

Chapter 1 : Recent Education Reform in the United States

Texans for Special Education Reform (TxSER) is the leading grassroots disability organization focused specifically on improving special education to prepare Texas individuals with disabilities for future education, employment, community participation, and independent living.

Classical times[edit] Plato believed that children would never learn unless they wanted to learn. In *The Republic*, he said, " The question concerned the educational value of pre-Christian classical thought: Modern education reforms are increasingly driven by a growing understanding of what works in education and how to go about successfully improving teaching and learning in schools. Classical education is most concerned with answering the who, what, where, and when? Unless carefully taught, group instruction naturally neglects the theoretical "why" and "which" questions that strongly concern fewer students. Classical education in this period also did not teach local vernacular languages and cultures. Instead it taught high-status ancient languages Greek and Latin and their cultures. This produced odd social effects in which an intellectual class might be more loyal to ancient cultures and institutions than to their native vernacular languages and their actual governing authorities. England in the 19th century[edit] Before there were government-funded public schools, education of the lower classes was by the charity school, pioneered in the 19th century by Protestant organizations and adapted by the Roman Catholic Church and governments. Because these schools operated on very small budgets and attempted to serve as many needy children as possible, they were designed to be inexpensive. The basic program was to develop "grammar" schools. These taught only grammar and bookkeeping. This program permitted people to start businesses to make money, and gave them the skills to continue their education inexpensively from books. Joseph Lancaster The ultimate development of the grammar school was by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell who developed the monitorial system. Lancaster started as a poor Quaker in early 19th century London. Bell started the Madras School of India. The monitorial system uses slightly more-advanced students to teach less-advanced students, achieving student-teacher ratios as small as 2, while educating more than a thousand students per adult. Lancaster promoted his system in a piece called *Improvements in Education* that spread widely throughout the English-speaking world. Discipline and labor in a Lancaster school were provided by an economic system. Every job of the school was bid-for by students in scrip, with the largest bid winning. However, any student tutor could auction positions in his or her classes. Besides tutoring, students could use scrip to buy food, school supplies, books, and childish luxuries in a school store. The adult supervisors were paid from the bids on jobs. The students were very clever at reducing their costs, and once invented, improvements were widely adopted in a school. For example, Lancaster students, motivated to save scrip, ultimately rented individual pages of textbooks from the school library, and read them in groups around music stands to reduce textbook costs. Students commonly exchanged tutoring, and paid for items and services with receipts from "down tutoring. As a result, the older children acting as disciplinary monitors tended to become brutal task masters. Also, the schools did not teach submission to orthodox Christian beliefs or government authorities. As a result, most English-speaking countries developed mandatory publicly paid education explicitly to keep public education in "responsible" hands. These elites said that Lancaster schools might become dishonest, provide poor education and were not accountable to established authorities. Lancaster, though motivated by charity, claimed in his pamphlets to be surprised to find that he lived well on the income of his school, even while the low costs made it available to the poorest street-children. Ironically, Lancaster lived on the charity of friends in his later life. Child-study[edit] Jean-Jacques Rousseau Jean-Jacques Rousseau has been called the father of the child-study movement. It has been said that Rousseau "discovered" the child as an object of study. He advocated a radical withdrawal of the child from society and an educational process that utilized the natural potential of the child and its curiosity, teaching it by confronting it with simulated real-life obstacles and conditioning it by experience rather than teaching it intellectually. Horace Mann[edit] In the United States, Horace Mann " of Massachusetts used his political base and role as Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education to promote public education in his home state and nationwide. No one did more than he to establish in the minds

of the American people the conception that education should be universal, non-sectarian, free, and that its aims should be social efficiency, civic virtue, and character, rather than mere learning or the advancement of sectarian ends. Prussia instituted primary school reforms expressly to teach a unified version of the national language, "Hochdeutsch". One significant reform was kindergarten, whose purpose was to have the children spend time in supervised activities in the national language, when the children were young enough that they could easily learn new language skills. Since most modern schools copy the Prussian models, children start school at an age when their language skills remain plastic, and they find it easy to learn the national language. This was an intentional design on the part of the Prussians. At this age, they could have been taught English in school, and achieved a proficiency indistinguishable from a native speaker. In other countries, such as the Soviet Union, France, Spain, and Germany this approach has dramatically improved reading and math test scores for linguistic minorities.

