67. A good case study of this reaction in California and Texas is Catherine Cornbleth and Detter Waugh's *The Great Speckled Bird: Multicultural Politics and Education Policy Making* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).
68. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Disuniting of America*.
69. Ibid., p. 8.
70. Ibid., p. 80.
71. Thomas Sobol, "Revising the New York State Social Studies Curriculum," *Teachers College Record* 95, no. 1 (winter 1993): 266.
72. Caroline B. Cody, Arthur Woodward, and David L. Elliot, "Race, Ideology and the Battle Over the Curriculum," in *The New Politics of Race and Gender*, ed. Catherine Marshall (Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press, 1993), p. 55.
73. Schlesinger, *Disuniting*, p. 15.
74. Ibid., pp. 40–55.
75. Ibid., p. 43.
76. Ibid., p. 47.
77. "Feminist Chronicles." Http://www.now.org. NOW's official account of its struggle for equal opportunity and equal educational opportunity for women.
78. David Neal and David Kirp, "The Allure of Legalization Reconsidered: The Case of Special Education" in *School Days, Rule Days: The Legalization and Regulation of Education*, ed. David Kirp and Donald Jensen (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1986), pp. 346–348.
79. Ibid., pp. 349–350.

Spring, Joel
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The End of the Century

In the 1990s a chain of events seriously undermined the nineteenth-century common school ideal of creating a common culture. The vanishing common school ideal made room for an educational system that was multicultural and offered a variety of school programs through a combination of school choice, charter schools, and privatization. The burial of the common school ideal was accompanied by extreme financial differences between school districts. Jonathan Kozol's popular book, *Savage Inequalities,* described the stark differences between rich and poor public school districts. The privileged turned their backs on the poor and continued the trend begun in the 1950s of moving to protected suburban communities where they could send their children to elite public schools or to private schools.

With hindsight, it appears impossible that public schools could have ever imposed a common culture when faced with religious dissension, the inevitable feelings of hostility from conquered Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans, and the continued bitterness of the African American community over slavery, segregation, and the denial of equal educational opportunity.

Ironically, in the late twentieth century, a major source of criticism of public schools came from the very community the common school ideal originally was to protect—Protestant fundamentalists. By the 1990s, the religious right, representing primarily Protestant fundamentalists, was demanding the right to choose—at public expense—private religious schools, the restoration of religious values—including school prayer in public schools, and the reduction of federal and state financial control of schools.

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND SCHOOL PRAYER

The religious right complained bitterly about the 1962 U.S. Supreme Court case *Engel* v. *Vitale* which denied the official use of prayer in public schools. Since the

founding of common schools in the early nineteenth century, many public schools opened with a prayer and reading from the Protestant Bible. The 1962 decision denied the right of a public school system to conduct prayer services within school buildings during regular school hours. The case originated in New York when a local school system was granted the right by the New York Board of Regents to have a brief prayer said in each class at the beginning of the school day. The prayer, considered to be denominationally neutral, read, "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country." The New York courts granted the right of local school systems to use this prayer.

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the case, one of its major objections to the prayer was that a government official had written it. This violated the First Amendment; that is, it put the government directly in the business of establishing religion. The Court reviewed the early history of the United States, the struggle for religious freedom, and the ending of government support of churches. The writing of a school prayer, the Court argued, ran counter to the long tradition of separation of church and state.[1]

Historically, given the purpose of common schools to protect a Protestant Anglo-American culture, the complaints of the religious right that the Supreme Court had undermined the moral and spiritual purposes of public schools were correct. The immediate reaction from the religious right to the school prayer decision was to claim that the U.S. Supreme Court had removed God from the schools. Adding to the fury of the response of the religious right was the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Abington School District* v. *Schempp*. The issue in this case was a Pennsylvania law that permitted the reading of ten verses from the Bible at the opening of each public school day. Again, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that this violated the prohibition against the linking of church and state. Religious texts could be read, the Court argued, as part of an academic course, such as literature or history.

For the religious right, potential solutions were the creation of a separate religious school system or the passage of a constitutional amendment allowing prayer in public schools. As I will discuss later in the chapter, in the 1980s and 1990s Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush gained political support from the religious right by supporting passage of a school prayer amendment to the U.S. Constitution and supporting legislation that would allow a choice, at public expense, between public and private schools.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION

The religious right represented one component to a general conservative reaction to the direction of American schools. Besides the issue of school prayer and Bible reading, conservatives were distressed by the demands of African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans for inclusion of their histories and cultures in the school curriculum. Conservatives demanded an end to bilingual and multicultural education courses and a restoration of an emphasis on Protestant Anglo-American culture.

Conservative educational policies were, in part, a reaction to student demonstrations that erupted on college and high school campuses in the late 1960s. The demonstrations occurred mainly in reaction to the Vietnam War and in support of the civil rights movement. As the demonstrations escalated, students began to question many of the institutions and values of American life. Demands were made for greater freedom of expression and more equality in the distribution of wealth. Universities and public schools were attacked as institutions of oppression and racism. Alternative schools began to appear in both the private and the public educational systems.

The irony of the demonstrations is that the participants were mainly college students who were part of the large concentration of youths attending college on deferments from the selective service system. For national leaders, the demonstrations indicated failures in both the use of the selective service system to control human resources and the idea that simply sending youth to college would improve the national economy.

The first major student demonstration took place at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964, when the chancellor announced that students would not be able to use an area in front of the entrance to the university for political activities. The students formed the Free Speech Movement and conducted a sit-in at one of the campus buildings.

The target of many students in the Free Speech Movement was university president Clark Kerr, who, in articulating the modern role of higher education, had likened universities to service stations providing help to business, government, and other private organizations. Many students objected to the role of universities in giving aid to the military and implementing American foreign policy. In addition, modern universities had grown to tremendous proportions compared with those in the earlier part of the century. As a result, Kerr and other administrators in higher education became targets of student demonstrators. The administrators were charged with using the university to aid in the war effort and with impersonal treatment of students.

