

THE ROTTEN APPLES IN EDUCATION AWARDS OF 2004

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Alas, 2004 graced us with an amazing bounty of putrid fruit. And I, early in the year, declared Rod Paige ineligible for a prize. Too easy. His “terrorist organization” comment (the NEA) and the reactions thereto, his comment on the benefits of being taught by Christians and the reactions thereto, and his repeatedly being labeled “inept” by *New York Times*’ editorials were reward enough in themselves. We do here recognize some activities in his department and donate one prize to the Bush Administration generally for its vigorous suppression of science it doesn’t like. This award documents the most frightening turn I have witnessed in many years. We present it first.

THE “BEST PERFORMANCE IN CALLING FOR SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH AND THEN SUPPRESSING SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH” AWARD: GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION.

The Union of Concerned Scientists accused the Bush administration of deliberately manipulating, suppressing and ignoring scientific advice it did not agree with while stacking advisory panels with people who met an ideological litmus test. When Bush’s White House science adviser, John H. Marburger, III, defended the administration, Harvard’s Howard Gardner said, “It’s kind of pathetic to hear Dr. Marburger try to refute 85 different accusations saying in each case, ‘You have to know the details.’ I really feel sorry for Marburger because he is probably enough of a scientist to realize that he has basically become a prostitute.”

Gardner went on to frame the essential question:

Is science a disinterested effort to find out what the world is really like...or is science simply a tool that we use to promote a certain point of view that we have and if the evidence supports us, great, and if not we squelch it or we don’t put it on the web, or don’t even find that kind of thing?

Health and Human Services disinvented Gardner and three colleagues from a conference on Head Start because they disagreed with the Bush policy of administering standardized tests to four-year-olds (an idea so goofy that it could only be proposed by people having no experience with four-year-olds). “An assistant Secretary at Health and Human Services, Wade Horn, simply put a line through our names [on the list of invitees] and the

words ‘not to appear.’ No explanation.” (A website where you can listen to Gardner’s conversation with NPR’s Diane Rehm is listed at the end of this text).

To a lot of people, federal squelching and suppression seems the order of the day. The National Council of Women pointed out how data were distorted or removed from the websites of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Cancer Institute and Health and Human Services when they conflicted with Bush ideology. For instance, rewrites downplayed the effectiveness of condoms and emphasized the effectiveness of abstinence-only programs. Bush operatives manipulated data to create a spurious correlation between abortion and later breast cancer.

The website www.scienceinpolicy.org, invites biologists, ecologists, climatologists, oceanographers, environmental engineers, or other environmental scientists to sign a statement that says, in part,

When the administration invokes science, it relies on research at odds with the scientific consensus, and contradicts, undermines, or suppresses the research of its own scientists. Furthermore, the administration cloaks environmentally damaging policies under misleading program names like “clear skies” and “healthy forests.”

As of January 1, 2005, 1849 people had signed, representing 344 professors, 167 post-docs, 853 graduate students, 47 NGO scientists, 65 government scientists, 58 industry scientists. Given the retribution the Bush administration visits on dissenters (ask Joe Wilson, Valerie Plame’s husband; or read Wilson’s “What I Didn’t Find In Africa,” *New York Times* July 6, 2003), signing requires an act of courage.

Representative Henry Waxman, called “science’s political bulldog” by *Scientific American*, established a website, Politics and Science, to report such outrages as a new policy at HHS that requires the World Health Organization to submit requests for expert scientific advice to political appointees at HHS who then decide which HHS scientists will be permitted to respond.

A flip side of altering scientific research findings is promoting technology that most scientists say won’t work. Both the House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform and the American Physical society have challenged the Bush plan for a missile defense system. As *The Economist* noted, “spending billions on technology that most [scientists] believe will not work is, at the least, a dubious approach.”

Ron Suskind captured the utter scariness of the Bush attitude toward science in a *New York Times* article, “Without a Doubt.” Wrote Suskind, “This is one key feature of the faith-based presidency: open dialogue, based on facts, is not seen as something of inherent value.” In the Bush faith-based approach, the lame old saw, “my mind’s made up, don’t confuse me with facts,” assumes chilling new force.

The Economist (2004). "Cheating Nature?" April 7.

National Council for Research on Women (2004). *Missing: Information About Women's Lives*. www.ncrw.org/misinfo/report.pdf. Retrieved, December 31, 2004.

Diane Rehm (2004). "Good Work: An Interview With Howard Gardner," Diane Rehm Show, March 4. Can be heard at <http://wamu.org/programs/dr/04/03/04.php>. Accessed, December 31, 2004.

Ron Suskind (2004). "Without a Doubt." *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, October 7, p. 44.

Debra Viadero (2004). "In Bush Administration, Policies Drive Science Scholars Group Claims." *Education Week*, March 3, p. 20.

Julie Wakefield (2004). "Science's Political Bulldog," *Scientific American*, May.

Henry Waxman, "Politics and Science." http://democrats.reform.house.gov/features/politics_and_science/index.htm. Accessed December 31, 2004.

**THE, “TAKE IT TO THE MEDIA AND TO HELL WITH PEER
REVIEW AWARD:” JAY P. GREENE AND HIS CO-
CONSPIRATORS, GREG FORSTER AND MARCUS WINTERS OF
THE MANHATTAN INSTITUTE.**

The Greene gang earns this prize by being the most irresponsible researchers in the field today. Greene’s weapon of mass deception is the “working paper.” The working paper, he says disingenuously, “is a common way for academic researchers to make the results of their studies available to others as early as possible. This allows other academics and the public to benefit from having the research available without unnecessary delay. Working papers are often submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals for later publication.”

Researchers? The Public? Later publication in peer-reviewed journals? The lay public would not know enough to evaluate the research (and in any case Greene doesn’t say enough about the methodology to allow such an evaluation, although he does clearly tell the reader what the reader should believe the data say). The working papers insult real researchers four times over.

First, the papers often attack other researchers. For example, Paper No. 6, “The Teachability Index” says “For years [Richard] Rothstein has defended the education status quo against all types of systematic reform by arguing that social problems are the cause of inadequate student achievement.” No real research paper would contain such a personal attack even if it were true which it is not (Arizona State’s David Berliner, Missouri’s Bruce Biddle, independent Alfie Kohn, and *Washington Post* columnist, Richard Cohen, receive similar treatment in Paper No. 6).

