

One-Blog Schoolhouse

An Historian's Quick Takes
on Education and Schools

Sherman Dorn

Perspectives on Education Publishing

Tampa

Copyright © 2009 by Perspectives on Education Publishing. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Dorn, Sherman

One-blog schoolhouse : An historian's quick takes on education and schools / Sherman Dorn.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9823313-0-9

ISBN-10: 0-9823313-0-4

Library of Congress subject headings:

Blogs—United States

Educational accountability—United States

Education—History

Education—Standards—United States

Education—United States

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Letter to the President.....	viii
Historical Perspectives	
What would Nation X do?	15
I am not a caring teacher.....	17
The argument against incrementalism	20
Teen expectations: Too little or too much?.....	22
The final death of race-conscious desegregation	24
Fantasies of apolitical education policy	26
Mis-remembering Title IX	28
Students and Youtube	29
Credentialism, human capital, and ahistoricism.....	31
A basketful of school.....	34
Accountability	
Viagra for ur tests.....	41
The test-prep debate.....	42
Conspiracy theories and NCLB	44
Stretched and broken goals.....	47
NCLB and the Bowl Championship Series.....	49
Giftedness and No Child Left Behind.....	51
Bundling accountability	55
The Ponzi blame game	58
The loving hardass manifesto	60
What comes after NCLB?	65
Florida Education	
Weird Florida.....	71
Media mayhem in Miami	72
Flubbing the FCAT reality check.....	74
City council member claims Darwin caused the Holocaust ..	75
A thoroughly bad choice.....	78
Gorillas split on teaching of evolution in Florida	79

Teachers Unions	
Manichean views of motivation in school politics.....	83
Bad labor history award of the week	84
The right context on merit pay	85
A higher-ed unionist’s view of performance pay	87
Graduation	
Dropout statistics in political use	91
The graduation rate scorecard.....	92
Increasing graduation rates.....	95
U. S. News story on graduation statistics	102
Index	103

Acknowledgments

This book includes three dozen entries from my professional blog and some guest entries produced for other blogs, originally written sometime in the past eight years. As of early 2009, I have published more than 1400 entries on my blog (shermadorn.com), and the selection here represents my best judgment of which topics remain interesting and important months or years after they first appeared. I have revised the entries for this collection, to improve readability and eliminate any requirement that readers of this book remember what was being hotly debated in the blogosphere in September 2007 (or in any specific week or month).

As the internet has grown, so too have my debts to those I regularly read, those who write or have encouraged me to write about elementary and secondary education. These include Chad Alderman, Charles Barone, Ken Bernstein, Corey Bunje Bower, Kevin Carey, Leo Casey, Craig Cunningham, Jenny Demonte, Liam Goldrick, Sara Goldrick-Rab, Jay Greene, Jim Horn, Jennifer Jennings, Ralph Luker, Chad Lykins, Ron Matus, Michele McLaughlin, Sara Mead, Deborah Meier, Ed Muir, Aaron Pallas, Mike Petrilli, Diane Ravitch, Mike Rose, Andrew Rotherham, A. G. Rud, Alexander Russo, John See, Jeff Solichek, Jose Vilson, and Kelly Woestmann.

Readers who comment regularly on my blog have made it a more lively place to visit and have kept me honest, for which I owe thanks to Bob Calder, “CCPhysicist,” Ken DeRosa, Jennifer Imazeki, Philip Kovacs, Glen McGhee, Larry Mishel, Eric Price, Penny Richards, Dick Schutz, and Matthew Tabor.

My colleagues at the University of South Florida continue to support my experimentation in this century’s new form of public engagement, and on occasion I wonder if I will come to the office that day to find a polite form of academic pitchfork aimed at me. It has yet to happen, a fact that delights and still astounds me.

This book is the fifth that my family has seen written in and around our lives together. Elizabeth remains my most important critical reader, and our children the most important reason I have to continue writing.

