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Inside this Issue

Leadership Axioms	2
Judging the Bush Years	2-4
Desired Changes to Improve Achievement	5
The Latest Nation At Risk Report	6
Past Presidents of the HML	7-8
HML Publications	7
Corporate Sponsors	8
Annual Meeting Registration	Insert



HML Notes

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HML Membership Survey Highlights

The 5th "Survey of the Members of the Horace Mann League," conducted in December 2008, resulted in the following conclusions:

Best Indicators of Quality School Improvement:

1. Increase student achievement
2. Increased school pride and engagement in activities.
3. Increased percentage of "yes" votes on a levy on bond issue.

External Factors Inhibiting School Improvement:

1. Inability of the legislator to adequately fund public schools.

2. Inability of the community to adequately fund public schools
3. In ability of parents to have access to how to prepare children for learning when entering kindergarten

Internal Factors Inhibiting School Improvement:

1. Inability to modify the "teacher contract" to allow alternative schooling arrangements.
2. Inability to provide the resource to plan and follow through on school improvement efforts.
3. Inability of some students to make a serious commitment to schooling.

Desired Changed in "No Child Left Behind" rules:

1. Eliminate the sanctions, negativity, and punitive aspects of NCLB
2. Eliminate or reduce the Federal role associated with NCLB
3. Fully fund the implementation of NCLB
4. Change the rules relating to the testing of special education and second language students

The complete report on the "Horace Mann League Survey of Members can be located on the HML web site at:

www.hmleague.org

Horace Mann League Annual Meeting

The 87th Annual Meeting of the Horace Mann League will be held at the San Francisco Marriott Hotel, in conjunction with the American Association of School Administrator's convention. The HML's "Outstanding Friend of Public Education"

will be presented to Dr. Harry Wong, nationally recognized speaker and expert on classroom management. The HML's "Outstanding Public Educator" will be presented to Dr. John Goodlad, President of the Institute for Educational

Inquiry. The HML's "Friend of the Horace Mann League" will be presented to Dr. Ken Underwood.

For additional registration information about the 2009 Annual meeting, an insert is included in this newsletter.

Leadership Axioms

As part of the "HML Membership Survey," participants were asked to share a significant axiom or quote: Following are a few of the contributions:

"Don't mistake the edge of the rut for the horizon."

"You are only as good as your teaching staff."

"Introducing myself by saying 'I am the current superintendent of'"

"Even if you can successfully swim against an angry tide as a school leader, you will be criticized for not walking on water."

"All will be right with the world when the military has to hold bake sales to buy bombs and schools have all the money they need."

"A (school) Board's perception of reality is reality; regardless of the facts. 1st Corollary: The function of the superintendent is to make the reality and the facts fit as closely as possible. 2nd Corollary: Any administrator's tenure in a district is directly related to how close the facts and reality correlate."

"Being a superintendent is a fine line between leading a parade and being run out of town by an unhappy mob."

"The key to leading a public school system is hiring great people and keeping everything that might prevent them from doing their job out of the way."

"Don't tell me what you value, tell me what you do and I will tell you what you value."

Judging the Bush years: Well-educated or much-schooled?

By John Goodlad

The No Child Left Behind Act approved by Congress in 2001 is President Bush's major intervention and the federal government's most intrusive entry ever into public schooling. Both praise of and blame for the act's consequences have been dumped on Bush. The nationwide testing mandate will be part of his legacy. In this state, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning provided the pivotal issue in the recent defeat of the long-term superintendent of public instruction who guided it by a challenger who strongly opposed the present version.

The months immediately preceding the 2004 national election were marked by a proliferation of "letters to the next president," many directed to fixing or getting rid of NCLB. I did not see any point in trying to fix what was not broken but should be terminated. I got into the habit of asking prominent educators what might happen if Bush was not re-elected.

After considerable thought, they answered "not much." Our proclivity for testing has been around a long time and probably will continue to be. The challenge is to choose wisely what and how we test.