Second, the papers insult real researchers’ intelligence and training. In Working Paper No 1., Greene writes, “Because these results are statistically significant we can be very confident that the charter schools in our study did have a positive effect on test scores.” Any legitimate researcher or, really, any non-researcher who has passed Statistics 101 would know that that statement is false. The lay public, of course, would have no way of judging it one way or another. That’s the idea, of course. To the public, this *trompe l’oeil* Research cannot be distinguished from the real thing.

Third, the papers do not provide sufficient detail for other researchers to actually evaluate the research. This is suspect, to say the least. As I wrote in my 13th Report in 2003, “The researchers *tell* you what they did, but they don’t *show* you what they did. They dropped six states from the state-level [charter school] analysis because they had insufficient data. They say. They present no figures, nor do they even tell readers what decision rules they used for including or excluding a state.”

Fourth, Greene and his group write as if theirs is the first study in the field worth considering. In working paper No. 7, Greene dismisses an entire body of research on the negative effects of retention-in-grade. “It is questionable whether research on students who were retained on subjective criteria is even relevant in the first place to retention policies based on objective criteria.”

On the basis of his lone “study,” he argues that Florida’s retention policy benefits the kids who pay for it with a year of their lives.

Worse still, the gang Greene rush from their inadequate “research” to whatever op-ed pages they can find to launch attacks on various targets. Shortly after the Teachability Index appeared, Greene wrote an op-ed for the *Hartford Courant*, “Connecticut’s Schools Are Worse Than They Look,” arguing that because CT spends a lot of money on its schools and because its kids are more teachable now than 30 years ago (according to the index), it should be scoring higher on NAEP than it does. It strikes me as curious that virtually all of the inefficient states were in the Northeast, and the efficient states were mostly in the Deep South. Thus far, I’ve heard nothing about mass migrations to Mississippi by Yankee parents seeking efficient schools.

Similarly, Greene deployed his Florida retention study—which even he admits is too short-term to be significant—in the *New York Post* arguing, “Bloomberg and Klein should hold firm” to their tough retention policy, Bloomberg being the Mayor of New York, Klein the public school chancellor. (Greene’s op-ed efforts often make the *Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*, but never the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*.)

As noted, the Working Papers declare that “Working Papers are often submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals for later publication.” Oh, really? I haven’t seen any of the seven extant papers anywhere else. If anyone reading this has, please provide me with the relevant citation.

Jay P. Greene, Greg Forster, and Marcus A. Winters (2003). “Apples to Apples: An Evaluation of Charter Schools Serving General Student Populations,” Working Paper No 1, Manhattan Institute. Accessed at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_01.htm, December 31, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster (2004). “The Teachability Index: Can Disadvantaged Children Learn? Working Paper No. 6. Manhattan Institute. Accessed at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_06.htm, December 31, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters (2004). “An Evaluation of Florida’s Program to End Social Promotion.” Accessed at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_07.htm, December 31, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster (2004). “Connecticut’s Schools Are Worse Than They Look.” *Hartford Courant*, September 9, 2004.

Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters (2004). “Yanking Schools Back From Oz.” *New York Post*, December 8.

**THE “PEOPLE ENVY—BUT WE TAKE NO EDITORIAL POSITIONS”
AWARD: EDUCATION WEEK.**

When Elliott Eisner won the Grawemeyer award for ideas (\$200,000), *Education Week* took little note of it or of Eisner’s long, important career (about 5 column inches on page 4 of the December 8, 2004 edition). But in its October 13, 2004 edition, Greene’s photo appears on the inside cover and EW devoted four full pages, including a full-page color photograph, to “Greene Machine.”

Although the article does cite criticisms of Greene from me and from Henry Levin at Columbia, it is more a puff piece than not. It contains, though, sentences that make you wonder why the article exists: “While he refrains from responding to Bracey directly, Greene has heard like-minded condemnations before,” writes EW’s Sean Cavagnagh. Condemnations is a fairly strong word and if other legitimate researchers are voicing same... Well, if that’s true is this the caliber of person and research *Education Week* should be devoting four precious pages to? It certainly gives lie to the claim on *Education Week*’s front page: “American Education’s Newspaper of Record.”

Greene displays hypocrisy by being a signatory on a full page ad in the *New York Times* establishing standards for research and for reporting on that research. If Greene held himself to the standards in that ad (see “The Right’s Charter School Hissy Fit” below), most of his 22 studies since 2002, 43 op-ed pieces, and 500 radio, television, and newspaper citations (according to EW), would not exist.

And I repeat: Although the Working Papers say the research is submitted later to peer-reviewed academic journals, has anyone *ever* seen one published?

Sean Cavanaugh (2004). “Greene Machine,” *Education Week*, October 13, pp. 34-37.

THE “KAREN RYAN PHONY JOURNALISM AND LEAVING GREG TOPPO BEHIND” AWARD: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department forked over 700,000 taxpayer dollars to a public relations firm for a video promoting No Child Left Behind. The video presents itself as a news story and doesn't tell the audience that it was paid for with public funds. It ends with “In Washington, I'm Karen Ryan reporting” (Karen Ryan is not a reporter). Health and Human Services used the same Karen Ryan tactic to promote the Medicare law.

The flacks also rated reporters on how favorably they wrote about No Child Left Behind. Toppo, an education writer for *USA Today* finished last, averaging only two points an article.

Individual stories as well as reporters got rated. A *Portland Oregonian* article by a third grade teacher criticizing the law received an icy -60. At the opposite pole, a piece in the *Seattle Times* rated 95 points, missing a perfect 100 only because it was not prominently displayed. That article carried the byline of...Rod Paige.

The Government Accountability Office judged the HHS video to be “covert propaganda” and is investigating the NCLB promo. In October, the Board of Directors of the Education Writers Association sent a letter of “strong objection” to the rating system. “We are concerned,” the letter read in part, “that the methodology used in analyzing the reporters' stories reflects a stark lack of knowledge (or purposeful confusion) of the roles of the media. News stories covering views of the community are attributed to reporters as their views.”

Ben Feller (2004). “Bush Ads Surface As TV News Again, This Time in Education,” *USA Today*, October 10.

