

government intervention is necessary. In fact, when this country faced a similar crisis 80 years ago ~~because of~~ the chaotic nature of college admission standards, leaders from the nation's most distinguished colleges and schools came together to form the College Board and work on their own solutions. The suggestion that a "committee of Congress" had the answer was unthinkable to them, and it is still unacceptable today. Granted, the content and administration of standardized examinations must be improved continually, but these changes can be achieved without intrusive legislation.

~~Nevertheless, there is~~ ^{today} ~~the~~ a grave mismatch between education and evaluation ~~on both the high school and college levels~~, a disparity reflected in our current frustrations about the quality of testing. But ~~why~~ this dissatisfaction ^{is} really a misplaced frustration about the quality of our schools and a deeply felt conviction that somehow education and evaluation must be more closely joined along the way.

^{TRUTH IN EDUCATION}
I believe the time has come to link the so-called "standardized testing" in this country more closely to the education process. Today there is no clear-cut connection between our classrooms and our tests, and, indeed, we go to enormous lengths to make sure tests are not directly linked to the curriculum and to teaching. The disputed "high school competency tests" illustrate this point. Many states, in a desperate move to recapture quality, now require high school students to take an "exit test"; not to measure the curriculum, but to see if students can "cope" in our complicated world. And yet, it's a curious fact that many of the "skills" these tests purport to measure--such as filling out a check or an application form--may not be related at all to what we teach in school.

It is also a curious fact that we somehow feel more comfortable tinkering with tests and measuring something we call "minimal competency" than we do in talking about the goals and content of our education and in confronting the question of quality head on. In fact, as our purposes become more and more unclear, our testing methods seem to become more and more precise. ^{and} In recent years we have focused on something we call "aptitude," not, as one might expect, on the content of the academic program, nor on the achievement of ^{the} our students. We proudly claim that ^{the} admission tests are largely "classroom" and teacher-free and not influenced by outside coaching.
There are I am concerned untaught classes.

But I do not see in this a cause for celebration. ^{Hi} I recently completed a two-and-a-half-year term as United States Commissioner of Education. During that exciting and rewarding tenure I worked with colleges and schools, I visited classrooms all across the country, and I talked to teachers and administrators at every academic level. ^{and I found many dedicated people} Frankly, I was dismayed by ^{the} the our fragmented structures within the schools. I was dismayed ^{and by the confusion in the mind of many students} that colleges could look condescendingly at schools and never ^{set} academic standards and the mismatch between the curriculum the offer their help or ask for help themselves. And I was dis- ^{play} mayed that their only answer to falling scores was to "jack up" their own admission standards.

Today, 50 percent of all high school students in New York City will leave school before they graduate. This should be cause for great concern not only within the schools but within the colleges as well. There is, of course, the tragedy of

human waste in this terrible statistic. But when 50 percent of all high school students "drop out," this also means an "enrollment drop" for higher education. And for reasons of their own survival, to say nothing of the survival of this nation, colleges should be eager to work with schools to improve their academic standards.

Today we have a great range of high schools and an even greater diversity of students. Despite these variables, the predictive value of ~~the~~ examinations has been remarkably consistent in the past. ^{Even so} But education and evaluation are growing further apart and they cannot and should not be totally divorced. To do so sparks great tension between those who test and those who teach, as we have seen. And public confidence in testing will continue to go down if the testing institutions and the schools try to run on wholly separate tracks.

I therefore propose that a national panel of distinguished educators and concerned citizens be convened--similar perhaps to the Committee of Ten that organized itself to form the College Board back in 1899. The goal would be to look--not just at our testing methods--but at the relationship between testing and something we call "standards."

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When the College Board began, high school and college teachers came together to talk about education and testing. After much debate these teachers agreed upon a core curriculum

should be cautious in these claims. Now I recognize that some distance between the tests and schools is absolutely crucial. We do have a great range of high schools in this Nation, and we have a great diversity of students. Nevertheless, the predictive value of the examinations has been remarkably consistent. But I also believe that education and evaluation cannot and should not be totally divorced. To do so sparks great tension between those who test and those who teach. And I believe public confidence will continue to go down if the testing institutions and the schools are run on wholly separate tracks.

Simpler System
Let me state the issue as clearly as I can. I believe that much of the current frustrations about the quality of testing is a misplaced frustration about the quality of our schools. And it reflects a deeply felt conviction that somehow these two enterprises must be more closely joined.

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I'll give you three examples to illustrate what I mean.

Last year I suggested--in the New York Times--that our school system should be restructured beginning with what I called the "basic school." I proposed that this four-year institution *first school should* focus on the fundamentals, especially the mastery of language.

After all, the effective use of symbols is the exquisite human skill that separates us from all other forms of life. The mastery of this process is essential to all future education and it cannot be endlessly postponed.

And after serving as Commissioner, I'm convinced that we need better ways to measure language progress, in the early *ages*, *we need* and new instruments to link the written and oral development of language. In fact, our language testing today is about as chaotic as college admission testing was 80 years ago. *and* There is an urgent need to tie evaluation to the language progress of each student.

