

Tough Love *for* SCHOOL REFORM

by Frederick M. Hess

This project began modestly enough, as a response to the question posed by a good friend, the superintendent of a midsized school district.*

I had been giving him a hard time about his school reform plan, as I'm wont to do. Finally, he said, "So what would you do if you were in my shoes?"

Being an academic, I did what any academic is trained to do. I waffled. "Well, it's tough to say," I hemmed.

He wasn't having any of it.

So I went ahead and said my piece. I told him that all the pedagogical and curricular tweaking that so concerned him was nothing but a distraction because his system itself was dysfunctional. I told him that the first steps in real improvement had little to do with instruction and a lot to do with sensible management.

I told him that his school system was engineered to foster and accept incompetence. No amount of new spending, professional development, or instructional refinement would suffice to change that. In truth, education reformers routinely approach school improvement as a matter of technical expertise rather than common sense — undermining their own best efforts while distracting public attention and energy from the larger, structural problems.

America's schools are in a state of crisis, though not the one that we usually imagine. American schools are not awful, not gutting our economy, and not terribly unsafe. On balance, given the population they serve, they are probably doing about as well as they did two generations ago.

The real crisis is that so few of our schools are excellent, so many are mediocre, and yet we, the adults responsible, are content to tinker and theorize. The crisis is that performance we deemed adequate 50 years ago is neither tolerable nor defensible today. However, demands for radical change are met by protestations

**Common Sense School Reform*, authored by Frederick M. Hess and published by Palgrave Macmillan, expands on the ideas presented in this Policy Perspectives paper. *Common Sense School Reform* is available at booksellers nationwide and at <http://www.palgrave-usa.com/hess>.

Education reformers routinely approach school improvement as a matter of technical expertise rather than common sense — undermining their own best efforts while distracting public attention and energy from the larger, structural problems.

The crisis is that performance we deemed adequate 50 years ago is neither tolerable nor defensible today. However, demands for radical change are met by protestations of good intentions, pleas for patience, and an endless stream of ineffectual reforms.

of good intentions, pleas for patience, and an endless stream of ineffectual reforms.

The dimensions of the problem are straightforward. Researchers have estimated that in 2001 just 32 percent of all 18-year-olds graduated from high school with basic literacy skills and having completed the courses needed to attend a four-year college. The figure was just 20 percent of African American and 16 percent of Latino 18-year-olds.¹ The 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that just 31 percent of fourth graders and 32 percent of eighth graders were “proficient” in reading and that fully 37 percent of fourth graders and 26 percent of eighth graders scored “below basic.”² These are not figures for poor or urban populations — these are national figures.

In 2002, three fourths of employers expressed serious doubts about the basic skills of public school graduates in the areas of spelling, grammar, and writing clearly, and more than 60 percent reported that public school graduates had fair or poor math skills. More surprising, college professors, teaching a self-selected group of the nation’s graduates, expressed similar concerns at almost identical rates.³

Perhaps most distressing, our children lose ground during their years in school. While our 9-year-olds score above international norms, our 13-year-olds slip below average, and our 17-year-olds avoid the bottom only by eking past nations like South Africa, Cyprus, and Lithuania.⁴

By any reasonable standard, American schools are well-funded. In 2000, the most recent year for which international comparisons are available, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reported that the United States spent significantly more per pupil than any other industrial democracy — including those well-known for the generosity of their social programs. For instance, at the primary level, the United States spent 66 percent more per pupil than Germany, 56 percent

more than France, 27 percent more than Japan, 80 percent more than the United Kingdom, and 62 percent more than Belgium.⁵ At the secondary level, the figures are similar.

Not only are we not getting a lot of bang for the buck, but we’re actually spending more than many realize. UCLA business professor William Ouchi calculated that in New York City, during 2001–02, adding the cost of debt service, school construction, and renovation to the \$11,900 and change in reported current expenditure meant the district actually spent more than \$14,000 per student. In Los Angeles, the true per-pupil cost in 2001–02 was over \$13,000.⁶ Yet, despite these expenditures, half of fourth graders in New York and Los Angeles were scoring “below basic” on something as essential as the NAEP reading test.