Rod Paige (2004). “Accountability is the Key to Revitalizing Our Schools,” *Seattle Times*, May 13.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). “Study for U. S. Rated Coverage of Schools Law.” *New York Times*, October 16, 2004, p. A13.

Mary Jane Smetanka, President of the Board of Directors of the Education Writers Association, letter to Rod Paige, October 22, 2004. Accessed at www.ewa.org, January 2, 2005.

THE “BEST PERFORMANCES IN A FARCE” AWARD: DARVIN WINICK, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD AND EUGENE HICKOK, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Its hand forced by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the U. S. Department of Education *finally* reported its NAEP study of charter schools on December 15, 2004. “Finally” because the data had been collected with regular NAEP activity and that data had been up on the Department’s website since fall of 2003.

It is likely that the data would never have been reported save for the fact that the AFT got hold of it, analyzed it and made its analysis known to *New York Times* reporter, Diana Jean Schemo. The *Times* carried the results as its lead story way back on August 17 (see “Right’s Charter School Hissy Fit” below).

(The delay was in line with Department policy. The Department had been so reticent about another charter school study that the *Times* had had to use a Freedom of Information Act request to pry the data from the Department’s grip. The Final Report of that study was delivered in June, but made public only in November after the *Times*’ request. That study, mostly conducted by researchers at SRI International, also found charter schools under-performing public schools.)

In his opening statement, Winick emphasized, “The pilot study was a trial, however, and the need for caution in using the results is apparent...Most charter schools are relatively new and charters are not evenly distributed across the country. Few students have been in a charter setting for much of their education.”

Winick thus repeated the canard often brought forth after the *Times* August story that, really, charter schools are too new to be evaluated (some have been open for 13 years). It must have come as something of a shock and embarrassment, then, for Winick and Hickok to learn that the *longer* a school had provided instruction the *worse* its students did:

YEARS OF INSTRUCTION	MATH	READING
0 to 1 year:	235	225
2 to 3 years:	232	214
4 to 5 years	227	212
6 years or more	228	210

Only the 0 to 1 year figures are above the scores for public schools which scored at, 234 and 217, respectively.

Similarly, Hickok and Winick and others have made much over charter schools' autonomy. Thus there was likely more shock and awe over findings showing that charter schools that were part of public school districts outperformed charters that constituted their own school district, 234 to 225, math, 218 to 208 in reading. While 10 points might seem small, in terms of growth on NAEP, it represents a full year's difference.

Of 22 comparisons in reading and math, 20 favored kids in public schools. Hispanic charter school students scored one point better in reading while white charter students' reading scores tied those in regular public schools.

Nick Anderson of the *Los Angeles Times* asked Winick and Hickok why they took such heart in charter school students attaining parity with public school students when the essential promise of charters was to do better. Didn't this satisfaction reflect an acceptance of the soft bigotry of low expectations for charters? Hickok replied that charters were spending less but doing just as well. Oh, Anderson asked in follow up, does that mean that money actually does matter? My notes do not show any Hickok response.

Hickok had primed himself with clichés, including “charter schools that don't work don't stay open.” This is basically a lie—few charter schools get shut down and those that close their doors do so because they botched the money; charters that botch the kids' education stay open. In the words of the study that the *Times* needed an FOIA request to force out of hiding:

Charter schools rarely face sanctions (revocation or nonrenewal). Furthermore, authorizing bodies impose sanctions on charter schools because of problems related to *compliance with regulations* and *school finances*, rather than *student performance*.” (emphases in the original).

These findings corroborate an earlier conclusion by Columbia University's Amy Stuart Wells that *lack of accountability* is the most robust finding in research on charter schools.

“We are big supporters of charter schools,” Hickok said. This is certainly true. In June, the Department lavished \$75 million on California to create 250 new charters. Given the data,* the question would have to be “Why?” Charter schools arose because critics said public schools had failed. If they're not doing as well as the publics, the critics are obliged to call them failures too, doubly so because of charters' promise to *improve* achievement.

*There are lots of data besides the NAEP results that show charter schools faring poorly. “Can Charter Schools Ever Be Truly Accountable?” was commissioned by the Charter School Accountability Center at Florida State University and boy, were they surprised (as was I, actually). The paper is available on request. At one point, Winick had said that perhaps the proper unit of analysis is the state. Alas, Winick and Hickok can take no comfort in state-level data—evaluations from California, Michigan, Ohio, Arizona, and Texas don't put charters in a good light, either.

Sam Dillon and Diana Jean Schemo (2004). "Charter Schools Fall Short in Public Schools Matchup," *New York Times*, November 24, p. A21.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). "Nation's Charter Schools Lagging Behind U. S. Test Scores Reveal," *New York Times*, August 17, p. A1.

U. S. Department of Education (2004). *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program, Final Report*. Washington, DC: Office of Deputy Superintendent. Document # 2004-08. Accessed at www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/choice/pcsp-final/finalreport.pdf, December 31, 2004.

U. S. Department of Education (2004). *America's Charter Schools: Results from the NAEP 2003 Pilot Study*. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences. Report NCES 2005-456. Accessed at www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2005456.pdf, December 31, 2004.

Amy Stuart Wells (author/editor) (2002). *Where Charter Policy Fails*. New York: Teachers College Press.

THE "YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO RICH OR TOO THIN OR TOO VICIOUS" AWARD: JEANNE ALLEN, PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM

After the Winick-Hickok soft shoe, the AFT's Bella Rosenberg and Jeanne Allen took the stage. Why the Department invited someone of Ms. Allen's technical skills to handle half of what was basically a data-driven, technical discussion remains a mystery.

Ms. Allen had displayed her technical prowess earlier in "What the Research Says About Charter Schools," where she claimed that 88 of 98 studies had favored charters. If that claim were really true, no doubt *it* made the front page of the *New York Times*. At the very least *someone* besides Ms. Allen would have taken it seriously.

In the fall of 2004, I had begun one post "The Right Has No Shame." The exemplars of the Right in question were Checker Finn and Denis Doyle (see, the "If At First You Don't Succeed, Fudge, Fudge Again" Award). But Doyle and Finn look like pikers in the truth bending arena compared to Allen.

Allen's web site account of the NAGB-Department charter school charade says this:

"Perhaps Rosenberg's opinion can best be surmised from a comment to a colleague during Deputy Secretary Hickok's commentary on the report.

