

Movers and shakers in education essay sample

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Sacrifices have been made throughout history by many to advance the field of education so all children have the opportunity for a proper education and a successful future. With these advances come all types of adjustments to keep the idea of a proper education moving. Just in the last fifty years, there have been several significant attempts to improve the educational system. The first being the A Nation at Risk report introduced in 1983. President Regan's Secretary of Education T. H. Bell created the National Commission on Excellence in Education to analyze the quality of education in America. The Commission's report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* is considered a landmark event in educational history. The report brought to light the ever-growing sense that American schools are failing students. Bell asked the commission to look into several areas of concern in the education system. A few of the requests included: assessing the quality of teaching and learning in primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools in private and public areas; compare American schools and those of other advanced nations; studying the relationship between college admission requirements and student achievement in high school; and defining problems in the educational system that we must address and correct if we are to achieve excellence in education ("A nation at," 1983).

The report expressed genuine concern with how our nation has settled for mediocrity. Due to our nation's standstill, other nations have surpassed our once superior status. The commission felt the dismantling of support systems have benefited to a disarming of our education and the surpassing of other nations to our own. The commission documented a drop in achievements in several areas such as mathematics, science, and a drop in

SAT scores. Referencing tests conducted in the seventies, the report outlined undesired comparisons with American students' achievements and those of students outside of the United States. On 19 academic tests American students were never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last seven times ("A Nation at Risk," 1983). In response to the concerns expressed, the commission made 38 recommendations in 4 major areas: Content, Standards and Expectations, Time, and Teaching. A

few of the recommendations include requiring a certain number of years in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies; encouraging no grade inflation and colleges raising the admission standards and standardized testing; and lengthening the school day as well as the academic year (A Nation at Risk, 2005). As with many proposed educational reforms, the ideas are acknowledged but not put into practice. Since the release of A Nation at Risk, several presidents have taken an initiative to address educational reform. One president was President Bill Clinton. President Clinton and his Vice President Al Gore made education reform a cornerstone of their administration. President Clinton and Vice President Gore felt all Americans had the right to have every educational opportunity available to insure success in the growing informational economy. The President and Vice President accomplished so much for education by raising students' expectation, provided support to states by helping to develop and implement rigorous standards and systems of assessment, and encouraging educators and states to be accountable.

The President's demand for reform has led to amazing progress in the areas of standards and accountability, improving performance, expanding technology in school, and making higher education more affordable. Due to President Clinton's interest and persistence for education reform a significant improvement has been seen since the implement of his reform policy. Before the reform policy, students faced diluted curriculum and low expectations. After the reform policy, students flourished when presented with higher standards focusing in core subjects and funding for low-performing schools so they can invest in proven reform strategies. A principal from Georgia had this to say regarding President Clinton's education reform: " Over the last eight years, President Clinton has proven a friend to education. Increased funding for critical investments, such as teacher development, greater resources and reduced class sizes, are just several contributions..." (" The clinton-gore administration,"). Another important attempt at education reform came during President George W. Bush's era. President Bush proposed the No Child left Beyond Act which was passed by both congress and the senate and was signed into effect by President Bush in 2002.

The act was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The NCLB Act set requirements that would affect every public school in America. It increased the federal government's role in education and aimed the majority of its focus on disadvantaged students. There were several key areas of reform starting with annual testing. The NCLB required annual testing in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics starting in the 2005-2006 academic year. Testing in science once in elementary, middle, and high school was required by 2008. Tests had to meet state academic standards.

Another significant area of reform was teacher qualification. Starting in the academic year of 2005-2006, teacher's had to be "highly qualified" in each subject taught. NCLB's definition of "highly qualified" meant the teacher was certified and demonstrated proficiency for the subject matter. These are only a few of the intended reform areas. Among educators and policymakers, concern for the NCLB started to build.

These educators and policymakers felt the goals and time restrictions were unfair to those in more diverse schools. The guidelines set by adequate yearly progress has made it impossible for schools to meet their set improvement rating. Schools that usually have high testing score found it difficult to meet there rate of improvement. The most recent educational legislation was passed by President Obama in his American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. In this act, the President awarded the Department of Education almost \$100 billion in an effort to provide financial assistance to states suffering from severe budget cuts in education. As a requirement, the Department of Education was required to publicly document how the funds were spent in the first quarter.

With these funds, over 400, 000 jobs were either saved or created. The jobs saved and created were not just education but also general public positions. The funds were also dispersed into several accounts that help to support reform in schools such as the Title I program. With all the funding, the Department of Education was able to provide necessary assistance in a time when the economy was in decline (" U. S. department of," 2009). The idea of education reform is nothing that has been placed in the back ground. So many political people continuously address the need for reform and will <https://assignbuster.com/movers-and-shakers-in-education-essay-sample/>

continue to do so. The importance education plays in our future has been established since the beginning. We as a nation need to continue to see it as the most important resource for the success of our nation now and in the future.

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