.

In the end, however, even the very proof that was demanded by those outside the school wasn't enough. Despite all her efforts to craft a reform process that would include the members of her vocal, upper-middle-class community, Sarah Chatsworth became the target of angry parents. Many, it turned out, considered the much-acclaimed Logos Team a hippie-era leftover, rather than a reasonable approach for their children. They formed the Group for Educational Accountability, and, in a most uncollaborative move, presented a widely signed petition to the board of education demanding that Verbena return to a basic curriculum and traditional teaching. Some parents demanded that specific books be read, and others prescribed specific amounts of time for certain lessons. The innovative Math in the Mind's Eye curriculum became a lightning rod for a group of fathers—many with degrees in science and engineering—who blasted the program as failing to prepare their children for the rigors of the university. One former student, now attending an elite college, wrote to the local paper, blaming his middle-school experience and Chatsworth for his being only an average math student in his college class. One school board member summed up the attack: "These people are out for blood. I mean, they're with the 'I pay your salary' stuff." With all the uproar, teachers began to feel that Chatsworth might have pushed "too fast, too much, too soon," eroding their professionalism rather than enhancing it.

Ben McCall confronted extraordinary nervousness from Inland's district office. He was sure that the superintendent wished he would just go away. The superintendent, fresh from a district that had experienced dramatic white flight, badgered McCall about changing practices in ways that might make families uncomfortable. For example, he balked when Inland adopted a grading scale that differed from the one used in the elementary schools, and he complained that the faculty didn't have a traditional homework policy. When the school took a slight dip in its scores on the "study skills" subtest of the state exam, the superintendent threatened to undo many of the changes at Inland. Not surprisingly, the superintendent's nervousness did little to assuage community fears that racial diversity at the school had brought a decline in academic standards. It also encouraged a political environment in which other district administrators cast McCall as a self-aggrandizing showman.

Fred Antouli and his faculty were bitterly disappointed that Madison didn't shake its image locally as a burning building or battleground. Even after receiving a stream of visitors from other schools and recognition from the governor, Antouli lamented, "People—from the superintendent to the school community—are ignorant of what has been happening here, and that is kind of sad." Few of Madison's graduates gained entrance to the city's academic high schools. Antouli also became embroiled in controversy over bilingual education. He had integrated language-minority students—along with their bilingual teachers—into the regular teams because he felt that the social isolation of Spanish-speaking students kept them from learning English and exacerbated behavior, attendance, and achievement problems. With characteristic impatience, he dismissed Latino community activists' concerns as "absurd." That dismissal led the activists to file a complaint with the state department of education. The ensuing controversy jeopardized the entire reform and eroded the hard-won neighborhood support for the school.

Serious resistance of another type came from inside the Madison building. As hard as the school struggled to be caring, many faculty members couldn't let go of their harsh judgments about students' families and potential. One told us, "With teachers only being able to go so far, and with some of the backgrounds [students] have, they will just not go the distance."

COMPROMISE

In the face of this considerable resistance from both outside and within their schools, Chatsworth, McCall, and Antouli made compromises that stalled their reforms and left the schools "only part way there." Chatsworth gave in to parent demands for more traditional curricula and instruction by creating a traditional team that avoided such progressive practices as active learning, integrated curriculum, and a classroom community environment. This team also closed its classroom walls, placed its desks in rows, and relied more on textbooks. Parents unhappy with the child-centered reforms were free to choose this "scholarly" team for their children.

McCall asked Inland's teachers to give up some of the time they devoted to the From Neighbors to Friends activities and multicultural curricula in order to drill students on the skills measured on the standardized tests. He never did persuade the district office to allow him to blend all of the mostly white honors English classes into the regular ones.

Antouli backed off on his efforts to integrate Madison's bilingual and regular programs and allowed parents to place their children in separate bilingual classes if they wished. To his regret, much classroom instruction remained quite traditional, in large part because too few faculty members gave up their low estimates of the students' abilities: His participatory governance process never went beyond the small inner circle of Madison teachers whom he trusted to run the school. He continued to fend off district concerns by brashly ignoring administrative directives and by effectively discouraging his teachers from electing a union representative.

TEN YEARS LATER

Sarah Chatsworth left Verbena Middle School. Her attempts to instill a meaningful curriculum, child-centeredness, and community ended bitterly in the face of parents' unrelenting pressure to retain a traditional curriculum and a school climate stressing individual achievement, competition, and upper-class entitlement. Rather than cave in, she agreed to resign when the school board offered to buy out the remaining year of her contract. Even so, years later, three reform-minded teams still survive alongside the one traditional team. Chatsworth now works as a private educational consultant.

Inland's Ben McCall became a nationally recognized leader. He is regularly invited to speak at national and regional meetings on school reform, and educators from around the country phone him seeking advice about detracking their schools. But acclaim from the outside made it harder and harder for him to negotiate local district politics, and his superintendent made life increasingly uncomfortable. In 1998, McCall left Inland (with considerable ambivalence) to become the assistant superintendent in a school system on the other side of the state. His new boss told us that he hopes McCall will do in the new district's schools exactly what he did at Inland—and more. McCall connected with experts in gifted education, who began to help him develop a dramatically new type of inclusive gifted program for his new district. He began at once to collect, assemble, and share data that would reveal both the problems and progress in the district. The Inland staff misses him terribly, and he misses them.

Fred Antouli remains principal of James Madison Middle School. He takes great pride in his continuing reputation as a renegade.

THE CULTURE OF THE STATUS QUO AND THE CULTURE OF REFORM

Despite the ubiquitous clamor for better schools and the quite impressive energy directed at achieving them, the unsettling stories of reform at Verbena, Inland, and Madison are neither surprising nor unique. Although the *Turning Points* approach to reform was in many ways a "best case" example, it provided little support for the most difficult reform challenges the schools confronted. Churning away in what we, with due disrespect, call the reform mill, state reformers focused policy changes, technical assistance, and new resources on changing the organization and classroom practices of the schools. As is usually the case, little attention was paid to the profound cultural and political challenges that lay at the heart of the reform.

Conventional school reform is a largely technical process. At the policy-making level, policy makers read the public interest and set schooling goals. Then they enact policies that channel technical support and resources to bring greater capacity for reform to schools. They design these policies to take effect in a coherent policy system by bringing new and existing policies

into alignment. Policies are designed to compel and “incent” with rewards and consequences (carrots and sticks).

At the local level, school district administrators implement reform policies by making structural and procedural changes—for example, by adding new course offerings, rearranging school schedules, providing new materials, changing assessment and accountability strategies, and engaging teachers in professional development. As at the policy-making level, schools approach reform as a technical problem that can be solved by sending clear and consistent messages, providing resources and new knowledge, and holding teachers and principals accountable through systematic evaluations. Reformers even manage to take such patently cultural and normative concepts as “working relationships” and attention to the “school culture” and package these into standardized workshops and inservice training sessions. Such policy making does not begin to capture how reform actually works. Reform is far less logical and technically rational. It is idiosyncratic—dependent on the context of local relationships, histories, and opportunities.

CONFRONTING CULTURAL CONTRADICTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Current reform efforts are proceeding as if there were strong consensus on the meaning of school reform. Typically, there is not. In spite of political and policy rhetoric calling for school reform that ensures “high standards for all students” and “excellence and equity,” these goals are not commonly understood. When acted upon, they are often little more than facile catch phrases, riddled with the contradictions and controversies that lie at the heart of the American culture. They embody, for example, the enduring tension between fostering in young people both rugged and competitive individualism and egalitarian civic mindedness. Throughout their history, American schools have been pressured to preserve the status quo while juggling multiple, competing visions of what makes a school good.

At the start of the 21st century, as individual interests and freedom from government interference dominate social policy (for example, through deregulation, privatization, and the glorification of market forces), reforms like those embodied in *Turning Points* press policy makers and educators to revisit and act upon countervailing American traditions that stress civic virtue. We view much of the reform struggle at Verbena, Inland, Madison, and the other schools we studied as a struggle between venerable, though conflicting, American cultural values with deep historical roots. These schools attempted to probe beneath the conventions of what it means for citizens to become educated, to participate in social justice, to care for all the community’s children, and to listen and be heard in the public sphere. As educators attempt to enact a vision of the common, public good, without compromising an equally compelling commitment to individual liberties and private interests, they will find themselves grappling with a series of profound questions about schooling.

Teaching and Learning. How can schools deepen the intellectual quality of classrooms when most policy makers, educators, and parents hold tightly to conventional ideas of teaching as a process of transmitting knowledge and of learning as a process of receiving it? How can schools combat the widespread conviction that individual differences between students are such that many students are not suited for serious academic study?

Dominance and Competition. How can schools attempting to become more inclusive and socially just deal with educators and communities that are wedded to an Anglo-dominated school culture? How can schools balance their obligation to educate all children well with the demands of those who vigorously pursue competitive advantages for their own children through schooling?

Dignity of Students and Others. How can schools broaden their academic mission to provide greater care for disadvantaged students without reducing them to needy and helpless clients who require condescending charity or bureaucratic social services? How can educators avoid detached professionalism and instead join respectfully with families and neighborhoods to promote engaging and healthy activities in safe, community settings?

Genuine Participation. How can schools that want to pursue a vision of participatory democracy go beyond the conventional, largely procedural approach to collaborative decision making and superficial parent involvement?

The Larger Context of Reform. What reform policies and implementation strategies might help schools move beyond the reform mill and enable them to address the cultural and political dilemmas that such reforms raise, as well as to develop the technical capacity to make changes in practice?

REFORM AS A STRUGGLE FOR BETTERMENT

At Verbena, Inland, and Madison, as in the other schools we studied, it was cultural norms and politics—local beliefs and power—that shaped the schools' reform goals, processes, and outcomes and that altered (modified, thwarted, adapted, finessed, etc.) the rational and technical strategies of policy makers and program designers. In the American liberal tradition, these schools took it as axiomatic that to pursue self-interest is to support the general good and that to pursue the civic virtues of learning, diversity, and justice for all is to establish a climate in which individuals can compete and excel. These schools were committed to principles of equality and fairness. They consistently, if not always effectively, confronted the nation's ambivalence over race, and they stood up to persistent discrimination and inequality. They worked under the glaring spotlight of their local communities and interest groups, of national foundations, and of state policy agencies. As is nearly always the case in such a heightened political context, the reforming schools were expected to attain success within a few years.

In the face of resistance from within and outside the schools, educators in most schools compromised and scaled back their reform practices. But this did not render their accomplishments meager. And theirs is not a story of failed school reform. The interventions were often catalysts that converted unproductive struggle (or absence of struggle) into genuine consensus around small shifts in practice that served children better. Sometimes, because the change was embedded within the school culture, teachers did not see themselves as having changed their beliefs or done anything new. Sometimes change did not last long. Sometimes nine steps forward were countered with eight steps back. In nearly all cases, tackling the complex and often contradictory task of creating good American schools made the schools better for children and adults than they would have been otherwise. But things should have gone better for these schools, and in the end we argue that the lessons learned from their experiences can inform a society that wants its schools to be better.

We believe that our study argues for alternatives and additions to the technical aspects of reform (finding and implementing best practices). In our view, the “best” schools for children were also the best for the adults who worked in them and visited them. With assistance from outside and by drawing on resources from within, educators at these schools opened dialogues on fundamental moral issues that are at the heart of their reforms. In these respectful and critical explorations, educators constructed new meanings and strategies that shaped both their goals and their practices. In this way, they married the means of educating to the ends of education. The results in such schools are never “good enough.” Good American schools do not settle for “good enough” any more than a good nation is satisfied that it is fair enough or free enough.

ELLIOT W. EISNER

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY A SCHOOL IS DOING WELL?

Driven by discontent with the performance of our schools, we are, once again, in the midst of education reform, as we were in 1983 with *A Nation at Risk*, in 1987 with *America 2000*, and a few years later with *Goals 2000*. Each of these reform efforts was intended to rationalize the practice and performance of our schools. Each was designed to work out and install a system of measurable goals and evaluation practices that would ensure that our nation would be first in science and mathematics by the year 2000, that all our children would come to school ready to learn, and that each school would be drug-free, safe, and nonviolent.¹

The formulation of standards and the measurement of performance were intended to tidy up a messy system and to make teachers and school administrators truly accountable. The aim was then, and is today, to systematize and standardize so that the public will know which schools are performing well and which are not. There were to be then, and there are today, payments and penalties for performance.

Eisner, Elliot. “What Does It Mean to Say a School is Doing Well?” in *Phi Delta Kappan* 82(5), January 2001. Reprinted by permission of the author.

America is one of the few nations in which responsibility for schools is not under the aegis of a national ministry of education. Although we have a federal agency, the U.S. Department of Education, the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution indicates that those responsibilities that the Constitution does not assign explicitly to the federal government belong to the states (or to the people). And since the Constitution makes no mention of education, it is a responsibility of the states.

As a result, we have 50 departments of education, one for each state, overseeing some 16,000 school districts that serve 52 million students in more than 100,000 schools. In addition, each school district has latitude for shaping education policy. Given the complexity of the way education is organized in the U.S., it is understandable that from one perspective the view looks pretty messy and not altogether rational. Furthermore, more than a few believe that we have a national problem in American education and that national problems require national solutions. The use of highly rationalized procedures for improving schools is a part of the solution.

I mention the concept of rationalization because I am trying to describe the ethos being created in our schools. I am trying to reveal a world view that shapes our conception of education and the direction we take for making our schools better.

Rationalization as a concept has a number of features. First, it depends on a clear specification of intended outcomes.² That is what standards and rubrics are supposed to do. We are supposed to know what the outcomes of educational practice are to be, and rubrics are to exemplify those outcomes. Standards are more general statements intended to proclaim our values. One argument for the use of standards and rubrics is that they are necessary if we are to function rationally. As the saying goes, if you don't know where you're headed, you will not know where you have arrived. In fact, it's more than knowing where you're headed; it's also knowing the precise destination. Thus the specification of intended outcomes has become one of the primary practices in the process of rationalizing school reform efforts. Holding people accountable for the results is another.

Second, rationalization typically uses measurement as a means through which the quality of a product or performance is assessed and represented. Measurement, of course, is *one* way to describe the world. Measurement has to do with determining matters of magnitude, and it deals with matters of magnitude through the specification of units. In the United States, the unit for weight is pounds. In Sweden or the Netherlands, it is kilograms. It's kilometers in Europe; it's miles in the United States. It really doesn't matter what unit you use, as long as everyone agrees what the unit is.³

Quantification is believed to be a way to increase objectivity, secure rigor, and advance precision in assessment. For describing some features of the world, including the educational world, it is indispensable. But it is not good for everything, and the limitations of quantification are increasingly being recognized. For example, although initial discussions about standards emphasized the need for them to be *measurable*, as standards have become increasingly general and ideological, measurability has become less salient.

Third, the rationalization of practice is predicated on the ability to control and predict. We assume that we can know the specific effects of our interventions, an assumption that is questionable.

Fourth, rationalization downplays interactions. Interactions take into account not simply the conditions that are to be introduced in classrooms or schools but also the kinds of personal qualities, expectations, orientations, ideas, and temperaments that interact with those conditions. Philosophical constructivists have pointed out that what something means comes both from the features of the phenomenon to be addressed and from the way those features are interpreted or experienced by individuals.⁴ Such idiosyncratic considerations always complicate assessment. They complicate efforts to rationalize education as well. Prediction is not easy when what the outcome is going to be is a function not only of what is introduced in the situation but also of what a student makes of what has been introduced.

Fifth, rationalization promotes comparison, and comparison requires what is called “commensurability.” Commensurability is possible only if you know what the programs were in which the youngsters participated in the schools being compared. If youngsters are in schools that have different curricula or that allocate differing amounts of time to different areas of the curriculum, comparing the outcomes of those schools without taking into account their differences is extremely questionable. Making comparisons between the math performance of youngsters in Japan and those in the United States without taking into account cultural differences, different allocations of time for instruction, or different approaches to teaching makes it impossible to account for differences in student performance or to consider the side effects or opportunity costs associated with different programs in different cultures. The same principle holds in comparing student performance across school districts in the U.S.

Sixth, rationalization relies upon extrinsic incentives to motivate action; that’s what vouchers are intended to do. Schools are likened to businesses, and the survival of the fittest is the principle that determines which ones survive. If schools don’t produce effective results on tests, they go out of business.

In California and in some other parts of the country, principals and superintendents are often paid a bonus if their students perform well on standardized tests: payment by results. And, of course, such a reward system has consequences for a school’s priorities. Are test scores the criteria that we want to use to reward professional performance?

The features that I have just described are a legacy of the Enlightenment. We believe our rational abilities can be used to discover the regularities of the universe and, once we’ve found them, to implement, as my colleague David Tyack titled his book, “the one best system.”⁵ We have a faith in our ability to discover what the U.S. Department of Education once described as “what works.” The result is an approach to reform that leaves little room for surprise, for imagination, for improvisation, or for the cultivation of productive idiosyncrasy. Our reform efforts are closer in spirit to the ideas of René Descartes and August Comte than to those of William Blake. They are efforts that use league tables to compare schools and that regard test scores as valid proxies for the

quality of education our children receive.⁶ And they constitute an approach to reform that has given us three major educationally feckless reform efforts in the past 20 years. Are we going to have another?