Dewey[edit] John Dewey John Dewey, a philosopher and educator based in Chicago and New York, helped conceptualize the role of American and international education during the first four decades of the 20th century. An important member of the American Pragmatist movement, he carried the subordination of knowledge to action into the educational world by arguing for experiential education that would enable children to learn theory and practice simultaneously; a well-known example is the practice of teaching elementary physics and biology to students while preparing a meal. He was a harsh critic of "dead" knowledge disconnected from practical human life. He presented his educational theories as a synthesis of the two views. His slogan was that schools should encourage children to "Learn by doing. He was a widely known and influential thinker, but his views and suggestions were often misunderstood by those who sought to apply them, leading some historians to suggest that there was never an actual implementation on any considerable scale of Deweyan progressive education.

The administrative progressives[edit] Horace Mann, regarded as the father of American public education The form of educational progressivism which was most successful in having its policies implemented has been dubbed "administrative progressivism" by historians. This began to be implemented in the early 20th century. While influenced particularly in its rhetoric by Dewey and even more by his popularizers, administrative progressivism was in its practice much more influenced by the Industrial Revolution and the concept economies of scale. The administrative progressives are responsible for many features of modern American education, especially American high schools: Lateth and early 21st century United states [edit] It has been suggested that this section be split out into another article titled Education reform in the United States. Discuss July See also: Hirsch put forth an influential attack on one or more versions of progressive education, advocating an emphasis on "cultural literacy"â€”the facts, phrases, and texts that Hirsch asserted every American had once known and that now only some knew, but was still essential for decoding basic texts and maintaining communication. A state would create a committee to adopt standards, and choose a quantitative instrument to assess whether the students knew the required content or could perform the required tasks. Congress in the s. Many of these goals were based on the principles of outcomes-based education, and not all of the goals were attained by the year as was intended. The standards-based reform movement culminated in the No Child Left Behind Act of, which as of [update] is still an active nationwide mandate in the United States. OBE reforms usually had other disputed methods, such as constructivist mathematics and whole language, added onto them. Other reform movements were school-to-work, which would require all students except those in a university track to spend substantial class time on a job site. See also Uncommon Schools. Trump Administration[edit] President Donald Trump relegated concerns in education to state governments. Giving states more authority can help prevent considerable discrepancies in educational performance across different states. It can also provide reasonable funding along with technical aid to help states with similar demographics collaborate in improving their public education programs. Trump appointed Betsy DeVos as education secretary. She also supported the idea of leaving education to state governments under the new K legislation. The primary approach to that rule has not changed significantly. These institutions which include government, higher education, healthcare, and mass media are still attuned with the traditional or original economic system. All of these stakeholders will reach out to bigger audiences and use similar tools and technologies to achieve their goals. President George Bush approved this statute in on August 12, Congress can provide more students with access to pertinent skills in

education according to 21st century career opportunities. It has given assistance to some 7, high school students juniors and seniors since by means of one-on-one coaching as well as exposure to STEM areas and careers. The Grant or specific amount of money is given by the government every school year for disadvantaged students who need to pay tuition fees in college. These issues raised doubts as to the effectiveness of the conventional approach to higher education. This is the first law the American president signed that made meaningful amendments to the federal education system. The move to change the Higher Education Act was also deferred. However, some advocacy organizations like Advanced CTE [45] and Association for Career and Technical Education [46] are apprehensive that said law can urge states to set passive laws for Career and Technical Education. The new legislation takes effect on July 1, and takes the place of the Carl D.

Chapter 2 : Special Education in the Schools

Reforming Special Education. Fishkin, Anne S.; Sullivan, Michael This paper describes education reform as an integrated effort to modify not only the structure and elements of the education system but also the culture or belief structure of that system.

