

Education: cradle of civilization

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Our congress has caused problems for Americans as they deviated away from making decisions with the Constitution.

From African American suffrage to women suffrage to animal rights, these are many things that Congress had to change so everyone could have “equal protection under the law”. But now, there is a new problem emerging: education. Our education is falling apart because of the decision making of our Congress. The passing of the No Child Left Behind Act and the nullification of the Hunger- Healthy Kids Act are just two of the things that have influenced our education for the worse and not for the better. Our government from a national level to a state level has infiltrated with our educational system.

Education is the cradle of civilization and we should elect government officials who put education first. But how do we know that our education system is falling apart? How do we know that our foundation is cracking? We know that based on the numerous amounts of globally standardized test, such as the Trades in International Mathematics and Science Study(TIMSS), that are taken. America has become one of the worst industrialized countries when it comes to education, only topping South Africa. Also, the United States is the sixth worst on school graduation, with only a 77% graduation rate (Frenstein, 2012). Emmeline Zhao says “ U.

S. students rank 25th among 34 countries in math and science (Zhao, 2012).” These statistics are alarming and the Congress is becoming the root of the problem. The removal of arts and healthy lunches has influenced our education and the learning capability for the worst and not the better. There

is tons of evidence to prove that healthier lunches can help increase grades. Jaelithe Judy states that “ the quality of food served can have a direct effect, not only on young students’ physical health, but also on children’s behavior and academic performance in the classroom (Judy, 2010).

” There was a study conducted at Appleton Central Alternative High School, in which they removed soda machines and heavily processed foods from the school. After 13 years of research, it showed that test scores and grades significantly went up and behavioral issues went down. The behavioral issues went down so much that they did not need a police officer at the school. In England, they conducted a study in 2007 that proved healthy eating improved children’s attention spans. On the other side, it also showed that certain foods with preservatives, the foods people normally eat, increase irritability (Judy, 2010). In Australia, eating processed meats and preservatives proved to increase the risk of receiving ADHD, a learning disability (Judy, 2010).

Dr. Oddy, the scientist conducting the experiment said that, “ a Western dietary pattern may indicate the adolescent has a less optimal fatty acid profile, whereas a diet higher in omega-3 fatty acids is thought to hold benefits for mental health and optimal brain function. It also may be that the Western dietary pattern doesn’t provide enough essential micronutrients that are needed for brain function, particularly attention and concentration, or that a Western diet might contain more colors, flavors and additives that have been linked to an increase in ADHD symptoms. It may also be that impulsivity, which is a characteristic of ADHD, leads to poor dietary choices such as quick snacks when hungry (Breyer, 2010).” If unhealthy foods

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decrease our ability to learn well, then how come the Congress has not passed a bill to get healthy foods into public educational institutes? Citizens presented a bill to the Congress called Healthy; Hunger- Free Kids Act.

This bill was supposed to bring healthy foods into public schools. But our Congress turned the Act down. Based upon his own personal experience, Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee says that “ children who learn music actually do better in math; children whose imaginations are sparked by the arts are more engaged in school (Hulbert, 2012).” Fine arts help to improve grades and engagement in school. President Barack Obama says that “ Students in Chicago have demonstrated that test scores improved faster for students enrolled in low income schools that link arts across the curriculum than scores for students in schools lacking such programs (Hulbert, 2012).” The study conducted was called Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) and the results were phenomenal.

The program teaches teachers how to integrate arts into their everyday teaching. One teacher said that “ CAPE has made me acutely aware of the need for quality documentation. I’ve really had to consider every aspect of the unit. I am very interested now in engaging the students in such a way that encourages them to want to educate themselves (CAPE, 2006).” Even Ann Hulbert, author for the New York Times, says “ There is indeed a correlation between, for example, how many years students spend in art classes and their SAT scores; more art, higher scores (Hulbert, 2012).

” That shows not only do fine arts improve engagement in math class, it also helps kids stay more focused in school and retain more information that is

necessary for college leveled thinking. Then why on the state level are some school districts removing fine art classes from curriculum? Fine arts are a vital ingredient to the prosperity of our educational system. Most government officials would agree that the removal of arts is a necessary budget cut to help pay for our education. But is it worth it? Many kids could have better scholarship opportunities if they were under the positive influence of arts. Some kids might want to learn more because arts have sparked their minds to think outside of the box.

