

The Goals of Public Schooling

What is the goal of American public schools? Is it to prepare workers to compete in the global economy? "Satisfying the demand for highly skilled workers is the key to maintaining competitiveness and prosperity in the global economy," declares the opening line to the official U.S. Department of Education's *A Guide to Education and No Child Left Behind*. Emblazoned across the opening page of the U.S. Department of Education's 2006 report *Answering the Challenge of a Changing World: Strengthening Education for the 21st Century* are the words of U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings: "High school reform is not just an 'education issue.' It's also an economic issue, a civic issue, a social issue and a national security issue." In his 2006 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush declared, "Keeping America competitive requires us to open more markets for all that Americans make and grow. One out of every five factory jobs in America is related to global trade . . . we need to encourage children to take more math and science, and to make sure those courses are rigorous enough to compete with other nations."

At the opening of the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, Kerry Killinger, CEO of Washington Mutual and vice-chair of Achieve Inc., declared, "We face the global economy today with workers who are largely not prepared to compete for the well-paid, cutting-edge jobs that are fueling economic growth around the world. The Summit is an extraordinary opportunity for states to work together to raise our academic expectations and the rigor of the preparation we give to our young people." The Summit's report, *An Agenda for Improving America's High Schools*, proposes a core high school curriculum of four years of English and four years of math including data analysis and statistics.

What about students who are failing in school or are attending failing schools? Meeting their needs is an important subgoal to the larger one of preparing public school students to help U.S. companies compete in the global economy. The previously mentioned report *Answering the Challenge of a Changing World* asserts that the fastest-growing jobs require some postsecondary education and that it "is therefore unacceptable that among all ninth-graders,

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Education* [13th ed.]. New
York: McGraw-Hill.

approximately three in 10 do not graduate on time, or that for black and Hispanic students the figure is about five in 10." The most influential federal legislation currently governing American public schools—The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001—addresses this issue. Title I, the first section of the 670-page legislation, opens:

SEC. 1001. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

This purpose can be accomplished by . . . meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance; . . . closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers.

No Child Left Behind is supposed to help U.S. businesses compete in the global economy by erasing the differences in educational opportunity between the rich and poor, the dominant culture and minority cultures, English speakers and limited-English-proficient speakers, and high- and low-performing students.

Are all public school parents committed to having their children educated so that they can help U.S. businesses compete in the global economy? Did all public school parents participate in the decision to make American economic competitiveness the central educational goal?

NATIONAL EDUCATION SUMMIT ON HIGH SCHOOLS: WHO DETERMINES THE PUBLIC INTEREST?

There is a distinction between private and public educational goals. A parent might want her public elementary school to develop her child's artistic talents. This we refer to as a private educational goal. This private parental goal might not be respected as schools strive to educate global workers. Parents are not often asked at the schoolhouse door what they want their children to learn and how they want their children to be taught. These decisions are made by a complex political process. Parents can influence what public schools do by being politically active or by simply voting.

The current public interest in education is to help U.S. businesses compete in the global economy. Public schools exist to serve the public interest. In most cases, public school parents do not have direct control of their children's education. Consider the National Summit on High Schools, which is playing an important role in articulating the public interest in secondary education. At

the Summit, public goals for secondary schools were articulated by a combination of governors, chief executive officers of major corporations, and educational leaders. Attending the Summit were 150 governors, heads of corporations, and educators. The Summit was co-sponsored by the National Governors Association (the self-described "collective voice of the nation's governors" founded in 1906) and Achieve Inc. Achieve Inc. was formed in 1996 by the National Governors Association and business leaders for the purpose of raising "academic standards and achievement so that all students graduate ready for college, work and citizenship." The list of representatives from the business community who serve as officers of Achieve Inc. is impressive. They include Arthur F. Ryan, Chairman & CEO, Prudential Financial, Inc.; Kerry Killinger, Chairman & CEO, Washington Mutual; Craig R. Barrett, CEO, Intel Corporation; Jerry Jurgensen, CEO, Nationwide; Edward B. Rust, Jr., Chairman & CEO, State Farm Insurance; Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Former Chairman & CEO, IBM Corporation; and Peter Sayre, Controller, Prudential Financial, Inc.

Also impressive were the business leaders represented by the Business Roundtable, one of the three co-partners sponsoring the Summit. The Business Roundtable's membership includes CEOs of companies employing a total of 10 million workers, representing nearly a third of the total value of the U.S. stock market and paying nearly a third of all corporate income taxes. Its stated goal is to advocate "public policies that ensure vigorous economic growth, a dynamic global economy, and the well-trained and productive U.S. workforce essential for future competitiveness." The other two co-sponsors of the Summit were the James B. Hunt Institute and the Education Commission of the States. The James B. Hunt Institute was organized by James B. Hunt, the former governor of North Carolina, for the purpose of engaging "governors and other leaders in strategic efforts to advance and sustain state-level education reform." The Education Commission of the States was created in 1965 with a signed compact between states to work at "improving and strengthening education policy and policymaking at the state level."

So there it is—a combination of governors and businesspeople working together to create public goals for American secondary education. Of course, as I will discuss later in the chapter, many other groups participate in determining public goals for schooling. But, in this example of the high school curriculum, the public interest is decided outside the direct control and influence of most parents. I would hypothesize that in 2005 few parents knew about the high school summit or its potential influence on public schools.

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC INTEREST?

In the case of the high school summit, the public interest was defined as jobs and national dominance in the global economy. "This is critical [changing high school graduation requirements] for job creation and economic growth,"

declared Ohio Governor Bob Taft, co-chair of Achieve and a member of the National Governors Association's Committee on Redesigning the High School, "To have graduates who are prepared . . . we need to raise the high school exit standards."

"America's High Schools: The Front Line in the Battle for Our Economic Future," the descriptive title of a document distributed by the National Education Summit on High Schools, describes the public interest in high school education: "High school is now the front line in America's battle to remain competitive on the increasingly competitive international economic stage." Why is the high school the front line in international economic competition? The document describes what it calls "a 'perfect storm' of economic change." This "perfect storm" includes rapid technological development, global economic competition, and U.S. demographic changes with prime-age adult workers becoming a smaller percentage of the population in comparison to the old and young.

What is the global economy? "America's High Schools" offers the following description:

The integration of the world economy through low-cost information and communications has an even more important implication than the dramatic expansion of both the volume of trade and what can be traded. Trade and technology are making all the nations of the world more alike. Together they can bring all of the world's companies the same resources—the same scientific research, the same capital, the same parts and components, the same business services, and the same skills.

Given this global economy, the official report of the Summit, *An Action Agenda for Improving America's High Schools*, describes the public interest in a high school education: "Our high school students' lack of preparedness has serious implications for our economy and prosperity."

TURNING PUBLIC GOALS INTO A CORE CURRICULUM

How did educating workers for a global economy get translated into a core high school curriculum of only four years of English and four years of math consisting of algebra I and II, geometry, and data analysis and statistics? Why weren't other subjects included in the core curriculum such as history, civics, art, physical education, and science? The answer is that communication skills and math, along with a good work ethic, are the main concern of employers filling entry-level jobs. In 2001, the National Association of Manufacturers released *The Skills Gap*, which is a survey of the employment needs of major manufacturers. A summary of the survey in Table 1-1 gives the reasons companies rejected applicants for hourly production jobs.

The survey in Table 1-1 reveals that the major complaint by employers is inadequate basic employability skills (attendance, timeliness, work ethic, etc.).

TABLE 1-1. Most Common Reasons Companies Reject Applicants as Hourly Production Workers

Reasons for Rejecting Applicants	Percentage
Inadequate basic employability skills (attendance, timeliness, work ethic, etc.)	69%
Insufficient work experience	34
Inadequate reading/writing skills	32
Applicants do not pass drug screening	27
Inadequate math skills	21
Poor references from previous employers	20
Inadequate oral-communication skills	18
Inability to work in a team environment	12
Inadequate problem-solving skills	11
Inadequate technical/computer skills	11
Lack of degree or vocational training	8
Problems with citizenship/immigration status	7
Other	4

Source: National Association of Manufacturers, *The Skills Gap 2001* (Washington, DC: National Association of Manufacturers, 2001).

The academic concerns are reading, writing, and math skills—the subjects recommended for the core curriculum by the National Summit on High Schools. All other subjects, besides a small concern with technical and computer skills, appear to be of little interest to employers. After all, most entry-level employees receive on-the-job training.

Other surveys report similar results. After analyzing 20 million job openings projected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Paul E. Barton, a senior associate of the Educational Testing Service, concludes that entry-level jobs only require a solid ninth grade education along with a good work ethic, timeliness, and good attendance habits. Citing economists Richard Murnane and Frank Levy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Barton reasons that employers are mainly concerned with "soft skills" and that these skills are not correlated with the results of paper-and-pencil tests. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce considers "soft skills" to be "basic employability skills (attendance, timeliness, and work ethic, etc.)." Michael J. Handel, professor of sociology at Northeastern University, points out "it is unclear whether they are dissatisfied mainly with workers' cognitive skills or rather with their effort and attitude." In 2006, Lynn Olson reported in *Education Week* in an article with the descriptive title "Ambiguity About Preparation for Workforce Clouds Efforts to Equip Students for Future" that: "Manufacturers polled were less happy with students' work-related skills than with their academic preparation." Similarly, the National Employer Survey conducted by the National Center on the Educational Quality of the Workforce revealed that the most important characteristics

sought by employers in hiring new nonsupervisors or production workers were applicant attitude followed by applicant communication skills and previous work experience. Years of completed schooling ranked 7th and academic performance ranked 9th in concerns by employers.

The above findings are supported by a U.S. Department of Education survey of 101 executives of small- and medium-size firms. This survey found:

1. The definition of basic skills typically used by employers includes not only the ability to read and write but also computation, communication, and problem-solving skills.
2. Business leaders also believe that schools should emphasize the importance of good habits such as self-discipline, reliability, perseverance, accepting responsibility, and respect for the rights of others.

Based on these surveys it seems reasonable to prepare youth for entry-level work by requiring a high school core curriculum of four years each of English and math. The reality is that other high school subjects are not of concern to employers hiring for entry-level jobs. To reiterate: most skills for entry-level jobs are taught at the workplace.

Why worry about high school graduation except for those going on to college? Why not just provide the non-college-bound with communication and math skills? The answer might be in the concern about soft skills or good work habits. In the nineteenth century, schooling was considered good preparation for factory work because schools required attendance, punctuality, obedience to authority, and completion of tasks. A school diploma indicated to employers that the applicant had been punctual, regularly attended school, completed assigned tasks, and was obedient to authority. In other words, the bearer showed good work habits.

Cynics might argue that employers, besides wanting good computation and communication skills, want to hire employees that have proven they are not frustrated by doing boring work. Is this what a high school diploma proves? Does a high school diploma indicate that the graduate is prepared to enter a world of work where many jobs are boring and routine; where workers must be able to follow orders and take responsibility for completing tasks; and where punctuality and attendance are required?

How do parents feel about changing the high school curriculum? They were never asked! However, some of them, not all, actually voted for their governor. The governor is their representative in defining the public interest and goals for the public high school. But few voters paid any attention to their governor's views on education and the high school curriculum.

All citizens, particularly parents, teachers, and school officials, must carefully attend to the educational viewpoints of elected officials and organizations that participate in creating the agenda for American public schools. Often changes in schooling occur without the average citizen knowing the why's and how's of educational policy decisions.

GETTING THE CORE CURRICULUM INTO SCHOOLS

After defining the public interest, the next step is getting the core curriculum required in all American high schools. The sponsors and partners of the Education Summit on High Schools are central actors in controlling local public school curricula since curriculum requirements are determined by state governments. The National Governors Association, the James B. Hunt Institute, and the Education Commission of the States play powerful political roles in determining state curriculum requirements. Also, the official report of the Summit, *An Action Agenda for Improving America's High Schools*, stresses the important role for business leaders: "Business leaders have a particularly important role to play. . . . They can communicate to parents, students, their employees, and the public the skills and knowledge it takes to succeed in the new economy and insist states assess whether students possess the requisite skills and knowledge."

PUBLIC BENEFITS AND GOALS FOR SCHOOLS

In American education, the political process determines the goals of public schools which in turn determines what is taught and how it is taught. The example of improving America's ability to compete in world markets by instituting a core high school curriculum represents only one of a multitude of things public schools are asked to do. Sometimes there is no conflict between parental and public goals. In other situations, conflicts over educational goals result in public protests.

Again, it is important to remind the reader that public schools exist to serve public goals not the desires of individual parents. Public goals are determined by elected representatives in local, state, and federal governments influenced by numerous interest groups. The goals for public schools established in the nineteenth century were reducing political and social unrest by teaching future citizens a common set of political values and patriotism; reducing social tensions by promising to provide students with equality of economic opportunity to compete for income; decreasing crime by teaching morality; and eradicating poverty by stimulating economic growth. These goals were expanded in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries because of concerns with urbanization, industrialization, racial and cultural harmony, juvenile crime, nutritional health, epidemic diseases, and globalization.

Educational goals have accumulated over time placing a heavy burden on schools, particularly on administrators and teachers. School staff are called upon to be the first line of defense in world economic competition while, at the same time, being asked to create cultural harmony and end crime. Think of the burden placed on public school teachers. Currently, the 2001 federal

legislation No Child Left Behind, the most important federal legislation and one that will be discussed throughout this text, specifies that teachers will integrate character education into subject matter instruction. Can teachers actually integrate character education into reading, writing, arithmetic, history, science, and other school subjects and, as a result, reduce crime, promote racial and economic harmony, increase employment opportunities, stabilize the political system, and prepare for globalization?

There are also ongoing conflicts between public and personal goals. Conflict quickly erupts when schools are asked to prevent the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Many religious groups pressure public officials to implement this goal by teaching abstinence while other citizens might want instruction on birth control and the use of condoms. Serious conflicts occur over other issues. What about parents who believe the political and economic values taught to students are too liberal or too conservative? Or parents who object to teaching evolutionary theory in required science courses? What about teachers who object to the values they are asked to stress in the classroom?

The conflict between personal and public goals for schools is an ongoing problem. It is important for all citizens, including teachers, students, school administrators, and elected officials, to understand the deep-rooted controversies surrounding the functioning of public schools. In evaluating the various public goals for education, you should consider the broader question of public benefits versus parental or personal educational goals.

- Do you think there are public benefits that should override the objections of parents and other citizens regarding the teaching of particular subjects, attitudes, or values?
- Should elected representatives determine the subject matter, attitudes, and values taught in public schools?
- What should teachers do if they are asked to teach values that are in conflict with their own personal values?

ARE SCHOOLS ALWAYS A PUBLIC GOOD?

Most people assume that public schooling is good for society. However, public schools are used to advance political and economic ideologies that do not improve the condition of human beings. For instance, in the 1930s Nazis enlisted schools in a general campaign to educate citizens to believe in the racial superiority of the German people, to support fascism, and to be willing to die at the command of Hitler. Racial biology and fascist political doctrines were taught in the classroom; patriotic parades and singing took place in the schoolyard. A similar pattern occurred in South African schools in attempts to maintain a racially divided society. Many totalitarian countries, particularly former communist countries, used their schools to instill allegiance to dictatorial control.

Consequently, the reader should be aware that “education” does not always benefit the individual or society. Public and personal benefits depend on the content of instruction. To think critically about education means to think critically about the content of instruction and the potential effect of that content on society. For instance, history can be taught in schools for the purpose of political indoctrination or to raise critical questions about the human condition. In the following sections, my goal is to enhance your critical awareness of the issues surrounding the goals of public education.

HISTORICAL GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Insight into the controversies surrounding public school goals can be gained by reviewing the historical record. As previously mentioned, the original goals of citizenship training, equality of economic opportunity, and reduction of crime remain on the public school agenda. Over time, schools have been asked to accomplish more as new problems are encountered. Most of the original goals of schooling still guide the work of educators. The multiplicity of things schools are now asked to do is a result of an accumulating historical agenda.

Therefore, a history of the evolution of public school goals provides a critical analysis of what public schools are now doing. For the purpose of analysis, I am dividing my discussion into “The Political Goals of Schooling,” “The Social Goals of Schooling,” and “The Economic Goals of Schooling.” Each of the following sections will trace the history of these goals to the present. In each section, I will list critical questions about the role of schooling in society. I have also created two time lines. Figure 1-1 indicates the approximate decades when public schools adopted particular educational goals to meet changing social and

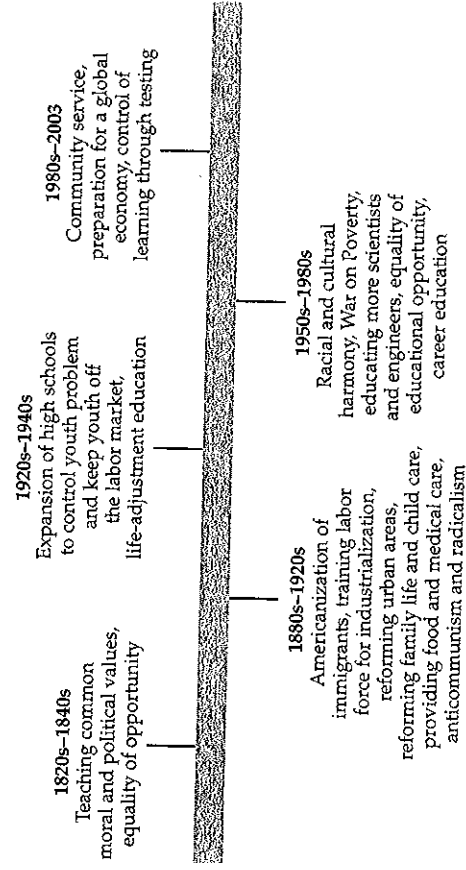


FIGURE 1-1. Goals of Public Schools in the U.S., 1820-2003

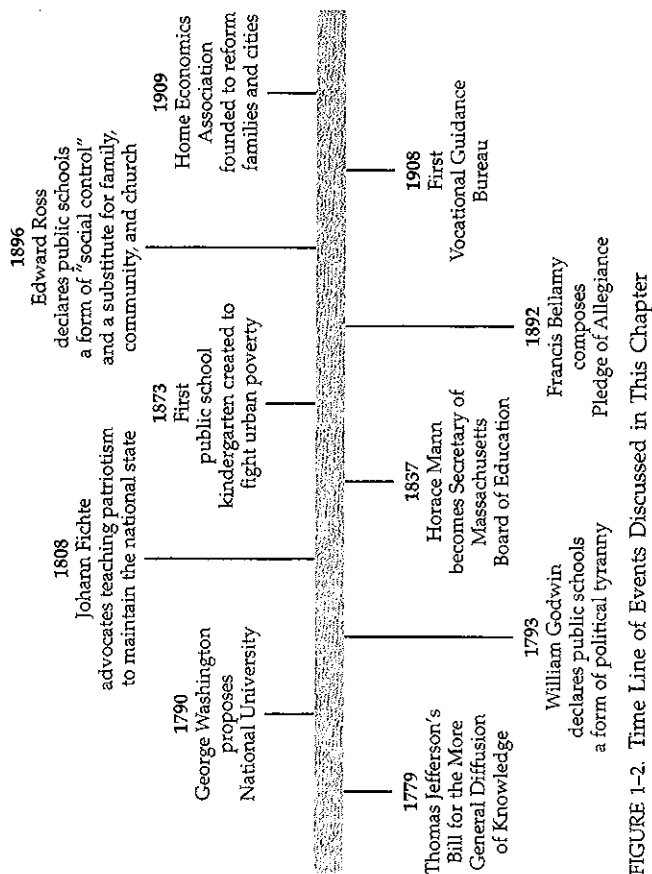


FIGURE 1-2. Time Line of Events Discussed in This Chapter

economic conditions. Missing from this time line are the changes in the teaching profession. The teaching profession time line is presented in Chapter 2. Figure 1-2 is a time line of events mentioned in my discussion.

