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Centralized Goal Formation and Systemic Reform: Reflections on Liberty, Localism and Pluralism

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Abstract

This paper asks whether there are reasonable concerns about liberty raised by standards driven systemic reform. **Part I** explores three kinds of concerns, students' interests in autonomy and authenticity, academic freedom, and pluralism. **Part II** explores two ways of conceptualizing the balance between liberty and various public interests, neo-classical economics and contemporary conservative thought. The paper draws two major conclusions about standards driven systemic reform: (1) This picture of reform raises serious questions about liberty. It may be inconsistent with some liberty interests of students. It is likely to pose serious questions about academic freedom and about pluralism. These concerns should make us cautious about systemic reform and should motivate us to a broader discussion of its assumptions and consequences. (2) The best defense of public sector reform efforts against their market oriented competition is one that emphasizes the importance of political goods such as citizenship. However, standards driven reform needs to avoid linkage with any nationalistic form of communitarianism. In order to do this it needs to seek ways to balance the demands for centralized goals and an educational system with an equal concern for local democracy, pluralism and community. A view of standards and accountability that is narrowly focused on clear public interests is crucial.

The paper concludes with an argument that we need to focus attention on the question of what makes for good educational communities, a discussion that is not abetted by debating issues of reform in a framework that poses choices between public

sector and market approaches.

Standards driven, systemic reform, as envisioned in the national standards of Goals 2000 (1993) or various state reform efforts, involves centralized goal formation. Centralized goal formation requires developing detailed descriptions of curricula at the state or national level. Systemic reform aspires in addition to create an educational system in which various components are aligned so as to interact in a mutually reinforcing way.

Centralized goal formation may run afoul of certain liberties beginning with the liberty of students or their parents to be free from unreasonable educational coercion, but rising to problems of multiculturalism, parent's rights, freedom of religion, local control, federalism, and academic freedom. Linking centralized goal formation to the aspiration to develop an aligned educational system also raises the prospect of additional centralization of educational authority.

These tensions have not been lost on advocates. Two solutions have been proposed. One is "centralized localism" in which standards developed at the national or state level can be further specified in local jurisdictions. In their paper on systemic educational reform, O'Day and Smith (1993) suggest a view of "content-driven systemic reform" which "would marry the vision and guidance provided by coherent, integrated, centralized education policies common in many nations with the high degree of local responsibility and control demanded by U.S. tradition." (p. 128) (Also see Clune, 1993.)

A related strategy involves centralizing goal formation while decentralizing implementation. In the introduction to their recent collection on reform Finn and Walberg (1994) say "In this volume, Albert Shanker ... shows how outcomes-based education might best be employed within a national system of goals and a national assessment of progress." (pp. xxii) This passage is immediately followed by one commending "... the transfer of political power ... from producers to consumers (the choice movement) or from central controllers to decentralized decision makers..." (p. xii) The State of New York has also expressed a simultaneous enthusiasm for centralization and decentralization in its *A New Compact for Learning* (1994).

...this is the essence of the New Compact for Learning: that schools and school districts exercise initiative to make what changes may be needed to bring about the learning results we all desire. In a new relationship between the State and localities, the State defines more precisely what is to be learned, and local teachers, administrators, and boards of education have more freedom to decide how such learning is to occur. (p. 10)

This mix of ideas hang together as a view *if* we see standards driven, systemic reform as the intersection of three concerns. The first is the desire for high standards. The second is the desire for a coherent or "aligned" educational system. The third is the desire for a less bureaucratized system (Fuhrman, 1993). The first two concerns account for the emphasis on centralized goal formation. A national or a statewide curriculum is seen as both a means to excellence and a precondition of a system. Permitting local elaboration of state or national goals and localizing responsibility for implementation serves the third concern.

These are plausible aspirations. Yet it is not self evident that we can satisfy all three simultaneously. The idea that centralized goal formation can be reconciled with local autonomy by permitting local specification of centrally achieved standards is not easily reconciled with the idea that centralized goal formation will be the centerpiece in