The removal of arts is not worth the sacrifice if it can improve education. Lauralee Moss says that “ While the case for the arts in students’ educations is strong, schools still eliminate them. Arts are quite subjective. After all, how can we all ever agree to think the same thoughts about a painting? We can’t, and so states do not test students over art subjects. Standardized, objective testing does not cover the arts; therefore, when teacher or budget cuts are necessary, districts eliminate art programs. The problem is that the arts are connected to the core subjects, just in ways that cannot be seen or always measured.

The freedom of art is what makes the arts so great-diversity, creativity, the special part in so many students that ends up abandoned. Teachers and parents have long realized this, but have gone unarmed to confront the disappearing arts from schools (Moss, 2010).” Some people do not believe that our government is causing our educational gap. Some people believe that we are not receiving enough time in school to even compete with other competitors such as China and India. Some people believe that there is a racial problem. Some people believe that because we have a larger

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population of African and Hispanic- Americans, that this ethnicity is dumber and starting to make our country look bad.

Some people have accepted the stereotype that Asians are smarter than any other ethnic group and that is why the countries in Asia are doing the best in education. But are those reasons really the true reasons? Some people believe that the reason why our students are not being educated effectively is because schools in other countries go to school longer than we do. In fact, U. S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan says “ Our students today are competing against children in India and China.

Those students are going to school 25- 30% longer than we are. Our students, I think, are at a competitive disadvantage. I think we are doing them a disservice” (Center for Public Education, 2012). However, is this really true? Kids in India and China have 25% more days in school, but in contrast, kids in America spend more time in school. For example, in India, they spend 800 hours per year in school.

That may seem like a lot, but in the United States, students go to school more hours. In New York, students spend 900 hours in school per year. In California, students spend 840 hours in school per year. In Texas, students spend a whopping 1260 hours in school per year. Even the top country in education, which is Finland, spends more than 50% less time in school than students in Texas; people in Finland spend about 608 hours per year in education.

This proves that it is not conclusive to say that more time leads to a better education. There is a belief that race has something to do with why our
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education is faltering. Some people say that minorities, such as blacks and Hispanics, do badly on national standardized test that brings the average scores down and makes us as a country look bad. This is a stereotype mainly directed onto African- American students. R.

L. ' Hereux Lewis says that " Not all schools are failing. The reality is that black and poor families are more likely to be lodged in failing schools (Hereux, 2012)." He also says, " If we want to turn around education and develop our children more fully, we must face race (Hereux, 2012)." Then towards the end of his article, he implies that " having a teacher of the same race can lead to improved test scores (Hereux, 2012)." These statements are not true.

First, there is a saying that says " The students make up the school." Now, when you say that black people will be lodged into failing schools, the question that emerges in peoples' head is " Why is the school failing?" And because of the first statement he said, the reason why the schools are failing is because of the black people who make up the school. This is not true.

Second, race should not be included when trying to improve our education. We will be reverting back to the Civil Rights movement era. Including race to education just promotes racism, allowing every decision made about their education to be generalized based on the color of their skin and not because of their specific learning style.

Having teachers that are the same race as the students does not guarantee improved test scores. Jones High School, for example, is predominantly filled with African- American students. 75% of the teachers are African – American,

yet they still perform poorly on the standardized test, with only 54% of 9th graders passing the 2010-2011 TAKS math test (HISD, 2012). On the other hand, Empowerment High School is in the exact same neighborhood at the exact same campus. It is also predominantly African- American.

However, this school has a diverse staff. There are 3 African- American teachers, 2 Hispanic teachers, 2 Caucasian teachers, 1 Asian teacher, and 1 African teacher. Not only did the 9th grade class have a 98% passing 2010-2011 TAKS math test, the school as a whole ranked nationally. This proves to show that it is not about race; it is about quality. It is how well teachers can teach that influences how well students can learn.

However, with all of the budget cuts and layoffs that the government is authorizing, this is also a quality that the government is limiting schools to have. In conclusion, the government has influenced our education, with rules and regulations that keep us from learning and retaining information to the fullest capacity. To solve this, we must elect government officials who make education their first priority. We must support those politicians and protest against all opposition. If they don't take education seriously, then our entire country will fall apart in the future, because education is the cradle of civilization.