THE POLITICAL GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Before the actual establishment of public schools, public leaders argued that public schools were needed to create a national culture and to educate qualified politicians for a republican government. The role of schools in determining national culture continues into the twenty-first century, particularly as a result of increased immigration. After the American Revolution, many worried about national unity and the selection of political leaders. In his first message to Congress in 1790, President George Washington proposed a national university for training political leaders and creating a national culture. He wanted attendance by students from all areas of the country. Washington's proposal was criticized as elitist. Requiring a college education, some protested, would result in politicians being primarily recruited from the rich. In this case, a hereditary aristocracy would be replaced by an aristocracy of the educated. If none but the rich had access to higher education, then the rich could use higher education as a means of perpetuating and supporting their social status.

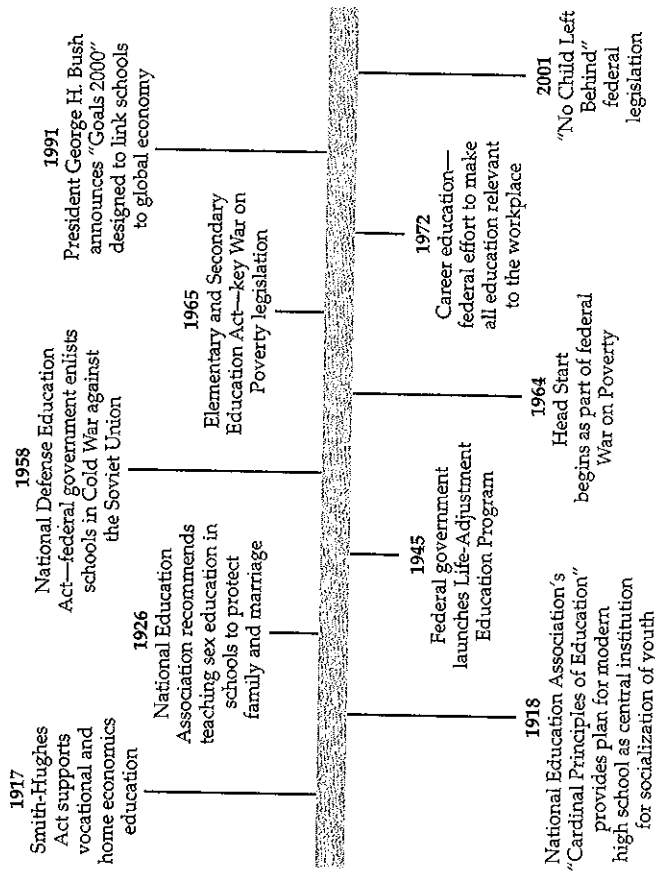


FIGURE 1-2. (Continued)

To avoid the problem of elitism, Thomas Jefferson suggested using education to promote a meritocracy. A meritocracy is an educational system that gives an equal chance to all to develop their abilities and to advance in the social hierarchy. Advancement within the educational system and society is based on the merit or achievements of the individual. For instance, consider the following situation: students A and B are given an equal chance to attend school; student A is very successful but student B fails. Within the framework of an educational meritocracy, their success or failure in school determines their later position in society. Since Jefferson was concerned with finding the best politicians, A's educational success would mean the possibility of assuming political leadership. On the other hand, B's educational failure would limit his (women were not qualified to vote at this time) ability to achieve political leadership.

In the 1779 Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, Jefferson proposed three years of free education for all nonslave children. The most talented of these children were to be selected and educated at public expense at regional grammar schools. From this select group, the most talented were to be chosen for further education. Thomas Jefferson wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "By this means twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually, and be instructed, at the public expense."

The details of Jefferson's plan are not as important as the idea, which has become ingrained in American social thought, that schooling is the best means

of identifying democratic leadership. This idea assumes that the educational system is fair in its judgments. Fairness of selection assumes that judgment is based solely on talent demonstrated in school and not on other social factors such as race, religion, dress, and social class. Meritocracy fails if schools favor individuals from certain racial, religious, and economic groups.

What happens when meritocracy fails, but citizens continue to believe that it is still operating fairly? Schools might claim to be operating according to merit while favoring privileged economic and racial groups. This situation might result in perpetuating these favored groups. If students are taught to believe that schools select fairly, then they might believe in the superiority of the social groups favored by the school. In other words, all students might be taught to accept a social hierarchy perpetuated by the educational system. Acceptance might obscure inequalities in society. For instance, if the educational system favored those with wealth, then all members of society might come to accept differences in wealth as differences in talent as determined by educational institutions.

Besides educating political leadership, schools are also to educate future citizens. However, opinions are divided on how this should be accomplished. For instance, Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann, the so-called father of public schools, differed on the best method of citizenship education. Jefferson proposed a very limited education for the general citizenry. The three years of free education were to consist of instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with reading instruction using Greek, Roman, English, and American history. Jefferson did not believe that people needed to be educated to be good citizens. He believed in the guiding power of natural reason to lead the citizen to correct political decisions. Citizens were to receive their political education from reading newspapers published under laws protecting freedom of the press. Citizens would choose between competing political ideas found in newspapers. Consequently, the important function of schools in preparing citizens was to teach reading.

Interestingly, while Jefferson wanted political opinions to be formed in a free marketplace of ideas, he advocated censorship of political texts at the University of Virginia. These contradictory positions reflect an inherent problem in the use of schools to teach political ideas. There is always the temptation to limit political instruction to what one believes are correct political ideas.

In contrast to Jefferson, Horace Mann wanted schools to instill a common political creed in all students. Mann felt that without commonly held political beliefs society was doomed to political strife and chaos. Mann developed these ideas and his reputation as America's greatest educational leader while serving as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education from 1837 to 1846. Originally a lawyer, Mann gave up his legal career because he believed that schooling and not law was the key to creating the good society.

Horace Mann feared that growing crime rates, social-class conflict, and the extension of suffrage would lead to violence and mob rule. Commonly held political values, Mann believed, would curtail political violence and revolution,

and maintain political order. For Mann, the important idea was that all children in society attend the same type of school. This was what was meant by "common." It was a school common to all children. Within the common school, children of all religions and social classes were to share in a common education. Basic social disagreements were to vanish as rich and poor children, and children whose parents were supporters of different political parties, mingled in the schoolroom.

Within the walls of the common schoolhouse students were to be taught the basic principles of a republican form of government. Mann assumed there was general agreement about the nature of these general political values, and they could be taught without objection from outside political groups. In fact, he opposed teaching politically controversial topics because of their potential for destroying the public school. The combination of common schooling and the teaching of a common political philosophy would establish, Mann hoped, shared political beliefs that would ensure the survival of the U.S. government. Political liberty would be possible, according to Mann's philosophy, because it would be restrained and controlled by the ideas students learned in public schools.

Is there a common set of political values in the United States? Since the nineteenth century, debates over the content of instruction have rocked the schoolhouse. Throughout the twentieth century, conservative political groups such as the Christian Coalition, American Legion, and the Daughters of the American Revolution pressured local public schools to not teach left-wing ideas. On the other hand, liberal organizations, and particularly labor unions and the People for the American Way, demanded schools teach their particular political doctrines.

There is a strong tradition of dissent to public schools teaching any political doctrines. Some argue that teaching of political ideas is a method of maintaining the political power of those in control of government. In the late eighteenth century, English political theorist William Godwin warned against national systems of education because they could become a means by which those controlling government could control the minds of future citizens. Writing in 1793, Godwin stated, "Their views as institutors of a system of education will not fail to be analogous to their views in their political capacity: the data upon which their instructions are founded."

Mann's political and social objectives were in part to be accomplished through socialization within the school. Simply defined, socialization refers to what students learn from following school rules, interacting with other students, and participating in school social events. Socialization can be contrasted with academic learning, which refers to classroom instruction, textbooks, and other forms of formal learning.

For many educational leaders, socialization is a powerful means of political control. Learning to obey school rules is socialization for obedience to government laws. Advocating the use of schools as political control, Johann Fichte, a Prussian leader in the early nineteenth century, asserted that schools should prepare students for conformity to government regulations by teaching obedience to school rules and developing a sense of loyalty to the school.

He argued that students will transfer their obedience to school rules to submission to government laws. According to Fichte, loyalty and service to the school and fellow students prepares citizens for service to the country. The school, according to Fichte, is a miniature community where children learn to adjust their individuality to the requirements of the community. The real work of the school, Fichte said, is shaping this social adjustment. A well-ordered government requires citizens to go beyond mere obedience to written constitutions and laws. Fichte believed children must see the government as something greater than the individual and must learn to sacrifice for the good of the social whole.

To achieve these political goals, Fichte recommended teaching patriotic songs, national history, and literature to increase a sense of dedication and patriotism to the government. This combination of socialization and patriotic teachings, he argued, would produce a citizen more willing and able to participate in the army and, consequently, would reduce the cost of national defense.

In the United States, patriotic exercises and fostering school spirit were emphasized after the arrival in the 1890s of large numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. In 1892, Francis Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance and introduced it in the same year to educators attending the annual meeting of the National Education Association. A socialist, Bellamy wanted to include the word "equality" in the Pledge but this idea was rejected because state superintendents of education opposed equality for women and African Americans. The original Pledge of Allegiance was: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Bellamy's Pledge of Allegiance became popular classroom practice as educators worried about the loyalty of immigrant children.

In the 1920s, the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution thought that the Pledge's phrase "I pledge allegiance to my Flag" would be construed by immigrants to mean that they could remain loyal to their former nations. Consequently, "my flag" became "the flag of the United States." It was during this period that schools initiated Americanization programs which were a precursor to current debates about immigrant education. Americanization programs taught immigrant children the laws, language, and customs of the United States. Naturally, this included teaching patriotic songs and stories. With the coming of World War I, the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of patriotic songs, participation in student government, and other patriotic exercises became a part of the American school. In addition, the development of extracurricular activities led to an emphasis on school spirit. The formation of football and basketball teams, with their accompanying trappings of cheerleaders and pep rallies, was to build school spirit and, consequently, prepare students for service to the nation.

Teaching patriotism creates problems for a society with a variety of religious, ethnic, and political groups. Some religious groups object to pledging allegiance to a flag because they believe it is worship of a graven image.

In *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that expulsion from school of children of Jehovah's Witnesses for not saluting the flag was a violation of their constitutional right to freedom of religion. Some teachers view patriotic exercises as contrary to the principles of a free society. In Chapter 10, which deals with legal issues, there is a lengthy discussion of the court cases related to academic freedom and loyalty oaths as well as the conflict between patriotic requirements and students' rights.

In the 1950s, the Pledge of Allegiance underwent another transformation when some members of the U.S. Congress and religious leaders campaigned to stress the role of religion in government. In 1954, the phrase "under God" was added to the Pledge. The new Pledge referred to "one nation, under God." Congressional legislation supporting the change declared that the goal was to "acknowledge the dependence of our people and our Government upon . . . the Creator . . . [and] deny the atheistic and materialistic concept of communism." For similar reasons, Congress in 1955 added the words "In God We Trust" to all paper money.

Reflecting the continuing controversy over the Pledge, a U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in 2002 that the phrase "one nation, under God" violated the U.S. Constitution's ban on government-supported religion. The decision was later dismissed by the U.S. Supreme Court because the father in the case did not have legal custody of his daughter for whom the case was originally brought. The suit was filed by Michael Newdow, the father of a second-grade student attending California's Elk Grove Unified School District. Newdow argued his daughter's First Amendment rights were violated because she was forced to "watch and listen as her state-employed teacher in her state-run school leads her classmates in a ritual proclaiming that there is a God, and ours is 'one nation under God'." While the issue remains unresolved, the suit raised important questions about the Pledge of Allegiance.

In reaction to the Court's decision, Anna Quindlen wrote in the July 15, 2002, edition of *Newsweek*, "His [Bellamy's] granddaughter said he would have hated the addition of the words 'under God' to a statement he envisioned uniting a country divided by race, class and, of course, religion." Another dimension of the story was that Bellamy was a socialist during a period of greater political toleration than today. In contrast to the 1890s, today it would be difficult to find a professional educational organization that would allow an outspoken socialist to write its patriotic pledge.

In recent years, community service has become a part of citizenship training. For instance, in the fall of 1998, Chicago became the nation's largest school system to require students to perform community service or service learning to receive a high school diploma. Currently, Chicago schools require that:

Students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of service between 9th and 12th grade in order to graduate. Beginning with the 2004-05 academic year, all sophomores must complete a minimum of 20 hours of service in order to be promoted to junior status. Students must spend time preparing for and reflecting on the Service Learning experience.

"We want students to learn the importance of community," said Bruce Marchiafava, speaking for the nation's third-largest school system behind New York and Los Angeles. "They need to know that community is about giving, not just getting."

The immediate problem for Chicago officials was defining and identifying community service. This problem was compounded by the headache of finding enough community service activities for all the students. "If you let students work for an anti-handgun group," Marchiafava said, "do you also let them work for the NRA [the National Rifle Association, which opposes strong gun control laws]?" Are political activities community service? Does volunteer work at for-profit schools and hospitals increase profits for these institutions by decreasing labor costs? Also, who decides what is community service? What happens if the person making this decision identifies work with religious organizations as community service? Would this be a violation of the Constitution's prohibition of government aiding religion? What about objections by some people to religious groups such as the Native American Church, which uses peyote, a hallucinogenic drug, in its ceremonies? Will students be able to volunteer to work for organizations advocating the legalization of marijuana?

Chicago schools never really resolved these issues. Ambiguous regulations were adopted that give school staff the power to determine what service learning could take place with political and religious organizations. The 2006 Chicago guidelines for service learning state:

Students may not earn Service Learning hours through the following: Religious organizations if the service involves proselytizing.

Students may not earn hours for the following specific activities: Volunteer work with a political campaign without the mediation of an approved community organization or classroom instructor.

These regulations still don't answer the question of students working with the National Rifle Association, the National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws, or the Native American Church.

None of the issues surrounding the political goals of education are easily resolved. Can they even be achieved? For instance, consider the following questions:

- Should there be a consensus of political values in the United States and should public schools develop that consensus?
- Should the public schools develop emotional or patriotic attachments to symbols of the State through the use of songs, literature, and history?
- Should the purpose of teaching history be the development of patriotic feelings?
- Does the teaching of patriotism in schools throughout the world increase the potential for international conflict?
- Who or what government agency should determine the political values taught in public schools?

THE SOCIAL GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Using public schools to improve social conditions is now a standard part of American school ideology. Horace Mann believed the school was the key to social improvement. He argued that past societies failed to stop crime through the power of government laws. To stop crime, Mann reasoned, schools must instill moral values in students. Later, this approach to controlling crime was referred to as putting a police person in every child's heart. Mann even suggested that America might see the day when the training in the schoolhouse would significantly reduce the number of police required by society.

The problem for Horace Mann and later educational leaders was determining which moral values to teach in schools. His approach was to teach moral values common to most Protestant denominations. A variety of religious groups disagreed with his ideas. The Catholic Church was the largest single religious group to reject Mann's plan and established its own system of schools. The argument of Catholic Church leaders was that all education by its very goal of shaping behavior was religious and that it was impossible for a public institution to claim that it could satisfy the needs of all religious groups. Even if the public school eliminated all religious and moral teaching, this alternative could not be accepted because education would then become irreligious.

Mann's dream of education as the key to social improvement remains alive despite conflicts over what morality should be taught in public schools. For many Americans, the school is the symbol and hope for achieving the good society. This hope is best illustrated by a story told to kindergartners in the early twentieth century about two children who bring a beautiful flower from their school class to their dirty and dark tenement apartment. Their mother placed the flower in a glass of water near a dirty window. She decides the flower needs more light to expose its beauty. The mother cleans the window allowing more light into the apartment which illuminates the dirty floors, walls, and furniture. The added light sends the mother scurrying around to clean up the now-exposed dirt. In the meantime the father, who is unemployed because of a drinking problem, returns to the apartment and is amazed to find his grim dwelling transformed into a clean and tidy house. The transformation of the apartment results in the father wanting to spend more time at home and less time at the local bar. The father's drinking problem is solved, he is able to find work, and the family lives happily ever after. This story characterizes the hope that the social influence of the school will penetrate the homes and neighborhoods of America.

This story illustrates the importance early sociologists placed on the social influence of the school. Writing in the 1890s, sociologist Edward Ross referred to education as a key mechanism for social control. He divided social control into external and internal forms. Traditionally, he argued, internal forms of control centered on families, churches, and the communities. The family and church ensured social stability and cohesion by inculcating moral values and social responsibility in the child. In modern society, Ross declared, the family and church were being replaced by the school as the most important institution for

instilling internal values. Ross saw reliance on education for control becoming characteristic of American society. "The ebb of religion is only half a fact," Ross wrote. "The other half is the high tide of education. While the priest is leaving the civil service, the schoolmaster is coming in. As the state shakes itself loose from the church, it reaches out for the school."

Other groups advocated the expansion of the social role of the school during the same period that Edward Ross was declaring schools a mechanism for social control. The home economics profession, currently called Family and Consumer Sciences, called upon schools to play a major role in improving the quality of American families, changing the lifestyles of women, bettering urban conditions, and reforming the American diet. Schools responded by adding home economics courses for girls and school cafeterias. Founded in 1909, the American Home Economics Association spearheaded the creation of educational goals linked to home and urban improvement projects.

Home economics courses were designed to train women to be scientific housekeepers who would free themselves from kitchen drudgery by relying on packaged and processed foods. Home economics courses taught cooking, household budgeting, sewing, and scientific methods of cleaning. The goal was providing housewives with more free time for education and working to improve municipal conditions. The family model was of wives as consumers of household products and educators and husbands as wage earners. By teaching women household budgeting, families learned to live within their means and as a result worker discontent over wages was to decline. A clean and cheerful house, it was believed, would reduce alcoholism because husbands would want to hurry home from work rather than stop at a tavern. Teaching women how to cook healthy meals would give their husbands more energy at work. And, of course, freed to receive more education, the housewives were to improve the political and cultural level of the American home.

In *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century*, Laura Shapiro credits home economists with the development of a distinctive American cuisine. She argues that during the latter part of the nineteenth century home economists "made American cooking American, transforming a nation of honest appetites into an obedient market for instant mashed potatoes." Jell-O and Wonder Bread, a factory-baked white bread, became symbols of American cuisine. These home economists paved the way for America's greatest contributions to global cuisine, the fast-food franchise.