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What are the consequences of the approach to reform that we have taken and what should we pay attention to in order to tell when a school is doing well? First, one of the consequences of our approach to reform is that the curriculum gets narrowed as school district policies make it clear that what is to be tested is what is to be taught. Tests come to define our priorities. And now we have legitimated those priorities by talking about “core subjects.” The introduction of the concept of core subjects explicitly marginalizes subjects that are not part of the core. One of the areas that we marginalize is the arts, an area that when well taught offers substantial benefits to students. Our idea of core subjects is related to our assessment practices and the tests we use to determine whether or not schools are doing well.

Because those of us in education take test scores seriously, the public is reinforced in its view that test scores are good proxies for the quality of education a school provides. Yet what test scores predict best are other test scores. If we are going to use proxies that have predictive validity, we need proxies that predict performances that matter outside the context of school. The function of schooling is not to enable students to do better in school. The function of schooling is to enable students to do better in life. What students learn in school ought to exceed in relevance the limits of the school’s program.

As we focus on standards, rubrics, and measurement, the deeper problems of schooling go unattended. What are some of the deeper problems of schooling? One has to do with the quality of conversation in classrooms. We need to provide opportunities for youngsters and adolescents to engage in challenging kinds of conversation, and we need to help them learn how to do so. Such conversation is all too rare in schools. I use “conversation” seriously, for challenging conversation is an intellectual affair. It has to do with thinking about what people have said and responding reflectively, analytically, and imaginatively to that process. The practice of conversation is almost a lost art. We turn to talk shows to experience what we cannot do very well or very often.

The deeper problems of schooling have to do with teacher isolation and the fact that teachers don’t often have access to other people who know what they’re doing when they teach and who can help them do it better.⁷ Although there are many issues that need attention in schooling, we search for the silver bullet and believe that, if we get our standards straight and our rubrics right and make our tests tough enough, we will have an improved school system. I am not so sure.

The message that we send to students is that what really matters in their education are their test scores. As a result, students in high-stakes testing programs find ways to cut corners—and so do some teachers. We read increasingly often not only about students who are cheating but also about teachers who are unfairly helping students get higher scores on the tests.⁸ It’s a pressure that undermines the kind of experience that students ought to have in schools.

Perhaps the major consequence of the approach we have taken to rationalize our schools is that it ineluctably colors the school climate. It promotes an orientation to practice that emphasizes extrinsically defined attainment targets that have a specified quantitative value. This, in turn, leads students to want to know just what it is they need to do to earn a particular grade. Even at Stanford, I sometimes get requests from graduate students who want to know precisely, or as precisely as I can put it, what they need to do in order to get an A in the class.

Now from one angle such a request sounds reasonable. After all, it is a means/ends approach to educational planning. Students are, it can be said, rationally planning their education. But such planning has very little to do with intellectual life, where risk-taking, exploration, uncertainty, and speculation are what it's about. And if you create a culture of schooling in which a narrow means/ends orientation is promoted, that culture can undermine the development of intellectual dispositions. By intellectual dispositions I mean a curiosity and interest in engaging and challenging ideas.

What the field has not provided is an efficient alternative to the testing procedures we now use. And for good reason. The good reason is that there are no efficient alternatives. Educationally useful evaluation takes time, it's labor intensive and complex, and it's subtle, particularly if evaluation is used not simply to score children or adults but to provide information to improve the process of teaching and learning.

The price one pays for providing many ways for students to demonstrate what has been learned is a reduction of commensurability. Commensurability decreases when attention to individuality increases. John Dewey commented about comparisons in a book that he wrote in 1934 when he was 76 years old. The book is *Art as Experience*. He observed that nothing is more odious than comparisons in the arts.⁹ What he was getting at was that attention to or appreciation of an art form requires attention to and appreciation of its distinctive features. It was individuality that Dewey was emphasizing, and it is the description of individuality we would do well to think about in our assessment practices. We should be trying to discover where a youngster is, where his or her strengths are, where additional work is warranted. Commensurability is possible when everybody is on the same track, when there are common assessment practices, and when there is a common curriculum. But when students work on different kinds of problems, and when there is concern with the development of an individual's thumbprint, so to speak, commensurability is an inappropriate aim.

What have been the consequences of the rationalized approach to education reform that we have embraced? Only this: in our desire to improve our schools, education has become a casualty. That is, in the process of rationalization, education—always a delicate, complex, and subtle process having to do with both cultural transmission and self-actualization—has become a commodity. Education has evolved from a form of human development serving personal and civic needs into a product our nation produces to compete in a global economy. Schools have become places to mass produce this product.

Let us assume that we impose a moratorium on standardized testing for a five-year period. What might we pay attention to in schools in order to say that a school is doing well? If it is not higher test scores that we are looking for, what is it? Let me suggest the kind of data we might seek by raising some questions that might guide our search.

What kinds of problems and activities do students engage in? What kind of thinking do these activities invite? Are students encouraged to wonder and to raise questions about what they have studied? Perhaps we should be less concerned with whether they can answer our questions than with whether they can ask their own. The most significant intellectual achievement is not so much in problem solving, but in question posing. What if we took that idea seriously and concluded units of study by looking for the sorts of questions that youngsters are able to raise as a result of being immersed in a domain of study? What would that practice teach youngsters about inquiry?

What is the intellectual significance of the ideas that youngsters encounter? (I have a maxim that I work with: if it's not worth teaching, it's not worth teaching well.) Are the ideas they encounter important? Are they ideas that have legs? Do they go someplace?

Are students introduced to multiple perspectives? Are they asked to provide multiple perspectives on an issue or a set of ideas? The implications of such an expectation for curriculum development are extraordinary. To develop such an ability and habit of mind, we would need to invent activities that encourage students to practice, refine, and develop certain modes of thought. Taking multiple perspectives is just one such mode.

In 1950 the American psychologist J. P. Guilford developed what he called "the structure of intellect," in which 130 different kinds of cognitive processes were identified.¹⁰ What if we used that kind of structure to promote various forms of thinking? My point is that the activities in which youngsters participate in classes are the means through which their thinking is promoted. When youngsters have no reason to raise questions, the processes that enable them to learn how to discover intellectual problems go undeveloped.

The ability to raise telling questions is not an automatic consequence of maturation. Do you know what's the biggest problem that Stanford students have in the course of their doctoral work? It is not getting good grades in courses; they all get good grades in courses. Their biggest obstacle is in framing a dissertation problem. We can do something about that before students get to the doctoral level. In a school that is doing well, opportunities for the kind of thinking that yields good questions would be promoted.

What connections are students helped to make between what they study in class and the world outside of school? A major aim of education has to do with what psychologists refer to as "transfer of learning." Can students apply what they have learned or what they have learned how to learn? Can they engage in the kind of learning they will need in order to deal with problems and issues outside of the classroom? If what students are learning is simply used as a means to increase their scores on the next test, we may win the battle and lose the war. In such a context, school learning becomes a hurdle to jump over. We need to determine whether students can use what they have learned. But even

being able to use what has been learned is no indication that it will be used. There is a difference between what a student can do and what a student will do.

The really important dependent variables in education are not located in classrooms. Nor are they located in schools. The really important dependent variables are located outside schools. Our assessment practices haven't even begun to scratch that surface. It's what students do with what they learn when they can do what they want to do that is the real measure of educational achievement.

What opportunities do youngsters have to become literate in the use of different representational forms? By representational forms, I mean the various symbol systems through which humans shape experience and give it meaning.¹¹ Different forms of human meaning are expressed in different forms of representation. The kinds of meaning one secures from poetry are not the kinds of meaning one secures from propositional signs. The kinds of meanings expressed in music are not the meanings experienced in the visual arts. To be able to secure any of those meanings, you have to know how to "read" them. Seeing is a reading. Hearing is a reading. They are processes of interpreting and *construing* meaning from the material encountered; reading text is not only a process of decoding, it is also a process of encoding. We *make* sense of what we read.

What opportunities do students have to formulate their own purposes and to design ways to achieve them? Can a school provide the conditions for youngsters, as they mature, to have increased opportunity to set their own goals and to design ways to realize them? Plato once defined a slave as someone who executes the purposes of another. I would say that, in a free democratic state, at least a part of the role of education is to help youngsters learn how to define their own purposes.

What opportunities do students have to work cooperatively to address problems that they believe to be important? Can we design schools so that we create communities of learners who know how to work with one another? Can we design schools and classrooms in which cooperating with others is part of what it means to be a student?

Do students have the opportunity to serve the community in ways that are not limited to their own personal interests? Can we define a part of the school's role as establishing or helping students establish projects in which they do something beyond their own self-interest? I want to know that in order to know how well a school is doing.

To what extent are students given the opportunity to work in depth in domains that relate to their aptitudes? Is personal talent cultivated? Can we arrange the time for youngsters to work together on the basis of interest rather than on the basis of age grading? Youngsters who are interested in ceramics might work in depth in ceramics; those interested in science might work in depth in science. To make these possibilities a reality, we would need, of course, to address the practical problems of allocating time and responsibility. But without a conception of what is important, we will never even ask questions about allocating time. A vision of what is educationally important must come first.

Do students participate in the assessment of their own work? If so, how? It is important for teachers to understand what students themselves think of their own work. Can we design assessment practices in which students can help us?

To what degree are students genuinely engaged in what they do in school? Do they find satisfaction in the intellectual journey? How many students come to school early and how many would like to stay late? The motives for such choices have to do with the “locus of satisfactions.” Satisfactions generate reasons for doing something. Basically, there are three reasons for doing anything. One reason for doing something is that you like what it feels like and you like who you are when you do it. Sex, play, and art fall into this category. They are intrinsically satisfying activities.

A second reason for doing something is not because you like doing it, but because you like the results of having done it. You might like a clean kitchen, but you might not enjoy cleaning your kitchen. The process is not a source of enjoyment, but the outcome is.

A third reason for doing something is not because you like the process or even the outcome, but because you like the rewards. You like the grades you earn. You like the paycheck you receive. That’s what Hannah Arendt described as labor.¹² There is too much labor in our schools—and not enough work. Work is effort from which you derive satisfaction. We ought be paying attention to the joy of the journey. This is easy to say but difficult and challenging to do. Nevertheless, we ought to keep our minds focused on it as a goal.

Are teachers given the time to observe and work with one another? To what degree is professional discourse an important aspect of what being a teacher means in the school? Is the school a resource, a center for the teacher’s own development? Is the school a center for teacher education? The center for teacher education is not the university; it is the school in which the teacher works. Professional growth should be promoted during the 25 years that a teacher works in a school—not just during the year and a half that he or she spends in a teacher education program. Can we create schools that take the professional development of teachers seriously? And what would they look like? Schools will not be better for students than they are for the professionals who work in them.

All of us who teach develop repertoires. We all have routines. We all get by. We get by without serious problems, but getting by is not good enough. We need to get better. And to get better, we have to think about school in ways that address teachers’ real needs. And when I say, “addressing teachers’ real needs,” I don’t mean sending them out every 6,000 miles to get “inserviced” by a stranger.

Are parents helped to understand what their child has accomplished in class? Do they come to understand the educational import of what is going on? Very often children’s artwork is displayed in the school, with the only information provided being the student’s name, the grade, and the teacher’s name, all in the lower right-hand corner. Then the best student work is posted more formally. What we do, in effect, is use a gallery model of exhibition. We take the best work, and we display it. What we need to create is an educationally interpretive exhibition that explains to viewers what problems the youngsters were addressing and how they resolved them.¹³ This can be done by looking at prior

work and comparing it with present work—that is, by looking at what students have accomplished over time. I am talking about interpretation. I am talking about getting people to focus not so much on what the grade is, but on what process led to the outcome.

What is my point? All my arguments have had to do with creating an educationally informed community. We need to ask better questions.

Can we widen what parents and others believe to be important in judging the quality of our schools? Can we widen and diversify what they think matters? Can those of us who teach think about public education not only as the education of the public in the schools (i.e., our students), but also as the education of the public outside of our schools (i.e., parents and community members)? Can a more substantial and complex understanding of what constitutes good schooling contribute to better, more enlightened support for our schools?

Can a more informed conception of what constitutes quality in education lead to greater equity for students and ultimately for the culture? Educational equity is much more than just allowing students to cross the threshold of the school. It has to do with what students find after they do so. We ought to be providing environments that enable each youngster in our schools to find a place in the educational sun. But when we narrow the program so that there is only a limited array of areas in which assessment occurs and performance is honored, youngsters whose aptitudes and interests lie elsewhere are going to be marginalized in our schools. The more we diversify those opportunities, the more equity we are going to have because we are going to provide wider opportunities for youngsters to find what it is that they are good at.

And that leads me to the observation that, in our push for attaining standards, we have tended to focus on outcomes that are standard for all youngsters. We want youngsters to arrive at the same place at about the same time. I would argue that really good schools increase variance in student performance. Really good schools increase the variance *and* raise the mean. The reason I say that is because, when youngsters can play to their strengths, those whose aptitudes are in, say, mathematics are going to go faster and further in that area than youngsters whose aptitudes are in some other field. But in those other fields, those youngsters would go faster and further than those whose aptitudes are in math. Merely by conceiving of a system of educational organization that regards productive variance as something to be valued and pursued, we undermine the expectation that everybody should be moving in lockstep through a series of 10-month years in a standardized system and coming out at pretty much the same place by age 18.

Part of our press toward standardization has to do with what is inherent in our age-graded school system. Age-graded systems work on the assumption that children remain more alike than different over time and that we should be teaching within the general expectations for any particular grade. Yet, if you examine reading performance, for example, the average range of reading ability in an ordinary classroom approximates the grade level. Thus at the second grade, there is a two-year spread; at the third grade, a three-year range; at the fourth grade, a four-year range. Consider how various the picture would be if

performance in four or five different fields of study were examined. Children become more different as they get older, and we ought to be promoting those differences and at the same time working to escalate the mean.

Does a more enlightened grasp of what matters in schools put us in a better position to improve them? I hope so. What I have argued here is intended to divert our focus away from what we normally use to make judgments about the quality of schools and redirect it instead toward the processes, conditions, and culture that are closer to the heart of education. I am unabashedly endorsing the promotion of improvisation, surprise, and diversity of outcomes as educational virtues that we ought to try to realize through our teaching.

The point of the questions I have raised is to provide something better than the blinkered vision of school quality that now gets front-page coverage in our newspapers. Perhaps this vision serves best those in positions of privilege. Perhaps our society needs losers so it can have winners. Whatever the case, I believe that those of us who wish to exercise leadership in education must do more than simply accept the inadequate criteria that are now used to determine how well our schools are doing.

We need a fresh and humane vision of what schools might become because what our schools become has everything to do with what our children and our culture will become. I have suggested some of the features and some of the questions that I believe matter educationally. We need reform efforts that are better than those we now have. The vision of education implicit in what I have described here is just a beginning.

NOTES

¹ The document that most directly expresses this view is National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983).

² Donald Schön describes the process of rationalization of behavior as “technical rationality.” See Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). Nor is this the first time technically rational approaches to planning and assessment have dominated schooling. The efficiency movement in American schools—from about 1913 to about 1930—is one example. The behavioral objectives and accountability movements of the 1960s and 1970s are two more.

³ For a discussion of issues pertaining to the quantification and use of standards, see Elliot W. Eisner, “Standards for American Schools: Help or Hindrance?,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 1995, pp. 758–64.

⁴ One of the foremost philosophical constructivists is John Dewey. The concept of interaction was a central notion in his philosophy of mind and in his conception of the educational process. For a succinct view of his ideas pertaining to education, see John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938).

⁵ David Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

⁶ League tables not only affect the priorities of the school, they are a major influence on real estate values. The value of houses is influenced significantly by perceptions of the quality of the schools in a neighborhood, and test scores are the indices used to determine such quality.

⁷ For a full discussion of the processes of observation and disclosure as they pertain to teaching and its improvement, see my book *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice* (New York: Macmillan, 1991).

⁸ For an insightful and lucid discussion of the pressures secondary school students experience in the high-stakes environment that we have created in schools, see Denise Pope, "Doing School" (Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1998).

⁹ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1934), especially chap. 13.

¹⁰ J. P. Guilford, *The Nature of Human Intelligence* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

¹¹ Elliot W. Eisner, "Forms of Understanding and the Future of Educational Research," *Educational Researcher*, October 1993, pp. 5–11. Also see my book *Cognition and Curriculum Reconsidered* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994).

¹² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

¹³ For a discussion and illustration of what I call educationally interpretive exhibitions, see Elliot W. Eisner et al., *The Educationally Interpretive Exhibition: Rethinking the Display of Student Art* (Reston, VA.: National Art Education Association, 1997).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 12

1. Why are Cohen and Ohanian so skeptical of the reforms that the federal government has proposed for changing schools? What do they believe has been left out of the discussion?
2. In what ways are the reforms proposed by Littky and Wood consistent with the ideas of Dewey? Can these ideas be carried out on a large scale in American schools?
3. One of the methods used for proving the effectiveness of educational reform is standardized testing. What is the rationale for such tests? What are the benefits of implementing this form of assessment as well as the drawbacks?

PART SIX

*The New Teaching
Professional and
the Workplace*

The Perception and Condition of the American Teacher

The preceding chapters illustrate the rich history of American public education, sprinkled with both controversies and triumphs. Chapter 13 focuses on the historical development of teaching as a profession, societal perceptions of teachers, issues that teachers may confront in the classroom and school environment, and long-term careers in education. Specifically, it addresses various approaches toward teacher preparation throughout the history of American education: from the time when any literate person could be a teacher to today's degree requirement and licensure processes. This chapter explores the transformation of teacher training over the past two hundred years, the perception of the teaching profession—how teachers are viewed by those within the profession as well as outside—controversial issues such as false allegations of child abuse as well as violence and drugs in schools, and the wide variety of career options open to those who have chosen the field of education.