From 1995–96 to 2003–04 alone, U.S. education spending grew by more than 53 percent, from \$287 billion to more than \$440 billion. This money has allowed schools to avoid cutting fat even as other organizations have slimmed down. In 1949–50, schools employed one non-teacher for every 2.4 teachers. By 1998–99, the ratio was more than twice that — one non-teacher for every 1.1 teachers.⁷

Quite simply, there is little reason to believe that the problem is primarily one of insufficient funds. The real problem is one of insufficient accountability, flexibility, and good management. The problem is our failure to foster a culture of competence in our schools.

The Culture of Incompetence

The problem that policymakers and education officials are loath to address is a system of schooling seemingly designed to frustrate competence. Teachers are hired, essentially for life, through drawn-out recruiting processes

that pay little attention to merit and alienate many highly qualified candidates. Little or nothing about teachers' or administrators' performance affects their career prospects or job security. Compensation and desirable assignments are distributed primarily on the basis of longevity. Informing decisions with data is considered novel, while the very words "efficiency" and "productivity" are derided as alien. The result is a culture of public schooling in which educators learn to keep their heads down, play defense, and avoid causing waves.

Our schools look this way because the structure once made sense. In a world where most students went on to work in factories or other blue-collar jobs, it was enough if schools kept children occupied and educated the privileged. When schools had a captive teaching force of talented women and African Americans, it made sense to limit entry to the profession and build compensation, seniority, and benefit systems that encouraged teachers to stay put for their entire careers. When it was difficult to rapidly collect and analyze solid information on student learning, it was reasonable to compensate educators without regard to student performance and to protect them from being capriciously fired.

The world has changed. A changing economy requires that all students master skills once required only by an elite. The assurance that talented women and minority college graduates will choose teaching due to a lack of viable options is long past. Schools compete for increasingly mobile workers in a labor market filled with tens of millions of white-collar jobs that beckon to potential teachers. Advances in technology and testing have made accountability and information available in a manner unimaginable even 15 years ago.

Can't Do Leadership

When he was chief of the U.S. Army, General Carl Vuono used to preach to the commanders of major Army units: "Poor training kills soldiers. If the American Army is not well trained, you can't blame it on Congress. You can't blame it on the media. You can't blame it on the mythical 'they.' It's your fault, your fault, your fault, and my fault because we didn't do our job."⁸ Like educators, military leaders wish for more resources, must make do with the available recruits, cope with political pressure, and endure public scrutiny. Yet, they are expected to get the job done. Why do we accept anything less in schooling?

Rejecting Hard Choices

Rejecting Vuono's challenge, many education leaders routinely explain that they don't get the resources they need and therefore cannot reasonably be held responsible for helping all students to succeed. According to Ken Baker, principal at Wyoming High School in Cincinnati, "We're supposed to drive all the kids toward success, and we have to do it with one hand behind our backs. The fact is that there are going to be students left behind."⁹ Cincinnati spent more than \$10,300 per attending pupil in 2001–02. Marion Canedo, the superintendent of a Buffalo, New York, district spending well over \$11,000 per student, said, "I don't know how to make services multiply with decreased revenues. I don't know how that's humanly possible, unless it's like the loaves and the fishes."¹⁰ In fact, a quarter of the nation's superintendents told Public Agenda last year that a lack of funding means that "only minimal progress can be made" in their district's schools.¹¹

The leaders of all organizations must make hard choices and find ways to do more with less. The American Red Cross announced in 2003 that it would lay off 231 of its roughly 4,000 employees, including 145 from the blood services division. The Red Cross, rocked by the challenges of 9-11 and leadership turmoil, did not express indignation. The chief financial officer noted, "The entire fundraising environment in the country is tough." The CEO observed that the situation required that "hard choices be made."¹² That was that.

Organizations transform themselves by refocusing on the essentials, tackling contract language and staffing routines once viewed as inviolable, and using new technological and management tools to rethink their work.

