

Educator calls for a “Revolution” in U.S. Education

Why an Educated America is Crucial in Our World Today: An Outsider Looks In (II)

Falling U.S. Dollar Hurts America’s Education System, the Economy and World Peace-
A Comprehensive Program for Fixing America’s Dysfunctional Education System

by

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with the assistance of Sharon Isac

Abstract

In this revised second in a series of wide-ranging papers on local, state, provincial, national, and international teachers, administrators, students, and their parents as well as elected officials, and the implications of not addressing these issues effectively and in a timely manner. Thirty-five recommendations are offered. These include: alternatives to high-priced, bureaucracy-based school boards, reintroducing the one- and two-room schoolhouse model, and creating new “salaam” (peace) schools in Arab countries to compete with Jihadist Madrassas. Harry Giles is an economist, lawyer, lecturer and school headmaster, with over forty years experience as a respected educator.

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Influences

Harry Giles

I have been asked to comment on those who have influenced me positively. My late father, George B. Giles, a man of duty and honour, who taught me both; my late father-in-law, Geza Por, a highly intelligent, cultured man, who shared his insights; my high school music teacher at Malvern, Roy Wood, who introduced me to classical music and led me to try to become a concert pianist; Glen Gould, whose tolerance, when I played duets with him, was remarkable; my grandmother, Jessie MacDonald Giles, whose moral standards led her to want me to become a Baptist Minister, which, in turn, led me to biblical studies at university; my wife, Anna, who taught me the meaning of love and the love of culture, especially of fine art; Jesus, who expanded my commitment to individuals to a love of humanity; Frederich von Hayek, who educated me in economics and democracy; Beethoven, whose works opened my spirits to a musical heaven; my brothers, George and Jack, who opened me to others; Professor Rhodes, whose lessons on metaphysical poetry opened me to literature, drama, theatre, and writing poetry; John Brown, who got me involved in Browndale, a revolutionary treatment centre for emotionally hurt children, whose cure was essentially love as expressed in physical caring; Sharon Isac, whose support and insight into children's needs in The Giles School and me was and is a pillar of support at our school; Tracy Faucher, a recent TGS teacher of English, whose commitments to children, were, and are, as real as my own; Michael Berns, my editor, biographer and friend, who has believed in me since we first met 35 years ago; and my children, Kathy and David, who have supported me emotionally since the death of my wife, Anna, 37 years ago.

Sharon Isac

I have been molded by people, places and events that touched my life: I thank my Sunday school teachers whose words I eagerly absorbed at a young age; Suzuri Sensei who must have been one of the best English teachers in Japan; Ayano Sensei who showed me that mathematics was beautiful. Jim Paget, my art teacher who opened my eyes to the works of great masters of Renaissance art; Gregg Watters, my piano teacher who quickened my spirit with sheer joy in the sublime beauty of Mozart's music; Mrs. Helen Fawcett who showed me the power of English language through poetry; My friend Ben whose spiritual transformation I was privileged to witness and who was the tower of strength through 10 years of my personal hell in the legal system; My two sons, Ted and Len Isac, who taught me the meaning of family ties; they continue to challenge my personal growth; Japan, the country of my birth, for the sense of profound beauty and reverence for life; India, my spiritual home, where I found my inner strength; Canada, my adopted home and country of my mother's birth, for allowing me to be who I am. I thank Harry Giles, founder and Head of the School where I spent the last 17 years of my life, for giving me the challenge of my life, and Mike Berns for being so American and whose friendship with Harry intrigues, inspires and motivates me to work.

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American education has been adequate so long as the U.S. dollar and the benefits of capitalism have brought very gifted, highly educated people from other countries to the United States to effectively lead its university science and mathematics faculties and major industries. The collapse of the U.S. dollar has changed all that.

The U.S. is in the midst of a paradigm shift unlike any it has experienced before-one as profound as humankind's move from agrarian to industrial to technological societies. There are a number of palliatives possible and a number of radical early intervention models, which might help to solve the problem, or at least to moderate the impact.

Today's changes in the U.S. can be likened to the decline of other empires-Roman, British and Soviet-where the paradigm itself dictates the world in which we live. One must adapt or die. The Romans and British failed; the jury is still out with the new Russian system.

Americans-in the midst of a record and growing national and individual debt, a market correction-cum-recession and falling U.S. dollar-have yet to recognize or respond to two extraordinary pressures by: (1) a new global environment and (2) the mistakes they themselves have created. For the latter, America's home-grown sub-prime mortgage fiasco comes readily to mind. In later years, this new form of lender and borrower greed-coming on the heels of the Anderson and Enron debacles, to name just a few, might be seen to be the U.S.' major, albeit dubious, export of our new millennium.

The Hidden Impact of a Collapsing U.S. Dollar

The attack on the U.S. dollar is both domestic and global. It has been suggested that the U.S. dollar is collapsing and is under global attack by OPEC, foreign banks and other governments who are shifting their foreign exchange dealings to the Euro as the currency of choice. But it is not just the U.S. dollar that may be

collapsing. It may also well be the entire socio-economic structure of contemporary America itself.

Internally, a high and growing deficit and the Federal Reserve's series of cuts in the prime-lending rate have pushed the value of the USD down against all G8 country currencies plus the Euro. Internationally, the America's sub prime mortgage crisis has been exported abroad to the detriment of world banks that, like their American counterparts, now have to write off mountains of bad debt. Unlike national governments, however, individuals cannot deficit finance their expenditures. Individual credit card balances, lines of credit, mortgages, and other forms of personal debt are high and already rising for the average American.

The end result at the national level? \$3.5 trillion has been recently transferred from U.S. currency-and more is leaving-generally, to the Euro pushing the European Community's currency up to \$1.53 from .78¢ a few years ago.

Over time, economics will have a profound and negative effect on America's imported intelligencia-given a weakening U.S. dollar, a ten percent decline in the stock markets and the possibility of this current "market correction" devolving into a recession-America's intellectual advances and their creators, Nobel Prize winners, will decline in number or cease to exist entirely. Currently forty percent of all PhD's awarded by American universities in engineering and the other sciences were granted to students largely educated abroad. More PhD's so educated cannot get work permits, so despite the genuine need in the US for their services, return to their homelands to create wealth there.

Until now, gifted, post-secondary students who come to the U.S. to attend an American university, get work experience or on-the-job training, usually returned to their homes in China, India, or elsewhere, or go wherever they could earn more money or enhance their careers upon graduation. With all the social and economic issues the U.S. is now facing, foreign students may, indeed, go elsewhere for their

advanced education and work. They may, for instance, follow present currency trends towards a strengthening Euro and away from a declining US dollar by going to Europe in place of America to study and work.

This, then, is the new and shocking paradigm America has yet to face: the U.S. will move towards third world status-unless the U.S. education system finally starts educating its own children.

What we are seeing and proposing in reaction to America's possible shift to third world nation status; this would be is a potential calamity in education which threatens the very survival of the United States as a significant country and as the leader of the free world. Unless the U.S. responds to this national emergency, it will over time cease to be viable in producing a decent living for its people. The U.S. needs to wake up now.

90% of American University Students are Under-Performing

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicates that only 10 percent of university students do the work wanted by their professors. 40 percent do less than what is sought but are at almost adequate levels; 50 percent do little or nothing. The fact that 90 percent of university students are not doing what they should is reflective of the fact that the vast majority of students have come to university unprepared, unaccustomed to work, obsessed with 4-6 hours of television or video games each day, untouched by study or academic work, with no or limited reading habits, and are intellectually inactive. Friends who teach in Universities in the US tell me that the old GCE O levels in English taken at age 16, and thought to be a Grade 10, were equivalent to second year in reasonable US universities.

How American Students Compare to Their Peers Abroad

Less than 35 percent of US high schools students study or do academic work more

than 6 hours each school week. By comparison, European students typically do three-to-four times that amount. Many Asian countries do far more. In China, primary school classes are 8 hours each day, and in secondary schools it is 11_ hours, and that is for 11 months a year. U.S. elementary and high school classes provide students with 4_ hours of class time a day at best. The Chinese approach is replicated in the equally long school days and school years of Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and India.

If American students are unprepared for the future, as they are now, they will have a dismal future-only unskilled jobs will be open to them. Their chequered career path throughout life will be one of persistent un- or under-employment.

Of course, some schools are better than others. Suburban public and independent schools are commonly better than the public schools of major American cities. Both have more commitment to a richer curriculum. The children in the slums, however, are cursed with monopoly bureaucracies that do not seem to care, so that in the end, it is the inner city child who is cheated out of any real hope of benefiting from a public school education.

A large segment of American society is thus condemned to poverty, ignorance, drugs, and crime in an intergenerational cycle of hopelessness and despair-from one generation to the next.

Positive Intervention: Scouting, Tutoring and Mentoring

Occasionally there is a positive intervention and some escape. The Gates Foundation has created 14 small high schools in New York and these have provided opportunities for a limited number of children. But even there, while a late start is better than nothing, it is still an almost too late start. International studies have repeatedly shown that early learning intervention at the pre-k level-namely, of children attending school from age 3-achieves the best outcomes. These children

achieve higher operational intelligences, fluency in more languages, better socialization skills than their same-aged peers, and dramatically higher levels of competence in mathematics.

In Black communities and in socially disorganized or disadvantaged communities, Big Brothers and Sisters and Boy and Girl Scouts are needed as positive mentors. To create them, courses to train all children as Scouts must become part of the curriculum. These can be organized as part of community service programs in schools, both primary and secondary, starting in Grade 6—the beginning of secondary schools in almost every European country. In High school perhaps 80-100 hours should be required, with the final 20 leading to apprentice roles as scouts, teachers' aids, fire department aids, social service aids, and big brother or big sister aids. They will be taught how to behave with honour, love, compassion, and decency. In turn, they will be honoured as those who have achieved well on graduation.

These students could also serve as the core group of a nationwide peer and cross-age tutors—in school and out—serving also as student mentors and as positive role models.

For children from 15-18, some children students might be interested in programs like the Duke of Edinburgh Awards or Outward Bound programs. These programs and similar ones can not only enhance a child's growing maturity but, when combined with a use of "good" boarding schools, improve a child's sense of well-being. What is a good boarding school? Contrary to popular representation in the movies, they do exist. These include the one Prince Charles went to in Northern Scotland—Gordonstoun School—which offers a combination of Spartan outward bound training (e.g., rescue boat training), opera, after-school study periods, organized sports, and solid course programs.

Given the desperate situation of education and living in impoverished sections of

big cities, boarding schools might be created for children from very bad homes with single or no parents, perhaps managed by nearby independent boarding schools.