The student demonstrations quickly spread from Berkeley to other campuses. In 1965, the first teach-in against the war was held at the University of Michigan. At other campuses, protesters blocked employment recruiting by Dow Chemical Corporation, a major producer of military chemicals for the government. In 1968, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., added more fuel to campus protests and sparked major urban riots. Campus protests continued after President Nixon's election and reached a high point in 1970 when Ohio National Guardsmen killed four students at Kent State University.

Student demonstrations, the civil rights movement, and urban riots convinced many conservatives that the United States was on the verge of radical social change. Given this point of view, it was logical for conservative leaders to seek some means of restoring a sense of authority to society and the educational system.

In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected president on a ticket promising to solve the problem of the Vietnam War and restore law and order to American campuses.

Nixon's policies ran counter to the more liberal policies of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. His administration questioned the value of the War on Poverty educational legislation in providing equality of opportunity for the poor, the use of selective service to control human resources, and the use of busing for desegregation. Nixon favored educational programs designed to prepare students for specific careers, a return to basic education, replacement of selective service with volunteer armed forces, and an expansion of vocational education. The years of the Nixon administration were a time of conservative reaction to student demonstrations and to the demands of the civil rights movement. The conservative reaction included a retreat from the programs of the War on Poverty, the development of career education, a renewed emphasis on the power of the educational expert, the spread of the concept of accountability in education, increased emphasis on testing, and the use of behavioral psychology in the classroom. Richard Nixon was elected in 1968 in the midst of national turmoil caused by the demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and widespread urban riots. Promises of maintaining law and order were an important part of Nixon's presidential campaigns in 1968 and 1972.

Part of Nixon's plan to restore law and order to campuses was career education. In 1971 and 1972, Sidney Marland, Jr., Nixon's commissioner of education, began to earmark discretionary funds provided by Congress to the Office of Education for the development of career education projects. Marland's method of using discretionary funds turned career education into a reform movement originating at the top of the political structure of education. By 1972–1973, Marland was able to announce that in the first year of this program, 750,000 young people had participated.

Marland believed that career education was the answer to student rebellion, delinquency, and unemployment. In his first annual report to Congress, in 1971, he argued that disenchantment among youth existed because education did not lead to career opportunities. For Marland, the villain was general education programs that lacked specific goals and were not linked to the job market. Marland argued that education should be meaningful; by meaningful, he meant "related to a career objective." He stated, "When we use the word 'meaningful,' we imply a strong obligation that our young people complete the first 12 grades in such a fashion that they are ready either to enter into some form of higher education or to proceed immediately into satisfying and appropriate employment." This, of course, was a restatement of the traditional goal of the comprehensive high school, but he considered its primary weakness to be its general education programs, which were not directly related to entry into either the job market or higher education. "The emergence of the comprehensive high school, properly defined and implemented, carries the ultimate solution."[2]

Therefore, Marland believed, students and schools were in a state of turmoil because the school had never completely achieved the goal of sorting students for the labor market. In his first report to Congress, he stated, "We must eliminate anything in our curriculum that is unresponsive to either of these goals [higher education and employment], particularly the high school anachronism called 'the general curriculum,' a false compromise between college preparatory curriculum and realistic career development."[3] For Marland, all elements of school life needed to be justified by their contribution to career development. In the words of Marland's associate commissioner, "The fundamental conception of career education is that all educational experiences, curriculum, instruction, and counseling should be geared to preparing each individual for a life of economic independence, personal fulfillment, and an appreciation for the dignity of work."[4] This meant a complete alignment between the job market and the public schools. Marland believed career education offered one solution "to some of our more serious social and economic problems, including high unemployment and the attendant problems of disaffection and drug excess among the young."[5]

Career education was unique in its attempt to make vocational guidance a part of the academic program of the school and to begin the program in the early grades. During the elementary and junior high school years, career education was to acquaint students with the world of work and the varieties of occupations by relating work and jobs to the subject matter of the curriculum. After study and preparation for an occupational choice in these early grades, the high school student was to begin preparing for entry into either an occupation or higher education. Advocates of career education also believed that higher education should be organized around this model. The real hope for higher education, Marland believed, was the community college. He argued that the community college should not be viewed as merely a "large anteroom for the four-year institutions"[6] but as a unique institution of higher learning whose developing philosophy was based on the concept of career education. Close ties with local businesses made it possible for the community college to gear its programs to the needs of the labor market.

At the same time that career education was becoming a major program of the Nixon administration, between 1970 and 1973, Nixon vetoed three of six appropriation bills for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and pocket vetoed the 1973 appropriation bill. Nixon justified the vetoes as necessary to reduce the federal budget and on the grounds of lack of evidence that federal money for compensatory education programs resulted in any significant social change.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE INCREASING POWER OF THE STANDARDIZED TEST

As government funding shifted from the clients to the experts, the rise of the accountability movement attempted to restore power to the professional educator. In part, the accountability movement was a reaction to attempts to achieve community control of the schools. Community control received its first public attention when instituted in 1966 at Intermediate School 201 in Harlem and in 1968 in the Ocean Hill–Brownsville section of Brooklyn, both in New York City.

The concept of community control emerged from attempts to end racism and discrimination in the schools. In many ways, it was an attempt to capture the nineteenth-century ideal of democratic localism, according to which the schools were to reflect the values and desires of their users. Minority groups felt that racism existed in the schools because the community served by the schools had little power

over the hiring of teachers, the spending of money, and the organization of the curriculum. Those in the community control movement believed that these decisions were made by a combination of elite school boards, educational administrators, and teachers unions. Leaders of the movement felt that decisions made by these groups resulted in racists teaching in schools serving minority communities and in the use of a curriculum that reflected discriminatory attitudes.

The community control movement simply wanted to restore complete control of the schools to members of the local community. Of course, this proposal threatened the power of professional educators, school boards, and teachers unions. In fact, the first major reaction to community control came from the teachers union, when the local community in Ocean Hill–Brownsville dismissed a number of teachers for racist attitudes. The resulting reaction from the teachers union, which viewed the actions of the community as a direct threat to the power of the union, ended the community control movement in New York City.

