



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on November 1, 2012

The Education Reform Racket

A “racket” according to my *American Heritage Dictionary* is “a dishonest business or practice, especially one that obtains money through fraud or extortion.” Extortion is defined as “an illegal use of one’s official position or powers to obtain property, funds, or patronage.” The verb “to extort” means “to obtain from another by coercion or intimidation.” The word “extort” is derived from the Latin *torquere*, meaning “to twist,” as in twisting someone’s arm to gain compliance. The word “fraud” is another beauty. It is defined as “a deception deliberately practiced in order to secure unfair or unlawful gain.” In other words, a fraud requires deception, and deception is a key strategy of the progressive movement.



Prior to the advent of the progressives in the early days of the last century, American educators were honest, conscientious public servants dedicated to the betterment of their young charges. Teaching was considered a sacred calling in which the future happiness of American children were in the hands of their educators. Public schools were controlled and funded by local citizens and the school house was considered a symbol of government integrity, patriotism, and concern for the children of the community. The public school was “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” and parents were respected by the educators and vice versa.

But all of that changed in a slow process initiated by the progressives. It was started in 1898 by John Dewey who advocated a radical change in American primary education from its emphasis on literacy — reading and writing — to a new emphasis on socialization. He wrote in his essay, *The Primary Education Fetich*:

It is one of the great mistakes of education to make reading and writing constitute the bulk of the school work the first two years. The true way is to teach them incidentally as the outgrowth of the social activities at this time. Thus language is not primarily the expression of thought, but the means of social communication.... If language is abstracted from social activity and made an end in itself, it will not give its whole value as a means of development.... It is not claimed that by the method suggested, the child will learn to read as much, nor perhaps as readily in a given period by the usual method. That he will make more rapid progress later when the true language interest develops ... can be claimed with confidence.

Of course, Dewey knew that American parents would not allow their children to be used as part of the progressives’ great experiment leading America to a socialist utopia. They would want their children to be taught to read, write, and spell in the traditional manner that produced excellent readers. And so, he wrote in the essay: “Change must come gradually. To force it unduly would compromise its final success by favoring a violent reaction.”



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In other words, deception would have to be used so that the progressives could implement their new reading program without parents even knowing what was happening. And that deception is still being used today in order to maintain control of the education process.

Indeed, a culture of deception now pervades the entire education system: in the training of teachers, the publication of reading textbooks, the textbook adoption process, the opposition to traditional phonics, the invention of new learning disabilities to account for the widespread reading failure among American children.

From the start, their deception was so successful that they were able to get John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to donate \$3 million to the progressive Lincoln School where he enrolled four of his sons. All four — David, Nelson, Winthrop, and Laurence — became dyslexic and spent the rest of their lives struggling with the written word.

So, if they could fool JDR, Jr., they could fool just about everyone else — except those few of us who can't be fooled. When in 1955 Rudolf Flesch exposed the whole rotten scheme in his famous book, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, the progressives suffered a bit of a setback. But then they organized the International Reading Association, which became the citadel of the whole-word teaching method.

Meanwhile, the authors of the new reading programs, such as Dick and Jane, Tom and Betty, and other similar programs, became quite wealthy as they went about destroying American literacy. The progressives had groomed their own men to become superintendents of the nation's largest school districts where they could make sure that the progressive program was implemented in their schools.

But they had their sights on even bigger sources of wealth than just selling textbooks. Just as bank robbers rob banks because that's where the money is, the education racketeers set their sights on the U.S. Treasury, where billions of dollars were waiting to be acquired by the educators' grubby fingers, all with the help of corrupt politicians. Thus, in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was the key to the U.S. Treasury. It was as if the president of a bank had given the key to its vaults to his favorite crook. (By the way, the ESEA law explicitly forbids the establishment of a national [curriculum](#).)

Now, billions of dollars poured into the coffers of the educators with no improvement in the children's reading skills. In fact, their reading skills got worse, for the more money the educators had at their disposal, the more very expensive phony programs they could buy from their friends.