On the other hand, education leaders have largely rejected such steps. Take the case of John Wilhelmi, a principal in Portland, Oregon. After the federal No Child Left Behind Act enabled students in his low-performing Marshall High School to transfer out, his school lost a lot of students and more than a third of the incoming freshman class. How did Wilhelmi respond? By overhauling his school? No. He wrote an open letter to the President of the United States complaining about his rating: "We can only do good things to the extent that we have the staff to do them. If we lose staff, then we lose the capacity to do good things."¹³ Only in education are leaders allowed to imagine that there is no fat to cut and no employees

Status quo reformers believe that the nation's millions of teachers and administrators are already doing the best they can and the only way to improve America's schools is to provide more money, expertise, training, and support.

to spare, to believe it impossible to deliver new services without new resources, or to assume that existing inefficiencies are a natural state of being.

Two Approaches to School Reform

There are two kinds of reformers in American public education: "status quo reformers" and "common sense reformers."

Status Quo Reformers

"Status quo reformers" believe that the nation's millions of teachers and administrators are already doing the best they can and the only way to improve America's schools is to provide more money, expertise, training, and support. They embrace new pedagogies, smaller schools, new assessment strategies, and any number of widely hailed reforms. Status quo reformers run the school systems, staff the schools of education, lead the professional associations, and dominate the education bureaucracies. Unwilling to consider fundamental change, they allow the status quo to define what is possible.

Status quo reformers engage in curricular and pedagogical reforms but steer away from radical changes in job security, accountability, compensation, or work conditions that would fundamentally change schooling. In fact, the only radical changes that status quo reformers embrace are those that would occur outside the schoolhouse.

Status quo reformers point out, quite correctly, that there are a number of non-school changes that might improve the lives of children and boost their academic success. Better child nutrition, heightened parental involvement, improved health care, safer streets, or more engaged civic leadership would all help. However, the status quo tendency to allow discussion of school

improvement to meander into such issues makes it easy to dismiss education problems we can address in favor of questions that schools are ill-equipped to manage. Issues like economic and racial inequality have a tremendous impact on children's opportunities, and must be addressed, but we do a disservice to students when we allow musings on public housing or welfare reform to stand in for tough-minded efforts to improve schools.

Common Sense Reformers

Common sense reformers recognize the merit of many status quo suggestions. Many of these are reasonable and helpful, at least in some locales and for some students. Yet, common sense reformers believe that these efforts are tangential to or distractions from the larger task of rooting out the culture of incompetence. Common sense reform focuses on two precepts: accountability and flexibility. Centuries of experience in fields from architecture to zoology tell us that people work harder, smarter, and more efficiently when they are rewarded for doing so; that people do their best work when goals are clear and they know how they'll be evaluated; that smart, educated, motivated people will find ways to do better; and that professionalism only flourishes when professionals have the flexibility to use their judgment and skills.

Common sense reform seeks to construct a culture of competence in schools: a culture where success is expected, excellence is rewarded, failure is not tolerated, and professionals are accorded the respect they deserve. Absent the pressure of markets or centralized accountability, it is not hard for mediocrity or inefficiency to seem the norm. Absent such pressure, even the best-intentioned educator may shy away from pursuing efficiencies when they require dislocation or wrenching adjustments.

The common sense reformer assumes that educators, for better or worse, are a lot like everybody else.

Common sense reformers seek to construct a culture of competence in schools: a culture where success is expected, excellence is rewarded, failure is not tolerated, and professionals are accorded the respect they deserve.

Some educators are passionately committed to their craft, highly skilled, and will be so regardless of rewards or guidance, but most — like most attorneys and journalists and doctors — will be more effective when held accountable for performance, when rewarded for excellence, and when given the opportunities to devise new paths to success. Common sense reform is the foundation upon which any number of instructional advances can comfortably rest, but without which systemic excellence will prove illusory.

Principles of Common Sense Reform

Seven simple, straightforward principles apply to common sense reform:

- » Schools must focus on doing a few crucial things and doing them well. The most important thing for schools to do is ensure that all children, at a minimum, master the gate-keeping skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and have a fundamental grasp of science and history.
- » Educators should be held accountable for the work that they do and should have the freedom and flexibility to run schools and teach classes in accord with their professional judgment.
- » School systems should relentlessly seek out talented and entrepreneurial teachers and leaders and should strive to nurture these individuals.
- » Schools need not look exactly the same. We should allow schools to excel in different ways and permit families to find the school that matches their child's needs.
- » Educators who excel at serving children, who contribute in meaningful ways to their schools, or

who take on the toughest assignments should be recognized and rewarded.