Index

- accountability, viii, 20, 21, 25, 42–43, 44–46, 48, 49–50, 60–64, 65–67, 74; Florida, 44–46, 55, 74; New York City, 55–57; politics of, 58–59; Rube Goldberg devices in, 65; school uniforms and, 71; single-sex classrooms and, 71; teacher misconduct and, 71
Accountability Frankenstein (2007), 64, 65, 87
 achievement gap: in Florida, 71
 Advanced Placement, 23, 53
 affirmative action, 24
 Allen, Woody, 61
 American Federation of Teachers, 87–88
 Apple Corporation, 62
 Barone, Charles, 26, 43
 Berger, Joseph, 51–54
 Berliner, David, 16, 43, 60
 Bestor, Arthur, 22
 Biddle, Bruce, 16, 60
 blog, vii
 Bloomberg, Michael, 83, 91
 Boise Senior High School, 49
 Boise State Broncos, 49
 Bolder, Broader Approach, The, 60–64
 Bong Hits 4 Jesus. *See* Morse v. Frederick
 bored children, 52
 Bowl Championship Series, 49–50
 Bowles, Samuel, 32
 Bracey, Jerry, 44
 Bush, George H. W., 48
 Bush, George W., 45, 46, 48, 79
 Bush, Jeb, 44, 45, 56, 74
 Canada, Geoffrey, xi
 Cardwell, Diane, 91
Caring (1984), 17
 caring teacher, 17
 Casey, Leo, 18
 chess, 50
 children's interests, x
 Clarenbach, Jane, 52
Class and Schools (2004), 60
 Coleman Report, 60
Collateral Damage (2007), 43
 College Cost Reduction and Access Act, 26
 Columbine shootings, 75–77
 Comer, James, xi
 Common Core of Data, 92
 comparative education, 16
 Concordia College, 17
 conflict of interest, 50, 55, 58–59
 credentialism, 31–33
 Cuban, Larry, 20–21
 cut score. *See* proficiency
 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 62
 Dempsey, Sam, 48
 Denver, Colorado, 85
 desegregation, 20; massive resistance, 24; *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle* (2007), 24–25; political theory and, 20; residential segregation, 25
 Dillon, Sam, 85–86
 dissection, 78

- dropouts. *See* graduation
- Duncan, Arne, 60
- Eastlake, Nancy, 51
- Education Equality Project, 60–64
- Education Partnership, 84
- electronic privacy, 29
- English-language learners, 54
- ethics, 17–19, *See also* virtue ethics and original position
- evolution, 75–77; chain of being myth, 77; racism and, 75–77; teaching of, 78, 79
- federalism, ix
- Ferrer, Fernando, 91
- Finland, 15
- Florida, 44, 71, 74, 75–77, 78, 79, 97, 102; legislative staff, 45; Palm Beach County, 29; third grade reading tests, 2006, 74; vouchers, 44
- Fordham Foundation, Thomas B., 51
- Foster, Bill, 75–77
- Frankfurt, Harry, 64
- Freeman, Richard, 32
- Gates, Bill, 62
- General Educational Development diploma. *See under* graduation, GED
- Germany, 15
- gifted education, 51–54
- Gintis, Herbert, 32
- Goldin, Claudia, 32, 34–37
- graduation, 89, 91–102; averaged freshman graduation rate, 92; Detroit measures, 93; Florida measures, 97, 102; GED, 91, 96; gifted children and, 52; increasing, 95–101; labor market and, 97; measures of, 58, 92–94, 102; political uses of statistics, 91; regulation of child labor and, 100; teenage work and work, 99; vocational education and, 96
- Green, Thomas, 32
- Greene, Jay, 91, 93
- Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (1971), 31
- Gutierrez, Bridget, 26
- Haney, Walt, 91, 92
- Hilton, Paris, 61
- Hochschild, Jennifer, 20
- Hofstadter, Richard, 22
- human capital, 33, 34–37
- IQ tests, 31, 52
- Iraq, 45
- Japan, 15, 16
- juku schools, 16
- Katrina (hurricane), 45
- Katz, Lawrence, 32, 34–37
- Katz, Michael B., 65
- Kennedy, Ted, 43
- Kittay, Eva Feder, 18
- Klein, Joel, 55
- Labaree, David, 32
- Lewis-Clark State College, 17
- local control, 21
- Loeb Rule, 84
- Louisville, Kentucky, 24
- Lynd, Robert and Helen, 22
- Madoff, Bernie, 35
- Mann, Horace, 15, 17, 27
- Manufactured Crisis, The* (1995), 60
- Marx, Karl, 32
- Mathews, Jay, 22, 23, 42–43
- McGraw-Hill, 46
- McMullen, Cary, 78
- merit pay, 85–86, 87–88
- Metcalf, Stephen, 46
- Miami Sunset Senior High School, 72–73
- Miao, Jing, 92

