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Standard Education Almanac

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Seventeenth Edition

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Contributing Editor

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Foreword

The 1984-85 *Standard Education Almanac* comes to press at a time when improving the quality of American education ranks high on the nation's agenda. Beginning with the release of *A Nation at Risk*, the report of the Commission on Excellence in Education, in April of 1983, a series of national reports have scrutinized, analyzed, and criticized education in the United States, focusing particularly on public elementary and secondary schools, competencies of teachers and school administrators, academic achievement of students, and teacher preparation. In addition to the 29 reports that have examined education on a national basis, many governors have appointed commissions to prepare state reports and recommendations. Also, local school districts throughout the nation are engaged in district studies and debating the implementing of the various recommendations.

Among the various national publications, the following have existed and are likely to exercise a significant impact on American education:

- *A Nation at Risk*, by the Commission on Excellence in Education, chaired by David L. Gardner, President of the University of California, which was appointed by Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell to: (1) assess the educational quality of American public and private schools, colleges, and universities; (2) compare American schools and colleges with those of other developed nations; (3) examine the relationship between college admission requirements and high school curriculum and student achievement; (4) assess the impact of social and educational change on student achievement; (5) make recommendations to restore excellence to American education.

- *Action for Excellence*, by the Education Commission of the States National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, chaired by Governor James B. Hunt of North Carolina. This Commission examined elementary and secondary schooling and devised strategies to improve the quality of high school graduates, especially in skills and subjects conducive to national economic growth and productivity.

- *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do*, by The College Board, chaired by George H. Hanford, President, which sought to develop a consensus on the knowledge and competencies needed to prepare high school students for success in college.

- *Educating Americans for the 21st Century*, by the National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, chaired by William Coleman and Cecily Selby, which defined a national agenda and developed an action plan that involved federal, state, and local governments, professional and scientific societies, and the private sector to improve mathematics and science education.

- *High School: A Report on American Secondary Education*, by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, chaired by Ernest L. Boyer. This report examines the current condition of American high schools and recommends strategies to improve the academic quality of public secondary education. It recommends a prescribed curriculum for two-thirds of the student's program with electives for the remaining one-third. It urges a curriculum focused on English Language and Literature, Biologi-

cal and Physical Sciences, Mathematics, History and Social Sciences, Computer Literacy, and Community Service.

• *A Study of High Schools*, by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Independent Schools. Chaired by Theodore R.Sizer, it examines the social change impacting high schools. Unlike the other reports, it suggests more flexible scheduling, teaching teams, interdisciplinary course development, and a variety of student options.

The national reports on education have identified a number of common themes that have had a negative impact on the quality of American education. Among these themes are:

1. American education has experienced a lack of purpose. Society and schools, especially high schools, no longer exhibit common agreement on the basic purpose of education, causing lowered expectations and increased discipline problems. There is also an absence of consensus on standards and strategies for improving academic performance of American students.

2. Educational deficiencies are most acute in Mathematics and Science. As a result, America's ability to compete internationally is threatened by a shortage of skilled engineers and scientists, and by a growing general scientific and mathematical illiteracy.

3. Based on student test scores, truancy and dropout rates, and incidents of violence, the reputation and performance of American schools has declined.

1983 and 1984 have seen: (1) proliferation of reports; (2) educational issues defined, redefined, and obscured; (3) schools and teachers attacked and defended. I propose to create a balance sheet on the national reports by identifying what I perceive to be their assets and liabilities—their strengths and weaknesses. My balance sheet will identify the following three assets derived from the reports:

Assets

1. The reports have focused national attention on American education. Not since President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty," the Great Society, and the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 has such national attention focused on the condition of American education. The intense interest generated by the reports may reverse a decade and a half of general disinterest and neglect of American schools at the national level. Hopefully, the reports will focus national attention on the general features, on the common curriculum, and on the general issues that influence the education of American children and youth. The reports carry the promise that by emphasizing the common curriculum we might reverse the disintegrative tendencies of the last twenty years that have made American public education the feeding ground for special-interest groups and lobbies that have eroded a common body of knowledge and have reduced the curriculum to a disintegrated set of mandates, units, and minicourses that reflect a partial and biased view of education. For too long, we have witnessed well-

organized interest groups advance their particular educational agendas but have had few voices raised for the general education of American children and youth. Perhaps we can use the reports as a basis for general advocacy rather than for special interests and specific mandates.

