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Analysis Essay on "America Skips School"

Introduction

"America Skips School," by Benjamin Barber reveals some shocking information on the state of the American education system. Barber brings to light the struggle the youth undergoes in the society and where they will end up after their hard work at school. He goes ahead to stress the importance of teachers to students and also the nation as a whole. It is time Americans stop yelling about the education crisis and end the struggle that will face their predecessors.

According to Barber (1), the American educational system needs a revamp since more 90 million adults are devoid of simple literacy skills. Additionally, more than 130,000 in 1993 were bringing guns to school that left many dropouts who ended up in jail (Barber 01). Barber feels that the critics of the education system are hypocrites who only talk but do nothing to change it. What happened to being the change you desire? The children need the society to rise and ensure quality education by raising the teachers' salary, taking responsibility and extending the school calendar ((Barber 07).

Barber further warns that the young take freedom and democracy for granted. They do not understand that such privileges should be guarded, paid for, and nurtured for their maintenance. He further indicates that the state of man is anything but democracy. American schools are cited as the worst despite them only having 180 days a year of public education when compared to Europe and Japan that have 240 (Barber 01). Barber makes good sense of all his

allegations against the American education system. One thing that comes out of his argument is the lack of parents and other adults at home to nurture children and show them the right path. At school, the kids have teachers to accompany them and teach them the right ways. When they get home, their moms and dads are often nowhere to be found making the house not be a home but a mere place to come and go. Children need their parents to be around them at home to regulate their activities (Wolk 65). In fact, it is the role of the parent to know at all times where the kid is at, his friends and when he is supposed to be home. Furthermore, the parent should have a schedule with the child that incorporates communication, playtime and studying time to help in the development of the child.

The author makes good sense of the education problem in the U.S until he starts exploring the solutions to these problems. It is often said that once a problem has been defined, it is half solved. Apparently, this axiom was not applicable in this case. Even though his suggestions of reducing the class size and extending the school year are reasonable, his liberal solution of pouring money on teachers is disappointing. I believe Barber is a professor of political science who should have a scientist mind and recognize that the teachers' problem cannot be cured with money. In fact, the author's sentiments that the more the teachers' salaries were raised, the worse the problem got are laughable. Surprisingly, Barber indicates that increased teachers' salaries over the decades have worsened the problem, yet he again suggests that money should be thrown to teachers to improve the quality of education. Liberals such as Barber can be described here as insane. Insanity, in this case, being defined as trying to the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Teachers have valid reasons as to why the education crisis is not their fault. Values and character in children should be taught at home and not at school. Kids also come to school

unready to learn and in need of certain basic resources such as medical care, nutrition and basic human nurturing (Wolk 40). Until these basic needs are met, improving the quality of education will prove to be an uphill task. Barber's thought that only money could cure the education barrier is thus irrelevant. Let's say that great results are achieved and teachers ask for the huge salaries. They would be given because of the good results. The last time I checked how businesses operated, all who want a raise are given a target to justify the raise. So why are teachers so special to be given a raise without good results?

Current discipline practices and parenting, coupled with steep-gradient nurturance and allowing kids to learn more in front of the television do not help kids to be ready for school, communication or even life. However, this trend is changeable once the MC movement is underway ((Barber 06). Communication, good parenting and relationship practices will produce productive and responsible people. These people will be eager to learn, think critically and engage themselves in effective relationships and problem solving. The MC movement will also spearhead the thriving, evolution and multiplication of true friendship that will replace superficial and pale relationships such as Facebook cyber-relationships. Parenting will have the knowledge and will be a pleasure and not as disappointing as it is with few rewards. Teachers will be able to teach and leave the responsibility of disciplining to parents. The MC movement is desirable because it will simultaneously take care of the teachers' pockets as well as the educational crisis. People will live an effective lifestyle that will embrace eldercare, child care and social relationships that focus on wisdom and knowledge. All these will be achieved without increases in taxes to cater for salary increment of teachers, politics, bureaucracies, permissiveness, and divisiveness.

Conclusion

Barber highlights the educational crisis and particularly emphasizes that a lot has been said than done. According to the author, lack of attention by parents and the poor pay to teachers have played a role in the deteriorating education system. To counter this disturbing trend, Barber proposes the school calendar be extended, increase the salaries of teachers and parents to play their role disciplining their children. Unfortunately, increasing the salaries of teachers is not an automatic solution to solving the education crisis. Teachers need to justify the salary increment by producing desirable results. Teachers need to be trained on how to handle kids in school and also the curriculum. Thus, America needs to be committed to improving their educational system. It is only through putting the ideas mentioned above into practice that will stop the American children from drowning in an educational system that does not add value to their careers.

Works Cited

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