Throughout the text, the concepts of justice, equality, fairness, opportunity, and merit have been interwoven into current and historical aspects of American education. These powerful terms have been applied to ideologies, the conditions of diverse students, educational reform and choice, philosophies, and bureaucracies. But how do these concepts reflect the conditions of teachers—as a group and as individuals? Is there justice in the manner in which teachers are perceived and treated by American society? Do teachers through merit (or lack of) deserve a positive (or negative) societal perception? Do students, parents, and communities treat teachers fairly? Are teachers as likely as other professionals to attain the “American dream”?

THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Teaching emerged as a profession in British North America almost immediately after colonists chose to create permanent settlements there. Although teachers were not trained as they are today, some individuals were drawn from

the most educated segments of the population. No formal course of teacher education and no other mandated requirements existed at first. In New England, many who chose to teach were destined for long-term careers in the ministry, law, or medicine. During the colonial period, teaching was often viewed as a transitory profession (something to do until something better came along). During this period, colleges such as Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary did not address teaching in their programs of study. Essentially, the knowledge obtained through course study was considered more than enough to enable one to become a teacher. Prospective teachers who did not attend college learned their craft from practicing teachers through a process similar to apprenticeship. Also, teachers did not have any professional organizations to consult with or any unified standards for preparation.¹ During this period, formalized teacher training was almost nonexistent.

During the early nineteenth century, demand for publicly supported education (or, as it came to be known, the common school) arose. Horace Mann, Massachusetts Secretary of Education, spearheaded the common-school movement. He believed that education was the “great social equalizer,” and he assisted in initiating tax-supported compulsory education for the children of Massachusetts. Other states followed suit, and demand not only for teachers but for competent, trained professionals followed.

One of the first institutions for teacher training was the normal school. The normal school curriculum encompassed a two-year course of study, primarily of content. Education courses focused to a limited extent on methods and on the philosophy and history of education. Cyrus Peirce was the principal of the first public normal school in America, established in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1839. His first class consisted of 25 “adolescent girls” who were preparing to be teachers.² Peirce’s course of study included the content of the common-school curriculum, plus teaching methods and the history of education.

Peirce’s students were all women. During the early nineteenth century, women had basically two career paths open to them: industry and teaching. Because of the rise of industrialization, textile mills (the Lowell, Massachusetts, plant, for example) needed workers. Partly because of the rise of industrialization and the growth of the common-school movement, women found opportunities in teaching. Subsequently, as the school population grew, so did the demand for teachers. Women found employment not only in industry but in the teaching profession as well. For the most part, however, they were underpaid and overworked.

During the early nineteenth century, Prussian and French state systems influenced American teacher training. Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, Calvin Stowe, and other influential American educators went abroad and enthusiastically adopted European teacher preparation models.³ Mann particularly supported the Prussian approach to teacher education, which stressed not only a broad knowledge of content but the ability to provide quality instruction.⁴ The emphasis on methodology began to mark a distinctive shift away from the content-centered approach. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a more structured approach to teacher training was beginning to take form.

In the late nineteenth century, teacher education was on the rise. By 1900, there were 345 normal schools in the United States. In spite of large enrollments, only about one-third of all public school teachers graduated from teacher education programs.⁵ According to Jurgen Herbst, "American normal schools were created to turn the temporary occupation of schoolkeeping into a lifetime of schoolteaching. Schoolmen intended to use these schools as instruments of professionalization. With their help they wanted to replace the citizen-teaching with classroom professionals."⁶ In the latter part of the nineteenth century occurred a shift toward professionalization, evident in the evolution of the normal school into a teachers college and finally into a college of education.

The curriculum of the teachers college or normal college focused primarily on the training of secondary teachers. The three-year curriculum allowed more time for content and for education methodology courses. During the late nineteenth century, education courses began to focus on psychology. Also, during this period, the integration of practice teaching became part of the curriculum.⁷ Francis W. Parker's Cook County Normal School, in Chicago, was one of the leading and most progressive teacher-training institutions of the period.⁸ Finally, in the late nineteenth century, several university departments of education created four-year programs. One reason for this new development was the desire to elevate educational programs of study and put them on equal footing with four-year programs in the arts and sciences or the liberal arts departments.

By 1900, several state universities in the United States had established chairs of pedagogy and were able to implement graduate training in education, which incorporated a scientific approach to educating the young based on the development and application of educational theory.⁹ Subsequently, these state universities became the major agencies for teacher training and established a new set of standards for public schools.¹⁰

By the first quarter of the twentieth century, normal schools and colleges were developing into four-year institutions, and most state universities had colleges or departments of education attached to them. The preservice teachers' course of study consisted of a four-year program that required a general liberal arts background, a specialized field of content knowledge, methodology courses, and practical field experience.¹¹ Also, in the early twentieth century, states began to mandate that teachers attain certain requirements before they could teach. Examples of these requirements include graduation from high school and the completion of a certain number of education courses.¹²

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the best and most effective methods of educating teachers have been a subject of continual debate. In the early 1960s, James Conant, formerly president of Harvard and U.S. ambassador to West Germany, concluded among other things that American teachers needed to know more content.¹³

In the 1980s and 1990s, several groups sought to improve the quality of teacher training. The Holmes Group (1986) believed that teachers first need a degree in an academic discipline and then a master's degree in education. The Carnegie Foundation on Education and Economy (1986) advocated forming a national board for creating teaching standards. The Project 30 Alliance (1991)

and the Renaissance Group (1996) believed that teachers need a liberal arts education. The Center for Educational Renewal, headed by John Goodlad, recommended that teachers be trained more as social workers to deal with the diversity of the student population. Another reform group, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), a committee composed of representatives from politics, business, and education, designed a framework to prepare knowledgeable and committed professionals. Linda Valli and Peter Rennert-Ariev conclude that these varied reform groups seem to share two commonly held beliefs—that teachers need a strong preparation in academic disciplines and that teachers need to develop “multicultural competence” in their students. In their study, the *least* agreed-upon suggestion was to add one year of teacher preparation beyond four years.¹⁴ At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we still face the reality that there is no universally agreed-upon approach to educating teachers.

SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS AND PRESSURES ON TEACHERS

Are teachers now, and in the past have they been, held in high esteem in America? The answer is not a simple yes or no and depends on the time and the place. In the colonial period, some teachers were held in high esteem because they were not only educators of the young but leaders in the local community. However, during this same period many teachers were required not only to teach but to perform additional tasks such as polishing coffins and digging graves and to take room and lodging with their students' parents.¹⁵ During the Progressive era, the teacher was cast “in an almost impossible role: he was to be an artist of consummate skill, properly knowledgeable in his field, meticulously trained in the science of pedagogy, and thoroughly imbued with a burning zeal for social improvement.”¹⁶

Throughout American educational history and into the present, the teacher has been held in high regard and in contempt. In some communities, teachers become active members of the community, are paid well, and are respected by students and their parents. In other communities, teachers are held in low regard, paid inadequately, and are scorned by students and parents alike. Today we often hear the adage “Those who can't, teach” or some similar negative comment. Teachers often are stigmatized as being second-class citizens. How can the concept of justice be applied in this case?

One of the main points of contention is teacher salaries. Is teachers' pay inadequate, as many teachers and others believe, or are teachers overpaid? Many argue that teaching is a fairly lucrative profession, at least in terms of financial compensation. Martin L. Gross, in *Conspiracy of Ignorance*, states:

To attract better talent, pay scales have increased substantially. In New York and New Jersey, classroom teachers earn over \$50,000 a year on average . . . [A]ccording to the National Education Association (NEA), the average teacher now earns over \$40,000 including those in small towns and rural areas. With

extraordinary benefits and a work year of 180 days, teaching has become a respectably paid career.¹⁷

Gross further illustrates his view of educational salaries by pointing out that the chancellor of the New York public school system receives a higher salary than the president of the United States.¹⁸

Gerald Bracey sees things differently. He states that “every public school teacher has a college degree, and 70 percent of their coursework was taken outside the school of education. Fifty percent have master’s degrees. In the United States about 25% of the population have a bachelor’s degree.”¹⁹ What is acceptable pay for the teaching professional? Bracey frames the argument in terms of educational credentials: Because teachers are some of the most educated individuals in American society, they deserve to be paid at a professional standard. How can the concepts of fairness, equality, and merit be applied in the case of teacher salaries?

Another point of contention is preparation. Gross states that too much emphasis is placed on pedagogy and not enough on content: “Education training focuses more on ‘how’ to teach than on content—the ‘what’ to teach—one of the grave liabilities of the present system.”²⁰ Gross would agree with Conant that knowing content is enough to be an effective teacher. Others, however, say that if a teacher lacks the ability to disseminate the knowledge he or she possesses, that knowledge is useless and worthless.

Another teacher preparation issue is the acceptability of alternative routes to teacher certification. Proponents argue that alternative routes attract potential teachers to traditionally underserved areas and to content areas such as math and science facing a teacher shortage. Proponents also say that alternative routes make possible the recruitment of nontraditional high-caliber candidates to fill a need. Critics of alternative certification argue that these new teachers are hurried into the classroom too quickly and often lack the knowledge or skills necessary to teach.

Despite the arguments, alternative routes will remain a viable option in the preparation of prospective teachers²¹ because of growing student populations and the increasing need for teachers. But questions remain. Are students who enroll in an alternative certification program “equal” to students who graduated from a four-year program? Do both have the same opportunity to pursue a successful, rewarding teaching career?

The professional affiliation of teachers is another topic of debate. The two strongest and most visible teacher organizations are the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). NEA came into being in 1857 when ten state educational associations merged. The purpose of the merger was to create a national professional organization. The original name of the organization was the National Teachers Association. In 1870, after a merger with the National Association of School Superintendents and the American Normal School Association, the organization was renamed. The National Education Association received a charter from Congress in 1907. Membership grew steadily after World War I.²²

During the early twentieth century, teacher unions began to affiliate with American labor unions. In 1916, several teacher unions attempted to create a national union. Representatives from Chicago, Gary, New York, Oklahoma City, Scranton, and Washington affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, thus creating the American Federation of Teachers.²³

Both NEA and AFT lobby at the state and national levels to advance the occupational interests of teachers. They also support and generate educational policy.²⁴ These teacher unions lobby for improved teachers' pay, more professional development, and greater influence for teachers in the developing of educational policy. NEA's president is Bob Chase, and NEA has 2.6 million members; AFT's president is Sandra Feldman, and AFT has over one million members.

One major historical point of contention between these organizations is collective bargaining. Traditionally, NEA did not embrace collective bargaining. Because a large portion of its membership consisted of educational administrators, it viewed itself as an association rather than a union. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, responding to pressures from members as well as to declining membership, NEA adopted the collective bargaining approach. Affiliated with organized labor, AFT already favored collective bargaining.²⁵

The issue of collective bargaining has given ammunition to detractors and to supporters of teacher unions. A most vocal critic is Myron Lieberman, who believes NEA and AFT sabotage school reform. Lieberman was once a staunch supporter of collective bargaining by teacher unions but now is against it. He believes that NEA and AFT are powerful interest groups that block competitive influences in education, and he concludes "that collective bargaining in public education is inconsistent with democratic, representative government."²⁶ G. Gregory Moo in *Power Grab* states that NEA is attempting to control public education through standardization and centralization and also control teachers through compulsory collective bargaining and the payments of dues.²⁷

In contrast, Charles Kerchner, Julia Koppich, and Joseph W. Weeres in *United Mind Workers: Unions and Teaching in the Knowledge Society* support teacher unions for not only improving the working conditions of teachers but also revitalizing, transforming, and improving schools. Albert Shanker, past president of AFT, believes that collective bargaining promotes two objectives—ensuring the security of teachers and promoting professional development.²⁸ Union representation, supporters say, ensures that teachers will be adequately represented and treated as professionals. Susan Moore Johnson and Susan Kardos argue that collective bargaining should be reformed to encourage comprehensive discussions between teachers and administrators on a broader range of issues.²⁹

FALSE ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE, VIOLENCE, AND DRUGS IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

Teachers wear many different hats. Yes, they have to teach students academics, but they also at times are needed to be a friend, surrogate parent, critic, and

mentor. Teaching is a multifaceted job that requires an educator to play a variety of roles.

Although teaching is a rewarding experience, threats and allegations can make it a painful ordeal. One problem that may confront a classroom teacher is a false allegation of child abuse. False allegations of child abuse against teachers are on the rise. In a 1999 study, over half of the teachers polled knew of a teacher falsely accused. In addition, teachers report increasing fear about false allegations.³⁰

Violence and abuse of drugs are two other problems that classroom teachers may confront. It must be remembered that schools mirror society. In fact, violence in schools has been part of the European and American school landscape for centuries. As early as the seventeenth century, French students came to class armed with weapons. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England, student violence and “mutinies” unsettled schools. The United States has had its share, too.

The problem of gang warfare between ethnic groups has plagued American public schools since the 1950s.³¹ Reasons why students join gangs include low self-esteem, lack of status and identity, aggressive behaviors, personal deficiencies, and boredom with current lifestyles.³² The role of gangs and the nature of gang activity in schools have considerably changed since the mid-twentieth century. “There is evidence that gang violence and gang involvement in drug use and the sale of drugs has increased in the past decade,” observed Herbert Covey in 1997.³³ Gang activities are just one form of violence in schools. Students also attack teachers, both physically and verbally.

One of the major crackdowns on violence in schools is reflected in the Supreme Court case *United States v. Lopez* (April 26, 1995). It upheld the Gun Free School Zone Act of 1990, which made it a federal offense “for any individual knowingly to possess a firearm at a place the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone.”³⁴

Drugs also have been on the rise in schools. This problem has been prominently addressed by the program DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). In 1983, the Los Angeles Police Department founded and developed DARE. A recent study notes that this program for drug prevention cuts across racial, economic, and ethnic lines and enjoys considerable support from the public at large.³⁵ Now a nationwide program, DARE won support from U.S. presidents as well as from state and local government agencies. It is a K–12 drug prevention program that utilizes police officers as teachers. It also focuses on gang prevention, conflict resolution, and parent education.³⁶ Research shows, however, that students’ attitudes toward drugs, police, and self-esteem show only modest gains and further improvement is needed.³⁷

TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY

Although each of the fifty states has its own certification or licensure requirements, state regulations overall are more stringent today than they were in the

early 1990s. A more rigorous screening process is in place in teacher education programs. Before a student can graduate and pursue teaching, the following requirements need to be completed: mandatory standardized tests to obtain certification/licensure, more clinical experiences, and more extensive general education requirements.³⁸ In the 1990s, Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed tests that graduates of education programs must take before they can be certified or licensed. The first test was the National Teachers Exam (NTE), replaced in 1999 by the Praxis II test. These tests are administered nationally and strive to establish a basic level of competency that all teachers must reach. Drew Gotimer and Andrew Latham found that these tests, by their very nature, limit the supply of teachers. Yet they concluded the tests are not a major barrier to entering the profession: "More than 3 of 4 candidates seeking entrance to a college of education passed Praxis I, and nearly 9 of 10 seeking their license passed Praxis II."³⁹ Nevertheless, the authors warned against over-generalizing from these statistics, because the pool of minority candidates was reduced and some areas of licensure saw a decline in numbers.

In 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards developed national standards for advanced teacher certification. The board hoped to improve the status of the teaching profession by having a voluntary national system of board standards. It also attempts to identify exceptional practitioners who can be role models for the profession.⁴⁰

"A profession cannot exist without a serious and committed group of individuals who constitute its membership. To earn the 'liberty' of being called professionals, educators must not only adhere to standards; they must uphold and advance the moral dimensions inherent in serving others."⁴¹ National standards are usually designed by scholarly bodies or professional organizations that have set benchmarks for schools to follow. For example, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) established ten thematic strands that specify what should be taught as "social studies." Most states have models that outline the subject material to be taught in the assigned grades. In addition, many states have required proficiency tests, which exert a major influence on what is taught in the state's schools. For example, Texas and Ohio require all children in public education to take standardized tests at predetermined grade levels. Students must successfully pass all of these tests before they are permitted to graduate. President George W. Bush, formerly governor of Texas, planned to make teacher and student accountability a major focus of his educational agenda.

Mary Lee Smith and Patricia Fey illustrate the consequences of high-stakes testing on education. The following is their scenario of how testing functions within a state: The state influences the district, which then influences the schools, and the schools influence the teachers. The state imposes a standard curriculum, and the district adopts the curriculum for the schools to follow and for teachers to deliver. Test scores are published in local newspapers. The district either punishes the schools and teachers or rewards them with incentives. The districts are further compared to each other. If they do not stack up well, the state assumes control over the operation.⁴² Finally, states are compared with one another.

LONG-TERM EDUCATIONAL CAREERS

Some schools have a teacher who has been around “forever.” Comments such as “Mr. Smith was a teacher here when my mother went to school” and “Ms. Jones came to this school two years before Moses was born” are common. Some teachers enjoy the classroom and spend their entire careers there. They enjoy teaching children and the school atmosphere. According to Harriet Tyson,

teaching can bring Zenlike raptures, as when waves of thought and response wash back and forth between teacher and students, when all have momentarily lost self-consciousness and are unified in a symphonic effort to figure something out or create something. Lots of teachers work late into the night, planning lessons they hope will be gems. When the lesson connects with the students, it is like hitting a tennis ball in the middle of the racquet and hearing the satisfying “whock,” or pulling a perfect cake out of the oven, or clinching a profitable deal—only better.⁴³

Other teachers, though wishing to remain in the field of education, move on to other educational endeavors. Teachers in search of a career change often pursue the following career options: administration, curriculum design, instruction, or counseling. One of the closest administrators to the teacher is the principal. Depending on a school’s size, there may be one principal or a host of principals who deal with curriculum, discipline, and so on. The requirements to become a principal vary from state to state. A principal’s certificate may require from one to three years of teaching and a master’s degree (often in educational administration).⁴⁴ A principal’s responsibilities vary from managing the school’s physical plant and dealing with internal needs to interacting with the external community. What are the benefits and drawbacks of this position? Principals are paid more than teachers. They come in contact with members of the community, the school board, and various other administrators. A possible drawback to being a principal is the enormous time commitment required. There also is the risk of not being “popular” because of decisions that affect students, staff, faculty, and the community.

