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British Literature

May 13, 2011

Rebuilding Americas Schools

“School is the key to success,” a quote everyone has heard and this statement holds much truth, but only if the educational institution is capable of educating. America’s educational system is a K-12 system designed to educate Baby Boomers (Birth years 1945-64) and later expanded for Generation Y (Birth years 1985-95). America and the World both have changed immensely since the 1950’s. Today students will need to continue on to a college or a trade school in order to compete in the global economy. The current educational system is built for the post World War II economy of agriculture and manufacturing, and efforts that have been made to help schools compete have not been effective. In America the educational system is in a state of sever disrepair, and as such is inadequate for preparing students for college and global job markets. Educational reforms have failed and nothing short of a system rebuild will educate Americans properly.

Asia; the Competitor to Copy

Our students must compete against Europe and Asia for work, and America’s educational system falls short of the competition. Asian countries such as China and Japan produce the smartest and most efficient workers. When an American teacher went to China for one month to teach English, he was surprised by the many similarities and differences there are. American and Chinese children are the same in class, there are the attentive ones in the front of the class, and the kids in the back that pay little attention and horse around. But the structure of the

schools is much different. The class sizes are larger, and students have a much longer school Day than Americans. The school days are from 8:00AM to 8:30PM, with two breaks for lunch and dinner. In exchange for the long days students only report to school 2 days a week and on Saturday for advanced students. In addition to a shorter week the students have no homework and all their work is done at school. This leaves more time for students to relax at home, and in the big cities children don't have room to do homework at home, so they wouldn't do it out of school. The American educational system is geared towards rural and suburban communities of the 1950's, however in the last 10 years re-urbanization has occurred, where people are fleeing the suburbs and entering the city (English Plush) This has amplified weaknesses the urban schools suffer from the suburban system, thus why educational quality is lowest in larger cities, and suffer from higher crime rates. This system is not even capable of properly meeting the needs of rural and suburban students, since most students do not have farm to work on after school. A system modeled after China's would raise education levels and lower crime rates.

No Child Left Behind is leaving the Majority Behind

With No Child Left Behind every child must be taught to a test, a test written so that the lowest intelligence student will get a good score and allow the school funding. This is in fact holding back the mass majority of students because the average capability and advanced capability students are being held into the lower capability education, meaning they will be no more capable to compete in the job market than the lowest capability student in the class. Schools need the federal government to pack up their bags and leave public school management to the individual states lawmakers. Schools and students need students to be separated by capabilities into classes of different levels. For additional help schools should purge students who continuously fail classes due to a lack of ambition to reach their potential, for these students

are a financial burden on the system and are capable of holding back the class. Lastly schools need to focus more on teaching kids college prep and real life useful information, with less useless information and no being taught to pass a poorly written test. Since No Child Left Behind has passed test scores have risen slightly due to the teaching to the test, though employment and the economy have since suffered.

Charter Schools; Teaching Kids and Public Schools

Public education should take notes from the lesson being given from their local charter schools. Charter school in all areas be it Suburban or urban outperform the public school district they reside in. Take for example Midland, MI a suburban area with a public school and a charter school both receiving A's from the State of Michigan YES report card. And Detroit, MI an urban center with a public school and charter school both receiving D-ALERT's from the State of Michigan Yes Report card. (Great Schools)

In Midland the District 2010 MME (Michigan Merit Exam) scores averaged to 82% proficiency in reading, 94% in social studies, 81% in science, 68% in writing, and 77.5% in Math. The Midland charters score for the same tests were, 91% proficiency in reading, 91% in Social studies, 82% in Science, 82% in writing, and 64% in Math. The Charter outscored the public in reading by 9%, science by 1%, and writing by 14%. (Great Schools)

In Detroit we have the Public Detroit City High School against the Charter Cesar Chavez High School. Detroit High scored 23% proficiency in reading, 37% in Social studies, 14% in Science, 10% in Writing, and 7% in Math. Cesar Chavez High School scored 36% proficiency in reading, 81% in Social Studies, 33% in Science, 21% in writing and 26% in math. Cesar Chaves outscored Detroit High in every category. (Great Schools)

Charter schools are as successful as they are because they divide students up by capability and needs. Charter schools are capable of releasing non ambitious students from the school and do less teaching to a test since their funding is not tethered to test performance. This shows that the methods charter schools use to educate students are working better than public schools and a combination of charter school technique and influences from Asian schools would improve the American educational system.