Making Parents Accountable

We need to make parents once again accountable—as in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries—for the education of their children. The parent must be restored to the teetering education stool of four legs—the teacher, the administrator, the student, and, of course, the parent. If the parent or guardian refuse to respond to and address repeated teacher or administration concerns about their child, the child—as draconian as it may seem—will probably be better served in a boarding school here both good adult male and female role models are once again available for the child.

Funding Issues

Obviously, current funding possibilities are impossible and, for these new special programs, either additional special funding must come from the Federal Government or via special taxes levied by the state beyond current funding arrangements. This applies to all of the recommendations in this report.

Other Global Economic Forces Eroding the U.S. Education System

An important part of America's education problems has been caused by social problems created by new economic forces in China, India and other countries, leading to declining American standards of living. Thus, in 1970, one family earner was enough to maintain a U.S. family well. Now, it requires both parents to work longer hours—with some parents having to hold down two or three jobs—often leaving latchkey children unsupervised. That has not merely undermined educational standards; it has opened the way for the development and growth of gangs, theft, assaults, and the use and sale of drugs.

The root cause -social, cultural, and economic-is in a word, "boredom." America's K-12 students are simply not being intellectually stimulated to a point where they want to visit a public library or bookstore and read. Parents, unaware of and uninvolved in their children's education, neither monitor nor encourage better reading or study practices. The problem is exacerbated by 4-6 hours watching useless TV or playing video games each day, both of which have frightening and largely negative consequences for children-apart from the time such activities steal from more edifying and productive pursuits such as reading.

The High Price of Student Boredom in the U.S.

In the 1970s, Torsten Nils Wiesel and David H. Hubel received the Nobel Prize for their discovery that some neural, sight-related pathways wither or die from non-stimulation. Other researchers later asked questions which might be combined and paraphrased as: If a failure to stimulate leads to the non-development or death of certain neural pathways, might not the same thing happen to those who don't exercise their brains with reading, thinking and other intellectual pursuits-even, perhaps, the conversation that comes with human contact?

From their lead, over 1,500 of the world's leading neurologists suggested in the 1980s and 1990s that early academic intervention would actually increase the operating intelligence of children by some twenty-plus percent by creating the stimulus which would lead to the creation of new neural pathways early; they did not mean kindergarten, or even junior kindergarten, but Nursery (aged 3) or earlier.

In the future, early childhood education is a must if we want America's children to really learn. Only in this way, can the U.S. apply international learning standards that can result in American students being able to compete in a global economy. This means a new emphasis on teaching modern languages in a way that the child is actually fluent verbally and in writing in that language and, especially, in learning and applying advanced mathematics. Recent research at the University of

Montreal has indicated that early mathematics-in terms of numerals, addition and subtraction facts, shapes, sizes, and colours all play a part in starting effective learning at the preschool.

While there are clearly some benefits in doing this with teaching basic literacy courses, including reading and writing, recent research in Canada indicates that early intervention achieves its best results with a child's learning of mathematics and second and third modern languages.

There has been a massive amount of neurological research on the positive impact of early intervention. Unfortunately, these series of articles published in the *Chicago Tribune* on these findings and in other newspapers went largely unnoticed. In the result, it appeared that there was no impact on education in the U.S. and, in particular, the introduction of early, pre-K education there.

Practical Uses for the Wiesel-Hubel Discoveries in North America

However, someone in Canada independently discovered the same thing in 1964-nearly 20 years earlier-and was applying the Wiesel-Hubel discoveries in an independent school. That "someone" was the author of this report.

Forty-six years ago I started what would become the first of the French Immersion programs in Canada in a private school where my own children were involved. My objective was to get children to think by learning things other than merely a second language and to be involved with processes requiring children to think. After two years, it was clear that the children learning academic subjects at my preschool, though the medium of a "French language filter," were operating at an increased operational intelligence. In fact, our pre-Kindergarten children were tested at the Grade 2 and 3 levels prescribed by the Ontario Ministry of Education. In addition, the children were in school for a longer day. By Grades 7 and 8, they were attending school happily for 7_ hours per day.

In 1962, we were the only school in Canada to be offering it. Since 1970, there have been 300,000 in French Immersion programs every year according to Statistics Canada. Five years ago, a Toronto newspaper said that more than 3,000,000 Canadian students had been enrolled in French Immersion.

At the end of a 7.5-hour school day-a “long day” by public school standards in the U.S. and Canada, then and now-most of the children didn’t want to go home. Instead, they wanted to participate in such after-school academic programs as fourth language instruction, special mathematics, Chess, science clubs, drama, and the like. But the key to these successes was that they were happier in school than elsewhere because they were not bored. Of course, children in economically advantaged areas are usually less bored because they are part of a group which brings to school the “hidden curriculum of the home”-often a rich, family-based culture introduced into the classroom-so they can move ahead faster with more enrichment.

It is generally believed that the ideas on positive reinforcement promulgated by well-known behavioural psychologist, B.F. Skinner, may have had some impact as well in further increasing the operating intelligence of young students-by as much as an additional 35 to 55 percent. Forty years ago to the present, no one would give The Toronto French School or The Giles School research money, including the Gates Foundation, but the results spoke for themselves. The school had accepted children on a first-come, first-accepted basis and in the senior, high school years proceeded to win everything in sight. The school’s students won the prestigious Euclid and Descartes mathematics competitions every year. They took 16 of the 18 places representing Canada in global competitions, after the national exams ended, in the Chemistry & Physics Olympiad. They dominated the Français anticipe of the Baccalaureate Français. School students averaged 14/20 while the national average of all children, mostly French nationals, was 7/20.

My school's children were largely native speakers of English; yet, they got two marks of 19, two of 18, three of 17, and three of 16. The other top mark in Canada was one 16/20 in Montreal. In France, traditionally only 7 or 8 students nationwide get 19 out of 20 and their papers are published in *Le Figaro Littéraire*. Ontario received 8 places for the freshman year at MIT; my school took all eight most years. Even more interesting, on the university-level Putnam Mathematics competition, for a period of at least twelve years, my graduates took between 4 to 7 of the top 9 places every year. From what I was able to discover, that had never happened before or since with any school.

Bureaucracy Paralyzes Student Learning

Our school was not part of a paralyzed bureaucracy. Indeed, one Ontario Ministry of Education inspector said that I had been “responsible for every positive change in the Ontario curriculum since the death of Canadian educator Egerton Ryerson” who died in 1882. Our students achieved these benchmarks in learning despite the misguided efforts of those who would capriciously change the administration, pedagogy and teachers who brought about these improvements in the first place. This always happens in education-not to mention other fields-whenver you get outstanding results.

There is no doubt that bureaucracies and monopolies stultify growth and prevent improvement. The terrible influences of determinists-this way or no way-such as Piaget and Dewey, coupled with an ever-expanding and deeply entrenched American educational officialdom, moved educational standards to the lowest common denominator or LCD.

Is Bigger Always Better?

The vast majority of the world's public and private schools still offer children assembly-line educations conceived for the 20th century's industrial revolution by educators such as America's John Dewey. His teaching methods sought to

produce large numbers of semi-literate blue collar workers for an industrializing America. These methods cannot recognize much less address, a child's unique learning needs or abilities. For most schools today, bigger is still better.

Years ago, when I was helping the Peel Board of Education to introduce late French Immersion, I happened to hear their views on school size. In order to get in all the desired options, it was seen as necessary that the High School be at least 1,492 strong. I was horrified by the number, and decided to ask the leaders of Belgian education what they thought since I was going there to learn what I could from their system. In Brussels, I visited what were seen as their three best French-language high schools. I asked each of the Rectors (Principals) how large a secondary school should be. In Belgium, High Schools start at Grade 7. One said a high school should be no more than 750 students. The other two said that a high school should not exceed 650. When I asked why, each responded in the same way. If the school were larger, we would not know all the students and could not respond to their needs, emotional or intellectual.

We have adopted a maximum school enrolment policy of 350 from Nursery to Grade 12 in The Giles School. A critical aspect of education lies in the emotional well being of the children. If you have a primary or secondary school of 1,000 or 2,000 or even larger, you are, in effect, building jails, factories or prisons. You are not building well-functioning schools or good students who want to learn. You are also building training grounds for bullies who may ultimately become criminals.

It is no wonder that the mass school and university killings have taken place. Even though, in hindsight, the killers' depressive and manic behaviour were noted, systems or institutions-especially large ones-cannot effectively intervene to help troubled students. America and Americans, in general, and American educators, in particular, have yet to become acquainted with British Economist E.F. Schumacher and his philosophy of *Small is Beautiful* and his book of the same name. For Schumacher, it does not always obtain that manufacturers who seek to increase

production efficiencies--less input and more output--actually achieve “economies of scale,” In education, it should never obtain. What one often gets, as in Columbine High in 1999 and Virginia Tech last year, are clearly “diseconomies of scale.”

Piaget may now be thought of as the creator of the “LCD” (lowest common denominator) in modern education with his “stages of cognitive development” theory. He believed that children could not learn beyond certain levels he arbitrarily established by the child’s chronological age. So, for Piaget, children under 7 can’t think logically about concrete events because they are not yet at their “concrete operational stage.” Similarly, children under age 11 can’t do abstract reasoning because they are not yet at what Piaget called the “formal operational stage.” In the Giles experiments, children are thinking logically from age 6. In life, as Michael Berns, an administrator at our school, once said, “Age is no respecter of maturity.” We have adults who act like children and children with the cognitive abilities of graduate students.

Removing Roadblocks to Learning

Also at The Giles School in Toronto, no artificial roadblocks (unlike Piaget, Dewey and other outdated educators) are placed in the way of the child’s intellectual and emotional growth. The student moves as fast as he or she can--without pressure and often well beyond the teacher’s daily lesson plan. Parents not familiar with the Giles method, are often amazed by the depth and breadth of understanding displayed, firstly, by TGS students they observe during their initial visits to the School, and, then, by their own children at The Giles School.

Piaget, Dewey and other educators attempt to mass market education to the masses; at The Giles School, individual student lesson plans replace class ones.

Debunking Popular Child-Rearing Practices

It will be remembered that Freud noted that the stress between a child and his

mother was perceived as creating behavioural problems in children. The popular children-rearing physician and author, Benjamin Spock, then proceeded to popularize Freud's ideas and encouraged parents to relax with their children and be more tolerant of their needs. This was interpreted as encouraging permissiveness in the child. This, in turn, led schools to practice their own form of academic permissiveness-lowering academic standards as part of what would become a national trend.