Superintendents provide overall leadership of a school district. As is the case with principals, there are a host of superintendency positions depending on the size of the district. For the most part the educational requirement for a superintendent position is a doctorate (PhD/EdD). For a superintendent’s license (depending on the state), from one to three years of teaching experience is required. Many potential candidates find formal doctoral study, which includes a dissertation, and a residency requirement, to be stumbling blocks. Potential candidates are often administrators who also maintain a job and have a family life.⁴⁵

Curriculum designers and instructional specialists perform administrative tasks in regard to subject matter and teaching methods. Curriculum designers develop subject material to meet state and national standards. A curriculum designer focusing on social studies would assess local, state, and national standards and would work with teachers to improve the quality of the social studies program. Instructional specialists explore different modes of delivery and

adapt curricula for students with special needs. An instructional specialist would work with a special education teacher to devise a variety of methods to teach students with a variety of disabilities. Counselors focus on providing guidance to students regarding academic issues and occupational careers. School psychologists address students' cognitive and emotional needs.

INSERVICE TRAINING AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

We all know that learning continues even after we receive a teaching degree. Mindful of the need for continuous quality improvement, most school districts offer some inservice training. This training could occur in a session in which a fellow teacher, consultant, or professor comes in to demonstrate a technique, or teachers could attend a formal workshop in which an educational expert introduces innovative ways to teach.

Many teachers pursue graduate education for career advancement, monetary compensation, and exposure to new ideas. Many states require teachers to take from three to six semester hours in addition to the bachelor's degree to maintain their certification/licensure and to receive pay raises. As a result, many teachers enter formal graduate programs to receive their master's degrees. Higher-education degrees and certification help teachers obtain administrative positions, such as a principalship.

CONCLUSION

The twenty-first century is going to be a period of rapid technological advances and ever-increasing social diversity. What are some of the challenges that will confront teacher education in the new millennium? Teachers will need to become more knowledgeable about the uses of technology in education. Also, there will continue to be competing strategies to reform and increasing pressure to maintain standards.⁴⁶

The development and professionalization of teacher education has been an evolutionary process over the past three hundred years. Today, the profession continues to improve itself through the rigorous implementation of higher pre-service and postgraduate standards. Although there are both negative and positive aspects to teaching, the profession of education will continue to offer rewarding career paths for individuals who choose to pursue them.

NOTES

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Readings on Current Conditions in Schools

This chapter addresses several controversial issues that teachers face in classrooms today. These issues include child abuse and violence in the form of allegations and threats. The chapter concludes with articles relative to maintaining teachers' interest and commitment to the profession.

Whether child abuse is suspected of parents or alleged against teachers, it is an issue that is prevalent in schools today. In "Concerns About Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Teachers and the Teaching Environment," Elizabeth Anderson and Murray Levine present results of a survey about child sexual abuse. They report that a large number of respondents were aware of false allegations against teachers in their district and about a third of respondents were concerned that allegations could be made against them. The authors conclude that fear of such accusations has an effect on the teaching environment.

In "Anger, Dismay, Guilt, Anxiety—The Realities and Roles in Reporting Child Abuse," Jeannette Nunnelley and Teesue Fields present the argument that although reporting child abuse is a teacher's legal responsibility, teachers still feel uncertainty and guilt when reporting it. The authors provide steps to follow when abuse is suspected.

Violence continues to be evident in schools. In "Dangerous Schools and What You Can Do About Them," Irwin Hyman and Pamela Snook examine the downside of using not an educational model but a law enforcement model to deal with violence in schools. They argue that educators commit forms of assault against students by using harsh and punitive discipline and they recommend that teachers who hope to improve the school environment first look at themselves. In "The Threat of Harm," Julie Rasicot presents methods that teachers can use to identify violence, and she recommends ways to deal with students with discipline problems.

The last two articles address the professional development of the teacher and the future of teacher preparation. Lloyd Duck's "The Ongoing Professional Journey" provides twelve recommendations for preservice teachers. They are intended to assist the teacher in growing within the profession to become

an accomplished practitioner. Finally, the influential teacher educator John Goodlad comments on the changing role of teacher education in the twenty-first century.

ELIZABETH M. ANDERSON AND MURRAY LEVINE

EXCERPTS FROM: CONCERNS ABOUT ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

This research was stimulated by an observation made by Mr. Emanuel Tabachnick a teacher's union attorney. He was addressing a seminar on defending teachers accused of child maltreatment. In the course of his presentation, he told a moving anecdote, which we here paraphrase. He said that when he was in high school, he was a poor math student. He got through only because a woman teacher voluntarily met with him in the morning before school and tutored him in the room alone before others came to school. He said, "It breaks my heart, but when I talk to teachers in inservice sessions, I tell them never to be alone in a room with a student." He told the anecdote to illustrate a changed climate which he attributed to intense concern about child abuse and sexual abuse in particular.

We undertook a survey of teachers in New York state in part to evaluate the hypothesis that concerns about child sexual abuse allegations made against teachers are affecting the teaching environment. Mandatory reporting of child maltreatment statutes have been enacted in all states in an effort to protect children from abuse and increase the likelihood that abused children will be recognized and provided help (Kalichman, 1993; Meriwether, 1986). The legal obligation to report, associated publicity, and in-service training on reporting brings child abuse concerns to the forefront for teachers. As noted in research with clinicians who have made mandated reports on clients in treatment (Levine, Doueck, with Anderson et al., 1995), the reporting mandate can affect ongoing relationships. For teachers, who are in regular contact with children, the mandate to report may be a double-edged sword. Teachers, as well as parents, may be accused of maltreatment. We will use the generic term maltreatment, although teachers are probably most concerned with allegations they have abused children sexually.

This research is directed toward studying two problems: One is the degree to which teachers feel a threat of being accused of maltreatment themselves, and what variables correlate with the perception of threat of allegations against themselves; the second question is whether those concerns affect the classroom environment.

Teacher training about child abuse has resulted in increased knowledge of the characteristics of abused children, and of legal duties and school policies concerning mandatory reporting (Hazzard & Rupp, 1986; McGrath, Cappelli, Wiseman, Khalil, & Allan, 1987; McIntyre, 1987; Zellman, 1990). Such training has an effect on the educational context, at the very least by making child abuse very salient. The mandate to report may well affect teachers' relationships with children. Teachers who receive training in child abuse and child abuse reporting may feel more secure in their relationships with their students and in their ability to avoid problems. As a consequence of their training, teachers may learn what to do and what not to do. The effect of training on teachers may be positive, in the sense that teachers may develop closer relationships with their students in order to meet the legal duty to report suspicions of abuse. On the other hand, knowledge may create a climate in which teachers are fearful about relating too closely with children. Inadvertently, the emphasis on child abuse reporting may increase teachers' perceptions of risk to themselves of being reported as abusers. The perception of risk may in turn result in teachers distancing themselves from students.

Knowledge of abuse allegations against teachers within one's school or school district, knowledge of false allegations, and perceived support or lack of it from school administrators about abuse allegations are all social context factors. Social context factors may have important effects on teachers' perceptions of risk about sexual abuse allegations against themselves. Teacher gender, years of teaching experience, and grade taught are factors that may figure in teachers' personal perceptions of risk. Males may experience threat differently than females. Older, more experienced teachers may experience the threat differently than younger teachers with less experience. Teaching younger children as against teaching older children may also make a difference.

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RESULTS

Awareness of Allegations Against Teachers. Are allegations of abuse against teachers salient for teachers (see Table 1)? Twenty-four percent (24%) were aware of allegations of abuse having been made against a teacher in their school district within the past year; 56% said they were aware of false allegations of abuse having been made against a teacher in their school district within the past few years. When asked if they worried about allegations being made against themselves in the course of their jobs, 62.5% reported that they did not, but a little more than one-third (37.5%) did feel concerned. The majority (55.1%) indicated it was probable to somewhat probable that students will make allegations against teachers; 64.5% of the teachers said that it was predictable that abusive teachers will have allegations made against them.

Policy About Contact with Students. School policies about contact with students also make the issue salient. Forty-one percent (41%) said that their

TABLE 1. Responses of New York State Teachers to Survey Items Measuring Concern with Allegations of Sexual Abuse Against Teachers (*n* = 515)

Survey Item	Yes (%)
Aware of Allegations Against a Teacher in Your School District in the Past Year?	24.1
Aware of False Allegations of Abuse Against a Teacher in Your School District in the Past Few Years?	56.0
Worried About Allegations Made Against You in the Course of Your Job?	37.5
Probable or Somewhat Probable Students Will Make Allegations Against Teachers?	55.1
Predictable That Abusive Teachers Will Have Allegations Made Against Them?	64.5
School Policy Against, or Cautioning Against Physical Contact with Students	41.0
Policy Is Informal	61.0
If Allegations Were Made Against You Would Other Teachers Support You?	82.0
Would School Administrators Support You?	65.0
Advise Against Being in a Room Alone with	
A Male Student?	41.2
A Female Student?	40.2
Advise Against Putting Arm Around, or Hand on	
Male Student's Shoulder?	61.7
Female Student's Shoulder?	61.5
Advise Against Physical Contact Such as Hugging to Provide Comfort or Show Affection with	
A Male Student?	71.1
A Female Student?	67.6
Some Risk of Allegations Made Against Yourself	
With a Male Student?	44.2
With a Female Student?	42.8

school had a policy cautioning against or limiting physical contact with students. Sixty-one percent (61%) of those teachers who said their schools had a policy indicated that it was an informal one. Based on these responses, we estimate that 25% of schools had a formal policy limiting physical contact with students. The existence of such policies, whether formal or informal, reinforces the salience of concerns about abuse allegations against teachers.

Environmental Support. Teachers were asked about the support they thought they would receive from other teachers and their school administrators if allegations were made against them. Lack of perceived support may be related to increased perception of risk. Eighty-two percent (82%) said that other teachers would be supportive of them, and 65% indicated that their school administration would be supportive. A sizable minority feel they would not be supported.

Teacher–Student Interaction Vignettes

To assess the impact on the teaching environment, teachers were asked to read and respond to vignettes about teacher–student interactions and offer

their advice about the interaction to a new teacher, of the teacher’s gender, and teaching students of the same age. There were three levels of contact: (1) being alone in a room with the student, (2) touching a student, and (3) touching or hugging a student to provide comfort or to show affection. The teachers were asked to give their advice separately for male and female students.

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Teacher Gender and Being Alone in a Room with a Student. Approximately 41% (41.2%) of the responding teachers said that they would advise against being alone in a room with a male student. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in the degree to which they advised against being alone in a room with male students. About forty percent (40.2%) of the responding teachers advised against being alone in a room with a female student. There was a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers, with male teachers more strongly advising against being alone with female students than female teachers.

Teacher Gender and Putting an Arm Around Shoulder. The teachers were asked about putting an arm around, or a hand on a student’s shoulder. The majority (61.7%/61.5%) of teachers advised against this type of contact with either male or female students (61.6%). There was no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers when advising about male students. However, male teachers more strongly advised against putting an arm around or putting a hand on a student’s shoulder when the student was female than did female teachers.

Teacher Gender and Hugging to Show Affection or to Comfort. The teachers were also asked to advise about having “physical contact with stu-

TABLE 2. Teacher Gender and Advice About Interaction with Students

	Mean Rating	
	Male Teachers	Female Teachers
Male Students		
Alone in a room	2.5	2.3
Touching	3.0	2.7
Hug, show affection	3.2 ^a	2.8 ^b
Perception of risk	1.9	1.7
Female Students		
Alone in a room	2.7 ^a	2.3 ^b
Touching	3.2 ^a	2.6 ^b
Hug, show affection	3.3 ^a	2.7 ^b
Perception of risk	2.1 ^a	1.7 ^b

Note. Values in the same row with different superscripts are significantly different . . .

dents, such as hugging them to provide comfort or show affection." A large majority of teachers advised against touching either male (71.1%) or female (67.6%) students to show affection. There was a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers when advising about male students. Male teachers more strongly advised against touching male students to show affection than did female teachers. Male teachers also more strongly advised against putting an arm around a student's shoulder when the student was female than did female teachers.

Teacher Gender and Risk of Allegations Against Self. Teachers were asked about the "degree of risk" of allegations being made against them by students. For both male and female students, fully 40% of the teachers reported no sense of risk of allegations. However, over 40% of the teachers indicated some sense of risk from their male (44.2%) and female (42.8%) students. An additional 10% of the teachers reported a moderate sense of risk with both male and female students; about 5% of the teachers reported a high sense of risk with both male and female students. There was no statistically significant difference on this item between male and female teachers when a male student was involved. However, there was a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers when a female student was involved. Male teachers felt themselves to be at greater risk than female teachers, when the reference was a female student.

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Grade Taught and Touching. There were statistically significant differences by grade taught and touching male students; teachers of grades 6–8 and 9–12 rated touching male students; significantly more negatively (warned more against this type of contact) than did teachers of grades K–5. Teachers of grades 6–8 and grades 9–12 rated touching female students significantly more negatively (warned more against this type of contact) than did teachers of grades K–5.

Grade Taught and Hugging to Show Affection or to Comfort. Teachers of grades 6–8 and 9–12 rated touching male students to show affection significantly more negatively (warned more against this type of contact) than did teachers of grades K–5.

Teachers of grades 6–8 and 9–12 rated touching female students to show affection significantly more negatively (warned more against these types of contact) than did teachers of grades K–5.

Advice-Giving and Perception of Risk of Allegations Against Themselves. The advice a teacher gave about teacher–student interactions was significantly correlated with the teachers' ratings of perception of risk of abuse allegations against themselves. Advice was also correlated with teacher's level of worry about being the subject of an abuse allegation . . . [T]he more teachers worried about an allegation of abuse against themselves, the more they advised against being in a room alone, or physically touching a student. A primary rea-

son for limiting contact with students appears to be concerns about the risk of abuse allegations.

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DISCUSSION

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The findings of the survey suggest that concern among teachers about allegations of child maltreatment against teachers is fairly widespread. Teachers are aware of allegations made against other teachers, and a majority claim to be aware of false allegations against teachers made in their school districts. About a third said they were worried about allegations being made against them. About a third felt they would not be supported by their administrations if an allegation were made against them.

This concern about child abuse is translated into formal and informal school policies limiting close or physical contact with students. Our study reveals that teachers advise against touching students, particularly older students who are post-puberty. The effect is stronger among male teachers, especially in regard to female students. The correlation between worry about being the subject of a child abuse allegation and advice against touching students suggests that the overall atmosphere which emphasizes child abuse and especially child sexual abuse may be having some detrimental effects on the school environment. These data suggest the effect may be stronger in the middle school and the high school than in the elementary school. Both male and female teachers are more likely to limit contact with older rather than younger students. Given the publicity about criminal convictions of child care workers in preschools and in day care centers, those workers may also limit contact with very young children. However, our data are restricted to teachers of school age children.

Although we don't have specific data bearing on the incidence of abuse allegations against teachers to make comparisons for male and female teachers, it seems more likely that the greatest incidence of abuse allegations by students against teachers would be allegations made against male teachers by female students. Male teachers appear much more likely to limit their contact with both male and female students than female teachers. Although this effect is clearly more pronounced with female students than with male students (as would be expected and is probably appropriate), there is also evidence to indicate that male teachers may be inhibited from interacting too closely physically with their male students as well.

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To the extent that fears about allegations cause teachers to limit contact with their students, there are potentially negative consequences within the teaching environment. One potentially negative outcome of more distant teacher-student interactions is that teachers will be less likely to relate closely enough to students to be open to disclosures of abuse or to be observant of

changes in behavior and affect that may be indicative of abuse (or other student problems). Perhaps more importantly, though, an environment in which teachers are fearful about interacting too closely with students may deny students opportunities for positive growth experiences that can occur in the educational setting. For many students, particularly those who don't have other opportunities for those experiences outside of school, this would be a significant negative outcome.

Teachers and administrators may need to be more straightforward in their policies and in drawing lines between what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior to avoid a chilling climate in which natural closeness is minimized to the student's detriment.

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JEANETTE C. NUNNELLEY AND TEESUE FIELDS

EXCERPTS FROM: ANGER, DISMAY, GUILT, ANXIETY—THE REALITIES AND ROLES IN REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

In 1997 more than three million children were reported to child protective services (CPS) for child abuse and neglect, and 1,054,000 cases were confirmed by authorities (Prevent Child Abuse America 1998). This number represents 15 out of every 1,000 children in the United States. Approximately 8% of all cases of confirmed victims of maltreatment were child sexual abuse. Since 1985 the fatalities rate as a result of abuse has increased by 34% (Wang & Daro 1998).

When abuse is reported, a certain amount of guilt for making the accusation is present along with anxiety and stress associated with the required procedures and possible court experiences. There is always empathy and grave concern for the child, who often exhibits frustrating behavior patterns that are hard to understand. In some cases an adult's own early childhood experiences are rekindled with overwhelming feelings. Also, flaws in the reporting system and in individual schools and centers can stifle a teacher's best attempts at helping a child.

