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MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION FOR ASSESSMENT

REFORM (MAAR)

MAY 1, 2005

I' m back after a Passover break. Here we have Bush lying to us with not even a shred of false evidence to back himself up.

From Bob Schaeffer:

From Thursday nights White House news conference. Beyond the logical non-sequitor of "I think it's working is because we're measuring," the President fails to present an iota of evidence to demonstrate the progress he claims has been made in "teaching people how to read and write and add and subtract." The latest news from Houston, for example, shows that city's schools -- the model for the Bush/Paige "Texas Miracle" and NCLB -- falling further behind its peers (see Houston Chronicle editorial pasted in below).

QUESTION: Mr. President, you've made No Child Left Behind a big part of your education agenda. The nation's largest teachers union has filed suit against it, saying it's woefully inadequately funded.

What's your response to that? And do you think that No Child Left Behind is working?

BUSH: Yes, I think it's working. And the reason why I think it's working

is because we're measuring. And the measurement is showing progress toward teaching people how to read and write and add and subtract.

Listen, the whole theory behind No Child Left Behind is this: If we're going to spend federal money, we expect the states to show us whether or not we're achieving, you know, simply objectives, like literacy, literacy in math, the ability to read and write.

BUSH: And, yes, we're making progress. And I can say that with certainty, because we're measuring.

Look, I'm a former governor. I believe that the states ought to control their own destiny when it comes to schools. They're by far the biggest funder of education. And it should remain that way.

But we spend a lot of money here at the federal level, and have increased the money we spend here quite dramatically at the federal level.

And we just changed the policy. Instead of just spending money and hoping for the best, we're now spending money and saying,

Measure.

And some people don't like to measure. But if you don't measure, how do you know whether or not you've got a problem in a classroom?

I believe it's best to measure early and correct problems early before it's too late.

That's why, as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act, we had money available for remedial education. In other words, we said,

We're going to measure. And when we detect someone who needs extra help, that person will get extra help.

And absolutely it's making -- it's a good piece of legislation. And I will do everything I can to prevent people from unwinding it, by the way.

QUESTION: What about the lawsuit? What's your response to...

BUSH: I don't know about the lawsuit. I'm not a lawyer.

BUSH: But I -- you know, I'll ask my lawyers about the lawsuit.

But I know some people are trying to unwind No Child Left Behind.

You know, I've heard some states say, Well, we don't like it.

Well, you know, my attitude about no liking it is this: If you teach a child to read and write, it shouldn't bother you whether you measure. That's all we're asking.

The system for too long had just shuffled children through and just

hoped for the best. And guess what happened? We had people graduate from high school who were illiterate. And that's just not right in America. It wasn't working.

And so I came to Washington and worked with both Republicans and Democrats -- this is a case of where bipartisanship was really working well -- and we said, Look, we're going to spend more money at the federal level.

But the federal government only spends about 7 percent of the total education budgets around the country.

But we said, Let's the change the attitude.

BUSH: We ought to start with the presumption every child can learn. Not just some. And therefore, if you believe every child can learn then you ought to expect every classroom to teach.

I hear feedback from No Child Left Behind, by the way, and admittedly I get the cook's tour sometimes. But I hear teachers talk to me about how thrilled they are with No Child Left Behind. They appreciate the fact that the system now shows deficiencies early so they can correct those problems.

And it is working.

WORST OF SHOW
Houston Chronicle Editorial
April 29, 2005

Houston fifth-grade students posted disappointing and unacceptable results on the math section of this year's administration of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Houston Independent School District Superintendent Abe Saavedra, nevertheless, said the results represented "improvement." Only a state of the art theme park ride could put a better spin on this dismal news.

For the first time, fifth-graders had to pass the math and reading portions of the TAKS in order to be promoted. A full third fell short of the mark in math. Those 4,500 students have another opportunity to take the test in May. Students who fail must go to summer school and take the test again in June. Those who fail again face the prospect of having to repeat the fifth grade.

Houston public schools scored the lowest passing rate on the math test among Texas' five urban districts. The state average was 12 points higher.

Saavedra pointed out that 76 percent of fifth-grade students passed the test last year when they were required to correctly answer 28 of the 42 math questions on the exam. This year, passing students had to come up with the right answer to 30 of the 42 problems. If last year's standard had been used this year, 78 percent would have passed. That was the

thin
gruel that fed Saavedra's pride in "the improvement in our test scores."

Last month, the district announced that even fewer HISD fifth-graders – only 62 percent – passed the reading exam on the first try.

Cheating scandals and failure to reduce dropout rates have undermined HISD's status as a role model for Texas and the nation. That image is further tarnished now that Austin, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Dallas outperform Houston on the TAKS, even though those districts also contend with insufficient state funding and high poverty rates. Those districts' higher passing rates suggest that Houston elementary students are not to blame.

HISD trustees named Saavedra interim superintendent last June. He needs more time to implement changes and exercise leadership, so he also gets a pass for now, too.

Recently Saavedra announced changes to the district's management hierarchy that go into effect at the end of this school year. The new structure is supposed to emphasize teaching over administrative functions. Houstonians will be monitoring this effort with a hopefulness that is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

To the Editor:

Re "Stand Firm for Educational Fairness" (editorial, April 22):

The National Education Association, with 2.7 million teachers and education employees as members, agrees with you that the Bush administration is putting the success of the No Child Left Behind law in jeopardy by not fully financing it.

That's why we are filing a lawsuit on behalf of school districts to challenge the lack of financing for the law's rules and regulations.

You said the N.E.A. wants to dismantle the law. Nothing could be further from the truth. In all of our public communications as well as in internal communications with our own members, the message has been consistently clear: The law's intent is good, and we agree with it.

Reg Weaver
Pres., National Education Assn.
Washington, April 26, 2005

For the record, the lawsuit serves to open the door for a serious look at a bad law. As Gerald Bracy said, this law that touts scientifically based research over and over has no basis in scientific research itself. No one has proven

that testing children and punishing schools on the results of those tests has ever worked in the past. Fully funding a bad law is really throwing money away, but hopefully someone will stop to take a good look at the law itself.

Freedom is what our recent Passover holiday was all about. It scares me to see our own freedom being worn away through the misuse of our public schools. It hasn't been that long – maybe a hundred years - that we have enjoyed the ability to teach our children real critical thinking skills through child centered curricula. Before this period, children were forced to learn by “drill & kill” methods that were primarily religion based, Native Americans were forced to learn European culture, African Americans were forced to learn mundane skills or nothing at all. It really seems like we are headed back to the past. . .

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Saving Public Education – Saving Democracy

E. Wayne Ross, Kathleen Kesson, David Gabbard, Sandra Mathison, & Kevin D. Vinson
Editors, *Defending Public Schools* Volumes 1-4 (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004)

The *Washington Post's* recent *mea culpa* over its participation in the broader media's complicity in the Bush administration's reckless revival of naked imperialism in Iraq belies the fact that investigative journalism in the mainstream press died in the 1970s. The corporatization of the media that reduced “reporting” to “regurgitating” the official statements of politicians and their trained handlers, of course, began much earlier. While Robert Greenwald's *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism* reveals the extremes to which private and state power will go in colluding to control the public mind, many of us on the left have always been aware of the corporate media's propaganda role in advancing the interests of the state and private power.

That elements of the broader public have grown more sensitized to these issues should not surprise us, given just how brazenly and consistently the Bush administration has lied. Even after Bush declared “mission accomplished” in his flight suit on board the USS Abraham Lincoln, when Paul Wolfowitz smugly told *Vanity Fair* that the administration had used Weapons of Mass Destruction as the “bureaucratic reason” for invading Iraq, the mainstream media scarcely reported his statement. Understanding the standards of American journalism,

Washington BBC correspondent Ian Pannell correctly predicted that Wolfowitz's remarks would not likely have any political consequences in the US.

The public, of course, has good reasons to be concerned about the press and the role it plays in a democratic society. Though the enforced, two-party system of "representation" goes a long way toward making democracy meaningless, access to information and ideas remains crucial to the public's capacity to organize and resist. The internet, along with the boost it has given to a resurgent independent media, has greatly expanded that access. Hence, the level of popular dissidence may be greater now than at any other time in US history. The growing influence of the internet and independent media may also be responsible for what limited questioning of official power we've seen in the mainstream news organizations.

As Thomas Jefferson observed, the health of democracy depends on an educated and informed citizenry. While the internet and independent media sources deserve much credit for helping to mobilize significant levels of organized popular protest in recent years, we should recognize that these outlets are essentially reactive. That is, they respond to issues and events in the immediate present. In this regard, they differ little from the mainstream media or even their right-wing counterparts. There is, however, an institution that plays a more formative role in shaping the public mind – our system of public schools. Though children today grow-up in a media-saturated world, we should not underestimate the potential of schools to help young people grow into adulthood with a discerning mind that will enable them to more critically evaluate the messages they receive from whatever news outlet. And yet, with so much media attention focused on the horrors of the Bush administration's "war on terror" and the surrounding scandals, the press – including progressive groups – has virtually ignored how the state and private power have colluded over the past twenty years to strip public schools of their democratizing potential. In the twenty-one years since the Reagan administration's National Commission for Excellence in Education released *A Nation At Risk*, no high-minded bastion of journalist integrity in the mainstream press has recanted its parroting reportage of the Commission's claims. Numerous books and professional articles have appeared in the interim to discredit those claims, but none of them have received any serious or sustained attention from the media. Neither has the media reported the miserable failure of educational privatization pioneers such as Christopher Whittle (CEO of the Edison Project) to rescue troubled schools through the wondrous powers of the business model of management.