- » Ineffective educators need to be identified and either remediated or fired.
- » School districts should promote flexibility and accountability by decentralizing, using modern technology, and rethinking how they are organized.

A Common Sense Reform Agenda

Common sense reform rests on five pillars: tough-minded accountability, competition, workforce, leadership, and reinvention. It begins with a powerful accountability system that clarifies goals, makes it easy for decisionmakers to monitor performance, and allows them to reward, remediate, or fire employees as appropriate. Accountability based upon student achievement in essential skills shows educators, parents, and policymakers how schools are faring at their core task. It provides assurance that decisions about employment or compensation are not being made on capricious grounds but by principals and other administrators who will be answerable for the results of their decisions. Once accountability is in place, it is easier for policymakers and voters to trust school leaders to make decisions guided by their knowledge of the students, the faculty, and the data on student learning.

The presence of tough-minded accountability makes competition both desirable and possible. Competition is desirable because focusing tough-minded accountability on core content will not, by itself, ensure that schools excel in other important ways. Competition allows different schools to adopt distinctive approaches that can meet the varied needs of local families. It's possible because the public will have assurances that all publicly funded schools are held accountable for their performance on what matters most.

The enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has, in many ways, made the task of common sense reform much easier. By requiring all states to test students in the gate-keeping subjects in grades three through eight and at least once in high school, NCLB ensures that the framework for tough-minded accountability is in place in every state. Although a common sense reformer has genuine concerns about NCLB — especially its emphasis on the level at which schools are performing rather than on student growth, its mechanical emphasis on setting specific benchmarks, and its adoption of choice-based reforms that do little or nothing to promote competition — these can all be addressed in time. More importantly, NCLB has provided states with a foundation that can make common sense reform a real possibility throughout the nation.

While NCLB has provided critical tools, the real changes that can enable and encourage excellence lie closer to home. Here, then, is the common sense reform agenda.

Tough-Minded Accountability

Tough-minded accountability is the province of the states.

- » States should construct straightforward standards specifying the knowledge and skills students must master in reading, writing, mathematics, and the essentials of science and history. Most states have taken these steps and are regularly assessing students in most grades, thanks in large part to the mandates of NCLB.
- » Assessments must be aligned with the underlying standard, carefully designed, and rigorously tested. This may require tripling or quintupling spending on assessments. Such spending would still amount to less than 3 percent of per-pupil spending and would be a bargain for high-caliber quality control.
- » Assessments should focus on the gate-keeping skills. Measuring too many things dilutes the pressure on schools to ensure that all students are, at a minimum, mastering essential skills. The purpose of common sense accountability is *not* to make all schools look alike or to dictate the entire curriculum but to ensure that no school is neglecting its most basic responsibilities.

- » Performance must matter for students. This will ensure that no child is sent off without the most basic preparation for adulthood. Students ought not graduate until they have, at the very least, mastered the gate-keeping skills.
- » For educators, student learning must be the fundamental measure of performance. What matters is not the level of student achievement or the performance of any one group of students, but the rate at which students improve over time.
- » States should provide readily accessible report cards that document the relative performance of each school and district and should encourage nonprofit and for-profit groups that seek to disseminate this information.

Competition

Common sense reformers do not endorse choice-based reforms because they believe charter schools or private schools are necessarily more effective than their traditional public counterparts or out of some mystical faith in parental rights. The reasoning is less grand. Allowing familial choices to steer education funding creates room for entrepreneurs and niche programs without compromising accountability.