Because of these conflicting emotions, lack of training, and so few support systems for the persons reporting child abuse, individuals may want to ignore suspected abuse. However, it is often the early childhood educator in a child care setting, Head Start, preschool, kindergarten, or other similar program who first encounters abusive situations. Therefore, it is imperative that every teacher, assistant, counselor, and administrator be knowledgeable about child abuse in general. They must also understand reporting procedures, recognize the various emotions associated with them, and seek support as needed.

GET TRAINING IN REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In 1974 the U.S. Congress passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which requires states receiving federal funds for combating child abuse to adopt mandatory reporting. Today, in every state in the United States as well as the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands, certain professionals (including early childhood educators) are required to report suspicions of child abuse and

Nunnelley, J. C., & T. Fields. 1999. Anger, Dismay, Guilt, Anxiety—The Realities and Roles in Reporting Child Abuse. *Young Children* (54) 5: 74-79. Reprinted with permission from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

neglect to proper authorities. Exact procedures and wordings may vary, but the bottom line is that failure to report is illegal.

Unfortunately, studies show that among professionals substantial gaps exist on what is required for the reporting procedures (Reiniger, Robinson, & McHugh 1995). In research conducted for the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, almost 40% of the professionals mandated to report abuse admitted that at some time in their careers they had suspected abuse but decided not to report it (Zellman & Bell 1990). Approximately one-fourth of the health care professionals and one-half of all child care providers in the sample had no reporting experience.

Misconceptions, such as the belief that parents are to be notified first and the person reporting must *prove* the abuse, are very common, particularly among child care providers (Wurtele & Schmitt 1992). Workplace characteristics, levels of knowledge and training concerning maltreatment, and positive beliefs about protective service agencies also influence reporting practices (Zellman & Bell 1990).

Results from a national teacher survey reveal that approximately two-thirds of the respondents believe that training on child abuse by their schools is insufficient (Abrahams, Casey, & Daro 1992). One imperative, therefore, is that professionals receive training relevant to the reporting procedures in their state. Such professional development must be comprehensive and not limited simply to recognizing signs of abuse and neglect. Reporting procedures, the role of protective service workers, and information on immunity to liability need to be covered (Reiniger, Robinson, & McHugh 1995).

Another major variable about reporting maltreatment is the actual definition of *abuse*. Cultural groups, family rights issues, religious doctrines, and assumptions about children influence a state's definition (Tower 1992). An individual's own beliefs and feelings about discipline also affect attitudes toward reporting abusive situations. Teachers seem particularly reluctant to be bound by specific definitions that may infringe on discipline strategies of the school or the home (Tite 1993). However, whatever a teacher's personal belief system might be, early childhood professionals should know the legal definition of *abuse* in their state and also realize their own emotional biases.

For instance, a family child care provider becomes concerned when a three-year-old has marks on his legs from "being spanked by Daddy." When the provider discusses it with the father, he explains that he believes in strict discipline and thinks hitting his son with a switch is the best way to help him learn good behavior. The provider knows that the boy and his father have a good relationship, so she is reluctant to make a report. Although it is a very stressful and confusing situation, the provider must report the problem.

BE AWARE OF SCHOOL OR PROGRAM POLICIES

How early childhood programs, school districts, family child care, or child care centers specifically report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect may vary

according to their policies. Tower (1992) suggests that it is important for each setting to have procedures that assist teachers and other personnel in making reports. These policies should clearly state who is responsible for calling in the report and any follow-up activities, such as court appearances, that may be needed.

Even when policies for reporting child abuse are in place, those responsible often feel their action is a betrayal of the family and they themselves become victims. For example, school counselors often must perform a multitude of conflicting roles associated with a child abuse report (Remley & Fry 1993). The counselor becomes the liaison between the victim and investigators and frequently must testify in court. In child care centers or other pre-school programs, these roles are often filled by the director. In many public schools, the principal takes on these duties. Educators feel that valuable work time is lost; teachers have concern about further repercussions toward the child; families are angry and threats are made; the school or center gets bad publicity—the list goes on. Even in the face of these realities, the report must be made.

Other issues that may need to be addressed are family counseling and possible medical attention for the child (Wolverton 1987). Additionally, ongoing contact with child protective services, leading to mutual training, the creation of task forces and various multidisciplinary teams, and joint public advocacy efforts, strengthens relationships and avoids misunderstandings.

KNOW THE SPECIFIC SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

It is extremely traumatic for those working with children to encounter child abuse in any form, and educators often avoid preparing themselves with the necessary knowledge about the identification. The cruel reality is that most educators will face that role. The chart titled “Four Types of Child Abuse” highlights major categories of child abuse with accompanying indicators as identified by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (1986).

Many abusing behaviors could signify other problems; thus interpretations must be cautious. It is important for educators to note the pattern of behavior as much as the behavior itself. For instance, are there recurring injuries or does an usually happy child suddenly become extremely withdrawn and fearful when touched?

Children *do* fall and *do* have accidents on the knees, elbows, shins, and forehead. However, bruises in the softer areas of the body, such as the back, genital areas, thighs, buttocks, face, or back of the legs, are cause for suspicion. Children *do* have sexual curiosities, but a preoccupation with or extreme protectiveness about the genital areas is not normal. Repetition of injuries can also be significant. A final reality is that some children are much more likely to be abused, such as those with disabilities or from communities plagued with social problems of drug abuse and violence (Cates, Markell, & Bettenhausen 1995).

Four Types of Child Abuse

Type/Definition	Physical Indicators	Emotional Indicators
Physical abuse: adult inflicts or allows infliction of physical injury by other than accidental means	bruises lacerations welts, lumps, bumps unexplained fractures burns—cigarette, scalding, water	verbalizes abuse shows fear of going home or of punishment acts severely withdrawn
Neglect: adult deprives a child of conditions necessary for appropriate development (food, shelter, medical care, and so forth)	severely underweight dark circles under eyes inappropriate dress gross uncleanness immature physical development	continual fatigue continual hunger with voracious appetite chronic absenteeism begging for or hiding food
Sexual abuse: adult (or older child in a position of power) uses a child for sexual gratification or permits another person to use a child for sexual gratification	foreign matter in genitals bruised or dilated genitals recurrent urinary tract infections difficulty/pain in walking	seductive behavior artwork depicting sexual themes self-destructive behavior sleep disorders running away prostitution
Emotional abuse: adult inflicts mental/emotional harm using verbal harassment, threats, and systematic destruction of a child's self-esteem	obesity self-abusive behaviors (head banging, hair pulling, rocking)	severely withdrawn overly submissive or apathetic verbalizes self-hate

UNDERSTAND THE CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE

Because recognition of abuse is so emotionally charged, it is important to know why it occurs. Anger and dismay are dealt with more easily when teachers understand why abuse happens. Many child abusers were abused themselves and had poor parenting models. Iverson and Segal (1990) found that many child abusers have low self-esteem or experience depression and other mental health problems. Many face societal issues such as economic stress, lack of social supports, and substance abuse problems (Tower 1992). Often, one adult in the home may be the abuser, and the other is unaware of the behavior. In some cases one parent may be financially or emotionally dependent on the other parent or someone else living in the household who is the abuser. Teenage

mothers also are more at risk for abusing their children due to their own lack of maturity (Iverson & Segal 1990).

Regardless of the situations, perpetrators must not be excused. However, simply to punish the abuser without addressing underlying issues is not effective in eliminating the problem in early childhood settings or society. Early childhood professionals must recognize the realities of the broader issues associated with child abuse.

REPORT SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE!

A knowledge of the state's definition of child abuse, policies of the child care program, and the issues surrounding child abuse will assist a teacher in reporting suspected cases. Generally, reports are made to the proper authorities 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, via a published hotline. Agencies are usually listed in the phone book under Child Protection Services or other similar names. The caller may remain anonymous, but being available as a resource may prove valuable to the investigation. The reporter of child abuse is protected under law if the call has been made in good faith.

Usually, the person reporting child abuse will need to give the following information:

- child's name, age, and address;
- parent's name and address; and
- a description of the problem observed.

In some states, additional information is needed. The childhood educator may be asked about other occasions of injuries to the child or details that may assist the state agency receiving the report (Tower 1992). It is not up to the teacher to investigate or prove the suspected case, but to report it. The child protective services agency will do the investigation.

If the CPS agency determines that action should be taken, a caseworker is sent to the home or setting, and the child may be removed temporarily. If further investigation reveals serious abuse, sometimes it is necessary to remove the child from the home and place him or her in foster care. This decision is never made lightly by either the social service agency or the courts. The action is taken to protect the child.

As difficult as it is for a young child to be placed with strangers, even more difficult is coping with a seriously battered child. In less serious cases, most states provide abusers with access to family counseling and other services. Even if action by CPS does not seem immediate, a report may be confirmed by future ones; it also may be useful in substantiating previous indications. Teachers should always report their suspicions.

Once the decision has been made to report the abuse, the child should not be questioned by any one until the appropriate agency is present. To prevent trauma to the child and to preserve the integrity of the case, the child should be asked to tell the story as few times as possible.

SEEK EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Reporting a case of child abuse can be very traumatic for the teacher/caregiver. Individuals worry, "Will I break up the family? Have I done the right thing? Will the parents be angry? Will I see the child again? Will I have to go to court? Will I lose my job?" If a report is made and nothing happens, the teacher also may feel frustrated by the system. If a parent confronts the caregiver in anger or removes the child from the program, guilt and a deep sense of loss may also occur.

First, it is important for teachers to recognize that these feelings are normal. Some steps that could help include the following:

- Talk to someone who has also reported cases of child abuse, such as the director of the program, another family child care provider, a school counselor, the principal, or the school nurse.
- Start a support group in the school district or area for those who generally make abuse reports and court appearances.
- Set up meetings within local professional organizations to address the issue of child abuse and its effect on those who report it.

The state affiliates of Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA), formerly the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, may have local child abuse councils that [offer] resources and a friendly listening ear. It is important to note that many child abuse survivors have revealed that the silence of adults who must have known of the abuse was as hard to take as the abuse itself (Calao & Hosanky 1983). Finally, teachers must remember that reporting the suspicion of abuse is *not* a choice—it is a legal obligation.

HELP THE CHILD

The focus of this article is on the realities of reporting child abuse and efforts to help the child. However, it is also important to mention that early childhood professionals should be aware of existing programs in the community that assist children in recognizing and reporting abusive situations. Additionally, there are educational materials beyond the scope of this article that inform teachers and others in understanding the abused child. Appropriate children's literature can also aid the individual child who may be dealing with child abuse.

The primary goal of understanding, reporting, and coping with the realities of child abuse is to ultimately help children and families. With all early childhood professionals working together in the new millennium, perhaps these realities will no longer exist.

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IRWIN A. HYMAN AND PAMELA A. SNOOK

EXCERPT: DANGEROUS SCHOOLS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THEM

In response to misperceptions of the real extent of school violence, schools have increasingly adopted law enforcement models rather than educational models for violence reduction. What's more, there is little evidence for the

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efficacy of such prevention approaches as the use of metal detectors, increased police presence in schools, searches of students and lockers, the use of student and staff identification cards, and so on. Even in those exceptional cases where police involvement remains necessary, an overdependence on police intervention can have a variety of unintended negative consequences. But all these approaches focus on violence committed by students and do not address the conditions of schools and the acts of educators that may increase school disruptions.

We examine school violence from a different angle. We argue that educator violence against students, including verbal and physical assaults and the undermining of students constitutional rights, erodes rather than enhances school safety. Unnecessarily harsh and punitive disciplinary practices against students create a climate that contributes to school violence. This issue is little recognized and scarcely researched.

So why is this information important for you to know? The increased climate of punitiveness toward children makes it more difficult to convince school boards, legislators, judges, and juries that harsh discipline is really toxic. If citizens believe that young people are dangerous and that schools are out of control, they will conclude that youthful offenders deserve draconian punishments. We have become a country of punishment promoters whose policies make us the most punitive of all the Western democracies. In this article we'll explain why we believe this to be true and what you can do to help bring about political change.

AMERICA THE PUNITIVE

Based on data from 1998, the United States incarcerates 668 citizens for every 100,000 residents. This is higher by a wide margin than any other country for which data exist. Russia and South Africa are our closest competitors. This emphasis on punishment by jailing would be great if it worked, especially with juveniles.

Most crimes are committed by males between the ages of around 15 to 25. Fifty-three percent of all identified murderers in 1993 were under the age of 25. Since there will be a 20% increase in the juvenile population by 2005, experts predict a doubling of juvenile arrests for violent crime by 2010. Of course, the experts could be wrong, because violent crime in the U.S. fell 12% in 1995 and has continued to drop.

Compared to most Western democracies, America is returning to an 18th-century model of punishment and retribution in dealing with misbehavior, deviancy, and delinquency. However, every study conducted that has compared punishment with prevention in juvenile detention centers demonstrates that education, rehabilitation, and therapy are much more successful than punishment in decreasing the re-arrest rates. But many Americans reject reliable scientific data because they are subject to a pattern of thought we call the Singapore Syndrome.

TRYING CHILDREN AS ADULTS: A RETURN TO THE 19TH CENTURY

In 1899, courts began to recognize that childhood is different from adulthood. Juvenile courts were established to intervene on behalf of children when their parents were unable to raise them properly. Since then, vast amounts of psychological, social, developmental, and medical research have demonstrated that children and youths are different from adults. However, America the punitive has begun to reject this notion. In part, this is due to the media's eagerness to sensationalize individual cases of youth violence. Particular groups, such as inner-city African American and Hispanic youths, have been demonized in cinematic portrayals of violent lifestyles. Since the recent well-publicized spate of school shootings—and despite an anticipated counter campaign by the National Rifle Association—white country boys brandishing hunting rifles may soon be demonized in the media.

This demonization of youth contributes further to the lynch mentality of many Americans. Rather than understanding why a boy like 11-year-old Andrew Golden of Jonesboro, Arkansas, would shoot his classmates, the first reaction of many citizens and officials was to find a way to try him as an adult. This reflects a growing belief in retribution and revenge in response to criminal activity, which contributes further to the toxicity of schools.

The political Right's push toward punishment has extended beyond schools and the jails. But, in a strange alliance, moderate to liberal jurists and conservative politicians are willing to eliminate juvenile courts as they exist, along with current laws for trying children and youths. Liberals feel that the closed proceedings of the courts and the indeterminate sentences, which were originally developed to protect children, tend to deny them their constitutional rights. While acknowledging that children and youths should not be treated as adults, these critics seek better guarantees of due process rights. Moderates and conservatives tend to believe that the system is too lenient. They feel that it protects predatory youths who deserve adult sentences for committing violent crimes.

TOXIC SCHOOLS

Our society's demonization of youth has resulted in schools that are increasingly driven by policies and politics of punishment. Many believe that safe and orderly schools require automatic punishments based on zero tolerance policies. The routine and unquestioning acceptance of these policies is not only undermining and distorting students' understanding and belief in constitutional rights; there is also the simple fact that such policies do not work. The intensifying and automatic use of punishment, as opposed to prevention of misbehavior and violence in schools, makes the schoolhouse toxic for too many children. We are concerned about educators who are inherently punitive and autocratic. We are alarmed about educators who believe exaggerated and distorted accounts of school crime and youth violence. They become agents of dangerously punitive policies that victimize students.

Yet we are not out to lead the charge of the teacher bashers and public school detractors or to undermine education or educators. Nor do we oppose the police or denigrate police tactics—in their proper place. However, we do want to make readers aware of the poisonous practices that have made too many schools toxic to the emotional, physical, and academic health of children. We also maintain that, except in very exceptional situations of imminent danger, such police tactics as strip searches, random urine screening, and massive drug searches have no place in schools.

THE ANTIDOTE

In contrast to toxic schools, schools that encourage participatory democracy are characterized by a climate in which students and staff members understand the need to respect one another's rights. Democratic schools provide students with a sense of shared responsibility with the school staff for assuring the safety of all. Further, these schools will encourage students to participate in democracy when they become adults.

We'd like to help you assess the level of democracy in your community's schools and discuss how and why schools that reflect democracy help our nation fulfill the promise of a life governed by the pursuit of liberty, happiness, and emotional health. Americans can enhance the quality of life for people of all ages by promoting democratic schools, or they can see the quality of life slowly—or not so slowly—eroded for themselves and their families as their schools settle into an authoritarian and repressive mold.

HOW CAN SCHOOLS BE DEMOCRATIC?

American schools are rooted in participatory democracy more than those in any other industrialized Western nation because of our system of local control. Citizens at the local level elect school boards to represent them in setting policies and regulations in each district. Unfortunately, democracy is extremely fragile, and, at the local level, it is particularly susceptible to the dictatorship of the majority. By this we mean that, in such areas as discipline and student rights, punitive and authoritarian impulses in a community can rule policy making and impose severe sanctions on individuals who do not conform to community standards. When students are accused of misbehavior, this tendency can be magnified by punishment-oriented policy makers who ignore evidence that supports democratic prevention- and treatment-oriented approaches to the problem. As a result, individuals' rights can be easily trampled, parents without political clout or resources are often prevented from protecting their children, and students' sense of the promise of democracy is stunted before it can blossom.