The accountability movement was an attempt to restore power to professional educators, who had been threatened by the community control movement and the public criticism of schools in the 1950s. Like the administrative progressives in the early twentieth century who argued for control by experts, the proponents of accountability considered education an arena for professional decision making.

Control by experts is an important theme of the book that sparked the accountability movement. Leon Lessinger's *Every Kid a Winner: Accountability in Education* considers the community control movement a threat to the quality of education.[7] Lessinger uses the model of the hospital to attack the concept of democratic control. He argues that in a hospital, patients and the community in general do not and should not participate directly in decisions regarding medical treatment or surgery because these are areas of decision making that require expert knowledge and training. For Lessinger, the idea of democratic control in surgery is ludicrous and dangerous to the patient. In his opinion, users of medical services have the right to complain, but decisions about how to deal with the complaint should remain in the hands of medical experts.

Lessinger feels that this model is applicable to education. Modern schooling, he maintains, is based on professional knowledge gained through research and study. The average member of the community does not have the training necessary to make correct educational decisions. Like the hospital clientele, the community has the right to complain but does not have the right or the knowledge to make decisions regarding the resolution of complaints. Only the educational expert should be entrusted with decision-making power.

Even with his reliance on experts, Lessinger recognizes that in a democratic society the schools must be responsive to the public. He feels this responsiveness can be achieved by the schools reporting their accomplishments and failures to the public. This public accounting of the results of schooling was the heart of the accountability movement. Lessinger envisions the creation of a national educational accounting firm operated by educational engineers who will measure educational results by the use of achievement tests and report the results to the public. He assumes that these results will provide the public with expert data that can be used to express approval or criticism of the accomplishments of the school system.

As the accountability movement spread in the early 1970s, states and local communities began to require schools to publish achievement test scores annually. The use of test scores to measure the schools' success kept power in the hands of educational experts. In the schools, students found themselves taking an increasing number of achievement tests in order to satisfy the requirements of accountability. One result was that testing, or measurement, was restored to a central place in the educational process. Accompanying this rebirth of interest in standardized testing was an increasing emphasis on behaviorism and on teaching by specific behavioral objectives.

The accountability movement's emphasis on testing and instruction according to specific behavioral objectives fit the pattern of traditional approaches to classroom instruction. At the same time that these practices for reform of American schools were being advocated, a more progressive approach to classroom organization, called the "open classroom," was being advocated. The differences between these approaches to instruction highlight the continuing debate about instruction. In addition, as I will discuss later in this chapter, the creation of standardized achievement tests began a central feature of national educational policy in the early 1990s.

THE POLITICAL NATURE OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

The tension between the classroom practices advocated by John Dewey and those advocated by Edward Thorndike persisted through the twentieth century. During the Cold War years of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the progressive educational theories associated with John Dewey came under attack by conservatives and anticommunists. This attack helped to align political beliefs with theories of classroom management.

In general, conservatives tended to reject student-centered instruction in favor of traditional teacher-centered classrooms. Political conservatives in the 1950s believed that instruction based on the interests and choices of children undermined the intellectual content of schooling. In fact, conservatives charged progressive education with causing a decline in the quality of American schools. This argument continued into the 1960s and 1970s, when conservatives attacked student demands for choice in the classroom and curriculum. Excellence, standards, discipline, homework, and evaluation in the classroom became the typical concerns of political conservatives.

Liberals, on the other hand, tended to argue that classroom instruction should be geared to student needs and interests. They argued, as John Dewey had, that rigid classroom procedures educated people primarily to take orders and to be passive participants in a democratic society. Liberals tended to reject excellence in favor of equality of educational opportunity. Those who advocated excellence most often wanted student performance to be measured by absolute standards. On the other hand, liberals wanted students to be judged according to their own abilities and interests. Sometimes differences between the two groups were reflected in attitudes about report cards. Conservatives tended to want report cards to be

based on absolute standards such as letter grades, whereas liberals tended to want report cards to be a statement of progress of the individual student.[8]

Of course, these political divisions cannot be rigidly applied because many people have a mixture of political beliefs. The differences in beliefs about the operation of classrooms were highlighted in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the development of open classrooms and the influence of the behaviorist theories of psychologist B. F. Skinner. Based on the idea that the classroom should be organized around the development and interests of the children, the open classroom operated in the tradition of John Dewey's progressivism. On the other hand, Skinner's theories were part of the tradition of Edward Thorndike, who emphasized managing the learning of children through the use of rewards. It was Skinner's theories that provided support for what Ira Shor has called "the conservative restoration of the 1970s."[9]

In the early twentieth century, behaviorism received support from the theories of educational psychology advocated by William James and Edward Thorndike. The behaviorist model is extremely mechanistic—a concept of teaching based on the use of measurement (testing) to determine deficiencies and accomplishments and the use of reinforcement to teach specific objectives. This concept of teaching fit nicely into the technocratic world view held by administrative progressives in the early part of the century.

Beginning in the 1940s, the behaviorist trend in education received an added boost from the work of B. F. Skinner. Skinner tried to apply behaviorism to the work of the school by developing programmed learning machines and writing about the relationship of behaviorism to the structure and functioning of society. The best introduction to Skinner's philosophy is his utopian novel, written in the 1940s, with the controversial title *Walden Two.*[10] The title was controversial because many readers could find little resemblance between the society described by Skinner and the Walden described in the original work by Henry David Thoreau. In Skinner's novel, *Walden Two* is a scientifically managed society organized around the principles of behavioral engineering. Skinner considered democratic control of his utopian society self-defeating, because behavioral engineering requires control by expert managers. The managers were to pay attention to community desires by measuring the degree of happiness and determining what things needed to be changed or improved to increase the happiness of the residents. In one sense, this novel depicts a society in which democracy is replaced by a public survey like the Gallup poll.