‘Liar, Liar, pants on fire,’ Rosenberg said.” (www.edreform.com, click on “Charter School Students: Statistical Dead Heat”).

Well, while it might have been impolitic or rude, it wouldn’t have been false if she *had* said it, but she did not. Rosenberg and Allen were the sole occupants of the right front row marked “Reserved.” Appropriately, Allen sat on Rosenberg’s right. To Rosenberg’s left was a rather wide aisle. Across the aisle and in a row somewhat behind Rosenberg’s were indeed two AFT colleagues, Howard Nelson, and Nancy Van Meter. To have said anything to them, Rosenberg would have had to lean left and turn partly around to the left. Anything she said, even *sotto voce*, would have been heard by half the room. She also told me she didn’t say it and I believe her.

THE “DEFINING OUR AMBITIONS DOWN” AWARD: NINA SHOKRAII REES, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

“Hundreds of charter schools have been created around this nation by educators who are willing to put their jobs on the line to say, ‘If we can’t improve student achievement, close down our school.’ This is accountability—clear specific and real.”

Joe Nathan, University of Minnesota, 1996

“We have enough information at our disposal to know that charter schools are not harming students.”

Nina Shokraii Rees, U. S. Department of Education on NPR’s “Marketplace,” December 15, 2004.

Ms. Rees, not so incidentally, went to the Department from the Heritage Foundation which received its initial funding from America’s First Family of Totalitarianism, the Coors.

Joe Nathan (1996). *Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunity for American Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

THE “NINA SHOKRAI REES ‘CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE NOT HARMING STUDENTS’” AWARD: C. STEVEN COX.

From 1999 to 2004, C. Steven Cox and his California Charter Academy (CCA) collected over \$100,000,000 (yep, one hundred million) from the Golden State’s treasury. Oversight of some campuses, though, came from districts hundreds of miles away. Because of earlier scandals under such arrangements, the California Assembly had barred such at-a-distance administration.

CCA illegally opened 10 new campuses after the law went into effect. The state launched a probe. It wondered about Cox’ (probably illegal) dual role as a CCA Board Member and the CEO of the management company that ran the schools. It also suspected that Cox had inflated enrollments and that CCA might be facing bankruptcy despite that.

Cox responded by shutting down all 60 CCA campuses leaving 10,000 kids schoolless. On August 15. Three weeks before the school year began.

Many teachers and principals found themselves jobless as did C. Steven Cox’s wife, son, daughter-in-law and other relatives whom he had placed on the CCA payroll.

Erika Hayasaki (2004). “Charter Academy Shuts 60 Schools,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, p. A1.

Sam Dillon (2004). “Collapse of 60 Charter Schools Leaves Californians Scrambling,” *New York Times*, September 17, p. A1.

THE “RIGHT’S CHARTER SCHOOL HISSY FIT” AWARD: JEANNE ALLEN AND HARVARD’S PAUL PETERSON.

Quick, can you remember the last time an education research report generated a full page ad in the *New York Times* trashing the report itself and flogging the *Times* for covering it? Me neither.

But that’s how the Right handled the AFT’s analysis of the NAEP charter school data and Diana Jean Schemo’s article about that analysis. Of course, when the U. S. Department of Education released its own analysis, four months later and over a year after the results were available, the results showed—surprise!—exactly when the AFT said they showed.

The annals of education about this story are too extensive for comprehensive reporting here. Suffice to say I am preparing a stand-alone essay on the Right’s tantrum and will send that as a separate Rotten Apple—bushel of rotten apples—when it is done. Here I

note that to say the story touched a nerve is to practice understatement. It's more like the story reached in and grabbed the Right by the spinal chord.

Schemo's story appeared August 17, 2004. August 18 saw a William Howell, Paul Peterson and Martin West op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Dog Eats AFT Homework." August 18 also found Rod Paige defending charters in the *New York Times*. *Newsday* chimed in to say that the jury is still out on charters. The *Chicago Tribune* was similarly sympathetic and called the findings "as new as a lava lamp, as revelatory as an old sock and as significant as a belch" (give those gentlemen a Tom Robbins novel and sign them up for remedial simile practice).

On the 19th, le deluge: Floyd Flake, President of Edison Schools, Inc., Charter School Division, an op-ed in the *New York Times*; Checker Finn, an op-ed in the *New York Post* and a *Post* editorial; Jay P. Greene, an op-ed in the *New York Sun*; Jeanne Allen on Tavis Smiley; Nina Rees on "The News Hour With Jim Lehrer." In Washington State where the legislature had just passed a charter law and where a charter referendum was coming up in the fall, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* mustered a luke warm editorial (the referendum failed, by the way, the fourth time Washington voters have rejected charters).

Maybe it was the piece's impeccable timing: Schemo's article appeared the day after the *Los Angeles Times* broke the story of the 60-campus charter closings in California (see award to C. Steven Cox above). Schemo mentioned the closings, thus a one-two punch.

In any case, the pièce de résistance appeared in the *New York Times* August 25, a full-page ad decrying both the study and the *Times*' coverage. Jeanne Allen's Center for Education Reform paid for the ad (\$125,000) and Peterson purportedly assembled the 31 conservative signatories. The ad constituted a massive exercise in hypocrisy as many of the signers have violated the standards they were setting for the AFT and the *Times* (these would include Howard Fuller, Jay P. Greene, Eric Hanushek, Will Howell, Caroline Hoxby, Paul Peterson, Herb Walberg, Martin West and Patrick Wolf and probably others whose work I know less well). Indeed, Caroline Hoxby rush-published such a "study" in the *Wall Street Journal*, September 29. Earlier, Peterson, Howell and Greene declared the Cleveland voucher program a success based on test scores in two schools, and no control group. Etc.

The ad ran weeks later in *Education Week* minus two signers, David Figlio of the University of Florida and Nobel-winning economist, James Heckman of the University of Chicago, neither of whom, they told me, knew what they were getting into the first time (I had obtained the email addresses of the signers and sent a memo on the hypocrisy involved). The ad can be seen at Allen's website, www.edreform.com/_upload/NewYorkTimesAd.pdf. (accessed January 3, 2005).

Chester E. Finn, Jr. (2004). "Defaming Charters," *New York Post*, August 19.

Floyd H. Flake (2004). "Classes of Last Resort," *New York Times*, August 19.