The strongly bi-partisan *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB) has similarly received no scrutiny that would alert the public to its insidious policy implications. In the first place, this legislation set ridiculously high standards that simply defied common sense. NCLB requires schools and teachers to insure that *all* students perform at or above grade level within a three year-period. This outrageous requirement includes children with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders no matter how profound. By definition, then – getting these kids to perform at grade level, NCLB holds teachers accountable for doing what medical science has never accomplished; namely, curing mental retardation.

NCLB also holds teachers accountable for bringing the performance of children from the most poverty-stricken homes up to grade level. While Rod Paige, Bush's homebred (former superintendent of Houston's public schools) Secretary of Education, chastises anyone who dares to criticize these "high expectations" and "rigorous standards" as "racists," one must

pause to wonder when policy makers discovered their new faith in the remedial powers of schools. After all, the prison industry has long used third-grade reading scores to project how many new cells they will have to construct over the next twenty-year period.

While the policies of NCLB never receive any attention in the press, there has been some considerable recent outcry by Democrats and others because of the Bush administration's refusal to fund this legislation at its originally planned levels. No one stops; however, to examine the policies themselves, or to listen to teachers' complaints concerning how this high-stakes-testing model of school/teacher accountability pressures teachers to adopt the most intellectually stultifying (drill and kill) teaching methods that remove the joy of teaching from them and any potential joy of learning from their students.

Beyond the fact, as revealed for us by Michael Moore's treatment of the Patriot Act in *Fahrenheit 9-11*, that the vast majority of our representatives in Congress never bother reading the legislation that they sign into law (What does this imply in terms of accountability?), the truth about NCLB goes beyond any ineptitude on the part of its architects. NCLB sets impossible standards for a reason. Public access to institutions of learning helps promote the levels of critical civic activism witnessed during the 1960s and 70s that challenged the power of the state and the corporations that it primarily serves. The current reform environment creates conditions where public schools can only fail, thus providing "statistical evidence" for an alleged need to turn education over to private companies in the name of "freedom of choice." In combination with the growing corporate monopolization of the media, these reforms are part of a longer-range plan to consolidate private power's control over the total information system, thus eliminating avenues for the articulation of honest inquiry and dissent. In the end, as evidenced by Secretary of Education Rod Paige's recent characterization of the National Education Association, anyone who contests state-corporatism will be labeled a "terrorist" or, in more Orwellian terms, a "thought-criminal."

While the progressive press and media are perfectly legitimate in pushing their corporate counterparts for greater integrity in their coverage of issues and events, we believe that progressive news and cultural organizations of all varieties owe the public an even greater responsibility to report on the corporate and state assault to privatize public education. We ground this belief in recognition of one very important distinction between the corporate-owned media that progressives have grown so fond of critiquing and public schools. While both the media and schools function as major institutions in the dissemination of knowledge, information, and ideas, the mainstream media will continue to be privately owned and operated. Therefore, the public will always find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to influence their editorial policies. Public schools, on the other hand, are *public*. That is, insofar as they continue to be operated under public control, the public can wield considerably more influence over the policies that impact the educational practices within public education than it can ever hope to wield over the corporate media. This, in our view, offers the best explanation for the growing movement to privatize schools. Privatization would effectively transfer the control of schools from public hands to corporate hands.

We want to believe that public schools serve us, the public, "We, the people." We want to believe that schools strengthen our democracy, our ability to meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes that impact our communities and our lives. Educational resources

need to be directed towards increasing people's awareness of the relevant facts about their lives, and to increase people's abilities to act upon these facts in their own true interests. For the past twenty years, however, significant efforts have been made to resurrect a statist view of schools that treats teachers as mere appendages to the machinery of the state and seeks to hold them accountable to serving the interests of state and corporate power. Linked as it is to the interests of private wealth, this view defines children's value in life as human resources and future consumers. In order to combat this movement, progressive media outlets must begin doing more to alert the public to the disastrous consequences it holds for our schools, our children, and our democracy.

Progressives everywhere must begin doing more to demand that our institutions of public education foster critical citizenship skills to advance a more viable and vibrant democratic society. They must push for schools to become organized around preparing young people for active, democratic citizenship through engagement with real-world issues, problem-solving, and critical thinking, and through active participation in civic and political processes. Informed citizenship in a broad-based, grassroots democracy must be based on principles of cooperation with others, non-violent conflict resolution, dialogue, inquiry and rational debate, environmental activism, and the preservation and expansion of human rights. These skills, capacities, and dispositions need to be taught and practiced in our nation's schools.

Progressives must also push harder to ensure that all schools are funded equally and fully, eliminating the dependence on private corporate funds and on the property tax, which creates a two-tiered educational system by distributing educational monies inequitably. Promoting greater equality in educational opportunity must also include demands for universal pre-k and tuition-free higher education for all qualified students in state universities. The past two decades have witnessed the increasing involvement of corporations in education in terms of supplementing public spending in exchange for school-based marketing (including advertising space in schools and textbooks, junk fast food and vending machines, and commercial-laden "free" TV). We believe that students should not be thought of as a potential market or as consumers, but as future citizens. We must call for the elimination of advertising in schools and curricula and of the marketing of unhealthy products on school grounds.

As suggested above, the current system uses "carrots and sticks" to coerce compliance with an alienating system of schooling aimed at inducing conformity among teachers and students through high stakes testing and accountability. This system alienates teachers from their work by stripping it of all creative endeavor and reduces it to following scripted lesson plans. We believe that teaching is a matter of the heart, that place where intellect meets up with emotion and spirit in constant dialogue with the world around us. Advancing a more democratic vision of education requires us to work toward the elimination of high stakes standardized tests, and the institution of more fair, equitable, and meaningful systems of accountability and assessment of both students and schools.

The current system also alienates students by stripping learning from its engagement with the world in all of its complexity. It reduces learning to test preparation as part of a larger rat race where students are situated within a larger economic competition for dwindling numbers of jobs. We believe that excellence needs to be defined in terms of teachers' abilities to inspire children to engage the world, for it is through such critical engagement that true learning (as

opposed to rote memorization) actually occurs. Students living in the 21st century are going to have to deal with a host of problems created by their predecessors: global warming and other ecological disasters, global conflicts, human rights abuses, loss of civil liberties, etc. The curriculum needs to address what students need to know and be able to do in the 21st century to tackle these problems— and it needs to be relevant to students’ current interests and concerns.

Progressives must also work diligently to enlist broader and deeper levels of public support for teachers. Teachers matter. Teaching is a public act that bears directly on our collective future. A broader movement in support of democratic and egalitarian reforms in education must include a commitment to ensure that teachers begin receiving salaries commensurate with other professions. At the same time, we must restore and expand teachers’ control, in collaboration with students and communities, over decision-making about issues of curriculum and instruction in the classroom – no more scripted teaching, no more mandated outcomes, no more “teacher-proof” curricula. Local control of education rests at the heart of democracy; state and nationally mandated curriculum and assessment are a prescription for totalitarianism.

Children of immigrants make up approximately 20 percent of the children in the United States, bringing linguistic and cultural differences to many classrooms. Added to this are 2.4 million children who speak a language other than English at home. Those of us struggling to defend the public’s welfare in public schools need the support of the wider progressive movement to ensure that the learning needs of English language learners are met through caring, multicultural, multi-lingual education. Citizens in a pluralistic democracy, after all, need to value difference and interact with people of differing abilities, orientations, ethnicities, cultures, and dispositions. Our nation as a whole needs to discard outmoded notions of a hypothetical norm, and either describe ALL students as different, or none of them. All classrooms should be *inclusive*, meeting the needs of all students, together, in a way that is just, caring, challenging, and meaningful.

Because they do not increase the market value of children, arts programs have never been funded at sufficient levels. Under pressure to increase student achievement rates (test scores), school districts in many areas of the country have eliminated art and music classes from their curricula to give students more time to spend preparing for standardized tests. Progressive elements in our society have always supported these programs. We must, however, do more in order to reverse these economically-driven assaults on the arts in schools, hopefully expanding students’ opportunities to learn and excel in the fine and performing arts, physical education and sports, and extra-curricular clubs and activities, in order to develop the skills of interaction and responsibility necessary for participation in a robust civil society.

In the end, whether the savage inequalities of neoliberalism—which define current social and national relations as well as approaches to school reform— will be overcome depends on how people organize, respond, learn, and teach in schools. With the help of the progressive press and other media outlets, those engaged in the larger struggle for social, political, and environmental justice can, and must, renew their commitment to educational justice and a democratic vision to guide the functioning of our nation’s schools. Concurrently, teachers and educational leaders need to link their own interests in the improvement of teaching and

learning to a broad-based movement for social, political, and economic justice, and work together for the democratic renewal of public life and public education in America. Collectively, we must make these commitments and act upon them soon, while public control still exists over the public schools. That control will not last unless we do.