Control by experts and behavioral engineering of a society do not contradict Skinner's concept of freedom. He believed that if a science of behavior could exist and the laws of behavior could be discovered, traditional ideas regarding freedom would need to be changed. If laws of behavior that can predict human action exist, free will does not exist, and without free will, individual actions become the product of past actions and the influence of the environment. Within this framework, behavior is determined by reinforcements received from other individuals or social conditions, which means that individual behavior can be scientifically controlled and the individual does not have the ability to break out of that control.

Skinner changed the meaning of freedom to fit his concept of behavioral control. For Skinner, freedom exists when individuals are not restricted from doing those things they have been conditioned to do. Thus, freedom is a feeling achieved when one is able to act out behavior that has been determined by previous reinforcement. As a concept of society and the individual, behaviorism places the expert in charge of a society that is scientifically engineered. In this engineered society, behavioral control is exerted over citizens, who exist in a state of planned happiness.

In the 1950s, Skinner joined the chorus of criticism of the public schools. From his perspective, a major problem with schools was that teachers did not use the scientific findings of behavioral psychology. His answer to this situation was the teaching machine or program. Based on the principles of behaviorism, teaching machines were to instruct by presenting students with small units of knowledge and providing constant reinforcement. By the late 1970s and 1980s, the original principles underlying the teaching machine were incorporated into many educational software programs for the microcomputer.

In the 1970s, the principles of behavioral psychology fit nicely into the use of increased measurement of students that was a result of the accountability movement. Philosophically, behaviorism was compatible with the conservative trends of the Nixon years. Like accountability, behaviorism rejects concepts of democratic control; like career education, with its emphasis on control, behaviorism was considered an antidote to the type of freedom expressed in student demonstrations. Behaviorism combined with accountability supported the competency-based education movement of the 1970s. Competency-based education simply means teaching the student specific competencies and measuring the achievement of that learning before proceeding to new competencies. Like other forms of behaviorism, competency-based education uses a mechanistic model of learning and attempts to exert direct control over student behavior.

In contrast to the behaviorally managed classroom, the open classroom, or, as it was sometimes called, the "informal classroom," emphasized active learning and student choice. A major source of the ideas associated with the open classroom was the primary school in England. In the United States, the idea received popular attention with the publication in 1970 of Charles Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom,* which, after criticizing the conditions in American classrooms, held up the open classroom as a panacea.[11]

The open classroom provided for individual instruction and choice through the establishment of learning stations within a large learning space or classroom. Ideally, students were to move from learning station to learning station according to their individual desires and learning rate. Each learning station had activities related to a particular area of learning. For instance, one learning station might be devoted to reading while another might focus on science. A characteristic of the open classroom was large, informal, open spaces without the traditional rows of desks.

A theoretical underpinning of the open classroom was provided by the psychological theories of Jean Piaget. Piaget worked within the tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Like Rousseau, Piaget argued that instruction should match the

child's stage of development. Piaget worked out an elaborate analysis of how each stage of cognitive development determined the ability of the child to understand different concepts. An important part of this theory was a stress on active learning and the child's developmental characteristics. Piaget's theories provided support for advocates of the open classroom. His emphases on relating instruction to development and on the importance of activity seemed to support the ideas of individualized learning and movement between learning stations, ideas that were characteristic of the open classroom.[12]

During the early 1970s, the idea of the open classroom spread to many communities. Elementary and middle schools were built with large open spaces to accommodate this new form of classroom organization, but by the end of the 1970s, the concept was losing popularity and many of the open spaces built specifically for this type of instruction were being divided into traditional classrooms.

In *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms 1890–1980,* Larry Cuban searched for the reasons for the demise of the open classroom idea. In 1981, he visited schools in North Dakota where the idea had had a major influence on school architecture. What he found were teachers who were pleased at the idea that central administrators had decided to construct walls to divide recently constructed open classrooms into smaller, traditional classrooms. From his study of North Dakota and other states, Cuban concluded that only a minority of teachers gave support to the open classroom concept. The majority of teachers continued to use traditional teacher-centered methods.[13]

Why wasn't the open classroom widely adopted? Cuban argues that, in general, student-centered instruction has failed to have a major impact in American public schools because of the conservative nature of teacher culture, the structure of schools, and the fact that schools are primarily interested, in his words, in "social control and sorting." For example, instruction based on student interest is contrary to the idea that education should serve economic and political purposes. Cuban's argument highlights the political nature of classroom instruction.[14]

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

Conflict is the best word to describe the politics of education in the 1980s and 1990s. The educational establishment was divided into differing groups. Teachers unions were more militant and actively engaged in national politics. Many college professors of education and members of large central-city educational bureaucracies lobbied for more federal funds for research. Other segments of the educational establishment wanted a greater emphasis on funding for compensatory education programs. School administrators started to unionize and could often be found bargaining with representatives from teachers unions. A variety of public interest groups organized to put pressure on the school establishment and to seek aid from the courts and other parts of government. Court decisions were increasingly affecting the operation of schooling and were considered an important component of the political structure of education. Business elites continued to try to use the schools to further their own self-interest by working with state governments.

Certainly, the most important changes in the politics of education after World War II were the transformation of the NEA from an organization dominated by school administrators into a militant teachers union and the use of strikes and collective bargaining by both the NEA and the AFT. The change in the NEA took place in 1962, when the organization launched a program for collective negotiations. This meant that local affiliates were to try to establish collective-bargaining agreements with local school systems. The result was a dramatic shift in the role of local NEA affiliates and a rewriting of local constitutions. Up to this time, many NEA locals, known in the organization as education associations, had been controlled by local administrators. Collective bargaining reversed this situation and turned the local affiliates into organizations that told boards and administrators what teachers themselves wanted.