The letters came again in abundance in the months preceding Nov. 4, 2008. But there also were proposals for intensively rethinking and reconstructing our system of public schooling. The relatively new Forum for Education and Democracy, for example, prepared a document titled "Democracy at Risk," with a quite different orientation to the purposes and conduct of schools than those presented in the 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk."

Gaining considerable political and media attention, "Democracy at Risk" was a call for renewing the schools that have served us well and are still highly regarded in their communities but are long overdue for fundamental cultural change. "A Nation at Risk," on the other hand, was a stunning indictment: "If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." The report's recommendations were not for the dawning of a new day but the toughening up of the old one.

Do we have two systems of public schooling in this country?

It would be the better part of wisdom for us not to view the end of Bush's terms in office as also the end of the NCLB genre of so-called school reform. It is simply excessive implementation of a genre that has had and will continue to have substantial support, especially in federal and state capitals. I have experienced it in lesser roles for many, many years.

There is plenty of blame for the past eight years to spread around. George W. Bush just happened to be our leader in chief at a time when, to borrow from communications scholar Neil Postman's book, "The End of Education," the god of economic utility was at the top of his game in guiding the purpose and conduct of our schools.

Once upon a time, there was considerable public discourse about schools. At

the beginning of the 20th century, philosopher/psychologist William James observed that the U.S. was marked by "the hard and tough" on one hand and "the soft and tender" on the other as competing ideologies in our lives and that it was important for us to keep them in balance. The tension between them regarding schooling has been apparent throughout the 20th century into the 21st century.

For the first half of the former, the conversation was healthy, somewhat muted and school- and community-based. "The war to end all wars," the Great Depression and the drive toward the American Dream in expanding universal schooling and jobs dominated. During the years immediately following World War II, peace and prosperity were the context for a schooling decade marked at least rhetorically by the soft and tender.

But what is perceived by people attached to one ideological mode to be excesses in the behavior of the other often exacerbates excesses of the former. And so we fail to come together in collaborative endeavor. A clash of major proportions occurred in the mid-1950s when so-called progressive education was attacked severely by prominent critics as threatening solid learning in the traditional school subjects. Their speaking and writing reached a wide audience. Publications such as Rudolf Flesch's "Why Johnny Can't Read" brought debate to the public.

With mothers not commonly employed outside the home, many engaged in coffee klatches, often bringing on lively conversations about their children's schooling.

Suddenly, in 1957, two small satellites, Sputnik I and II, circled the globe and ushered in a new top priority for schools -- ensuring the nation's global supremacy in science and technology. Schooling quickly appeared on the agenda of policymakers in Washington, D.C. Although the influential book, "The American High School Today," by the much-respected James Conant supported the concept of a comprehensive secondary school available to all students, Conant recommended a much heavier curriculum in mathematics and science for the academically able.

The hard and tough was moving toward ascendancy in the curriculum for advancing the nation's agenda of leading in the global economy.

How did policymakers and corporate leaders come to have such expectations? You read above the damning charge of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. **When the economy soared later, not a word of praise for our schools appeared in the media. Are schools simply a convenient target for blame when our nation appears to falter?**

In 1965, Congress passed an Elementary and Secondary Education Act quite different from that of 2001, providing the largest budget ever for research and development pertaining to schools to support President Lyndon Johnson's vision of the Great Society. The challenge to educators was to create a system of schooling that would go down in history as ending poverty, homelessness, crime in the streets and racial prejudice as well as bringing about world peace. The infusion of dollars would ensure good teachers, curricular renewal, well-equipped classrooms and educational equity for urban, suburban and rural children and youths.

Sociologist James Coleman was commissioned to lead a research team that would bring out within a year a report on the critical factors in classroom learning and guide funding priorities. The most significant and controversial finding stunned the president and Congress: The primary factors are not teachers and curricula but the social and particularly the educational capital students bring from home and communities and encounter in their fellow students. That is the expectation many parents cautiously admit guides their careful selection of private schools - schools exempted from the narrow curricular path and rigorous testing mandate of NCLB.