creating an aligned system. Arguably, the more local variation we have, the less of a system we will have. O'Day and Smith (1993, p. 297) suggest that ecology might be taught differently to students depending on their locale. Students in fishing communities might study coastal ecologies while students in Arizona might study deserts. However, the more we imagine this, the less we can imagine an aligned system. Is preservice teacher education going to emphasize the ecology of deserts or of coasts or just principles of ecology? Accountability is particularly a problem. It is easy to write standards capable of local variations in implementation so long as they are not too detailed. But tests are the operational definitions and enforcers of a curriculum. Tests which are affordable, provide for comparability, and respect local variation are at best difficult. (See Smith, Scoll, and Link, 1995 where the problem is recognized.) Is New York State going to have different science exams for students on Long Island and in the Adirondacks? Or suppose that some schools wish to emphasize a curriculum in which biological theory is central, others a curriculum in which ecology is emphasized, and a third group wish to focus on a tech prep agriculture curriculum? These are all responsible emphases in the biological sciences. All might be done with excellence. Each might be responsive to a local need. To the degree that we permit them, we will find it hard to align a system. To the degree we forbid them we will not have local autonomy. Thus a central question in thinking through systemic reform is to decide how much the desire for a coherent system will need to be accommodated to desirable forms of localism or pluralism.

Nor is it clear that the "the state determines the what and the locale determines the how" story can be consistently maintained. If systemic reform is to mean anything, it must mean that the state will be involved in such activities as helping or coercing failing schools to change (perhaps even "reconstituting" some), in exporting best practice, or enforcing opportunity to learn standards. While such activities may be commendable, it is not at all clear that they are consistent with the rhetoric of the decentralization of responsibility.

The issues run deeper. While the motivation for centralized goal formation, an aligned educational system, and debureaucratization reflect a concern for efficient educational organizations, the forms of decentralization that characterize American polity are often motivated by a concern for liberty. This is one point of federalism. The division of powers and the numerous jurisdictions that characterize American politics were created, in part, to prevent one faction or one idea from becoming the ruling faction or idea. Similarly, the autonomy of intellectual professions is intended to protect intellectual freedom. There are numerous examples where liberty has been asserted as an interest inconsistent with centralized authority over education. In *Pierce v Society of Sisters* the Supreme Court said that

The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right ... to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations." (p. 12)

Pierce echoes a famous statement by J. S. Mill (1956) in *On Liberty*.

All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves ... diversity of

education. A general state education is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another; and as the mold in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in government ... it establishes a despotism over the mind.... (p. 129)

In *Milliken v Bradley* and *San Antonio v Rodriguez*, the Supreme Court claimed that local control of education had Constitutional standing in that it served the liberty interest of permitting a higher level of control over the goals of education. New York's Court of Appeals asserted a similar view in *Levittown v Nyquist*. Law Professor Stephen Arons (1994) declared a national curriculum to be "broadly inconsistent with the principles of constitutional democracy." (p. 57) Others have seen standards as inconsistent with the freedom of parents or children. Professor Nel Noddings (1992) associates national goals with an ideology of control and as inconsistent with an ethic of caring.

Note the diversity and complexity of these contentions. Much of the objection to Goals 2000 has been in the name of federalism or local control. And the supposition that federalism and local control provide protection for certain forms of liberty is plausible. However, as we should have learned from the history of desegregation, sometimes local control permits local majorities to oppress local minorities. Local control is a significant factor in fiscal inequality. Moreover, the assumption that links liberty to local control is that the important forms of diversity are mapped onto geography so that providing for the autonomy of some political jurisdiction against the center promotes the liberty of those who reside in there. However, many of the forms of diversity that are important to Americans, ethnic or religious diversity for example, do not map onto local political jurisdictions in this way. Thus, even if it is true that centralization of authority over curricular content at the federal level is inconsistent with liberty or diversity, it does not follow that federalism and local control are always the solutions. Solutions depend on the kinds of liberty and pluralism that are desirable. While this paper will worry much about liberty and pluralism, it is not simply an argument for federalism and local control.

Liberty is not absolute. We are not free to run red lights, throw our trash into the streets, or install ourselves in public office by force. Even in the freest of societies individual conduct is appropriately compelled or restrained in order to protect the rights of others or to promote the public interest. Nor are all liberties and public interests of equal weight. A child who is not free to leave school because he or she is bored might be free to do so if he or she wishes to observe a religious holiday. We might approach the question of whether there are liberty interest that are at odds with centralized goal formation and systemic reform as follows: First, we need a sample of relevant liberties. Second, we need a view of the public interests that might be balanced against these liberties. Finally, we need some principled ways to weight these interests so as to strike a principled balance.

In **Part I**, I shall focus on developing a sample of liberty interests. I shall address three questions:

1. Are there any liberty interest of students that might be in conflict with systemic reform?
2. Are there any liberty interests of educational professionals or of the academic professions that are in conflict with systemic reform?
3. Is systemic reform inconsistent with diversity or pluralism?