A major factor in the growing militancy of the NEA was the success of the AFT in conducting strikes and gaining collective-bargaining agreements. Originally, neither organization supported the idea of teachers striking. In 1944, when the AFT local in Cicero, Illinois, signed the first collective-bargaining agreement between a school board and a teachers' organization, the national AFT maintained a no-strike policy. The national organization maintained the same policy in 1947 when the Buffalo teachers union went on strike against the local school system. Other local unions joined in the support of this strike, which became a model for teachers around the country.

The major break in the no-strike policy came in 1960 when the New York affiliate of the AFT, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), voted to strike over the issues of a dues check-off plan, the conducting of a collective-bargaining election, sick pay for substitutes, fifty-minute lunch periods for teachers, and changes in salary schedules. On November 7, 1960, the UFT officially struck against the New York City school system. The union declared the strike effective when 15,000 of the city's 39,000 teachers did not report to school, and 7,500 teachers joined picket lines around the schools. In the spring of 1961, the UFT won a collective-bargaining agreement with the school system and became one of the largest and most influential locals within the AFT.

The New York City strike acted as a catalyst for more teachers to join the union and to increase the level of militancy. In 1966, the membership of the AFT was 125,421; by 1981, it had more than quadrupled, to 580,000. This increased membership plus the increased militancy of the NEA heralded a new era in the relationship between teachers' organizations and the managers of American education.

As teachers' militancy increased during the 1970s, a major movement developed in the ranks of teachers for more power over educational policy. In part, this was a response to the troubled financial state of many school districts in the 1970s, which made it difficult for teachers to demand salary increases. The teacher power movement, as it came to be known, sought to have collective bargaining decide issues concerning classroom size, the counseling of new teachers, the establishment of teacher-controlled committees to approve policies of boards of education, and the formation of building committees to curb and challenge the power of principals.

The teacher power movement of the 1970s was reminiscent of the concerns of teachers in the early twentieth century, when reforms introduced by administrative progressives had left teachers feeling they were merely pawns in the educational plans of school administrators. The rebellion of teachers in the early part of the century was not successful against this threat to their power and status. Almost seventy years passed before teachers were able to successfully challenge these earlier school reforms.

The next major step for teachers' organizations was active involvement in politics—a step that represents another aspect of the teacher power movement. The most significant political step taken by the NEA was to give its support to the 1976 presidential campaign of Jimmy Carter. This step began a process of political involvement whereby teachers' organizations supported political candidates, who, in turn, promised political favors. In 1976, Carter promised the NEA, in exchange for its support, the establishment of a department of education, having a secretary of education who would represent educational interests at presidential cabinet meetings. After his election, Carter fulfilled his promise to the NEA, thus launching a new era of federal involvement in education. The establishment of the Department of Education ensured the role of the federal government in establishing national educational policy.

The involvement of teachers' organizations in national politics caused a major change in the role played by education in national elections. Both the NEA and the AFT tended to favor the policies of the Democratic Party. This left the Republican Party without any clearly defined educational constituency. President Reagan tried to correct this situation for the Republican Party in the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections by appealing to groups that were opposed to the teachers unions and highly critical of the public school establishment. Part of his appeal went to private school groups that were hoping for some form of federal support through vouchers or tuition tax credits. Another part of his appeal went to groups that felt the schools had lost their role in shaping student character to conform to traditional Christian values. Individuals concerned with the teaching of moral values were organized into a number of groups, including the Moral Majority and groups supporting school prayer. Reagan hoped to win political support from these groups by promising tuition tax credits and a restoration of school prayer.

THE REAGAN, BUSH, AND CLINTON YEARS: NATIONAL STANDARDS, CHOICE, AND SAVAGE INEQUALITIES

In the 1980 and 1984 elections, President Ronald Reagan appealed to the religious right and conservatives by supporting school prayer, educational choice, and a restoration of moral values in the public schools. Also, he promised to limit federal involvement in education. And reacting to the culture wars, he tried to stem the tide of federal support of bilingual education. The actual educational program offered by the Republican Party in 1980 and 1984 included abolishing the Department of Education, amending the Constitution to allow prayer in public schools, and providing choice of public and private schools through tuition tax credits.

During the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections, each political party appealed to a particular educational constituency. The Democrats appealed to the two major teachers unions, members of dominated cultures, and liberals favoring increased federal aid to local schools. Republicans appealed to the religious right and conservatives. These clear differences between the two parties meant that education was now a national issue with clearly defined national constituencies.

One of the high points in the Reagan administration was the issuance, in 1983, of a report, *Nation at Risk*, which blamed public schools for America's difficulties in competing with Japan and West Germany in world markets. The allegedly poor academic quality of American public schools was seen as the cause of lower rates of productivity than those of Japan and West Germany, as well as of the declining lead of the United States in technological development. The report states, "If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must rededicate ourselves to the reform of the educational system for the benefit of all."[15]

A similar argument was used in the early twentieth century to justify federal aid to vocational education. At that time, the major international competitor was Germany, and the American school system was compared unfavorably with the German school system. The difference between the earlier plea for vocational education and the reform proposals in *A Nation at Risk* is that the latter did not call for increased federal aid. *A Nation at Risk* exhorted states and local communities to increase academic standards, improve the quality of teachers, and reform the curriculum.

A Nation at Risk put the Reagan administration into an interesting political situation. On the one hand, blaming the public schools for international economic problems appealed to those members of the Republican constituency who were highly critical of the workings of the schools. On the other hand, the report could not call for federal intervention to aid the schools because of Republican promises to decrease federal involvement in education. Finally, the Reagan administration did place the issue of schooling on a national political agenda by linking it to national trade problems. In other words, the net effect of Republican actions was to ensure that education would remain a national issue.

A major strategy of the Republican administration was to increase the role of states in education as the federal role declined. The role of state governments in education had increased with federal legislation in the 1960s. Most federal monies were channeled through state departments of education, and funds were provided to increase the administrative staff at the state level. Thus, the actions of the Reagan administration reinforced existing trends in the distribution of political power. As power over education shifted back and forth between state and federal agencies, the power of local school boards over education declined.