Jay P. Greene (2004). "No Comparison," *New York Sun*, August 19.

William G. Howell, Paul E. Peterson and Martin R. West (2004). "Dog Eats AFT Homework," *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, p. A10.

Caroline Hoxby (2004). "Chalk It Up," *Wall Street Journal*, September 29.

Tom Loveless (2004). "The Facts About Charter Schools." *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, p. A24.

Newsday (2004). "Despite Low Test Scores, the Jury Is Still Out on These Schools," (editorial), August 18.

New York Post (2004). "Kids Come Last" (editorial). August 19.

New York Times (2004). "Bad News on the Charter Front," (editorial), August 18.

Paul E., Peterson, William L. Howell, and Jay P. Greene. (1998). An Evaluation of the Cleveland Voucher Program After Two Years." Accessed at www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/pdf/clev2rpt.pdf, January 3, 2005.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). "Nation's Charter Schools Lagging Behind, U. S. Test Scores Reveal," *New York Times*, August 17, p. A1.

Diana Jean Schemo (2004). "Education Secretary Defends Charter Schools," *New York Times*, August 18.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer (2004). "Experiment Continues," (editorial), August 19.

THE “IF AT FIRST YOU DON’T SUCCEED, FUDGE, FUDGE AGAIN” AWARD: DENIS DOYLE, WITH A NOD TO CHECKER FINN.

Since 1980, Doyle has sifted through census data trying to prove that public school teachers are hypocrites and traitors because they disproportionately send their own kids to private schools. Despite the claim, the 1980 census figures refuted it. The 1990 census data refuted it. The 2000 census data refute it. With bated breath one awaits 2010.

Doyle has consistently used rhetorical sleight of hand to make the charge that the data actually refute. For instance, in his 1995 report, Doyle wrote “Not to make too fine a point, teachers...know how to address the nation’s education crisis: they vote with their feet and their pocketbooks. They choose private schools for their children when they think it serves their needs.” Well of course! Parents choose private schools “when they think it serves their needs.” So what? Doyle continued: “With teachers choosing private schools. The truth is self-evident: while they work in public schools they choose private schools for their own children because they believe they are better.” (Note that the “nation’s education crisis” is assumed, not proven, and the impression left in the last sentence is that all teachers choose private schools).

Except they don’t choose private schools. When Doyle finally got around to showing the data, the 1990 data revealed that 12.1% of public school teachers use private schools compared to 13.1% of the general public. In his analysis of the 2000 census, the figure is down to 10.6%, and it’s only 7.9% if you don’t count teachers who send their kids to both public and private schools. For the general public it’s 12.1%, 9.4% dropping out parents who use both. (I was told, but cannot independently confirm, that Doyle’s 1995 report included pre-school enrollments in an attempt to increase the proportion of public school teachers using private schools. I have no information about this for 2004).

Of course that is not an apples-to-apples comparison, teachers to the general public. While teachers don’t earn princely sums, they

Doyle's 1986 report gave birth to an urban legend fathered by columnist George Will: "nationally about half of urban public school teachers with school-age children send their children to private schools." Not true then, not true now. In only 2 of 50 cities that Doyle reports on does the percentage exceed 40% (Cincinnati and Philadelphia). Indeed, among the 50 cities, in only 10 does the difference between public school teachers and all families exceed 10% (keep in mind, "all families" includes poor people). In 21 cities the difference is actually *negative*: public school teachers use private schools *less*.

Still, the rhetorical fog continued in 2004 as in previous years. Doyle asked what are the reasons teachers choose private schools. They vary, he says. "But they all share this: A school of choice—whether it is a well-heeled suburban public school, an urban private school, a charter school, or a traditional private school—is self-evidently *better* to the family that selects it, in precisely the way that any other choice is better, be it political, social, cultural, religious, or commercial." I might have to create a new set of awards, "The Year's Woolliest Thoughts" prizes.

Doyle's first report came through the American Enterprise Institute, the 1995 endeavor was funded by Jeanne Allen's Center for Education Reform. Chester E. Finn's Thomas B. Fordham Foundation published this year's effort. What a pedigree.

As for Will's urban legend, I debunked it but, like most such fairy tales, it still has a life.

Denis Doyle, Brian Diepold and David Alan Deschryver (2004). "Where Do Public School Teachers Send *Their* Kids to School?" www.edexcellence.net/doc/Fwd-1.1.pdf. Accessed December 31, 2004.

The Center for Education Reform apparently has no more copies of the 1995 report. The 2004 report contains email addresses of the authors and interested readers can inquire there.

George F. Will (1993). "Taking Back Education," *Washington Post*, August 26, p. A27.

Gerald W. Bracey (1993). "George Will's Urban Legend," *Education Week*, September 29.

THE "I DON'T LIKE REALITY, DAHLING, AND I JUST WON'T DEAL WITH IT," OR, THE "LOOKING FOR RACISM IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES" AWARD: KATI HAYCOCK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE EDUCATION TRUST.

Word came that Education Trust Executive Director Haycock had opened her address to the Trust's annual national conference quoting from me and from Richard Rothstein. Haycock said our statements were often presented as reflecting a liberal position, but they were really racist.

She paraphrased Richard as saying “You can come to a more profound understanding than most policymakers possess of the gap in achievement between middle-class and lower-class children just by taking the bus from Harlem to the Upper West Side and observing the differences in parenting between lower-class and middle-class parents.”

Surely Haycock cannot believe that Rothstein is *wrong*. I got the same understanding in a supermarket where a number of low-income mothers seemed to have two strategies for controlling their children in public spaces: “shut up” and “come here.” If the child fails to respond, these commands are repeated at ever-increasing volume, then terminated for the really recalcitrant with whacks on the buttocks or elsewhere.

More formal research by Betty Hart and Todd Risley found that the 3-year-old *children* of affluent mothers used more words (1,116) when interacting with their mothers than did poor *mothers* when interacting with their 3-year-olds (974).

Haycock thinks schools alone can prepare all students for a college education. Richard, living in reality, and thinks other conditions play a role. After all, from birth to age 18, children only spend 9% of their lives life in a school.

My quotes have to do with the logic expressed in an article “What if Education Broke Out All Over?” Haycock also cited a different Ed Week piece where I wrote, “Educating all will take care of the equity situation but will lower wages and leave lots of highly skilled people standing around on street corners currently occupied by the low-skilled.”