2. The national reports suggest a prescribed common general curriculum for secondary schools. An asset of the reports, especially *A Nation at Risk* and Boyer's *High School*, is that they present a rationale for curricular integrity in the secondary schools. They argue that there are certain identifiable bodies of disciplined knowledge and inquiry that constitute an indispensable general core for educating American youth—the English Language and Literature, Mathematics, the Biological and Physical Sciences, and History and Social Science. To be sure, many high schools have maintained their academic integrity; however, the entry of courses based on life experiences, personal growth, human interaction, and other non-academic topics during the late 1960s eroded the academic integrity of American schooling.
3. The reports see schools as having a primary purpose—as existing to educate children and youth. In their zeal to create multi-purpose institutions, certain segments of the public and some educators lost sight of and eventually lost the concept that schools have a primary purpose—to educate. As a result, educational talent, time, effort, and resources have been misappropriated for non-educational uses. The arteries of schooling became clogged by functions other than the primary one.

Liabilities

1. Generally, the reports have failed to recognize that education takes place in a cultural context and that schools exist in a social, political, and economic context. Education does not occur in a cultural vacuum nor do schools exist in social isolation. The social, economic, and political conditions that impact the larger society also shape its schooling. The processes of social change, the desire for social and racial equality, the disintegration of older values, all have had their impact on children, adolescents, teachers, and schools, as well as on the general society. New cultural elements such as one-parent families, television, computers, nuclear weapons, huge fiscal deficits, declining birth rates, suburbia, inner cities, bilingualism, affirmative action, genetic engineering, drug abuse, energy conservation, and the aging of the population all have had educational effects. The reports have dealt inadequately with the context in which American schools must function.

It should also be recognized that American schools and their students, teachers, and administrators are part of the American historical and cultural experience. Comparative education is a fascinating study, but America's students and its schools are not China's, Japan's, Germany's or Russia's. Our concern should be with

America's educational priorities rather than with those of other countries which have a different style of life, priorities, and expectations.

2. The reports have a feeling of political and economic unreality about them. Current conditions of educational reality in the United States are: (a) public schools are locally controlled by elected or appointed boards of education; (b) local property taxes and state aid pay over 90 percent of the costs of public schooling in the United States; (c) tax-conscious citizens in many school districts have consistently defeated referenda to raise tax rates; (d) deficits at the state level cause legislators to resist increases in state aid to schools. A report or a speech on the condition of education is not going to solve the financial problems facing schools, nor provide revenue for increases in teachers' salaries, nor purchase up-to-date textbooks. The great dilemma is that the reports call for reform that is national in scope while the agencies of reform are hard-pressed local school districts that are struggling to survive.
3. The reports may set the stage for scapegoating and simplistic quick fixes. The reports tell us that something is drastically wrong with our educational system and our schools. Ergo, if something is wrong, there must be a villain—a wrongdoer—a scapegoat. It must be the teachers, the school administration, or the schools of education. Perhaps if we purge the scapegoats, the problem will be resolved.

The reports do not adequately recognize the cumulative nature of education. They have fixed their critical sights on the high schools and have neglected the reality that elementary schools and colleges are part of a cumulative curricular and institutional educational sequence. The improvement of mathematical and scientific literacy, knowledge, and competency depends upon the foundations established in primary and intermediate grades. And what about the simple notion that more time equals improved quality? Elongating the school year or lengthening the school day will have little effect if we spend more time doing the same things—more time on rote learning, more time on disruptive students, more time being interrupted by announcements on the intercom system, more time on busywork—more time will not necessarily result in improved quality.

Americans have often perceived change and reform to be the simple adding on of courses, units or time. Genuine reform, in this case, is unlikely to result from simply adding to what we now have. Indeed, it may require the more difficult challenge of deleting some elements and reordering of others.

The national reports on education have the potentiality to generate needed qualitative reforms of American Education. They are serious studies of serious problems. But like all things, they also have the potential for being misused for purposes that are other than educational.

While the national reports on education are most signifi-

cant for policy-making in the future, the research for this year's *Standard Education Almanac* revealed other significant trends. In terms of demographics, the shift of population to the southern and western "sun belt" states continues. The need for teachers and other educational personnel in these states remains persistent. Nationally, the elementary school age population is showing signs of a slight increase that should create some slightly increased demand for elementary school teachers. While the elementary school population shows slight increases, the population of secondary age students is decreasing, particularly in the northeastern and midwestern states.

Throughout the nation, serious teacher shortages continue to persist in mathematics and the physical sciences, especially chemistry and physics, at the secondary school level. Various federal and state initiatives to attract more individuals to these subject areas remain sporadic and unorganized. To remedy deficits in mathematics and science achievement, a major federal initiative will be needed.

While the national reports on education have stimulated proposals for teacher merit pay, financial incentives for master teachers, and differentiated teacher salary schedules, concerted and widespread implementation of such proposals has not occurred. Major changes in financial support for teachers are tied to general funding for public education. Here, the situation remains much the same as in the recent past. The publicity accorded to education may work to increase local and state revenues for public schooling. Increased federal funding of elementary and secondary education appears to be unlikely in the next year.