School cafeterias were to reform American eating habits. Home economists made school and hospital cafeteria food healthy, inexpensive, and bland. Through the school cafeteria, home economists hoped to persuade immigrant children to abandon the diet of their parents for the new American cuisine. A founder of the home economics movement, Ellen Richards projected a liberating role for prepared food in a 1900 article titled, "Housekeeping in the Twentieth Century." In her dream home where the purchase of cheap, mass-produced furniture allowed more money for "intellectual pleasures," the pantry was filled with a large stock of prepared foods—mainly canned foods and bakery products. A pneumatic tube

connected to the pantry speeded canned and packaged food to the kitchen where the wife simply heated up the meal. In addition, the meal would be accompanied by store-bought bread. Besides being unsanitary, home economists believed that homemade bread and other bakery goods required an inordinate amount of preparation time and therefore housewives should rely on factory-produced bread products. Ellen Richards dismissed the issue of taste with the comment, "I grant that each family has a weakness for the flavor produced by its own kitchen bacteria, but that is a prejudice due to lack of education." People would stop worrying about taste, she argued, when they fully realized the benefits of the superior cleanliness and consistency of factory kitchens and bakeries.

Concern about the American diet continued into the twenty-first century when in 2002 the U.S. Congress began considering the Obesity Prevention and Treatment Act that would initiate a campaign to improve the eating habits in the nation, where more than 60 percent of adults are overweight. Public schools also jumped on the campaign to control student diets. Referring to the nationwide income of \$750 million earned by schools from companies that sell snack or processed food in schools, Steve O'Donoghue, a teacher at Fremont High School in California, commented, "Should schools be co-conspirators in promoting unhealthy diets? Even if we can't change a single kid's behavior, the message we send by having all these deals with junk food peddlers is that this stuff is OK." To control student diets, Fremont High School has banned junk and snack foods. However, the Center for Consumer Freedom objects to the restrictions as a denial of student freedom of choice. Who should control students' eating habits?

In addition to the family, community, health, and diets, schools were called on to exercise social control over youth. Traditionally, the high school focused on teaching academic subjects. Broader goals were established for high schools in the National Education Association's 1918 report, *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*. This report set the stage for the high school to become the major public institution for the socialization of youth through school dances, athletics, student government, clubs, and other extracurricular activities. Attended by only a small portion of the population prior to the 1920s, the high school became a mass institution during the 1930s.

High school extracurricular activities aimed to control adolescent sexuality and prepare youth for future family roles. In 1926, the NEA's Committee on Character Education recommended sex education courses as a means of combating the decline of the family and regulating sexual impulses for the good of society. The recommendation defined the purpose of human life as: "The creation of one's own home and family, involving first the choice and winning of, or being won by, one's mate." Sex education was to prepare youth to fulfill this purpose. Similar to today's emphasis on sexual abstinence before marriage, these early sex education courses taught that sexual control was necessary for "proper home functioning, which includes the comfort and happiness of all, maximum development of the mates, proper child production, and effective personal and social education of children." Students were warned

that sexual intercourse outside marriage should be avoided because of its potential threat to the stability of the family.

Ironically, the high school heightened the possibility of early sexual activity by bringing large numbers of youth together within one institution. High school activities created a shared experience for youth. In *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*, Beth Bailey argues that the high school standardized youth culture and created ritualized dating patterns. High school marriage texts and manuals built sexual boundaries around dating. According to Bailey, early high school sex education books dealt with the issue of petting, which meant anything from hand-holding to sexual acts short of actual penetration. All the books warned against promiscuous petting. High school girls were cautioned that heavy petting would lead to a decline of their dating value in the marketplace. Women were given the task of ensuring that petting did not go too far. They were warned that boys tended to sit around and talk about their sexual exploits. The worst thing that could happen to a girl was to become an object of locker room discussions. Girls were told to achieve a balance between being known as an "icicle" and a "hot number."

By the 1930s, the senior prom was the pinnacle of the high school dating experience. In *Prom Night: Youth, Schools, and Popular Culture*, Amy Best argues that as a growing number of youth attended high school, "School clubs, school dances, and student government increasingly became a significant part of the kids' lives." Proms became widespread in the 1930s as the high school became a mass institution. They were considered a poor or middle-class version of the debutante ball which instructed youth in proper dating and mating rituals. Amy Best contends, "Proms were historically tied to a schooling project used to govern the uncontrollable youth. By enlisting you to participate in middle-class rituals like the prom, schools were able to advance a program that reigned in student's emerging and increasingly public sexualities."

By the 1940s, high schools had created a national youth culture and school youth were given the name "teenagers." After World War II, spending patterns changed as symbolized by the publication *Seventeen* magazine with its slogan "Teena means business." The word "teenager," according to Kelly Schrum, was invented by advertisers. At first advertisers experimented with "teenster" and "Petiteen," then "teenager" was popularized during the 1940s to mean a group defined by high school attendance. Defined as a major consumer market, it was believed that teenagers needed to be trained in the arts of consumption. Reflecting this trend, high school home economics courses were replaced by Family and Consumer Science courses.

Today, the sexual education of teenagers remains a controversial issue. Many people turn to the schools in efforts to exert control over adolescent sexual behavior. In recent years, the most heated value conflicts centered on AIDS education. These debates pitted those who believe in a strong moral code to control sexual behavior against those who believe in the right of free sexual activity between consenting adults. Those who believe in a strong moral code tend to support AIDS education programs that advocate sexual abstinence outside marriage and take a strong stand against homosexual

activities. Those at the other end of the value spectrum emphasize educational programs that teach safe sexual procedures and advocate the dispensing of condoms in public schools.

The importance of schools shaping social behavior continues in the twenty-first century. The 2001 federal legislation No Child Left Behind contains a section on "Partnerships in Character Education" that calls for the integration of character education into classroom instruction. At the 2002 White House Conference on Character and Community, President Bush highlighted the value of character education:

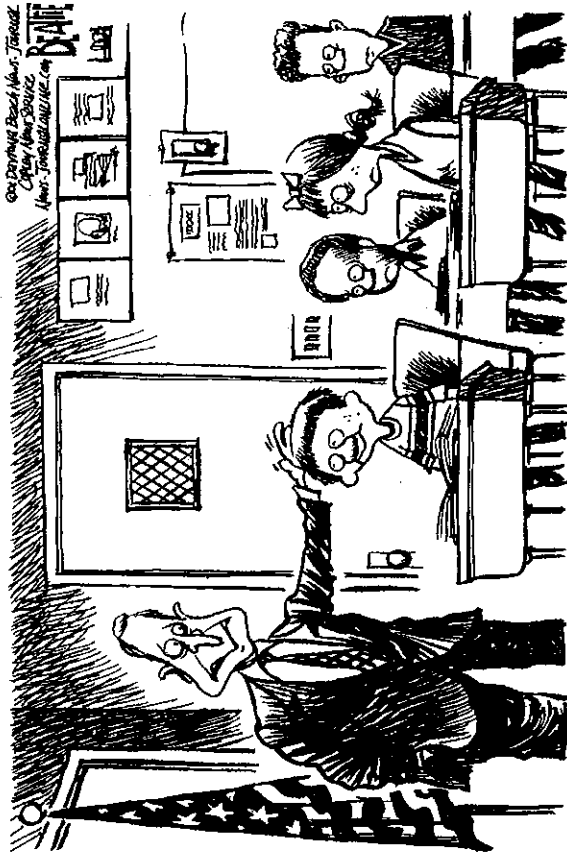
The thing I appreciate is that you understand education should prepare children for jobs, and it also should prepare our children for life. I join you in wanting our children to not only be rich in skills, but rich in ideals. Teaching character and citizenship to our children is a high calling. It's a really high calling. And I'm grateful for your work. (June 19, 2002)

While many parents and teachers support the development of good character and citizenship, there is a problem in defining its meaning. For instance, the No Child Left Behind Act refers to "integrating *secular* character education into curricula and teaching methods of schools" [my emphasis]. The use of "secular" in the legislation is to make a distinction from character education based on religious values. As examples of the elements of secular character education, the legislation provides the following:

- a. Caring
- b. Civic virtue and citizenship
- c. Justice and fairness
- d. Respect
- e. Responsibility
- f. Trustworthiness
- g. Giving

What do these terms mean? Does "caring" mean that the individual should support a strong welfare government that guarantees all citizens health care, shelter, and adequate nutrition? Or does "caring" mean eliminating welfare programs so that the poor are forced to work and learn to be economically independent?

While public schools can't teach religion, some religiously oriented people would object to "secular character education." Christian fundamentalist groups refer to this form of character education as secular humanism. The simplest definition of secular humanism is that it comprises a set of ethical standards that place primary emphasis on a person's ability to interpret and guide his or her own moral actions. Most religions believe that good character must be grounded in religious doctrines. Many Christians believe that sources of ethical and moral values should be the Bible and God. Secular humanism relies on the authority of human beings rather than the authority of the Scriptures. From a religious perspective, ideas like caring, respect, responsibility, and giving should only be taught in a religious context.

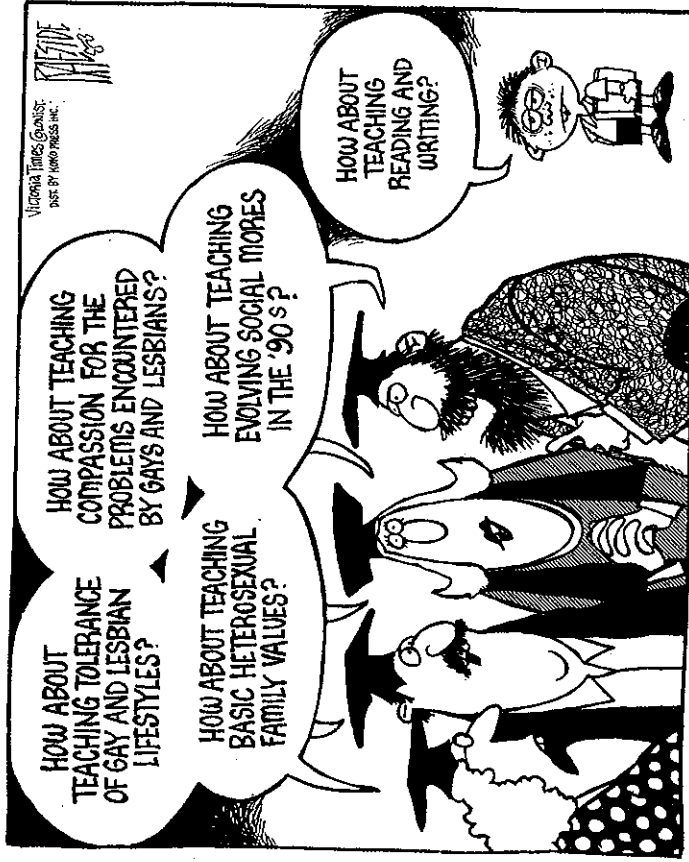


"I'm here to emphasize values. Remember . . . work hard, aim high and always use your parents' connections."

Source: Bruce Beattie/Copley News Service. Reprinted with permission.

The controversy surrounding the goals of character education are illustrated by a 1986 legal suit brought by a group of parents against the Hawkins County School District in Tennessee for requiring students, on a threat of suspension, to read from the Holt, Rinehart and Winston basic reading series. Specifically, the parents objected to selections in the readers from *The Wizard of Oz*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, and *Macbeth*. The parents claimed that the textbook series contained explicit statements on secular humanism and taught values contrary to the religious beliefs of their children. In the words of presiding U.S. District Judge Thomas Gray Hull, "The plaintiffs believe that, after reading the entire Holt series, a child might adopt the views of a feminist, a humanist, a pacifist, an anti-Christian, a vegetarian, or an advocate of a 'one-world government'."

Does the concept of "respect" included in the character education section of No Child Left Behind include teaching respect for households headed by gay and lesbian couples? In 1992 New York City adopted the "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum, which required elementary schools to teach tolerance toward gays and lesbians. Among the books recommended for use in classrooms were *Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Both books show pictures of gay couples, including a drawing of two men in bed. Standing on top of a truck outside the school chancellor's office, Mary Cummings, the president of the local Queens district board of education, led a



Source: By permission of Adrian Raeside and Creators Syndicate, Inc.

demonstration against the curriculum. "It is bizarre," she said, "to teach six-year-olds this [referring to the gay and lesbian content of the curriculum]. Why single out [homosexuals] for respect? Tomorrow it will be skinheads." Catholic, Pentecostal, and Baptist churches along with Orthodox Jewish synagogues protested that homosexuality is a sin and that schools should not teach respect for gay and lesbian lifestyles. Neil Lodato, a construction worker, shouted outside his daughter's school, "They should stick to teaching these babies that $1 + 1 = 2$, instead of what daddy and his boyfriend are doing in the bedroom."

Should schools teach "respect" for other cultures? In *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children*, William Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, expresses his objections to teaching respect for other cultures. Bennett argues that U.S. cultural traditions have produced the best society on earth. Why teach respect for inferior cultures? Bennett maintains that U.S. schools should focus on transmitting the European roots of American culture.

So what does "respect" mean if it doesn't include appreciation of other lifestyles and cultures? Does it mean respect for one's own person with regard to sexual activities? The Sex Respect program began in 1983 with a curriculum guide designed to motivate teens to practice chastity. The program's

current goal is "to enable each individual to progressively develop responsible behavior, positive self-esteem, and respect for others as he/she makes decisions involving the use of his/her sexual freedom." Sex Respect defines sexual freedom as the freedom to say no. In 2006, Sex Respect reported that when its founder Coleen Kelly Mast delivers her "'save sex for marriage' message to teenagers in both public and parochial schools, the response is hand-painted posters like 'Pet your dog, not your date' [and] 'Use your will, not the pill'."

Today, the program is being used in all 50 states and 23 foreign countries. The program's growth was made possible by Title V of the welfare-reform act of 1996 in which Congress authorized federal funds to be provided to the states in the form of block grants to promote chastity until marriage. Title V requires states to fund education that:

- a. Has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity;
- b. Teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children;
- c. Teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems;
- d. Teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity.

Both the federally funded Sex Respect program and the goals of Title V raise important questions about the meaning of respect and the goals of public schools. Should schools be involved in sex education or should this area of instruction be left to parents, the community, or religious groups? Should government legislation define a "faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage . . . [as] the expected standard of human sexual activity" for all people? Should public schools focus on birth control methods as opposed to abstinence from sexual activity?

Despite the fact that the historical record indicates that moral instruction has not reduced crime, controlled teenage sexuality, or ended substance abuse, society still turns to public schools as the cure for many social problems. Certainly, the school can teach subjects that will improve society without engaging in moral instruction that will light the fires of religious controversy. For instance, early home economists advocated teaching about sanitation and diseases as a means of promoting public health. High school courses can teach about the results of alcoholism and substance abuse without entering the realm of morality; for example, is cigarette smoking "evil" or just bad for your health? Social studies, history, and economics courses can study social conditions that might contribute to crime and violence. However, even in this seemingly neutral approach to social issues there is always lurking in the background the potential for conflict over moral values.

Attempts to use public schools to solve social problems will continue to raise problems about what values should dominate character education

and how to reconcile secular and religious values. Consider the following questions:

- What are legitimate areas of social concern for public schools? Should public schools attempt to solve social problems, such as the AIDS epidemic or other epidemics, the destructive use of drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and child abuse?
- What government agency, organization, or group of individuals should decide the moral values to be taught in public schools?
- Should instruction related to social and moral issues be mandatory for all students?
- Should teachers be required to teach only the moral and social values given in the school district's curriculum?

THE ECONOMIC GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Since the nineteenth century, politicians and school leaders justified schools as necessary for economic growth. Originally, Horace Mann proposed two major economic objectives. One was what we now call "human capital." Simply stated, human capital theory contends that investment in education will improve the quality of workers and, consequently, increase the wealth of the community. The second was the idea of "equality of opportunity." By going to school, everyone was to be given an equal opportunity to compete for jobs and wealth.

Horace Mann used human capital theory to justify community support of schools. For instance, why should an adult with no children be forced to pay for the schooling of other people's children? Mann's answer was that public schooling increased the wealth of the community and, therefore, even people without children economically benefitted from schools. Mann also believed that schooling would eliminate poverty by raising the wealth of the community and by preparing everyone to be economically successful.

Human capital ideas were central to the War on Poverty programs of the 1960s. This legislation continues to affect public schools. The economic model of the War on Poverty in Figure 1-3 exemplifies current and past ideas about schooling and poverty. Notice that poor-quality education is one element in a series of social factors that tends to reinforce other social conditions. As you move around the inner part of the diagram, an inadequate education is linked to low-income jobs, low-quality housing, poor diet, poor medical care, health problems, and high rates of absenteeism from school and work. This model suggests eliminating poverty by improving any of the interrelated points. For instance, the improvement of health conditions will mean fewer days lost from school and employment, which will mean more income. Higher wages will mean improved housing, medical care, diet, and education. These improved conditions will mean better jobs for those of the next generation. Antipoverty programs include Head Start, compensatory education, vocation and career education, public housing, housing subsidies, food stamps, and medical care.

standardized tests to place the student into an ability group in an elementary school classroom and later in high school into a course of study. Ideally, a student's education will lead directly to college or a vocation. In this model, there should be a correlation among students' education, abilities, and interests and their occupations. With schools as sorting machines, proponents argue, the economy will prosper and workers will be happy because of the close tie between the schools and the labor market.

In the twenty-first century, American workers are competing in a global economy. As U.S. companies seek cheaper labor in foreign countries, American workers are forced to take reductions in benefits and wages to compete with foreign workers. The only hope, it is argued, is to train workers for jobs that pay higher wages in the global labor market.

Preparation for the global economy shifts the focus from service to a national economy to a global economy by preparing workers for international corporations and for competition in a world labor market. The income of American workers is to rise because they will be educated for the highest-paying jobs in the world economy.

The architect of educational policies for the global economy, former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, writes in *The Work of Nations*, "Herein lies the new logic of economic capitalism: The skills of a nation's workforce and the quality of its infrastructure are what make it unique, and uniquely attractive, in the world economy." Reich draws a direct relationship between the type of education provided by schools and the placement of the worker in the labor market. He believes that many workers will be trapped in low-paying jobs unless their employment skills are improved. Reich argues, "There should not be a barrier between education and work. We're talking about a new economy in which lifelong learning is a necessity for every single member of the American workforce."

Reich's education and economic goals are based on human capital concepts. In schools, human capital is students, and the development of human capital simply means preparing students to be efficient workers, who, it is hoped, can find employment in their area of training. Economic growth pays for the investment in education. In the framework of human capital illustrated in Figure 1-4, an important consideration is the return on investment:

- Does investment in education produce worthwhile economic returns?
- Should governments invest in schools if there are few economic rewards?

