



Written by [Denise Behreandt](#) on June 24, 2009

What? Even Charter Schools Got “F’s”?

For example, the latest finding from a study at Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes is that even “charter schools” fall short of expectations (See hyperlink to *Washington Times* article: [“Charter schools hit, miss in new report”](#)). Some 37 percent of charter schools even came in below their “traditional” public-school counterparts.

Say what?

Many “poor” families, plus parents who are simply dissatisfied with their children’s education but cannot afford increasingly expensive alternatives, have been sending their children to what they thought were higher-performing charter schools. The parents aren’t aware that the same constraints that are placed on public-school learning are placed on charter schools. They aren’t aware that any sort of federal funding — passed through to the states and on to local education agencies — adversely affects the school environment and curriculum. It is the rules that must be followed if a school accepts federal funding (incentives and disincentives) that guides a school’s curriculum. That is why schools are awash in political correctness masquerading as history (“social studies”), junk science as scientific method, and sex education as health. Tests are called “assessments,” meaning they are not really tests at all, but rather opinion research with large doses of mental-health screening interspersed among self-reports and how-do-feel-when queries.



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Some readers may have seen a version of the following test — this one an eighth-grade final exam, circa 1895, from Salina, Kansas. The original document is on file at the Smokey Valley Genealogical Society and Library in Salina and was reprinted by the *Salina Journal*. A similar test served as the entrance exam for New Jersey public high schools. If a student couldn’t pass these, they failed a grade, or were channeled into low-paying, menial jobs. The message was two-fold: (1) success at academics matters;



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and (2) education is a privilege, not a "right." Thus, the school environment was infused with strict discipline — "Yes, Ma'am" and "No, Sir" — and appropriate dress and decorum.

What follows, then, is an honest-to-goodness **test**, not a "questionnaire," not an "assessment," not an "instrument." Notice the construction is not "multiple choice"; comprehensible sentence structure was required. Note also the first entry under Geography: "What is climate? On what does climate depend?" That alone should give our nation's education policymakers a reality check:

8TH GRADE FINAL EXAM, 1895

Grammar (1 hour)

1. Give nine rules for the use of capital letters.
2. Name the parts of speech and define those that have no modifications.
3. Define verse, stanza and paragraph.
4. What are the principal parts of a verb? Give principal parts of "lie," "play," and "run."
5. Define "case" and illustrate each.
6. What is punctuation? Give rules for principal marks of punctuation.
- 7-10. Write a composition of about 150 words and show therein that you understand the practical use of the rules of grammar.

Arithmetic (1 hour, 15 minutes)

1. Name and define the Fundamental Rules of Arithmetic.
2. A wagon box is 2 ft. deep, 10 ft. long and 3 ft. wide. How many bushels of wheat will it hold?
3. If a load of wheat weighs 3,942 lbs. What is it worth at .50/bushel, deducting 1,050 lbs. for tare?
4. District No. 33 has a valuation of \$35,000. What is the necessary levy to carry on a school for seven months at \$50 per month, with \$104 for incidentals?
5. Find the cost of 6,720 lbs. coal at \$6.00/ton.
6. Find the interest of \$512.60 for 8 months and 18 days at 7%.
7. What is the cost of 40 boards 12 inches wide and 16 ft. long at \$20 per foot?
8. Find the bank discount on \$300 for 90 days (no grace) at 10%.
9. What is the cost of a square farm at \$15 per acre, the distance of which is 640 rods?
10. Write an example of a bank check, a Promissory Note, and a receipt.

U.S. History (45 minutes)

1. Give the epochs into which U.S. History is divided.
2. Give an account of Columbus' discovery of America.
3. Relate the causes and results of the Revolutionary War.
4. Show the territorial growth of the United States.
5. Provide a short history of Kansas.
6. Who were Morse, Whitney, Fulton, Bell, Lincoln, Penn, and Howe?
7. Name events connected with the following dates: 1607, 1620, 1800, 1849, 1865.

Orthography (1 hour)

1. What is meant by the following: Alphabet, phonetic, orthography, etymology, syllabication?
2. What are elementary sounds and their classifications?
3. Give examples of each of the following: Trigraph, subvocals, diphthong, cognate letters, linguals.
4. Give four substitutes for caret 'u.'



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5. Give two rules for spelling words with final 'e.' Name two exceptions under each rule.
6. Give two uses of silent letters in spelling. Illustrate each.
7. Define the following prefixes and use in connection with a word: bi, dis, mis, pre, semi, post, non, inter, mono, sup.
8. Mark diacritically and divide into syllables the following, and name the sign that indicates the sound: card, ball, mercy, sir, odd, cell, rise, blood, fare, last.
9. Use the following correctly in sentences: cite, site, sight, fane, fain, feign, vane, vain, vein, raze, raise, rays.
10. Write 10 words frequently mispronounced and indicate pronunciation by use of diacritical marks and syllabication.

Geography (1 hour)

1. What is climate? Upon what does climate depend?
2. How do you account for the extremes of climate in Kansas?
3. Of what use are rivers? Of what use is the ocean?
4. Describe the mountains of North America.
5. Name and describe the following: Monrovia, Odessa, Denver, Manitoba, Hecla, Yukon, St. Helena, Juan Fernandez, Aspinwall and Orinoco.
6. Name and locate the principal trade centers of the U.S.
7. Name the republics of Europe and give the capital of each.
8. Why is the Atlantic Coast colder than the Pacific in the same latitude?
9. Describe the process by which the water of the ocean returns to the sources of rivers.
10. Describe the movements of the earth. Give the inclination of the earth.

As a guest on Pat Buchanan's radio show a few years ago, this author brought along a copy of this test to prove that American schools were not pursuing real academics. A liberal professor represented the opposing view, alleging that the three R's were less relevant in today, falling way behind things like teamwork and socialization. Thus, the perfect time to whip out the vintage test from 1895. It turned out that neither the liberal professor, nor even Mr. Buchanan (a former Jesuit student), could answer most of the questions, and we dissolved into laughter.

Nevertheless, the point was made: educators no longer have a clue what a real education is. As soon as "social studies" replaced history, civics, and geography, America's precipitous slide into ignorance began. Today, most graduates are oblivious to any connection between national sovereignty, the Declaration of Independence, self-evident truths, inalienable rights, liberty, private property rights, and popular sovereignty. How can they be expected to understand the Constitution?

Little wonder that America is on the path to socialism in earnest, having turned out some 40 years' worth of little socialists who believe not in self-sufficiency, independent action, or self-determination, but rather in interdependency, mob action ("teamwork"), government regulation, and bean-counting.

*Beverly K. Eakman is a former teacher and retired federal employee who served as speechwriter for the heads of three government agencies. Today, she is a Washington, DC-based freelance writer, the author of five books, and a frequent keynote speaker on the lecture circuit. Her just-released book is **Walking Targets: How Our Psychologized Classrooms Are Producing a Nation of Sitting Ducks** (Midnight Whistler Publishers).*





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