

POSITION PAPER

EDUCATION IN AMERICA – A FAILING GRADE

By: John W. Wallace

I think we can all agree that a well-educated citizenry is vital to America's security, economy, freedom and future. Yet, despite the tens of billions of dollars the federal government spends on education each year, our children continue to fall behind the rest of the world in basic academic skills, particularly in those subjects crucial to participation in a world economy. President Jimmy Carter created the federal Department of Education in 1979, made it part of his cabinet and it became operational in 1980. Before the creation of this new federal Department of Education, America had the finest education system in the world.

Thirty years ago the U.S. ranked first in the world in the number of young adults who had high school diplomas and college degrees. Today we rank ninth and seventh, respectively, among industrialized nations. Compared to Europe, Asia and Latin America, 15-year-olds in the United States are below average in applying basic math skills to real-life tasks. The United States ranks 18th out of 24 industrialized nations in terms of relative effectiveness of its education system. Knowledge in American and world history, geography, grammar, math, civics and literature are all in decline in terms of academic understanding and achievement. Even as the American education system continues to fall behind other developed countries in educational achievement, the federal government's role in education continues to grow at a staggering rate. It has become too intrusive, too bureaucratic and it is the main reason our children are not learning the basic skills needed to be successful in today's world.

Our current education system is more about indoctrination than education. It is driven by money and mandates from the federal government working hand-in-hand with the education establishment headquartered in the federal Department of Education and manned by the National Education Association (NEA). These forces have combined with psychologists, huge textbook publishers, the healthcare profession, government bureaucrats, big corporations, pharmaceutical companies and sociologists to invade local school boards, classrooms and private homes in the name of "fixing" education. This new education restructuring is working wonders for everyone involved - except for the children of America and their parents. As a result of these combined forces, today's education system and classrooms are a very different place from only a few years ago. Every American should also understand that the proposed solutions: higher pay, smaller classrooms and more money for schools are the specific agenda of the National Education Association (NEA).

It has become very clear that America's education system is not teaching our children. They can't read or work simple math problems without a calculator. They can't spell, find their own country on a map, know why July 4th is a national holiday, name the president of the United States or quote a single founding father,

but they are taught how to put a condom on a cucumber and that any kind of sex is OK as long as it's safe.

Literacy has always meant the ability to read and write; the ability to understand numbers, and the capacity to appreciate factual material. The current system being pushed by the Department of Education and the National Education Association is specifically designed to de-emphasize academic knowledge and to dumb-down our children. Our current federally mandated system is designed to teach politically correct beliefs about gender issues, diversity, multiculturalism, the new world order and environmentalism. Some members of Congress even appear ready to sign off on programs that would mandate a mental health examination of every child from pre-school on through graduation, without the parents consent.

Many parents in America have already shown their desire to be free of federal control of their children's education by either enrolling their children in private schools or home schooling them. Students enrolled in these alternatives have consistently performed better and tested higher than those in government-run schools. I support the concept of School Choice for parents, funded through tax credits, to make it easier for parents to send their children to the school of their choice, or to home school them. I am committed to guaranteeing parity for home school diplomas and advancing equal scholarship consideration for students entering college from a home school environment.

Not only is the federal Department of Education unconstitutional, but it has been a colossal failure and should be abolished. Nowhere in Article 1, Section 8, of the US Constitution (the Powers of Congress), is Congress given the power to legislate or mandate educational policy for the states. This very important power was retained by the states and for a very good reason. Parents, along with their respective State and local governments, are the people best situated to educate their children, not federal government and union bureaucrats in Washington trying to push their political and social agenda on us. I will support any legislation giving educational control back to parents, where it belongs.

- I support legislation similar to the Family Education Freedom Act, introduced by Rep. Ron Paul, which helps parents with the costs of schooling, This bill would allow parents a tax credit of up to \$5,000 (adjustable for inflation) per student per year for the cost of attendance at an elementary and/or secondary school of their choice. This includes private, parochial, religious, and home schools.
- I support legislation similar to the Teacher Tax Cut Act, introduced by Rep. Ron Paul, which gives full-time elementary and secondary teachers a \$3,000 yearly tax credit, thus easing their financial burden and encouraging good teachers to stay in the profession.

For more information about John W. Wallace, or to find out about his positions on other issues, please go to: www.TeaPartyRep.com