Horace Mann's other economic goal was equality of opportunity. The idea of equality of opportunity resolves the conflict between promises of equality and the existence of a society strongly divided by economic inequalities. Equality of opportunity does not mean equal income, living conditions, or status, but rather equality to compete for wealth. Horace Mann envisioned schools providing children of the rich and poor an equal education so that when they graduated they would be on equal terms to compete for jobs. He believed that the idea of equality of opportunity would reduce social tensions between the rich and poor by instilling the

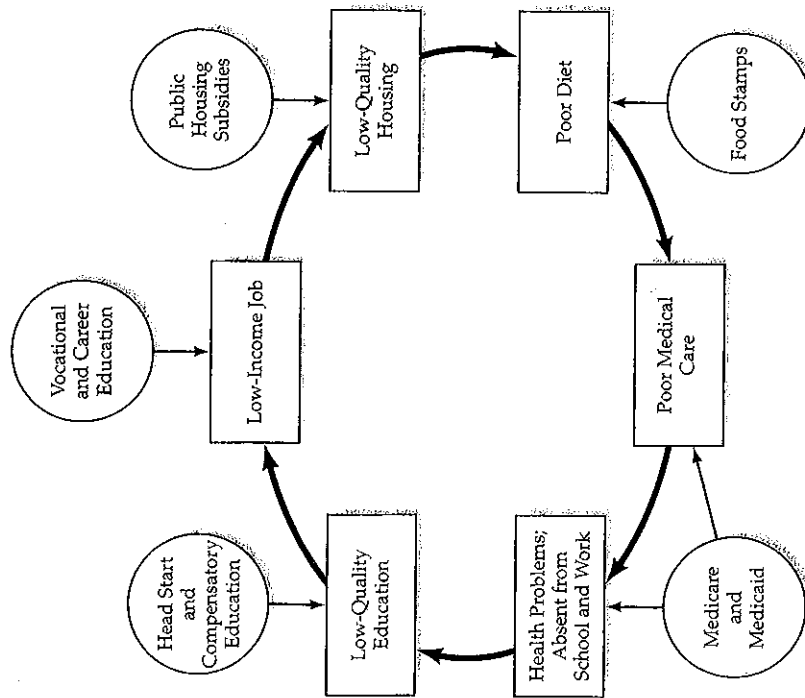


FIGURE 1-3. War on Poverty

Today, Head Start programs are premised on the idea that some children from low-income families begin school at a disadvantage in comparison to children from middle- and high-income families. Head Start programs provide early childhood education to give poor children a head start on schooling that allows them to compete on equal terms with other children. Job-training programs are designed to end teenage and adult unemployment. Compensatory education in fields such as reading are designed to ensure the success of low-income students.

Besides the issue of poverty, human capital arguments have directly influenced the organization of schools. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the dominant model for linking schools to the labor market is the "sorting machine." The image of the sorting machine is that of pouring students—called human capital or human resources—into schools where they are separated by abilities and interests. Emerging from the other end of the machine, school graduates enter jobs that match their educational programs. In this model, the school counselor or other school official uses a variety of stan-

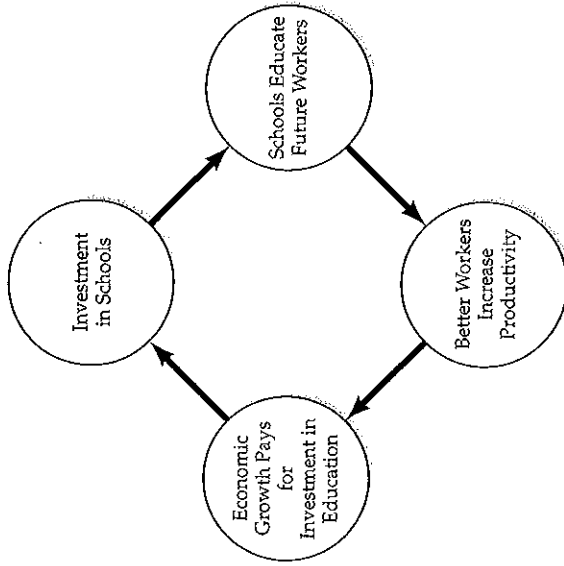


FIGURE 1-4. Human Capital Model

belief in people that everyone had an equal chance to succeed. It didn't matter whether equality of opportunity actually existed because social tensions would be reduced simply by people believing that the school provided everyone with an equal chance for success.

Equality of opportunity plays an important role in human capital theory. The War on Poverty and the No Child Left Behind legislation are premised on the idea that improved schooling will provide an equal opportunity for poor children in the labor market. It also assumes that equality of opportunity will improve the efficiency of the labor market by letting talented children from poor families achieve occupations commensurate with their abilities. Allowing talented children to achieve despite family conditions will, theoretically, contribute to economic growth.

Educational inflation, however, might fly in the face of equality of opportunity and human capital arguments. Increasing the number of high school and college graduates might result in decreasing the economic value of education. It is a simple story of supply and demand. With educational inflation, the educational requirements of jobs increase while the actual skills required for the jobs do not change. This results in the declining economic value of high school and college diplomas. Educational inflation first appeared in the early 1970s when the labor market was flooded with college graduates, and scholars with doctorates were driving taxicabs and cooking in restaurants. In this situation, the occupational structure did not expand to meet the increased educational training of the labor force. The response of educational institutions was to reorganize for more specific career training and call for more lim-

ited educational aspirations. The important lesson was that the nature of the labor market was more important in determining employment than was the amount of education available to the population. Educational inflation can hinder the ability of increased schooling to end poverty. There must be an increase in the number of jobs actually requiring higher levels of education for increased schooling to effectively raise levels of income. Education alone cannot solve the problems of poverty.

As I discussed, schools are believed to benefit the economy by socializing students for work. The school is the first formal public organization encountered by the child and provides the preparation and training needed to deal with other complex social organizations. The school's attendance requirements, tardiness rules, instruction in completing tasks and following directions, and obedience to authority are preparation for the workplace.

Arguments for the school's role in socializing for the workplace can be found throughout U.S. history. In the nineteenth century, schools emphasized marching, drills, and orderliness as preparation for the modern factory. Lining up for class as well as marching in and out of the cloakroom and to the blackboard were justified as training for factory assembly lines. Today, some students are prepared for job interviews and filling out employment forms. However, there is the question of whether the school is simply educating workers who are obedient, conforming, and passive, and who are, consequently, unwilling to join or form unions to actively struggle for workers' rights.

In recent years, there has been discussion of the school's role in promoting a learning society and lifelong learning so that workers can adapt to constantly changing needs in the labor force. A learning society and lifelong learning are considered essential parts of global educational systems. Both concepts assume a world of constant technological change, which will require workers to continually update their skills. This assumption means that schools will be required to teach students how to learn so that they can continue learning throughout their lives. These two concepts are defined as follows:

- In a learning society, educational credentials determine income and status. Also, all members in a learning society are engaged in learning to adapt to constant changes in technology and work requirements.
- Lifelong learning refers to workers engaging in continual training to meet the changing technological requirements of the workplace.

In the context of education for the global economy, the larger questions include the following:

- Should the primary goal of education be human capital development?
- Should the worth of educational institutions be measured by internal and external efficiency?
- Will the learning society and lifelong learning to prepare for technological change increase human happiness?

HUMAN CAPITAL AND THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Businesses, as I demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter, are very involved in formulating educational policies. Education for the global economy links schooling to the interests of the business community and international corporations. In fact, by the twenty-first century most Americans seemed to accept business as a natural partner in the control of schools. In the 1990s, few people questioned President George Bush and the National Governors Association's statement: "Parents, businesses, and community organizations will work together to ensure that schools are a safe haven for all children." Why would business be considered a logical partner in this objective? Why was there no mention of unions or churches? In fact, why was there no mention of participation by all the citizens who pay taxes to support schools?

The extensive and often unquestioned involvement of business in American schools has increased at a rapid rate and has made economic goals the number-one priority of public schools. Business involvement in schools raises a number of issues. It is not necessarily true that what is good for American business is good for American schools and students. The primary concern of business is the maximization of profits. Business profits depend on the quality and expense of workers. Although businesses want educated workers, they also want workers who are compliant and loyal to the company.

It can also be argued that it is in the public interest for schools to focus on the education of future workers. Doesn't everyone benefit if the economy is booming? Therefore, shouldn't public schools emphasize the development of habits that will meet the requirements of business? If you believe that the primary goal of public schools is making sure that graduates can get jobs, then your answer is "Yes!"

CONCLUSION

The school continues to be used in efforts to solve social, political, and economic problems. It is easier for politicians to blame schools for social and economic problems than to try to directly correct these problems. By relying on the school, issues are shifted from an economic and social level to a personal level. "Reform the individual rather than society" is the message of those who trust the school to end crime, poverty, broken families, drug and alcohol abuse, and myriad other social troubles.

Now the focus is on the role of the school in a global economy. This focus emphasizes the school's role in economic development. Fortunately or unfortunately, students are viewed as human resources whose primary value is their potential contribution to economic growth and productivity. But is eco-

nomix expansion a worthy goal if the quality of life is not improved? Doesn't education in and of itself improve the quality of an individual's life by opening new possibilities to thinking and learning?

Suggested Readings and Works Cited in Chapter

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CHAPTER 2

Education and Equality of Opportunity

The 1776 American Declaration of Independence declared "All men are created equal." In the 1830s, Horace Mann declared schools the great balance wheel of society by providing graduates with equality of opportunity to pursue wealth. Is equality of opportunity the same equality promised in the Declaration of Independence? Answering this question requires a definition: *equality of opportunity means that all members of a society are given equal chances to pursue wealth and enter any occupation or social class*. Sometimes people think equality of opportunity means equal incomes and status. Therefore, it is important to emphasize what it is not: *equality does not mean that everyone will have equal incomes and equal status*.

In fact, equality of opportunity is based on the idea of an unequal society where individuals compete with each other with some becoming wealthy and some falling to the bottom of the economic scale. In Horace Mann's vision, schools will ensure that everyone receives an education that will allow them to compete for wealth on equal terms. Life is a race and the school is that starting point.

What about the meaning of equality of opportunity and the wording of the Declaration of Independence? In *The Pursuit of Equality in American History*, J. R. Pole argues that promoting equality of opportunity was America's way of balancing the ideal of equality with a society riddled with inequality. Since the American Revolution, the ideal of equality has been seriously compromised by the denial of women's rights, slavery, legal racial segregation, exploitation of Native Americans, and differences in wealth and status. Even many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, including Thomas Jefferson, owned enslaved Africans and later denied U.S. citizenship to Native Americans. Did the Declaration's statement of equality exclude women since women did not gain the right to vote until the twentieth century? Apparently, given the historical circumstances, the phrase "All men are created equal" applied only to white men at the time of the signing of the Declaration. Limiting full citizenship rights to white men was highlighted by the Naturalization Act of 1790. Passed by the U.S. Congress, this legislation restricted the granting of citizenship to "free white

persons' only. Under this law, Native Americans were excluded from citizenship because they were classified as domestic foreigners. Until the 1940s and 1950s, this 1790 law was used to deny citizenship to Asian immigrants.

An emphasis on equality of opportunity through schooling seemed to resolve the conflict between the use of the word "equality" and the existence of widespread inequality. Education would provide everyone with an equal chance to pursue wealth. Ideally, equality of opportunity through education would ensure that citizens occupied their particular social positions because of merit and not because of family wealth, heredity, or special cultural advantages.

Equality of opportunity can be thought of as a contest where everyone is competing for jobs and income. To provide everyone with an equal chance in the competition, all participants must begin at the same starting line. During the contest, some people will succeed and others will fail. In this concept, it is the role of the school to ensure that everyone begins the race for riches on an equal footing.

In declaring schools the great balance wheel of society, Horace Mann believed equality of opportunity would reduce tensions between the rich and poor. The poor could believe that their children had an equal chance to compete with the children of the rich. Rather than feeling antagonistic toward the wealthy, the poor could believe that they had the opportunity to join the rich. By believing schools could give everyone an equal opportunity to achieve wealth and power, one could ignore blatant social, economic, and political inequalities. Faced with obvious inequalities, people could now argue, "Hey, everyone is given a chance to get ahead. Those without money or power just didn't work hard enough. They had all the chances. They could have done well in school and gotten into a good college." This reasoning stabilized the social system by shifting the causes of inequality onto the shoulders of the individual. People seeking rectification of unequal conditions could call for more and better schools rather than demanding major political and economic changes. Schools promised to be the gateway to equal opportunity.

Can schools provide equality of opportunity to pursue wealth? How can schools be structured to provide graduates with equality of opportunity? Can they simultaneously compensate for differences in students' family income, race, ethnic background, languages spoken at home, cultural capital, and gender to provide equality of opportunity after graduation to compete for income and property? These questions are central to current discussions about school organization, curriculum, and methods of instruction.

SCHOOL MODELS FOR EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Debate over equality of opportunity is centered on three major models. These models overlap and sometimes operate simultaneously. These three models are associated with a particular historical period. However, like other things in American education, nothing ever seems to disappear; a new model or

educational practice is just added onto an older one. Just as U.S. schools in the twenty-first century are a patchwork of educational goals from different historical periods, the schools are a patchwork of attempts to ensure equality of opportunity.

I call these attempts to provide equality of opportunity the common-school model, the sorting-machine model, and the high-stakes testing model. Today, all three of these models are present in public schools with the high-stakes testing model receiving the greatest attention. Interestingly, all of these models assume that schools can provide equality of opportunity. But can they?

THE COMMON-SCHOOL MODEL

In the common school model illustrated in Figure 2-1 everyone receives an equal and common education. Theoretically, this will ensure that everyone begins the economic race on equal footing. Children from all social backgrounds attend school where they receive an education that will prepare them to compete on equal terms in the economic system. Upon graduation, all students have an equal chance to succeed; thus, competition for socioeconomic standing occurs *outside* the schoolhouse.

Nineteenth century advocates of common schools believed that differences of social class and special advantages would disappear as everyone was given an equal chance to get an equal education. During the 1830s, workingmen's parties wanted publicly supported common schools, believing that if the children of rich and poor families were mixed in the same schoolhouse there

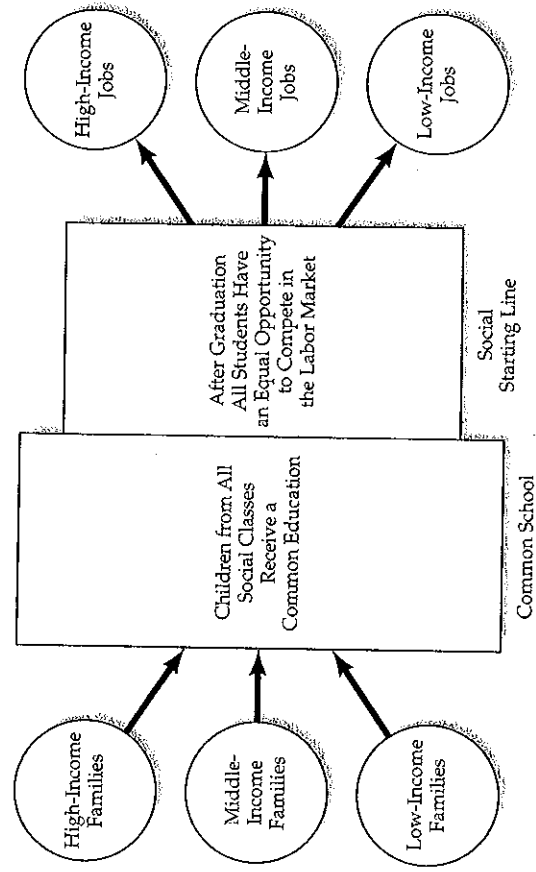


FIGURE 2-1. The Common-School Model

would be greater equality of opportunity. But what about before children entered schools? Would there be advantages growing up in a rich household as opposed to a poor one?

The most extreme answer to these questions came from one faction of the New York Workingman's Party. This group argued that sending students to a common school would not in itself eliminate differences in social background, because the well-to-do child would return from school to a home richly furnished and full of books, whereas the poor would return to a shanty barren of books and opportunities to learn. School, in the opinion of these workingmen, could never eliminate these differences. Their solution was that all children in New York should be removed from their families and placed in state boarding schools where they would all live in the same types of rooms, wear the same types of clothes, and eat the same food. In this milieu, education would truly allow all members of society to begin school on equal terms. This extreme solution to the problem did not receive wide support, and debates about it eventually led to the collapse of the New York Workingman's Party.

However, the common-school model continues to be plagued by differences in family backgrounds. Children with parents who read to them and expose them to a variety of cultural events are probably better prepared to learn than children whose parents are illiterate. Also, wealthy parents can provide their children with special advantages such as tutors and learning aids, while poor parents might have to struggle just to feed their children. After graduation, children might receive uneven support in pursuing a career. We will explore these issues later in this chapter.

THE SORTING-MACHINE MODEL

In the sorting-machine model, as depicted in Figure 2-2, the school attempts to overcome the influence of family background. Here, equality of opportunity is guaranteed by impartial decisions of teachers, counselors, and standardized tests. Students from all social backgrounds enter school where they are classified and placed in ability groups and tracks that will lead to jobs appropriate to student abilities. Unlike the common-school model, students receive unequal and different educations. Some students graduate with vocational training while others prepare to enter college. In this model, competition for social positions takes place *within* the school.

As it developed in the early twentieth century, students entered the first grade and were placed by their teachers in different reading and math ability groups. During junior high or what is now called middle school, students were to be tested and evaluated to find out what types of jobs they might be able to do after graduation or whether they should go on to college. An important addition to both junior or middle and high schools was the guidance counselor. Students were to meet with counselors who help them select a future career and an educational program leading to that career.