Budget Cuts Can Help Schools

In America a faltering economy over the past decade has put a stretch on government budgets, hitting schools especially hard. In other areas schools have also been hit by a loss of population due to lack of employment, a drop in income, and population, property values and subsequently property tax income for schools have fallen dramatically. America's schools have found these conditions treacherous, however these budget cuts have a potential to cut out wasteful spending, administrative corruption, wasteful unions, and force the necessary reconstruction of the American educational system.

To sample how simple cuts can force educational change and save money, a sample budget cut plan will be proposed for the public school district in Bay City Michigan. In this district loss of property tax income has devastated the district and its communities; this is due to an overall rough economy and loosing countless jobs with General Motors facilities cutting shifts. On top of these conditions Michigan's governor has proposed a balanced budget which cuts educational funding leaving many districts with deficits. Bay City faces a 9.9Million dollar deficit for the upcoming school year (Bay City Public Schools) The Governors plan has gathered controversy and national attention from the media, part of the plan offers emergency

financial managers (an EFM for short) to be installed in failing districts to restructure the budget. The EFM's have the power to alter and terminate union contracts, such as when Detroit's EFM broke the union by laying off every staff member (Associated Press). Americans must support these plans nationwide to force reconstruction and choke out wasteful spending and corruption.

To save money, turn a profit, and change education in Bay City the under-filled schools will need to be condensed to save money on maintenance, utilities, and supplies. Fewer schools is not enough, schools need to become greener. To be greener classrooms and hallways will have one of the three fluorescent tubes removed to save energy, and leave the school with enough extra light bulbs to replace the remaining lights for multiple years. Also, reducing the brightness in class rooms will increase student efficiency by reducing eye strain, but not be dark enough to put students to sleep. Reducing building temperatures in the winter and only using the A/C in rooms with computer labs and on days when people's lives could be endangered by high heat conditions in early September and late May and June, will also help to save numerous dollars. Schools should be condensed to the point that no more students can safely be fit into the classrooms and hallways during passing. The condensing and greening of schools would shave an estimated 1.4M dollars from the deficit (or 40%), leaving Bay City with a 8.5M dollar deficit.

To further reduce spending and improve school performance athletics should be removed from the school environment. Some say that athletics must remain in school because going to the games are an integral part of a towns culture. This is in fact not all that true or a reason too keeps athletics. Until the 1950's athletics in school were nothing more than a group of kids hanging out after school and in their free time playing baseball or football, so school athletics have not existed long enough to become "integral. Also in many European countries school athletics either vanished or never occurred. In these places athletics are held by community

organizations, still allowing the fun of going to a game. More naysayers say that school athletics combat obesity. If this is so explain why America is the fattest nation on earth, and the Europeans are among the fittest on earth, school athletics do not combat athletics. Athletics distract from academics, and can leave student stressed about sports when they should be doing school work. (Delany) Injuries from athletics further distract from school, resulting in missed instructional hours or a physical inability to write homework and notes. Cutting athletics would also shave another approximately 900 thousand dollars from the building maintenance and utilities funds by cutting renovations to facilities and the costs of lighting a football field or keeping the school open late. This would reduce the deficit to 7.6M.