Why We Need Standards in Learning and in Life

When standards are low, students need not read, do not think, and do not work. They do not develop work habits that, in turn, drive down the standards and can set in place lifelong habits of indolence, sloth and concomitant aggressivity or passivity. This, combined with many children becoming unsupervised, latch key kids, has led to stresses for children, which have often been misdiagnosed. The result? Many children end up being drugged unnecessarily with such psychiatric drugs as Ritalin. It should be remembered that Dr. Spock's son ended by committing suicide-an all too-frequent occurrence for children who have no limits imposed on their behaviour.

Where a parent is in the home and a child has extra firmness administered when needed and receives immediate consequences for misbehaviour in the period from age 12-to-36 months, this will reduce the incidence of misbehaviour later. However, in the absence of nurturing and discipline in the home, often due to both parents working away from home, children will "act out"-that is, misbehave.

Excessive Television May be Worse Than Some Illegal Drugs

Too much TV may be worse than some illegal drugs in destroying or inhibiting the growth of children's minds.

Several recent studies have shown that when children watch too much television

between the ages of 1 and 3, they are more likely to show evidence of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) between the ages of 6 and 7 and beyond. By 2005, over 4.5 million children age 18 and under were taking Ritalin and similar drugs. By 1991, the use of Ritalin in the U.S. was systemic, endemic and, possibly, pandemic in the developed world, especially, many of the “G8” countries of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

One of the problems with Ritalin and other psychotropic (psychoactive) behaviour-modifying drugs is that they are no substitute for better parenting and better schools. It is also known that biofeedback can cure 75 percent of ADHD kids and leave children with an operating IQ eleven points higher than where drugs are used in place of biofeedback. Unfortunately, these treatments are initiated neither by schools nor school boards but schools and school boards could and should, as a minimum, give parenting classes. There is some evidence that the overuse of Ritalin can lead to the use of other drugs such as cocaine and tobacco.

Ritalin does help normal children to concentrate. But what children need to improve their attention spans and ability to concentrate is discipline and limits. However, after the negative influences of Dr. Spock, limits and discipline became uncommon. The notion of just about “anything goes” became the norm. We seem to have substituted Ritalin for care, discipline and love. As treatment, fish oil may be a more appropriate treatment for child inattention and as a replacement for Ritalin and other drugs.

Classroom Discipline Does Not Mean Aloofness

Discipline does not mean rigidity. Effective parenting is not easy but it is the easiest way to avoid using drugs. What is needed is the setting of limits and the prompt and equitable enforcement of them—one rule for all the children in a family with no exceptions. When children are difficult, parents need to respond immediately and

not let the rules be broken. Children learn that they are dependent on their parents. As a useful by-product, well-disciplined and loved children are, as a rule, more respectful of their parents, siblings and others than when there is insufficient or inappropriate discipline.

When parents start to be controlled by their children, the result is a massive insecurity for the child. When one is inconsistent in child rearing, an increase in child insecurity is not surprising.

When a child becomes confused, he or she grows insecure and tests for new limits at home and at school; their behaviour resembles that of an ADHD child. That applies equally for teachers. Children need regular hugs and demonstrated affection and they need to be given choices as part of the discipline process. Research in England points the same way.

The High Cost of Political Correctness

Sadly, in the U.S. and other countries in these times of “political correctness,” teachers-especially male teachers-are not permitted to even pat a child on the back for fear of being accused of child molestation. At a time when American society is crying out for a saner, gentler schooling that offers child encouragement for trying or succeeding and not public belittlement for making mistakes, we have reversed the basic need for human contact, values and standards adhered to by all-students and adults alike.

In addition, it has been found that with athletes as with the intellectually gifted, these individuals reach their full potential after lengthy periods of intensive training. Thus, when children are intellectually challenged continually from Grade 2, they will reach a fuller intellectual potential in Grade 12: by that time, they will have been developing more neural pathways every year and will also have learned systematic applications for the new knowledge obtained from their schooling. Children who are deprived of this ongoing intellectual challenge will simply not be able to approach,

much less, reach their full potential. Indeed, as the United Negro College Fund's advertising says: "a mind is a terrible thing to waste." It's not just the loss of a human mind's full potential for African Americans that we need to worry about today: it's all Americans educated by the American education system.

What Rising Marks in America's Schools Really Mean

Even with these calamitous or non-existent standards, marks still rose in American schools. In the 1970's, 20 percent of the high school marks were A's. By 2003, 47 percent were A's. To make it even more absurd, the 47 percent was achieved on lower standards. Yet, by the time the children of the middle class reached university, only 15-20 percent of them could construct basic, grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs.

Average results on the same first year chemistry test started in 1968 fell from 68 percent that year to 48 percent in 1996. This has reduced university standards to the extent that it has led to inflationary grade point averages and an undermining of the work ethic in universities and the consequent production of unqualified, incompetent teachers-as well, of course, as other so-called professionals in the American workforce.

For university professors to even give C's for mediocre work, for which students had been given A's in high school for doing little if anything, was becoming impossible. Such students think that last minute cramming the night before is hard work-instead of 3-5 hours of homework each night and 6-8 hours on the weekend as they should have done. Bad primary and high schools have taught children that A's can and often are given for everything, worthless or not. So, at university, many students not surprisingly produce work of little value and feel little if any regret at having done so. Indeed, incidences of plagiarism and the use of bogus-degree "diploma mills" as well as questionable accelerated degree programs have grown dramatically in recent years.

This meant that by 2002, the cream of the crop—namely, those going on to university, were “studying” about one hour per week in each of their five high school subjects. Because of their own incompetence, such students were frustrated at university, not understanding why their work was inadequate, and tended to blame their professors for their own shortcomings.

According to American psychologist Laurence Steinberg (*Beyond the Classroom*. NY: Simon and Schuster. 1996), some 40 percent of non-slum children are just “going through the motions” in high school and virtually all “slum” (inner city ghetto or rural poor) children were doing so. The result is that approximately two-thirds of America’s students now say they cheated on exams in the last year in university and that 90 percent have copied their homework from other sources regularly—plagiarism. The average American high school student spends only 15 percent of his time in school on academic learning. Appallingly, the average American high school student does only about 4 hours of homework each week. By comparison, this is roughly the **daily** commitment of students in “serious” (about education) countries such as Japan, South Korea, Finland, and Denmark.

If a student repeatedly gets good marks for doing poor work, what can be expected of him or her later in life? What will pass as quality in the U.S. will be rightly considered to be substandard elsewhere.

Universities admit on the basis of high school marks. This is irrational because every school gives its own marks, and an overall GPA (Grade Point Average) of, for instance, 62% in one school may well be a 98% in another. One could argue that things like the International Baccalaureate should be used. Alternatively, a university Scholarships Examination Board could be used with control questions being set by staff from select universities such as MIT, Stanford, Cal-Tech, Princeton, Harvard, or the like. The same exam could be used for university admissions themselves. I tried to set up such a board in Ontario but the Ministry of Education killed it—presumably because they did not want the public to know how

bad things were.

Many high schools no longer give rankings on graduation because students and parents become hysterical when their school ranks poorly due to student inattention, laziness, lack of work, lack of reading, lack of homework, lack of studying, and, most importantly, lack of parental supervision, encouragement and pressure. This has led to such a high level of grade inflation that even a high "A" is usually necessary to get into a teachers' college.

In the UK, students often have a year between high school and university called a "gap year." to enable young adults to see that they are still children needing to grow up before they will be admitted to the serious, adult world of higher education.

In the U.S., it seems that marks are given not to recognize standings but to make the student feel good and to avoid strife with parents disenchanted with a failing education system, and, if they are honest, with their own failure in properly parenting their children.

Most university professors feel that only 10 percent of their students are fully engaged in actively listening and learning. At least 10 percent of their students, trying as best they can, because of a lack of sufficient study preparation, are overwhelmed and failing at the post-secondary level. This is often the result even in the Ivy League or Big Ten American universities. To many, who have had a more rigorous educational background and where an "A" means an "A," American universities have become universities in name only. In short, American schooling is seen as a joke by most educated Europeans and Orientals.

Global Problems

Universities which seek to evaluate their entrants by asking them to write a few paragraphs on a subject of their own choosing. Many of these new university

students had A's in English in high school. Nonetheless, they are being found to be "near illiterates." Only 33 percent of university graduates in the U.S. are 4-year graduates. Most, if they do obtain their Bachelor's degree, are 6-year graduates and many are from universities of questionable value.

France

In other countries, such as France, there are regular state exams with reasonable standards. In addition there are independent exams such as Advanced Placement tests and the International Baccalaureate. "The Baccalaureate," France's national secondary-school (*lycée*) diploma, was terribly cheapened by the then-President of France, Francois Mitterrand, who wanted more children to pass the Baccalaureate by increasing the pass rate from 60% to 83% with no commensurate improvement in educational outcomes to warrant the sudden 38% jump in new graduates of French high schools. Prof. Jean-Robert Pitte, since 2003 the President of the Sorbonne, said that "the French Baccalaureate was now not worth a fart." Since the French language has been an enormous source of pride, the decline in literacy and language has left France a poorer country in the eyes of many French educators such as University of Paris-Sorbonne President, Prof. Jean-Robert Pitte.

Canada

As a practical matter, "whole language" has not only undermined literacy and language but also the whole educational process in the UK, the US and also much of Canada. This has led to the use of such doubtful programs for quick results as "Reading Recovery."

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has a list of approved and required texts for use in the classrooms which school principals are required to use-and no others. That list does not include a single phonics text. To be fair, however, Ministry experts are now going out to the province's various Boards of Education to teach teachers how to teach children to read using phonics. The problem in Ontario is

that the province's Colleges of Education have stopped teaching teachers how to use phonics so that even with these remedial Ministry efforts, teachers will have difficulty implementing any new directives.

When I led the Canadian Physics Olympiad team to compete in London at Harrow School against high school teams from around the world, I learned that all the current teachers and many of the retired ones who were there to help were grammar school graduates. The comprehensive schools-the equivalent of America's public schools-took all students; they were a complete failure, replicating the failed secondary moderns that had preceded them in the UK. It may have been that their individual student enrolments were just too large and the weaker kids just slipped through the cracks. The few who succeeded were in good catchment areas where the parents were university graduates, who had libraries, took their children to libraries, and gave their children extra outside courses.