What is emerging in this brief historical analysis is not that we have two systems of schooling but that we had in the second half of the 20th century a growing divergence in expectations for schools. The closer an adult is to children and youths, the more likely his or her expectation that schools will take care of their education and the more intuitive he or she will be about whether they are or are not. The closer the adult is to political responsibility for the well-being of city, state or nation, the more she or he will be interested in hard data and accountability regarding the conduct of schooling. That is something of the distinction philosopher William James had in mind with his two modes of thought

and the need for balancing them.

The trouble with both modes is the difficulty of getting solid evidence about their impact on schools. Good intuition about a school's educational care of children requires knowledge about many factors. Hard data about an array of characteristics is difficult and expensive to get. Further, distinguishing which characteristics are acquired from schooling and which from home, church, companions, television or the Internet challenges the research process. The fact that those educating influences beat NCLB at its own narrowly focused game suggests we need a different mission for our schools.

Unfortunately, we have never made clear to policymakers, teacher educators, school board members and school personnel what that game should be. Had we done so even a quarter-century ago, we might now be a long way along the road to the renewing system of schooling our democracy must have. **Educational researchers and the media must take some responsibility for the public's lack of information about the substantial body of knowledge regarding virtually every component of the schooling enterprise that has piled up unused over the past half-century.** Seeking information and counsel, the National Commission on Excellence in Education interviewed people from coast to coast, including the directors of three major ongoing inquiries into contemporary schooling. The review of the book reporting one of the studies, widely regarded as the most comprehensive ever, began on the front page of The New York Times and subsequently was published in several hundred newspapers. All three reports were ignored.

Opinion and ideology triumphed over hard-nosed inquiry.

Would the public have let NCLB prevail as a mandate for nearly eight years had there been an awareness of the relationship between standardized test scores and the personal, social, vocational and academic development of the young? Students' performance correlates hardly at all with such human attributes as perseverance, honesty, good problem-solving behavior, ability to work alone and with others, compassion, dependability, creativity or any of the other traits we associate with a democratic people. They are surprisingly spread over the full range of test scores.

I am not assuming that parents and others close to schools and the children and youths in them are not concerned about the role of schooling in the nation's well-being. Nor am I assuming that those in the policy arena are disinterested in the well-being of young people in schools. **My concern is with excesses such as NCLB.** The trail to it was being blazed decades before. As educator TheodoreSizer ob-

served, "A Nation at Risk" called for a crusade but failed to provide the necessary resources.

The shortage of dollars probably was a good thing since they probably would have supported toughening up the regularities of our longstanding system of schooling. Several educational leaders saw instead the need for comprehensive renewal and discovered a readiness for it among school principals and teachers nationwide. A fascinating flurry of innovation, funded by philanthropic foundations, arose late in the 1980s and continued into the late 1990s. Then it largely perished, like plants without water, during Bush's first term.

Where do we go from here? That is another story in the making, not of further tinkering I hope.

Two major lessons emerge out of the past half-century of misguided school reform eras.

First, we will never have the schools our democracy requires until primary responsibility for them returns to their community contexts.

Second, we will never have them until community leaders, educators and policymakers agree on the democratic purpose of public schooling and work together toward its advancement. A common mission, unlike a common mandate, promotes creativity and innovation. And where do we begin when faced with challenges such as renewing the nation's system of schooling? We talk.

On Dec. 1, 2006, the editorial column of the Seattle P-I began with the following sentence: "Whatever became of the idea that representative democracy is the essential starting point for public education?" One also might ask, "Whatever happened to the idea that public education is the essential starting point for addressing the well-being of our democracy?" Let the conversation begin.

*John I. Goodlad is president of the Institute for Educational Inquiry at the University of Washington.

Desired Changes to Improve Student Achievement

School leaders seldom have the opportunity to follow through on what could happen if they had the resources. When asked what they wanted to accomplish, nearly half of the participants indicated a preference for preparing young children for the school experience. Participants suggested programs relating to a quality early childhood learning experiences, available health and dental services, and parenting programs for mothers and fathers. The second most often mentioned change was related to services for children in need of extra assistance in learning. The third area of desired change was in extending the school day and school year. Finally, participants wanted to implement continuous professional development programs.

