



Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on July 29, 2011

## Education Department Throws America's Kids Under the Bus

On July 27, Education Secretary Arne Duncan reiterated an earlier request for a 13.3-percent budget increase over 2011, which would bring Education Department spending to one-fifth higher than 2010 levels. Amid congressional arguments over reducing the nation's debt and raising the debt ceiling, Duncan justified his stance by explaining: "You can't sacrifice the future to pay for the present."

He said the additional funding would allow the department to fund more Pell grants; to place increased emphasis on the [STEM](#) (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) initiative; to continue most aspects of President George W. Bush's decade-old [No Child Left Behind](#) law, which even liberals have [admitted is a disappointment](#); and to push the Obama administration's new toddler initiatives, such as the Early Learning Challenge (ELC), described earlier this week as part of the President's "[Race to the Top](#)" boondoggle.



Race to the Top, like No Child Left Behind and its predecessors, are "reforms" that build upon their forerunners and serve as a means to re-authorize the legislative triumph that virtually federalized education in 1965: the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA), passed as part of the "[War on Poverty](#)" under President Lyndon B. Johnson. Poverty continued on as usual, but America became a different nation, beginning with [Head Start](#).

Head Start began as a pre-kindergarten summer program for low-income youngsters thought to be at risk. It morphed into one of the longest-running anti-poverty programs in U.S. history, with its own federal office run out of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Thus did schools get into the business of feeding children, which today has morphed into a demand that all school districts, poor or not, provide meals — and specific kinds of meals at that. The involvement of HHS had the side-effect of moving schools further away from academics — for pitifully little result considering Head Start's [discouraging track record](#). Even HHS' own Longitudinal Study admitted to "only a few statistically significant differences in outcomes at the end of 1st grade for the sample as a whole," and in some cases even "negative impacts."

How, then, would Obama's Early Learning Challenge be any improvement? [ELC](#) is, once again, essentially government-subsidized day care with an emphasis on mental-health inspection, thinly



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disguised as education.

Part of the problem may lie in our leaders' flawed view of what constitutes poverty. Heritage Foundation president, Ed Feulner, cited government surveys in [another July 25 article](#), revealing that:

The average household defined as poor ... has a microwave, a washer and dryer, a dishwasher, a coffee maker, and a cordless phone. Half of poor households have a computer..., two color televisions and a DVD player, along with a video-game system such as an Xbox or a PlayStation for those households with children.... Welfare expert Robert Rector [reveals] in a new study [that] "...the houses and apartments of America's poor are quite spacious by international standards. The typical poor American has considerably more living space than does the average European."

This may be good news for America's so-called poor, but if the Education Department has its way, even middle-class kids will leave school believing the above circumstances equate to "grinding poverty," with the further implication that taxes should be raised to improve matters. Given the already outrageous debt crisis, this view may spell the [end of upward mobility](#), the beacon for millions of America's naturalized citizens, as well as natural-born persons seeking to climb the socio-economic ladder.

In 1965, the poverty-focused ESEA had only seven titles — which grew exponentially, thanks to the federally funded Council of [Chief State School Officers](#). Beginning in 1974, the old Office of Education under the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare gave the Chief State School Officers the task of pressuring every state education agency (which at that time had considerable autonomy) to standardize data collection and make computers systems compatible with federal ones. Once accomplished, every state agency's autonomy virtually disappeared.

With that, a new cabinet-level agency was born, the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) in 1976. Making good on his campaign promise to the far-left [National Education Association](#) (NEA), and its smaller, but still liberal rival, the [American Federation of Teachers](#) (AFT), President Jimmy Carter created the new agency — with dire consequences for America's families.

Today, if you look at the Education Department's [organization chart](#), then click on the offices and bureaus at every point along the chart, *and* factor in the fact that the U.S. contributes heavily to the Organization for [Economic Cooperation and Development](#), with another whole subset of U.S. offices and bureaus, you have a diagram that, even in small print, covers an 8 x 12-foot floor!

The NEA and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching co-founded UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1947, and by 1976, there was little the NEA could not get away with. Increasingly, schools implemented UNESCO-inspired curricula, their cornerstones being the UN Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. If one doesn't look too closely, both documents may appear to mimic the wording and framework of our own founding documents. In fact, they run counter to American interests and the U.S. Constitution.

Policymakers at the DoE know this. The late President Ronald Reagan knew it, too, which is why he tried to shut the Education Department down — and also why he failed in that attempt. Two of President Reagan's children had already succumbed — quite publicly, while he was still Governor — to the leftist brand of indoctrination proliferating on campuses, so he no doubt knew the stakes up close and personal. The future for families less well-off than his own looked even bleaker.

By 1980, the NEA and AFT had virtually co-opted America's education system through conscription of nearly all teachers. They could dictate to universities how professors would train future educators,



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telling them which disciplines to incorporate (psychology) and which they could start eliminating (classical learning). It was subtle if one was outside the system looking in, but blatant from the perspective of a teacher-in-training listening to professors mock every conservative radio-TV commentator and ridicule traditional values.

By 1982, the education behemoth had grown intolerant of all but the most left-leaning ideas and individuals. Federal policy increasingly reflected the NEA's annual legislative agenda. Over the years, the NEA agenda items covered everything from national defense to Social Security to gay rights, but remarkably [little about actual teaching](#).

The national organization is always flush with cash — and not all of it from teachers' dues. Today, the union is poised to double the [size of its political war chest](#), even though its mission purports to be nonprofit and education-focused. The bulk of its money goes to state and local affiliates to ensure NEA-friendly school boards via its various state [Uniserve](#) offices, while the NEA's tax-exempt national headquarters in Washington, D.C. continues to wield mounting influence over how teachers' dues are disbursed — to thwart parent-friendly bills and promote radical-left initiatives that will crush the very students it pretends to serve, with plenty of dollars left over to fund smaller scale, highly targeted measures, such as proposed capital-gains and [income-tax hikes in Massachusetts](#), through its state and local chapters.

So, when Education Secretary Arne Duncan opines that we “can't sacrifice the future to pay for the present,” he probably knows his agency has long since compromised the future in its unholy alliance with the NEA and UNESCO. The Department has, in effect, thrown America's children under the bus.

*Part III of this series will focus on how the Common Core of Standards, the proposed new National Assessment, and the International Baccalaureate has changed the current voting generation. Part IV will offer real solutions to the education system's failures.*

*Article Series:*

Part 1: [Obama's Early Learning Challenge and Our Failed Education System](#)”

Part 3: [Obama's “Common Core of Standards”: Final Step in Phony School Reform](#)

Part 4: [Tax Dollars Fuel Unlawful Nationalized Curriculum, Parent-Bypass](#)

Part 5: [George Washington: The Latest Casualty of Progressive Education](#)

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Part 7: [An “Extreme Makeover” for U.S. Education — Can We? Should We?](#)

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