Seems logical to me: If 100% of our students obtained a sheepskin, that would make 100% of students capable of filling the 25% of jobs that actually require higher education. Supply and demand. Wages for skilled labor fall (and, we might note, having lots of highly educated, unemployed people sitting around in bars and coffee houses is a great way to propel social unrest and revolution).

I have since come to see the error of my ways, though, and realize that if 100% of our young people get a college education, it *won't* necessarily solve the equity problem. If employers can pick anyone and be guaranteed a college grad, they might well start using capricious criteria for their choices: hair color, hair length, looks, posture, smile, the distance between the eyes, the slope of the forehead, the density of the eyebrows or any of the many characteristics that were thought important in the days of the Jukes and Kallikaks.

The other quote refers to my contention that until our society's dirty work can be done wholly by robots, it requires uneducated or undereducated people. Education makes people allergic to sweat. Educated people won't scrub urinals in public toilets or pick up the trash or slash the entrails out of cows and chickens, or even make the beds in hotels. George W. Bush keeps talking about finding people to do the jobs that “Americans” won't do anymore, meaning the dirty work that gets allocated to immigrants (you won't find many “Americans” in the meat packing plants in Iowa or Kansas anymore, but you

can get good Vietnamese food in Dodge City). Well, after the immigrants get educated, they won't do it either whether or not they've become formal "Americans."

A 1992 John Kenneth Galbraith treatise and a couple of more recent books have made the point that, in this country at least, those of us who enjoy a modicum of material wellbeing absolutely depend on the working poor for that wellbeing. And we treat them as if they are not there.

In speeches, if I cover this topic, I ask the assembled conference goers to consider not only the skilled workers like pilots who got them there, but the baggage sorters, the cabbies, the skycaps, the waiters, the bus boys, the maids, the janitors, the men and women who arranged the tables and chairs where the conference goers are now seated. Without these people—poof—no conference. I wonder if Kati thought about them as she was ragging me and Richard.

Gerald W. Bracey (1998.) "What if Education Broke Out All Over?" *Education Week*, March 28., p. 44.

Gerald W. Bracey (1997). "Swallowing Industry Line on U. S. Education Needs" (letter). *Education Week*, December 10.

Barbara Ehrenreich (2001). *Nickel and Dimed: On Not Making It in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books. A brief summary of the book is in the 12th Bracey Report, *Phi Delta Kappan*, October, 2001, where it receives a Golden Apple Award.

John Kenneth Galbraith (1992). *The Culture of Contentment*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Richard Rothstein (2004). *Schools and Class*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

David K. Shipler (2004). *Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Knopf.

“THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU STOOPID” AWARD: HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ALBERT VAZQUEZ, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION “SPOKESPERSON,” STEPHEN MORELLO, WITH A NOD TO MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, MAYOR OF NEW YORK, AND JOEL KLEIN, CHANCELLOR OF NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Tiffany Schley was a high school senior to die for or, at least, if you're Smith College, to give a full scholarship to. She was valedictorian at the High School of Legal Studies in Brooklyn and her classmates voted her “Most Likely to Succeed.” So, she's a person to listen to. But school officials didn't like what she had to say.

Tiffany used her valedictory speech to tell the world that the school had had four principals in four years, suffered equally unstable teacher staffing, lacked sufficient textbooks and other materials, offered classes taught by teachers not qualified to teach them, and lacked administrators willing to meet with students to discuss the school's problems.

When Tiffany and her mother came to school the next day to pick up her diploma kids, administrators refused to hand it over, told them they had been disrespectful, and instructed security to escort them from the building. Department of Education official Morello, said “We feel that her schoolmates are deserving of an apology,” a comment that almost garners a separate prize.

Tiffany's mom stuck by her: “She busted her butt to get there, she kept it clean and she was honest. Sometimes the truth hurts.” The *New York Daily News* broke the story and Tiffany got calls of support from all over the country.

When Klein heard about Vazquez' folly, he overruled the principal, but declined an invitation to deliver the diploma in person. He had it sent by messenger. For his part, Bloomberg called Vasquez a “bozo.”

Community organizers put together a celebratory gathering at a church and attendees contributed \$4600 to Tiffany for living expenses. For her part, Tiffany was unmoved: “Mayor Bloomberg has called the principal a bozo and a bonehead, but what has he done to address the issues at the school?”

What, indeed?

Joe Williams (2004). “Speech Costs Grad,” *New York Daily News*, June 26.

Lisa L. Colangelo, Warren Woodberry, Jr., and Alison Gendar (2004). “Bloomy Blasts Diploma ‘Bozo’”, *New York Daily News*, June 27.

Elizabeth Hays and Nancy Dillon (2004). “Sheepskin At Tiffany’s,” *New York Daily News*, July 2.

THE “WHY DARRELL HUFF’S 1954 BOOK, *HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS* IS STILL IN PRINT, I” AWARD: MIKE COHEN AND MATT GANDAL, ACHIEVE, INC.

In *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up?*, Cohen and Gandal attempt to show that students rise to the challenge of graduation tests. To make their case, they show a graph from the Massachusetts Department of Education (which should give rise to suspicions by itself; “Governments lie,” said Izzy Stone). The graph shows that while only 48% of the class of 2003 passed the MCAS (MA’s high stakes graduation test) in math, 95% of the class of 2003 eventually passed.

The graph, though, does not account for those who dropped out or who were retained, or who switched to a GED program (in Florida the number of GED’s doubled from 2002 to 2003). The proper statistic is a ratio: the number of seniors as a proportion the number of freshmen four years earlier. This ratio takes the rate down in to the 70’s, lower still in areas that are heavily poor, black or Hispanic.

Addressing the issue of fairness, the report labels another graph “Achievement Gap Closing” and shows passing rates by ethnicity from 1998 to 2003. Cohen and Gandal are sufficiently statistically savvy to know that *passing rates* tell you *nothing* about whether the gap is widening, closing, or holding steady. To judge how the gap is changing or not, you need *scores*. A passing rate tells you only how many kids cleared the hurdle set for them; it does not measure how high they jumped (that would be an actual score).

I’d guess that poor and minority kids who had to retake the test actually fell farther and farther behind overall: They had to continue to prep on subjects covered by the test while white and middle class students went on to study other material.