- » States should enact charter and school voucher legislation that will encourage the emergence of new schools. State departments of education should provide expertise, loan guarantees, and some start-up funding for authorized schools.
- » Most or all of per-pupil spending has to follow students who change schools and the funding needs to reflect the real cost of educating the student. It is essential that lost enrollment not vaguely impact schools but that the lost resources have a direct impact on the compensation and job security of school personnel.
- » States need to monitor authorization processes, academic performance, financial accounting, and school admissions practices.
- » States should collect and make available information on measures of school quality that extend beyond student achievement on the gate-keeping skills. Although states need not plan to be the primary provider of this information,

Compensation strategies should recognize and reinforce commitment. Rather than paying teachers based on seniority or college credits, districts should base pay on the value of a teacher's skills, the difficulty of his assignment, his responsibilities, and the caliber of his work.

they should support efforts by self-interested educators to market themselves and efforts by nonprofit and for-profit parties to provide and disseminate information on school quality.

- » Finally, an important caveat is that expanding autonomy and flexibility will require conscious action on the part of reformers. The modest school choice measures promoted by proponents will rarely suffice to foster meaningful competition. "Choice" alone will not necessarily increase school autonomy, personnel flexibility, decentralization, or operational freedom if legislation serves to constrain these.

Workforce

Taking advantage of accountability and competition requires a workforce prepared for that challenge.

- » Licensing provisions that deter potentially qualified candidates from applying for teaching jobs ought to be stricken. This will also break the hammerlock enjoyed by teacher preparation programs, injecting new blood into the teaching force and subjecting these programs to healthy competition.
- » Districts need to put quality-conscious personnel in charge of the hiring process and eliminate the excessive paperwork and lengthy delays that deter good candidates.
- » Compensation strategies should recognize and reinforce commitment. Rather than paying teachers based on seniority or college credits, districts should base pay on the value of a teacher's skills, the difficulty of his assignment, his responsibilities, and the caliber of his work.
- » Retirement plans should be shifted from "defined benefit" to "defined contribution"

plans and changed so that educators vest much sooner. This change will make the profession more attractive to a mobile population and to candidates who may not plan to teach 20 years, make it less costly for entrepreneurs to launch new programs or switch to charter schools, and reduce the number of veterans who feel trapped.

- » Principals and superintendents should be empowered to terminate ineffective educators, subject to reasonable safeguards. The concept of tenure in K-12 schooling should be retired and education employment should be made "at-will."
- » The one-size-fits-all job description of the teacher should be made more flexible. Teachers might play a variety of mentoring or administrative roles without leaving the classroom and be recognized and compensated appropriately.

Leadership

The opportunities and responsibilities of modern education management require a new breed of education leaders with the tools and experiences to address this changing world.

- » The narrow notion of "instructional leadership" that requires principals to be former teachers should be retired. Education administrators confront a number of managerial challenges and personal expertise in pedagogy or curriculum may not always be essential, especially if former teachers tend to lack other important skills.
- » Licensing provisions that require leadership candidates to have taught or completed a certification program ought to be stricken. School and district leaders should be culled from as broad a talent pool as possible.

Visionary leadership requires a certain basic toolbox: that executives be able to assemble their own teams, reward excellence, remove the inept, measure performance, encourage entrepreneurial activity, access information, and reinvent operations as necessary.

- » Administrators ought to be compensated on the basis of performance, the challenge of their assignments, and the scope of their responsibilities. Terminating administrators for unacceptable performance should be a simple matter.
- » Districts should cease drawing personnel in critical support positions like human resources, facilities, or information technology from the ranks of former teachers. Rather, districts should pursue trained specialists and pay them appropriately for their services.

Reinvention

None of the previous measures will serve to radically enhance school performance or efficiency unless educators have the tools to rethink and reinvent instruction and school management.

- » States and districts should invest in information technology that provides information on student and teacher performance, expenditures, and personnel. Because much of this technology can be developed in common, significant federal and state investment is appropriate. Ready access to detailed and integrated information allows managers to target support, permits teachers to address the needs of individual students, and allows school-site personnel to control budgets and hiring.
- » Districts should decentralize resources to the school level to enable school personnel to take full advantage of their particular resources and familiarity with student needs. However, decentralization should not be pursued recklessly. In urban districts in particular, centralized decisions regarding instruction and professional development can make good sense.

- » Districts should take advantage of information and technological advancements that have removed geographical barriers to the provision of schooling, support services, and professional development by exploring the possibility of contracting with specialized providers. Properly managed, such arrangements can help district leaders focus on core competencies while yielding less expensive and more effective service.