Republicans also advocated closer ties between big business and public schools. An example of this argument was the 1983 report of the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, *Action for Excellence*. The report called for closer relationships between American business and the schools. The introduction to the report states, "We believe especially that businesses, in their role as employers, should be much more deeply involved in the process of setting goals for

education in America and in helping our schools to reach those goals." One of the "action recommendations" called for in the report states, "Business leaders should establish partnerships with schools." And in bold type in the section titled "Education and Growth," the report proclaims: "If the business community gets more involved in both the design and the delivery of education, we are going to become more competitive as an economy." The call for greater participation of the business community in establishing the goals of the public schools was couched in the traditional language of the promise of American schooling. Like the proclamations of school reformers and public leaders in the nineteenth century, the report proclaims education as a panacea for society's ills: "It is the thesis of this report that our future success as a nation—our national defense, our social stability and well-being and our national prosperity—will depend on our ability to improve education and training for millions of individual citizens."[16]

Within the framework of the traditional promise of American education to solve economic and social problems, business and state leaders banded together in the early 1980s to reform education. Although this strong coalition was formed at the state level, local schools also felt pressure from local business leaders. Many schools were adopted by business through an "adopt-a-school" program, and in communities with wide-ranging magnet, or alternative, schools, businesses often helped to plan educational goals according to the needs of the labor market.

In some communities, a formal relationship was established between business and the schools. In the early 1980s, business leaders and the Boston schools signed a formal compact stating that the schools would improve the quality of graduates to meet employers' needs, and, in exchange, local business would give preference to graduates of Boston schools. A similar alliance was established in Atlanta. Michael Timpane, in his 1981 study *Corporations and Public Education*, written for the Carnegie Corporation, details the extent of the new cooperative ties between business and the schools and argues that the basic reason for this alliance was the growing shortage of entry-level workers. "For the first time in a generation there will probably be, in several urban locations, an absolute shortage of labor supply for entry level positions. Urban employers already report great difficulty in locating qualified employees for entry level positions."[17]

With the election of President George Bush in 1988, the contribution of public schools to the economy and business continued to be emphasized. Receiving support from the religious right, Bush also advocated school prayer and some form of educational choice. With regard to the economic goals of education, Bush, on April 18, 1991, unveiled plans for achieving national education goals by the year 2000. Similar to the rhetoric of the Reagan administration, these plans were presented as necessary for improving the ability of the U.S. companies to compete in international markets. Administration officials admitted that the plans were also designed to ward off criticism during the 1992 election campaign that Bush had no domestic agenda.[18]

The four main features of the plan were the creation of model schools, national standards, voluntary national achievement tests, and incentives for parental choice.[19] Bush's model schools plan was launched on July 8, 1991, with the establishment of a private, nonprofit corporation, the New American Schools Development

Corporation (NASDC), which was funded by private corporations and in cooperation with the federal government. The Bush administration planned that the NASDC would develop 535 model schools with one experimental school in each congressional district and two more for each state.

The domination of the model schools program by large corporations was reflected in headlines in the *New York Times* ("Brought to You by Exxon—School Reform") and *Education Week* ("Educators Watch with a Wary Eye as Business Gains Policy Muscle").[20] These headlines were prompted by the announcement of the membership of the controlling board of the NASDC. Of the eighteen members of the board, twelve are heads of major corporations, including Nabisco, the Boeing Company, AT&T, B. F. Goodrich, and the Exxon Corporation. In addition, there are two politicians, two publishers, and the commissioner of the National Football League. The only educator on the board is Joan Cooney, chairman of the executive committee of the Children's Television Workshop.[21]

The lack of educators on the board caused Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, to declare, "It is clear that business has an open door to the top policymakers, including the President, in a way that professional educators would envy."[22]

Many believe, as expressed by David Hornbeck, former Maryland state school superintendent, that "For the first time in American history, what is good for kids and what is good for business coincide almost on a one-for-one basis."[23] The assumption is that business will be able to help plan an educational system that will improve the American workforce and economy.

This close relationship between business and educational policy could be criticized from the standpoint that while workers and business leaders share a common interest in an improved economy, there is an inherent conflict between the desire of workers for increased wages and the desire of business leaders to reduce wages. This is an important issue for the middle and lower classes because of the increasing inequality in the distribution of income.

During the 1980s, the rich got richer and the middle class and poor got poorer. A 1991 report by the U.S. Census Bureau states that between 1984 and 1988 the median income for the most affluent fifth of all households increased by 14 percent, from $98,411 to $111,770, while the median income of all households declined, from $37,012 to $35,752.[24] Also, between 1977 and 1990, the average pretax income of the richest fifth of the population increased by 9 percent, while that of the poorest fifth declined by 5 percent.[25]

The Bush administration proposed creating voluntary "American Achievement Tests" for grades four, eight, and twelve. The tests would cover five core subjects, and students would be measured by "world class standards." To accomplish this goal, the Bush administration, in cooperation with Congress and the National Governors Association, created the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST).

The election of President Bill Clinton in 1992 did not substantially change the direction of educational policies. While Clinton did not try to appeal to the religious right by promising school prayer and financial support of choice between public and private schools, he did support Bush's Goals 2000 program. On March

31, 1994, Clinton signed the Goals 2000 Educate America Act. The legislation was the culmination of proposals Bush initiated five years earlier when Clinton was governor of Arkansas.[26] At the time, Clinton, as governor of Arkansas, and his future secretary of education, Richard Riley, former governor of South Carolina, were active in the formulation of the educational goals of the National Governors Association. These goals eventually became part of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act.[27]

The overall goal of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act again linked education to the needs of big business by emphasizing the importance of educating workers for competition in international trade. For the Clinton administration, the Goals 2000 Educate America Act was one part of a plan for lifelong learning. The plan included funding of preschool and adult education. Clinton's preschool efforts focused on increased funding for Head Start programs. Another part of the program focused on training the workforce to meet new economic demands.[28]

Influenced by his secretary of labor, Robert Reich, President Clinton gave particular attention to improving the skills of the general workforce. Also, Clinton believes the children of the poor require a greater opportunity to receive a quality education and attend college.