The idea that American schools should be exemplars of democracy is not new. In recent history, John Dewey was perhaps the educational philosopher

most associated with attempts to transform rigid, conservative schools into progressive institutions reflecting the ideals of democracy. He was an educator, philosopher, psychologist, and writer who in the 1930s and 1940s urged schools to take democracy seriously as an underpinning of education. Needless to say, he and his liberal ideas were excoriated by conservatives, who still blame the implementation of his theory of progressive education for many of the ills they perceive in schools. His critics fail to resonate to the idea of democratic schools.

WHAT IS A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL, ANYWAY?

A democratic school begins with a school board that respects and empowers all members of the education community to participate in policy development and implementation. Therefore, school governance, as a common concern, enhances participatory democracy. By this we mean that all citizens come to feel that they have a stake in the success of the school. For instance, a national study that compared violent and safe schools demonstrated that safe schools were characterized by leadership that instilled in students a sense of fairness, belongingness, and empowerment to effect change. It was not the strict, authoritarian, rule-bound schools that were the safest.

One of the best indicators that your school district is oriented toward democratic principles is the morale of the school staff. Morale will be high if the school board and administrators seek consensus by responding to the needs of teachers, students, and parents. Policy making is characterized by committee efforts to define problems and consensus building to shape solutions. Committees may be made up of teachers, administrators, parents, and representatives of other constituencies. The hallmark of these democratic schools is that the recommendations of such committees are seriously considered and often adopted.

While disagreements among school board members are healthy and sometimes desirable, democracy is defeated when the board is politically polarized to the extent that constant ideological and economic battles paralyze the educational process. As a result, school administrators frequently attempt to survive either by aligning themselves with the most powerful factions on the school board or by avoiding decisions and actions that would anger either side. In each case, the process for enhancing democratic decision making is stymied.

When school boards and administrators are paralyzed by conflict or entrapped in authoritarian leadership, students and parents will suffer. These situations cause poor morale among teachers. When teachers are dispirited, students will inevitably suffer. When officials denigrate, demean, or ridicule teachers, teachers will tend to denigrate, demean, and ridicule students. In addition, in situations of poor staff morale, educators tend to focus on their careers and survival within the system rather than on the needs of students and parents.

Children are at serious risk of maltreatment in disciplinary situations in dysfunctional, authoritarian schools. Such schools rarely provide equitable means for redress and can usually be changed only through political efforts.

This requires electing different school boards and hiring democratic administrators. This solution is complex and beyond the scope of this article.

Another approach to change is personal action based on knowledge of democratic schooling and, if necessary, the threat of litigation. Ideally, when a problem occurs, you can identify either individual or systemic abuses and pressure or encourage school officials to ameliorate the situation. To do this at a system level, you need some guidelines to identify problems and develop a plan of action to make the school more democratic and sensitive to children's needs. In what follows, we sketch an approach to developing such a plan.

ASSESSING SCHOOL CLIMATE

We believe that the best antidote for toxic climates characterized by punitive discipline is large infusions of democracy. This is the best prescription for administering schools and enhancing the lives of children. Yet many consider this medicine a cause rather than a cure. The level of democratic practice in every school district and school building can be measured through climate assessment techniques. Every school district and building has a climate, which may range from authoritarian to democratic. Effective discipline is dependent on a healthy school climate.

School climate includes all aspects of the environment of a school that may affect learning and discipline. Communities, parents, students, teachers, and even the school buildings contribute to the climate. Almost invariably, however, the principal is the chief determiner of the climate in any school. Almost any educator who works in more than one school can tell you about the differences between them. Sitting in a classroom, watching the students at lunch, observing the secretaries, watching students and teachers in the halls, and attending staff meetings all offer valuable clues about the climate of a school as determined by the principal's leadership style.

The scientific way to diagnose school climate is to develop a questionnaire that is answered anonymously by students, staff, administrators, and even parents. Sounds impossible, but it isn't. Effective change to eliminate toxic practices and change the school culture takes at least three to four years of effort, beginning with school climate assessment.

There are many books on school climate, some focusing on systematic and intentional modeling of democracy in discipline policies and practices. This topic is too complex to discuss fully here, but you can find out more about it in a book co-authored by Irwin Hyman, *School Discipline and School Violence* (Allyn & Bacon, 1997), from which some of the following is taken. The brief overview here will familiarize you with the concept as it applies to our concerns.

First, for climate assessment and subsequent change to occur, school boards and administrators must be open to using social science methods to bring about democratic change. Change begins with the commitment to openly seek information from students, parents, and school staff regarding the functioning of the schools.

Democratic leaders feel free to listen to criticism, assess problems, and consider options for change. Authoritarian leaders are rarely open to public criticism or self-analysis and therefore are generally unwilling to conduct climate assessment. When authoritarian administrators are forced to participate in a climate assessment, they often sabotage the process, ridicule any information that emerges and is contrary to their own beliefs, and undermine change efforts.

Climate assessment begins with the process of problem identification. This is best done by a committee representing teachers, administrators, students, and parents. Through brainstorming and consultation with their constituencies, committee members identify areas of concern. They may need technical help to learn to write items for a climate assessment questionnaire. The list they develop will be unique for each school, but it will probably include many of these items: discipline codes and policies; staff morale; availability of professional support services, such as school psychologists, social workers, and counselors; teacher communication with parents and administrators; availability of resources; extra staff to help with discipline problems; adequacy of libraries; and even availability of such essentials as textbooks, pencils, chalk, and paper.

Problem clarification may take several sessions of brainstorming by the steering committee. After areas of concern are discussed, members of the committee meet with their constituents to confirm that all problem domains have been identified before developing a climate assessment questionnaire.

Items are then developed to measure the extent of problems in each area. This is where technical help may be necessary to develop a questionnaire that can be easily administered, scored, and interpreted. The questionnaire usually consists of statements to which the respondents can indicate their feelings about the nature, severity, and extent of the issues included.

School climate assessment related to discipline involves asking questions about organization, structure, and leadership. For instance, are clear guidelines concerning school rules made available to parents and students each year? Were the guidelines developed with input from parents, students, and teachers? Do they spell out the rights and responsibilities of both students and school staff members? If so, do they indicate that teachers must show respect and concern for students and treat them with the same dignity that is demanded from students? Are penalties for misbehavior meted out in a strictly legalistic manner, or are they based on an understanding of individual differences and mitigating circumstances? Does the pattern of punishment reflect fairness and equity for all groups? Does the school have a positive motivational or discipline plan to encourage appropriate behavior, and are staff members trained in the system? Do teachers understand individual reasons for misbehavior? Do school staff members attempt to make school an interesting and rewarding place for students?

The effects of diversity of students on discipline policies and practices should be formally studied in climate assessment. It is important to identify whether students are unfairly disciplined because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, or family background. Are teachers aware of the best motivational techniques for various groups, and has the school attempted

to implement a variety of corrective approaches, such as peer counseling, peer tutoring, or cooperative learning groups?

Diagnoses of climate factors that affect discipline should include questions about teachers. For instance, are significant numbers of teachers burned out and therefore apathetic or overly punitive toward misbehavior? Are teachers involved in developing policies and practices regarding misbehavior? Are there systems of rewards or recognition for teachers who develop and carry out positive, preventive, and effective discipline programs? Are parents, students, and mental health personnel involved in planning discipline strategies? Do teachers have adequate access to consultation with support personnel such as school psychologists and counselors? Are adequate resources available to individualize programs for chronically misbehaving students, even though they may not be classified as having disabilities? To prevent misbehavior, are all students taught at appropriate grade levels?

The construction, administration, scoring, and feedback of results can take up to a year. Once the results of the assessment are obtained, the committee presents them to the school staff, administrators, and other constituencies. By using an assessment instrument, it is possible to quantify the results in a way that allows issues to be prioritized.

Using the results of the survey, the school staff can determine which areas have the highest priority and what resources can be expended for solutions. Because of democratic participation in the process, various school constituencies, including teachers and students, own the process and the possible solutions. Therefore they will be likely to commit to solving the problems by developing programs to prevent misbehavior; to sensitize teachers, parents, and students to one another's needs; and thereby to enhance the total school climate.

The implementation of problem solving is far beyond the scope of this article. It involves a variety of activities, from researching how other schools have resolved similar problems to developing local strategies, consulting experts, and employing a variety of resources to strengthen the school. While we believe it is important to understand how schools can become detoxified by making themselves democratic and thus sensitive to the needs of students, we understand that individual educators may have little opportunity to effect change at the system or school level. But you may have influence at the classroom level. So it is important to have a good understanding of what democracy means at the classroom level.

LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL POLICY INITIATIVES

In Your School District. In the annual Gallup polls of the public's attitudes toward public schools, discipline invariably comes out as one of the top concerns. Yet a national survey done in 1993 indicated that only about half of all accredited teachers colleges offered an undergraduate course in school discipline and only half of those required all students to take the course.

When we give our discipline workshops to teachers, most participants who were trained before the 1990s indicate that they never had any undergraduate or graduate courses in discipline. Few are familiar with the research and literature on corporal punishment or psychological maltreatment. Many have had at least one inservice workshop on discipline, but these workshops have generally lasted only a few hours each, and the teachers often have only a vague idea about what they learned.

You can lobby in your district for extensive teacher training to improve school discipline and decrease abuses. Educators and school boards need to be sensitized to these issues. School psychologists, mental health professionals, and child abuse experts can present workshops. There are probably college professors and others in your area with the necessary expertise. Preferably, workshops should be part of an ongoing program of training and consultation to help teachers deal with more difficult behavior problems. Ideally, this approach would be integrated into a climate assessment and remediation project based on the principles we have already discussed.

If you live in one of the 23 states that allow corporal punishment, you can lobby to eliminate it in your school district. The references we provide in our book should give you plenty of ammunition to respond when educators use personal anecdotes to defend a practice that invariably leads to abuse. Local school districts should recognize psychological maltreatment in the classroom and write regulations forbidding it. These should be included in the district's statement of philosophy, goals, and objectives and should be included in discipline handbooks.

Fear of drugs has led to the introduction of police tactics and a pedagogical penchant for punishment, interdiction, and a law enforcement orientation to substance abuse education. We will never win the war on drugs with police-oriented education programs, such as D.A.R.E., that use scare tactics. Despite millions of dollars spent on these popular programs, research shows that most are either ineffective or counterproductive.

Changing national drug policy is difficult, and considerations of this issue are beyond the scope of this article. Addiction is a medical problem that is treated as a moral issue. Drug prevention education in the schools can teach about addiction from a medical perspective rather than focusing on criminal issues. At a local level, schools and communities can decide how to design these programs. Drug education programs should focus entirely on the social, medical, and psychological problems of substance abuse. They should be conducted primarily by psychologists, nurses, physicians, and others with similar expertise on brain and behavior. Programs should be developmentally sensitive and therefore targeted to the language, cognitive understanding, and emotional readiness of each age group.

At the State Level. If your state allows corporal punishment in the schools, you can organize or join groups willing to lobby against this practice. Your allies can be drawn from agencies dealing with child abuse, workers dealing with domestic violence, former victims of maltreatment, and state professional

organizations representing the various mental health professions. You will also find that most national organizations devoted to child welfare, such as the American Psychological Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Education Association, the National PTA, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, have position papers or statements opposing corporal punishment in the schools.

You should urge your state representative to consider legislation that will enable your state to join the 27 states and almost all the other Western democracies that are able to educate schoolchildren without paddling. You will of course need to connect with experienced lobbyists, whose addresses may be made available to you through state organizations interested in the issue.

It will be a tough struggle, as we have discovered in Pennsylvania. After repeated attempts through Michael Veon, a state legislator, and with the cooperation of many professional and parent groups, we have still been unable to introduce a bill banning corporal punishment in Pennsylvania. The response we have encountered reflects the rural conservative mindset of a legislature wedded to pain and punishment in pedagogy. Our research shows that two-thirds of Pennsylvania schools report that they do not use corporal punishment, but the legislature continues to protect the ability of the remaining third to paddle students at will.

No state that we know of, except Connecticut, addresses psychological maltreatment in classrooms. However, many state departments of education have regulations that allude to prohibitions against emotionally damaging children. You should determine whether and where these regulations exist and lobby for improvement in the wording and specification of penalties.

We have documented the realities of psychological maltreatment in classrooms, one of the most common types of abuse of students. Because it is widespread but little understood by so many educators, we believe legislators need to address this issue. We recommend that they mandate education on psychological maltreatment in the classroom for teacher training programs and for school staff. This can be accomplished without significant cost increases to colleges or school budgets.

We believe that the violation of children's constitutional rights can be ameliorated at the state level. We propose that states establish a system of constitutional ombudsmen. We envision a system in which attorneys would provide pro bono (free) services to school districts. They would act as neutral ombudsmen when students, teachers, or parents feel that their constitutional rights have been violated. The task of these ombudsmen would be to educate individuals and groups within the school system about the constitutional issues involved in any particular situation.

Unlike attorneys who represent the school district or injured parties, constitutional ombudsmen would remain neutral and focus on educating people to make a decision about whether they believe they were denied their constitutional rights. For example, if a principal arbitrarily censored an article in the school newspaper, the writer could seek advice about case law involving similar situations. It would then be up to the student to decide what to do. The

ombudsman's consultation could be directed to the writer, the newspaper staff, or the entire student body. The purpose would be to make the Constitution a living document and to frequently remind students and staff members of the importance of the Bill of Rights in their daily lives.

At the National Level. Most of us probably feel that we have little chance of directly influencing national policy. However, there are many legislators who support the positions we have presented here, and they welcome the efforts of people who are concerned and willing to work. The first author has testified in congressional hearings on bills to restrict the use of corporal punishment in the schools and to deter national policies of punitiveness. These efforts have always been blocked by conservative legislators, and admittedly this is an uphill struggle at this time. But we believe that the country will eventually swing back to moderation and that lobbying groups should be positioned to present meaningful legislation to make schools safer for children . . .

We hope that our efforts have helped you to understand this truth and that you are willing to join the struggle to change our schools. While you may think that our portrayal is one of doom and gloom, we obviously have hope. Otherwise, why write our book, why publish this article, and why continue to work with schools and parents? We are continuing the fight because we believe that, given facts rather than propaganda, the majority of Americans will opt for reforms. Where do you stand?

JULIE RASICOT

THE THREAT OF HARM: WHY YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE STUDENTS' THREATS LIGHTLY

Jose Martinez is not likely to forget that Sunday afternoon last November when he was summoned to the police station in Burlington, Wis.

At the station, the high school principal listened in disbelief as police officers told him of a plot by five students to take over his school the next day. The boys say they were going to shoot the school's police liaison officer, take Martinez and his assistant principal hostage, lock down the building, and use records to find students and staff they wanted to kill.

"If anybody got in their way, even if they were innocent, they would shoot them, too," says Martinez, who was also on the hit list. "I was in shock. I became extremely concerned for the safety of everyone, not just myself."

Convinced the boys were serious, police rounded them up. By 9 that Sunday evening, the five students had confessed their parts in the plot. After

watching the boys' taped statements to police, Martinez says he had no doubt they would have followed through with their plan.

"That was part of the reason I felt it was real. They were cold-hearted in their statements," he says. "It wasn't a joke. They were serious about their plan."

HOW REAL A THREAT?

These boys' words left the principal certain of their intent, but cases aren't always so clear cut. Increasingly, school officials across the country are grappling with trying to determine whether a student's threat is serious or just youthful exaggeration. In the wake of last year's string of deadly school shootings in Oregon, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania, officials are responding by tightening policies, implementing maximum penalties, and educating staff members about recognizing the early warning signs of students who might be prone to violence.

For Martinez and others who've been faced with students threatening violence, there's only one way to handle threats. "Always take them seriously. Investigate every threat you have. And if you investigate and find out there was nothing there, that's great," he says. "But you don't want to take that chance."

Most school officials these days take student threats seriously, even if they're in the form of a couple of lines scribbled in a class journal or a conversation overheard at the bus stop. No longer can anyone afford to dismiss a threat simply because it might have been made in jest—the consequences of inaction might be devastating.

"In light of what happened in 1998, it is how school officials have been reacting," says Ron Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village, Calif. "The question that still remains is: How do you react without overreacting?"

How to discipline a student who has made a threat is a subject of debate, fueled by the conflicting views of school officials, psychologists, and civil rights advocates. Zero-tolerance policies, which treat all threats equally and often result in suspension or expulsion, are gaining popularity. Critics say these policies lead to overreaction, pointing to such cases as suspending a child for bringing a toy gun to school, but many school officials stand by the policies.

"It's not so much the issue of whether the threat is serious. It is serious, and the consequences are the same," says Edwin Merritt, superintendent of the 6,000-student Trumbull School District in Connecticut. "You don't differentiate."

Trumbull school officials recently consolidated several policies relating to school violence into one that was printed in a pamphlet and distributed to students. The policy was developed after two students were arrested this past June: a 12-year-old boy for threatening to kill three classmates and a 15-year-old freshman who had a bomb in his locker that was discovered a few hours before graduation.

"It's not zero tolerance, but that was the intent of it," Merritt says of the new policy. "The public in general was supportive."

WEIGHING MOTIVES AND RIGHTS

Mental health experts, however, are urging a more deliberative approach that explores a student's motives and metes out punishment on an individual basis. And civil rights advocates worry that students' rights might be trampled by efforts to ensure a safe school.

"This is a touchy and difficult issue that really should be taken on a case-by-case basis," says Kent Willis, director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Virginia. "The key for the school is to determine the context of any given statement and to try to determine realistically if this is something the student intended to carry out."

Willis cites the case of an Alexandria, Va., high school sophomore who was suspended in 1996 because a teacher found menacing his use of gun photos and "gangsta" rap song lyrics in a creative writing assignment. Representing the teen, the ACLU reached an out-of-court settlement with school officials that erased the suspension from the boy's record.