E. Wayne Ross (University of British Columbia), *Kathleen Kesson* (Long Island University), *David Gabbard* (East Carolina University), *Sandra Mathison* (University of British Columbia), and *Kevin D. Vinson* (University of Arizona)
<http://www.publicresistance.org/journals/1.1-1SavingPublicEd.htm>

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2004 Rotten Apple Awards

Gerald W. Bracey

George Mason University

Alas, 2004 graced us with an amazing bounty of putrid fruit. And I, early in the year, declared Rod Paige ineligible for a prize. Too easy. His “terrorist organization” comment (the NEA) and the reactions thereto, his comment on the benefits of being taught by Christians and the reactions thereto, and his repeatedly being labeled “inept” by *New York Times*’ editorials were reward enough in themselves. We do here recognize some activities in his department and donate one prize to the Bush Administration generally for its vigorous suppression of science it doesn’t like. This award documents the most frightening turn I have witnessed in many years. We present it first.

THE “BEST PERFORMANCE IN CALLING FOR SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH AND THEN SUPPRESSING SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH” AWARD: GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

The Union of Concerned Scientists accused the Bush administration of deliberately manipulating, suppressing and ignoring scientific advice it did not agree with while stacking advisory panels with people who met an ideological litmus test. When Bush’s White House science adviser, John H. Marburger, III, defended the administration, Harvard’s Howard Gardner said, “It’s kind of pathetic to hear Dr. Marburger try to refute 85 different accusations saying in each case, ‘You have to know the details.’ I really feel sorry for Marburger because he is probably enough of a scientist to realize that he has basically become a prostitute.”

Gardner went on to frame the essential question:

Is science a disinterested effort to find out what the world is really like...or is science simply a tool that we use to promote a certain point of view that we have and if the evidence

supports us, great, and if not we squelch it or we don't put it on the web, or don't even find that kind of thing?

Health and Human Services disinvented Gardner and three colleagues from a conference on Head Start because they disagreed with the Bush policy of administering standardized tests to four-year-olds (an idea so goofy that it could only be proposed by people having no experience with four-year-olds). "An assistant Secretary at Health and Human Services, Wade Horn, simply put a line through our names [on the list of invitees] and the words 'not to appear.' No explanation." (A website where you can listen to Gardner's conversation with NPR's Diane Rehm is listed at the end of this text).

To a lot of people, federal squelching and suppression seems the order of the day. The National Council of Women pointed out how data were distorted or removed from the websites of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Cancer Institute and Health and Human Services when they conflicted with Bush ideology. For instance, rewrites downplayed the effectiveness of condoms and emphasized the effectiveness of abstinence-only programs. Bush operatives manipulated data to create a spurious correlation between abortion and later breast cancer.

The website www.scienceinpolicy.org, invites biologists, ecologists, climatologists, oceanographers, environmental engineers, or other environmental scientists to sign a statement that says, in part,

When the administration invokes science, it relies on research at odds with the scientific consensus, and contradicts, undermines, or suppresses the research of its own scientists. Furthermore, the administration cloaks environmentally damaging policies under misleading program names like "clear skies" and "healthy forests."

As of January 1, 2005, 1849 people had signed, representing 344 professors, 167 post-docs, 853 graduate students, 47 NGO scientists, 65 government scientists, 58 industry scientists. Given the retribution the Bush administration visits on dissenters (ask Joe Wilson, Valerie Plame's husband; or read Wilson's "What I Didn't Find In Africa," *New York Times* July 6, 2003), signing requires an act of courage.

Representative Henry Waxman, called "science's political bulldog" by *Scientific American*, established a website, Politics and Science, to report such outrages as a new policy at HHS that requires the World Health Organization to submit requests for expert scientific advice to political appointees at HHS who then decide which HHS scientists will be permitted to respond.

A flip side of altering scientific research findings is promoting technology that most scientists say won't work. Both the House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform and the American Physical society have challenged the Bush plan for a missile defense system. As *The Economist* noted, "spending billions on technology that most [scientists] believe will not work is, at the least, a dubious approach."

Ron Suskind captured the utter scariness of the Bush attitude toward science in a *New York Times* article, "Without a Doubt." Wrote Suskind, "This is one key feature of the faith-based

presidency: open dialogue, based on facts, is not seen as something of inherent value.” In the Bush faith-based approach, the lame old saw, “my mind’s made up, don’t confuse me with facts,” assumes chilling new force.

The Economist (2004). “Cheating Nature?” April 7.

National Council for Research on Women (2004). *Missing: Information About Women’s Lives*. www.ncrw.org/misinfo/report.pdf. Retrieved, December 31, 2004.

Diane Rehm (2004). “Good Work: An Interview With Howard Gardner,” Diane Rehm Show, March 4. Can be heard at <http://wamu.org/programs/dr/04/03/04.php>. Accessed, December 31, 2004.

Ron Suskind (2004). “Without a Doubt.” *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, October 7, p. 44.

Debra Viadero (2004). “In Bush Administration, Policies Drive Science Scholars Group Claims.” *Education Week*, March 3, p. 20.

Julie Wakefield (2004). “Science’s Political Bulldog,” *Scientific American*, May.

Henry Waxman, “Politics and Science.” http://democrats.reform.house.gov/features/politics_and_science/index.htm. Accessed December 31, 2004.

**THE, “TAKE IT TO THE MEDIA AND TO HELL WITH PEER REVIEW” AWARD:
JAY P. GREENE AND HIS CO-CONSPIRATORS, GREG FORSTER AND MARCUS WINTERS
OF THE MANHATTAN INSTITUTE**

The Greene gang earns this prize by being the most irresponsible researchers in the field today. Greene’s weapon of mass deception is the “working paper.” The working paper, he says disingenuously, “is a common way for academic researchers to make the results of their studies available to others as early as possible. This allows other academics and the public to benefit from having the research available without unnecessary delay. Working papers are often submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals for later publication.”

Researchers? The Public? Later publication in peer-reviewed journals? The lay public would not know enough to evaluate the research (and in any case Greene doesn’t say enough about the methodology to allow such an evaluation, although he does clearly tell the reader what the reader should believe the data say). The working papers insult real researchers four times over.

First, the papers often attack other researchers. For example, Paper No. 6, “The Teachability Index” says “For years [Richard] Rothstein has defended the education status quo against all types of systematic reform by arguing that social problems are the cause of inadequate student achievement.” No real research paper would contain such a personal attack even if it

were true which it is not (Arizona State's David Berliner, Missouri's Bruce Biddle, independent Alfie Kohn, and *Washington Post* columnist, Richard Cohen, receive similar treatment in Paper No. 6).

Second, the papers insult real researchers' intelligence and training. In Working Paper No 1., Greene writes, "Because these results are statistically significant we can be very confident that the charter schools in our study did have a positive effect on test scores." Any legitimate researcher or, really, any non-researcher who has passed Statistics 101 would know that that statement is false. The lay public, of course, would have no way of judging it one way or another. That's the idea, of course. To the public, this *trompe l'oeil* Research cannot be distinguished from the real thing.

Third, the papers do not provide sufficient detail for other researchers to actually evaluate the research. This is suspect, to say the least. As I wrote in my 13th Report in 2003, "The researchers *tell* you what they did, but they don't *show* you what they did. They dropped six states from the state-level [charter school] analysis because they had insufficient data. They say. They present no figures, nor do they even tell readers what decision rules they used for including or excluding a state."

Fourth, Greene and his group write as if theirs is the first study in the field worth considering. In working paper No. 7, Greene dismisses an entire body of research on the negative effects of retention-in-grade. "It is questionable whether research on students who were retained on subjective criteria is even relevant in the first place to retention policies based on objective criteria."

On the basis of his lone "study," he argues that Florida's retention policy benefits the kids who pay for it with a year of their lives.

Worse still, the gang Greene rush from their inadequate "research" to whatever op-ed pages they can find to launch attacks on various targets. Shortly after the Teachability Index appeared, Greene wrote an op-ed for the *Hartford Courant*, "Connecticut's Schools Are Worse Than They Look," arguing that because CT spends a lot of money on its schools and because its kids are more teachable now than 30 years ago (according to the index), it should be scoring higher on NAEP than it does. It strikes me as curious that virtually all of the inefficient states were in the Northeast, and the efficient states were mostly in the Deep South. Thus far, I've heard nothing about mass migrations to Mississippi by Yankee parents seeking efficient schools.

Similarly, Greene deployed his Florida retention study—which even he admits is too short-term to be significant—in the *New York Post* arguing, "Bloomberg and Klein should hold firm" to their tough retention policy, Bloomberg being the Mayor of New York, Klein the public school chancellor. (Greene's op-ed efforts often make the *Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*, but never the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*.

As noted, the Working Papers declare that "Working Papers are often submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals for later publication." Oh, really? I haven't seen any of the seven extant papers anywhere else. If anyone reading this has, please provide me with the relevant citation.