An increasing volume of articles has appeared on topics related to computers and education and computer-assisted instruction. Although a significant educational revolution is suggested, the majority of articles continue to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of various systems, hardware, and software. Several authors have suggested that children enrolled in financially poorer, urban school districts are suffering still another instructional handicap as wealthier districts devote more of their resources to computers and computer-assisted instruction.

The proposed school prayer amendment to the Constitution has stimulated a number of articles that take a generally piecemeal and ideological pro or con position. The debate over Creationism versus Evolutionism has continued but is showing signs of abating. Although attracting less attention than mathematics or science, the humanities and civic education continue to be significant educational themes.

The national reports on education and the significant demographic and curricular trends are highlighted in this year's *Standard Education Almanac*. Of course, significant educational statistics remain an important component of the volume.

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Preface

Standard Education Almanac is a comprehensive reference resource providing information and viewpoints in the field of education. Contents include current issues, statistics, specially selected articles and reports, and lists of resources covering all levels and aspects of education in the United States and Canada.

In preparing the Seventeenth Edition of *Standard Education Almanac*, the editors reviewed more than 5,000 articles from 100 different journals covering the field of education. Of these, 500 pieces were considered so outstanding that they were selected for further consideration. More than 200 articles, tables, and graphs are included in this edition; others are cited in the Selected Bibliography at the back of this book.

Part 1: Introduction begins with a look at American education, particularly following the current emphasis on excellence in education. Enrollments and other selected statistics, including U.S. expenditures, also are covered. Attitudes and trends commence with the annual Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools and emphasizes plans for educational excellence. Private school growth and educational vouchers also are discussed, along with funding.

Part 2: Elementary and Secondary Education starts with students' attitudes toward today's schooling. The national assessment of educational progress also is included for the first time in this edition. Enrollments, graduate characteristics, instructional staffing, and expenditures are discussed, as are attitudes and trends. Particular emphasis is placed on trends in mathematics and science.

Part 3: Higher Education focuses on the emerging college student, as well as on the number of institutions offering higher education. Enrollments are covered, as are instructional staffing, funding, trends, and developments.

Part 4: Employment Trends and Adult Education embraces education demographics, employment statistics, and expenditures, and their effect on vocational and adult education. Presented are enrollment and graduation information as they relate to jobs and income, as well as enrollment statistics and expenditures for this segment of education.

Part 5: Issues in Education looks at educational vouchers, school effectiveness, religion and public education, the dilemma of discipline, the growing imbalance between education and work, sexual harassment, merit pay, desegregation, professional liability, and the burgeoning area of computers in the classroom.

Part 6: Sources for Further Information underwent significant changes as compared to previous editions of the *Almanac*. The category of Associations has been expanded to include state organizations, as well as national and specialty education associations, and now contains nearly 400 listings. In addition, State Associations of Independent Colleges is a new category that lists groups that represent private schools of higher education in the U.S.

State Departments of Education, a feature instituted in the last edition, has been updated and expanded to cover not only elementary and secondary education but also the board of regents and/or higher education commissions in each state. State School Board Associations, also introduced in the last edition, has been updated as well.

Periodicals, which lists monthly and quarterly publications, has been expanded to include many university presses, along with a number of new publications in the field of education. Possibly one of the most significant developments in this section is the growth of periodicals that cover computer education or focus on the specific educational concerns of certain regions of the country.

In this edition, Book Publishers now is called Educational and Scholarly Book Publishers. Completely updated in 1984, the section lists more than 650 publishers in the field of education. For the first time, it also lists publishers who specialize in the publication of scholarly works, as well as textbooks.

Foundations now includes nearly 350 separate listings, a major expansion as compared to previous editions. To ease the reader's task of finding appropriate potential funding, this category is subdivided into the following—General, Elementary and Secondary, Higher Education, and Scholarly Aid Programs. Information for this section

is based on data gathered for *The Annual Register of Grant Support*, another Marquis publication.

The editors wish to thank the associations, publications, authors, and governmental bodies who helped in compiling this edition. Particularly, we are grateful to Statistics Canada, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the U.S. Department of Education. Statistics Canada prepared information specifically for this edition so that it paralleled as much as possible the U.S. statistics.

The following libraries also cooperated in our research: Indiana University's South Bend and Bloomington periodicals departments, the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, and Loyola University of Chicago.

The editors hope you find this edition helpful and informative. As always, the Marquis Professional Publications staff welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the scope, content, and organization of *Standard Education Almanac*.

About the Editors

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION

