



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on September 7, 2010

Teach for America — Another Bad Idea

In New Jersey, a program called “Teach for America” is being tested as a tool for addressing the manifest failure of public schools in areas like Newark. This program purports to improve schools by providing them with leadership through this foundation, which combines teaching and administration.



There is little doubt that public-school administrators are remote, insulated, and overpaid. Many of them have never taught a class and have little background in actual teaching. The “Teach for America” program, however, has the same noxious effect on education that teachers’ unions do: The actual administration of schools is removed even farther from the control of the voters and the parents. Although the convoluted system of boards of education often allows school systems to be obscured from ordinary citizens (few of whom have the time or energy to follow the machinations of these boards), nevertheless an energized public could vote in board members who support the teaching of traditional Judeo-Christian moral values, factual American History, as well as a command of the English language and basic skills in math and science.

When “Teach for America” insinuates itself into the administration of public schools, the layers that separate the education bureaucracy from parents and local taxpayers expand. The program’s website shows that government agencies, like the [United States Department of Education](#), support this nonprofit organization.

Huge charitable organizations, which nearly always seem to have an ideological agenda, also fund “Teach for America.” Surely this will make schools less accountable to parents, local taxpayers, and voters than the current system.

Most parents would state that the problem with public education today is not that it lacks unaccountable governmental and charitable control, but rather that schools do not stick to their fairly narrow role in civic life: teaching basic learning skills and inculcating in students sufficient traditional values so they can understand what the American tradition means.

Hints of what “Teach for America” really means can be found by a closer examination of its website. One of the goals of the organization is the [“Political Leadership Initiative.”](#) What does that mean? It



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helps members to “influence the policies and priorities of local, state and national government” (i.e. push politicians to give more money to education), “work towards educational equity in our nation” (i.e. introduce a sort of socialism in education funding), and help train cadres for a career in politics.

“Teach for America” represents all the trends in education that have proven so disastrous. Instead of instruction being accountable to parents of students, to local taxpayers who support the schools, and to voters in school districts who elect the government of schools, this new plan offers a national program which will be safe from local outrage, an overt effort to redistrict educational resources “from each district according to its ability, to each district according to its need,” and to train activists who can run for political office and organize political activism, rather like the scandal-ridden ACORN program.

On the other hand, homeschooling works. Small, locally-run school systems work — as long as educational re-programmers stay out. The nationalization, bureaucratization, and socialism of education, however, is a perfect recipe for failure. That is just what “Teach for America” represents.



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