Above all, the common sense reformer is a realist. The common sense reformer knows that all good things do not go together, that adopting common sense reform will entail real costs, and that some measures will require refinements or alterations with time.

Conclusion

The fact that the principles above are considered controversial in education circles suggests just how far out of kilter our schools really are. When status quo reformers caricature such measures as entailing a “business approach” they do a tremendous disservice to students, educators, and themselves. There is nothing uniquely “businesslike” about asking that organizations be accountable, flexible, or efficient. These are not business principles — these are sensible guidelines for motivating adults and ensuring that they competently perform their chosen work. The travesty is that these common sense principles are regarded as “businesslike” principles because they are the norm in the private sector, while we have permitted our most precious institution — our nation’s public schools — to totter along with little more than good intentions as a guide.

Common sense reform is not an attempt to import business thinking; rather, it reflects the recognition that we should approach our children’s education with at least the same degree of seriousness that we currently reserve

for the production of breakfast cereal, barbecue sauce, and designer jeans. The fact that we have not done so reflects an appalling lack of moral seriousness on our part.

Some may point to merit pay proposals or No Child Left Behind-style accountability and suggest that common sense reform is ascendant. In truth, most of these are half-measures born of a reluctance to unapologetically embrace common sense principles. Policymakers rhetorically speak of using test-based accountability to harness tough-minded incentives, then settle for vague, distant, collective sanctions that have little impact on individual educators. Efforts to compensate educators based on their work yield timid, tepid pay adjustments or bonuses pegged to criteria crafted by status quo authorities.

It's important to understand that the various common sense reforms will not work as intended in isolation from one another. Individually, they are politically unpalatable and given to misfiring. It is easy for advocates to promote one tack as the answer, but the results are often disappointing and the search for miracle remedies distracts from the need to promote common sense change. Accountability without the diversity provided by markets, without competent principals familiar with outcome-based management, or absent the flexibility that allows managers and educators to reinvent service provision is a recipe for small-minded micro-management and frustration. Alternative teacher hiring without meaningful accountability, without retooled district hiring practices, or absent efforts to reallocate resources to support induction and ongoing professional training will yield uneven and often disappointing results.

Common sense reform is not a miracle cure. It will not solve all, or even most, of the day-to-day problems

in mediocre schools. It will not ensure that teachers are well-trained, that curricula are sound, or that excellence is replicated. What it can do is make it far more likely that these improvements will come to pass — it can create the preconditions for excellence.

Common sense reform is only a beginning. There are many necessary and sophisticated measures to cultivate instruction and management that need to extend far beyond the building blocks of common sense reform. Management and organizational behavior scholars like Clayton Christensen, co-author of *The Innovator's Solution*, or Jim Collins, co-author of *Built to Last*, have illustrated how great organizations forge a culture of competence through creative thinking, dynamic leadership, and careful attention to practices — not through some mechanical carrot-and-stick strategy.

They are entirely correct. The problem is that when today's education managers try to adopt the advice of a Christensen or a Collins and try to assemble the right people or create space for innovation, they quickly get mired down by the regulations and routines that create the culture of incompetence. Visionary leadership requires a certain basic toolbox: that executives be able to assemble their own teams, reward excellence, remove the inept, measure performance, encourage entrepreneurial activity, access information, and reinvent operations as necessary. Otherwise visionary leadership amounts to little more than high hopes.

Whether we will unflinchingly embrace common sense reform is the question of the hour. In a world as complex and diverse as ours, it is easy for simple truths to get lost. Simple truths like responsibility, merit, and opportunity. Real school reform begins by resurfacing those truths.