Great Britain

In 1959, a British inspector of state schools by the name of Morris reported on the condition of British education. At that time, he noted, children went into school in the "reception class" (pre-K or Junior Kindergarten) at the age of 4_ years of age. They were taught directly and by the age of 6 read and wrote fluently. Before 6, the children were writing 5-to-6 page essays. I personally visited some of the Inner London Infant Schools and saw this myself. They were teaching the children from their first day and using phonics coupled with the learning of small whole words. "Whole Language" was seen then, as now, as a pretend system of learning to read by getting children to memorize the shape of words, including, some small words such as "if," "and," "as," and "but" coupled with picture clues. It didn't work. It has never worked.

This "whole language fraud" has not yet appeared to undermine British education as it did in both the US and Canada. It is interesting that early academic

intervention in the British schools of the time resembles nothing so much as our own pilot program at The Giles School in Canada and the results were comparable. The United Kingdom has now returned to phonics. Some Canadian provinces are considering going back to phonics.

Later, UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson, in the 1960s, decided to replace the direct grant or “grammar schools” (separate from Britain’s Secondary Modern public schools) with private school-type public schools offering “comprehensives.” Unlike American grammar or primary schools which teach K to Grade 5 students, British comprehensive schools are at all three levels: primary, middle and secondary (high school) levels from pre-K through Grade 12. Here’s how the British grammar schools worked: the age 11+ general knowledge exam levelled the playing field by admitting talented students into private-type grammar schools. The age 11+ exam was a child’s personal voucher to entrance into a better school-one the child’s parents could ill afford if they had to pay tuition, which they didn’t. The exam/voucher-based, British grammar schools produced exceptional students who went on to play leading roles in education, particularly in mathematics and science. They got the best education in the English-speaking world. The independent sector produced, in general, people who went into business. The British “grammar schools” enabled the poor to escape from poverty into the middle class and provided virtually all the mathematics and science teachers in schools and universities.

When Tony Blair came to power in 1997, he followed Thatcher’s lead for the most part-except in education. He wanted to do away with the “local authorities” (school boards) and oblige the individual schools to sink or swim. If schools lost students to other schools doing a better job, then the poorer schools would close and the teachers there would become unemployed. It was a sensible idea because teachers would go out of their way to help all students extra so that they would not lose their jobs but his back benchers refused to permit the schools to become better. Something he did, however, was a calamity. He changed the marking

scheme for the GCE (General Certificate of Education) A levels-which are taken around the world-transforming E's, a 40% passing grade, into B+'s and A's. The result has been the complete collapse of standards at the university level. As a professor of Sussex University has stated, the students who now come to university cannot write a grammatically correct sentence in their first year. So he waits until their second year to introduce the use of the "comma." On the other hand, Cambridge University is trying to re-establish A levels with what they call the "Pre-U," uninfluenced by what can only be termed "irresponsible" educational saboteurs who would diminish the value of learning.

United States

Basically, the average American high school graduate has a poor grade 10 reading comprehension level. This has led to university texts being dummed down and the curriculum reduced in quality so as to accommodate the new student. This, in turn, has led to poor students getting grades they do not deserve in courses that no longer reflect the quality they once did. It also has led to the achievement by university and college registrars of their principal, although generally unspoken, task of filling seats at their often high cost, post-secondary institutions, even with unqualified students.

Harvard University now graduates over 90 percent of their students with honours-up from 33 percent some 50 years ago. Princeton is attempting to buck the trend by holding down A's and honours to no more than 35 percent of its graduates. This is the position of the University itself, which takes some pride in its historical leadership role. Even UCLA has a grade of 98% for a B.

The current U.S. system seems aimed at destroying children instead of helping them to grow intellectually and emotionally. Even worse, the slum children have been cheated out of almost any chance, except for the odd intervention by organizations such as the Gates Foundation. President Bush tried to create hope

through the “No Child Left Behind” program, but Ted Kennedy and other irresponsible politicians stole the chances of improved learning for the educational bureaucracy and took away from public education any incentive to increase parental involvement, improve student learning or the system itself, or identify or proactively deal with at-risk students. In the end, the uncaring political hacks have guaranteed the slum children’s future as zero. A school which is in a poorer district and lacks the resources to help its children may well end up being closed because of the impossibility of bringing the standard up to those achieved in wealthier districts under “The No Child Left Behind” legislation. There now are no more neighbourhood schools in the poorer areas. Some areas have educational exams that are culturally or linguistically racist. For example, Florida has an exam which called the “FCAT”-the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test-is an example of what in law is known as “double jeopardy”: one cannot be tried for the same crime twice. In the field of American education, Floridian students must not only pass all state and federally mandated requirements to graduate from their primary, middle and secondary schools-as is the case in all U.S. states-Florida’s students must also pass the FCAT when administered in Grades 3 through 11. If they don’t, they can’t go on to college or university. They receive instead what is, really, a meaningless, bogus high school diploma for 12 or more years of full-time study. Only 2 other states apparently have a law similar to Florida’s FCAT; 49 do not.

The FCAT is so culturally structured that a Spanish-speaking child would find it difficult, even impossible, to pass this exam. Suicide is sometimes a result. Other parents return to their home country, such as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to give their children a fair chance to get their high school diploma. One doubts that the creators of this exam really understood its essential malice.

Because of the earlier, federal “No Child Left Behind” law, state public school teachers are told by their school administrators to abandon the curriculum to “teach to test” so that failing children can be advanced, deserving or not, to the next grade. By law, after three failures in the same grade, the child must be advanced.

All students and NCLB students, in particular, know this. The latter seldom work to improve their grades or department in class-there is no incentive to do so. In Florida, the situation is worse: “teaching to test” is necessarily more frequent than in non-FCAT states simply because there is an additional pressure on teachers, students and schools to succeed. The state-mandated FCAT is such that no elected State of Florida official has ever taken. Perhaps, someone should ask them to take it a la the TV show, “Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?”

Florida has the highest crime rate in the United States. Education, or rather the lack of it, probably is a major causal factor. In initiating changes, it must be recognized that most children in city schools are so far behind that changes will take time. Regardless of what we will try to do, it will take years to reach the desired levels. The “No Child Left Behind” law should be re-titled “No Child Learns Better” today and often worse than those who went through America’s public school system previously.

Acceptance of Poor Education Standards is Not a Viable Option

The states in the U.S. and most provinces in Canada simply accept a poorer standard of public education or are afraid of the political repercussions of implementing a “survival of the fittest” approach to teaching. The implications for the U.S.-as the leader of the “free world”-are profound. The absence of buy-in to “free market” approaches to learning in the U.S. is more serious to the U.S. than just about anywhere else because of the substandard education that American children have “enjoyed” since WWII. It is something that has the potential to ruin the United States’ education system in the short term and the country, as a whole, in the long term. This is especially true in an increasingly competitive global world that demands the best of each of its citizens, students and workers alike. As much as America may be ridiculed, chastised or questioned abroad, the world looks to the U.S. for direction in just about every aspect of life.

All children are part of a public and even those in private education remain part of

that public. In the United States, a failed Communist-like public education system-with minimal or no checks and balances-cheats children of a meaningful education. Boards of Education, like most monopolies, are free from challenge and, thus, are set to fail-themselves and their student charges, their teachers, the parents, and ultimately, society itself.

In Edmonton (Canada), the School Board uses democracy, choice, capitalism, and market forces to change and improve its public schools. There, everything is decentralized. Each school decides what they will specialize in. In one school it may be art and music, in another history and economics, in yet a third it may be sports, in a fourth it may be modern languages such as Mandarin, in a fifth it may be mathematics and science, theatre arts, and all kinds of others. Each school must cover the Provincial (Alberta) curriculum, and each competes not only with other public schools but also with private and independent schools as well to attract students. All of Alberta's public schools are funded on the basis of the number of students attracted to the particular school.

Want to know how to grade the performance of your child's school on a daily basis?

Periodically, once or twice a year or sometimes not at all, school boards or state departments of education publish school performance lists that are usually reprinted in local newspapers.

Here's a rough guide to your school's performance every day. In countless films, Hollywood has popularized the notion of hordes of shouting, smiling, running, laughing children slamming the doors of a school's main entrance open to get out of that "unhappy place" as fast as possible.

There is another possible scenario. As in The Giles School in Ontario, students don't push and shove to get out of school as fast as possible. Nor do the teachers

who also stay after the bell rings to help students needing help or to teach students staying for optional, after-school programs in the arts, sciences, mathematics, and the like. In Alberta, teachers recognize that they need the students to keep their jobs. There, most children want to stay after the last bell rings.

If your child wants to stay at school-in fact, pleads with you to stay an extra hour-when you pick him up, his or teacher and the school administration are probably doing a good job.

In Alberta, a Darwinian “survival-of-the-fittest” education obtains. Schools that fail to change by not enriching their students adequately lose their funding and close. This means that instead of the teachers fleeing after a short day, they frequently stay late to help weaker students, to enrich the learning experience of other students with supplemental courses, and to refine their own lesson plans. By working harder, the teachers start to take pride in their achievements. One sees this also in the children. Alberta’s public schools now have the highest academic results overall in Canada.

In Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec, each private school is publicly funded at about \$6,000 per student. Their students are all considered to be part of the public schools system with one exception--parents of children enrolled in private schools have democratically chosen to seek a better education for their child by placing their children in private schools. Interestingly, in Edmonton (Alberta), the number of private schools is shrinking because today a public education is often better than a private school education in Edmonton, Alberta.

International Assessments

There are a myriad of international assessments conducted over the years that show that the US no longer has an effective educational system. These studies are not only based internally on children’s learning performance within a particular

country but also on that of children throughout the world. Essentially, in the key areas of mathematics and science, the US is behind almost everyone. Countries with populations of less than 5 million have better results in terms of high standards than the US. For instance, Singapore consistently outperforms the US. Most of the former Soviet states do as well as Singapore, even if by a small margin. For example, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia, Slovakia, The Czech Republic and Azerbaijan all do well. So do Poland, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, and even the U.S.' arch nemesis, Iran.

The international evaluations with things like the TIMMS Test, The National Association of Educational Progress, The OECD Pisa results, and the international results of 100-plus countries in the Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics Olympiads mostly tell the same bitter story: by world standards, America and its students are getting failing grades in education.

In some areas, like mathematics, science and reading, American children seem to learn little between Grade 4 and Grade 8. An aspect of the problem for minorities was reflected in the 2007 "Brown Centre Report." It observed that minority children attending Catholic private schools learned twice as much mathematics as their peers in the public system. In the US, the doing of rote computations is the primary goal: whereas, in Japan, it is to understand mathematics. The University of Chicago evaluated US universities, saying that 90% of them were of a lower standard on completion than children who finished the French Baccalaureate. Even graduate degrees from less well known U.S. universities are likely to be of extremely doubtful value.