Looking at the SAT and NAEP results for blacks and whites for the same period of time shows no narrowing. In Massachusetts, the gap was 90 points on the SAT verbal in 1998 and 93 points in 2003. For the SAT math, the gap was 96 points in both 1998 and 2003. Some closure.

The SAT and NAEP data are readily accessible at the websites of the College Board and National Center for Education Statistics. Why didn’t Cohen and Gandal look for them? Or did they?

Michael Cohen and Matt Gandal (2004). *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up?* www.achieve.org. Click on “publications.”

THE WHY DARRELL HUFF'S *HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS* IS STILL IN PRINT AFTER 50 YEARS, II: HERB WALBERG, HOOVER INSTITUTION AND JOE BAST, CEO, HEARTLAND INSTITUTE.

Huff called one of his chapters “The Little Figures That Are Not There.” In an op-ed, “Does Literacy Still Matter” in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Walberg and Bast used these figures to contend that 59% of America’s recent high school graduates do not read well enough “to cope with the complex demands of everyday life.” The 59% figure was the worst among the 18 nations in the study by OECD. Even Poland, which scored lower (the lowest of all countries), had a higher proportion of copers.

Certainly one could wonder if results from a single test could tell us if people were prepared to cope with everyday life although the OECD report claimed that people had made that judgment (OECD was working with data from the International Assessment of Adult Literacy and I don’t recall seeing any such judgment).

However, OECD didn’t look at “recent graduates.” It tested people aged 16-25.

But what are the little figures that aren’t there? Test scores for the 2/3 of American high school graduates who go on to higher education. The OECD graph is for “Percent of secondary school graduates aged 16-25 (excluding those who go on to attain higher education qualifications).”

So the graph is for the mostly bottom third of graduates and omits the top two thirds (“mostly” because a few high scoring students opt not to go to college).

The 59% figure is the percent of American graduates age 16-25 who scored at level 1 or 2 (level 5 being the highest) on the OECD literacy test. It is worth noting that few people in the 18 nations who scored at levels 1 or 2 said that their reading skills limited their job opportunities or caused them difficulties in life.

But questions arise: Since most American 16-year-olds haven’t graduated, who were they testing? How did they find the older people? How many of those contacted refused to be tested? Did the testers roam the barrios of Los Angeles, the ghettos of Roxbury, the Tunisian quarter of Paris or the Cambodian slums of Bordeaux? Little questions not answered, little figures that are not there.

Herbert J. Walberg and Joseph L. Bast (2004). “Does Literacy Still Matter?” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13.

OECD data at: www.attac.org/fra/orga/doc/ocdeen2.pdf.

**THE “ONE REASON WHY CARL ROVE AND GROVER
NORQUIST SMILE A LOT” AWARD: MASSACHUSETTS
SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY AND STAFF AND CALIFORNIA
REPRESENTATIVE, GEORGE MILLER AND STAFFER ALICE
CAIN.**

In an attempt to find out how on earth Teddy Kennedy and George Miller not only voted for No Child Left Behind, but enthusiastically advocated it until Bush failed to fund it as much as he had promised, I contacted their offices. I laid out the logic that NCLB is designed to increase the role of the private sector, provide vouchers to private schools (voucher provisions were in the original legislation), reduce the size of the public sector and reduce or destroy the power of two Democratic power bases, the teachers unions.

From Kennedy’s office, nothing.

From Miller’s office, staffer Alice Cain replied, in toto, “I certainly hope not.”

Email, Alice Cain to Gerald Bracey, Friday, June 18, 2004.

Gerald W. Bracey, (2004). “The Perfect Law: No Child Left Behind and the Assault on Public Education,” *Dissent*, Fall, pp. 63-66.

**THE “BEST PERFORMANCE AT NOT RECOGNIZING THEIR
OWN LOGIC” AWARD: THE AUTHORS OF
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND.**

The text of the 1100 page law uses the phrase “scientifically based research” on average once every ten pages and the Department of Education denied New York City \$47 million until it abandoned its reading program of choice for one the Department had approved. Yet there is no scientific research based for the law itself. In fact, there is no research base for it at all. Nothing in the annals of education research would lead one to believe that testing kids every year and punishing schools that don’t make arbitrary increases in test scores is a good way to improve education.

THE “POTEMKIN SCHOOLS” AWARD: KAYE STRIPLING AND THE HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.

You probably don't want to play Texas Hold 'Em with retired (forced out) superintendent Stripling. After “60 Minutes II” had blasted HISD in January for its statistical shenanigans (one high school had 463 students leave in a single year but reported zero dropouts), Stripling sent a memo to all HISD employees. It reads, in part

We were all disappointed by 60 Minutes II's failure to show even a basic level of journalist integrity. What it produced was a report that ignored the accomplishments of our teachers, administrators, and students in favor of sensationalism....

That 60 Minutes II simply wouldn't tell the truth that it knew was hugely disappointing. 60 Minutes II knew that HISD has dealt swiftly and decisively with the issue of the false dropout rates, yet never reported that information to viewers.

How's that for keeping a straight face?

Unfortunately, the swift and decisive action mentioned above, if it happened, was to no effect. In October, 2004, Houston reported its dropout data to the Texas Education Agency: 0.9%. The district is 88% black and Hispanic and 82% qualify for free and reduced price meals. Another miracle. Call the Education Trust to spread the word.

And now come charges of cheating. And not just cheating in any ol' school. Cheating in schools that include the storied Wesley Elementary where Thaddeus Lott once reigned, Lott, a principal celebrated on Frontline and Oprah for his high test scores. Lott, promoted to oversee four schools by then-superintendent, Rod Paige, departed under something of a cloud. And now there are suggestions that those high test scores weren't real. Certainly, says the *Dallas Morning News*, the current scores can't be real: “Scores swung wildly from year to year. Schools made test-score leaps from mediocre to stellar in a year's time.” Often the scores “came crashing down” as students left elementary schools and entered middle school.

Donna Garner started teaching at Wesley in 2001. She found her charges barely literate and was therefore surprised to see their records showing high test scores. When she returned to Wesley after a maternity leave, she was even more shocked to find that many of her charges had aced the practice state test, many with perfect or near perfect scores. She asked all of them how they did so well and they all, to a kid, said the teacher helped them.