Quotes from participants about desired change:

“Make preschool programs universally available on voluntary basis to all low-income students; expand out-of-school health and dental screening and recreation and social service options for students.”

“I would pay extra so that all staff development was outside of the regular school day. We talk about how important the teacher is and then we continue to take them out of the classroom and away from teaching.”

“I want a more extensive pre-school program. More intensive intervention programs with middle and high school students. A “failure in not an option” program, that works with all students to be successful.”

“Move to year round school with enhanced opportunities for staff training and intervention and additional support for students during breaks between regular instruction.”

“I’d promote universal preschool that involves parents from the very beginning. This usually leads to stronger parental involvement later.”

“Complete restructuring of comprehensive high schools in terms of curriculum that is more rigorous, relevant and engaging to students (project-based). The 2nd thing I would do is to focus more resources on early childhood education. Class size isn’t really the issue.”

Past Recipients of the Horace Mann League’s “Outstanding Friend of Public Education” Award.

2008 Ms. Wendy Puriefoy, President, Public Education Network

2007 Dr. Thomas Sobol, Professor, Teachers College and Past Commissioner, New York State Dept. of Education

2006 Dr. Johnathan Kozol, Author and Researcher, [The Shame of Our Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid School in America](#)

2005 Larry and Joyce Stupski, The Stupski Foundation, San Francisco

2004 Mr. Frosty Troy, Publisher, Oklahoma Observer

2003 Dr. Mary Ellen Fitzgerald, The Wallace Readers’ Digest Fund

2002 Mr. Richard Rothstein, Columnist, [The New York Times](#)

2001 Mr. Al Dietzel, Vice President, The Limited, Inc. Columbus, OH

2000 Dr. Barry Lynn, Executive Director, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, DC

1998 Dr. Lew Salmon, The Milken Foundation, Santa Monica, CA

1997 Mr. James Hunt, Governor of North Carolina

The Latest Nation At Risk Report: The Education Roundtable to Tell Corporate America How to Stop Ruining America. By Carl Glickman

We feel compelled to report to the American people that the business and financial foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur- companies that extolled themselves as models of excellent practices have deceived the American people with sloppy, undisciplined, and greedy practices that are driving Americans out of their homes, threatening their retirements, and dashing their hopes of a financially secure future. Indeed, if an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre corporate financial performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.

As it stands, our businesses have allowed this to happen, with greedy CEOs and upper management taking enormous benefits for themselves while preaching and dictating to our schools the need to adopt their "sound" business practices of unbridled free markets, privatization strategies, and the notion of competition as the force for change.

Taxpayers are now providing an initial \$700 billion bail-out of some of these companies, whose CEO's have been actively involved in dictating to policy-makers that America's schools should model the management style of the private sector.

God forbid that our schools become more like these kinds of businesses! Our business and financial communities have, in effect, been committing rash, thoughtless acts of unilateral financial disarmament, dragging our citizens and their children into economic insecurity while having many of these same citizens pay the bill. By making their terminology, practices and transactions incomprehensible to the lay audience, these business leaders enjoyed a decade-long end run around the public and our alleged watchdog agencies. The hubris of high rollers on the top floors of America's giant companies permitting unfettered profit-taking at the expense of others has no limit. To be blunt, the business community has become an industry at risk of implosion.

To help our colleagues in the business community, we educators hereby recommend a new guiding and monitoring organization for business and financial institutions. The Education Roundtable will gather a team of the

country's top educators, whose charge will be to set business standards, goals, and accountability structures for all corporations and financial institutions. To promote a greater culture of accountability, the Roundtable will also require each entity to publish a report card every year, based on a series of standardized assessments.

Our final word, perhaps better characterized as a plea, is that all segments of our population will give close attention to the implementation of our recommendations. Our present plight did not appear overnight, and the responsibility for our current situation is widespread. Reform of our corporate and financial system will take time and unwavering commitment. For no one can doubt that the United States is under challenge from many quarters.

Epilogue

There will be some angry readers out there who will bristle as I have lifted some of the exact wording of the Nation at Risk Report of 1983 and changed the word "schools" and "public education" to "business and financial institutions." And yes, I have taken plenty of liberties to extend and add sentences to define all business and financial leaders and stock market manipulators as untrustworthy, immoral, dangerous people who have let our country down; crushing the day to day lives and long term hopes of the large majority of Americans who can not afford to lose their jobs, their homes, and their savings. And my business friends -- if there still are a few left -- will bristle at the idea that educators and lay people, with no experiences in business or finance, should be taking charge of what they need to do. If so, the point has been made and hopefully, sincerely taken before further policy making.

Author: Carl Glickman, President, Institute for Schools, Education, and Democracy and was recently Scholar in Residence at The University of Georgia.

HML Publication:

During the past three years, Julie Underwood and Linda Darlig-Hammond have been editing the book, Creating Common Schools for the 21st Century. The seven chapter book will be published by Jossey-Bass, Publishers, of San Francisco. Publication date is summer of 2009.

Chapter 1, The Common School for the 21st Century

Chapter 2, The Call for Leadership

Chapter 3, Whose Job is it Anyway

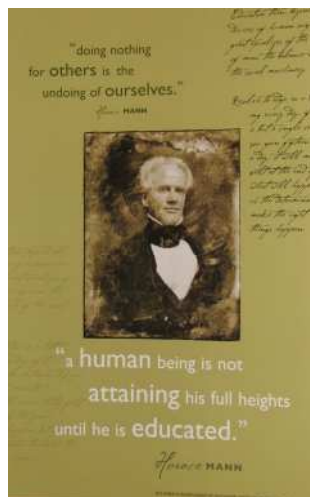
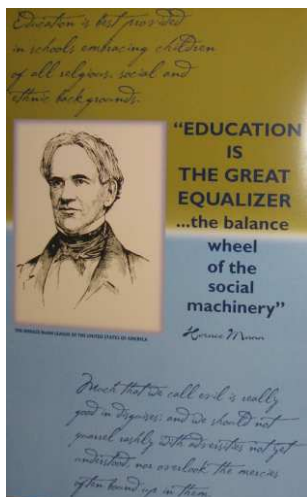
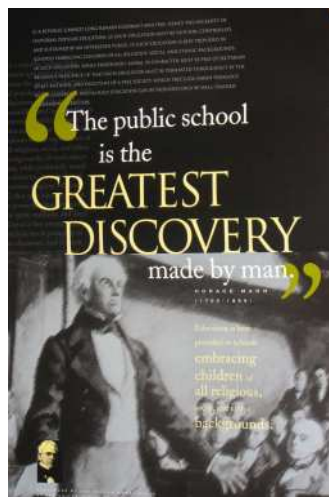
Chapter 4, Adequacy and Quality

Chapter 5, Standards of Learning for All

Chapter 6, Shaping a Good State Accountability System

Chapter 7, Assuring Teacher Competence through State Policy Making

HML Prints Available

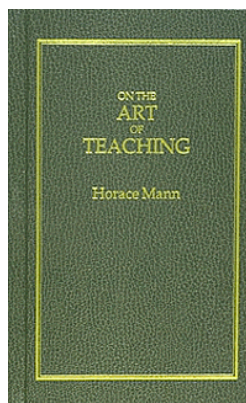


Prints are \$15.00 each or \$35.00 for the set of three. Orders can be placed by email (jmckay@hmleague.org) or by phone: (360) 821 9877.

"On the Art of Teaching

Horace Mann's book, On the Art of Teaching. is \$10.00. This book makes an excellent gift to present to school board member, employees, and citizens as token of appreciation. Orders of 50 or more can have the name of the school district or organization printed on the front cover.

Orders can be placed by email (jmckay@hmleague.org) or by phone: (360) 821 9877.



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(Continued from page 7)

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The Horace Mann League
560 Rainier Lane
Port Ludlow, WA 98365