Indeed, the educators have turned reading failure into a financial bonanza. Take Title 1 of the ESEA, for example. The purpose of Title One is to provide federal funds for schools with a high percentage of children from low-income, culturally deprived families. According to the U.S. Education Department:

ED's most recent data on participation in the program are from school year (SY) 2009-10. In SY 2009-10 more than 56,000 public schools across the country used Title I funds to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to help low-achieving children master challenging curricula and meet state standards in core academic subjects. For example, funds support extra instruction in reading and mathematics, as well as special preschool, after-school, and summer programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum.

That same year Title I served more than 21 million children. Of these students, approximately 59 percent were in kindergarten through fifth grade, 21 percent in grades 6-8, 17 percent in grades 9-12, 3 percent in preschool, and less than one percent ungraded.



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How much money was appropriated in 2009 for Title One? \$14,492,401,000. In 2010, the same amount was appropriated, and in 2011, \$14,463,416,198. And that's just one program. If we add up all the funding since 1965, a period of 47 years, in which no improvement in academic skills has occurred, we get a total close to a trillion dollars, and nothing to show for it in terms of reading improvement. So who has gotten the money? Fifty-thousand Title One directors. Fifty-thousand Title One assistant directors, plus countless Title One teachers and their aides. If this isn't a racket, I don't know what is.

In the 47 years since its inception, Congress has tinkered with the ESEA, but nothing has stopped the flow of money out of the federal treasury into the coffers of the educators. In 1994 Congress enacted the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), which revised the ESEA. In 2001, President Bush signed into law No Child Left Behind, which was, according to Wikipedia,

a reauthorization of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#), which included [Title I](#), the government's flagship aid program for disadvantaged students. NCLB supports [standards-based education reform](#) based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The Act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills. States must give these assessments to all students at select grade levels in order to receive federal school funding.... NCLB expanded the federal role in public education through annual testing, annual academic progress, report cards, teacher qualifications, and funding changes.

No Child Left Behind moved the entire American K-12 education system closer to the European model of a National Education System. President Obama's Race to the Top program has also provided billions of dollars more funding and has inched the system toward nationalization. According to Wikipedia:

Race to the Top ... is a \$4.35 billion [United States Department of Education](#) contest created to spur innovation and reforms in state and local district K-12 education. It is funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#) and was announced by President [Barack Obama](#) and Secretary of Education [Arne Duncan](#) on July 24, 2009. States were awarded points for satisfying certain educational policies, such as performance-based standards (often referred to as an [Annual professional performance review](#)) for teachers and principals, complying with nationwide standards, promoting [charter schools](#) and [privatization](#) of education, and computerization.

Race to the Top prompted 48 states to adopt common standards for K-12.... The common standards were developed by the [National Governors Association](#) and the Council of Chief State School Officers with funds from the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), the [Charles Stewart Mott Foundation](#) and others.

I doubt that Bill or Melinda Gates have any idea of how the progressives have turned public education into their own lucrative racket. Just as John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was foolish enough to donate \$3-million to the very school that turned his four sons into dyslexics, so Bill and Melinda Gates are throwing their money at the public schools on the premise that the schools need more money and not a change in the way they teach reading. It's good publicity for them, but not much good for the children.

And this article is about only one reform racket, the ESEA, which is reauthorized by Congress every three years. But there is also Head Start, Mastery Learning in the 1980s, Goals 2000, and Outcome Based Education, just to name a few of the other rackets thought up by educationists and discarded when proven useless. But the money's been pocketed.



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Need further proof that education reform is the greatest racket ever conceived by human beings? Consider how many billions of dollars have been spent on “improving” K-12 education, and then consider what there is to show for the money. In 2012, the SAT reading score was the lowest in history, and in 2007, the National Endowment for the Arts reported that American literacy is declining at a frightening rate. Chairman of the Endowment Dana Gioia said: “This is a massive social problem. We are losing the majority of the new generation. They will not achieve anything close to their potential because of poor reading.”

More than a trillion federal dollars has been spent since John Dewey told his colleagues that they would have to deceive the American people in order to be able to implement their socialist curriculum. The culture of deception now permeates the entire education system. Can the lying be stopped? Not as long as we keep paying them to do it.



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