



Dishonest Educators

Nearly two years ago, *U.S. News & World Report* came out with a story titled “Educators Implicated in Atlanta Cheating Scandal.” It reported that “for 10 years, hundreds of Atlanta public school teachers and principals changed answers on state tests in one of the largest cheating scandals in U.S. history.” More than three-quarters of the 56 Atlanta schools investigated had cheated on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, sometimes called the national report card. Cheating orders came from school administrators and included brazen acts such as teachers reading answers aloud during the test and erasing incorrect answers. One teacher told a colleague, “I had to give your kids, or your students, the answers because they’re dumb as hell.” Atlanta’s not alone. There have been investigations, reports and charges of teacher-assisted cheating in other cities, such as Philadelphia, Houston, New York, Detroit, Baltimore, Los Angeles and Washington.



Recently, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s* blog carried a story titled “A new cheating scandal: Aspiring teachers hiring ringers.” According to the story, for at least 15 years, teachers in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee paid Clarence Mumford, who’s now under indictment, between \$1,500 and \$3,000 to send someone else to take their Praxis exam, which is used for K-12 teacher certification in 40 states. Sandra Stotsky, an education professor at the University of Arkansas, said, “(Praxis I) is an easy test for anyone who has completed high school but has nothing to do with college-level ability or scores.” She added, “The test is far too undemanding for a prospective teacher.... The fact that these people hired somebody to take an easy test of their skills suggests that these prospective teachers were probably so academically weak it is questionable whether they would have been suitable teachers.”

Here’s a practice Praxis I math question: Which of the following is equal to a quarter-million — 40,000, 250,000, 2,500,000, 1/4,000,000 or 4/1,000,000? The test taker is asked to click on the correct answer. A practice writing skills question is to identify the error in the following sentence: “The club members agreed that each would contribute ten days of voluntary work annually each year at the local hospital.” The test taker is supposed to point out that “annually each year” is redundant.

CNN broke this cheating story last July, but the story hasn’t gotten much national press since then. In an article for NewsBusters, titled “Months-Old, Three-State Teacher Certification Test Cheating Scandal Gets Major AP Story — on a Slow News Weekend” (11/25/12), Tom Blumer quotes speculation by the blog “educationrealist”: “I will be extremely surprised if it does not turn out that most if not all of



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the teachers who bought themselves a test grade are black. (I am also betting that the actual testers are white, but am not as certain. It just seems that if black people were taking the test and guaranteeing passage, the fees would be higher.)”

There’s some basis in fact for the speculation that it’s mostly black teachers buying grades, and that includes former Steelers wide receiver Cedrick Wilson, who’s been indicted for fraud. According to a study titled “Differences in Passing Rates on Praxis I Tests by Race/Ethnicity Group” (March 2011), the percentages of blacks who passed the Praxis I reading, writing and mathematics tests on their first try were 41, 44 and 37, respectively. For white test takers, the respective percentages were 82, 80 and 78.

This test-taking fraud is merely the tip of a much larger iceberg. It highlights the educational fraud being perpetrated on blacks during their K-12 education. Four or five years of college — even majoring in education, an undemanding subject — cannot make up for those 13 years of rotten education. Then they’re given a college degree that is fraudulent, seeing as some have difficulty passing a test that shouldn’t be challenging to even a 12th-grader. Here’s my question: If they manage to get through the mockery of teacher certification, at what schools do you think they will teach?

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