In **Part II** I shall try to construct two different and more systematic way of

understanding the nature of both liberty interests and public interests, and I will discuss some of the theoretical and political issues raised in attempting to balance them.

Part I

Students

One might argue that in a free society even modest interference with the educational preferences of students requires justification. Justification is easily provided. Education serves numerous public interests including human capital development and citizenship that are of sufficient importance to warrant constraint on the educational freedom of minors. The immaturity of students provides a further reason for adult direction of their education.

This picture might change if there are plausible views of education that serve important liberty interests. Are there such interests? Two candidates might be authenticity, the ability to choose and act in accordance with one's identity or nature, and autonomy, the capacity to freely and wisely choose among options unencumbered by prejudice or ignorance. Moreover, there are plausible educational programs associated with authenticity and autonomy.

Recall that Goals 2000 emphasizes the mastery of a common academic curriculum. Goal #3 of Goals 2000 says "By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competence over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography..." Second, the reform movement has understood the point of such a curriculum as economic competitiveness and the development of human capital. (Hanushek, 1995; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Reich, 1990.)

No curriculum is likely to do much for students who ignore it. (See Steinberg, 1996.) Thus some school reformers have wanted to tell a story about how students are to be engaged in learning. One story goes like this: Students are only likely to be motivated to learn when something they want is contingent on their performance. Currently little that students value is contingent on their doing well in school. Indeed, as a society, we absurdly protect students from educational malfeasance by numerous second chance institutions. However, once we, as a society, have been able to agree on what students are to learn, we will be able to link school achievement to a range of incentives. Jobs and further education are favorite examples. (See Bishop, 1989 and Shanker, 1994.) The educational system is to speak softly and carry a big carrot.

Does such an approach interfere with any significant liberty? Return to an earlier Presidential report, *Youth: Transition to Adulthood* (Coleman, 1974). This work is noteworthy because, while it sought to change American education, it had a remarkably different picture of the problem to be solved. If the problem James Coleman (the committee chair) saw could be put into a phrase, it might be "youth alienation." Schools are age segregated. They abet the development of youth culture. Schools substitute formal for participatory learning and make the lives of adults and their communities invisible. Schools provide only one way to grow up.

The idea that schools provide too few ways to grow up might serve as a focus of discussion. Howard Gardner's (1982, 1983) work on multiple intelligences suggests one way of formulating the issue. Gardner claims that intelligence is not one thing but many. Schools focus on the development of a narrow range of these intelligences. Even if one

disagrees with Gardner's formulation, it is apparent that schools make some capacities and aspirations central and others less so. In doing so they influence how students are valued by schools, whose capacities count for something and whose don't, and whose interests are worthy and whose aren't.

Schools cannot be about everything. Nor is it clear that what they are about should be fully determined by students' capacities or interests as much as, perhaps, social or economic needs or students' long term needs. Nevertheless, it may be harmful and alienating to students to subject them gratuitously to a curriculum that emphasizes capacities and aspirations that they do not possess in abundance. Moreover, often our sense of what we are good at or what we aspire to is part of our sense of who we are. When an institution does not value something central to our sense of self, we do not belong. We cannot generate a sense of ownership. We are alienated. We will resist or move through passively. If so, it is not a trivial thing if we develop a curriculum that gratuitously narrows the range of things that are valued in schools. Yet it seems that is a likely consequence of the strong focus of systemic reform on academic learning.

What does this have to do with the liberty interests of students? Perhaps, one kind of liberty is the freedom to be who we are, the freedom to act in accordance with our nature, identity, or character. Let's call this authenticity (Taylor, 1991). Honoring authenticity might include providing the freedom to pursue a kind of learning in tune with how we learn, what we are good at, how we understand our identity, or what we aspire to. One way to cash this out is to claim that schools ought to help students form an educational project that is both worthwhile and is their own. (See Noddings, 1992 for a useful example.) Such an educational program would not simply permit students to follow their interests. It would constrain or require what students pursue both for their own welfare and the public interest. And it would insist that students do something of worth. However, it would seek to honor their self-chosen educational projects within these limits.

Another perspective can be developed by considering the anomalous treatment of a liberal arts curriculum. The current emphasis on academic learning is linked to the concern for economic competitiveness and human capital formation. Yet this instrumental justification is quite different from arguments historically made for the liberal arts which have emphasized their intrinsic worth and have seen their chief values as including their capacity to transform the individual and to liberate the intellect (Adler, 1982). This liberation might be thought of as an interest in autonomy.