Jay P. Greene, Greg Forster, and Marcus A. Winters (2003). "Apples to Apples: An Evaluation of Charter Schools Serving General Student Populations," Working Paper No 1, Manhattan Institute. Accessed at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_01.htm, December 31, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster (2004). "The Teachability Index: Can Disadvantaged Children Learn? Working Paper No. 6. Manhattan Institute. Accessed at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_06.htm, December 31, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters (2004). "An Evaluation of Florida's Program to End Social Promotion." Accessed at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_07.htm, December 31, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster (2004). "Connecticut's Schools Are Worse Than They Look." *Hartford Courant*, September 9, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters (2004). "Yanking Schools Back From Oz." *New York Post*, December 8.

**THE "PEOPLE ENVY—BUT WE TAKE NO EDITORIAL POSITIONS" AWARD:
*EDUCATION WEEK.***

When Elliott Eisner won the Grawemeyer award for ideas (\$200,000), *Education Week* took little note of it or of Eisner's long, important career (about 5 column inches on page 4 of the December 8, 2004 edition). But in its October 13, 2004 edition, Greene's photo appears on the inside cover and EW devoted four full pages, including a full-page color photograph, to "Greene Machine."

Although the article does cite criticisms of Greene from me and from Henry Levin at Columbia, it is more a puff piece than not. It contains, though, sentences that make you wonder why the article exists: "While he refrains from responding to Bracey directly, Greene has heard like-minded condemnations before," writes EW's Sean Cavagnagh. Condemnations is a fairly strong word and if other legitimate researchers are voicing same... Well, if that's true is this the caliber of person and research *Education Week* should be devoting four precious pages to? It certainly gives lie to the claim on *Education Week's* front page: "American Education's Newspaper of Record."

Greene displays hypocrisy by being a signatory on a full page ad in the *New York Times* establishing standards for research and for reporting on that research. If Greene held himself to the standards in that ad (see "The Right's Charter School Hissy Fit" below), most of his 22 studies since 2002, 43 op-ed pieces, and 500 radio, television, and newspaper citations (according to EW), would not exist.

And I repeat: Although the Working Papers say the research is submitted later to peer-reviewed academic journals, has anyone *ever* seen one published?

Sean Cavanaugh (2004). "Greene Machine," *Education Week*, October 13, pp. 34-37.

THE "KAREN RYAN PHONY JOURNALISM AND LEAVING GREG TOPPO BEHIND" AWARD:

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department forked over 700,000 taxpayer dollars to a public relations firm for a video promoting No Child Left Behind. The video presents itself as a news story and doesn't tell the audience that it was paid for with public funds. It ends with "In Washington, I'm Karen Ryan reporting" (Karen Ryan is not a reporter). Health and Human Services used the same Karen Ryan tactic to promote the Medicare law.

The flacks also rated reporters on how favorably they wrote about No Child Left Behind. Toppo, an education writer for *USA Today* finished last, averaging only two points an article.

Individual stories as well as reporters got rated. A *Portland Oregonian* article by a third grade teacher criticizing the law received an icy -60. At the opposite pole, a piece in the *Seattle Times* rated 95 points, missing a perfect 100 only because it was not prominently displayed. That article carried the byline of...Rod Paige.

The Government Accountability Office judged the HHS video to be "covert propaganda" and is investigating the NCLB promo. In October, the Board of Directors of the Education Writers Association sent a letter of "strong objection" to the rating system. "We are concerned," the letter read in part, "that the methodology used in analyzing the reporters' stories reflects a stark lack of knowledge (or purposeful confusion) of the roles of the media. News stories covering views of the community are attributed to reporters as their views."

Ben Feller (2004). "Bush Ads Surface As TV News Again, This Time in Education," *USA Today*, October 10.

Rod Paige (2004). "Accountability is the Key to Revitalizing Our Schools," *Seattle Times*, May 13.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). "Study for U. S. Rated Coverage of Schools Law." *New York Times*, October 16, 2004, p. A13.

Mary Jane Smetanka, President of the Board of Directors of the Education Writers Association, letter to Rod Paige, October 22, 2004. Accessed at www.ewa.org, January 2, 2005.

THE "BEST PERFORMANCES IN A FARCE" AWARD:

DARVIN WINICK, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD AND EUGENE HICKOK, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Its hand forced by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the U. S. Department of Education *finally* reported its NAEP study of charter schools on December 15, 2004. “Finally” because the data had been collected with regular NAEP activity and that data had been up on the Department’s website since fall of 2003.

It is likely that the data would never have been reported save for the fact that the AFT got hold of it, analyzed it and made its analysis known to *New York Times* reporter, Diana Jean Schemo. The *Times* carried the results as its lead story way back on August 17 (see “Right’s Charter School Hissy Fit” below).

(The delay was in line with Department policy. The Department had been so reticent about another charter school study that the *Times* had had to use a Freedom of Information Act request to pry the data from the Department’s grip. The Final Report of that study was delivered in June, but made public only in November after the *Times*’ request. That study, mostly conducted by researchers at SRI International, also found charter schools under-performing public schools.)

In his opening statement, Winick emphasized, “The pilot study was a trial, however, and the need for caution in using the results is apparent. . . . Most charter schools are relatively new and charters are not evenly distributed across the country. Few students have been in a charter setting for much of their education.”

Winick thus repeated the canard often brought forth after the *Times* August story that, really, charter schools are too new to be evaluated (some have been open for 13 years). It must have come as something of a shock and embarrassment, then, for Winick and Hickok to learn that the *longer* a school had provided instruction the *worse* its students did:

	YEARS OF INSTRUCTION MATH	READING
235	0 to 1 year: 225	
232	2 to 3 years: 214	
227	4 to 5 years 212	
	6 years or more 210	228

Only the 0 to 1 year figures are above the scores for public schools which scored at, 234 and 217, respectively.

Similarly, Hickok and Winick and others have made much over charter schools’ autonomy. Thus there was likely more shock and awe over findings showing that charter schools that

were part of public school districts outperformed charters that constituted their own school district, 234 to 225, math, 218 to 208 in reading. While 10 points might seem small, in terms of growth on NAEP, it represents a full year's difference.

Of 22 comparisons in reading and math, 20 favored kids in public schools. Hispanic charter school students scored one point better in reading while white charter students' reading scores tied those in regular public schools.

Nick Anderson of the *Los Angeles Times* asked Winick and Hickok why they took such heart in charter school students attaining parity with public school students when the essential promise of charters was to do better. Didn't this satisfaction reflect an acceptance of the soft bigotry of low expectations for charters? Hickok replied that charters were spending less but doing just as well. Oh, Anderson asked in follow up, does that mean that money actually does matter? My notes do not show any Hickok response.

Hickok had primed himself with clichés, including “charter schools that don't work don't stay open.” This is basically a lie—few charter schools get shut down and those that close their doors do so because they botched the money; charters that botch the kids' education stay open. In the words of the study that the *Times* needed an FOIA request to force out of hiding:

Charter schools rarely face sanctions (revocation or nonrenewal). Furthermore, authorizing bodies impose sanctions on charter schools because of problems related to *compliance with regulations* and *school finances*, rather than *student performance*.” (emphases in the original).

These findings corroborate an earlier conclusion by Columbia University's Amy Stuart Wells that *lack of accountability* is the most robust finding in research on charter schools.

“We are big supporters of charter schools,” Hickok said. This is certainly true. In June, the Department lavished \$75 million on California to create 250 new charters. Given the data,* the question would have to be “Why?” Charter schools arose because critics said public schools had failed. If they're not doing as well as the publics, the critics are obliged to call them failures too, doubly so because of charters' promise to *improve* achievement.

*There are lots of data besides the NAEP results that show charter schools faring poorly. “Can Charter Schools Ever Be Truly Accountable?” was commissioned by the Charter School Accountability Center at Florida State University and boy, were they surprised (as was I, actually). The paper is available on request. At one point, Winick had said that perhaps the proper unit of analysis is the state. Alas, Winick and Hickok can take no comfort in state-level data—evaluations from California, Michigan, Ohio, Arizona, and Texas don't put charters in a good light, either.

Sam Dillon and Diana Jean Schemo (2004). “Charter Schools Fall Short in Public Schools Matchup,” *New York Times*, November 24, p. A21.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). “Nation's Charter Schools Lagging Behind U. S. Test Scores Reveal,” *New York Times*, August 17, p. A1.

U. S. Department of Education (2004). *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program, Final Report*. Washington, DC: Office of Deputy Superintendent. Document # 2004-08. Accessed at www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/choice/pcsp-final/finalreport.pdf, December 31, 2004.

U. S. Department of Education (2004). *America's Charter Schools: Results from the NAEP 2003 Pilot Study*. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences. Report NCES 2005-456. Accessed at www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2005456.pdf, December 31, 2004.

Amy Stuart Wells (author/editor) (2002). *Where Charter Policy Fails*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**THE “YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO RICH OR TOO THIN OR TOO VICIOUS” AWARD:
JEANNE ALLEN, PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM**

After the Winick-Hickok soft shoe, the AFT’s Bella Rosenberg and Jeanne Allen took the stage. Why the Department invited someone of Ms. Allen’s technical skills to handle half of what was basically a data-driven, technical discussion remains a mystery.

