

The Six Main Tenets of the 1979 Founding of FedEd: Signposts Ignored on the Roadmap of Public Education

The federal government's first Department of Education (ED) was created in 1867—based on legislation signed into law by President Andrew Johnson—as a non-cabinet-level agency charged with collecting information on schools and teaching to help states establish effective school systems. Almost immediately, critics of the new agency emerged, voicing concern that local schools would be subjected to excessive control by the department. Consequently, by the following year, the ED was reduced to a minor office, ultimately buried inside the Department of the Interior. It was operated by four employees on a budget of \$15,000.

<http://www.allgov.com/departments/department-of-education?detailsDepartmentID=584>

The Federal Department of Education in its current incarnation was birthed by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. Carter's idea was founded on sound reasoning. At that point in time he saw the federal government as intrusive. He himself stated that the federal government had, instead of assisting education at local levels, added to their "burden." The fed had indeed become a culture "bureaucratic buck passing." He further went on to say that the federal government, which should be a "junior partner" in American education, had mistakenly relegated itself to that of an equal and silent partner. There were essentially six key tenets that the Federal Dept. of Education was founded upon.

- 1) It would bring education into the national spotlight and put someone a position of authority to "stir the discussion" regarding education.
- 2) It was to make federal education programs more accountable.
- 3) It would streamline education as it would no longer be enmeshed in HEW; which in turn would "promote better **service**" to local school systems.
- 4) The reorganization would result in substantial personnel and bureaucratic streamlining. It would allow for improved **services** at less cost.

- 5) “It will make Federal education programs more responsive. Placing education in a highly visible department of its own gives the American people a much clearer perspective on what the Federal Government is doing in education and who is responsible for these activities. It allows people to better decide what the Government should and should not be doing in education.”

- 6) “A Department of Education will ensure that local communities retain control of their schools and education programs. That is essential if our schools are to serve their students properly, and the Department of Education will, therefore, not permit the Federal Government to begin making decisions on education policy that are best made at the local level.”

President Carter’s complete statement regarding the DOE can be found here:
Department of Education Organization Act Statement on Signing S. 210 Into Law. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=31543> *October 17, 1979*

I truly believe that President Carter had nothing but the best intentions mind as he created the DOE.

While I will offer my own two cents in this writing addressing each of the individual statements, the two that truly separate Carter’s proposals from what happened subsequently can be found in the Act’s fifth and sixth proclamations.

Statement one is similar to many statements we have heard from many subsequent administrations: the need for discussion on education in America. In Carter’s words the department and those in positions of leadership were to “stir the discussion.” Not necessarily lead it, and certainly not use it as a bully pulpit. “Stirring the discussion” by definition does not give FedEd the authority to dictate. Discussing and dictating are two very different things. I imagine that Secretary Duncan would say he did hold discussions about what he wanted to do. The question becomes “with whom did he have these discussions?” It certainly was not with the “locals” or the people of America. Whatever discussions he held were certainly not those of a “junior partner.” The NGA is a perfect example as it is put out there as a front for saying there was state involvement. In truth it was funded in part by the federal government and in part by Bill Gates. I also do not believe that bribery through use of funding(RTTT) and coercion in the form NCLB waivers used as a threat count as “discussion.”

The second tenet said that federal education programs become more accountable. To date the only “accountability” I have seen has been at the lowest level of the system, the last line of defense within the system to protect students...their educators and teachers. The misuse and abuse of standardized testing in this country as a way to measure teacher worth and efficacy is a farce. It is based on a concept of Value Added Measure (VAM) that has clearly been shown to be neither valid nor reliable to be used in such a manner. More information on VAM can be found at the following links:

- a) http://www.amstat.org/policy/pdfs/ASA_VAM_Statement.pdf?1420416000028
- b) <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/12/education-data-teachers.html>
- c) <http://dangerouslyirrelevant.org/resources/value-added-measures>

In New York , NYS Regent Dr. *Kathleen Cashin* recently released a very strong statement regarding such accountability:

“As a Regent of the State of New York, I cannot endorse the use of the current state tests for teacher/principal evaluation since that was not the purpose for which they were developed. It is axiomatic in the field of testing that tests should be used only for the purpose for which they were designed. They were designed to measure student performance, not teacher effectiveness. The American Statistical Association, the National Academy of Education, and the American Educational Research Association have cautioned that student tests should not be used to evaluate individual teachers. Nor should these tests be used for student growth measures until there is clear evidence that they are valid and reliable. The Board of Regents should commission an independent evaluation of these tests to verify their reliability and validity before they are used for high-stakes purposes for students, teachers, principals, and schools. How can we criticize people for opting out when the tests have not been verified? We need to cease and desist in the use of these tests until such time as we can be confident of their reliability and validity. If tests do meet those criteria, the tests must be released to teachers and to the

public after they are given, in the spirit of transparency and accountability.”

<http://dianeravitch.net/2015/04/02/regent-cashin-of-new-york-speaks-out-against-high-stakes-testing/>

There currently is no system in place to hold the federal Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, accountable or in check. He answers to no one, even though he should answer to everyone.

The key operational word in Carter's third and fourth statements is "service." The DOE was created to serve the districts and the public, not the other way around. The way Secretary Duncan and the Obama Administration are currently doing things is the antithesis of this. They have gone from serving the public trust at the local level to playing the role of master. They have bullied and intimidated, bypassed the legislative process, and quite possibly violated the Constitution of the United States of America. They did circumvent it on their own, they had help from some state governors to impose their will. They set up and worked with front groups set as NGA, PARCC, and others; many of which had private funding from those who would gain major financial benefits from what Secretary Duncan has foisted onto the American Public.

Duncan's use of NCLB waivers as a sword over the head of many states who were strapped for funding was nothing short of extortion and intimidation. The withholding of RTTT funding from those who didn't "volunteer" was plainly and simply bribery under duress. In essence the Common Core State Standards themselves, with no vetting, no pilot, and no research, were forced upon states which in turn forced them upon localities.

According to Dictionary.com the definition of "serve" includes "to act as a servant," and "to render assistance; be of use; help." Its verb form also includes "to render obedience or homage to."

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/serve?s=t> By definition the DOE is clearly not behaving in a manner consistent with service. The department's actions under this administration are the antithesis of the ideals of service that the department was founded upon.

The creation of DOE was also too streamlining bureaucracy. To save money that streamlining would also be reflected in reduction of personnel. This also is now

far from what has happened and what is currently happening. In 2010 and 2012 two reports documented the bloat occurring in the DOE. They can be found here respectively:

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/07/creating-a-crisis-spending-increase-to-fund-bloated-education-bureaucracy> and

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/04/obamas-2013-education-budget-and-blueprint-a-costly-expansion-of-federal-control>

A recent article by John Blankenship that was updated in July of 2014 stated:

“Meanwhile, the bloated government educational agency has evolved into a bureaucratic spending trough; more explicitly, an open drain of mismanagement and malfeasance. Approximately 52 percent of recipients of education salaries and benefits in America are non-teachers.

In other words, only a small portion of the total educational budget for states and school districts actually reaches students and teachers in the classrooms. The rest is spent on luxurious salaries for state department bureaucrats and administrators.”

http://www.register-herald.com/opinion/columns/department-of-education-influence-should-be-limited/article_c9e1b463-55f2-5b6e-b86f-32200cec34ce.html?mode=jqm

The greatest travesty in my opinion comes when we reach the final two statements as set forth by President Carter. These two immensely important recognitions that empower localities and limit the role of the federal government were the first to be attacked by subsequent administrations. They remain under clear assault today!

Since the flawed report “A Nation at Risk” <http://neatoday.org/2013/04/25/a-nation-at-risk-turns-30-where-did-it-take-us-2/> and the complete and purposeful ignorance of the subsequent Sandia Report during the Reagan years every administration since then has tried, in vain until NCLB, to orchestrate a national takeover of our public schools. The underlying flaw in A Nation at Risk was that it did not make fair comparisons; it did not compare apples to apples as the saying goes. It made grandiose and damaging claims based on flawed data and

little valid evidence. Further, not only was the Nation at risk paper completely inaccurate it was flat out wrong as was proven and documented in the Sandia Study of 1990. In 1990, Sandia Laboratories in New Mexico was commissioned to document the purported decline with actual data. What they found was that the reality of the matter was that our nation's educational system was progressing and succeeding, not declining! Unfortunately politicians and many "journalists" at the time seemed to not care about facts and research.