"In our case, it was a clear example of the student's experience being protected by the First Amendment," he says. "It was clearly in the context of a creative writing assignment that he made those statements. In our minds, [the suspension] was certainly an overreaction."

Like Willis, some school officials are wary of zero-tolerance policies because they allow little flexibility for considering the circumstances of a given situation, such as the student's age and background. Mike Wittmayer of the Oregon School Boards Association cites the example of how such a policy would punish a student who brings a paring knife to school to peel a piece of fruit for lunch.

"You take each of those cases individually," says Wittmayer, a former principal and the association's director of policy services. "There's no shortcut to taking the time to find out what's relevant" in a given situation.

And then there's the issue of reporting threats. Some school districts have adopted policies requiring staff and students to report threats, set up anonymous tip lines, and worked with school security staffs to create "intelligence networks" designed to keep officials aware of brewing trouble. A few have even established cash reward programs for information about students with guns.

But Willis warns that establishing tip lines on top of enforcing zero-tolerance policies could have unintended consequences.

"The school atmosphere is fraught with teenage angst and competition, and it seems a very dangerous precedent," he says. "If someone is falsely accused in this atmosphere of zero tolerance, they could find themselves being expelled because someone doesn't like them."

Some such ideas might be worth considering, says the National School Safety Center's Stephens. But he also recommends that school officials think carefully about devising new policies and treading that "fine line between supervision and snoopervision."

"We must ask ourselves what kind of climate we want in our schools," he says.

A RISK OF HARM

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association knew it was inviting controversy when it recently developed a suggested policy covering “terroristic” threats and acts after requests by some districts for guidance.

According to the policy, students making terroristic threats or committing such acts can be expelled. But because state law prohibits schools from expelling students permanently unless they are 17 or older, officials are faced with the prospect of a troubled student returning to school after 30 days. So the policy says a school board may require, prior to the student’s readmission, “competent and credible evidence that the student does not pose a risk of harm to others.”

It also says that expelled students may be subject to random searches upon returning to school. And staff and students are responsible for telling the principal when they find out about a threat or possible act.

“The policy basically puts an affirmative duty on staff and students to be stool pigeons, if you will,” says Don Owen, the group’s associate executive director for board development programs.

The association leaves it up to school districts to determine how much of the policy they want to adopt, he says. While some districts have adopted a similar version, he adds, some school lawyers are “queasy” about the section concerning random searches. But Owen believes that past court cases have paved the way for school officials to conduct such searches.

Larry Frankel, executive director of the Pennsylvania ACLU, doesn’t agree. Although his organization has received no complaints about the policy to date, he says, the ACLU does not believe that a prior expulsion provides enough reasonable suspicion to randomly search a student.

“It’s certainly giving an awful lot of authority to whoever is conducting this search,” Frankel says. “It doesn’t even limit the search. Is it the locker? Is it the body?”

Requiring staff and students to report possible threats and violent acts can also have unintended consequences, he says. “There should be better training of all school personnel to recognize real threats. This kind of policy can lead to not distinguishing what’s real or what’s a kid’s fantasy or joke,” Frankel says. “Are students really capable of evaluating that? Or even worse, are students going to start making things up because they don’t like someone? All of which could happen without a policy.”

EARLY-WARNING SIGNS

Recognizing whether a student represents a serious threat or has the potential for violence is a difficult task, made even more so when administrators are forced to make such determinations without the benefit of training or advice from mental health professionals.

Providing guidance on these issues is the goal of an early-warning guide developed by the departments of Education and Justice at the request of President Bill Clinton after last year's spate of school killings.

The guide outlines the characteristics of schools that are safe and responsive to all children. It also lists early-warning signs that can be used to identify kids prone to violence and discusses intervention tactics, developing a prevention plan, and how to respond to a crisis. (The guide is available online at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP>.) "People are using the guide for statewide problem-solving. Other school systems are dealing with it through interagency collaboration," says Kevin P. Dwyer, principal investigator for the guide and the president-elect of the National Association of School Psychologists.

One of the guide's most important recommendations, according to Dwyer, is that schools should establish a team that can make decisions about students who are threatening violence or exhibiting other troublesome behavior. That team, which should include an administrator and others with experience in the mental health field, such as a school psychologist and a special education teacher, would be responsible for determining how serious a student's actions may be and what steps to take.

"It's an unrealistic burden to put on the principal to make those kinds of decisions. Most of these situations are mental health issues," Dwyer says. "If a kid brings a gun to school, you don't have a problem dealing with that. But if a kid writes a story about killing peers, you have to determine" how serious the student is.

The guide also stresses the importance of training staff to recognize early-warning signs that a student might be prone to violence. But it warns against using these signs to diagnose or label a student; instead they should be viewed as possible signals that intervention is needed. Such signs include uncontrolled anger, social withdrawal, excessive feelings of rejection, and feelings of being picked on and persecuted.

"None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence," the guide warns. "Moreover, it is inappropriate—and potentially harmful—to use the early-warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children."

Dwyer agrees. "We're not good enough at predicting this," he says. "It's certainly harder to predict violent behavior in kids than if someone is going to get a disease."

Consulting a list of early-warning signs wouldn't have helped Principal William Gummerson when he thwarted a possible shooting at Northwestern High School in Rock Hill, S.C., in November.

A 16-year-old boy who'd brought a gun to school hadn't shown up on anyone's radar. His record showed no discipline problems, just some absences. But he'd told classmates that he planned to pull a fire alarm and shoot people as they left the building—copying the events of the deadly shooting rampage by two middle school students in Jonesboro, Ark., eight months earlier.

After students reported that the boy had shown them a gun at the bus stop, Gummerson and staff members searched him and found five .38-caliber

bullets. Minutes later, Gummerson discovered a holstered pistol in a box near the boy's desk.

In talking with the boy, Gummerson says, officials couldn't determine what his motive was. "We could get nothing out of this kid," he says. "He was cool as a cucumber. No remorse. This is the kind of kid you worry about who just comes out of the woodwork."

In the case of the five boys in Burlington, Wis., feelings of persecution did seem to play a role. The boys, some of whom wore black fingernail polish and lipstick, claimed they were tired of being taunted by other students.

Principal Jose Martinez says school officials had been hitting hard on the issue of harassment, holding a first-day-of-school symposium for freshmen and issuing statements that were read in homerooms, as recently as a week before the boys were apprehended. Students were urged not to harass others and to tell adults if they saw someone being persecuted.

"These young men didn't tell anyone that that was the case," he says. "They themselves were harassing other kids, we know that now."

A MATTER OF TRUST

Fostering strong relationships and open communication between students and staff can be a more effective deterrent to school violence than installing metal detectors and guards at the doors, experts say. If students trust the adults at school, they're more likely to confide in them when trouble is brewing.

"There's not a metal scanner or high-tech device that can accurately predict whether a youngster is going to commit an act of violence," Stephens says. His advice? "Get to know your students, and get to know them well. It's about building relationships."

Dwyer suggests that school officials look into setting aside time for teachers to spend regularly with their students if they want to prevent violence.

Requiring regular contact between teachers and students "will really prevent these things from happening," he says. "That kind of policy is far better than obsessing over the warning signs."

Gummerson praised staff and students for their help in averting a tragedy at Northwestern, saying the school's procedure for such incidents worked perfectly. "To a large extent, the reason we didn't have anyone hurt was because these students reported" seeing the gun, he says. "The most important factor is having the trust of students so they will come to you, even though it may mean giving up their friends."

In fact, there were a few calls for increased security after the gun incident at Northwestern, but Gummerson says he told parents that "if we had a fortress mentality, we never would have gotten the trust of students to tell us these things."

That trust should extend to security personnel as well, some observers say. According to Edwin Merritt, using security personnel who are trained to work with students and understand the peer network has helped Trumbull school officials keep informed about student problems.

"Our early-warning system is our kids," he says.

And once that early-warning system goes off—once officials hear of a violent threat, by whatever means—most say they wouldn't hesitate to call the police if the threat involves the use of a gun or other weapon. A growing number of school districts are developing partnerships with local police departments that include having officers stationed at schools so that help will be immediately available.

Dick Young, who assumed the superintendency of Arkansas's Westside Consolidated School District after the Jonesboro Middle School shooting, advocates such proactive measures as creating an anonymous tip line and establishing a school resource officer program that is capable of "developing intelligence regarding potential or planned acts of violence."

A resource officer who is a certified police officer began working at the Westside District's three schools in January. Not only does the officer provide a positive role model and police presence, he advises school officials on safety matters, helps with conflict resolution, and serves as a link between students and staff.

Young added the resource officer as part of a security plan he put in place after the former superintendent retired. He stresses that the officer wasn't hired directly in response to the fatal shootings.

"If I walked in here and there was not a feeling in the community for this service, I wouldn't try to put this in the schools," he says. "This is a response to the teachers who don't want to worry about being shot at and students who don't want to worry about being shot at."

But Stephens points out that not every situation requires police involvement. He advises officials to develop what he calls a threat protocol. First, talk to the student and, if necessary, involve a counselor and parents. Get a second opinion if need be. "The key factor is to utilize a level of judgment and prudence to make certain you're providing an appropriate level" of jurisprudence, he says.

School officials might differ on the best approach to handling a student threat, but there's one fact on which all agree: It's better to be safe than sorry. No longer can a comment like "I'm going to kill you" be dismissed for the joke it might be. These days, such words are likely to trigger administrative and even legal action.

Says Gummerson: "We come to school every day assuming something can happen."

LLOYD DUCK

EXCERPTS FROM: THE ONGOING PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

Building solid practices and positive attitudes from their first days of preservice education classes prepares teachers for the inevitable twists, turns, and

necessary course corrections that they will experience as their careers progress. Reflecting on growth *toward* the profession and planning for growth *within* the profession are essential for maintaining the freshness of self-renewal and the stamina for effectiveness throughout a career.

I'd like to share the 12 important principles of teacher education that I use with my graduate students as they prepare to assume the role of teacher.

GROWING TOWARD THE PROFESSION

Principle 1. Analyze your memories of successful teachers and successful learning experiences to discover how you can teach effectively (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). Use this analysis as a base for decision making. Ask yourself three questions: What one teacher do I remember as most successful? Why do I think that that teacher was successful? Does research on teaching support these elements of success? You will find that the elements of success you have noted informally are usually supported by research—and that the criteria for success you apply reveal your own temperament type and learning-style preference.

Principle 2. Mentally rehearse and practice with peers how you will introduce yourself to students on the first day of class by sharing learning experiences that gave you a zeal for studying the discipline you have chosen to teach. This information personalizes the subject matter and shows your enthusiasm for the discipline's value in your life. But be sure to present this information from a position of strength. That is, present it because you believe that your experiences have instructional value, not because you are reluctantly allowing students to probe for personal information that they might later use against you.

Sharing your enthusiasm directly and personally will help you develop appropriate rapport with students and may motivate them to view the discipline as worthy of study. Mentally rehearsing this procedure, even when you are beginning your growth toward the profession, underscores the usefulness of all you are doing to prepare for teaching. Ultimately, you should develop an introductory activity for your students that will illustrate the value of your discipline for their lives (Duck, 1994).

Principle 3. Ensure wholeness in your life by blending your plans for professional and personal growth (Jersild, 1955). This practice allows students to perceive your genuineness and underscores your credibility as a model for rational and moral behavior.

For instance, while attending a summer camp in New Mexico as a 14-year-old, one of my current interns decided to become a science teacher devoted to helping students benefit from outdoor education. That summer, he watched another youth in fragile health mature physically and emotionally to the point that the young camper could willingly climb a tree even with a heavy backpack digging into his shoulders. From that moment, this future science teacher was sold on the value of outdoor education and knew how he would blend his per-

sonal and professional development. He would keep learning about and experiencing outdoor education. He would make outdoor education central to his role as a teacher.

He continues to pursue that dream as he makes plans to teach in a rural setting where he can make outdoor education a focus of the science curriculum. When he shares his enthusiasm with his students, he will be establishing his genuineness and credibility in the classroom.

Principle 4. Analyze a range of teaching styles to find the most effective styles for beginning your career. There is no one fail-safe way to teach: all you can do is to expose yourself to different styles and learn how to enhance the natural strengths and minimize the weaknesses associated with each style.

The most prevalent teaching style, Essentialism, is based on convergent thinking, which assumes that for each question there is only one right answer. A typical weakness of this style is that during a class discussion, the teacher may listen for—and reward—only the precise answer and phrasing that he or she has in mind.

The next most prevalent teaching style, Experimentalism, is based on divergent thinking, which rewards multiple logical answers to each question. A typical weakness of this style is that for some lessons, students may become confused when they learn that no specific right answer exists. Another is that if students move from one interesting activity to another without appropriate debriefing sessions to analyze what they have learned and how that information relates to the knowledge and skills they need, they may assume that they have learned nothing.

Two additional styles, Behaviorism and Perennialism, are based on convergent thinking; two others, Existentialism and Reconstructionism, are based on divergent thinking. If student participants experience lessons representing the full range of teaching styles, they can assess the strengths and weaknesses of each, analyze how well each can be related to different learning-style needs, and select an effective style or styles for themselves (Duck, 1994).

Principle 5. Realize that students learn differently by reflecting on the ways you and your friends learned best at different grade levels from elementary school through college. If as a preservice teacher you completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, you can study your temperament type and associated learning-style preference: the Traditionalist/Stabilizer, who has both a sensing (S) and a judging (J) preference in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, is well organized, masters details easily, and wants to complete tasks well in advance; the Catalyst, who has both intuition (N) and feeling (F), values human interaction, cares deeply about morale, and is convinced of the value of personalizing all topics; the Visionary, who has both intuition (N) and thinking (T), understands and seeks change, delights in growth-stimulating conflict, and wants to become increasingly competent at more and more tasks; and the Troubleshooter/Negotiator, who has both sensing (S) and perceiving (P), is the most skilled problem solver in emergencies, values the close camaraderie of egalitarian relationships, and has less tolerance for writing tasks than the other types do (Duck, 1996).

Use your understanding of the different temperaments and learning styles to modify your teaching. You might use only one teaching style and modify assignments to match the learning styles, temperaments, and diverse learning needs of all your students (Gardner, 1993; Myers & Myers, 1983; Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1998; Duck, 1996). Or, as you grow within the profession, you could become a “healthy eclectic” who effectively uses different teaching styles in succession and thereby meets the learning-style needs of all your students. Becoming a healthy eclectic is generally a long-term goal achieved only after much reflective practice and planned growth within the profession.

An eclectic teacher uses convergent thinking and divergent thinking about equally, showing no clear preference for either one. A favorite lesson that uses both types of thinking involves advertising. The teacher asks students to recall and write down advertising slogans, along with their associated products. By reading aloud a few of the slogans, asking students to list the corresponding products, and having them determine how many items they got correct, the teacher illustrates convergent thinking.

When the teacher, contrary to students’ expectations, announces that anyone whose answers were 100 percent correct gets an *F* and anyone whose answers were 100 percent incorrect gets an *A*, he or she is preparing students for the remainder of the lesson. The teacher then leads students in an analysis of why they think that advertising is effective and of whether they have spent money on items they later regretted buying. The second part of the lesson emphasizes divergent thinking.

Principle 6. Assess your preferences for classroom-management approaches before beginning classroom responsibilities. Complement your analysis of teaching and learning styles by examining the Teacher Behavior Continuum (Wolfgang, 1999) and by completing a self-assessment instrument designed to reveal your preference for a certain band on the continuum. This technique shows how each major theory can become the foundation for a classroom-management approach and how each approach mainly uses one band of the Teacher Behavior Continuum.

Behaviors on this continuum are grouped into the Relationship/Listening band (silent observation, nonverbal cuing, nondirective statements), the Confronting/Contracting band (questions, directive statements), and the Rules/Consequences band (directive statements, preparatory command, physical intervention).

Relationship/Listening approaches assume that effective classroom management occurs when teachers help students discover and understand the motives behind their lack of compliance. Confronting/Contracting approaches assume that teachers need to call their students’ attention to their lack of compliance and that students help plan their own improvement. The Rules/Consequences approaches assume that teachers need to be aware of noncompliance and to apply appropriate, predetermined consequences fairly and without anger.

Because instruction and classroom management are parallel and simultaneous processes, it is helpful for new teachers to realize that their management

strategy and their teaching style preference can be based on different philosophies. For example, a teacher who wants effective classroom management only to ensure enough cooperation for meaningful learning to occur may use Rules/Consequences management strategies (based on convergent principles and behaviorism) and simultaneously employ a divergent-oriented teaching style, such as Experimentalism.

Teachers should also understand that although they may have a preference for one approach on the continuum, they will probably begin there but will move along the continuum until they find an effective approach for a specific situation. Therefore, eclecticism is chosen more often for classroom management than for teaching.

With your colleagues, view videotaped incidents and brainstorm avoidance strategies and ways to reestablish rapport after a problem has occurred. You will learn that each classroom-management approach has natural strengths and weakness, just as teaching styles do, and that even more than with teaching styles, a teacher is likely to be an eclectic for classroom management. You will also learn that you must be comfortable with whatever classroom management you choose. Techniques and behaviors alone never ensure success. Success is likely only when a teacher *believes* that the behavior will succeed.

Principle 7. Use classroom visits and observations to assess the teaching-style and classroom-management preferences of practicing teachers. Brainstorm how to adapt your own teaching style and preferences to mesh with a given master teacher's preferences.