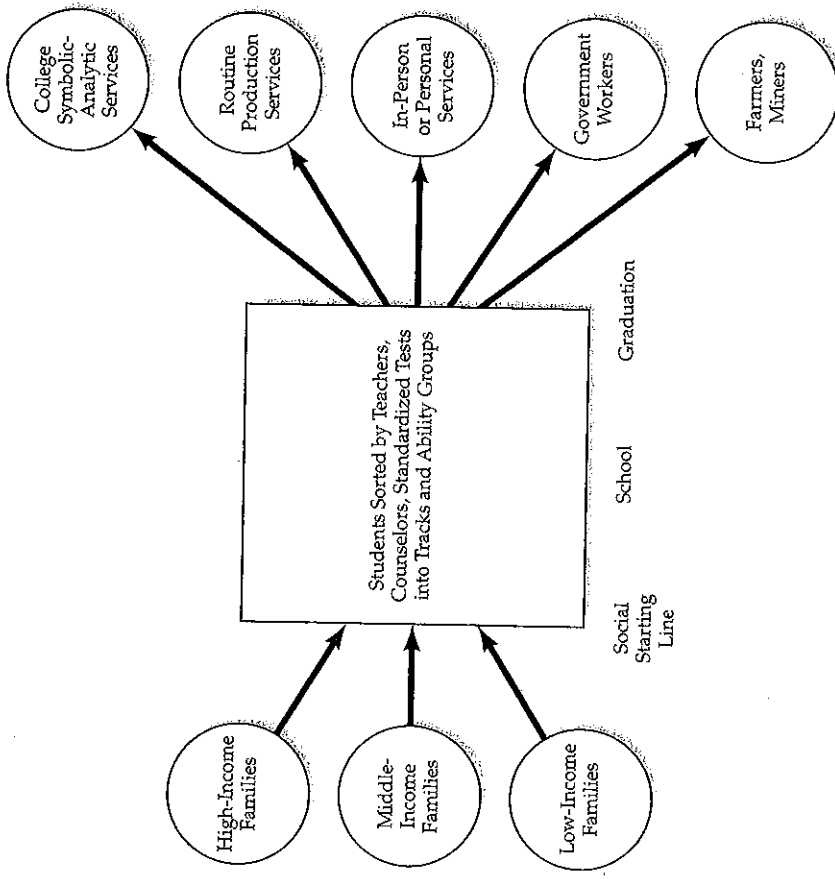


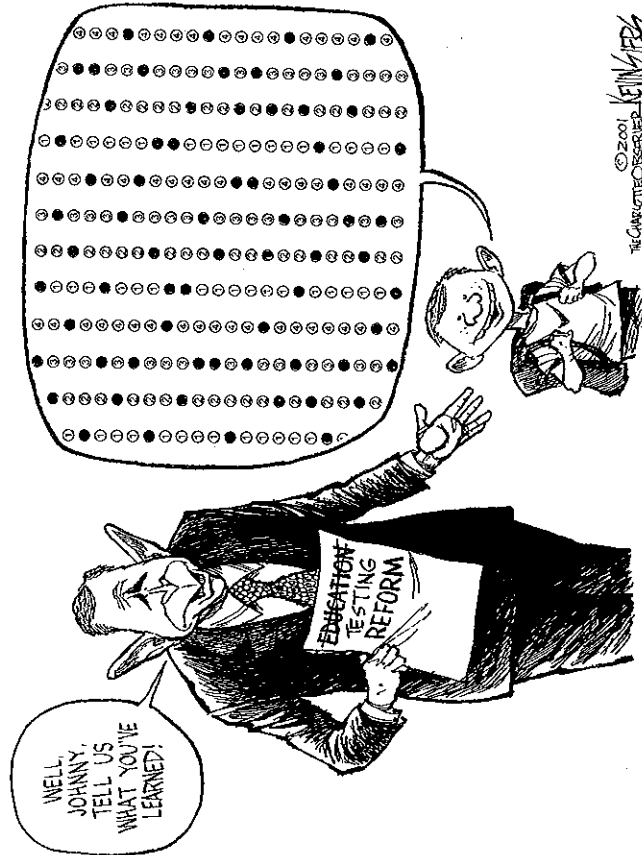
FIGURE 2-2. The Sorting-Machine Model

Why did educational leaders assume that they could fairly provide equality of opportunity by sorting students according to their future positions in the job market? In part, it was a result of a belief that ability or intelligence could be scientifically determined at an early age. Intelligence testing promised to eliminate the effect of social backgrounds. Some believed intelligence tests could be an objective measure to determine what type of occupation a person should enter. Test them at the beginning of their school career and, it was argued, you could determine what type of education a child should receive and his or her future place in society. Thus, equality of opportunity would be achieved through the use of scientific testing.

Intelligence tests thus justified a hierarchical social structure based on measured intelligence. Within this framework democracy was viewed as a social system in which all people were given an equal chance to reach a level in society that corresponded to their individual level of intelligence. The French psychologist Alfred Binet, who wanted to find a method of separating children

with extremely low levels of intelligence from those with normal intelligence levels, developed the first intelligence test in the early 1900s. The assumption of the test was that an inherited level of intelligence existed and could be measured independently of environmental factors such as social class, housing conditions, and cultural advantages. In the United States, the intelligence-test movement spread rapidly. Intelligence tests seemed to furnish a scientific means to achieve equality of opportunity based on individual ability.

Of course, the cultural bias of intelligence tests limits their power to be a fair means of providing equality of opportunity. In addition, there is the issue of whether an inherited native intelligence exists or whether intelligence is determined by early learning. Those believing in the existence of inheritable intelligence feel that these test results accurately reflect social-class differences. Alfred Binet contended that the reason the poor did not do well on intelligence tests was that they had lower levels of intelligence and, moreover, that was why they were poor. More recently, psychologist Arthur Jensen argued that existing tests accurately measure inherited intelligence and that differences in performance by certain racial and social groups are accurate. On the other hand, there are those who believe in the existence of inherited intelligence but feel that the questions asked on existing tests reflect the cultural and social bias of the dominant middle class in the United States. The poor, and certain racial groups, do poorly on existing tests because many test



Source: © North America Syndicate.

questions deal with things that are not familiar to those groups. Within this framework, the solution to the problem is the creation of an intelligence test that is free of any cultural bias.

Another approach is to reject inherited intelligence and place emphasis on the effect of the child's environment. This is the famous nurture versus nature debate. Those who see nurture as more important argue that differences in measured intelligence between social and racial groups primarily reflect differences in social conditions. The poor grow up in surroundings limited in intellectual training: an absence of books and magazines in the home; poor housing, diet, and medical care; and lack of peer-group interest in learning all might account for their poor performance on intelligence tests. This approach suggests that the school can act positively to overcome differences caused by social and cultural conditions.

Most recently, school programs try to overcome inequalities caused by differences in preparation for school learning. Head Start and early childhood education programs are designed to counteract the supposedly inadequate learning opportunities for poor children, and compensatory education is designed to provide special instruction in reading and other skills to offset disadvantages in preparation for formal schooling.

THE HIGH-STAKES TESTING MODEL

The high-stakes testing model is an advanced variation on the sorting-machine model (see Figure 2-3). A "high-stakes test" refers to an achievement examination that determines a person's future academic career and job opportunities. These are not tests of innate qualities, as are intelligence tests, but tests of what a person has learned. High-stakes testing begins in elementary school, where the results determine promotion from one grade to another. High-stakes tests then determine graduation from high school; admission to undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools; and professional licenses and employment credentials. In Chapter 7, I analyze the educational ramifications of high-stakes testing.

In the high-stakes testing model everyone is given an equal chance to learn and they take the same tests to determine what they have learned. The National Education Summit on High Schools, discussed in Chapter 1, recommends that high-stakes tests be given for each course completed in the core high school curriculum, rather than a single test at graduation. Similar to the sorting-machine model, this model attempts to use scientific measurement to socially engineer equality of opportunity.

How is equality of opportunity to be achieved? Imagine a society where complete regulation of employment is based on high-stakes testing. Tests are the basis for issuing diplomas, assessment certificates for job skills, and licenses. Educational institutions become well-oiled machines processing children using a variety of tests and training to receive a particular credential for jobs ranging from child care provider to auto mechanic to real estate

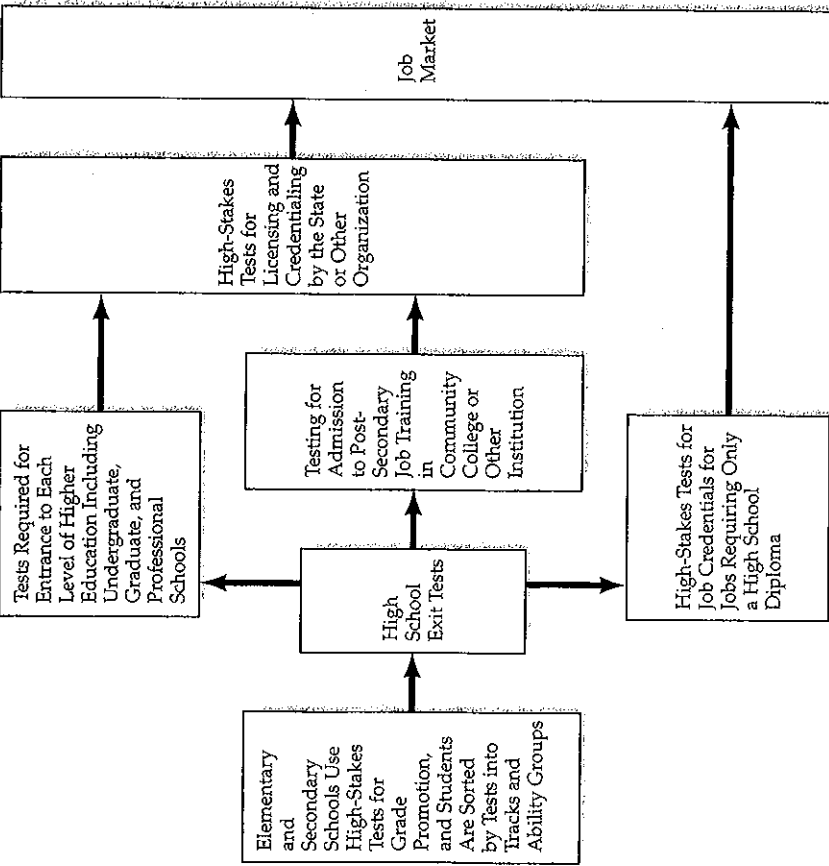


FIGURE 2-3. Equality of Opportunity: High-Stakes Testing

salesperson to accountant to college professor. When applying for any job, people are asked to submit proof of their qualifications. This proof would be their credential. A society organized around high-stakes testing is advantageous to employers because they are presented with immediate evidence of a person's abilities to perform a job.

Throughout the twentieth century there existed many forms of high-stakes testing used for granting licenses for careers ranging from medicine to beautician. Most of these licenses required a combination of educational achievement and state testing such as attending medical school and then taking a state examination. However, from the 1980s into the twenty-first century the labor market has been swamped with calls for greater testing and certification. Consider the history of the licensing of teachers. In the nineteenth century, a person applying for a teaching position was simply evaluated by a local school board using whatever method it felt adequate. Then in the early twentieth century, state governments required local school systems to hire only

those teachers licensed by the state. To obtain these licenses teachers had to take college courses in education. In the second half of the twentieth century, state governments began to require both college courses and the passing of a state examination. Today, the U.S. is rapidly on the path to requiring the passage of a national teaching examination for permanent licensing.

In the twenty-first century, most global school systems are test driven. In the U.S., life-determining standardized testing begins in elementary school and extends into the workplace. Most states now require passing a state test before receiving a high school diploma. Of course, standardized testing does not end in high school but extends through a person's college career. Test centers and test courses exist for the sole purpose of preparing people to take tests. It is now a test-happy world!

In a society organized around high-stakes testing, people can undergo a variety of examinations to gain credentials that provide proof of their ability to perform a job. For instance, some employers might just be interested in a job applicant having a high school or a college diploma. Another employer might want to see a college transcript to ensure the applicant received a particular type of education, such as engineering. Another employer might want to see a diploma plus test scores qualifying the applicant for the job. Another employer might want a diploma, test scores, and a license.

In a society organized around high-stakes tests, the school becomes a crucial institution for determining economic success. To ensure equality of opportunity in the high-stakes testing model, the school must give everyone an equal chance to learn and to be tested without cultural bias. Is this possible?

EDUCATION AND INCOME

What is the relationship between education and income? This is a crucial question in considering the school's ability to provide equality of opportunity. The above three models assume a close relationship between education and income. Studies show that years of schooling are associated with income levels. These findings suggest that achievement in school is the road to economic success. However, a comparison of educational attainment, gender, and race suggests that other social factors affect the role of schools in determining personal income.

To demonstrate the relationship between schooling and income I am using statistics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics. Most of these data are derived from the 2000 U.S. census; the federal government conducts a national census every 10 years. Both the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics are constantly updating their statistical reports. Particularly useful is the annual *Digest of Education Statistics* issued by the National Center for Education Statistics and the annual U.S. Census Bureau's *Statistical Abstract: The National Data Book*. Both volumes are available on the Web sites of these federal agencies. The reader is advised to check the Web site for both government agencies for any updates to the statistics reported in this book.

TABLE 2-1. Median Income of Persons 25 Years Old and Over, by Highest Level of Educational Attainment and Sex, 2004

Gender	All Workers	High School			Bachelor's Degree or More		
		Less than 9th Grade	9th to 12th Grade (no equivalency test)	Some College (no degree)			
Male	\$37,669	\$20,100	\$22,255	\$31,624	\$38,186	\$40,879	\$58,362
Female	25,809	12,541	13,951	20,928	24,586	27,396	39,330

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Table 379," *Digest of Education Statistics Tables and Figures 2005*. http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest/digest05/tables/dt05_379.asp.

While the following tables indicate a relationship between educational attainment and income, they also indicate that in the labor market gender is as important as education. Simply stated, even with equal educational attainments, men earn more than women. As Table 2-1 shows, there is a steady increase in annual median income with educational attainment. The U.S. Census Bureau provides this definition of median income as related to unrelated individuals, households, and families:

Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having incomes above the median, half having incomes below the median. The medians for households, families, and unrelated individuals are based on all households, families, and unrelated individuals, respectively. The medians for people are based on people 15 years old and over with income. (From Table 672—Money Income of Households—Distribution of Income and Median Income by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1999)

For men, the increase in annual median earnings from less than a ninth grade education (\$20,100) to a bachelor's degree or higher (\$58,362) is \$38,262, while the difference for women with less than a ninth grade education (\$12,541) and those with a bachelor's degree or higher (\$39,330) is \$26,789. As demonstrated in Table 2-2, the lifetime income for men with a professional degree is \$4.8 million as compared to \$1.1 million for men without a high school diploma, while for women with a professional degree the lifetime income is \$2.9 million as compared to \$0.7 million for women without a high school diploma.

THE BIAS OF LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, INCOME, AND GENDER

Can schools provide equality of opportunity? Are there bias factors in society that limit the ability of schools to ensure everyone an equal chance to attain wealth? Can labor market biases be corrected? According to recent studies, changes in the labor market conditions can increase equality of opportunity for women.

TABLE 2-2. Educational Attainment and Estimated Lifetime Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex and Educational Attainment, in 1999 Dollars

Educational Attainment	ESTIMATED LIFETIME EARNINGS	
	Women	Men
Not high school graduate	\$0.7 million	\$1.1 million
High school graduate	1.0	1.4
Some college	1.2	1.7
Associate's degree	1.3	1.8
Bachelor's degree	1.6	2.5
Master's degree	1.9	2.9
Doctoral degree	2.5	3.8
Professional degree	2.9	4.8

Source: This table is adapted from Figure 6 of Jennifer Day and Eric Newburger, *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings* (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, July 2002), p. 6.

Table 2-2 shows the income differences according to educational attainment for full-time, year-round workers. First, it should be noted that incomes for both women and men rise steadily with each advance in educational attainment. Second, there is about the same percentage difference in earnings for each level of educational attainment. As shown in Table 2-2, the lifetime earnings for a female high school graduate are \$1 million while for a female with a bachelor's degree, \$1.6 million. For men, a high school graduate can expect lifetime earnings of \$1.4 million and for those holding a bachelor's degree \$2.5 million. Comparing women and men's earnings, a man with a high school diploma will earn \$400,000 more in a lifetime than a woman with a high school diploma. A man with a bachelor's degree will earn \$900,000 more in a lifetime than a woman with a bachelor's degree.

At all levels of educational attainment men earn more than women. And it is important to emphasize that these income differences are for full-time, year-round workers. In other words, the differences cannot be attributed to women working part time or taking time from work to raise children.

Several years ago, the owner of the coffee shop down the street from my house posted a notice:

WOMEN'S INCOMES ARE 68% OF MEN'S INCOMES
COFFEE: 68 CENTS FOR WOMEN
1 DOLLAR FOR MEN

I don't know where the owner got the number "68%" but it is smaller than the percentages given by the U.S. Census Bureau in a 2005 press release: "the ratio of female-to-male earnings for full-time, year-round workers was 77 cents on the dollar, up from 76 cents in 2003."

TABLE 2-3. Educational Attainment and Women's Estimated Lifetime Income as a Percentage of Men's Estimated Lifetime Income for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers

Educational Attainment	Women's Estimated Lifetime Income as a Percentage of Men's Estimated Lifetime Income
Not high school graduate	63%
High school graduate	71
Some college	70
Associate's degree	72
Bachelor's degree	65
Master's degree	65
Doctoral degree	65
Professional degree	60

Source: This table is adapted from Figure 6 of Jennifer Day and Eric Newburger, *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings* (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, July 2002), p. 6.

Gender discrimination in the labor market is lessening with the ratio of female-to-male earnings increasing from 2003 to 2005, which explains the lower percentage shown on the coffee shop's sign. In 2005, the coffee shop owner would have upped his price for coffee for women to 77 cents while continuing to charge men one dollar. The 2005 ratio is also larger than figures given in Table 2-3, which was compiled in 2002. In 2002, for each level of educational attainment, women earned from 60 to 72 percent of men's income.

Women's incomes have increased as a result of political and social activism since the nineteenth century. The changes indicated in Table 2-4 provide another example of the improving conditions of women in the labor market. Things can change and they can improve. It just takes continued effort over a long period of time.

To demonstrate the improving economic situation for women, Jennifer Day and Eric Newburger compare differences in income by age cohort group. The assumption is that there will be higher levels of income discrimination among older workers than among younger workers who have been more affected by the struggle for equal pay for equal work. In Table 2-4, these comparisons are made between age groups for high school and college graduates.

As indicated in Table 2-4, the incomes for the younger age group of women (25 to 29) are considerably closer to male incomes in that age group than between women and men in the older group (60 to 64). In the younger group, women with high school and bachelor's degrees earn 78 and 81 percent, respectively, of men's income in the same age group as compared to 71 and 60 percent, respectively, in the older group. These younger women have significantly benefitted in income from the equal rights struggles of their

TABLE 2-4. Women's Income as a Percentage of Men's Income by Age Group and Educational Attainment, 1997-1999

Educational Attainment	WOMEN'S INCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEN'S INCOME BY AGE GROUP							
	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64
High school diploma	78%	69%	69%	66%	67%	65%	65%	71%
Bachelor's degree	81	72	73	64	62	59	58	60

Source: This table is adapted from Figure 5 of Jennifer Day and Eric Newburger, *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings* (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, July 2002), p. 5.

parents. The most significant improvement has been in the salaries of college-educated women. In the youngest age group (25 to 29) women with bachelor's degrees earn 81 percent of men's incomes for the same age and educational level while for the older group (60 to 64) it is only 60 percent.

In conclusion, the above statistics indicate that in the United States income is related to educational attainment but that discriminatory factors in the labor market negate some of the advantages gained through increased education; equality of opportunity depends on equality of opportunity in the labor market.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: RACE, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AND INCOME

Like gender, race limits the effect of educational attainment on equality of opportunity in the labor market. The income differences between men and women with the same levels of education are also present when racial differences are a factor. Racial differences point to another labor market bias. Table 2-5 indicates differences in lifetime income among people of differing races with the same levels of educational attainment. I will explain the racial classifications used in Table 2-5 in the next section on "Asian" educational advantages.

At almost every level of educational attainment, "white, non-Hispanic" had higher estimated work-life earnings. The exception is for "advanced degrees" with "white, non-Hispanic" and "Asian and Pacific Islanders" having equal work-life earnings of \$3.1 million. Otherwise there are significant differences. For instance, "white, non-Hispanics" with bachelor's degrees earned an estimated \$2.2 million during their work-life, while "blacks" and "Hispanics" with the same educational attainment earned \$1.7 million.

