

Parents: Take Charge of Your Children's Education

Are America's public schools falling apart?

The evidence certainly points in that direction.

In 2022, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as "[The Nation's Report Card](#)," found historic declines in reading and math scores among American students. Scores by grade level and subject fell dramatically in all categories.

In my state of Virginia, overall student [test scores](#) ranked just slightly above the national average, which sounds great until you realize that the scores of students at the "basic" and "proficient" levels dropped sharply. You can look up your state's scores [here](#).

While math and reading may be going down the tubes, critical race theory and gender-bending have proliferated in the curriculum. Here in Virginia, for instance, it appears that, in the name of equity, the administrators of several schools in wealthy counties concealed or delayed [national merit recognition](#) due to some students for their high academic achievements, thereby destroying these students' ability to earn prestigious National Merit Scholarships.

Some schools have also [pushed](#) the transgender movement, [secretly counseling](#) students on their sexual identities and giving them access to the bathrooms of their newly declared gender. In August 2022, Fox News [reported](#) that radical gender theory is now a part of some 4,000 schools.

And some teachers have taken a hands-on approach to sex education. On Jan. 1, for example, the Chicago Board of Education [reported](#) that, in the 2021–2022 academic year, teachers raped, sexually abused, or groomed hundreds of their

students. And those were only the ones detected or accused. In [“X-Rated Ed,”](#) Larry Sand cites cases of pedophilia and abuse in schools from around the nation and points out that, at its 2022 annual convention, the New Jersey chapter of the National Educator’s Association hosted a “‘LGBTQIA+ banned books drag queen story hour’” to explore their “‘intersectional identities.’”

Meanwhile, a good number of families are voting with their feet and leaving the public schools. Search [“how many students have left public schools”](#) in the last two years, and [some outlets](#) report the number as 2 million students. Following the COVID lockdowns and other issues, these families turned instead to charter schools, private academies, or home learning.

To the clear-eyed, our system appears irreparably broken. The teachers’ unions care more about benefits and political correctness than educating students. The intrusion of the federal government into education over the last five decades has brought disaster. Broken families and a broken culture affect the young every day of their lives. [Screens](#) with their social media and games distract students and eat up their time.

Short of some enormous national about-face, only one solution seems possible: Parents must take charge of their children’s education.

Forgive me if I sound harsh, but your circumstances don’t matter. Rich or poor, single or married, black, white, Asian, Hispanic, country mouse or city mouse: If you are in possession of your faculties, you are ultimately responsible for your child’s education. Your child’s education should be secondary only to putting food on the table and keeping a roof overhead, and you’re the one responsible.

Homeschool if you can, enroll your child in a mediocre school

if you must, but the buck stops with you. If your child graduates from high school [illiterate or a poor reader](#), as so many now do, it's on your head. You can blame some school or your situation, perhaps with some justification, but the question remains: Where were you all those years, and what did you do?

Here's the good news: You have vast resources at your fingertips. A few strokes on the keyboard, and [free online math lessons](#) from kindergarten to graduate school are yours for the taking. Search for reading helps, and you open another treasure chest of resources. You have access to public libraries. You have aunts and uncles, grandparents, and friends, all of whom might step up and serve as tutors.

Plutarch once [wrote](#), "For the mind does not require filling like a bottle, but rather, like wood, it only requires kindling to create in it an impulse to think independently and an ardent desire for the truth." But a whole lot of students aren't getting any matches for that kindling. It's up to us parents to provide them. Some of the homeschoolers I once taught in my seminars went on to Ivy League schools, U.S. service academies, and prestigious state and private colleges. Others attended trade schools or entered the workforce after high school. No matter what their ambitions, all of them had one thing in common: They could read, write, and do basic math. Why? Because their parents cared about their education.

Someday my grandchildren and your children and grandchildren will be living and working alongside one another trying to make a go of this country. Let's give them the tools to do the job. Let's give them the education they deserve.

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