Such an education aspires to transform what people want. People are to come to want what is genuinely good. Their wants are to be consistent with virtue and self rule. Since this kind of education aspires to transform wants, that students who are initially exposed to a liberal education do not immediately aspire to its ends is not decisive. However, freedom in their education may be respected in that a liberal education should be such as to produce people who are virtuous, of good taste, and liberated intellect, and such people should come to view the education they have received as the kind of education they would have chosen for themselves had they been the kinds of people they now are.

Authenticity and autonomy are examples of liberty interests of students that are associated with plausible educational programs. How are such aspirations served by the curriculum envisioned by current reform efforts? Authenticity fairs poorly. Because systemic reform promotes a common academic curriculum, it is likely to make the "only one way to grow up" problem worse. It is unlikely to invest much effort in helping students to develop and pursue their own educational projects. If Coleman's arguments have merit, we might expect systemic reform to increase the alienation and

disengagement of some students.

It is less clear that the liberal arts picture of the liberty interests of students is frustrated. Often those who accept the ideals of liberal education have thought that they are served by a common academic curriculum. Even so, I suspect these aspirations are not likely to be well served by systemic reform. Standards are to be a means of attaching school achievement to incentives such as further education and jobs. Students are thus pictured as people who value income and increased economic opportunity rather than as people capable of an intrinsic interest in history or science. National goals are rarely described as ways to alter students' educational preferences in order to help them love learning. There is no Dead Poets Society here, no sense that education can or should transform people. Anomolously, given the traditional values of the liberal arts, the motivation to learn is instrumentally attached to untransformed wants.

We need to be careful about such pictures. They may be more than empirical observations. They may presuppose a picture of human life that has been characterized as possessive individualism (Young, 1990). When schools make such assumptions about what students want they may abet a process of producing people with these wants. At the very least they may uncritically abandon the project of helping students acquire an enlightened set of tastes. They may privilege one conception of a good life and one picture of the point of education over another. It is a serious matter if we are implicitly defining the character of a good life as money, jobs, and things and transmitting such a picture to students.

Thus centralized goal formation and systemic reform do not comfortably fit with either authenticity or the liberal education of students.

Academic freedom

At first glance centralized goal formation with local responsibility for delivery seems consonant with the aspiration of teachers to be professionals. Teachers might expect more flexibility and autonomy to result from locating the responsibility for implementation at the local level. Nevertheless, teachers may find that the essential message of this formula is captured by the expression "You are free to do what we say in any way you choose." This falls somewhat short of a motto for empowerment. Teachers might want to claim that part of their professional expertise is knowledge of what constitutes excellence in their fields and that a process that defines goals politically at the state or national level, even if teachers participate significantly in the process, is inconsistent with their professionalism. (See Wise, 1990.)

One point of academic freedom is to protect the autonomy of the intellectual professions. The autonomy of intellectual professions serves an important public interest. A society cannot have a free intellectual life in which important matters are dealt with on the basis of reason and evidence if the intellectual professions are subject to unreasonable political control. However, the autonomy of the intellectual professions needs to be balanced against the democratic control of education. The character of this balance is difficult to describe. (See Strike, 1990.) Here I will only suggest that a line that should not be crossed is crossed when political processes come to determine what is regarded as true within disciplines or when political means are employed to make decisions that require significant expertise. However, when the question is primarily one of balancing conflicting interests or competing values, then political processes are more appropriate. Thus the decision as to whether to teach biology or auto mechanics calls for a political judgment. However, the question of whether the theory of evolution is true is a question for biologists. Balancing interests is a political matter. The truth value of

biological theories is not. Roughly this suggests a division of labor in which the broad outline of the curriculum to be taught in public schools is a matter for political determination, but where the content to be taught within these broad outlines is appropriately left to experts and to processes of academic argumentation. It is thus worth asking if centralized goal formation and systemic reform might tend to politicize matters appropriately left to the disciplines or in some way degrade the working of the marketplace of ideas.

Centralized goal formation will not result in the content of the curriculum of public education being developed by politicians, lobbyists, and bureaucrats drafting standards in smoke filled rooms and taking votes on the laws of physics. The production of goals and standards is usually farmed out to teachers and academics. This process of goal formation may have more intellectual integrity than one in which the commercial interests of textbook companies are central. Nevertheless, national or state wide curriculum standards may tend to make curricular content highly visible and accessible to political influence. When standards are also controversial, the result is that they can easily move into the political arena. Recent debates about the American history standards should serve to illustrate. (See Manzo, 1997.)