- Microsoft Corporation, 55, 62
middle class, 36
Miller, George, 43
Mishel, Lawrence, 92
Morse v. Frederick (2007), 29
Muncie, Indiana, 22
National Assessment of Educational
Progress, ix, 22, 45, 56
National Association for Gifted Children,
52
National Education Association, 85, 87–
88
national goals for education, 48
National Research Council, 100
NCAA Division I-A football, 49–50
NCLB. *See* No Child Left Behind
New York City, 97; teachers strike of
1968, 61
Nichols, Sharon, 43
No Child Left Behind, viii, x, 20, 26, 42–
43, 44–46, 47, 49–50, 51–54, 55, 60–
64; future of, 65–67
Noble, David W., 15
Noddings, Nel, 17–19
O'Connor, Sandra Day, 24
Obama, Barack, 24, 49, 61
Ohio State University, 49
Orfield, Gary, 92
Origin of Species, On the (1859), 77
original position (Rawls), 18
Palm Beach County, Florida, 29
Parsons, Talcott, 32
Petrilli, Mike, 51
Pinellas County School Board, 75
politics of education, 26–27, 26, 33
ProComp, 85
proficiency, viii–ix, 47–48, 49, 65, 67
Progressive Era, 26
Prussia, 15
purpose of education, 22, 31–33, 42, 54;
gifted students and, 52
*Race between Education and Technology,
The* (2008), 34–37
Raleigh, North Carolina, 24
Ravitch, Diane, 43
Rawls, John, 18
Reading First, 46
Reddick, Donna, 72–73
Rickover, Hyman, 22
Robbins, Alexandra, 22–23
Rosenbaum, James, 16
Rotherman, Andrew, 42
Rothstein, Richard, 60
school grades: Florida, 44, 55, 56, 74;
New York City, 55–57
school uniforms, 71, 78
Science, Evolution, and Creationism
(2008), 76
segregation. *See* desegregation
sex discrimination, 28
sex education, 78
sheepskin effect. *See* credentialism
Shopping Mall High School, The (1985),
54
single-sex classrooms, 71
Sizer, Theodore, 22
Social Darwinism, 48, 77
social-reproduction argument, 32
Soviet Union, 15
Spellings, Margaret, 59
student debt, 36
student journalism, 72–73
students with disabilities, 54
Sutton, Bob, 64
Swanson, Christopher, 92, 93

- teachers, ix, x, xi, 17–19, 42, 47, 48, 49,
58–59, 60, 71, 72; gender, 18; merit
pay, 85–86, 87–88; privacy and, 29–
30; salaries, 18; unions, 83–88
- teachers unions, ix, 83–88, *See also*
American Federation of Teachers *and*
National Education Association;
history of, 84
- Tennessee, 48
- test preparation, 42–43
- Tinkering toward Utopia* (1995), 20
- Title IX, 28
- Tyack, David, 20–21
- United Nations Charter, 62
- University of Florida, 49
- University of Utah, 49
- Van Roekel, Dennis, 88
- Vedder, Richard, 31
- Virginia, 27
- virtue ethics, 17
- Wagner Act, 84
- Warren, John Robert, 91, 92
- Weingarten, Randi, 83, 88
- West Hartford, Connecticut, 51
- Wetzel, Dan, 49
- Williams, Joe, 83
- Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 48
- Winters, Marcus, 93
- Wiseman, Rosalind, 64
- Yes, Prime Minister*, 71
- Youtube, 29–30