GROWING WITHIN THE PROFESSION

The foregoing seven principles underscore growth *toward* the profession in the typical sense: preparing well before assuming instructional responsibilities. Five additional principles relate directly to growth *within* the profession. Though there is obvious overlap, and though a teacher can grow *within* the profession and experience self-renewal by revisiting the first seven principles, those principles are usually associated with teacher preparation before an internship experience.

Principle 8. Develop a portfolio as a way of charting your growth within the profession and your plans for self-renewal. Start your portfolio with a statement of philosophy that includes your choice of teaching style, classroom-management strategies, and teaching techniques that you plan to emphasize. This statement sets the stage for other portfolio items: sample activities, lessons, projects, photographs of classroom interaction, and videotapes of instruction (Martin, 1999). These items reveal how you have implemented your philosophy by reflecting thoughtfully on your practice.

Begin your reflective practice by writing brief journal entries describing your greatest success of the week, your most pressing concern, and the way you are addressing this concern. These journal entries document your growth within the profession and help you compose the rationale for selecting the

portfolio items. This process puts you in control of your own professional development and helps ensure ongoing self-renewal.

Principle 9. Participate in a support group dedicated to sharing information about successes and concerns, to reflective practice, and to action research (Hubbard & Power, 1999; Schmuck, 1997). Many states and school divisions have mandated mentorship programs in which master teachers are assigned to new teachers; some schools provide formal preparation for the mentoring role. If such support mechanisms are not already in place, however, you should select a mentor yourself.

Try sharing a success and a concern with a few experienced teachers you might want as mentors. If, in the process of sharing, these teachers genuinely listen and ask probing, nonjudgmental questions, then any one of them might be a good mentor. If, however, a first response approaches "Well, I certainly wouldn't have done that!" consider finding another mentor candidate—and avoid sharing other concerns with that individual.

Principle 10. Build on your successes. Concentrate on what you enjoy about each lesson and each group of students. When you reflect on a lesson, emphasize its positive aspects more than its negative aspects. To focus on successes and to choose only one or two points of weakness to address at a time, ask yourself three questions. What three things did I like most about the lesson? What two things did I learn about myself from this lesson? What one thing will I do differently when I offer this lesson again?

Principle 11. Keep your focus on the future and on the excitement of life-long learning. To help develop this perspective, project your professional role 5 to 10 years into the future and ask these questions (Duck, 1996): What changes do I foresee? How will my role be performed then? How do I feel about these changes and their impact on my role? What new skills and knowledge will I need? How might I attain them?

Principle 12. Investigate new technologies and how you can best use them in your classroom. Use a technology not just because it is there, but because of its curriculum design potential (Norton & Wiburg, 1998). Although gaining expertise with technology is essential for growth *toward* the profession, it is a key element for growth *within* the profession and for assessing the future's impact on classrooms.

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A CONVERSATION WITH JOHN GOODLAD

EXCERPTS FROM: REVIEWING THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING

A leader in educational renewal, John Goodlad has published widely on school reform, including The Nongraded Elementary School (1959), A Place Called School (1984), and Educational Renewal (1994). Currently a professor at the University of Washington and the president of the Institute for Educational Inquiry, Goodlad first formed his ideas about education growing up in rural Canada and then teaching in a one-room schoolhouse.

Influenced by John Dewey's concepts of progressivism, Goodlad has been an obstinate yet optimistic voice of humanistic ideals through several decades of school reform. Recently Goodlad spoke with Educational Leadership about the teacher shortages, his centers of pedagogy, the changing mission of schools, and the ways in which new teachers and teacher educators can prepare for the next century.

Statistics tell us that in the next 10 years, the United States will experience enormous teacher shortages. How can teacher educators best deal with these shortages?

The problem provides an opportunity for a fundamental redesign of the way we prepare teachers. I have argued for a long while that we need a core of highly prepared teachers. For example, we pay dearly for the number of children who move into higher grades without being able to read. Teachers who teach reading in the primary grades take, on average, one and one-half courses in teaching reading. That training is just enough to know how to group students and what the materials are. It is not enough to be able to diagnose a reading problem and take care of it.

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This teacher shortage could provide an opportunity to prepare a few head teachers—at the doctoral level in mathematics or reading, for example—to work with a team of teachers at the primary level. Some career teachers would be part of that team, too, and every team might take on a cluster of neophytes or interns who are coming through the teacher education program. But if we try to prepare enough teachers to address shortages in the same way we’ve always done it, we will open the gates for all sorts of unqualified people. We’ll pay for it for years to come.

We could also increase the number of teachers if we could manage to bring about a greater collaboration between the arts and sciences faculty and schools of education. The schools of education do not attract that many students, but the arts and sciences do—sometimes 50 percent of their students become teachers, and yet many of these students don’t prepare initially to be teachers. If they were recruited into a teacher education program, and if teacher education developed the role of professional development schools—we call them *partner schools*—I envision highly prepared people working with teams of neophytes, particularly in that internship year.

What changes—both good and bad—have you seen over the years in preparing new teachers?

In the last decade in particular, we have heard many calls for change in how we should go about preparing teachers. The zenith of this was *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future* (1996). This fine report, from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, agrees with much of what our group has recommended in our National Network for Educational Renewal.

But when it comes to implementing actual change, the idea of the professional development school is breaking new ground. It’s hard to believe that in a century of school reform reports, teacher education was not mentioned until 1986. In 1986, the Carnegie Commission on the Economy and the Holmes Group came out with a strong recommendation of connecting teacher education and schooling. Now that connection is under way.

The other major change is the close collaboration between the arts and sciences and the education departments. Most coursework of a future teacher is completed in the departments of arts and sciences. People blame our schools of education for the poor test scores of teachers in their subject fields, for example, but they don’t realize that schools of education are virtually not allowed to teach in content areas. The arts and sciences have to take responsibility when teachers don’t know their math or English or biology. We require all participants in our work to establish these connections inside the university and with schools.

You write in Educational Renewal (1994) that we must focus on educating students for civitas, or human goodness. Why do you think we haven’t focused on these ideals as much as we have focused on instrumental purposes for education?

The question you are asking is really, What is the fundamental mission of schooling? This, of course, is the most difficult. In my book *A Place Called School* (1984) and in the late Ernie Boyer's book *High School* (1983), we both came to the same conclusion; in fact, each of us has a chapter with the exact same title, even though we didn't communicate with each other. The title of the chapter is "We Want It All." When we really push parents to think about what they want out of schooling, they want academic development, social development, civic development, vocational development, character development. They want it all.

Something very significant happened in our movement from an agrarian to an industrial to a highly technological society. Children became useless. Prior to our current era, children *were* useful, and the idea of schooling was not accepted because children worked—first on the farm, and then in the factory. With industrialization and unionization, children were no longer desired in the workplace. And by moving from a 90-plus percent agrarian society to a 3 or 4 percent agrarian society, children were useless on the farm.

What would we do with children then? Put them in school. During the Great Depression, school enrollments shot up. Because the main function of schooling was then custodial, we did not worry much about what we were educating children for. We wanted them safe; we even were interested in their character development.

What has happened now—brought forward by *A Nation at Risk*—is that schools are supposed to advance a global economy and make us competitive. *A Nation at Risk* suggested that schools were failing in this regard. Of course, that was nonsense. But a funny thing has happened in the process. We have convinced the American people that their kids must prepare for the high-tech economy of the future, and therefore they've got to be highly trained in math and science. What have we done? Children are now an investment once more. What is dominating schools today is what Neil Postman calls "the narrative of economic utility." Our kids are part of our economic utility system.

Try to get a moral concept built into that! We have a tough, tough challenge. If that youngster is an investment in the future—and math and science and high test scores are the entry to that future—then how do we bring in character development, moral development, civility, and *civitas*?

And it seems that the public wants measurable results. But how can we measure civility, for example?

Most people have lofty goals for education. They talk about developing citizens, responsible workers, and good community members. But as your question implies, these ideals are very difficult to appraise, in part because we think we don't have a common set of values. The problem is that successful marks, grades, and test scores do not correlate with any of the virtues that we set for the young. So we can measure fairly accurately whether a youngster is able to manipulate numbers, whether a youngster is able to read and write. But when it comes to civility, developing a test to be used in large quantities is a challenge.

If we would move our attention away from thinking only of outcomes and think of conditions, then we could start examining whether the conditions are democratic, whether the conditions are caring, whether the conditions provide equity. I use a simple analogy: If you discover that in the population there's a great number of respiratory problems—colds, influenza—you might want to look at the conditions under which people are living. And if you provide for better conditions, you can't guarantee that people won't get sick. But you move a long way toward a healthier population.

In our system, we receive test scores without having the faintest idea under what conditions students worked. For instance, we heard a lot about how the U.S. ranked so poorly in international tests. Why didn't we go study British Columbia, which is so much like us, and find out what students did to score better than we did? But we just blame the teachers and the schools; we have always used the villain theory.

I'm not against looking at outcomes, but we've got to shift our attention to the conditions that connect with the outcomes we want. Currently, what we're measuring does not correlate with our stated aims of education. We mouth them at commencement addresses and forget all about them.

What would it take to change the public perception of the mission of schools?

Changing the mission of schooling is a monumental process. First of all, we need political leadership. My colleagues and I edited a book, *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*, in 1991. That book went to the White House, was passed around, and someone decided that they wouldn't pay any attention to it because what in the world did moral development have to do with schooling and education? So we didn't get very far in the political arena.

Second, we need resources. Given the wealth of this country, the paltry way that we treat schooling is pretty sad. You can walk into schools all over the United States and find that they're ill prepared in regard to the materials they have, ill prepared in the preparation of their teachers, and functioning in inappropriate facilities. A literary figure once said, "I buy books and when I have bought all the books I need, then I think about food and shelter." We should think of education as vital and spend our tax dollars accordingly.

It's interesting that we don't really value education highly in this country. We value schooling. Schooling is a political entity subject to changing manipulations. That is, we value most an instrumental process whereby we prepare children to meet and accept adult values. Today, a growing adult value is the degree to which the child is in the right school, ensuring the future economic value of the family.

Do you see positive signs for the future of education?

About a decade ago, friends would say, "John, you've always been such an optimist about public education." Of course, my answer is that being an educator and being a pessimist are incompatible.

Several years ago, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. described United States political history in 30-year cycles. He predicted that in the decade of the 1990s, we would begin to see a shift from a cycle of selfishness to a cycle of sacrifice. We would be more worried about the environment, more worried about one another. And lo and behold, that seems to be happening. Communitarian movements, largely rhetorical thus far, at some point will infiltrate into community action. We're getting new kinds of groups talking about civil communities. Those signs are very encouraging.

I don't know whether we will be able to develop an infrastructure for our schools and for other human and health services to reflect these changes. But people are getting annoyed with how many things are being removed from human action—you know, dial 1 if you want this, dial 2 if you want something else. The banking industry was absolutely dumbfounded by a study that they sponsored, the results of which were reported a couple of years ago. The bankers thought people wanted more efficiency, quicker tellers. They discovered that people wanted more human contact from their banks. I think we're going to find out that technology is not going to bring us wisdom.

We must pay attention to what we are building in the infrastructure. It isn't jobs that we need; it's good work. We must have jobs that satisfy. This idea that we can find good work in the human sector—in the community sector—is a fascinating area in which to move. The first part of the 21st century could be very exciting.

Along with communitarian efforts, there has also been a greater interest in spirituality and education.

Seymour Sarason points out that the loss of community is often accompanied by an increase in spirituality. I interpret this to mean that people have to identify with something, and as they lose their identification with community, they turn to spirituality. They turn to divine guidance when they don't feel that they're getting earthly guidance here.

There's something to that; there is also a positive side. If we look at all the great religions of the world down through history, they conclude with the same set of values—divine values. If we look at all the great philosophical thinkers of the world, who talk about the kind of behavior we need to practice here on earth, they come up with the same principles. We actually have a rational and a divine idiom coming together. That's what we need to work toward—coming together around basic principles even while we maintain sectarian, religious differences, even nationalistic differences. I don't suggest we can have a world order, but I do think we're going to have to agree on a set of human principles, a set of qualities that identify us all as humans and tie us together. That's the great challenge of the 21st century.

How did your early life in rural Canada and your experiences teaching in a one-room schoolhouse influence your ideas about teaching and learning?

I cannot help but wonder what would have happened to me if my school had succeeded in doing what they wanted to do with me at the end of my 1st grade. I brought home a report card, not knowing what was in it, and my parents were blown away. I had been flunked.

Apparently, I had been reading quite a bit before I went to school. By the time I was halfway through the 1st grade, I would come home and read the primer—but my parents noticed that I was turning the page in the wrong places. I had the primer memorized, so I quit reading. The teachers at that time used phonetic approaches to reading, which I found to be absolutely silly. I'd go to the chalkboard, and here was a word I knew I could read, but I had to break it down into these little pieces. I have a rebellious nature at times, and I just rebelled against reading as it was being taught.

Furthermore, my best friend at school was the one who was truant most often. I would come home and talk about this youngster with admiration, and my father would say, "Do you really want to be like him?" I would think about it and say, "Well, no, I guess I don't," but if I had been flunked, I probably would have been.

My father went down to school and had a conference with the principal and the teacher. The principal agreed that I would be promoted, and my father said, "We'll take full responsibility, and we will not blame the school if things go wrong." My 1st grade teacher said, "But no good will come of it!"

The next year, I flourished. In those days, we had a system where if you ranked first in your class, you sat in the front seat (what *should not* happen, of course). The classroom was a 2–3 grade combination, and I always sat in the front seat. So at the end of the year, instead of staying in that class, I went into a 3–4 combination. By midyear I was doing 4th grade work—a year ahead. Had I spent two years in the 1st grade, I would have had the non-nourishing diet served twice, with the second helping being a warmed-over version of the first.

What lessons did you carry over when you became a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse?

Well, my first morning of teaching, before school opened, I covered the chalkboards—front, side, back—with information because I had no books. I had to lay out work for eight grades, 34 students. I rang the bell outside the door, and the students all came in. One boy, Ernie, to whom I dedicated a book years ago, had been in the same seat for seven years.

I realized immediately that my students were encountering the very same experience I encountered as a youngster—exactly the same conditions. All my life I've asked, Why do we organize schools in this way so that they resemble no other institution in the world? Why is it that children can't talk to other children, except on the playground or outside? Why is it that the teacher out-talks children in the classroom? Why is the dialogue teacher-to-child or child-to-teacher—never child-to-child-to-child? And, are we never to learn a better alternative to the long-standing pass or fail system?

I've spent my life looking at these issues, all the time believing that we need to quit monkeying around, quit using children as investments, quit making schools instrumental. If we educate the individual self, then the future will take care of itself.

What advice would you give to new teachers?

Well, I'd have to first give the advice to teacher educators. Then I'd carry that advice over to the beginning teacher. John Steinbeck said it in *East of Eden*: Get your eyes set on where you're going and then look to your feet, lest ye stumble. Our research shows that teachers are not prepared to know where they are going or where they should go. In our program, we take educators and immerse them in a fourfold mission of schooling: enculturate them into a democracy; expand their engagement in the human conversation; provide careful pedagogical nurturing and training; and offer good moral stewardship of the schools. Teachers then see themselves as different—as professionals and not just as instrumentalists or mechanics in the classroom.

Teacher educators also have to prepare new teachers to be good crap detectors. New teachers are deterred from what they believe in when they have all this stuff—crap, if you will—dumped on them. And an administrator or a teacher who runs off after this fad or that fad often forgets what the journey's all about.

Back in the days when we had a commissioner of education, we had educational goals that leading educators in the United States could rise to and accomplish. A few of our Department of Education Secretaries have done great jobs—Secretary Terrel Bell and Secretary Richard Riley are examples. But where's the great educator? We need educational leadership in high places. Instead, teachers are being pushed this way and that way—to phonics one day, to standards the next—and I think this destroys the profession. Teachers need freedom—freedom to make professional decisions. As long as we continue to force teachers to implement strategies from above, we will not get good future teachers entering the profession.

You've contributed so much to teacher education over the past several decades. Talk with us about the "John Goodlad legacy." What accomplishments are you most proud of?

Well, that would be close to what we have been talking about: a hope that some people have been made aware of the larger issues in education. Education is not an instrument to achieve some goal—that automatically demeans the role of education. Rather, education is the development of the self. Because there is no self without a culture, then that culture has to be an ennobling one.

I would like to have helped lift the profession of teaching out of where many people in political life have tried to keep it—as a kind of servitude, where we can push teachers around. I'd like to have raised the idea of being a teacher from a robotlike business—a mechanical position requiring very little preparation—

into a profession of high demand and high expectation. A profession in which you always have to be learning more.

At the same time, I'd like to be sure that education continues to be the right of all children. That has been my defense of the public school. I don't agree with those educators who say that the public school is all but dead. The public school is endangered—highly endangered. But education is an inalienable right that the public school can best uphold.

So those two things—one, trying to raise the level of what teaching is all about; and two, trying to keep public education available for everybody. Advancing these goals has been my mission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 14

1. Allegations of child abuse are sometimes leveled against teachers. What are your concerns regarding this issue? How can you protect yourself and safeguard the well-being of your students? How do the concepts of justice and fairness apply to teachers confronted with allegations of sexual abuse? What if the allegations are true?
2. Do schools reflect the violence in society? How do you create a classroom that is free of violence?
3. What kind of rewards (both positive and negative) do you expect to receive when you become a teacher? Devise a professional development plan for yourself, outlining how you will hope to develop into an effective practitioner. Address the opportunities you will need in order to grow professionally as well as the merit you must demonstrate.

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