With the closing of building comes the release of a few of the staff members from the districts. Bay City Public Schools spend 44.5M dollars on staffing, of this 33.9M is for teachers, 3.8M on secretaries, 3.3M for custodians, 3.2M to principals, and 300 thousand for hall monitors and detention room services. (Bay City Public Schools) All the staff from the remaining schools and the closing schools will be combined, then out of all the teachers the lowest performing will be laid off until the number of remaining required staff has been reached. An EFM will also have been dispatched to the district and broken the union, staff would as such receive a pay cut, and any member who does not accept the pay cut will be terminated and replaced by an unemployed person in the area who will be more than happy to accept the previous staff members reduced pay. The previously mentioned steps will reduce teacher cost by about 45%, secretaries by 60%, custodians by 20%, and principals by 40%. Detention room and hall monitors will disappear from the schools because teachers can patrol halls between classes and detentions shall be fewer, and served with teachers or the principal. These cuts would result in an estimated 20.8M dollar savings, creating a 13.8 Million dollar surplus. This surplus can be

used for state of the art technology, class room supplies, improving schools, replacing an inefficient and decrepit bus fleet, and possibly to recall a few teachers.

To Evaluate a Teacher

The method used to evaluate teacher effectiveness and pay has for years been a complicated and controversial topic. Currently most teachers are evaluated by taking the standardized test scores and then compared to a national average rating due to the No Child Left Behind act. This method is believed to be unfair, punishing a teacher for a bad batch of kids, over valuing a teacher with smart kids, and encouraging the teaching to the test in a manner in which the lowest intellect of the class can do well enough not to scar the teacher's record. A method that has been in existence since the 1970's, though not used widespread is appreciated by the districts who use it, is the Value Added method (LA Times) With the value added method a student's future test performance is forecasted based on present performance, and the teacher is rated by how much value they add or subtract from the projected score. Meeting or exceeding indicates a good or adequate teacher, while a subtract score will raise red flags and cause the teachers teaching methods to be scrutinized and the teacher to be terminated if scores do not improve or layoffs are deemed necessary (LA TIMES) This is a better system because a bad student or a bad group of students can not harm the teachers score, because their poor past performance will have a created a low projection for the teachers to meet.

Senior Staff; Be Ware

The longstanding belief is that the oldest teacher is the best one, thus why they get job security and a larger salary. It has been found in recent years with the introduction of computers in schools that in fact the opposite tends to be true. Younger teachers are more capable of

understanding technology enough to better incorporate such devices into their classes. Many students also find that younger teachers are livelier and pay more attention to younger teacher's lessons. (Rodriguez) However age and seniority alone cannot influence a teacher's job security and pay, rather all teachers should be graded on the Value Added method and have such decisions made about their careers in that manner.

The Schools are Rebuild-able, but Only if America is Willing

The American educational system is severely dysfunctional and in need of a complete reconstruction from the ground up. A combination of dividing students, modeling after Asian and charter schools, making budget cuts to choke out inefficiency, and changing the way we view teacher effectiveness and seniority will make an exponential improvement. However this reconstruction can only take place if the Americans stand up and demand their schools be fixed, or else American schools will remain inadequate and produce unemployable idiots. Americans should contact schools and law makers and let their demands be known, or else school board officials and politicians may find themselves out of job next election. Speak up and rebuild the educational system or suffer the effects of poor educational quality, such as a poor economy and exporting jobs to other countries.

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Mrs. Piotrowski – Research Project Grading

Name: Martin Hilger

Hour: 4th period

Notebook:

Notes	<u>20</u>	20pts
Pre-Work	<u>20</u>	20 pts
Research	<u>20</u>	20 pts
Outline	<u>20</u>	20pts
Rough Draft	<u>20</u>	20 pts
Total	<u>100</u>	100 pts

Final Draft Paper

MLA Format	<u>10</u>	10 pts
In-text Doc	<u>8</u>	10 pts
Works Cited	<u>10</u>	10 pts
Intro	<u>5</u>	5 pts
3 Main Arguments	<u>30</u>	30 pts
Opposing View Point	<u>10</u>	10 pts
Conclusion	<u>5</u>	5 pts
Overall Writing	<u>20</u>	20 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spelling/Grammar• Organization• Transitions• Voice		
Total	<u>98</u>	100 pts

good
good - punctuation ERROR

Very impressed
Excellent writing
- well organized
- Great Research
- Excellent Arguments & Examples

Fantastic !!