Garner gave another practice test without assisting the children and many students failed. She was then called into the principal's office and "told she did not know 'how to administer a test the Wesley way.'"

In June, 2003, Garner spoke before the Houston School Board, saying "I was instructed on how to cheat and that the expectation was that I would cheat." The Board directed the district to assemble an independent investigative panel, but, 18 months later, no such panel exists or has ever existed. Currently its absence is caught in a he-said-she-said between HISD and the Texas Education Agency which had agreed to provide a facilitator for the panel.

A former Wesley principal who remained anonymous for fear of retribution said teachers would walk around the room and if they saw a wrong answer, would stand behind the student until it was changed. On the writing test, teachers would read essays during the testing period and tell some children "You need to write some more."

Abelardo Saavedra, who succeeded Stripling as HISD superintendent has issued a written statement reacting to the charges published New Year's Eve in the *Dallas Morning News* (and don't you know the *Houston Chronicle* loved that) that "these anomalies identify performance that is highly questionable."

Grigory Potemkin ordered impressive village façades erected for Catherine The Great's visit to Ukraine and the Crimea. As Houston Superintendent, Rod Paige built test score veneers that had no achievement behind them and Stripling painted them afresh. It remains to be seen if Saavedra will knock them down. As an Assistant Superintendent, Saavedra recommended to the Houston School Board in 2003 that the Board should approve a goal of lowering the dropout rate from 1.5% to 1.3%. It so approved.

Watch for more breaking stories.

Joshua Benton, (2004). "Cheating Allegations Go Back to 2003," *Dallas Morning News*, December 30.

Joshua Benton and Holly K. Hacker (2004). "TAKS Results Too Good at Houston Elementaries." *Dallas Morning News*, December 31, p. A1.

Robert Kimball (2004). "HISD Reports New Dropout Rate of Less than 1%: Miracle or Myth. Educationnews.org, November 9.

THE “YET ANOTHER PROMULGATION OF A DISCREDITED MYTH” AWARD: JUNE KRONHOLZ, WALL STREET JOURNAL AND GAIL RUSSELL CHADDOCK, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR.

This is a dispiriting prize to dole out because it goes to generally competent veteran reporters. That makes the goof all the more difficult to comprehend. The WSJ headlined Kronholz’ Story, “Economic Time Bomb: U. S. Teens Are Among the Worst At Math.” Chaddock’s take ran under the headline “Math + Test = Trouble for US Economy.” Headlines sometimes don’t represent the text that follows, but this time the headlines reflect the story. The story was PISA2003.

Interestingly, while Kronholz said “The bad news [of PISA] is likely to be repeated next week with the release [of TIMSS]” she has not yet reported on TIMSS where the news was much better.

Chaddock brought in Business Roundtable mouthpiece Susan Traiman to parrot the party line: “It’s very disturbing for business if the capacity to take what you know...and apply it to something novel is difficult for US teenagers.” This statement indicates Traiman and the BRT uncritically buy OECD’s assertion that PISA measures application.

Frankly, I don’t think anyone *knows* what PISA measures. PISA officials say the tests reflect, in part, what kids learn outside of school in the world around them. That world differs, of course, from country to country and it is questionable how many PISA items would pass the gender and culture bias reviews test items receive in this country.

For example, one item in PISA2001 required kids to know that racetracks were ovals and how understand how speed must be altered for the curves vs. the straightaways. Boys did much better than girls. One English researcher thought that German or Austrian boys could probably handle this item, but what about girls in rural Greece or Portugal? When he checked, he found that 8% of Greek girls and 10% of Portuguese girls got the item right compared to 43% of Austrian boys and 38% of German boys (the problems with PISA were discussed in my February 2004, *Phi Delta Kappan* Research column).

More importantly to this award, some years have elapsed since a commission wrote “if only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system....” The commissioners were pretty smart people by and large and the fact that they fell for this hoax only shows how widely the myth pervades our culture.

The quote is from page 7 of “A Nation At Risk,” penned nearly 22 years ago. I don’t recall what the economy was doing then. I do know that around 1990 it spiraled down into a recession that cost George H. W. Bush his second term (“It’s the economy, stupid”). It then exploded into the longest sustained expansion in the nation’s history-- followed by another recession, followed by another expansion which, consensus at the

moment has it, will continue modestly through 2005. Schools are always failing, say the critics. Economic cycles come and go nevertheless.

The World Economic Forum ranks the US second in the world among 104 nations in global competitiveness. We fell from #1 two years ago because the WEF doesn't like the Bush tax cuts, the ever-increasing trade deficit, the ever-increasing national debt, and the seemingly endless parade of indicted CEO's and Wall Street Masters of the Universe.

School is hugely important. Differences among *developed* countries in test scores are trivial.

Gail Russell Chaddock (2004). "Math + Test = Trouble for US Economy," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 7.

June Kronholz (2004). "Economic Time Bomb: U. S. Teens Are Among the Worst At Math." *Wall Street Journal*, December 7.

Well, there are more worthies they're already 30% longer than last year. The Rotten Apples, alas, have grown to the same length as the Bracey Report itself. In a year less blessed with a bounty of rubbish, we'd throw a prize to Frederick Hess for his American Enterprise Institute essay, "The Case for Being Mean," an apologia for harsh accountability measures. We'd also toss one to Joan Mahon-Powell. Owing credentials that wouldn't even let her substitute teach, Mahon-Powell forged papers about her accomplishments that let her make as much as \$152,500 a year as a district superintendent in the New York City school system. She admitted the forgery but denied that she had lied to anyone (the 48-year-old will get a pension based on these inflated salaries at 55 unless legal action against it prevails).

In a less sated year, California Senator, Dianne Feinstein, could pick up her prize for going over to the Dark Side and voting for vouchers for Washington, DC while opposing them at home. Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* could receive a quart of curried lichee nuts for his assertion that we're losing our edge in science to India and China (stick to the Middle East, Tom, and books like *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*--you're good there). And the editors at Japan's *Daily Yomiuri* could establish a precedent by receiving both a Rotten *and* Golden Apple for the same editorial. That essay decried Japan's "decline" in test scores (Rotten), then recommended that Japanese educators stop using multiple-choice tests (Golden).

But, you get the picture. Until next year then,

Jerry Bracey