History tells a story. It should have a narrative structure, a story line that brings its elements into an integrated whole. Two common narrative structures for American history are these: One is a narrative that emphasizes the spread of Western civilization. This is picture of the expansion of civilization, the triumph of Enlightenment culture, and of carving a nation out of the wilderness. An alternative is to organize history around an oppression narrative. Such a narrative might describe European emigration as an invasion. Slavery will not be seen as a deplorable, but corrected, aberration, but as an expression of the racist character of America. Our history is not a matter of working out the kinks in a more or less sound design, but is an ongoing liberation struggles against an oppressive order. One of the indictments of the Goal 2000 history standards saw them as dominated by an oppression narrative. (Fonte, 1995.)

A history curriculum might weave together various narratives or even note the competition between them. There is no obligation to have only one. But having no narrative is not an option if we wish history to make sense. Apart from some narrative structure history becomes "one damn thing after another." It becomes impossible to explain why some facts are included and others not and impossible to interpret what is included. The standards for world history have been widely criticized for just such defects. They are very long, over 300 pages with over 526 standards, yet there seems no explanation of why the Scythians, the Xiognu, and the Olmecs receive more attention than the ideas of Islam or Protestantism (Gagnon, 1995). Thus a dilemma. History is not just a series of facts. It requires a narrative. But any narrative will be controversial. How, then, are we to have standards that are not vacuous or platitudinous without giving some controversial conception of the American story the force of law?

This point about history can be extended to other subjects. Academic disciplines are frequently characterized by competing pictures of the nature of the field. People will and should structure curricula so as to reflect their understanding of the nature of their field. Biology has traditionally been structured around taxonomy. Natural selection and biochemistry are now more central. The post Sputnik structure of knowledge movement made set theory central in mathematics instruction. That emphasis has largely disappeared in the NCTM standards and is replaced by something called constructivism (Mathematics, 1989). Thus even in mathematics which, at the K through 12 level, is not characterized by disputes about what is mathematically true, there will be debate about matters important to teaching. Whole language v phonics is a similarly contentious

matter.

Goals 2000, systemic reform, and the development of standards are not responsible for controversies about narrative structures, pedagogical approaches, or the organizing characteristics of disciplines. However, they contribute to the fact that these debates have begun to take place on the floor of Congress and in state legislatures. The criticism of state and federal history standards is largely owing to the fact that the standards are seen as rooted in the oppression and struggle narrative. Those who have attacked them prefer the spread of Western civilization narrative. Former under secretary of education Chester Finn (1996), has suggested that bus drivers, policemen, shopkeepers, engineers, preachers, and orthodontists should have a larger role in developing standards than historians. (This "democratization" of standards makes sense only if one assumes that the truth of historical claims is subservient to the political or socialization role of history so that, perhaps, Americans are entitled to "feel good" history regardless of its truth.) Similarly, the development of standards is not responsible for the emergence of constructivism or for the existence of state textbook selection committees, but it is responsible for the fact that state textbook committees have become an enforcement mechanism for this doctrine (Saxon, 1995, 1996).

We are now in a position to consider four possibly undesirable consequences of goal centralization of the sort required by systemic reform.

First, developing centralized standards places controversial academic issues on the public agenda in ways that abet their politicization and transforms them from a search for truth into a search for the politically acceptable. The history standards are exhibit A. Language standards may pose similar questions given a need to resolve issues about the status of phonics or standard English (Gagnon, 1995) or likely debates about multiculturalism. Math may provoke a struggle between those who emphasize practice and the currently popular constructivism (Saxon, 1995). Biology standards may put evolution on political center stage. Systemic reform is not responsible for the fact that these matters are controversial, but it abets a process which makes them visible, takes them out of the hands of teachers and members of the academic professions, and puts them into a political arena. At worst, it may result in disputed doctrine having the force of law.

Second, systemic reform provides paths for interference in the internal workings of universities. Part of creating an articulated system has to do with teacher education. O'Day and Smith (1993) suggest that states will need to work with universities to ensure an alignment between the training of teachers and new curricular frameworks. We should wonder about the form this working with will take and take careful note that systemic reform seems to include peoples' professional opinions as among the things that need to be aligned. Will history professors be expected to take the view of history expressed by the history standards when they teach future history standards? Will math professors be expected to be constructivists? Probably not. Will people who train teachers? This seems more likely. Can we assign any meaning to alignment that does not involve someone external to the university generating expectations that define for scholars (and pursuantly teachers) how they are to understand the nature of their subjects or who will be hired or whose work will be funded? I have difficulty in constructing a picture of this alignment that does not involve some politically achieved picture of a subject matter being made normative for a portion of the professorate. If something like this does not happen, there is no systemic reform of teacher education.

