

# Argumentative essay on the pros and cons of single-sex schools

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Education is a conventional mode of receiving knowledge needed for people to pursue professional aspirations. What shape such aspirations are schools that narrow children's scope of interests, determine the areas of expertise and, most importantly, provide with knowledge. To make school environment better in terms of efficiency, school officials came to introduce class differentiation years ago. The system of single-class schools had not regained its popularity with American parents until 2000s. On paper, single class schools handle the problem of bullying, however, not necessarily. Better school performance and mental skills development are believed to be the case in such schools in spite of possible criticism. Overall, school students achieve better results though the instrumentality of gender separation; however, there are a variety of disadvantages not be counted away.

Novotney (58) notes that since “ No Child Left Behind” Act being signed into law back in 2002, the popularity of single-sex education has been on the rise. This piece of legislation made it possible for regional educational agencies to apply the funds of the so-called “ Innovative Programs” for lending support to same-gender classrooms and schools in line with the existing legislation. The US Department of education, in turn, reduced restrictions on single-sex education by easing its Title 9 regulation in 2006. As of today, there are a total of 95 single-sex public schools, as per NASSPE, or the National Association for Single Sex Public Education, with as many as 445 public coeducational schools offering single-sex classrooms. According to Leonard Sax, philosophy doctor and NASSPE executive director, it is not that separating boys and girls grants success; it is that such schools take

advantage of gender-specific teaching methods instrumental in identifying boys' and girl's merits and strengths. Such mode of education is popular, not but that a good number of experts are inclined to believe that single-sex class success originates in both the focus on extracurricular activities and a demanding curriculum irrespective of whether or not the opposite sex was present (Novotney 58). Anyway, parents ought to think long and hard before making the decision of sending their children to single-sex schools, as there are clear arguments and counterarguments of doing so.

The proponents of single-sex education insist on brain difference being one of key rationales for class separation. A longitudinal pediatric neuroimaging study from 2007 conducted by neuroscientist team from the National Institute of Mental Health have concluded that different brain areas tend to develop in a different tempo and sequence in girls as compared to boys. The occipital lobe linked to visual processing shows the signs of development in girls aged between 6 and 10 years, whereas boys have the region cells grow until after they turn 14 years of age (Novotney 58). With that in mind, the expert points to the brain properties of girls developing at a much faster pace as opposed to boys, which rationalizes class separation, as girls require exercises developing these areas of brain much earlier than boys do. Hence, class segregation creates opportunities for a more harmonious development of school students based on the principle of organism maturation, so to speak.

Novotney (58) goes on to note that studies on gender language divergence have demonstrated that three-year-old girls' language processing far outpaces that of five-year-old boys. It is safe to assume that, in dividing

classes on the basis of gender, educators are afforded the ample opportunity of employing language-based exercises, with the members of the same sex in class. Thus, the value of such exercises will be proportionally distributed among all the students, bar none, more importantly, students whose brain has matured enough to apprehend information. Parker and Rennie (n. p.) admit that teachers may employ not only instructional techniques, but also exercises that boys believe more exciting, which will activate their attention and information apprehension (qtd. in Briegel 6). NASSPE (n. p.), Parker and Rennie (n. p.), Warrington and Younger (n. p.) are convinced that class separation allows educators to use whatever technique necessary, without having to alternate one method with the other (qtd. in Briegel 6). According to Novotney (58), psychologist and philosophy doctor, Lisa Darmour claims same sex classes to enable teachers to apply strategies inapplicable in coeducational classes. To quote an example, boys are good at math courses while girls show shades of doubt, when dealing with difficult math-related material, as per Carol Dweck, philosophy doctor and Stanford University psychologist.

It is worth noting that Lee and Bryk (387-388) observations are indicative of single-sex schools girls' and boys' performing more homework for their classes, as compared with their unisex school counterparts. In addition, boys from single-sex classes were more willing to join science and mathematics courses than their peers from schools for both sexes were (qtd. in Briegel 7). Unlike their coeducational-class peers, girls from single-sex classes, according to Gillibrand, Robinson, Brawn, and Osborn (356), show abiding faith in their physics knowledge, which leads them to join respective courses

and score high test results. Girls, in their turn, appear hesitant and less willing to become actively involved in laboratories in unisex classes, with boys more superior to them in physics (qtd. in Briegel 7). Riordan (n. p.) notes that, of both sexes, girls appear to benefit more from a single-sex education mode. Boys and girls, whether from Catholic or public high schools, far outclassed their peers from unisex schools in math scores (Streitmatter 37). To overcome complexes, to deal with gender and inferiority stereotypes, and to strengthen students' educational determination is what single-sex system is all about. Parker and Rennie (n. p.) claim single-sex classes to enhance internal cooperation and make student-to-student interaction more respectful in all-girl classes.

Lisa Darmour believes that one-sex schools help students concentrate more on studies rather than opposite sex peers, they feel affection towards and try to put it on display (Novotney 58). Lee and Bryk (n. p.) also agree on the point that opposite gender no longer poses distraction in single-sex classrooms, with student contingent composed of peers supportive of other children's comments and ideas. Interestingly, once in such educational environments, girls fall to pursuing the so-called male-dominated disciplines, such as the sciences, mathematics, and the industrial arts (qtd. in Briegel 5). According to Warrington and Younger (n. p.), when in single-sex environment, boys may go all the way to taking academic risks since getting ashamed is far easier to take in the group of males than if it were in a unisex classroom (qtd. in Briegel 6). Zero girls' presence may incite boys to assume role they perceive as being masculine.