I also proposed a "middle school" to replace the so-called junior high. This would be a four to five year institution in ~~level be used~~ which a new kind of "core curriculum" would be taught. Indeed, I believe the search for a new common core of subjects, is a point where college and school interests clearly intersect.

During both the junior high school years and the first two years in college, we say we introduce students to "general education." And yet, at both of these important levels the so-called core curriculum is highly disordered. Why not bring both junior high and college teachers together to search for a new kind of common core? Why not have teachers at these levels attempt to build a two-part general education sequence--introductory and advanced--with one level related to another. Such a curriculum could focus on our common heritage--the common experiences we share today--and introduce students to our common options of the future. And why not work in new ways to help teachers measure academic progress.

Finally, in my article I proposed a ~~not~~ "transition school"--a three-year institution--to replace the high school, which is largely a failing institution. In the transition school, with many smaller "cluster units," the so-called comprehensive high school would be broken down into ~~cluster~~ ^{cluster, smaller units} sections. Students would continue their study of the basics of general education, but each student would also begin to specialize following his or her own aptitudes and interests. There would be, for example, cluster schools in the arts, in health sciences, in computer technology, in mathematics, in community services--just to name a few.

Some students would have part-time apprenticeships and

others would go to college early. For this school to function effectively, we would have to know much more about the individual student. Much guidance and evaluation would be needed in order to place students in the appropriate program in this transition school.

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And this brings me to my fourth proposition: In the days
This means that increasing
ahead tests must increasingly be used for guidance and for place-
ment and not for sorting only. When the College Board began in 1900, the goal was clearly stated in Butler's words: "The sole purpose of the test was to determine whether the pupil is ready to go forward with advantage from one institution to another." Today, we reject this narrow view of testing. We are now convinced that all students--not just the privileged few--must "go forward with advantage." And our job must be to help students of all ages chose the most appropriate path to take.

Today we are, quite literally, a nation of learning. We have all sorts of colleges to serve all sorts of students. And, increasingly, adults in every walk of life must go back to school to stay in touch with changes in their fields.

Given these ^{is objective} conditions, it is ludicrous to suggest that our only job is "sorting people out." Our job in the future must be to help students learn more about themselves. And we ^{must} have ^{new tools?} the instruments to do the job. (Visit Brockport's Computer Program ETS and Stanford's Academic Information Center.)

One final point. In the days ahead we must also find new ways to identify and assess our most creative students. The truth is that for many years our tests have measured recall and problem solving and the use of words and numbers, and these have been

most useful. But we have been less successful in measuring imagination and in identifying the creative and artistic student. It is a disturbing circumstance that in recent years the inventiveness of this Nation has been going down. Between 1966 and 1975 the U.S. patent balance decreased with respect to the United Kingdom, Canada, West Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union. The proportion of the world's major technological innovations produced by the U.S. decreased from 80 percent in 1956, to 59 percent in 1971. Between 1960 and 1976 the U.S. moved from first to last in productivity gains in manufacturing when compared to France, West Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and Canada.

I am convinced that our success--and even our survival--hinges on our capacity to manage an increasingly complicated world. And, frankly, I worry that we are becoming more ignorant about our own inventions. Take Three Mile Island, for example. Not many months ago millions of Americans sat glued to their TV sets listening to strange talk about "rems," and "cooling systems," and "cold shut downs," and for all the world it sounded like a foreign language. In fact, for most of us it was a foreign language, and if Three Mile Island taught us anything at all, it taught us how ignorant we are.

And without more education and more creativity we all will become increasingly more ignorant--not just about nuclear power but about energy and economics and SALT II and a whole host of very vital issues. Indeed, a new kind of "priesthood" is beginning to emerge. Specialists who control the information to their own special ends, and tell the rest of us--who are functionally illiterate--only what they want us to know.

My point is this: In the days ahead we must develop new ways to identify and stimulate creativity, not conformity, and challenge the imagination of our most gifted students who come from every neighborhood and every economic level.

Vachel Lindsey once wrote that:

"It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,
Not that they serve
--but that they have no God to serve,
Not that they sow
--but that they seldom reap,
Not that they die
--but that they die like sheep."

The crime of life is talent unfulfilled.

On final word. We hear a lot of talk these days about "truth in testing." Frankly, this slogan may divert us from the most essential issue. Quality should be our real concern, and I'm convinced that "truth in education," not just truth in testing, should be our new crusade.

The time has come for teachers and administrators from our schools and colleges to come together to clarify our academic goals to relate evaluation more closely to classroom and the teacher; to test increasingly for guidance, not for sorting; and to continue to look for ways to serve the creative needs of every student.

James Agee wrote on one occasion:

"In every child who is born under no matter what circumstances, and of no matter what parents, the potentiality of the human race is born again.

And in him, too once more is born our terrific responsibility towards human life and towards the utmost idea of goodness, of the horror of error, and of God."

The history of the College Board is most distinguished,

and I am certain that this vision of using tests--not to protect the system but to give opportunity to every individual--will continue to guide you in your work.

Thank you for inviting me to meet with you today.

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