Teachers are not the only problem. In a 1983 report on American education by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk," it was recommended that the school day be increased. Almost every year the same recommendation is made. No increase has taken place. Today there are a myriad of texts and teaching aids, few offering consistency from one grade to the next or

between core subject areas, and not all of the texts being rigorous or of high standards-also, contrary to the Commission's recommendations.

PISA-Pronounced "Piece-ah," Not "Pizza"

In the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), recently published study of 2006, for science competence for 15 year olds, the top country was Finland , followed by Hong Kong, Taipei, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Estonia, Australia, The Netherlands, Korea, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, and Macao. The United States stood 35th in terms of their mean score, well below the average of the OECD scores. Twenty-five per cent of Americans do not believe dinosaurs ever existed. The United States should be leaders everywhere but it is below where it should be to even be a passable (pun intended) "camp follower." American students are failing academically in every core subject-vis-à-vis their peers abroad-in the physical and biological sciences, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and modern languages.

Reading

In the reading portion of the study the leader was South Korea, followed by Finland, Hong Kong, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Australia, Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Estonia, and Slovenia. The United States did not participate in the reading study, but Canada stood 4th, New Zealand stood 5th, Australia stood 9th, and the UK stood 22nd.

Mathematics

In mathematics, Finland and South Korea again did very well, followed by Taipei, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Belgium, Australia, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Austria, Macao, Liechtenstein, Estonia, and Slovenia. The United States stood 36th, well below the average OECD

(Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) score. One of the genome specialists recently reported that 58% of Americans cannot calculate a 10% tip; so, perhaps, the results should not be surprising.

Science Olympiads

Each country has its own organization, and the teams representing their country are selected from Grade 11 and 12 students nationally, after national exams, as well as CEGEP students in the province of Quebec. The writer started the Canadian science Olympiads, and introduced the American science authorities to the idea. Twenty students are then selected nationally in Canada. From this group, the Canadian leaders, usually University Professors, make the final selection of 5 students that go to the country hosting that Olympiad in July of that year.

Chemistry Olympiads

In the 2007 Chemistry Olympiad, Russia got 4 gold medals, Poland 5, China 4 gold, South Korea 3 gold, 1 silver, Lithuania 2 gold and 1 silver, India 2 gold and 2 silvers, Germany 2 gold, and 2 silvers, Chinese Taipei 2 gold, 2 silvers, Lithuania 2 gold, 1 silver, Slovakia got 1 gold, 2 silver, 2 bronze, Hungary 1 gold, 3 silvers, Thailand got 1 gold, and 3 silver, Vietnam got 1 gold and 2 silver, Iran 1 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze, Canada 1 gold and 1 bronze, France 1 gold and 1 bronze, Rumania 3 silver and 1 bronze, Singapore 2 silver and 2 bronze, Australia 2 silver 2 bronze, New Zealand 2 silver 2 bronze, Indonesia 2 silver and 2 bronze, Estonia 2 silver and 2 bronze, Armenia 2 silver 1 bronze, The Czech Republic 2 silver and 1 bronze, Armenia 2 silver 1 bronze, the United States 2 silver 1 bronze, Kazakhstan 1 silver 3 bronze, Italy 1 silver and 2 bronze, Brazil 1 silver 1 bronze, Argentina 1 silver and 3 bronze, Israel 1 silver and 1 bronze, Japan 4 Bronze, Malaysia 3 Bronze, and Denmark 2 bronze. The first American was 43rd, the second 65th, and the third 152nd. One can only call the results catastrophic. Little countries like Singapore, Lithuania, Estonia, Vietnam, New Zealand, as well as larger ones like Russia, China, and Iran who are not always friendly to the West

are doing much better than the United States; this does not portend well for either the present or the future.

The Physics Olympiads

China (4 gold) and Russia (3 gold) dominated the latest Physics Olympiad, closely followed by Korea, Singapore, Japan, and the Ukraine coming close behind. Here the US came in 7th tied with the Czech Republic and India. There were a host of countries with 5 medals including China, the Czech Republic, Singapore (population 4.5 million), the Ukraine, Taiwan, Thailand, Belarus (population 9.5 million), and Hong Kong. The US also got 5 medals so it was their best standing recently. The two US students standing highest were 28th and 30th.

Mathematics Olympiads

There were 108 countries competing with Benin, Cameroon, Cuba, Cyprus, Honduras, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates as some of the newer ones. Happily, the US stood 5th after Russia, Korea, Vietnam, and China. Close behind came Japan, the Ukraine, and Taiwan. The two US gold medal winners came from private schools, and the other medal winners for the US came from schools located in wealthier areas. With Russia and China, their gifted students are in special schools, specializing to win medals as a matter of propaganda status.

What Can be Done in North America and Abroad?

Most European countries-such as Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Latvia, Finland, Estonia, and Hungary-still recognize the value of education and have real educational exams which require children to think, to apply themselves conscientiously to their studies, to learn, to read, to develop good work habits as well as to know and understand the content of the subjects themselves-be they mathematics, reading, modern languages, the physical or biological sciences,

humanities, or social sciences.

The Chinese School Year

One of the possible ideas that could be taken from the Chinese, which might improve American education, would be to have 11-month-long school years. Given the fact that our brains start being less efficient over 75 degrees Fahrenheit, air conditioning would be required. But at the very least, an 11-month American school year would do two key things. It would give teachers time to make up for wasted years with remedial or advanced courses to help laggards or gifted students, respectively. It would also help keep children off the streets and away from bad, boredom-related influences such as gangs, drugs, promiscuity, and violence. It is also true that in hot climates in Spain and in Morocco, they have designed buildings that are cool without the need for costly air conditioning.

Charter Schools in the U.S.

One innovation that seems to have helped modestly is that of Charter Schools. In tests organized by Harvard University and the National Bureau of Economic Research, children in Grade 4 were compared with the nearest schools of similar racial background and the differences in favour of Charter Schools were dramatic.

While it remains true that only 1.5% of American students are enrolled in Charter Schools .The positive benefits of these schools are sometimes startling.

Usually, Charter Schools originate where families are relatively poor. In the United States as a whole, Charter students are likely to be 4.9% more proficient in reading than students in the nearest public school with a similar racial composition. The benefits are more marginal in mathematics if the comparison is with the nearest public school with a similar racial composition. There the advantage in favour of the Charter Schools is 2.8%.

In areas where Charter Schools are more common, the advantage in favour of Charter schools is more striking. For example, when compared to racially similar public schools, Alaska's charter schools have a 17% advantage in mathematics, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin, a 7-8% advantage, California, 3%, Colorado and Hawaii, 12-13%, Illinois, 21%, Louisiana, 29%, and the District of Columbia, 31%.

When parents elect to send their children to Charter Schools, it is likely that the parents care. The concomitant and positive side effect is probably the increased help children receive from their parents or guardians at home versus children in area public schools. This in itself is likely to enhance the children's education in those schools.

Charter Schools in Canada

It is puzzling that the Charter School movement has not produced in the United States the even better results they have produced in Alberta, Canada. There, public education has responded to produce a renaissance throughout the public school system in Alberta where public schools now all offer several enrichment courses, multiple modern languages that children are expected to use fluently upon graduation, longer school days, better science and mathematics programs. None of this has happened anywhere in the U.S.

U.S. Magnet Schools

In some areas, an attempt has been made to use federal funding to assist in desegregation. One such approach has been the so-called Magnet Schools, which has attempted to provide higher academic standards for a representative cross-section of the community. These have often been located in areas that would not be attractive to many parents but these free schools, with higher academic standards, have drawn parents from outside the immediate community. This has, in some cases, helped to restore the multicultural, interracial nature of American

society—something lost in the real estate red-lining of urban communities in the 1960s and still present today in some gated or deed-restricted communities in upscale urban, suburban and rural areas.

Magnet high schools often have entrance exams. While the enhanced-learning goals may benefit the individual children in the Magnet schools, the result has often been to make no difference in the other schools in the area. Why this should be the case is not clear but one aspect may be the leadership, or lack of it, in the public Boards of Education, or poor or the absence of direction flowing from state governments.

Proposed Pakistani and Other Moslem “Salaam (Peace) Schools”: How to Win the Global War on Terror

Parenthetically, one of the proposals I recently made in Canada is aimed at the Taliban in Afghanistan by supporting democracy in neighbouring Pakistan with Canadian, American, British, Australian, and New Zealand teachers sent to teach English in schools in Pakistan. They would follow the highly successful Singapore curriculum, texts and exams to compete for students with the Madrassas that train Moslem fanatics, Jihadists and future suicide bombers. The schools might also include up to 25% of well-educated Pakistani immigrants to these several western countries as teachers of English. The schools would be taught in English, would be “religion free” and, ideally, would eventually provide Pakistani children with a broad-based education in the core subjects of mathematics, science, the humanities, and arts.

The proposal would help enable Pakistan and other Moslem countries to become more democratic and infinitely better educated, thus weakening the ability of the Taliban and Al Qaeda to recruit young and impressionable Moslem youth into local and worldwide militant Islamic terrorist organizations. The cost would not be large but the saving in lives in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the rest of the world—especially the volatile Middle East—would be real and our own security here

in North America as well as in Europe would be improved. One day these “peace schools” might even replace the Madrassas of terror-exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran as the principal schools in these lands.

Science vs. Religion

The United States, if it is to have a future, must train enough people in those scientific skills that are needed. Business cannot expand and will be left behind if they can't hire qualified people, and currently business cannot. The weakened U.S. dollar will hurt business' ability to attract foreign talent as much as post-secondary institutions. Science students need to be taught applied mathematics as well as pure mathematics. The total number of students enrolled in science studies in American universities is declining; not surprisingly, there is a general shortage of qualified Americans working in the field of bioscience. If matters are not remedied, watch for similar scarcities to appear in other cutting-edge fields such as robotics, nano-technology and bio-engineering.

About 20 years ago, the American Advancement for Science published a book called “Science for all Americans.” The book tried to help Americans understand how science and technology are shaping our world. One part of the concern about scientific literacy was the necessity to be informed on important matters, so that one could vote on issues critical to the survival of the United States. However, without rigorous training in the discipline of scientific inquiry, we are facing a resurgence in the type of irrationalism that promotes an uncritical, wholesale belief in creationism and opposition, for instance, to therapeutic cloning and genetic engineering. These are concepts that have been developed for many years and often with remarkable results by American farmers who successfully spearheaded the search for greater crop yields on less land to feed the world's hungry.