One great mistake that has gone largely unnoticed through the years is the improper interpretation of the word "reform." When we talk about education reform it is the verb definition of reform; we are simply "forming" education again. Unfortunately, "reform" in this sense is not synonymous with "improve," it simply means we are changing it. One must wonder, however, looking at where we are in education reform today if indeed reforming was the goal all along.

The following segment in italics was Prepared by Tammy L. Austin and is stated here verbatim:

"GOALS 2000--THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION PROGRAM

In late 1989, President Bush and the Nation's Governors met in Virginia for a bipartisan "Education Summit." At this summit, the groundwork was laid for the National Education Goals, which are all part of the Goals 2000 Education Program. Under the Bush administration, the program was called "America 2000."

The goals were not to be used for political gain or as a hollow promise. They were the centerpiece for education reform in both the Bush and Clinton Administrations. They serve as a nationwide pact by which we can measure the output of our educational systems throughout America.

The passing of the GOALS 2000: Educate America Act on March 31 of 1994 allowed the federal government a new role in its support for education. The federal government can now promote a comprehensive approach to help all students succeed in life.

The National Education Goals are listed, followed by current information about why these goals are needed.

By the year 2000:

- 1. Every child will start school ready to learn.*
- 2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.*
- 3. American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including english, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, art, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.*
- 4. The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.*
- 5. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.*
- 6. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise rights and responsibilities of citizenship.*
- 7. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.*
- 8. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.”*

<https://www3.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/goals200.html>

I am not implying that goals are bad. I am saying that we need to question goals stated in absolutes such as the use of the term “every” in the majority of those stated. I also feel it is imperative to question goals that fail to take into account many factors and variables outside of the educational system that directly affect ones “success” in it. Education of children is not like building a car. Our educational system may be loosely based on the factory assembly line system, but that is as far as it goes. There will always be one thing completely out of our control: the raw material that comes into our “factory.” Quite honestly I feel that those differences were what made our nation unique in the world.

In the year 2000 George Bush introduced “No Child Left Behind.” NCLB looked great on paper and passed with bi-partisan support; which should come as no surprise to anyone. What politician in an age of sound bites would dare vote against something called “no Child Left Behind;” great title, great ideal, unrealistic goals and expectations. It was here that “accountability” became the buzzword. Unfortunately it placed almost all, if not all, accountability solely at the feet of the schools and the nation’s educators.

It is not surprising to see that the rise of “teacher bashing” began at this time. In the NCLB years 2000-2004 the blame game began in earnest. Who better to blame than the most high profile group there was in the education system: teachers. The root of the attacks can be traced directly to politicians with a political agenda, not an educational one. It is this writer’s opinion that the root of any failure in education can also be traced to politicians and policy makers that really had no business being involved in decisions regarding education. The assault on public education and educators continued and got increasingly negative reaching a nastiness never before seen until the advent of Common Core. More than a decade of negative press and attacks on teachers eventually weakened the unions and shifted more power to the government, federal and state.

In hind sight it is easy to see that the more the Fed Gov’t became involved the more it became the teachers’ fault that Public Ed was “failing”in essence A MANUFACTURED CRISIS.

Each attack on Public Ed by the Gov’t itself “scared” the public more and more into thinking something was wrong. ; reaching a crescendo when public letters to the editor and negative public sentiment was at an all-time high...the public demanded change...little realizing that the Gov’t had been changing things all along.

Ironically it is our current President, Obama that has done the most damage. He ran for office making responsible education a major part of his message, a message delivered to get votes but never to be followed through on:

“There's a lot of talk out there about accountability in education. I share that concern, and I've called for more accountability in our schools myself. But I also believe that before we can hold our teachers accountable for the results our schools need, we have to hold ourselves accountable for giving teachers the support that they need. That's where accountability starts with a government that puts its money where its mouth is, and parents and community members who instill the value of education in their students.