Ms. Allen had displayed her technical prowess earlier in “What the Research Says About Charter Schools,” where she claimed that 88 of 98 studies had favored charters. If that claim were really true, no doubt *it* made the front page of the *New York Times*. At the very least *someone* besides Ms. Allen would have taken it seriously.

In the fall of 2004, I had begun one post “The Right Has No Shame.” The exemplars of the Right in question were Checker Finn and Denis Doyle (see, the “If At First You Don’t Succeed, Fudge, Fudge Again” Award). But Doyle and Finn look like pikers in the truth bending arena compared to Allen.

Allen’s web site account of the NAGB-Department charter school charade says this:

“Perhaps Rosenberg’s opinion can best be surmised from a comment to a colleague during Deputy Secretary Hickok’s commentary on the report.

‘Liar, Liar, pants on fire,’ Rosenberg said.” (www.edreform.com, click on “Charter School Students: Statistical Dead Heat”).

Well, while it might have been impolitic or rude, it wouldn’t have been false if she *had* said it, but she did not. Rosenberg and Allen were the sole occupants of the right front row marked “Reserved.” Appropriately, Allen sat on Rosenberg’s right. To Rosenberg’s left was a rather wide aisle. Across the aisle and in a row somewhat behind Rosenberg’s were indeed two AFT colleagues, Howard Nelson, and Nancy Van Meter. To have said anything to them, Rosenberg would have had to lean left and turn partly around to the left. Anything she said, even *sottovoce*, would have been heard by half the room. She also told me she didn’t say it and I believe her.

THE “DEFINING OUR AMBITIONS DOWN” AWARD:

NINA SHOKRAII REES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

“Hundreds of charter schools have been created around this nation by educators who are willing to put their jobs on the line to say, ‘If we can’t improve student achievement, close down our school.’ This is accountability – clear specific and real.”

Joe Nathan, University of Minnesota, 1996

“We have enough information at our disposal to know that charter schools are not harming students.”

Nina Shokraii Rees, U. S. Department of Education on NPR’s “Marketplace,” December 15, 2004.

Ms. Rees, not so incidentally, went to the Department from the Heritage Foundation which received its initial funding from America’s First Family of Totalitarianism, the Coors.

Joe Nathan (1996). *Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunity for American Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

THE “NINA SHOKRAII REES ‘CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE NOT HARMING STUDENTS’” AWARD:

C. STEVEN COX

From 1999 to 2004, C. Steven Cox and his California Charter Academy (CCA) collected over \$100,000,000 (yep, one hundred million) from the Golden State’s treasury. Oversight of some campuses, though, came from districts hundreds of miles away. Because of earlier scandals under such arrangements, the California Assembly had barred such at-a-distance administration.

CCA illegally opened 10 new campuses after the law went into effect. The state launched a probe. It wondered about Cox’ (probably illegal) dual role as a CCA Board Member and the CEO of the management company that ran the schools. It also suspected that Cox had inflated enrollments and that CCA might be facing bankruptcy despite that.

Cox responded by shutting down all 60 CCA campuses leaving 10,000 kids schoolless. On August 15. Three weeks before the school year began.

Many teachers and principals found themselves jobless as did C. Steven Cox’s wife, son, daughter-in-law and other relatives whom he had placed on the CCA payroll.

Erika Hayasaki (2004). “Charter Academy Shuts 60 Schools,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, p. A1.

Sam Dillon (2004). "Collapse of 60 Charter Schools Leaves Californians Scrambling," *New York Times*, September 17, p. A1.

THE "RIGHT'S CHARTER SCHOOL HISSY FIT" AWARD:

JEANNE ALEEN & HARVARD'S PAUL PETERSON

Quick, can you remember the last time an education research report generated a full page ad in the *New York Times* trashing the report itself and flogging the *Times* for covering it? Me neither.

But that's how the Right handled the AFT's analysis of the NAEP charter school data and Diana Jean Schemo's article about that analysis. Of course, when the U. S. Department of Education released its own analysis, four months later and over a year after the results were available, the results showed—surprise!—exactly when the AFT said they showed.

The annals of education about this story are too extensive for comprehensive reporting here. Suffice to say I am preparing a stand-alone essay on the Right's tantrum and will send that as a separate Rotten Apple—bushel of rotten apples—when it is done. Here I note that to say the story touched a nerve is to practice understatement. It's more like the story reached in and grabbed the Right by the spinal chord.

Schemo's story appeared August 17, 2004. August 18 saw a William Howell, Paul Peterson and Martin West op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Dog Eats AFT Homework."

August 18 also found Rod Paige defending charters in the *New York Times*. *Newsday* chimed in to say that the jury is still out on charters. The *Chicago Tribune* was similarly sympathetic and called the findings, "as new as a lava lamp, as revelatory as an old sock, and as significant as a belch" (give those gentlemen a Tom Robbins novel and sign them up for remedial simile practice). Not so the *Times* which pointed out that one option in NCLB is conversion to charter status.

On the 19th, le deluge: Floyd Flake, President of Edison Schools, Inc., Charter School Division, an op-ed in the *New York Times*; Checker Finn, an op-ed in the *New York Post* and a *Post* editorial; Jay P. Greene, an op-ed in the *New York Sun*; Jeanne Allen on Tavis Smiley; Nina Rees on "The News Hour With Jim Lehrer." In Washington State where the legislature had just passed a charter law and where a charter referendum was coming up in the fall, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* mustered a luke warm editorial (the referendum failed, by the way, the fourth time Washington voters have rejected charters).

Maybe it was the piece's impeccable timing: Schemo's article appeared the day after the *Los Angeles Times* broke the story of the 60-campus charter closings in California (see award to C. Steven Cox above). Schemo mentioned the closings, thus a one-two punch.

In any case, the pièce de résistance appeared in the *New York Times* August 25, a full-page ad decrying both the study and the *Times*' coverage. Jeanne Allen's Center for Education Reform paid for the ad (\$125,000) and Peterson purportedly assembled the 31 conservative

signatories. The ad constituted a massive exercise in hypocrisy as many of the signers have violated the standards they were setting for the AFT and the *Times* (these would include Howard Fuller, Jay P. Greene, Eric Hanushek, Will Howell, Caroline Hoxby, Paul Peterson, Herb Walberg, Martin West and Patrick Wolf and probably others whose work I know less well). Indeed, Caroline Hoxby rush-published such a “study” in the *Wall Street Journal*, September 29. Earlier, Peterson, Howell and Greene declared the Cleveland voucher program a success based on test scores in two schools, and no control group. Etc.

The ad ran weeks later in *Education Week* minus two signers, David Figlio of the University of Florida and Nobel-winning economist, James Heckman of the University of Chicago, neither of whom, they told me, knew what they were getting into the first time (I had obtained the email addresses of the signers and sent a memo on the hypocrisy involved). The ad can be seen at Allen’s website, www.edreform.com/_upload/NewYorkTimesAd.pdf (accessed January 3, 2005).

Chester E. Finn, Jr. (2004). “Defaming Charters,” *New York Post*, August 19.

Floyd H. Flake (2004). “Classes of Last Resort,” *New York Times*, August 19.

Jay P. Greene (2004). “No Comparison,” *New York Sun*, August 19.

William G. Howell, Paul E. Peterson and Martin R. West (2004). “Dog Eats AFT Homework,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, p. A10.

Caroline Hoxby (2004). “Chalk It Up,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 29.

Tom Loveless (2004). “The Facts About Charter Schools.” *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, p. A24.

Newsday (2004). “Despite Low Test Scores, the Jury Is Still Out on These Schools,” (editorial), August 18.

New York Post (2004). “Kids Come Last” (editorial). August 19.

New York Times (2004). “Bad News on the Charter Front,” (editorial), August 18.

Paul E., Peterson, William L. Howell, and Jay P. Greene. (1998). An Evaluation of the

Cleveland Voucher Program After Two Years.” Accessed at www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/pdf/clev2rpt.pdf, January 3, 2005.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). “Nation’s Charter Schools Lagging Behind, U. S. Test Scores Reveal,” *New York Times*, August 17, p. A1.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). “Education Secretary Defends Charter Schools,” *New York Times*, August 18.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer (2004). “Experiment Continues,” (editorial), August 19.

**THE “IF AT FIRST YOU DON’T SUCCEED, FUDGE, FUDGE AGAIN” AWARD:
*DENIS DOYLES, WITH A NOD TO CHECKER FINN***

Since 1980, Doyle has sifted through census data trying to prove that public school teachers are hypocrites and traitors because they disproportionately send their own kids to private schools. Despite the claim, the 1980 census figures refuted it. The 1990 census data refuted it. The 2000 census data refute it. With bated breath one awaits 2010.

Doyle has consistently used rhetorical sleight of hand to make the charge that the data actually refute. For instance, in his 1995 report, Doyle wrote “Not to make too fine a point, teachers...know how to address the nation’s education crisis: they vote with their feet and their pocketbooks. They choose private schools for their children when they think it serves their needs.” Well of course! Parents choose private schools “when they think it serves their needs.” So what? Doyle continued: “With teachers choosing private schools. The truth is self-evident: while they work in public schools they choose private schools for their own children because they believe they are better.” (Note that the “nation’s education crisis” is assumed, not proven, and the impression left in the last sentence is that all teachers choose private schools).