An interesting aspect of Table 2-5 is that percentage differences in income narrow with bachelor's and advanced degrees. This suggests that increased

TABLE 2-5. Estimated Lifetime Earnings by Educational Attainment, Race, and Hispanic Origin, in 1999 Dollars

Educational Attainment	ESTIMATED LIFETIME EARNINGS			
	White, Non-Hispanic	Black	Hispanic (of any race)	Asian and Pacific Islander
Not high school graduate	\$1.1 million	\$0.8 million	\$0.9 million	\$0.8 million
High school graduate	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.1
Some college	1.6	1.2	1.3	1.3
Associate's degree	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.4
Bachelor's degree	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.7
Advanced degree	3.1	2.5	2.6	3.1

Source: This table is adapted from Figure 7 of Jennifer Day and Eric Newburger, *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings* (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, July 2002), p. 7.

educational attainment will contribute to improving equality of opportunity for nonwhite groups. For instance, blacks without a high school diploma earn a lifetime income of about 72 percent of that of whites without a high school diploma (\$0.8 million divided by \$1.1 million). In contrast, the percentage difference is about 77 percent for a bachelor's degree and about 80 percent for an advanced degree. There is a similar decline in differences between whites and Hispanics in lifetime income with increased educational attainment. Hispanics without a high school diploma earn about 81 percent of the lifetime earnings of whites without a high school diploma and the difference between those with an advanced degree is about 83 percent.

The above differences are sometimes referred to as "white privilege." It is worth from \$400,000 to \$500,000 more to be white with a bachelor's degree! If you are black or Asian and Pacific Islander with a bachelor's degree, you will earn \$500,000 less in your lifetime than will a white with a bachelor's degree. The lifetime cost for Hispanics with a bachelor's degree is \$400,000.

In conclusion, comparisons of income for those with the same levels of educational attainment but of different genders and races indicate that to achieve the goal of equality of opportunity, we must remove the gender and racial biases in the labor market.

THE ASIAN ADVANTAGE: RACE, HOUSEHOLD INCOME, AND EDUCATION

White privilege appears to be negated by the high educational attainment of Asians. Today, those classified as Asian and Pacific Islanders have a significantly higher median household income than whites (Table 2-6), which appears to be related to higher levels of educational attainment (Table 2-7).

TABLE 2-6. Race and Median Household Income, 2003

Median Household Income 2004	White, Non-Hispanic			Hispanic (of any race)		Asian and Pacific Islander	
	White, Non-Hispanic	Black	Hispanic (of any race)	Asian and Pacific Islander	Asian and Pacific Islander	Asian and Pacific Islander	
	\$46,857	30,442	33,884			57,196	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "673—Money Income of Households—Percent Distribution by Income Level, Race, and Hispanic Origin in Constant (2003) Dollars: 1980 to 2003," *The 2006 Statistical Abstract; The National Data Book*, <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab>.

The term "Asian" used in this section and the racial classifications used in Table 2-5 and the previous section require some explanation. The terms "Hispanic" and "Asian and Pacific Islander" are problematic since they cover peoples from vast and differing areas. For instance: Should the term "Hispanic" include people from Argentina who are mostly of European ancestry with those from Mexico who are mainly of Native American ancestry? Should Samoans and Koreans be placed in the same category of "Asian and Pacific Islander"? Should Hmong and Japanese be placed in the same category of "Asian"? What do "white" and "black" mean? In Chapter 4, I will discuss the complexities of defining ethnic and racial categories.

The census data used in Table 2-5 is based on self-identification. In other words, people are asked what they consider to be their race. For instance, the U.S. Census in its official "Definitions and Explanations" defines "white, non-Hispanic" as: "Respondents who selected their race as White and indicated that their origin was not one of the Hispanic origin subgroups of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American." There are many people in these Hispanic subgroups who identify themselves as "white" because their ancestors were primarily European.

Keeping in mind the difficulties in racial classification, which will be explored in Chapter 4, Tables 2-6 and 2-7 summarize differences in median household income and educational attainment by racial categories. I have chosen median incomes for 2003 because of available statistics for educational

TABLE 2-7. Race and Educational Attainment 2003 of the Population 25 Years and Over

	High School Graduate or More	Some College or More	Bachelor's Degree or More
White, non-Hispanic	84.1%	53.2%	30%
Black	80.0	44.7	17.3
Hispanic	57.0	29.6	11.4
Asian	87.6	66.5	48.9

Source: Nicole Stoops, "Current Population Reports, Educational Attainment in the United States: 2003, Table A. Summary Measure of the Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over: 2003" (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

attainment in 2003. There is some disparity between the two tables because one uses "Asian and Pacific Islander" and the other simply uses "Asian."

Tables 2-6 and 2-7 indicate that higher median household incomes of Asian and Pacific Islanders than whites (\$57,196 versus \$46,857, respectively) might be related to higher levels of educational attainment (48.9 percent of Asians with a bachelor's degree or more versus 30 percent of whites, respectively). I use the term *might* in this discussion because these comparisons do not prove a causal relationship. The statistics only suggest that white privilege is overcome by Asians through higher levels of educational attainment.

In conclusion, the above discussions do indicate a relationship between income and educational attainment but that relationship is limited by gender and racial bias in the labor market. Schools might be able to indirectly change labor market biases by changing student attitudes regarding race and gender so that when these students enter the labor market they will work to reduce bias in employment. Otherwise, enforcement of laws against discrimination and provisions for equal pay for equal work will be needed to ensure equality of opportunity.

CULTURAL CAPITAL: CHILD-REARING AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

As discussed earlier, nineteenth-century common-school advocates worried that schools might not be able to provide equality of opportunity because children enter school with different social experiences and knowledge; a situation that members of the New York Workingman's Party wanted to correct by placing preschool children in state residential institutions and currently is being addressed with Head Start and other preschool programs, and television's *Sesame Street*.

Do different family environments for preschool children affect children's school achievement and, consequently, the ability of schools to provide equality of opportunity? In other words, do children enter school with differing abilities as a result of dissimilar family backgrounds? Do these differences in family background continue to affect learning throughout the student's school years and do they have an effect on the level of a student's educational attainment, such as graduating from high school or college?

The key to answering the above questions is the concept of *cultural capital*, which refers to the economic value of a person's behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge. For instance, education, which provides a person with particular knowledge and attitudes, is related to income and therefore has economic value when seeking employment. Also, behaviors learned in the home contribute to cultural capital. In my college classes, I often use scenes from rapper Eminem's movie *8 Mile* to illustrate cultural capital. Eminem's goal in making the movie was to illustrate his life growing up in Detroit and his crossing cultural lines to enter the world of African American rap music. He portrays his life with his mother in a trailer park as chaotic and punctuated by emotional outbursts with

short declarative sentences being shouted between family members. Living in poverty, the characters' dress and manners are what some might refer to as "white trash." Fired from a pizza parlor, Eminem finds low-paying repetitive work in a factory where the bosses shout orders and Eminem obeys authority.

My question for students is, How could Eminem's cultural capital be improved so that he could get a high-paying job as a bank manager? Students immediately suggest that Eminem would need to improve his grammar, speech patterns, social manners, and dress or, in other words, his cultural capital. In the movie, Eminem actually improves his income by adapting his white trailer park cultural capital to the cultural capital of black rappers.

Variations in cultural capital affect the ability of children to learn in school and to gain future employment. In *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*, Annette Lareau writes:

Many studies have demonstrated that parents' social structural location has profound implications for their children's life chances. Before kindergarten, for example, children of highly educated parents are much more likely to exhibit "educational readiness" skills, such as knowing their letters, identifying colors, counting up to twenty, and being able to write their first names.

Lareau demonstrates that educational readiness is affected by differences in child-rearing practices. She distinguishes child-rearing practices by the terms "concerted cultivation" and "accomplishment of natural growth." Concerted cultivation is practiced by what she calls "middle class" families and accomplishment of natural growth by "working class" families.

The terms *middle class* and *working class* have a special meaning in Lareau's work. Throughout this chapter I will be highlighting differing definitions of social class. For her purposes, a middle-class family is one where one or both parents have supervisory or managerial authority in the workplace and are required to have stringent educational credentials. In working-class families, parents' occupations are without supervisory authority and do not require a high level of educational credentials.

Differences in child-rearing between working- and middle-class families is summarized in Table 2-8. Lareau concludes that middle-class families consciously intervene (concerted cultivation) in their children's lives to develop their talents. In contrast, working-class families have a more *laissez-faire* attitude allowing their children to grow without much intervention (accomplishment of natural growth) except for attending to their basic needs.

Imagine the life of middle-class children as detailed in Table 2-8. Their parents spend time chauffeuring them from training events and competitions in organized sports, to music and dance lessons, to an art, craft, or hobby group. After school and weekends are packed with events as parents try to develop their children's various talents. If their children encounter any problems in these activities, parents quickly intervene and discuss the situation with the coach, trainer, or teacher. These middle-class parents influence their children's behavior through reasoned discussion in which their children learn to question their parents' arguments if they think their parents are wrong.

TABLE 2-8. Differences in Child-Rearing Between Working- and Middle-Class Families

	Middle-Class Concentrated Cultivation	Working-Class Accomplishment of Natural Growth
General	Parents involve children in multiple organized activities, such as sports, music and dance lessons, and arts, crafts, and hobby groups	Children "hang out" with siblings, friends, and relatives while parents involve them in a minimum of organized activities
Speech	Parents allowing them to challenge their statements and negotiate	Parents issue directives and seldom allow their children to challenge or question these directives
Dealings with Institutions	Parents criticize and intervene in institutions affecting the child, such as school, and train their children to assume a similar role	Parents display powerlessness and frustration toward institutions, such as the school
Results	Children gain the cultural capital to deal with a variety of social situations and institutions they encounter throughout their lives	Children develop a cultural capital that results in dependency on institutions and jobs where they take orders rather than manage others

Source: Adapted from Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 31.

According to Lareau, the result of concerted cultivation is the development of cultural capital that allows the children and later adults to feel comfortable and know how to act in a variety of social and institutional situations; this is a result of all those afterschool activities. Middle-class children also learn to interact, challenge, and reason with authority; this is learned through their interaction with their parents and the model of their parents questioning institutional authority.

In contrast, working-class parents allow their children to spend unstructured time with their friends and relatives in their yards, in local parks, on the street, or in another home. The most frequently planned activity for children is some form of organized sports. Working-class parents tell their children what to do and don't allow the children to be sassy and talk back. When problems occur at school or other institutions their children might encounter, the parents act powerless.

Working-class accomplishment of natural growth, according to Lareau, results in cultural capital that does not contain the skills to interact in a variety of social and institutional situations. The children lack the verbal ability and behavioral skills needed to become managers and supervisors. They primarily

assume jobs where they take orders rather than give orders. Like Eminem, they lack the verbal skills, social graces, and dress to interview for jobs as bank managers but they do have the cultural capital to accept low-paying jobs where they are given orders.

The cultural capital developed in middle- and working-class families has different economic value. First, middle- and working-class children have different cultural capital when interacting with schools. The cultural capital needed for educational success has economic value when educational achievement helps people gain higher-paying jobs. Middle-class children have learned the verbal and social skills to advantage themselves when interacting with teachers and school staff. If something negative happens to them at school, their parents are quick to intervene on their behalf. The opposite is true of working-class children. Their cultural capital hinders their ability to succeed at school. The cultural capital of middle-class children increases their possibilities of gaining jobs high on the income scale while working-class children have the cultural capital to work in jobs low on the income scale.

In conclusion, the promise of schooling providing equality of opportunity to compete for income and wealth is seriously compromised before the child even enters the classroom. Parents develop different forms of cultural capital which advantage or disadvantage their children in school and in the labor market. In the next section, I will discuss how family background is related to the actual reading and math skills of children as they enter kindergarten and advantages or disadvantages them throughout their school careers.

CULTURAL CAPITAL: PRESCHOOL AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Valerie Lee and David Burkham's report *Inequality at the Starting Gate: Social Background Differences in Achievement as Children Begin School* confirms the fears of early common-school advocates that family background would compromise the ability of schools to provide equality of opportunity. Students entering kindergarten have significantly different reading and ability skills as measured by tests given as part of the U.S. Department of Education's Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort. Test results show differences that are correlated with social class and race, with social class being the most important factor.

What are the preschool family factors affecting reading and math skills of children entering kindergarten? The following could be considered a parental guide for ensuring that children have high reading and math skills as measured by tests on entering kindergarten. Lee and Burkham found the strongest correlation between family factors and reading skills on entering kindergarten to be:

1. Frequency of reading (including parents reading to their children)
2. Ownership of home computer
3. Exposure to performing arts
4. Preschool

Other factors weakly correlated with reading skills are:

5. Educational expectations of family
6. Rules limiting television viewing
7. Number of tapes, records, CDs
8. Sports and clubs
9. Arts and crafts activities

For math scores, the most strongly correlated family factors are:

1. Ownership of computer
2. Exposure to performing arts
3. Preschool

Other factors weakly correlated with math skills are:

4. Educational expectations
5. Frequency of reading (including parents reading to their children)
6. Number of tapes, records, CDs
7. Sports and clubs
8. Arts and crafts activities

Therefore, if parents were planning to prepare their child to enter kindergarten with high reading and math scores they would read to their child; own a computer; take their child to performing arts events; and send their child to preschool. In addition, they should have high expectations for their child's education; have rules governing television viewing; have a large amount of media in the home, such as tapes, records, and CDs; and involve their child in sports, clubs, and arts and crafts.

Social class is directly related to kindergarten entrance-test scores and family factors correlated with high reading and math scores. Using a different definition of social class than Annette Lareau's separation of families into middle and working class, Lee and Burkham divide families by SES, or socioeconomic status, which is determined by a combination of occupation, income, educational attainment, and wealth. They divide SES into quintiles or gradations of 20 percent. Those in the lowest SES represent the 20 percent at the bottom of the SES scale in occupation, income, education, and wealth while the highest are in the top 20 percent. Table 2-9 reports math and reading achievement at the beginning of kindergarten by SES. Test scores are those used by Lee and Burkham in analyzing the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort.

As noted in Table 2-9, reading and math skills on entering kindergarten are closely related to the family SES as measured by tests in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study: the higher the SES of the family, the higher the test scores; the lower the SES of the family, the lower the test scores.

Is there a relationship between family SES and activities that are correlated with high test scores? Table 2-10 indicates the relationship found by Lee and Burkham.

TABLE 2-9. Socioeconomic Status and Math and Reading Scores at the Beginning of Kindergarten, Based on Lee and Burkham's Analysis of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study

Socioeconomic Status of Family	Reading Scores	Math Scores
Highest 20 percent	27.2	24.1
Next highest 20 percent	23.6	21.0
Middle 20 percent	21.3	19.1
Next lowest 20 percent	19.9	17.5
Lowest 20 percent	17.4	15.1

Source: Adapted from Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkham, *Equality at the Starting Gate: Social Background Differences in Achievement as Children Begin School* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2002), p. 18.

As indicated in Table 2-10, upper SES families are more likely than lower SES families to expose their children to factors that are correlated with high math and reading scores on entering kindergarten. No wonder children from higher SES families have higher scores on tests measuring math and reading skills when entering kindergarten. Simply stated, families provide their children with differing cultural capital needed to succeed in school. Fears that family background would hinder the ability of schools to provide equality of opportunity seem confirmed by Lee and Burkham's study.

TABLE 2-10. Socioeconomic Status and Family Activities Correlated with Math and Reading Scores at the Beginning of Kindergarten

Socioeconomic Status of Family	Percent of Kindergartners with a Computer in the Home	Percent of Kindergartners Whose Parents Read to Them Three to Six Times per Week or Every Day	Percent of Kindergartners Who Attended Preschool	Percent of Kindergartners Who Attended Performing Arts Events (play/concert/show)
Highest 20 percent	84.7%	93.9%	65.0%	48.4%
Next highest 20 percent	71.5	87.3	52.2	43.0
Middle 20 percent	54.7	80.7	41.7	38.9
Next lowest 20 percent	38.3	76.6	31.2	33.9
Lowest 20 percent	19.9	62.6	20.1	27.1

Source: Data used in creating table are from Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkham, *Equality at the Starting Gate: Social Background Differences in Achievement as Children Begin School* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2002), pp. 24-45.

SCHOOLING: WHY ARE THE RICH GETTING RICHER AND THE POOR GETTING POORER?

The above statistics suggest that middle-class families and upper-SES families provide their children with the cultural capital and experiences needed to succeed in school. Consequently, it is legitimate to ask about the role of schooling in reinforcing social-class differences. In other words, does family income determine educational success and, as a result, the student's future income? Also, questions are currently being raised about the possible link between education and the growing inequality of incomes: Are schools contributing to the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer?

"America's High Schools: The Front Line in the Battle for Economic Future," a report of the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, warns that the global labor market, as discussed in Chapter 1, is contributing to the growing inequality of incomes in the United States. The American worker now competes with workers from other nations. The argument regarding this particular view of international labor competition is: if a company can find less expensive workers in another country, then they will move to that country. If a company needs highly educated workers and these are available in the US, then the company will remain.

The result is the increasing income of Americans with skills needed for high-paying jobs in the global economy and a decline in wages for those competing for low-wage jobs. The Summit report describes the situation: "High school, beyond the front line of international economic competition, is the dividing line between those workers whose incomes have been rising and those whose incomes have been falling."

Major American businesses involved in the National Education Summit on High Schools, as discussed in Chapter 1, acknowledge the growing disparities in income in the United States. They place the blame on schools for not educating workers for the top-paying jobs in the global economy. The Summit report warns: "In short, we run the risk of losing our middle class." The report predicts:

The average wages of high school graduates and those individuals who never graduated high school have fallen over the last two decades; the average incomes of those who went beyond high school have risen. This demarcation promises to become even starker in the coming years, as technology and trade separate the economy into two camps—those with the skills to participate in the global economy and those who lack them. If we do not make a concerted effort to move our society beyond this boundary, we will find ourselves a society cut in two—one side enfranchised in the modern economy, experiencing its affluence, the other lacking the means of access to the future.

Are the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer? U.S. Census figures confirm that this is so. In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau compiled historical statistics that indicate changes in distribution of income from 1967 to 2001. In Tables 2-11 and 2-12 mean household incomes in 2005 dollars are ranked

TABLE 2-11. Mean Household Income in 2001 dollars for Selected Years as Reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005

Social Class	MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
	1970	1980	1990	2001
Upper class—highest 20%	\$85,607	\$93,631	\$114,320	\$145,970
Upper middle class—fourth 20%	48,350	53,306	58,908	66,839
Middle class—third 20%	34,300	36,204	39,071	42,629
Lower middle class—second 20%	21,299	21,996	23,655	25,468
Lower class—lowest 20%	8,010	9,114	9,440	10,136

Source: Adapted from "Table IE-1. Selected Measures of Household Income Dispersion: 1967-2001," *Historical Income Tables—Income Equality* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005), <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/ie1.html>.

by 20 percent groups or quintiles. In these tables I am using a definition of social class that is based on mean household income in contrast to the previous definitions based on socioeconomic status (SES) and Annette Lareau's distinction between middle- and working-class families. This should be a reminder to the reader to find out the definition of class being used whenever a person refers to the term "social class" or to distinctions such as upper, middle, or lower classes.

I will identify the top 20 percent according to household income as the upper class and the bottom 20 percent as the lower class. The middle class is the 20 percent between the top 40 percent and bottom 40 percent. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as consisting "of all people who occupy a housing unit. A house, an apartment or other group of rooms, or a single room, is regarded as a housing unit. . . . A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards or employees who share the housing unit."