In any school system, special education is a means of enlarging the capacity of the system to serve the educational needs of all children. The particular function of special education within the schools and the education departments of other institutions is to identify children with unusual needs and to aid in the effective fulfillment of those needs. Both regular and special school programs play a role in meeting the educational needs of children with exceptionalities. A primary goal of educators should be to help build accommodative learning opportunities for children with exceptionalities in regular educational programs. In the implementation of this goal, special education can serve as a support system, and special educators can assist regular school personnel in managing the education of children with exceptionalities. When the special placement of a child is required, the aim of the placement should be to maximize the development and freedom of the child rather than to accommodate the regular classroom. Special education should function within and as a part of the regular, public school framework. Within this framework, the function of special education should be to participate in the creation and maintenance of a total educational environment suitable for all children. From their base in the regular school system, special educators can foster the development of specialized resources by coordinating their specialized contributions with the contributions of the regular school system. One of the primary goals of special educators should be the enhancement of regular school programs as a resource for all children. Special education must provide an administrative organization to facilitate achievement for children with exceptionalities of the same educational goals as those pursued by other children. This purpose can be achieved through structures that are sufficiently compatible with those employed by regular education to ensure easy, unbroken passage of children across regular-special education administrative lines for whatever periods of time may be necessary, as well as by structures that are sufficiently flexible to adjust quickly to changing task demands and child growth needs. The major purpose of the special education administrative organization is to provide and maintain those environmental conditions in schools that are most conducive to the growth and learning of children with special needs. Under suitable conditions, education within the regular school environment can provide the optimal opportunity for most children with exceptionalities. Consequently, the system for the delivery of special education must enable the incorporation of special help and opportunities in regular educational settings. Children should spend only as much time outside regular class settings as is necessary to control learning variables that are critical to the achievement of specified learning goals. Special education is a cross-disciplinary, problem-oriented field of services which is directed toward mobilizing and improving a variety of resources to meet the educational needs of children and youth with exceptionalities. Indeed, special education developed as a highly specialized area of education in order to provide children with exceptionalities with the same opportunities as other children for a meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling life. Perhaps the most important concept that has been developed in special education as the result of experiences with children with exceptionalities is that of the fundamental individualism of every child. The aspiration of special educators is to see every child as a unique composite of potentials, abilities, and learning needs for whom an educational program must be designed to meet his or her particular needs. From its beginnings, special education had championed the cause of children with learning problems. It is as the advocates of such children and of the concept of individualization that special education can come to play a major creative role in the mainstream of education. The special competencies of special educators are more than a collection of techniques and skills. They comprise a body of knowledge, methods, and philosophical tenets that are the hallmark of the profession. As professionals, special educators are dedicated to the optimal education of children with exceptionalities and they reject the misconception of schooling that is nothing but custodial care. The focus of all education should be the unique learning needs of the individual child as a total functioning organism. All educators should recognize and

accept that special and regular education share the same fundamental goals. Special education expands the capacity of schools to respond to the educational needs of all students. As advocates of the right of all children to an appropriate education, special educators affirm their professionalism. Children with special educational needs should be served in regular classes and neighborhood schools insofar as these arrangements are conducive to good educational progress. It is sometimes necessary, however, to provide special supplementary services for children with exceptionalities or to remove them from parts or all of the regular educational program. It may even be necessary to remove some children from their homes and communities in order for them to receive education and related services in residential schools, hospitals, or training centers. The Council believes that careful study and compelling reasons are necessary to justify such removal. The Council charges each public agency to ensure that a continuum of alternative placements, ranging from regular class programs to residential settings, is available to meet the needs of children with exceptionalities. Children with exceptionalities enrolled in special school programs should be given every appropriate opportunity to participate in educational, nonacademic, and extracurricular programs and services with children who are not disabled or whose disabilities are less severe. While special schools for children with exceptionalities and other separate educational facilities may function as part of an effective special educational delivery system, it is indefensible to confine groups of exceptional pupils inappropriately in such settings as a result of the failure to develop a full continuum of less restrictive programs. The Council condemns as educationally and morally indefensible the practice of categorical isolation by exceptionality without full consideration of the unique needs of each student, and the rejection of children who are difficult to teach from regular school situations. When insufficient program options exist and when decisions are poorly made, children with exceptionalities are denied their fundamental rights to free public education. In so acting, education authorities violate the basic tenets of our democratic societies. Like all children, children with exceptionalities need environmental stability, emotional nurturance, and social acceptance. Decisions about the delivery of special education to children with exceptionalities should be made after careful consideration of their home, school, and community relationships, their personal preferences, and effects on self-concept, in addition to other sound educational considerations. To achieve such outcomes, there must exist for all children, youth, and young adults a rich variety of early intervention, educational, and vocational program options and experiences. Access to these programs and experiences should be based on individual educational need and desired outcomes. Furthermore, students and their families or guardians, as members of the planning team, may recommend the placement, curriculum option, and the exit document to be pursued. CEC believes that a continuum of services must be available for all children, youth, and young adults. CEC also believes that the concept of inclusion is a meaningful goal to be pursued in our schools and communities. In addition, CEC believes children, youth, and young adults with disabilities should be served whenever possible in general education classrooms in inclusive neighborhood schools and community settings. Such settings should be strengthened and supported by an infusion of specially trained personnel and other appropriate supportive practices according to the individual needs of the child. Policy Implications Schools In inclusive schools, the building administrator and staff with assistance from the special education administration should be primarily responsible for the education of children, youth, and young adults with disabilities. The administrator s and other school personnel must have available to them appropriate support and technical assistance to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities. In return for greater autonomy, the school administrator and staff should establish high standards for each child, youth, and young adult, and should be held accountable for his or her progress toward outcomes. Communities Inclusive schools must be located in inclusive communities; therefore, CEC invites all educators, other professionals, and family members to work together to create early intervention, educational, and vocational programs and experiences that are collegial, inclusive, and responsive to the diversity of children, youth, and young adults. Further, the policy makers should fund programs in nutrition, early intervention, health care, parent education, and other social support programs that prepare all children, youth, and young adults to do well in school. There can be no meaningful school reform, nor inclusive schools, without funding of these key prerequisites. As important, there must be interagency agreements and collaboration with local governments and business to help prepare students to assume a

constructive role in an inclusive community. Moreover, special educators should be trained with an emphasis on their roles in inclusive schools and community settings. They also must learn the importance of establishing ambitious goals for their students and of using appropriate means of monitoring the progress of children, youth, and young adults. Teacher training institutions are challenged to instruct all teacher candidates about current trends in the education of exceptional children. State and provincial departments of education are charged with the responsibility to promote inservice activities that will update all professional educators and provide ongoing, meaningful staff development programs. Administrators can have a significant positive influence upon the professional lives of teaching staff and, therefore, upon the educational lives of children. Administrative personnel of school districts are, therefore, charged with the responsibility to promote inservice education and interprofessional exchanges which openly confront contemporary issues in the education of all children. The Council believes that the central element for the delivery of all the services required by a person with an exceptionality must be an individually designed program. Such a program must contain the objectives to be attained, resources to be allocated, evaluation procedures and time schedule to be employed, and a termination date for ending the program and procedure for developing a new one. The process for developing an individualized program must adhere to all the procedural safeguards of due process of law and must involve the individual person and his or her family, surrogate, advocate, or legal representative. Most significant is our position that all individuals are entitled to adequate representation when such decisions are being made. We support the increasing efforts on the part of governments to officially require the assignment of a surrogate when a family member is not available for purposes of adequately representing the interests of the person with an exceptionality. It is also our position that the individual consumer must be given every opportunity to make his or her own decisions, that this is a right provided to all citizens, and that any abridgement of that individual right can only occur upon the proper exercise of law. For this reason, all programs should contain plans to evaluate their effectiveness, and the results of such evaluations should be presented for public review. The Council believes that all legislation to fund existing programs or create new programs should contain mechanisms for effective evaluation and that governmental advisory bodies should review the findings of evaluations on a regular basis. External as well as internal systems of evaluation should be developed to aid in the evaluation of programs for children and youth with exceptionalities. As the result of early attitudes and programs that stressed assistance for children with severe disabilities, the field developed a vocabulary and practices based on the labeling and categorizing of children. In recent decades, labeling and categorizing were extended to children with milder degrees of exceptionality. Unfortunately, the continued use of labels tends to rigidify the thinking of all educators concerning the significance and purpose of special education and thus to be dysfunctional and even harmful for children. These problems are magnified when the field organizes and regulates its programs on the basis of classification systems that define categories of children according to such terms. Many of these classifications are oriented to etiology, prognosis, or necessary medical treatment rather than to educational classifications. They are thus of little value to the schools. Simple psychometric thresholds, which have sometimes been allowed to become pivotal considerations in educational decision making, present another set of labeling problems. Indeed, special educators at their most creative are the advocates of children who are not well served by schools except through special arrangements. To further the understanding of and programming for such children, special educators as well as other educational personnel should eliminate the use of simplistic categorizing. No one can deny the importance of some of the variables of traditional significance in special education such as intelligence, hearing, and vision. However, these variables in all their complex forms and degrees must be assessed in terms of educational relevance for a particular child. Turning them into typologies that may contribute to excesses in labeling and categorizing children is indefensible and should be eliminated. In the past, many legislative and regulatory systems have specified criteria for including children in an approved category as the starting point for specialized programming and funding. This practice places high incentives on the labeling of children and undoubtedly results in the erroneous placement of many children. It is desirable that financial aids be tied to educational programs rather than to children and that systems for allocating children to specialized programs be much more open than in the past. Special educators should

enhance the accommodative capacity of schools and other educational agencies to serve children with special needs more effectively. In identifying such children, special educators should be concerned with the identification of their educational needs, not with generalized labeling or categorizing of children. To further discourage the labeling and categorizing of children, programs should be created on the basis of educational functions served rather than on the basis of categories of children served. Regulatory systems that enforce the rigid categorization of pupils as a way of allocating them to specialized programs are indefensible. Financial aid for special education should be tied to specialized programs rather than to finding and placing children in those categories and programs. Psychological tests of many kinds saturate our society and their use can result in the irreversible deprivation of opportunity to many children, especially those already burdened by poverty and prejudice. Most group intelligence tests are multileveled and standardized on grade samples, thus necessitating the use of interpolated and extrapolated norms and scores. Most group intelligence tests, standardized on LEAs rather than individual students, are not standardized on representative populations. In spite of the use of nonrepresentative group standardization procedures, the norms are expressed in individual scores. Most group intelligence tests, standardized on districts which volunteer, may have a bias in the standardization. Many of the more severely handicapped and those expelled or suspended have no opportunity to influence the norms. Group intelligence tests are heavily weighted with language and will often yield spurious estimates of the intelligence of non-English speaking or language different children. A group intelligence test score, although spurious, may still be a good predictor of school performance for some children. School achievement predicts future school performance as well as group intelligence tests, thus leaving little justification for relying on group intelligence tests.

Chapter 3 : Special Education Reform? - Bagura News

Reforming Special Education. MAY 26, Continue reading the main story Share This Page. Continue reading the main story. About the Archive. This is a digitized version of an article from The.

Recent Education Reform in the United States I have never let my schooling interfere with my education. On this day, President George W. He came to announce that the school had been named a federal Blue Ribbon School, 1 of 12 in Illinois and nationwide. With Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings by his side, Bush emphasized that this Blue Ribbon honor was not the same as those that might have been given at an earlier time, during what he termed a "kind of a feel-good era. Math scores had increased even more dramatically" up almost 52 percentage points to Bush called Greeley "a center of excellence" and praised the school principal as a person who understood that "we have got to set high standards for our children and work with the teachers to achieve those standards" Bush, Greeley was selected as the site for a reason: It proved, at least in his mind, that NCLB was working well. With a significant Hispanic population and new immigrants among its students, Greeley "is a school that is exceeding expectations because of high standards and using the accountability system as a tool to make sure that no child is left behind" Bush, The Greeley event highlighted the defining characteristics of education reform efforts in the United States during the early years of the 21st century: Although it intends to ensure that every child receives a good education so no child is left behind, its definition of good education is good scores on standardized tests in reading and math. The law requires that all children be given state assessments in reading and math in grades 3 through 8. If a child fails the test, she is judged not to have received a good education from the school. If the school does not make Adequate Yearly Progress AYP on student test scores, the school is considered not providing a good education to its students and is labeled "in need of improvement. Schools that produce good scores are considered good education providers. Those that see significant increases in test scores, such as Greeley, are rewarded and honored. Although the current version of NCLB does not focus on high schools, it requires reading and math to be tested at least once from grades 10 to 12, and testing in science was proposed by the Bush administration. In addition, 22 states have enacted burgeoning high school reforms requiring students to pass a state exit exam to receive their high school diploma. Math, reading, and perhaps science have become the most valued content of education. Students who perform poorly on a state math or reading test are considered at risk, no matter how well they do in other areas. As Bush said during his visit to Greeley, his philosophy started with a "refusal to accept school systems that do not teach every child how to read and write and add and subtract" Bush, The virtually exclusive emphasis on math, reading, and science is also evidenced by the American Competitiveness Initiative ACI Bush proposed in his State of the Union address: Tonight I propose to train 70, high school teachers to lead advanced-placement courses in math and science, bring 30, math and science professionals to teach in classrooms, and give early help to students who struggle with math, so they have a better chance at good, high-wage jobs. The high school reforms in many states show the same tendency. Many states have increased the number of required courses in math, English, and science. And in most states, the high school exit exams are primarily in those three subjects. The almost exclusive emphasis on math, reading, and science is also clearly evidenced by funding appropriations. No other subjects have received the same attention. Department of Education initiative titled Strengthening Education: Department of Education, The High School Reform Initiative will bring high standards and accountability to high schools by aligning their academic goals and performance with the No Child Left Behind Act. Additional Current Math and Science Initiatives: The National Language Security Initiative will address our shortage of people who speak languages critical to our national security and global competitiveness by encouraging earlier and stronger coursework in critical need foreign languages from kindergarten through postsecondary education; increasing proficiency among all speakers; and providing incentives for government service and teaching critical need foreign languages U. Foreign language education is the only other subject mentioned besides reading, math, and science, but it is the last item, and no specific dollar amount or actions are specified. Standards and Accountability Accountability is an exercise in hope. When we raise academic standards,

children raise their academic sights. When children are regularly tested, teachers know where and how to improve. When scores are known to parents, parents are empowered to push for change. When accountability for our schools is real, the results for our children are real. Department of Education to explain NCLB best explains the logic of the reform and underscores the central role of accountability, standards, and testing in the reform efforts. No Child Left Behind required that all states develop rigorous curriculum standards in math and reading following its passage, and in science by Today all 50 states have developed such standards and grade-level expectations. These standards must be reviewed and approved by the U. To ensure implementation of these standards, tests must be developed. Every state has developed standardized tests according to these standards. Some states even prescribed textbooks to go with these standards, requiring publishing companies and authors to include and cover certain topics in depth. No Child Left Behind has also mandated an extensive accountability system involving the state and the local education agency LEA. Specific responsibilities are assigned to the various agencies involved in education, and punitive consequences are explicitly spelled out if the agency fails to fulfill its responsibilities. States and schools have developed elaborate systems to collect, analyze, and report data required by NCLB to show Adequate Yearly Progress. To further hold schools accountable, data on student performance must be published in local papers, and a school report card, with information about school performance as judged by NCLB requirements, must be provided to parents.

Closing the Achievement Gap: Goals of Recent Reform Efforts The massive reform efforts in the United States have been intended to close two types of so-called achievement gaps in order to deliver a better future for America and all Americans. The first is the gap inside the United States and among the different subgroups of the population; the second is the gap between the United States and other countries. As America enters the 21st Century full of hope and promise, too many of our neediest students are being left behind. Today, nearly 70 percent of inner city fourth graders are unable to read at a basic level on national reading tests. Our high school seniors trail students in Cyprus and South Africa on international math tests. For example, results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress NAEP show that 39 percent of white students scored at the proficient level or higher in 4th grade reading, but only 12 percent of black students and 14 percent of Hispanic students did so National Center for Education Statistics, b. The gap in math was even larger, with 42 percent of white 4th graders scoring at the proficient level or above and just 10 percent of black students and 15 percent of Hispanic students achieving the same result. Thirty-eight percent of 4th graders who were eligible for free and reduced lunch scored below basic in math, whereas only 12 percent of those who were not eligible scored at the same level National Center for Education Statistics, c. Similar gaps exist in the dropout rate and the graduation rate. In , the dropout rate for white, African American, and Hispanic youth was 5. A study on high school graduation rates Swanson, shows similar disparities: That rate is well below the national graduation rate of 70 percent, and even falls short of the average for urban districts across the country 60 percent. Only six of these 50 principal districts reach or exceed the national average. In the most extreme cases Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, and Indianapolis , fewer than 35 percent of students graduate with a diploma. The sense of an economic threat from other countries has long been associated with the sense that the American education system is much inferior to those of its foreign competitors. The achievement gap between U. In all these tests, the United States has not fared well. On the advanced math test, of the 15 countries participating, the United States was outscored by 11 countries. The PISA results were no better; American year-olds ranked 24th among students in 40 countries that participated in the study Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century [National Academies], The disappointing news is that between and , U. The gap is also identified in terms of the number of students pursuing degrees in math, science, engineering, and technology. Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future, written by a panel of 20 prominent individuals with diverse backgrounds. The panel presented the following information: Estimates of the number of engineers, computer scientists, and information technology students who obtain 2-, 3-, or 4-year degrees vary. One estimate is that in , China graduated about , engineers, computer scientists, and information technologists with 4-year degrees, while the United States graduated about , China also graduated about , with 3-year degrees in these same fields, while the United States graduated about 85, with 2- or 3-year degrees. Over the past 3 years alone, both China and India have doubled their production of 3- and 4-year

degrees in these fields, while the U. To some, these kinds of gaps spell clear danger to the future of the United States. People in China and India are starving. In , Robert Compton, a venture capitalist, produced a documentary film to show how Indian and Chinese students are outdoing their American counterparts in education. The film, *Two Million Minutes: A Global Examination*, compares the lives of six students in China, India, and the United States through their final year of high school. The point of the comparison is clear, at least according to the filmmaker: American students are squandering their precious two million minutes—the estimated time that students spend in high school—playing video games and partying, while their peers in China and India spend more hours studying math and science, with a strong motivation to enter the best colleges because they all aspire to become top scientists and engineers. The filmmaker compares the situation to the context surrounding Sputnik: Are we doing enough with the time we have to ensure the best future for all? The Education for Innovation Initiative, begins as follows: Almost 50 years ago, the Soviet Union shocked Americans by launching Sputnik, the first Earth orbit satellite. Department of Education expressed similar thoughts in in a report titled *Answering the Challenge of a Changing World: Strengthening Education for the 21st Century*: This global challenge requires bold action and leadership. America has done it before. An average of double-digit growth in gross domestic product GDP over two decades propelled China ahead of the United Kingdom, making it the fourth-largest economy in the world, after the United States, Japan, and Germany in . And India has become the epicenter of the high-tech boom. Multinational information technology companies have rushed to set up research and development centers in India. It clocked an 8. But more unsettling to the United States is the future. China and India may have found the secret to turning their combined two billion citizens into highly competitive workers:

Chapter 4 : Education reform - Wikipedia

Issues that are driving the reform of special education funding are outlined, including the need for greater flexibility in placement and use, rising special education costs and enrollments, concerns over the efficiency of special education services, the strict categorical nature of special education services, and fiscal policies that work at.

All public schools now provide access to educational programs for students with disabilities SWD. Indeed, SWD are entitled to a free appropriate public education FAPE that is reasonably calculated to provide them with a meaningful educational benefit. Today, many SWD are educated in inclusive settings with access to the regular education curriculum. More than six million SWD across the nation receive access to the programs and the education they need to meet higher curriculum standards and lead fuller, more productive lives. It requires that all children, including SWDs, have research-based educational curricula with demonstrated effectiveness, especially in the areas of reading and math. However, upon closer examination, because of the requirements and cost of these special education programs, other areas of education are adversely affected. It is fair and just for us now to seek a better balance to serve all our school children. It is prudent to seek new pathways to find this balance if schools are to be educationally effective, fiscally responsible, and responsive to all in their charge. Can the special educational system be reformed and streamlined without diminishing appropriate services for SWDs? The Problem While the rest of the nation educates slightly more than 13 percent of its students through the IDEA, the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island share the dubious distinction of placing the highest percentage While most of these students need support, the cost to the state and school districts of providing special services is seriously affecting our ability to invest in other educational areas and to promote education reform for all students. A Case Study of Massachusetts. Most school reform dollars allocated for all students have, instead, been funneled to meet the rising costs of special education. Funding for special education comes off the top in our public schools. Other numbers tell the same story. Between and , the cost of special education in Massachusetts as a percentage of total district expenditures rose from While spending for regular education rose by In , MASS updated its report on special education. Although he agreed with the goal of educating all children with disabilities, he also foresaw that the law as written had these faults: It was too cumbersome, entailing too much bureaucracy and paperwork; It was too costly, claiming unrealistic and excessive authorization levels for funding; It promised more than it could deliver, falsely raising expectations. Although the law has been rewritten and reauthorized by Congress many times since , becoming in its latest version the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of IDEA , sufficient reform has yet to occur. The system is driven by complex regulations, excessive paperwork, and ever-increasing administrative demands at all levels. The culture of compliance has often developed from the pressures of litigation. IDEA has done little to address this burden of paperwork: The Massachusetts regulations add another 35 pages, whose contents sometimes conflict with those of the IDEA and create confusion for educators and parents. One of the key causes of this avalanche of paperwork and the high cost of special education is the adversarial framework within which special education takes place. While Congress had initially tried to create a more cooperative approach, where schools and parents would work together to educate SWDs, a litigious atmosphere has taken over, feeding off the mistrust it promotes. It added that the parents, however, are not powerless since they are entitled to an independent evaluation: IDEA thus ensures parental access to an expert who can evaluate all the materials that the school must make available, and who can give an independent opinion. They are not left to challenge the government without a realistic opportunity to access the necessary evidence, or without an expert with the firepower to match the opposition. Even worse than litigation is the fear of litigation, because it infects everything. The IDEA is the fourth most litigated federal statute. It fields almost hearing requests per year, of which some 94 percent do not result in decisions. Among the unintended consequences of the IDEA is that these professionals appear to have a stake in litigation or the fear of litigation, even as it breeds mistrust between those who, in the end, have to find a way to work together for the sake of the child. Because the only entity that is legally required to provide for SWDs is the public school system, insurance companies and the other state social agencies are able to shirk their

responsibilities for these children. However, they work around the fact that SWDs have no legal entitlements at other agencies or entities. Thus, those entities can deny all types of services to children on budgetary grounds, even when those services are within their mandate and are not educational. Due to the special education entitlement, public schools are left with the burden of escalating needs and costs. Educators, state officials, parent representatives, and other leaders in education met to celebrate the anniversary of the IDEA, honor the progress of special education in Massachusetts, and develop reform proposals. The most common responses were the adversarial climate, the litigious atmosphere, the burdensome procedures, excessive paperwork, and the lack of trust, respect, and dignity for school personnel. The first three require no legislative action, just the support of the public and Department of Education DOE, and modest funding. SPEDCO seeks to have the first three reforms piloted without delay, even as we wait for the legislature to work on the fourth proposal: To expedite the delivery of special education services to SWDs while minimizing procedural and paperwork requirements. To restore trust between parents and school systems. It establishes basic structures and processes including an information packet, to be developed within which parents and schools can work cooperatively while reducing the number of regulatory steps. Both parties have the right to opt back into the IDEA and Massachusetts procedures anytime by informing the other party. Initial discussion with the DOE has confirmed that this option would not require legislation, and it appears interested in pursuing this avenue with us. Services for students to start as soon as agreed upon without protracted procedural steps. Quicker resolution of problems and conflicts. More direct instructional time. Less frustration and more trust between schools and families. The cost savings from Procedure Lite could be enormous. We estimate that special education teachers may spend 25 percent of their time doing non-instructional work such as documenting compliance or organizing and attending meetings. We recommend that this option be piloted in selected school districts to study its effectiveness and implications for broader use. To provide effective, impartial, and student-centered dispute resolution focused on delivering a FAPE to special needs students. To reduce the need for litigation procedures, and provide prompt, appropriate delivery of educational services. To provide expertise that targets the student rather than future litigation. The BSEA has shown interest in this approach during preliminary discussions. This model would shift the focus of family, schools, and BSEA to the child, away from positioning for the strongest case in litigation. Resolution would be reached within 30 days from the time the parents and school jointly choose a FAPE expert. A decrease in the number and intensity of disputes. The restoration of trust between schools and parents. The cost savings from the FAPE expert model could be substantial. There is no hard data concerning what the present adversarial system costs, but we will try to make a rough estimate of the cost of an average BSEA hearing for schools. We do not estimate the cost of maintaining the BSEA. There is no data to tell us how many of the approximately hearing requests begin down the path toward a hearing or how far down that path they proceed. Such data would be useful to have. We do know that 34 decisions and 17 rulings were written in FY Thus, even with only 51 decisions and rulings in a year, several million dollars are spent that could be used for better educational purposes. A Collaborative Training Model Goals: To shift the training paradigm away from compliance toward student outcomes. In current practice, school districts spend scarce money and effort in defensive training to assure compliance with procedural requirements. Special education paperwork burdens are onerous and often cited as the reason professionals leave the field. The shift in training will refocus educators and parents on improving teaching and learning strategies and on building cooperative working relationships. No new legislation would be required, just the shifting of money already in the system. Department of Education training funds will target training for educators and parents on successful education and relationship-building practices to enhance trust and communication. Fewer disputes and less spending on litigation. More funds and attention to improving student outcomes. Conformity Legislation Model To streamline legal requirements so that educators can focus on educational outcomes. In addition to the federal law, the IDEA, Massachusetts has its own law Chapter 71B and its own set of regulations governing special education. Some Massachusetts requirements just create more toil and paperwork. In , California passed conformity legislation that eliminated most requirements for special education that went beyond the IDEA. The effort streamlined special education, making it less confusing, more efficient, and more effective. Fewer conflicts and disputes because of

divergences between state and federal regulation. The state will have the energy to tackle other needs, such as enforcing interagency agreements. Educators and parents will have the energy to focus on improving outcomes for all students. This proposal, of course, will require state legislation. Conclusion The landscape has changed greatly for special education students in the last thirty years. So much has been accomplished in terms of programs, access, funding, and fairness. However, without timely and radical reform, these gains, achieved with great effort and difficulty, are at risk. Moreover, education for all children in the Commonwealth may be compromised.

Chapter 5 : Four Proposals to Reform Special Education – Better Government Competition

The Texas Education Agency released a preliminary plan for reforming special education Thursday. In the plan, the TEA addresses federal concerns about Texas' failure to serve students with.