Except they don’t choose private schools. When Doyle finally got around to showing the data, the 1990 data revealed that 12.1% of public school teachers use private schools compared to 13.1% of the general public. In his analysis of the 2000 census, the figure is down to 10.6%, and it’s only 7.9% if you don’t count teachers who send their kids to both public and private schools. For the general public it’s 12.1%, 9.4% dropping out parents who use both. (I was told, but cannot independently confirm, that Doyle’s 1995 report included pre-school enrollments in an attempt to increase the proportion of public school teachers using private schools. I have no information about this for 2004).

Of course that is not an apples-to-apples comparison, teachers to the general public. While teachers don’t earn princely sums, they do earn on average at least 5 times what a person living in poverty. The 20 percent of Americans in poverty earn less than what many private schools ask for tuition. Health and Human Services defined the 2004 poverty level for the 48 contiguous states as \$9,310 for one person with \$3,180 added for each additional person in the household; \$18,850 for the oft-cited family of four. Many private schools charge \$20,000+ for their services.

Doyle calls public school teachers education “connoisseurs.” One would expect private school teachers to exhibit the same level of expertise, yet fewer than a third of *private* school teachers pack their children off to private schools, 29.5% in 2000, down from 32.7% in 1990. In fact, although 54.1% of private school teachers in 2000 had family incomes of more than \$84,000 a year, only 31.1% of this group had children in private schools.

Doyle’s 1986 report gave birth to an urban legend fathered by columnist George Will: “nationally about half of urban public school teachers with school-age children send their children to private schools.” Not true then, not true now. In only 2 of 50 cities that Doyle reports on does the percentage exceed 40% (Cincinnati and Philadelphia). Indeed, among the

50 cities, in only 10 does the difference between public school teachers and all families exceed 10% (keep in mind, “all families” includes poor people). In 21 cities the difference is actually *negative*: public school teachers use private schools *less*.

Still, the rhetorical fog continued in 2004 as in previous years. Doyle asked what are the reasons teachers choose private schools. They vary, he says. “But they all share this: A school of choice—whether it is a well-heeled suburban public school, an urban private school, a charter school, or a traditional private school—is self-evidently *better* to the family that selects it, in precisely the way that any other choice is better, be it political, social, cultural, religious, or commercial.” I might have to create a new set of awards, “The Year’s Woolliest Thoughts” prizes.

Doyle’s first report came through the American Enterprise Institute, the 1995 endeavor was funded by Jeanne Allen’s Center for Education Reform. Chester E. Finn’s Thomas B. Fordham Foundation published this year’s effort. What a pedigree.

As for Will’s urban legend, I debunked it but, like most such fairy tales, it still has a life.

Denis Doyle, Brian Diepold and David Alan Deschryver (2004). “Where Do Public School Teachers Send *Their* Kids to School?” www.edexcellence.net/doc/Fwd-1.1.pdf. Accessed December 31, 2004.

The Center for Education Reform apparently has no more copies of the 1995 report. The 2004 report contains email addresses of the authors and interested readers can inquire there.

George F. Will (1993). “Taking Back Education,” *Washington Post*, August 26, p. A27.

Gerald W. Bracey (1993). “George Will’s Urban Legend,” *Education Week*, September 29.

**THE “I DON’T LIKE REALITY, DAHLING, AND I JUST WON’T DEAL WITH IT,” OR,
THE “LOOKING FOR RACISM IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES” AWARD:
KATI HAYCOCK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE EDUCATION TRUST**

Word came that Education Trust Executive Director Haycock had opened her address to the Trust’s annual national conference quoting from me and from Richard Rothstein. Haycock said our statements were often presented as reflecting a liberal position, but they were really racist.

She paraphrased Richard as saying “You can come to a more profound understanding than most policymakers possess of the gap in achievement between middle-class and lower-class children just by taking the bus from Harlem to the Upper West Side and observing the differences in parenting between lower-class and middle-class parents.”

Surely Haycock cannot believe that Rothstein is *wrong*. I got the same understanding in a supermarket where a number of low-income mothers seemed to have two strategies for

controlling their children in public spaces: “shut up” and “come here.” If the child fails to respond, these commands are repeated at ever-increasing volume, then terminated for the really recalcitrant with whacks on the buttocks or elsewhere.

More formal research by Betty Hart and Todd Risley found that the 3-year-old *children* of affluent mothers used more words (1,116) when interacting with their mothers than did poor *mothers* when interacting with their 3-year-olds (974).

Haycock thinks schools alone can prepare all students for a college education. Richard, living in reality, and thinks other conditions play a role. After all, from birth to age 18, children only spend 9% of their lives life in a school.

My quotes have to do with the logic expressed in an article “What if Education Broke Out All Over?” Haycock also cited a different Ed Week piece where I wrote, “Educating all will take care of the equity situation but will lower wages and leave lots of highly skilled people standing around on street corners currently occupied by the low-skilled.”

Seems logical to me: If 100% of our students obtained a sheepskin, that would make 100% of students capable of filling the 25% of jobs that actually require higher education. Supply and demand. Wages for skilled labor fall (and, we might note, having lots of highly educated, unemployed people sitting around in bars and coffee houses is a great way to propel social unrest and revolution).

I have since come to see the error of my ways, though, and realize that if 100% of our young people get a college education, it *won't* necessarily solve the equity problem. If employers can pick anyone and be guaranteed a college grad, they might well start using capricious criteria for their choices: hair color, hair length, looks, posture, smile, the distance between the eyes, the slope of the forehead, the density of the eyebrows or any of the many characteristics that were thought important in the days of the Jukes and Kallikaks.

The other quote refers to my contention that until our society's dirty work can be done wholly by robots, it requires uneducated or undereducated people. Education makes people allergic to sweat. Educated people won't scrub urinals in public toilets or pick up the trash or slash the entrails out of cows and chickens, or even make the beds in hotels. George W. Bush keeps talking about finding people to do the jobs that “Americans” won't do anymore, meaning the dirty work that gets allocated to immigrants (you won't find many “Americans” in the meat packing plants in Iowa or Kansas anymore, but you can get good Vietnamese food in Dodge City). Well, after the immigrants get educated, they won't do it either whether or not they've become formal “Americans.”

A 1992 John Kenneth Galbraith treatise and a couple of more recent books have made the point that, in this country at least, those of us who enjoy a modicum of material wellbeing absolutely depend on the working poor for that wellbeing. And we treat them as if they are not there.

In speeches, if I cover this topic, I ask the assembled conference goers to consider not only the skilled workers like pilots who got them there, but the baggage sorters, the cabbies, the skycaps, the waiters, the bus boys, the maids, the janitors, the men and women who arranged

the tables and chairs where the conference goers are now seated. Without these people—poof—no conference. I wonder if Kati thought about them as she was ragging me and Richard.

Gerald W. Bracey (1998). “What if Education Broke Out All Over?” *Education Week*, March 28., p. 44.

Gerald W. Bracey (1997). “Swallowing Industry Line on U. S. Education Needs” (letter). *Education Week*, December 10.

Barbara Ehrenreich (2001). *Nickel and Dimed: On Not Making It in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books. A brief summary of the book is in the 12th Bracey Report, *Phi Delta Kappan*, October, 2001, where it receives a Golden Apple Award.

John Kenneth Galbraith (1992). *The Culture of Contentment*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Richard Rothstein (2004). *Schools and Class*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

David K. Shipler (2004). *Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Knopf.

“THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU STOOPID” AWARD:

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ALBERT VAZQUEZ, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION “SPOKESPERSON,” STEPHEN MORELLO, WITH A NOD TO MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, MAYOR OF NEW YORK, AND JOEL KLEIN, CHANCELLOR OF NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Tiffany Schley was a high school senior to die for or, at least, if you’re Smith College, to give a full scholarship to. She was valedictorian at the High School of Legal Studies in Brooklyn and her classmates voted her “Most Likely to Succeed.” So, she’s a person to listen to. But school officials didn’t like what she had to say.

Tiffany used her valedictory speech to tell the world that the school had had four principals in four years, suffered equally unstable teacher staffing, lacked sufficient textbooks and other materials, offered classes taught by teachers not qualified to teach them, and lacked administrators willing to meet with students to discuss the school’s problems.

When Tiffany and her mother came to school the next day to pick up her diploma kids, administrators refused to hand it over, told them they had been disrespectful, and instructed security to escort them from the building. Department of Education official Morello, said “We feel that her schoolmates are deserving of an apology,” a comment that almost garners a separate prize.

Tiffany’s mom stuck by her: “She busted her butt to get there, she kept it clean and she was honest. Sometimes the truth hurts.” The *New York Daily News* broke the story and Tiffany got calls of support from all over the country.

When Klein heard about Vazquez' folly, he overruled the principal, but declined an invitation to deliver the diploma in person. He had it sent by messenger. For his part, Bloomberg called Vasquez a "bozo."

Community organizers put together a celebratory gathering at a church and attendees contributed \$4600 to Tiffany for living expenses. For her part, Tiffany was unmoved: "Mayor Bloomberg has called the principal a bozo and a bonehead, but what has he done to address the issues at the school?"

What, indeed?

Joe Williams (2004). "Speech Costs Grad," *New York Daily News*, June 26.

Lisa L. Colangelo, Warren Woodberry, Jr., and Alison Gendar (2004). "Bloomy Blasts Diploma 'Bozo'", *New York Daily News*, June 27.

Elizabeth Hays and Nancy Dillon (2004). "Sheepskin At Tiffany's," *New York Daily News*, July 2.

THE "WHY DARRELL HUFF'S 1954 BOOK, *HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS* IS STILL IN PRINT, I" AWARD:

MIKE COHEN AND MATT GANDAL, ACHIEVE, INC.

In *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up?*, Cohen and Gandal attempt to show that students rise to the challenge of graduation tests. To make their case, they show a graph from the Massachusetts Department of Education (which should give rise to suspicions by itself; "Governments lie," said Izzy Stone). The graph shows that while only 48% of the class of 2003 passed the MCAS (MA's high stakes graduation test) in math, 95% of the class of 2003 eventually passed.

The graph, though, does not account for those who dropped out or who were retained, or who switched to a GED program (in Florida the number of GED's doubled from 2002 to 2003). The proper statistic is a ratio: the number of seniors as a proportion the number of freshmen four years earlier. This ratio takes the rate down in to the 70's, lower still in areas that are heavily poor, black or Hispanic.

Addressing the issue of fairness, the report labels another graph "Achievement Gap Closing" and shows passing rates by ethnicity from 1998 to 2003. Cohen and Gandal are sufficiently statistically savvy to know that *passing rates* tell you *nothing* about whether the gap is widening, closing, or holding steady. To judge how the gap is changing or not, you need *scores*. A passing rate tells you only how many kids cleared the hurdle set for them; it does not measure how high they jumped (that would be an actual score).

I'd guess that poor and minority kids who had to retake the test actually fell farther and farther behind overall: They had to continue to prep on subjects covered by the test while white and middle class students went on to study other material.

Looking at the SAT and NAEP results for blacks and whites for the same period of time shows no narrowing. In Massachusetts, the gap was 90 points on the SAT verbal in 1998 and 93 points in 2003. For the SAT math, the gap was 96 points in both 1998 and 2003. Some closure.

The SAT and NAEP data are readily accessible at the websites of the College Board and National Center for Education Statistics. Why didn't Cohen and Gandal look for them? Or did they?

Michael Cohen and Matt Gandal (2004). *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up?*
www.achieve.org. Click on "publications."

THE "WHY DARRELL HUFF'S 1954 BOOK, *HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS* IS STILL IN PRINT, II" AWARD:
HERB WALBERG, HOOVER INSTITUTION AND JOE BAST, CEO, HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

Huff called one of his chapters "The Little Figures That Are Not There." In an op-ed, "Does Literacy Still Matter" in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Walberg and Bast used these figures to contend that 59% of America's recent high school graduates do not read well enough "to cope with the complex demands of everyday life." The 59% figure was the worst among the 18 nations in the study by OECD. Even Poland, which scored lower (the lowest of all countries), had a higher proportion of copers.

Certainly one could wonder if results from a single test could tell us if people were prepared to cope with everyday life although the OECD report claimed that people had made that judgment (OECD was working with data from the International Assessment of Adult Literacy and I don't recall seeing any such judgment).

However, OECD didn't look at "recent graduates." It tested people aged 16-25.

But what are the little figures that aren't there? Test scores for the 2/3 of American high school graduates who go on to higher education. The OECD graph is for "Percent of secondary school graduates aged 16-25 (excluding those who go on to attain higher education qualifications)."

So the graph is for the mostly bottom third of graduates and omits the top two thirds ("mostly" because a few high scoring students opt not to go to college).

The 59% figure is the percent of American graduates age 16-25 who scored at level 1 or 2 (level 5 being the highest) on the OECD literacy test. It is worth noting that few people in the 18 nations who scored at levels 1 or 2 said that their reading skills limited their job opportunities or caused them difficulties in life.

But questions arise: Since most American 16-year-olds haven't graduated, who were they testing? How did they find the older people? How many of those contacted refused to be tested? Did the testers roam the barrios of Los Angeles, the ghettos of Roxbury, the Tunisian

quarter of Paris or the Cambodian slums of Bordeaux? Little questions not answered, little figures that are not there.

Herbert J. Walberg and Joseph L. Bast (2004). "Does Literacy Still Matter?" *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13.

OECD data at: www.attac.org/fra/orga/doc/ocdeen2.pdf.

**THE "ONE REASON WHY CARL ROVE AND GROVER NORQUIST SMILE A LOT" AWARD:
MASSACHUSETTS SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY AND STAFF AND CALIFORNIA
REPRESENTATIVE, GEORGE MILLER AND STAFFER ALICE CAIN.**

In an attempt to find out how on earth Teddy Kennedy and George Miller not only voted for No Child Left Behind, but enthusiastically advocated it until Bush failed to fund it as much as he had promised, I contacted their offices. I laid out the logic that NCLB is designed to increase the role of the private sector, provide vouchers to private schools (voucher provisions were in the original legislation), reduce the size of the public sector and reduce or destroy the power of two Democratic power bases, the teachers unions.

From Kennedy's office, nothing.

From Miller's office, staffer Alice Cain replied, in toto, "I certainly hope not."

Email, Alice Cain to Gerald Bracey, Friday, June 18, 2004.

Gerald W. Bracey, (2004). "The Perfect Law: No Child Left Behind and the Assault on Public Education," *Dissent*, Fall, pp. 63-66.

**THE "BEST PERFORMANCE AT NOT RECOGNIZING THEIR OWN LOGIC" AWARD:
THE AUTHORS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

The text of the 1100 page law uses the phrase "scientifically based research" on average once every ten pages and the Department of Education denied New York City \$47 million until it abandoned its reading program of choice for one the Department had approved. Yet there is no scientific research based for the law itself. In fact, there is no research base for it at all. Nothing in the annals of education research would lead one to believe that testing kids every year and punishing schools that don't make arbitrary increases in test scores is a good way to improve education.

**THE "POTEMKIN SCHOOLS" AWARD:
KAYE STRIPLING AND THE HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

You probably don't want to play Texas Hold 'Em with retired (forced out) superintendent Stripling. After "60 Minutes II" had blasted HISD in January for its statistical shenanigans (one high school had 463 students leave in a single year but reported zero dropouts), Stripling sent a memo to all HISD employees. It reads, in part

We were all disappointed by 60 Minutes II's failure to show even a basic level of journalist integrity. What it produced was a report that ignored the accomplishments of our teachers, administrators, and students in favor of sensationalism....

That 60 Minutes II simply wouldn't tell the truth that it knew was hugely disappointing. 60 Minutes II knew that HISD has dealt swiftly and decisively with the issue of the false dropout rates, yet never reported that information to viewers.

How's that for keeping a straight face?

Unfortunately, the swift and decisive action mentioned above, if it happened, was to no effect. In October, 2004, Houston reported its dropout data to the Texas Education Agency: 0.9%. The district is 88% black and Hispanic and 82% qualify for free and reduced price meals. Another miracle. Call the Education Trust to spread the word.

And now come charges of cheating. And not just cheating in any ol' school. Cheating in schools that include the storied Wesley Elementary where Thaddeus Lott once reigned, Lott, a principal celebrated on Frontline and Oprah for his high test scores. Lott, promoted to oversee four schools by then-superintendent, Rod Paige, departed under something of a cloud. And now there are suggestions that those high test scores weren't real. Certainly, says the *Dallas Morning News*, the current scores can't be real: "Scores swung wildly from year to year. Schools made test-score leaps from mediocre to stellar in a year's time." Often the scores "came crashing down" as students left elementary schools and entered middle school.

Donna Garner started teaching at Wesley in 2001. She found her charges barely literate and was therefore surprised to see their records showing high test scores. When she returned to Wesley after a maternity leave, she was even more shocked to find that many of her charges had aced the practice state test, many with perfect or near perfect scores. She asked all of them how they did so well and they all, to a kid, said the teacher helped them.

Garner gave another practice test without assisting the children and many students failed. She was then called into the principal's office and "told she did not know 'how to administer a test the Wesley way.'"

In June, 2003, Garner spoke before the Houston School Board, saying "I was instructed on how to cheat and that the expectation was that I would cheat." The Board directed the district to assemble an independent investigative panel, but, 18 months later, no such panel exists or has ever existed. Currently its absence is caught in a he-said-she-said between HISD and the Texas Education Agency which had agreed to provide a facilitator for the panel.

A former Wesley principal who remained anonymous for fear of retribution said teachers would walk around the room and if they saw a wrong answer, would stand behind the student

until it was changed. On the writing test, teachers would read essays during the testing period and tell some children “You need to write some more.”