Whatever advantages, class segregation has plenty of negative implications

and consequences in it. According to Novotney (58), coed proponents and researchers report classroom segregation to result in a greater gender discrimination, whether it be at school or in classroom. Students were also reported to have problems dealing with the opposite sex in their later life. Schools are the preparation for adult life, as per Diane Halpern, APA ex-president, that is to say, it is exactly at school that boys and girls learn how to cooperate with each other. While in the workplace, they are sure to have issues of interaction with opposite sex colleagues, without having this type of experience at school. Halpern, Eliot, Bigler, Fabes, Hanish, Hyde, Liben, and Martin (1707) suggest that, apart from decreasing boys' and girls' opportunities of working together, separation causes them to spend the minimum amount of time with opposite sex peers. Boys' spending more time with other boys grow aggressive and develop behavioral problems with time, which does not allow them to assume a wider range of attitudes and behaviors (Halpern, et a. 1707). A study conducted by Doctor Lynn Liben and her graduate student, Lacey Hilliard showed that class segregation contributed to stereotypical attitude increase, which was in inverse proportion to the interest of playing with opposite sex peers (Novotney 58). Children come developing gender stereotypes in environment where gender division is explicit, which has the potential of causing interpersonal relationship issues at some point in the future. Education equity director with the Feminist Majority Foundation, Sue Klein suggests that class division produces inequality; what is more, plenty of single-sex classrooms and schools overstate and induce sex stereotypes by putting focus on aggression and rivalry among boys and inactivity among girls by means of setting

expectations about boys' not being good at writing. According to Halpern, Eliot, Bigler, Fabes, Hanish, Hyde, Liben, and Martin (1977), some scientists insist as if class segregation eliminated sexism, or gender stereotypes suggesting men's superiority over women. Children start regarding sex as a core human attribute as well as developing strong intergroup biases.

Novotney (58) admits that the biggest problem is that a good many educational programs sex-separated public educational programs are illicit inasmuch as they do not provide parents with a coed choice for children.

More importantly than that, schools officials do not display the interconnection between single-sex program and educational goal (Novotney 58).

According to Bailey (n. p.), single-sex schools blight the decades of anti-segregation civil movements and sex-related discrimination cessation attempts. In Arlington Community High School and a number of other educational establishments, educators have come to separate students in lunchrooms, hallways, and even school buses while other schools have established separate classes for both sexes in physics and algebra. Not only does deepen the once battled sex-based societal segregation, but it also creates judicial collision. To put an example, it was because of segregation that West Virginia middle school program controversy required hearing and settlement in court. The program imposed different expectations of girls as well as boys, with the latter permitted plenty of moving about and the former ordered to sit quietly. Overall, far from yielding no results due to, segregation is the sources of many long-term problems (Bailey n. p.).

Clearly, it is no good telling some students, for example, that they are

excellent at subjects other than exact sciences by virtue of gender stipulated laws. Such an imposed attitude will most likely live a mark on the vision of their future profession. Studies conducted by neuroscientists, and legal scholars have proved that segregation based on sex boosts discrimination and helps children develop sex stereotypes that are prerequisite to them engaging in drug abuse, unprotected sex, and aggression. Newly converted schools often force students unwilling to attend unisex classes into transferring to lower-quality schools. Worse, single-sex schools are an expensive educational option. With that in mind, there should be more affordable coed alternatives to such schools without the shortage of experienced educators, better athletic opportunities, and more afterschool options, and what distinguish single-sex schools from unisex establishments are these three options (Bailey n. p.). Conley (n. p.) also puts focus on the possibility of children's developing gender stereotypes, which is among one of the most negative outcomes of unisex learning mode.

Halpern, Eliot, Bigler, Fabes, Hanish, Hyde, Liben, and Martin (1706) claim that gender distinction is of huge academic value to students; however, such statement may have no scientifically proved grounds. Students already have a higher academic level on entering single-sex schools and had better test scores one year prior to being admitted. In other words, academic successes are mostly anyone else's merit but that of SS schools. This is not all there is to it since underachieving students tend to transfer out prematurely, which inflates performance results. Exist as successful single-sex schools might, there is no evidence that their organization, a demanding curriculum, and other aspects boost students' academic performance. If truth be told, the



supposedly axiomatic concept of brain difference central to single-sex educational principle does not seem to stand to criticism since neuroscientists have hardly found any differences save for boys' brain larger volume and girls' brain cells earlier growth completion, of which neither bears relation to learning and academic success.

Nor is the argument of both sexes having different autonomic nervous system function scientifically correct (Halpern, et al. 1707). Strain (29) states that, despite a well-developed stereotype of performance academic improvement, SS math classes damage students' end-of-grade scores of mathematics and reading tests. Finally, according to Taylor (n. p.), studies have demonstrated that children from single-sex schools are no different than their counterparts who stem from unisex schools, which refutes the popular belief, based on which unisex schools and classes provide children with knowledge needed for them to master STEM or science, technology, engineering, and math subjects. Conley (n. p.) also insists that there are distinctions between single-sex schools students and their peers from conventional unisex schools in terms of knowledge an academic success. Such children are far more likely to join subject courses than their peers from unisex schools are. However, single-sex schools are also said to produce stereotypes and be the source of sexism. Children from such classes will likely have problems socializing with opposite sex counterparts while in the workplace. Plenty of scientists claim students from separated classes to show the exact same academic performance as their peers from unisex classes do. Attitudinal, behavioral problems, substance abuse, unprotected sex, and aggression are possible fallouts of single-sex education. That being

said, it is highly doubtful that such approach to plying school students with knowledge should be applied very carefully, if at all since there are plenty of weighty arguments against it.

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