While the Goals 2000 Educate America Act was the centerpiece of Clinton's human capital agenda, another important element was the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. This legislation funded school programs that involved a combination of school-based and work-based learning. While signing the legislation in May, 1994, on a desk built by students in the type of program supported by the legislation, Clinton stated, "It's a small seed that I believe will give us quickly a national network of school-to-work programs." Secretary of Labor Reich argued at the signing ceremony, "There should not be a barrier between education and work. We're talking about a new economy in which lifelong learning is a necessity for every single member of the American workforce."[29]

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act supported programs that link education and employment for new workers. The legislation provided for support of school-based career exploration and counseling, and the creation of programs of study that integrate academic and vocational education. The work-based part of the programs provided on-the-job training with paid work experience.

In summary, the major contribution of the conservative restoration of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations was the creation of closer ties between the needs of business and the public schools. The period was a major triumph for advocates of public schools serving the needs of human capital. It was a triumph of the social efficiency and human capital arguments of the early twentieth century.

THE END OF THE COMMON SCHOOL: CHOICE, PRIVATIZATION, AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

Choice, privatization, charter schools, and multicultural education put the final nail in the coffin of the common school. While conservative big-business groups

gained the most from the educational policies of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations, the religious rights' concern with school choice was attracting a wide range of support from liberals to profit-making educational corporations. The basic idea of choice runs counter to the common school ideal of having all children receive a common education that inculcates a common culture and common moral and political values.

There were important differences in choice plans. One plan, often supported by the religious right, was providing public support of a choice between public and private schools. The other plan limited choice to schools within a school district or to schools throughout the state.

In 1990, the choice idea was supported by the findings of two political scientists, John Chubb and Terry Moe. In their book, *Politics, Markets & America's Schools*, they argue that a major hindrance to student achievement is the existence of large bureaucracies that impose their will on local schools. Their criticism of the educational bureaucracy reflected conservative complaints since the 1930s. Chubb and Moe maintained that bureaucracies work against the basic requirements of effective school organizations by imposing goals, structures, and requirements. Bureaucracies, according to Chubb and Moe, do not allow principals and teachers to exercise their professional expertise and judgment, but, rather, deny to them the flexibility needed to work effectively together to assure student achievement. Chubb and Moe concluded that schools controlled by competition in a free market have less bureaucracy and, consequently, promote student achievement.[30]

Choice plans were also supported by liberals concerned about the education of children from low-income homes. According to many liberals, public schools had failed these students. In response to this argument, the Wisconsin state legislature in 1990 passed a bill allowing students whose parents' income was less than 75 percent of the poverty level established by the federal government to choose a nonsectarian, private school. Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson argued, "Choice gives poor students the ability to select the best school that they possibly can. The plan allows for choice and competition, and I believe competition will make both the public and private schools that much stronger."[31]

In the 1990s, in response to pressures from the religious right, conservatives, and liberals, state and local school boards adopted choice plans. Minnesota was one of eight states in 1992 allowing choice between public schools. The other states were Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, Utah, and Washington. In the fall of 1992, the New York City Board of Education, one of the largest school systems in the country, unanimously adopted a plan that would allow parents to choose any public school in the system.[32]

In addition to choice plans, privitization and charter schools contributed to the demise of the common school. Are charter schools a spinoff of the privatization movement? Privatization involves private companies operating public schools. "Governors William Weld of Massachusetts and Ruddy Roemer of Colorado," wrote *New York* magazine reporter, James Traub, "contacted [Benno] Schmidt in the fall 1992 to say that they would like to find a way to bring Edison into the public schools in their states. Both states went on to pass 'charter school' laws that permit states and school systems to award contracts to . . . private contractors."[33]

Moving in the world of the rich and famous, Benno Schmidt, while president of Yale in 1990, encountered entrepreneur Chris Whittle at a party in the ultra-exclusive Hamptons section of Long Island. That meeting, according to Whittle, led him to the decision to hire Schmidt to head his school privatization scheme called "the Edison Project." Lured from Yale in 1992 with a salary around one million dollars, Benno Schmidt applied his elite private school background (St. Bernard's in New York City and Exeter) to designing private schools that were to be nationally franchised. When Whittle was unable to raise enough money to support this scheme, the Edison Project decided to operate public schools for a profit. Charter schools and choice provide mechanisms for this form of privatization of public schools.[34]

In 1994, the Wichita, Kansas school board signed a contract with the Edison Project to operate two of its elementary schools in 1995 and to plan the operation of a possible Edison middle school. Similar agreements were reached with school boards in Greeley, Colorado; Hawaii; Austin, Texas; Mount Clemens, Michigan; Dade County, Florida; and Bridgeport, Ohio. In addition, Massachusetts awarded the Edison Project the right to run three charter schools in Boston, Worcester, and Lowell starting in the fall of 1995. All of these schools would be operated for a profit.[35]

Another example of privatization is the decision by the Minneapolis school board in 1993 to hire Public Strategies Group, Inc. to provide leadership services. These leadership services involve Peter Hutchinson, president of the company, functioning as the school superintendent. Under the contract signed between the company and the board of education, Public Strategies will be paid for the goals it meets, goals which include such areas as student achievement, financial management, and community support. Also, Public Strategies will receive a six-month base fee of $30,000. For achieving the various goals, the company will be paid fees from $1,000 to $35,000 for each goal it meets. Potentially, the company could earn $214,000 in a six-month period for achieving all of its goals.[36]

In 1994, the school board of Hartford, Connecticut, voted 6 to 3 to hire Education Alternatives, Inc. to manage its school district. Regarding this decision, Stephanie S. Lightfoot, one of the board members supporting the action, said, "They can help us better manage our resources so we can put more resources back into the classroom."[37] The primary purpose in hiring the company was to save money and avoid budget deficits. The school board said that it would like the company to manage maintenance, purchases, security, transportation, food contracts, and construction projects. In addition, the company would be involved in monitoring and training the staff and in gaining new grant money.