Abelardo Saavedra, who succeeded Stripling as HISD superintendent has issued a written statement reacting to the charges published New Year’s Eve in the *Dallas Morning News* (and don’t you know the *Houston Chronicle* loved that) that “these anomalies identify performance that is highly questionable.”

Grigory Potemkin ordered impressive village façades erected for Catherine The Great’s visit to Ukraine and the Crimea. As Houston Superintendent, Rod Paige built test score veneers that had no achievement behind them and Stripling painted them afresh. It remains to be seen if Saavedra will knock them down. As an Assistant Superintendent, Saavedra recommended to the Houston School Board in 2003 that the Board should approve a goal of lowering the dropout rate from 1.5% to 1.3%. It so approved.

Watch for more breaking stories.

Joshua Benton, (2004). “Cheating Allegations Go Back to 2003,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 30.

Joshua Benton and Holly K. Hacker (2004). “TAKS Results Too Good at Houston Elementaries.” *Dallas Morning News*, December 31, p. A1.

Robert Kimball (2004). “HISD Reports New Dropout Rate of Less than 1%: Miracle or Myth. Educationnews.org, November 9.

THE “YET ANOTHER PROMULGATION OF A DISCREDITED MYTH” AWARD:
JUNE KRONHOLZ, *WALL STREET JOURNAL* AND GAIL RUSSELL CHADDOCK, *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR*.

This is a dispiriting prize to dole out because it goes to generally competent veteran reporters. That makes the goof all the more difficult to comprehend. The WSJ headlined Kronholz’ Story, “Economic Time Bomb: U. S. Teens Are Among the Worst At Math.” Chaddock’s take ran under the headline “Math + Test = Trouble for US Economy.” Headlines sometimes don’t represent the text that follows, but this time the headlines reflect the story. The story was PISA2003.

Interestingly, while Kronholz said “The bad news [of PISA] is likely to be repeated next week with the release [of TIMSS]” she has not yet reported on TIMSS where the news was much better.

Chaddock brought in Business Roundtable mouthpiece Susan Traiman to parrot the party line: “It’s very disturbing for business if the capacity to take what you know...and apply it to something novel is difficult for US teenagers.” This statement indicates Traiman and the BRT uncritically buy OECD’s assertion that PISA measures application.

Frankly, I don't think anyone *knows* what PISA measures. PISA officials say the tests reflect, in part, what kids learn outside of school in the world around them. That world differs, of course, from country to country and it is questionable how many PISA items would pass the gender and culture bias reviews test items receive in this country.

For example, one item in PISA2001 required kids to know that racetracks were ovals and how understand how speed must be altered for the curves vs. the straightaways. Boys did much better than girls. One English researcher thought that German or Austrian boys could probably handle this item, but what about girls in rural Greece or Portugal? When he checked, he found that 8% of Greek girls and 10% of Portuguese girls got the item right compared to 43% of Austrian boys and 38% of German boys (the problems with PISA were discussed in my February 2004, *Phi Delta Kappan* Research column).

More importantly to this award, some years have elapsed since a commission wrote "if only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system. . . ." The commissioners were pretty smart people by and large and the fact that they fell for this hoax only shows how widely the myth pervades our culture.

The quote is from page 7 of "A Nation At Risk," penned nearly 22 years ago. I don't recall what the economy was doing then. I do know that around 1990 it spiraled down into a recession that cost George H. W. Bush his second term ("It's the economy, stupid"). It then exploded into the longest sustained expansion in the nation's history--followed by another recession, followed by another expansion which, consensus at the moment has it, will continue modestly through 2005. Schools are always failing, say the critics. Economic cycles come and go nevertheless.

The World Economic Forum ranks the US second in the world among 104 nations in global competitiveness. We fell from #1 two years ago because the WEF doesn't like the Bush tax cuts, the ever-increasing trade deficit, the ever-increasing national debt, and the seemingly endless parade of indicted CEO's and Wall Street Masters of the Universe.

School is hugely important. Differences among *developed* countries in test scores are trivial.

Gail Russell Chaddock (2004). "Math + Test = Trouble for US Economy," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 7.

June Kronholz (2004). "Economic Time Bomb: U. S. Teens Are Among the Worst At Math." *Wall Street Journal*, December 7.

Well, there are more worthies they're already 30% longer than last year. The Rotten Apples, alas, have grown to the same length as the Bracey Report itself. In a year less blessed with a bounty of rubbish, we'd throw a prize to Frederick Hess for his American Enterprise Institute essay, "The Case for Being Mean," an apologia for harsh accountability measures. We'd also toss one to Joan Mahon-Powell. Owing credentials that wouldn't even let her substitute teach, Mahon-Powell forged papers about her accomplishments that let her make

as much as \$152,500 a year as a district superintendent in the New York City school system. She admitted the forgery but denied that she had lied to anyone (the 48-year-old will get a pension based on these inflated salaries at 55 unless legal action against it prevails).

In a less sated year, California Senator, Dianne Feinstein, could pick up her prize for going over to the Dark Side and voting for vouchers for Washington, DC while opposing them at home. Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* could receive a quart of curried lichee nuts for his assertion that we're losing our edge in science to India and China (stick to the Middle East, Tom, and books like *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*--you're good there). And the editors at Japan's *Daily Yomiuri* could establish a precedent by receiving both a Rotten and Golden Apple for the same editorial. That essay decried Japan's "decline" in test scores (Rotten), then recommended that Japanese educators stop using multiple-choice tests (Golden).

But, you get the picture. Until next year then, Jerry Bracey

<http://www.publicresistance.org/journals/1.1-2RottenApples.htm>

The above were two articles from this new journal. You can access the rest at:

<http://www.publicresistance.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=currentIssue>

Begin forwarded message:

From: George Sheridan <learn@jps.net>

Other view: Under NCLB, state tinkers with dropouts

By Russell W. Rumberger and Daniel J. Losen -- Special To The Bee

Published Friday, April 29, 2005

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/opinion/story/12807086p-13657428c.html>

California has a federally approved plan to solve the state's high school dropout problem. The bad news is it will take 375 years.

The state submitted its plan in response to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation enacted in 2002. NCLB requires states to demonstrate that all schools and districts are making "adequate yearly progress" toward the goal of all students reaching proficiency in state-designated reading and math tests within 12 years. In addition, the legislation requires that states establish a high school graduation rate goal and demonstrate that all schools and districts either reach the goal or make progress toward it. California originally set a goal of 100 percent, but has since revised it to a less lofty 82.8 percent.

Unfortunately, the federal government doesn't require states to use a realistic measure of high school graduation rates. California's method inflates that rate. By counting only the official dropouts and graduates, it ignores tens of thousands of students who start school in the ninth grade but who disappear from the rolls at some point between ninth and 12th grade. Thus, the dropout figures are notoriously inaccurate. The vast numbers of missing students left out of the formula led to an official statewide graduation rate of 87 percent in 2002.

The report released in March by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard used a formula based instead on actual enrollment numbers, comparing the number of graduates from grade 12 with the number of students enrolled in each of the previous four grades. When California's graduates for 2002 were calculated using this method, the state's overall graduation rate was 71 percent. Breaking down that figure, the data show that white students graduated at a rate of 78 percent. Minority graduation rates were much lower in the state: 57 percent for African Americans, 60 percent for Latinos and 52 percent for Native Americans.

NCLB also lets states set their own criteria for measuring progress. So California and several other states decided that schools and districts make adequate yearly progress if they improve their graduation rate by a mere one-tenth of 1 percent per year. According to the Civil Rights Project's estimates for the 10 largest districts in California, Los Angeles Unified School District has the lowest graduation rate in the state - 45.3 percent. So if LAUSD improves its graduation rate by 0.1 percent per year, it will take 375 years to get to the state-approved graduation rate.

NCLB requires states to show progress in achievement for up to seven identifiable subgroups - including poor, minority, English learner and disabled students. But the U.S. secretary of education has decided states do not need to show progress in graduation rates for these subgroups. This provides a perverse incentive: One way to raise both the aggregate test scores and the test scores of these subgroups is to get the most low-achieving students to leave the school or the district, either by dropping out or transferring to a program that issues a high school equivalency diploma. Although such students would lower the NCLB graduation rate, the school or district could still make adequate yearly progress as long as it showed a 0.1 percent improvement in its aggregate graduation rate. So by discharging the most difficult at-risk students and working with the best of the rest, both test scores and graduation rates could improve. This practice

already has been reported in New York City and in Houston, and has been documented in the research literature.

Even if such practices don't show up in California, the lack of a timely plan to reduce the state's dropout figures is shameful, and costly in the long run. The census estimates that over their working lives, dropouts earn \$270,000 less than students who graduate and don't go to college. That means the 66,567 students who the state admits dropped out of California public schools in a single year (2002-03) will cost the state \$14 billion in lost wages. If the actual number of dropouts is much higher than the official state figures, then the cost is even greater. Dropouts also cost the state in other ways through higher crime rates, increased welfare and more dependence on public health care. Last year's dropouts likely will result in 1,225 more state inmates who will cost taxpayers \$73 million to incarcerate.

California's long-term welfare depends critically on its willingness and ability to fully educate the state's growing and diverse student population. Its dropout plan falls far short of this goal.

About the writers:

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