A Gallop Poll, published in June of 2007, indicated that about half of the American people did not believe in evolution. The US National Academy of Science has

published a book called *Science, Evolution and Creationism* to counter this ignorance in order to demonstrate why evolution is critical to agriculture, medicine and tackling viruses such as SARS and HIV. Florida's Department of Education is voting on the question of whether evolution is to be matched by also teaching "nut science" in the form of Creationist science. Texas is reviewing its curriculum and if Florida follows suit, Texas may also follow. On the Bill Maher Show (December 15, 2007), former Arkansas governor, Mike Huckabee, said he doesn't believe in evolution and, by extension, the scientific approach. He seeks to be President. Facing terrible flues, viruses and other maladies that could kill millions of Americans, would you want a President who professes to believe only in miracles and not at all in how to cure illness?

America's First "5th Column" President?

The personal beliefs of the President, whether they are based upon his or her religious beliefs or not, will have a profound and far reaching impact on U.S. education. US citizens must consider and scrutinize personal views held by the candidates. One of the disturbing trends in Canada, as in the U.S., is a new form of religious intolerance and racism: hatred and violence preached to their youth by many Palestinians and other Middle Eastern Arabs towards Jews.

Islamic extremist views preach hatred and destruction of Jews, Christians, and other Moslems who don't conform to their rigid views as articulated by Wahabi religion (i.e., Sunnis supported by the government of Saudi Arabia) that proclaim their desire to kill all Sufis, all Shiites, all Jews, and seemingly, all Christians. The Taliban want to kill all Buddhists, all Shiites, all Hindus, all Jews, and all Christians. The Hezbollah, are more modest. They are committed to only killing all Jews worldwide and, then, all Christians.

In the name of freedom of speech and religion, publicly expressed hatred is not only tolerated but even condoned in the in Western Canada by our Human Rights Commissions. Consider the recent case that involves the publisher of a well-

regarded weekly magazine who was brought before the Tribunal for publishing a report on the Jihadists threat to Canada and Canadians. Section 13(1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits “any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred ridicule or contempt.” As such, libel ought to be a matter for the courts, not a Human Rights Tribunal. This case against this publisher is by no means an isolated case. The questions surrounding Barack Hussein Obama’s personal beliefs are equally disturbing and need clear answers. None has been forthcoming to date.

Consider such facts as:

- 1 Obama is a member of the Trinity United Church of Christ, a south-side of Chicago church known for its anti-Semitic views.
- 2 Obama’s church minister Rev. Jeremiah Wright has also been Obama’s spiritual mentor for over 20 years, a man who, in Obama’s words, “truly epitomizes greatness.”
- 3 Rev. Wright is a well known Afrocentric racist who bestowed an award on Head of the Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan, who asserts, among other things, that the Holocaust was a Jewish conspiracy.

Barack Obama has stated that he does not support all of the views held by his Church. This is a lukewarm response to extreme and unconscionable statements by the Church’s recent Minister, the Rev. Wright. He has not denounced Rev. Wright, only some of his more hateful statements, nor has Obama left this self-avowed racist and anti-Semite’s church where Obama and his family have been members for over 20 years. I cannot help but make a parallel comparison with my own experience.

Years ago, I was a member of a United Church in Canada. One day, during 1945, our Minister preached a sermon of hate against Germans. It was not against Hitler, the Gestapo, the SS, the Nazi party, but against Germans. I left the church that day never to return. By staying in The Trinity United Church of Christ, which endorses

Farrakhan, Obama has shown that he agrees with Farrakhan and is also an anti-Semite. He claims to be a Christian. But how can he be a Christian and anti-Semitic if Jesus, all the Apostles, James, Simon, and Mary, were all Jews. Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi, "who came to fulfil the law, not to break it."

It must be remembered that the U.S. Federal Government pays about 50% of the primary through secondary public school education costs of each state. How well is Obama equipped to serve his country's dire need for better education? If Mr. Obama decided to distort that education and its texts-with, for instance, anti-Semitic, anti-White, anti-West, or pro-Arab revisionist history of the type prevalent in Arab countries in the Middle East which, among other things, deny the existence of the State of Israel-then America could be twisted out of all recognition if he were to become President. That is another threat to the US' well being.

Obama's only idea on education is that it needs more money-this is not the answer to America's core education needs as cited in this paper. If he got in, would he also introduce misguided "Human Rights Tribunals"-similar to the ones in Canada-in the United States? Based on his evasive answers to direct questions on religious issues, even as to whether he has renounced his former faith, Islam or not, to become a Christian, I would not trust Obama in any way.

In the U.S. Senate, he voted against a bill that would have allowed the death penalty for a "gang member who committed a murder in furtherance of the activities of a gang." One could interpret such a decision in many ways but one interpretation is that one should protect gangs of Blacks and others who commit murder rather than the innocent. If he does this, how would he act as President of the United States? His church (The Trinity United Church of Christ) proclaims its pro-African bias. Farrakhan has lied about Jews repeatedly and slanders them regularly to the extent that he even claimed that Jews were funding Hitler to facilitate the Holocaust. Obama's Minister, has applauded Farrakhan's "depth of analysis when it comes to the racial ills of this nation." Farrakhan's "Nation of

Islam” is clearly supporting Obama. In a talk in Iowa, Farrakhan also called “the Palestinians the most oppressed people on earth.” By doing so, he implied that the plight of the Palestinians was caused by Israelis, a blatant lie.

The Palestinians’ oppressors have been the Arab states themselves who urged the Arab Palestinians to leave when they first invaded the fledging Jewish state in 1948 as did some of the Jewish fanatics. The United Nations created Israel and yet Israel must still defend its right to exist and even its right to defend itself. Since then, the UN has been hijacked by the Arab-Muslim states. The rest of the world has failed in presenting the truth and now one cannot help wonder if the United States, by electing Obama, who apparently shares the views with his hate-mongering spiritual mentors, will also be turning his back on Israel. Will he leave them surrounded, as they are now, by those who have openly stated time and again they wished to annihilate Israel? The question must be asked in light of the foregoing: Is Barack Obama a “fifth columnist,” a sleeper agent or closet radical Moslem who, once elected, no longer will need to distance himself from his close friends and allies in the anti-Semitic, anti-White, anti-West, pro-Arab Nation of Islam and its Christian counterpart, The Trinity United Church of Christ?

The various Arab states have repeatedly attacked Israel and, by so doing, created massive problems for the Palestinians and themselves. But the Palestinians have also been very adept at creating massive problems for themselves. Far from being oppressed, they are the oppressors in the Intefada with their firing of some 2,500 Kassam rockets into the Israeli town of Sderot alone, since the Israeli voluntary withdrawal from Gaza. This type of attack has been going on for 2 years. Thirty percent of Sderot residents now suffer from post-traumatic stress. More than 3,700 rockets have been fired since the Israeli left Gaza, and fired at southern Israel. The Palestinians and Mr. Farrakhan talk about Palestinian oppression while Palestinians seek, every day, to indiscriminately kill as many Israelis as possible with home-built or imported missiles with components manufactured in Egypt, Iran and Syria.

At best, Barack Obama is sheltering within the support of Mr. Wright and Mr. Farrakhan and, by so doing, tacitly adopting their positions. His attempts to gloss over their comments are insulting to the intelligence of the American people. Americans must become better educated and better informed. At worst, Barack Obama's stated disdain for the U.S. will boil over into executive actions, as President that will unnecessarily put the U.S. and the world at risk. America must educate all of its people so that they can intelligently hold their leaders accountable. The survival of democracy and of the individual freedoms we so cherish depends upon well-educated, free thinking, responsible, compassionate citizens. Every vote in the primaries for Barack Obama, every state won by Barack Obama, reflect how poorly educated the American populace has become in recent years. Where is the critical thinking that elected a George Washington, Abraham Lincoln or FDR when the country needed them most?

Education Systems that Work

A new Peace Corps needs to be formed-one that encourages American teachers to teach abroad. In addition to providing useful work for American teachers overseas, their exposure to other pedagogies and teaching materials may germinate into techniques that can be employed when they return to the U.S. They can also develop or improve their proficiency in the use of foreign languages.

Other methods can be employed now in the U.S.:

The Edmonton Renaissance in Education

Edmonton, Alberta (Canada) has created a renaissance in education. What has happened in Edmonton can happen in all public schools with relatively stable communities, namely those where immigration-with its concomitant cultural, language and remedial learning demands-has not overwhelmed the local schools.

Of course, the converse holds true too. When private schools are funded, public schools must become better too or lose students. In Alberta, failing public schools are closed. As in life, there should be and are negative consequences for poor schools in Alberta. That means that grants to private education can actually improve public education.

Unfortunately, the funding of private schools with public monies runs counter to the popular view in societies such as the U.S. There, long-cherished views, enshrined in *The U.S. Constitution*, provide for the “separation of church and state.” This issue, incorporated into the very first of the ten original (now 27) amendments, was obviously very much on the minds of the founding fathers. Also, unfortunately, private schools—even non-denominational ones—are deemed to be parochial schools in the U.S.

One answer to the US problem in schools would be to require a modified Edmonton approach with no funding going to private or parochial school.

Another would be to abolish school boards and spend the money saved on the schools themselves but with the public schools, as in Alberta, having to compete for students. This idea was considered by the current Prime Minister of England, Tony Blair, but was rejected by left-wing members of his Labour party. The children were “trapped,” because if they got a better education, they would become part of the middle class and vote either Liberal, or Conservative. Perhaps, this is what the Democrats want in the US as well. Blacks who cannot get an education in the existing schools will thus be kept in their current position of under- or un-educated and under- or unemployed inner city residents—traditional supporters of Democratic candidates.

The Russian Solution

At first glance, it may seem strange that the failed-Communist (formerly Soviet)

now Russian education system requires standards far higher than the best US public schools. For example, their Grade 12 students are often at the sophomore or junior levels at the best universities in the United States.

By using capitalism either under U.S. Boards of Education, or without the Boards, America can again lead the way, and recover its ability to compete domestically and in world markets by introducing competition into the American school system itself. But Russian teachers are better educated than their American counterparts; so something new must be done in the U.S. to improve the educations of America's teachers.

The Near and Far East

A variation on the Russian method is that used in China. In China, primary school classes are held for 8 hours each day and in secondary schools it is 11_ hours, and that for 11 months a year. U.S. elementary and high school classes provide students with 4_ hours of class time a day at best. The Chinese approach is replicated in the Far East in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and, in the Near East, in India.