Education Alternatives, Inc. (E.A.I.) received its first school contract in 1990 to provide instructional services to the Dade County, Florida school system's South Pointe Elementary School. In 1992, the company assumed management of nine schools in Baltimore. The firm provides an upfront investment in facilities, computers, and teacher training in the schools it is contracted to manage. This investment is to be recouped through savings in managing school budgets. The promise of immediate investment by the firm is one of the things school boards find appealing.[38]

In another elaborate plan for public school privatization, the Walt Disney Company signed a joint agreement in 1994 with the Osceola County school district and Stetson University to build and operate a public school of the future in its 5,000-acre community called "Celebration." Celebration is located near Walt Disney World and its community design is inspired, according to a Disney brochure, "by the main streets of small-town America and reminiscent of Norman Rockwell images." While detractors wonder disparagingly if teachers have to wear hats with funny little ears, the Disney Company claims the school will reflect the state-of-the-art in educational methods and technology. In addition, the plans include a teacher-training academy. The building and designing of the school at Celebration could be just the beginning of Disney's involvement in school privatization. The company created a separate group called Disney Educational Publishing to develop curriculum materials that will bring "the magic of Disney to learning both at home and at school."[39]

Charter school legislation enables the development of privatized schools. The basic idea of a charter school is that a private company, a group of teachers, or parents can petition a local school board or state agency to establish a public school or create a special program in an existing public school. Once the charter school is approved, it operates in a semi-autonomous fashion and receives public funds for its support. The basic idea is to create public schools that can act with a certain degree of independence from local and state educational bureaucracies. It is hoped that, freed from bureaucratic control, charter schools will develop and maintain unique and innovative alternatives to traditional public schools.

The 1991 Minnesota law specified that only licensed teachers can apply to local school boards to establish charter schools. In addition, proposals for charter schools must be approved by the state department of education. The only power given to local school boards is to assure that a charter school fulfills the outcome of its original charter. Otherwise, school board members and administrators are not allowed to interfere in the operation of the charter school. Under this law, the first charter school to be approved was the Bluffview Montessori School which operated for three years as a private school before deciding to seek public support.[40]

In 1992, California became the second state to adopt a charter school law. Under the California legislation, charter schools would not be required to follow most state regulations for traditional schools. Establishing a charter school required the signatures of at least 10 percent of teachers in a school district, or 50 percent of teachers in a school building and the approval of the local school board.[41]

By 1994, seven states—California, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, and Wisconsin—had charter school laws and fourteen other state legislatures were considering charter-school bills. The bills in these various states differed markedly as to a definition of a charter school. Some states limited conversion to charter schools to existing public schools. Some gave primary responsibility for the creation of charter schools to local school boards, while in Massachusetts local boards were bypassed.[42]

The development of charter schools in Detroit provided the opportunity for the funding of African American–centered schools. Under the Detroit plan, a petition

The Rev. Graham H. Walworth, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Long Island community of Northport, looks at the sign he posted on his outdoor bulletin board protesting the Supreme Court's decision banning prayer in New York public schools. © *Associated Press/Wide World Photos.*

for opening a charter school required the approval of its principal, 75 percent of its teachers, and its parents council. In 1991, the Detroit Board of Education chartered three all-male academies for African American boys. After a brief struggle in the courts, the three academies were required to admit girls along with boys.[43]

The creation of choice plans, the coming of privatization, and the development of charter schools reflected the general breakdown of the common school ideal of

unifying the nation around Protestant Anglo-American culture. Ironically, conservatives and the religious right supported these new educational movements because they believed that U.S. Supreme Court rulings on school prayer and Bible reading, and the rise of multicultural education, had shattered the dominance of Protestant Anglo-American culture in public schools. Choice, privatization, and charter schools held out the promise to conservatives and the religious right of allowing for the creation of schools that would reflect their traditional values. Of course, these same educational innovations allowed dominant cultures to send their children to schools reflecting their cultural backgrounds. In contrast, liberals could jump on the band wagon of choice, privatization, and charter schools because of the possibility of having public schools serve the interests of children from low-income groups.

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE CENTURY—VIOLENCE, TESTING, AND TECHNOLOGY

As the century ended, politicians beat the drums for school reform. Trotted out for public consideration were the old standbys of education for morality, citizenship, and economic growth. Proposed solutions combined moral instruction with the scientific efficiency techniques of accountability, testing, and standards. In addition, choice and charter schools continued to win support. And, in the age of computers, technology revolutionized the classroom.

Horace Mann's hope that schools would plant a common morality in every child took on new meaning as school violence increased. Of course, fights and gang rumblings had always been a part of the middle and high school way of life. But now there was the terror of mass murderers with guns and bombs. In the spring of 1999, at Columbine High School in suburban Denver, two students proclaiming themselves members of the "Trenchcoat Mafia" assembled an arsenal of 30 bombs, two sawed-off 12-gauge shotguns, a 9-mm semi-automatic rifle, and a 9-mm semi-automatic pistol. Before committing suicide, they left the school littered with debris from exploded bombs and with the bodies of twelve students and a teacher.[44]

The Columbine killings followed several years of armed school attacks. In November 1998, in Burlington, Wisconsin, five students plotted to hold their high school principal hostage as they called 20 student victims from their classes for execution. The plan unraveled as the teenager with access to his father's rifles, shotguns, and handguns dropped out and another boy bragged about the scheme at a party. This gruesome plan included forcing the principal to announce over the school's intercom that all teachers were to keep their students in their classrooms, while the juvenile terrorists searched through school files to find the classes of the victims. After calling their prey to the principal's office, the executioners envisioned a blood bath, including their own deaths along with those of the principal and students. A friend of the arrested conspirators described them as "the freaks" and "the Satan worshipers." The Wisconsin conspiracy was reminiscent of the shootings by Barry Loukatis, a 14-year-old honors student. He walked into his