I am tired of hearing teachers blamed for our collective failures.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to take a bus ride with a group of Iowa teachers and discuss their thoughts on education. Afterwards, one teacher said, "I don't think any teacher minds being accountable when the measuring tool is fair to educators and not about satisfying unrealistic goals."

http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/07/speech_to_the_national_educati.html

In a 2007 speech in Philadelphia to the NEA President Obama went as far as stating the following:

But don't come up with this law called No Child Left Behind and then leave the money behind. Don't tell us that you'll put high-quality teachers in every classroom and then leave the support and the pay for those teachers behind. Don't label a school as failing one day and then throw your hands up and walk away from it the next. And don't tell us that the only way to teach a child is to spend too much of the year preparing him to fill in a few bubbles on a standardized test. We know that's not true. **You didn't devote your lives to testing, you devoted them to teaching, and teaching is what you should be allowed to do.**

<http://www.schoolsmatter.info/2007/07/obama-speaks.html>

It was a rousing speech from a man who has overseen what is the most, draconian measures of school control, over testing and over use of testing, and dependence upon standardized testing that our nation has ever seen.

I feel I must mention that in researching this piece I found that by August 2007 Whitney Tilson, who helped found Teach for America, had at that point raised \$50,000 for Obama.

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/08/07/clinton_obama_go_easy_on_school_reform_talk/?page=full

What has happened with Race To The Top and Common Core being forced upon the nation's schools is a far cry from statements five and six made in 1979:

- 5) “It will make Federal education programs more responsive. Placing education in a highly visible department of its own gives the American people a much clearer perspective on what the Federal Government is doing in education and who is responsible for these activities. It allows people to better decide what the Government should and should not be doing in education.”
- 6) “A Department of Education will ensure that local communities retain control of their schools and education programs. That is essential if our schools are to serve their students properly, and the Department of Education will, therefore, not permit the Federal Government to begin making decisions on education policy that are best made at the local level.”

As I shared in an earlier piece I say again:

To see clearly the cycle of lies and deceit repeating itself as the federal government makes its push to take over all of public education I suggest you watch this 23 minute video by Chris Tienken of Seton Hall University. “Christopher Tienken, Ed.D is an assistant professor of Education Administration at Seton Hall University. Dr. Tienken confirms what many believe that Common Core lacks the appropriate scientific evidence for its very existence.--West Harrison, NY. September 21, 2013.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us1tqamLzPU>

I also recommend watching Building the Machine which raises many clear and concise points about what went on behind the scenes as the CC agenda was pushed. It includes people instrumental to the process that did NOT agree with the final product and how that was handled, as well as simply stated insight into as to how “college and career ready” is a farce.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjxBClx01jc>

I also ask you once again to consider:

- 1) Why the secrecy and half-truths that are rampant in the government's push of CC?
- 2) Why resort to bribery and coercion to force states to "volunteer" for RTTT and CC?
- 3) Why the continued threats of school district take over and loss of funding?
- 4) Why were superintendents, BOEs, administrators, and teachers told to keep quiet and NOT say anything negative about CCSS or else....even if it was the truth?
- 5) Why the misuse and abuse of testing now purposely using flawed data that ultimately will make our children look bad in order to hurt our nations teachers, and destroy our local schools?
~ If you wanted to destroy public education which group would you take out first?
- 6) If you have taken the time to digest all of this are you going to stand idly by or make you a stand with the others who are awaiting your help to take protect our children, our schools, our communities, and our very nation from those who would take all of those things from us?

START NOW: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Stop-Common-Core/390379521070336>

In New York:

<https://www.facebook.com/StopCommonCoreinNewYorkState?fref=ts>

“The federal government’s first Department of Education (ED) was created in 1867—based on legislation signed into law by President Andrew Johnson—as a non-cabinet-level agency charged with collecting information on schools and teaching to help states establish effective school systems.

Almost immediately, critics of the new agency emerged, voicing concern that local schools would be subjected to excessive control by the department.

Consequently, by the following year, the ED was reduced to a minor office, ultimately buried inside the Department of the Interior. “

<http://www.allgov.com/departments/department-of%20education?detailsDepartmentID=584>

Amazing isn’t it? Almost 150 years ago people knew the dangers of excessive control of local schools by the federal government. The difference is that back then the people were listened to by the government, not met with threats from it.