

Education in Crisis: A Strategic Plan for Renewing Public Schools

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence” - Vince Lombardi

Part 12/12

Who Are We and Who Do We Want to Be?

Our once-envied public education system is now struggling, leaving too many of our children disadvantaged. Other countries used to send delegates to study our K-12 public schools to better theirs. But now it's the opposite. A recent Gallup poll found that 58% of Americans are dissatisfied with public schools. As parents, the future of our children and society is at stake. Why aren't we demanding better? What kind of society do we want for our children and grandchildren? For those seeking a better homeland? For ourselves?

A Blueprint for Change

In this 12-part series, we explored the problems and solutions to the top issues facing U.S. public schools. Yes, change is hard. Do we need leadership and strong will? Certainly! Do we need practical plans that strong leaders will embrace and put into action? Absolutely! The quality of our public schools is a responsibility for all: federal and state legislators, local school boards, teachers' unions, parents, and the public.

Here are those problems and solutions again:

1. **Grade Inflation:** Promote educational standards and state policy changes by the State Board of Education.
2. **Classroom Disruption:** Implement alternative classroom environments and parent training to combat behavioral problems.
3. **Lackluster Administrations:** Restructure appropriate School Boards with a focus on quality education and reduced overhead.
4. **Reading Struggles/Social Promotion:** Implement early intervention and funding toward individualized attention efforts.
5. **Teacher Shortage:** Increase pay, instill education's value in children, and “clean up” classrooms so teachers can teach.
6. **Student Apathy:** Create more vocational programs in schools to promote different types of learning and engagement.

Will it require hard work? Absolutely! But **important things are worth the effort—and are not impossible.** Maryland's \$3.8 billion reform program, which includes schools for three-year-olds and \$80,000 average teacher salaries, passed despite a governor's veto. (Their return on their investment is projected to be \$2.20 for every \$1 spent.) Our efforts above could cost a fraction of that, potentially boosting economies, tax revenues, and living standards far beyond the initial investment.

Where to Begin

You have the power to ignite change. Start by raising your voice to local school boards, state superintendents, and education committees. Demand the policy changes that will clean up classrooms and make education a career worth pursuing. It won't be easy, but we can create a future where our children can excel together. Let's reclaim our pride and ensure a brighter future for the next generation.

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