Western Europe

As in Ireland, private school teachers in France are paid by the government. In Holland, 70% of the schools are private and all are fully funded by the government. Denmark and Sweden pay for some of their private schools.

Vouchers Worldwide

School or educational choice for parents in the U.S. involves either tax credits or vouchers or both. Tax credits give the middle and upper classes more school choices. Vouchers have the same objective as credits but are aimed principally at

impoverished and low-income earners. In both cases, the intent is to introduce a higher level of competition in the educational market. The key and still unresolved question is whether funds should be diverted from public schools to fund education at private schools. The question is critical because many unaccredited public schools have per-pupil costs more than twice the tuition of accredited private schools in the same area. In the U.S., accredited private schools also have educational outcomes superior to those of area public schools with which they compete for students.

One of the problems faced by the economically disadvantaged is that they are largely defrauded by the incompetence of the public school system. Few parents take advantage or even know of the vouchers available to them. There are mostly no standardized exams except in the odd state in which students are expected to pass a state-wide test to obtain a high school diploma that will permit entry into college or university. Unfortunately, standardized state tests, such as Florida's FCAT, have a number of flaws. There currently is some attempt to reach the standards set out in the "No child left behind" program but it means ignoring the general curriculum, such as in Florida, in favour of such outlandish and unethical practices as "teaching to test."

About half of the Americans growing up in poverty "complete" high school but these children really have at best a Grade 8 education. This underlines the fact that the practice of age-appropriate passing, rather than standards, means that these children have advanced to the next grade without exams, without adequate reading or studying skills, and leaving them with little hope of leaving the ghetto for a better life.

Britain has a voucher system for preschool children. According to recent information, those who send their children to private schools-so that their children can get a higher quality of education denied them in the public system- spend 40% or more of their disposable income to do so.

Chile pays public and private schools directly based on the number of students recruited.

In the United States, voucher programs exist in about half a dozen states; most are offered to low income families.

In Hong Kong, a voucher system exists for children from 3-to-6 years of age, as long as the program is used in non-profit schools.

Sweden's Voucher Schools

When Sweden introduced its voucher system in 1992, it was not regarded as anything of consequence. As the Deputy Minister of education said, "It was just a token." The token has increased to 1 in every 8 schools in Sweden and now totals some 900 schools.

The new schools operate where they can, mostly in office buildings without gyms and outside play space but the parents have choice and the bureaucrats in the Swedish Boards of Education cannot stop them. Parents seem to prefer a better education in modest facilities to a poorer one in a gilded cage. Religious schools are accepted too in the Swedish voucher program.

Educational studies in Sweden, involving some 28,000 students, have shown that the new voucher schools have stimulated the old bureaucratic schools to become better. Either the bureaucratic schools become better or they lose students and money to the new schools. The voucher schools tend to be very modest, with simple furniture, little in the way of special equipment, and little or no sports facilities. Some of the voucher schools are profit making; others are charities.

In Sweden no capital funding is provided to the voucher schools. In England, the Conservatives have made the adoption of the Swedish model their educational

policy. Voucher schools in Sweden get \$14,000 per student but no capital costs. The Conservatives are looking at giving capital funding to each voucher school.

Music

When we reflect on ways of upgrading standards in reading mathematics and science, we should not forget the need for music to ensure that there are adequate changes of pace in the class day quite apart from the cultural enrichment provided. The same neural pathways-and the same opportunities for increasing a child's operational intelligence-that support mathematics also support music.

How American Educators, Students, and Parents Can All Do Better

A US Nobel Laureate in Physics, Richard Feynman, visited Brazil to find everyone memorizing physics material without really understanding what they had read. He felt that the key was not memorizing but thinking. Understanding may come about from practical application or discussion of the problems. At the same time, it must be remembered 80% of learning comes from the eyes and only 20% comes through learning through the ears. In both cases, however, understanding comes from applying or discussing the item.

In order to produce competent mathematicians and scientists one must treat this issue more seriously than it has in the past. One must start a child's education early, with good texts, lots of relevant and imaginative experiments, and good teachers. One idea might be to adopt the Singapore texts nationally in the U.S. At the end of Grade 1, students should be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide-preferably in bases 2-to-10. In the physical and biological sciences, the old Nuffield Science program from the UK should be resurrected; it was experimentally oriented from Grade 6 requiring the children to learn to do-not just read and remember.

If one wants a role model, one should look at how Richard Feynman (pronounced

“fine-man”) grew up. He had his own modest chemistry lab in his Manhattan apartment. He fixed everything. Radios were his specialty. He would become one of the most influential physicists of the twentieth century.

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but cognitive-centered action is worth a thousand pictures. Standards must be national and should be at least at the level of those of New Zealand, and/or Singapore. This should be undertaken immediately.

If, as one of the genome developers said recently, 58% of the American public cannot calculate a 10% tip in their heads, we have a long way to go and we need to start now.

To put it another way, in order to produce competent mathematics and science teachers and learners, you must provide real mathematics and science instruction in schools and it must be done in ways that oblige children to think.

The Irresponsibility of Minority Education

Educational opportunities for minority children are slim. When a group of black children learned twice as much mathematics in Catholic private schools as their peers in the public system, that research was ignored by prominent American educators who refused to permit children to escape from a failing public system indifferent to change and the needs of its minority children. Often the perspective is that the children are not bright enough to benefit from academic programs after Grade 4. Many of America’s current 21st century teachers, administrators and school board members are actually 20th century “Deweyists”—they think that such children should be trained to do repetitive blue or pink colour or low-level, service-type jobs and that anything else is a waste of time and money. Even in the 20th century’s industrial age that kind of thinking is indefensible. It denies the basic rights of all Americans—including, children—to “the pursuit of happiness.”

Such children are effectively defrauded under current circumstances. This conflicts with the notion that 100% of all children exposed to early academic intervention will experience an increase in operational intelligence of at least 20 percent. If that postulate is true, then the possibility of enormous advances for minority children is there, but ignored. The real slavery in America today is not colour based. It is time that all the slaves of a failed education system—many of America’s Black, Hispanic, White, and “other colour” children—are finally freed intellectually.

In an instance from my own experience, we accepted an underage child into our kindergarten, whose IQ was measured as 85 with a WISC, an IQ test. After a year of our preschool stimulus, the child had to be withdrawn for financial reasons. At that point, the child read in French and English, could add and subtract to 100. He was subsequently placed in a gifted Grade 2 class in a Toronto public school. We all know that early IQ tests are unreliable. But did this child’s operating intelligence increase by more than 25% because of his early academic learning, and thinking? Early academic intervention, while demanding for teachers and administrators, might just be the kind of miracle needed by minority children and others that could not only benefit the children themselves but also reinvigorate the U.S. economy, making it once again the strongest in the world. It is an opportunity too great to be missed.

If the U.S. is to have a great future, one that measures up to its great past, a new and completely revamped approach to American education must be undertaken.

Improving American Teacher Qualifications

The U.S. has more than 3 million teachers, many of whom are in need of upgraded academic competence beyond a college or university undergraduate-level degree, including, teacher certification. It is said that there is a shortage of 1 million teachers-qualified or not.

One program, “Teach for America,” asks that top college graduates, without teaching diplomas, teach for two years in difficult, impoverished rural or inner-city school situations. The 10,000 recruited, while helpful, are too few to make a real difference.

By comparison, new teachers in Finland must now all have a graduate degree and be teacher certified. New teachers must also participate in extensive in-service programs and be mentored by master teachers to ensure ongoing improvement in the teacher’s instructional ability.

Recommendations

My recommendations are as follows:

1. A logical progression of serious exams that measure student growth vis-à-vis international standards should be established as genuine and achievable objectives on the way through school. These exams, which would have to be “passes” in order to permit a child to proceed, might be at Grade 5, Grade 8 and Grade 12. They should be state exams, but uniform in goals according to national recommended standards, based upon the norms of my own school, and that of Singapore.
2. The school day should be extended from current levels to 6 hours per day at kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3. In Grades 4, 5 and 6, students should attend for 6_ hours, and in Grades 7 and 8, for 7 hours. In Grade 8 and up, the students should start at 7_ hours per day.
3. Introduce a solid Grade 5 exam in every state based upon national norms, such as those of Singapore or New Zealand, which would literally force children and teachers to work to higher standards or repeat their class until they could pass them, and, in the case of teachers, forego their obligatory, state-mandated, annual raise;

4. Introduce a Grade 8 exam of the same kind for every state and later a similar exam for the new Grade 12;
5. Change university admissions to require the taking and passing with a B standing of at least four Advanced Placement exams in Grades 10 and 11.
6. Make kindergarten obligatory as an all-day class, with the new curriculum, of a traditional Grade 1 or more. Lower the various grades so that a new Grade 12 would seek to attain first year university-level standards.
7. Classes should be increased in hours to enable American children to compete on behavioural grounds, with improved emotional quotients, and on an academic basis with children in other countries with better education systems:
 - a. Kindergarten: 6 hours;
 - b. Grades 1 and 2: 6 hours;
 - c. Grades 3 and 4: 7 hours;
 - d. Grades 5 and 6: 7 hours;
 - e. Grades 9-12: 7_ hours.
8. Primary and secondary schools should provide optional parenting courses for all parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators;
9. Homework should be “real”—that is, it should involve thinking and learning. Often it will be a review of what has been learned during the day but involving problem solving in all areas. Much of the existing homework required is not very helpful and is, therefore, often a waste of the student’s time and so often “just go through the motions”—by doing the bare minimum in the quickest time possible by sliding along the lowest level of competency, a “Homework LCD (Lowest Common Denominator).” Homework can involve reading and note taking, memorizing of mathematical formulae, poetry, songs in foreign languages, scientific equations, and the like. Most importantly, homework can and should involve the parent or guardian, or failing that, an older sibling who can serve as a (young) adult role model by listening to and questioning the child about the answers provided or guiding them through the process. The resulting

homework can be evaluated by other students (supervised by the teachers), self evaluation by the students, or work done in groups. Pairs of students from grade 7 and up can prepare lessons, thus lightening the teacher's work load and giving the students an appreciation of what the teachers have been doing. In addition, there are many software programs available in the UK and in the US, and these should be made available in every school to all students. For instance, Singapore has a great primary school mathematics support program and Plato has programs in every subject area. Additional funding will be required but this will help all children make up for lost ground. It can be done. It should be as follows:

- a. Grades 1-2: 1 hour per day and on each day of the weekend;
- b. Grades 2-4: 1_ hours per day and on each day of the weekend;
- c. Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8: 2 hours each day and on each day of the weekend;
- d. Grades 9 and 10: 2_ hours per day and on each day of the weekend;
- e. Grades 11 and 12: 3 hours per day and on each day of the weekend.