First, the reader should note that real wages climbed significantly from 1970 to 2001. As indicated in Table 2-11, the mean middle-class household

TABLE 2-12. Shares of Mean Household Income for Selected Years as Reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005

Social Class	SHARE OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
	1970	1980	1990	2001
Upper class—highest 20%	43.3%	43.7%	46.6%	50.1%
Upper middle class—fourth 20%	24.5	24.9	24.0	23.0
Middle class—third 20%	17.4	16.9	15.9	14.6
Lower middle class—second 20%	10.8	10.3	9.6	8.7
Lower class—lowest 20%	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.5

Source: Adapted from "Table IE-1. Selected Measures of Household Income Dispersion: 1967-2001," *Historical Income Tables—Income Equality* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005), <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/ie1.html>.

income in 2001 dollars in 1970 was \$34,300 and it increased to \$42,629 in 2001. In other words, income for the middle class increased about 24 percent.

However, while real wages increased for all social classes, the actual distribution of income changed. Table 2-12 indicates that for the middle class the percentage share of total mean household income declined from 17.4 percent in 1970 to 14.6 percent in 2001—a decline of 2.8 percent. In contrast, for the upper class, the percentage share of total mean household income from 1970 to 2001 increased from 43.3 percent to 50.1 percent, or by 7.8 percent. A close examination of Table 2-12 shows that all but the upper class declined in percentage of the total mean household income from 1970 to 2001. In other words, all other social classes gave up a percentage share of their total household income to the upper class; the lower class lost .6 percent, the lower middle class 2.1 percent, and the upper middle class 1.5 percent.

Why the increase in the percentage of total household income of the upper class? The U.S. Bureau of the Census explains, "Increasing income inequality is believed to be related to changes taking place in the labor market and in the composition of the households in the United States." The composition of households is an important factor with a decline in married couple households and an increase in single-parent and nonfamily households, which typically have lower incomes.

On the other hand, the National Education Summit on the High School blames the failure of schools to prepare youth for competition in the global labor market. As stated before, the labor market's contribution to income inequality is the result of increasing wages paid to well-educated or highly skilled workers and declining wages for poorly educated or low-skilled workers. Workers now compete in an international labor market. U.S. companies will move if they can find cheaper labor and production costs in another country. U.S. workers must compete with the wages paid in other countries. This results in a decline in real wages for unskilled labor in the United States.

SHOPPING FOR A PUBLIC SCHOOL: EDUCATION, SOCIAL CLASS, AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Imagine that you and your spouse are setting out to buy a house and that your primary concern is settling in an area with good schools. Your dream is for your children to attend college and, thereby, gain access to high-paying jobs. Recognizing the important influence of peers on your children's academic future, you want to live in a community where most students plan to attend college. In other words, you want the best for your children.

According to Horace Mann's dream, all school districts should be equal. But this is not the case when you consider expenditures per child, test scores, and college attendance. Communities in the United States are not equal in wealth and educational attainment of their students. Census statistics show an American population divided by social class into separate school districts, with the sharpest division being between suburban and central city school

TABLE 2-13. Differences in Median Household Income by Residence

Residence	Median Household Income (in 2000 dollars)
Suburban—metropolitan area	\$50,262
Central city—metropolitan area	36,987
Rural—outside metropolitan area	32,837

Source: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income in the United States: 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Printing Office, September 2001), p. 2.

districts. The U.S. Census Bureau's *Money Income in the United States: 2000* reports: "High-income households tended to be family households that include two or more earners residing in the suburbs of a large city." Table 2-13 shows the findings of the 2000 census on differences in income by residential areas.

However, the distribution of the population by wealth does not exactly match the amount of educational money spent per student. In fact, because of special funds for high-poverty areas, children going to schools with the highest percentage of poor children spend more per student than other schools except for schools with the lowest percentage of poor students. This is shown in Table 2-14 as reported in the National Center for Education Statistics's *The Condition of Education 2006*.

As indicated in Table 2-14, the most money per student—\$10,768—is spent in school districts with the fewest students from families below the poverty level. Districts with the highest percentage of students from families below the poverty level spend \$10,191 per student as compared with those in the middle level of the scale: \$8,927, \$8,839, and \$9,419.

There are other factors beside educational expenditures that determine the educational quality of school district, including college attendance and test

TABLE 2-14. Total Expenditures per Student by Level of Poverty in School Districts, 2002-2003

District Poverty Level Divided into Quintiles	Total Expenditures per Student, 2002-2003
Highest percentage of students from families below poverty income threshold	\$10,191
Middle-highest percentage of students from families below poverty income threshold	8,927
Middle percentage of students from families below poverty income threshold	8,839
Middle-lowest percentage of students from families below poverty income threshold	9,419
Lowest percentage of students from families below poverty income threshold	10,768

Source: Adapted from Table 41.1, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2006* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2006), p. 197.

scores. Some parents use reports of test scores and college attendance rates when shopping for a new home. Where do home buyers get their information on schools? They usually get the data from real estate brokers or online services. For instance, the data I use in the next section are taken from the Yahoo! real estate Web site <http://list.realestate.yahoo.com>. Using this Web site, home buyers can collect information on schools, neighborhood characteristics, and housing for any place in the United States. Some might consider the Web site the best guide to quality public education in the United States.

Now, returning to the search by you and your spouse for the best school district, imagine that you want to buy a home near your jobs. The closest school districts are four neighboring suburban school districts in the New York City metropolitan area—Scarsdale, Bronxville, Yonkers, and Mount Vernon. Real estate agents divide Yonkers, the largest of these four suburbs, into four different school areas to highlight differences between neighborhoods. You contact a real estate agent serving these communities and request information on schools, residents, and housing costs.

Of course, your household income is a factor in shopping for a new home. Both you and your spouse have had some college and both of you earn the estimated annual income for workers with some college, which, according to Table 2-1, is about \$38,186 for the husband and 24,586 for the wife. Your total household income is of \$62,772.

Using the Yahoo! real estate Web site, the local real estate agent organizes Tables 2-15 and 2-16 to give you an overview of the four communities. Examining Table 2-15, you and your spouse are surprised by the academic disparities among these four bordering communities. After high school graduation, 97 percent of the students in Scarsdale and 99 percent in Bronxville attend college, while the college attendance rate of graduates in Yonkers and Mount

TABLE 2-15. School and Community Data for Scarsdale, Bronxville, Yonkers, and Mount Vernon

School District	Graduates Attending 4-Year College	National Merit Finalists	Mean		Percent College or Better	Median Household Income		Average Household Total Consumer Expenditures	
			SAT Scores	SAT Verbal		SAT	Household Income	Total	Consumer Expenditures
Scarsdale	97%	33	666	620	77.66%	\$126,777	\$120,319		
Bronxville	99	6	630	611	75.94	104,619	102,670		
Yonkers 1	50	0	416	403	27.1*	65,031*	46,796*		
Yonkers 2	38	1	462	452	same	same	same		
Yonkers 3	25	0	419	420	same	same	same		
Yonkers 4	37	0	402	391	same	same	same		
Mount Vernon	43	0	444	429	26.39	63,609	44,990		

*The Yahoo real estate site does not provide Yonkers's demographic data by school district. Data are average for all of Yonkers.

Source: <http://list.realestate.yahoo.com>.

TABLE 2-16. Cost of Living and Housing in Bronxville, Scarsdale, Mount Vernon, and Yonkers, Based on National Average of 100

Community	Cost of Living	Single Family Home	Home Sale Price	Index
Scarsdale	325			1399
Bronxville	277			1677
Yonkers	126			324
Mount Vernon	121			323

Source: <http://list.realestate.yahoo.com>.

Vernon ranges from 25 to 50 percent. Also, Scarsdale and Bronxville can claim 33 and 6 National Merit Finalists, respectively, while the total for Yonkers and Mount Vernon is only 1. An examination of mean SAT scores reveals that in Scarsdale and Bronxville the range is from 611 to 666, while in Yonkers and Mount Vernon the range is 391 to 462.

You and your spouse are convinced from the data supplied by your real estate agent that the best public schools for your children are in Scarsdale and Bronxville. These school systems prepare students for college. In addition, your children will be surrounded by a college-oriented peer group. After noting that the percentage of college graduates living in Scarsdale and Bronxville is 77.66 and 75.94, respectively, while it is only 27.1 in Yonkers and 26.39 in Mount Vernon, you decide that Scarsdale and Bronxville are the communities where you both want to shop for a home.

Both of you are impressed by the high income levels in these communities, with the median household income in Scarsdale and Bronxville being \$126,777 and \$104,619, respectively. The average annual consumer expenditures for these communities are \$120,319 and \$102,670, respectively. You realize that you will never be able to compete with most of your neighbors regarding ostentatious displays of wealth such as expensive cars and clothes. Also, your children might face self-image problems when attending school, particularly high school, because of their more-affluent peers. Still, these school systems promise to be gateways to economic success for your children.

The hopeful vision of your children's future begins to dim as you start looking at real estate prices in the two communities. As indicated in Table 2-16, the price of single-family houses in Scarsdale is nearly 14 times the national average and in Bronxville nearly 17 times the national average. The cheapest house listed in Scarsdale is \$710,000 for 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms and in Bronxville it is \$849,000 for 5 bedrooms and 3.5 bathrooms (these were the cheapest houses listed on the Yahoo! Web site on August 13, 2002).

All dreams of buying a house in either of these two communities end when you calculate the monthly payments on these two homes. Assuming a 10 percent down payment and 7 percent interest on a 30-year mortgage, the \$710,000 house in Scarsdale will require a down payment of \$71,000 and mortgage payments will be \$4,251 per month, or \$51,015 per year. The \$849,000 house in

Bronxville will require a down payment of \$84,900 and mortgage payments of \$5,083.58 monthly, or \$61,002.96 per year.

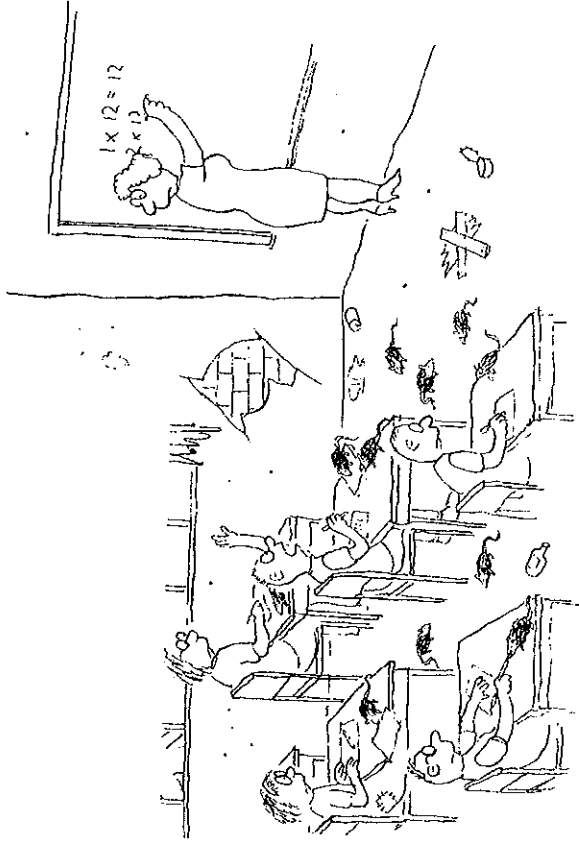
Since your annual household income is \$62,772, you cannot afford to make these monthly mortgage payments and, in addition, pay property taxes, buy food and clothing, own an automobile, or take a vacation. In fact, given your household income, you probably would be unable to secure a mortgage for the purchase of either of these two houses. Your next choice is to seek housing in Yonkers or Mount Vernon.

SAVAGE INEQUALITIES

Residential segregation into rich and poor school districts seriously compromises Horace Mann's dream of mixing the children of the rich and poor in the same schoolhouse to receive an equal education. This is particularly true as income becomes more dependent on educational achievement. Those with already high incomes will be able to buy houses in school districts that promise to provide their children with an education geared for high-income jobs. In this manner, a family can pass on its educational advantages to its children. The reverse might be true for low-income families where educational disadvantages are passed on from generation to generation.

Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* is a classic study of residential and educational inequalities. Kozol's book is designed to shock the reader by presenting the most extreme differences in public school systems. The book opens with a description of the economically depressed East St. Louis school system. Taken on a tour of the local high school, Kozol meets frustrated vocational education teachers who are unable to prepare their students for the world of work because of antiquated and broken shop equipment. The high school science teacher shows Kozol a physics lab where the lab stations have empty holes that once contained pipes. Balance scales and other lab equipment are either broken or outdated. The biology lab has no laboratory tables. The lack of tables did not seem to matter since the school district could not afford to buy dissecting kits. The chemistry lab, Kozol is informed, is not used because it is considered unsafe. The school has no VCRs and, therefore, is unable to use any of the latest visual-aid material.

A major problem contributing to the low quality of education in financially strapped school districts is the lack of a regular teaching force. Because of low salaries and poor working conditions, many urban school districts are unable to retain good teachers and must rely on substitute teachers. Consequently, many students spend idle time in classrooms as they face a steady stream of substitute teachers. In Chicago, more than a quarter of the teachers are low-paid substitutes. In addition, there is even a shortage of substitute teachers. On an average morning in the Chicago schools, 190 classrooms are without teachers. One high school student complained to Kozol that he had been in a class for an entire semester and there still was not a regular teacher.



"Miss, I'm finding it hard to concentrate with the rats nibbling at my books."

Source: www.Cartoonstock.com. Reprinted with permission.

A student in an auto mechanics class said that he hadn't even learned to change a tire because the substitute teacher only wanted them to sit quietly.

One way the teacher shortage is handled is to increase the number of required study halls. So, many students find themselves sitting idly in classes managed by substitute teachers who do not know the subject matter of the course and then spend more idle time attending two or three study halls. No wonder many of these students do not feel that it is worthwhile to go to school.

In Camden, New Jersey, Kozol found student learning hindered by both poor health conditions and poor school facilities. Learning is difficult for children who come to school sick. Often, poorer school districts have a flood of students with medical and dental problems that their parents cannot afford to correct. The Camden school nurse complained to Kozol about children coming to school with rotting teeth and chronic and untreated illnesses. They sit in class in a state of discomfort unable to really pay attention to the classwork. Even if they could pay attention, they would be receiving an inadequate education. A typing teacher showed Kozol a typing room full of 10-year-old manual typewriters. The training in this class, she reflected, was completely out of touch with the world of word processing and computers. Buying computers is out of the question when the Camden school district can barely pay its teachers.

Kozol found savage inequalities even within the same school district. In New York City, he uncovered disconcerting differences between public schools in the

poorer sections of the Bronx and a public school in the wealthy Riverdale section of the Bronx. At one school in the Bronx, he found classes being conducted in a former roller skating rink with no windows. Although the school's capacity is 900, more than 1,300 children attend. A shortage of textbooks requires students to share social studies books. Because of a lack of classroom space, two first grade classes share the same classroom, with a blackboard being used as a divider. In some parts of the school, Kozol found four classes taking place within the same undivided space. On the top floor of the school, Kozol encountered 59 students and 4 adults of a bilingual class and a regular sixth grade class sharing a classroom that in a suburban school would be assigned to 20 students.

In contrast to the conditions in this school, an elementary school in the Riverdale section of the Bronx allows gifted students to have access to a school planetarium. At this school, class sizes are kept to around 22. Each classroom has a computer. Students have in-class research centers stocked with up-to-date sources. The school does not depend on substitute teachers. Whereas in other areas of the Bronx students find themselves being forced to sit idly, students at the Riverdale school are engaged in constant learning activities that emphasize the use of reason and critical thinking.

Besides certain privileged urban schools, savage inequalities become most apparent when comparing schools with low per-student expenditures to schools in wealthy suburban districts and elite private schools. In contrast to Chicago schools, where students must worry about having a regular teacher and textbooks, New Trier High School, which serves wealthy Chicago suburban communities, provides four-year courses in six foreign languages and elective courses ranging from the literature of Nobel winners to computer languages. The school even operates its own licensed television station. The average class size is 24. Each freshman is assigned an adviser who remains the student's counselor through graduation. Each counselor has only 24 students to advise as compared with Chicago schools, where counselors advise an average of 420 students. In contrast to the problems facing students in the Camden school district, the nearby wealthy Cherry Hill suburban school district offers 14 different courses in its physical science department and eighteen biology electives. In Princeton, New Jersey, students are provided with music suites and computer-equipped subject-related study halls. Besides having up-to-date equipment, a large variety of courses, and a dedicated teaching staff, elite private schools such as Exeter maintain class sizes of about 13. The obvious cause of these savage inequalities is difference in community wealth. The New Trier district has approximately \$340,000 of taxable property for each child while the Chicago schools have approximately \$70,000 per student.

CENTRAL CITY SCHOOLS

A frequently mentioned educational disparity occurs between schools in the central areas of large cities and those in surrounding suburban areas. A 1996 National Center for Education Statistics report found that fewer urban students

than poor children in rural areas completed high school. What is the educational disadvantage of city living?

Jeanne Griffith, acting commissioner of the center, explained, "We found that in about half the things we looked at—the problems in urban schools were due to poverty. But in the other half, there was something about being in an urban setting that contributed even more." According to the center, the poor academic performance of urban students from low-income families is often a result of:

- Attending schools with large enrollments.
- Attending schools with high rates of teacher absenteeism.
- Attending schools with safety problems.
- Attending schools with high discipline rates.
- Transferring schools more frequently.
- Living in single-parent homes.
- Watching at least three hours of television a day.
- High rates of teenage pregnancy.
- Exposure to crime, including murder.

As Brenda Chaney, a Boston reading teacher states, "Too many of my students have seen murders. One student last year had to move because his brother had gotten shot (fatally) by a gang and they were worried he would get shot, too."

SOCIAL CLASS AND AT-RISK STUDENTS

During the last century many terms, including "disadvantaged," "urban," and "culturally deprived," were used to characterize students who might have academic problems. The latest descriptor is "at-risk." Many students classified as at-risk experience few academic problems. Being at-risk is only an indication of potential academic problems. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 35 percent of students with risk factors finished high school and enrolled in a four-year college or university within two years of high school graduation.

Poverty is high on the list of factors that put students at-risk. The report of the National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2002*, lists the factors that might indicate that a student is at-risk of academic failure. In this list, the Center for Educational Statistics uses socioeconomic status (SES) rather than the U.S. Census Bureau's income classifications. The socioeconomic status of students is determined by parental education level, parental occupation, family income, and household items. In the following list of at-risk factors, low socioeconomic status refers to students from the bottom 25 percent of households on a socioeconomic scale. These are families in which the parents have minimum levels of educational attainment, low income, and poor job status. The report's list of at-risk factors are:

- Being in the lowest socioeconomic status.
- Changing schools two or more times from grades 1 to 8 (except for transitions to middle school or junior high school).

- Having average grades of C or lower from grades 6 to 8.
- Being in a single-parent household during grade 8.
- Having one or more older siblings who left high school before completion.
- Being held back one or more times from grades 1 to 8.

The best predictor of whether a student will drop out of school is if a student repeated a grade in elementary and middle school, conclude sociologists Karl Alexander and Doris Entwistle in "Signs of Early Exit for Dropouts Abound" in *Education Week's* special 2006 report "Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates." Studying students in Baltimore public schools revealed that 64 percent of those who repeated a grade in elementary school and 63 percent of those who repeated a grade in middle school eventually left school without a high school diploma. Russell Rumberger, in the same report, concludes from his national study that students who move twice during high school are twice as likely to drop out. A Gates Foundation survey tied dropping out to excessive absenteeism.

