

Educational Philosophy

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I'm of the opinion that parents/family lead the primary role in raising children and it is a school's job to teach a core curriculum. I believe that our Country is best served when we have a diverse portfolio of school types (Public, Charter, Private). I am strongly pro-school choice. I think that the Classical/Core Knowledge model is the best currently available model available. I am strongly against the Common Core model (and have researched it relatively extensively over the years) and its standards and overreach. I believe that children's education should be the purview of parents with some limited localized district organizational/funding assistance. I think it all starts with the parents/family and down from there, not the Federal/State governments and down. We are "forced", by our taxation, to pay for public education. Do we not get to decide where/how that money is spent? If the current general state of affairs is an indication, then I suppose the answer is "NO".

This is one of the few areas where I may actually slightly disagree with Hirsch's assertion that we should have a singular Federal standard. I fully understand the previous sentence is an oversimplification of his stance. However, my point is that there is a fine line between having shared (cultural) knowledge and group think, or as he calls it "Thoughtworld". Where he shines, in his assertions about how the dramatic decline of our educational system is directly correlated to Progressivism and the concepts that put more emphasis on "reform", rather than informed. As he points out, this didn't derive solely from the Progressive movement (of which I have studied somewhat extensively) that became popular in the US in the 1920's, but rather a deeper misapplication of "Romanticism" fostered hundreds of years earlier.

Fast forward to our world as it is today, with social media running rampant and our children bombarded with opinions masked as "information" on a daily basis. It is difficult -as a parent- to help them (and ourselves) to navigate these waters. So, conceptually, the notion of a shared set of foundational principles and subjects (math, science, etc) seems intriguing, if not essential. Surprisingly, that isn't what many of our nation's students are receiving in the conventional public school system. With a solid foundation of relevant, factual information, our children really do have a chance to hold the same amount of "Intellectual Capital" as he states. So long, that is, the government is the decider of exactly what that looks like. We -as parents/families/communities- are the ones whom should have a final say in the matter.

As I say, I do strongly believe in the Classical/Core Knowledge model. However, I do not think the government should force any particular curriculum on our nation's children. We have that right now with Common Core and it isn't working, it's never worked. Look at our rankings versus the rest of the developed world. I could however (with little effort) make the argument that if our Federal standard was Core Knowledge, instead of Common Core, that we would be much better off. However, that still leaves the problems and pitfalls of top-down mandates. Top-down takes the individual rights of parents and communities away and substitutes them with the ever-blowing winds of DC and the DOE. One of the current challenges our school faces is in relation to "autonomy", having a Federal/State top-down will ensure that we do not have

any autonomy, thereby rendering all the efforts and hard work of not only our current Liberty community, but also the school's founders. I have met with several of these founders over the years, and I can say with certainty, that autonomy was one of the main drivers behind the existence of our school.

Part of the genius (and indeed the necessary ingredient) of the Hirsch/Core Knowledge model is that it requires strong parent/family involvement. Frankly, it's disheartening that so many parents in this Country are disconnected from their child's education, typically just defaulting to their "local" public school without a second thought. I think that alone is a major factor in the current deficiencies of our entire educational system.

As stated, raising a child to become a productive member of society is the responsibility of parents/family, first and foremost. However, this notion isn't mutually exclusive to the notion that schools can play an important role in this endeavor. The Foundation Stones and Capstones (integral parts of Liberty's essence) are useful tools that should be utilized as reinforcement to parent/family values and expectations of their children. It is not a school's role to "raise" our children (like so many modern "Progressive pseudo-intellectuals" would have you believe), but rather to compliment our (parent's/family's) values, while giving them a solid baseline of knowledge that will actually help prepare them to become valued participants in society at large.