The foregoing are minimum times.

10. Parents should not use the TV, computer or video game as babysitters. We have noted the suggestion of too much television or on-/off-line video games for the young as tending to create or amplify the problems associated with ADD or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Years ago I taped CBS on Saturday from 8 am to 8 pm in the hope of verifying the average size of a vocabulary used on TV. It was 5,833 words: the passive vocabulary of a 5 year old, that is, the known vocabulary but not necessarily regularly used. The average middle class 5 year-old has a vocabulary of 5,500 words. We think with our vocabulary. This means that if our vocabulary is too small, we can't understand and think through important issues. Then, too, if you are watching 4-6 hours of TV a day, you cannot read, acquire sentence structure, punctuation, and vocabulary in that time. The key to all learning is high levels of reading and anything that interferes with that is destructive.

11. Child care institutions should be required to teach to the same level as the schools—namely, serving as educational as well as child care needs.
12. Teachers who are not effective should be encouraged to retire early or, in gross cases of incompetence, fired. They should be financially assisted to retire early. There are too many uncaring, indifferent teachers in Canada, and I assume the same thing is likely to be true of the United States;
13. Teacher certification programs in North America, are poor. In other countries, such as England, people with a traditional (i.e., not accelerated or online) degree from a recognized university, but no teacher training, are allowed to teach. I myself trained primary school teachers for France, emphasizing working with master teachers, making lesson plans, and making précis of the best in modern psychology for learning. It worked perfectly. When tested, the result was well above the norm. Teachers should be encouraged to upgrade their academic competence for at least 2 years at public cost;
14. Given the shortage of trades, all schools should offer some background in these areas to their students. This would also help to keep the highest group of dropouts and those at risk, boys, in school longer than at present, and constructively taught;
15. Teachers in Grades 7 and up in mathematics, science and computer science should be obliged within 5 years to take 2 more full years of studies in their subject areas to ensure they are able to teach their subject properly. The cost of these courses should be borne by the state;
16. “No Child Left Behind” should be shut down as a first step to raising all children up;
17. Five replicas of The Giles School should be established in the U.S. starting with early academic intervention for children at age 3, four with the socially and economically disadvantaged in such cities as New York, Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles. A fifth school for middle class children should be set up elsewhere.
18. Edmonton public school ideas should be implemented.
19. The University Scholarship Examinations Board concept, namely a national

examinations board to select students for earned academic university scholarships, and then for university admissions, should be established.

20. No school should be larger than 650 students. Where a school is larger, you cannot be aware of the emotional and intellectual needs of a child; If you cannot respond to these needs, you are failing the child.
21. The principal in each school should spend at least 70% of his time in the classrooms of the school, learning from his best teachers, and helping the poorer ones. His visits should play a role in Star recommendations, and help to determine the needs for professional development days;
22. After 10 years of teaching, promising teachers should be recommended to a bronze star, with the very modest pension supplement, and after 20 years of outstanding teaching, a further possible silver star; and after 30 years of such teaching a possible gold star;
23. Special efforts to find “big brothers/sisters” for single parent children, failing that, teachers’ aids who would act in that role for at least 8 years;
24. All-day academic kindergartens should be in every school, in which reading (phonic) writing and mathematics are taught. If possible there should be academic junior kindergartens of half days or full days;
25. The use of sensorial materials such as logic blocks, and multibase materials (bases 2-10) for bases for teaching mathematics for use in preschool to Grade 5 should be available in every school, to teach addition subtraction, multiplication, and division in the various bases;
26. More teachers would be steadily trained in biofeedback, a treatment process which cures ADHD in 75% of the cases, and which increases operating intelligence by about 11%. It is also relevant in treatments of Tourette’s Syndrome, Aspergers Syndrome, Autism, Grand Mal, and Petit Mal Seizures.
27. Since children would be expected to be part of the Global Village, they would have to learn additional economic-related international languages such as Mandarin, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, and learn as well the histories of these and other countries such as India, Malaysia, Portugal,

Austro Hungary, and France. An obsession with the war on independence and the civil war does not equip Americans for competence in the world;

28. The evidence from Alberta in Canada and Sweden is that when private schools get government funding, the leadership in the public schools respond by making the public schools more challenging, with a richer curriculum-ergo, more competitive with their private school counterparts and, therefore, more effective. In this case, everyone benefits: public and private schools both get better, students learn more and enjoy learning more, parents are pleased with the newfound improved behaviour of their child, and teachers can teach in an environment where hourly or daily disruptions by troubled children become the exception, not the norm. All private schools should be funded with at least \$7,000 per student per school;
29. Because of bio-fuel nonsense, edible foods such as corn are being diverted to artificial or synthetic oil. It is uneconomic and it is raising the cost of food to the poorest minorities and the current 5% increase in the cost of food is going to get much worse. A good breakfast will have to continue to be served to children from low income households because desperately hungry children cannot learn.
30. When parents send ill-mannered, ill-educated, inattentive, undisciplined children to school, often without their homework done, who waste the time of their classmates and their teachers, I would have a system that would assess the situation and, if appropriate, then charge the cost of the education time as baby sitting to the parents or guardians if the child is living in the parents' or guardians' home. It is well known that in excess of 25% of all new teachers burn out within five years because of the impossible situations in the classrooms that are most often precipitated by misbehaving children.
31. Voucher schools should be introduced nationally so that they can become the fundamental engine of educational improvement in the United States, supplemented by the British approach of providing capital funding for lands,

libraries, furniture, equipment, and laboratories. This could be the basis for a second, albeit peaceful, American Civil War; this would be a war that frees the disadvantaged of all colours and creeds from ignorance-a more insidious, 21st century form of slavery. Why voucher schools? The virtue of vouchers is that they are based upon grassroots democracy, not the kind of incompetent representative or “pork belly” bureaucracies that school boards have become. Vouchers return education to the people. Voucher schools can be run by and report to the parents-as in Sweden, a type of town hall, direct democracy. American education could become a true, not sham, democracy.

32. By limiting schools to 650 students, we can find ourselves on a human-scale campus made up of one- or two-room schoolhouses of a type I experienced as a child in rural Ontario: we get to know and cherish all students, greet them by name each day and show them we care. Student apathy, separation, isolation, and violence will decline. Both student and staff emotional and intellectual quotients-that is, EQs and IQs-will increase. The open 19th century American schoolhouse could and should, ironically, become the archetype for America’s new, 21st century schools-not the monolithic eye sores that are currently in vogue: prisons, factories and gated communities.
33. In the face of a possible recession and state and federal cutbacks, America’s public schools are now experiencing far-reaching educational budget cuts. To minimize their impact, a major cost saving would be the elimination of the bureaucracy of the school boards-except for funding, which would send money for salaries, books, maintenance, and the like-to let the schools run their own operations assisted by a replacement voluntary school board of directors made up of parents, key teachers, and the individual school principal and vice principal.
34. To compete with Jihadist Madrassas, “Salaam” (Peace) Schools the peaceful tenets of *The Koran* should be created for Moslem students in all countries. These schools might be considered an extension of Turkey’s

moderate, Moslem Sufi schools. They would teach modern, core subjects in the physical and biological sciences, mathematics, and humanities to Moslem students. As such, they might be viewed as an extension of Turkey's moderate Moslem Sufi schools and an attempt to recreate the enlightened schools of the Islamic Golden Age (from the middle of the 8th century to the middle of the 13th century) when the Arab World led in philosophy, the sciences and, especially, medicine. "Perhaps, Harry Giles says, "in much the same way Islam saved Christianity from itself by restoring the Greek Classics and other works that Christianity itself destroyed during its religious wars, so too can Christianity can now help Islam restore its former greatness."

35. Worldwide, we need a spiritual revolution, one that extols humanitarian values to replace the vapid ones now present in the West's politically correct public schools where "The Golden Rule" and other basic values are no longer taught or to replace the hateful ones taught by Islamo-Fascists in Madrassas. In America's new public schools suggested here, students would be exalted because they and their parents have come to respect and support their children's teachers and staff.

In Conclusion

At the end of World War II only one country had the atomic bomb, the United States. We overlook the fact that Americans could have been the first peoples to effectively subjugate the entire world. Not only did they obviously not do so, a review of the literature of the time and since shows they never even considered doing so. America, through its own history of struggle with slavery as well as racial and other forms of inequalities, has learned the lesson that there is no freedom without freedom for all people-everywhere. Thus, America sought to rebuild war-damaged areas, even those of its former enemies, with the Marshall Plan. We forget the magnanimity and generosity of the U.S. and of Americans.

An Overdue Thank You

Humankind's history is replete with examples of would-be conquerors-from the better known ones (because they almost succeeded) such as Alexander the Great, Genghis Kahn and Adolf Hitler to today's Islamo-Fascists who would kill anyone who doesn't agree with their beliefs, Moslem or not.

America and Americans chose a different route-one not of war but of democracy, peace and prosperity. It is this dream America gave to the world that we non-Americans should remember and emulate. One of my Giles School staff, Michael Berns, said that the greatest vice known to mankind is really ingratitude because it denies the contributions, even the existence, of others. So, here I offer a long overdue-in my view-thank you to America. Thank you, America.

Wanted: Courage and Integrity in American Education

The United States is too important to the Free World to be permitted to slide into ruin by the indifference of so-called educational bureaucrats and consultants, the ignorance of legislators, and the cowardliness of school administrators who refuse to provide leadership-including, those at Virginia Tech. It is time to face up to these problems and to do so immediately.

Naysayers joke that America is a country that jumped from adolescence to senility without having gone through a period of maturity. This is untrue. The citizens of the United States must know that as their country reaches maturity, one finds strength by going back to one's roots with pride and humility-to accept and embrace the nation's adulthood and its responsibilities with renewed vigour and resolve. Most of all, the youth and the citizens of America must receive the highest level of education, a quality of learning befitting the great country that the U.S. must remain-for its own sake and the rest of the world too.

In brief, America now needs to apply the same democratic principles in improving the quality of education given to the youth at home as it asks of the world at large. The survival of democracy depends upon educated, productive and caring individuals who can convey a nation's ethos and values. To do so, Americans must re-establish ownership of their schools; they must take the education of their children out of the hands of bureaucrats and return it to themselves, reassert the primacy of the family and parenting at home and in the school, and create healthy and ethical competition for quality in all that one does. America needs to stop making huge schools that resemble penal colonies. America must strive to make every school a community of caring, dedicated parents and staff where all students feel they belong and are proud to be present.

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