The potential for academic failure increases with an increase in the number of risk factors in a student's life. In other words, the student who is most at-risk of academic failure has the lowest socioeconomic status, frequently changes schools, receives low grades from the sixth to eighth grade, has siblings who are high school dropouts, and fails one or more grades. Table 2-17 indicates the accumulative effect of risk factors on college attendance as analyzed in the report *The Condition of Education 2002*. Those students without any risk factors were more than four times (63.5 percent) as likely to go to college as those students with three or more risk factors (14.0 percent). Almost 50 percent of those with three or more risk factors would never enroll in a postsecondary institution, which in a society where income is linked to educational attainment means that they will probably continue in the same socioeconomic status as their parents.

Raising female incomes to the level of males would appear to be one means of reducing the number of at-risk students. Poverty combined with being raised in a single-parent family appears to put a student at-risk for school failure. As

TABLE 2-17. Risk Factors and Attendance at Four-year College or University

Number of Risk Factors	Percentage of All Students	Percentage Attending 4-Year College or University	Never Enrolled in Postsecondary Institution
None	42.2%	63.5%	12.2%
One risk factor	32.2	45.1	23.8
Two risk factors	16.3	27.0	38.7
Three or more risk factors	9.3	14.0	49.2

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2002* (Washington, DC: U.S. Printing Office, 2002), p. 77.

TABLE 2-18. Money Income of Households: Distribution by Income Level and Selected Characteristics, 2001

Characteristic	Median Income
Male household, wife absent	\$40,715
Female household, husband absent	28,142
Nonfamily household, male	32,312
Nonfamily household, female	20,264

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003* (Washington, DC: U.S. Printing Office, 2003).

indicated in Table 2-18, this is more of a problem for female-headed families as opposed to male-headed families because of the disparity in incomes.

POVERTY AMONG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Poverty becomes an at-risk factor when a child's parents have a low level of educational attainment. This is why socioeconomic status, which includes parents' level of educational attainment, is used to determine at-risk factors. For instance, highly educated parents might be living in poverty because of a personal choice. The poor writer or artist is a persistent occurrence in our society. While growing up in poverty, these children might benefit from a love of learning displayed by their parents. However, in many situations, poverty contributes to educational disadvantages when combined with other risk factors.

The National Center for Education Statistics study, *The Condition of Education 2002*, reports that 29 percent of school-aged children in central cities live in poverty while 13 percent of school-aged children in suburbs live in poverty. In 2003, the percentage of children under 18 years living in poverty was 17.6. The official U.S. Census Bureau definition of poverty by size of family for 2003 is provided in Table 2-19.

According to Carmen Wolf, Bernadette Proctor, and Robert Mills's *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003*, the number of

TABLE 2-19. Poverty Definition in 2004 by Size of Family

Size of Family	Threshold Income
Two people	\$12,335
Three people	15,071
Four people	19,311
Five people	22,837
Six people	25,791
Seven people	29,304
Eight people	32,430
Nine people or more	38,659

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education, 2006* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2006), p. 222.

children living in poverty increased in 2003. Their study provides the following summary of changes:

- The official poverty rate in 2003 was 12.5 percent, up from 12.1 percent in 2002. In number, 35.9 million people were in poverty in 2003, up 1.3 million from 2002.
- Poverty rates remained unchanged for Hispanics, non-Hispanic whites, and blacks, although it rose for whites and Asians.
- For children under 18 years old, both the poverty rate and the number in poverty rose between 2002 and 2003, from 16.7 percent to 17.6 percent, and from 12.1 million to 12.9 million, respectively.
- The poverty rate of children under 18 remained higher than that of 18- to 64-year-olds and that of seniors aged 65 and over (10.8 percent and 10.2 percent, respectively, both unchanged from 2002).

Eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch is one measure used by schools to determine the number of students from low-income families. The National School Lunch program provides a free lunch to students from families at or below 130 percent of the poverty level and a reduced-price lunch for students from households at or below 185 percent of the poverty level. Table 2-19 provides the official federal definition of poverty for 2004. Based on this definition, 41 percent of fourth grade students in the United States in 2005 were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Health insurance is a major problem for children living in poverty. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 19.2 percent of children living in poverty are without any form of health insurance and 11.4 percent of all children are without health insurance, as indicated in Table 2-20.

TABLE 2-20. Uninsured Children (under 18) by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age

Children in Poverty, Race, and Age	Percentage Uninsured
All children	11.4%
Children in poverty	19.2
Race	
White alone, non-Hispanic	7.4
Black alone or in combination	14.0
Black alone	14.5
Asian alone or in combination	11.8
Asian alone	12.4
Hispanic origin of any race	21.0
Age	
Under 6 years	10.3
6-11 years	11.0
12-17 years	12.7

Source: Carmen Wolf, Bernadette Proctor, and Robert Mills, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, August 2004), p. 19.

THE END OF THE AMERICAN DREAM: SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Savage inequalities are reflected in graduation rates. Consider the disparity between the Detroit, Michigan, school district where only 21.7 percent of students graduate from high school to Fairfax County, Virginia, where 82.5 percent graduate or, in other words, 78.3 percent of Detroit students drop out and only 15.5 percent of Fairfax County students drop out (as reported in *Education Week's* special 2006 report "Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates"). This is a shocking contrast. Those who do not graduate from high school will almost certainly enter a low-paying job. Table 2-21 summarizes school graduation rates by gender, school district type, race and ethnic composition, and socioeconomic status.

The consequence of these savage inequalities is the perpetuation of social-class differences. Children attending an urban school district are more likely to drop out than students in suburban schools. As indicated in Table 2-21, 60 percent of urban students graduate from high school as compared to 76.2 percent of suburban students. Even more of an indication of disparities between school districts are the racial and economic differences.

TABLE 2-21. Graduation Rates by Selected Characteristics 2002-2003

Characteristics	Percentage Who Graduated from High School
Gender	
Male	65.2%
Female	72.7
District type	
All districts	69.6
Urban	60.0
Suburban	74.4
Town	70.5
Rural	73.1
District racial and ethnic composition	
Majority minority	58.2
Majority white	76.2
High racial segregation	56.2
Low racial segregation	75.1
District socioeconomic status	
High poverty	60.2
Low poverty	78.6
High economic segregation	54.9
Low economic segregation	74.3

Source: Compiled from tables available in "State and District Patterns," in "Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates," *Education Week* special report, 2006, p. 15.

In Table 2-21, "high poverty" are those districts where the poverty level exceeds the national average. In districts with high economic segregation, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch are twice as likely to attend school with other students receiving free or reduced-price lunch than with those who are ineligible for free and reduced-price lunches. Only 54.9 percent of students living in districts with high economic segregation graduate from high school as compared to 74.3 percent in districts with low economic segregation. And those living in high-poverty districts have a high school graduation rate of 60.2 percent as compared to 78.6 percent in districts with low levels of poverty.

Racial segregation is also related to graduation rates with majority-white school districts having the highest graduation rate of 76.2 percent. In districts with high racial segregation—minority students are twice as likely to attend school with other minority students than with whites—the graduation rate is only 56.2 percent as compared to the 76.1 percent in districts with low racial segregation.

In summary, a student is less likely than others to graduate from high school if he is male and lives in an urban school district with high racial and economic segregation.

TRACKING AND ABILITY GROUPING

Two methods that can separate students according to family income are tracking and ability grouping. Tracking, primarily a practice of the high school, separates students into different curricula such as college preparatory, vocational, and general. Ability grouping places students in different classes or groups within classes based on their abilities. These abilities are usually determined by a combination of a teacher assessment of the student and standardized tests.

The United States, with its emphasis on individual differences, uses ability grouping more often than most other countries. A 1991 study found that the use of ability grouping in math classes in the United States was two-thirds higher than in other countries. In lower secondary school grades, 56 percent of math classes used ability grouping. England reported the highest use of ability grouping with 92 percent of math classes grouped in the lower secondary grades.

Often, the family income of students parallels the levels of ability grouping and tracking. That is, the higher the family income of the students, the more likely it is that they will be in the higher ability groups or a college-preparatory curriculum. Conversely, the lower the family income of the students, the more likely it is that they will be in the lower ability groups or the vocational curriculum.

Studies show the existence of this condition in the American public schools from the 1920s to the present. One of the first major studies of social-class differences in relationship to adolescent culture and the high school was conducted

in a small town in Indiana by a team of sociologists headed by A. B. Hollingshead. Their findings, which they titled *Elmtown's Youth*, can still be found duplicated in many high schools throughout the country. The Hollingshead study divided the population of Elmtown into five social classes. The tracks, or courses of study, at Elmtown's high school were college preparatory, general, and commercial. When the social-class origins in each track were determined, it was found that children from social classes 1 and 2 concentrated on college-preparatory courses (64 percent) and ignored the commercial courses. Class 3s were found mainly in the general courses (51 percent), with 27 percent in college preparatory and 21 percent in commercial. Class 4s slipped down the hierarchical scale of curricula; only 9 percent were in college preparatory, 58 percent were in general, and 33 percent were in commercial. Only 4 percent of class 5s were in the college-preparatory curriculum, whereas 38 percent were in commercial and 58 percent were in the general curriculum.

Sometimes teacher expectations are linked to the perceived social class of the student. The most famous study of the tendency to live up to expectations is Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. In the first part of the study, a group of experimenters was given a random selection of rats and told that certain rats came from highly intelligent stock. The rats labeled as coming from highly intelligent stock tended to do better than the other rats, though they were randomly grouped. The two psychologists tested their results in a school to see if teacher expectations would affect student performance. After giving students a standardized intelligence test, they gave teachers the names of students whom they called late bloomers and told the teachers to expect a sudden spurt of learning from them. In fact, the names of these students were selected at random from the class. A year later the intelligence tests were administered again. The scores of the supposed late bloomers were compared with those of other children who had received scores similar to the supposed late bloomers on the original test. It was found that those students who were identified to teachers as late bloomers made considerable gains in their intelligence-test scores when compared with students not designated as late bloomers.

The principal inference of this study is that teacher expectations can play an important role in determining the educational achievement of the child. This might be a serious problem in the education of children of poor and minority groups, where teachers develop expectations that these children will either fail or have a difficult time learning. Some educators, such as teacher and educational writer Miriam Wasserman, argue that teacher expectations are a major barrier to educational success for the poor and for certain minority groups.

Wasserman, in her case study of the New York school system, *The School Fix: NYC, USA*, relates the issue of teacher expectations to what she calls the "guidance approach to teaching." The guidance approach means that when planning instructional units, the teacher tries to take into account the student's family background, social life, and problems outside school. On the surface

this sounds like good educational practice in relating teaching methods and materials to the background and needs of the student. In practice, Wasserman discovered the tendency to label all students from poverty areas as having learning problems, as not being interested in school, and as probably not succeeding in school. Teachers tended to provide material that was not very challenging to students so labeled or explained their own failure to teach the student in terms of the student's background.

In further investigation of this problem, Wasserman interviewed students from poverty backgrounds who had been successful in school. She found that these students believed the major element in their successful educational career was having a teacher who was primarily interested in the student's learning and who emphasized and demanded high-quality work. These teachers had high expectations for their students, expectations that were not influenced by the social-class backgrounds of the students.

The combination of the classification of students according to abilities and curriculum and the expectation of teachers and other school officials seem to contribute to the social-class divisions of the surrounding society being reflected in the placement and treatment of students in the school. In addition, it has been found that in terms of educational achievement, the differences between children from different social classes become progressively greater from the first grade through high school. And now there is the possibility of a technological gap between social classes.

SHOULD TRACKING AND ABILITY GROUPING BE ABOLISHED?

In 1992, with the backing of Governor William Weld and the Commissioner of Education Robert Antonucci, the Massachusetts Department of Education began an active campaign to eliminate grouping by academic ability in local schools. Since the 1920s the separation of students by academic ability has been criticized because the result is often separation by socioeconomic class and race. In 1985 these practices again became an important issue with the publication of Jeannie Oakes's *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. As the name of the book suggests, Oakes documented the use of grouping by academic ability as a means of fostering social inequality. By 1993 the debate over grouping by academic ability had reached a point that, in the words of educational researcher Robert Slavin, "whenever anybody holds a meeting on this topic, it is packed to the rafters." The National Education Association adopted a resolution in 1992 condemning the use of academic tracking as a means of segregation by social class, race, and gender.

While criticizing academic ability grouping that results in discrimination by social class, race, and gender, supporters argue that the practice makes it easier for teachers and it allows high achievers to progress at a more rapid rate. Teachers of gifted and talented classes are particularly upset at the idea of ending academic ability grouping. A defender of ability grouping, Peter D.

Rosenstein, the executive director of the National Association of Gifted Children, worries that it has become "politically correct to deny that there are different potentials among children." Supporters might be correct that there are different academic potentials among children, but the reality is that tracking and ability grouping are frequently used as a means of discrimination.

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The discussion so far in this chapter would suggest that schools might play a role in maintaining differences between social classes. This argument is called social reproduction. Simply defined, social reproduction means that the schools reproduce the social-class structure of society. Economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis are the major proponents of the concept of social reproduction. They contend that the school causes occupational immobility. This argument completely reverses the idea that the school creates occupational mobility. Bowles and Gintis, in constructing this thesis, accept the findings that mobility rates are consistent throughout Western industrialized countries and that family background is one major factor in determining economic and social advancement. What they argue is that the school is a medium through which family background is translated into occupational and income opportunities.

This translation occurs regarding personality traits relevant to the work task; modes of self-presentation such as manner of speech and dress; ascriptive characteristics such as race, sex, and age; and the level and prestige of the individual's education. Bowles and Gintis insist that the four factors—personality traits, self-presentation, ascriptive characteristics, and level of educational attainment—are all significantly related to occupational success. They also are all related to the social class of the family. For instance, family background is directly related to the level of educational attainment and the prestige of that attainment. Here the economic level of the family determines educational attainment. Children from low-income families do not attain so high a level of education as children from rich families. From this standpoint the school reinforces social stratification and contributes to intergenerational immobility. For ascriptive characteristics such as race, the social advantages or disadvantages of a particular racial group are again related to levels of educational attainment.

As discussed in previous sections on cultural capital, personality traits and self-presentation are, according to Bowles and Gintis, important ingredients in occupational success. In *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Bowles and Gintis support these findings on cultural capital. Child-rearing, they declare, is important in developing personality traits related to entrance into the workforce. Personalities evidencing a great deal of self-direction tend to have greater success in high-status occupations. The differences in child-rearing patterns, the authors state, are reflected in the schools attended by different social classes. Schools with populations from lower-income families tend to

be more authoritarian and to require more conformity than schools attended by children from higher-income families. This is often reflected in the differences between educationally innovative schools in high-income suburbs and the more traditional schools in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods. In some cases, parents place pressure on local schools either to be more authoritarian or to allow more self-direction. The nature of this pressure tends to be related to the social class of the parents.

In this manner, Bowles and Gintis argue, the child-rearing patterns of the family are reflected in the way schools treat children. Children from authoritarian families are prepared by authoritarian schools to work at low-paying jobs that do not require independent thinking and decision making. The reverse is true for children coming from upper-income families and schools; they are socialized to high-paying jobs that require independent thinking. In this manner, education reproduces social classes. One problem with the social reproduction argument is the treatment of students as passive recipients of knowledge. As the next section on resistance suggests, students are not passive objects that are easily manipulated by school authorities.

RESISTANCE

As educational philosopher Henry Giroux argues, most educational studies assume that students are nonresistant recipients of instruction and that they can be easily managed by the school. Certainly, arguments that schools simply reproduce the social-class structure create an image of submissive students being molded for their place in society. Even the more-effective-schools movement assumes that students can be easily managed to achieve higher test scores. But any teacher will tell you that students are not that easily controlled and manipulated. Many students balk at following instructions, and they go out of their way to make life difficult for teachers. Students have an agenda regarding life that might have little to do with the goals of the school.

Giroux contends that students often resist the plans made by teachers and school administrators. In this case, resistance means the culture developed among students to oppose the goals of teachers and the schools. The pioneer study of this phenomenon is Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour*. Willis studied a group of students from working-class backgrounds who attended an all-male comprehensive high school in an industrial area of England. These students learned to manipulate the environment of the school to make sure that they would have a good time. They created a peer culture that was antischool. Their culture differed sharply from what they called the "ear-oles." The ear-oles—students who appeared to do nothing but sit and listen in school—represented the student who conforms to the authority and the expectations of the school. The working-class students resented both the ear-oles and the authority of the school. They felt that the school was out of touch with real life and had little relationship with the male working-class world that they came from and expected to enter as adults. They took every opportunity to

play pranks on school officials, teachers, and ear-oles. Their culture was a rejection of hopes for upward mobility through schooling and the values of schooling and learning.

Ironically, Willis portrays this antischool culture as preparation for the generalized labor force the students will be entering. The pranks they play in school are similar to the pranks they will later play on the shop floor. The peer culture they develop is similar to the culture of their fathers at work and the culture they will experience when they enter the workforce. This interpretation provides a more complex picture of the interaction between family background and the school. The students create an antischool culture that plays a determining role in ensuring the perpetuation of their working-class status. In Willis's account, the school is not the villain that takes account of family background to reproduce existing social classes. Rather, the culture of the school comes into conflict with the culture of the students.

The antischool culture that developed among these students was not in their best interests. The school did hold out the opportunity for them to gain an education and improve their status in life. In addition, the student culture described in Willis's study is sexist and racist. Given these facts, the notion of an antischool culture should not be romanticized as something to protect.

On the other hand, students do resist school programs that they know are not working in their interests. Some students develop an antischool culture when they note that the real benefits of schooling seem to go to students in the upper curriculum tracks and ability groups. Often, this resistance is exhibited as a general defiance of school authority. In addition, many students develop a sense of rage as they witness their life's chances slipping away. Rage turns to anger, and anger sometimes results in physical violence.

Within this framework, the key to improving the schools for the children of the poor is to understand that school learning is really a function of the interaction between student culture and the school's intentions. Students at many times have reasons for feeling oppressed. Consequently, educational change should be a product of a dialogue between students and school authorities. This dialogue might result in the school adjusting to the culture of students and students adjusting to the culture of the school. One might argue that this is the method for ensuring that the school provides equality of opportunity.

In *Theory of Resistance: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* and his many other writings, Henry Giroux argues that student resistance can be the vehicle for developing an educational method that will empower students and teachers to transform society. I do not have room in this book to cover Giroux's arguments in any depth, but at the end of Chapter 9 there is a brief discussion of critical theory, which forms the framework for Giroux's argument. Critical theory suggests that by itself education can never provide equality of opportunity. Not only may the pursuit of equality of opportunity through schooling be a false hope, but it may also distract people from the real issues. It could be that equality of opportunity depends on concrete economic changes in society.

CONCLUSION

Can schools provide equality of opportunity? Or does equality of opportunity depend on economic circumstances outside the power of the school? Does the school reduce social differences or heighten them through ability grouping, tracking, teacher expectations, counseling, and inequalities in school financing? Will the equalizing of school finances ensure an equal education for children from all social classes? These questions reflect the major problems confronting a public school system that professes equal educational opportunity and tries to provide an education that will guarantee equality of opportunity.

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