Endnotes

- 1 Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster, "Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates in the United States," *Education Working Paper 3* (September 2003). Center for Civic Innovation, Manhattan Institute.
- 2 National Center for Education Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2003).
- 3 Jean Johnson and Ann Duffett, *Where Are We Now? 12 Things You Need to Know About Public Opinion and Public Schools* (New York: Public Agenda, 2003), pp. 22-23.
- 4 Paul Peterson, "Little Gain in Student Achievement," *Our Schools and Our Future*, ed. Paul Peterson (Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2003).
- 5 "Expenditure on Educational Institutions per Student (2000)," *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, 2003*, Table B1.1, p. 197. The specific figures for the various countries were (primary and secondary): Germany \$4,198 and \$6,826, France \$4,486 and \$7,636, Japan \$5,507 and \$6,266, United Kingdom \$3,877 and \$5,991, Sweden \$6,336 and \$6,339, Belgium \$4,310 and \$6,889, Finland \$4,317 and \$6,094, and South Korea \$3,155 and \$4,069.
- 6 William G. Ouchi, *Making Schools Work: A Revolutionary Plan to Get Your Children the Education They Need* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), p. 10.
- 7 National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2001), Table 80.
- 8 Carl Vuono quoted in Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Pocket Books, 1991), pp. 129-130.
- 9 Dale Russakoff and Linda Perlstein, "States Cutting School Funding," *Washington Post*, March 15, 2003, p. A1.
- 10 Alan Richard and David J. Hoff, "Schools Trim Fiscal Fat, and Then Some," *Education Week*, 23, no. 4 (September 24, 2003), p. 1.
- 11 Steve Farkas, Jean Johnson, and Ann Duffett, *Rolling Up Their Sleeves: Superintendents and Principals Talk About What's Needed to Fix Public Schools* (Washington, DC: Public Agenda, 2003), p. 11.
- 12 Jacqueline L. Salmon, "American Red Cross to Cut 231 Jobs," *Washington Post*, June 6, 2003, p. A10.
- 13 Jay Mathews, "Rule Aids Students but Drains Some Schools," *Washington Post*, June 10, 2003, p. A8.

About the Author

Frederick M. Hess is Director of Education Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and Executive Editor of *Education Next*, a journal focusing on education policy and school reform. Hess is known for his scholarship on education issues including: the politics of school reform, urban education, district governance, accountability, professional licensure, school choice, and the nature of public education. He is the author or editor of books including the recently published *Common Sense School Reform*, *Revolution at the Margins*, *Spinning Wheels*, *Bringing the Social Sciences Alive*, and *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?* His work has been published in scholarly forums including: *Phi Delta Kappan*, *American Politics Quarterly*, *Urban Affairs Review*, *Educational Policy*, *Teachers College Record*, and *Social Science Quarterly*; general education publications including *Educational Leadership*, *Education Week*, and *American School Board Journal*; and other outlets such as *Policy Review* and *The Weekly Standard*.



Hess currently serves on the Review Board for the Broad Prize in Urban Education, as a research associate with the Harvard University Program on Education Policy and Governance, and as a member of the research advisory board for the National Center on Educational Accountability. Prior to joining AEI, Hess served as a high school social studies teacher in Louisiana and professor of education at the University of Virginia. He earned his MEd from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education and his MA and PhD from the Harvard University Department of Government.

Hess can be reached at rhess@aei.org.

About WestEd

Policy Perspectives (www.WestEd.org/policyperspectives) presents visiting authors' own views and/or research on issues relevant to schools and communities nationwide. WestEd welcomes submission of papers on a topic not previously addressed in Policy Perspectives or presenting a different viewpoint to a Policy Perspectives paper already published. Address drafts and/or inquiries to Colleen Montoya, Policy Perspectives Executive Editor, 4665 Lampson Avenue, Los Alamitos, California, 90720; 562.799.5105; fax, 562.799.5138; or email, cmontoy@WestEd.org.

WestEd, a nonprofit research, development, and service agency, works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. While WestEd serves the states of Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah as one of the nation's Regional Educational Laboratories, our agency's work extends throughout the United States and abroad. It has 17 offices nationwide, from Washington and Boston to Arizona, Southern California, and its headquarters in San Francisco.

For more information about WestEd, visit our Web site: WestEd.org; call 415.565.3000 or toll-free, (877) 4-WestEd; or write: WestEd/730 Harrison Street/San Francisco, CA 94107-1242.

© 2004 WestEd. All rights reserved.

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of its author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of WestEd; nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by WestEd. WestEd is providing this forum for visiting authors and is interested in presenting a wide range of views and/or research.

WestEd[®]

730 Harrison Street
San Francisco
California 94107-1242

Address service requested