

Heated Battle for 'Reformer' Mantle

Sparked by the lead-up to the appointment of President-elect Obama's education secretary, the past month has seen a marked intensification of the battle over who has the strongest claim to be called a "reformer."

The recent skirmish started in early December, when Kitty Wilson of Democrats Infatuated with Republican Policies (DIRP) took the lead in the reformer battle with a bold proposal to level each and every single public school with a bulldozer and then sow the ground with salt.

But when told of that proposal, Gray P. Jean of the Brooklyn Institute said, "Oh yeah? Well, we propose that the schools be destroyed with bombs. Big ones. With lots of loud noise and stuff." Jean then added, "We'll set up a competitive system among the bombers, to ensure that the process is high-quality."

This healthy debate reflects progress from a mere decade ago, when people were most likely to be called reformers when they made proposals for school improvement based in research. Such people are now universally understood to be defenders of the status quo.



School Reform

Prestigious Task Force Concludes Schools Suck, Immediate Action Required

The Elm Institute's Commission on Educational Castigation returned from their retreat at a five-star hotel in Monte Carlo to launch a campaign for more fiscal restraint and stronger accountability measures. "The complete failure of these reform measures over the last forty years shows that we have not been trying hard enough. We must redouble our failures," reads the Commission's declaration.

The Commission's chair said that schools can learn a great deal from the literature concerning the private business sector. He explained, "Simply put, our study panel focused with laser-like intensity on creating an inclusive, deep restructuring design to meet the increasing demands of the twenty-first century workforce based on non-governmental synergy among partners and stakeholders to leverage multiplicative forces for exponential rewards."

Carlson finds Shortcut in Preparation for Senate Hearings

Advisors preparing Education Secretary designate Arne Carlson for his Senate confirmation hearings have made the fortuitous discovery that they are able to use the same talking points used by Bush education secretaries Margaret Spellings and Rod Paige. "All we had to do was take out the part about vouchers and tone down some of the stuff about how awful public schools are. Arne's pretty comfortable with the rest," said an advisor who requested confidentiality.