Third, centralized goal formation may generate pressures tending to prematurely decide open questions. Coherent standards and curricular frameworks require some view of the organizing principles of a field. These are ordinarily controversial and fleeting.

The post WWII period has seen a number of views concerning how to structure curricula. We have swung from a focus on behavioral objectives and the Skinnerian conviction that complex skills could be constructed from their parts, to the top down view of the structure of knowledge movement, to the current emphasis on constructivist learning. Views about the basic nature of disciplines or their pedagogical organization have always been controversial, yet believers have often been confident enough to be willing to use the power of government to impose their vision before they have won the academic argument. Standards driven systemic reform is an excellent mechanism for getting the profession out ahead of the evidence and for quieting contrary voices.

One thing that protects the marketplace of ideas is the systemic incoherence of our educational system. Systemic reform may provide a tool for eroding this protection, for enhancing the systemic implementation of the currently dominate fad, and for transferring power over teacher education from the professorate to state education personnel and their academic allies. Once again we are asked to place our faith in those intellectual elites who have promised progress in schooling through scientific research and management. (See Tyack and Cuban, 1995.) Yet no one with a sense of the recent history of educational fads and reforms can possibly doubt that in another decade current views will be represented as the problem, not the solution. Other visions of reform will be ascendent. To base current policy on the conviction that educational research has given us the assurance that we can now make policy systemically without the fear that we will write our errors large is naive. It is part of the human predicament that we must often act in the face of uncertainty. We cannot stop educating pending definitive research. But we do not need to act in concert in the face of uncertainty. Uncertainty is a reason for decentralization, for letting a thousand flowers bloom. J.S. Mill (1956) reminded us in *On Liberty* that when we enforce our opinions using the power of the state, we assume our infallibility. Let us not.

The fourth difficulty is ossification. The previous objection would lose some of its force if we could believe that the development of standards would not curtail the debate about what standards should be and that standards would be kept up to date as opinion changed or knowledge grew. Such a view defies experience. Once in place current standards will be difficult to root out. They will have the force of institutional inertia behind them. Texts will have been written, tests made, lessons planned, money spent, appointments made. The current vision will gain a constituency. Meanwhile, governments will change, new concerns will emerge, the attention of reformers will move elsewhere. National goals and state curriculum standards will have the same degree of flexibility as, say, New York State's Regents exams, which is to say, some, but not much. What we manage to put into place may live to be dated and will be seen by a later generation as something that ties teachers to an outdated view of their subjects.

These four dangers are dangers of trying to write good and informative standards. There is another option. We may prefer consensus to coherence thereby running the danger of standards that are vacuous and platitudinous. Such outcomes are likely in controversial areas. They are even more likely when the groups that produce the standards are broadly representative as they should be. Such groups are not suitable forums for resolving complex intellectual disputes. Members of such groups are likely to approach their tasks by seeking accommodation, not by pursuing the argument until someone wins the debate.

There are many questions of public policy that are usefully approached by seeking accommodation and consensus. Questions about where to locate highways or how to fund public works are examples. Moreover, since highways must go somewhere seeking consensus is unlikely to produce vacuous results. Vacuity is more likely when the task

given to a diverse group is to produce a piece of paper. New York's Preliminary Draft of a Framework for Social Studies (1995) often seems to succumb to the vagaries of consensus. Are we to emphasize depth or breadth in our coverage? Shall we emphasize unity or diversity in our understanding of whether Americans are a people? Predictably, in each case, the answer is both. We must seek an appropriate balance. The guidance as to how we are to strike such a balance is meager and unlikely to resolve many disagreements. Or consider Standard 6.

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship; and the avenues of participation in American life. (p.13)

The performance indicators that follow provide such guidance as that students should know something about the Constitution and about how citizens can influence policy. Who will disagree? Will people who have very different ideas about the character of the U.S. Constitution or citizen participation, or who have conflicting views about how these topics should be taught find much to quarrel with here? If they do not, then what guidance is provided? Will there be many social studies teachers who do not currently believe themselves to be doing these things? What current educational practices are inconsistent with this?

When standards are vacuous academic freedom is still an issue because the development of standards and frameworks can effect a change of venue with respect to where and how educational questions are discussed. Issues are moved from academic forums where the truth of various ideas is argued about to political forums where consensus is sought. This change of venue is not necessarily a good thing. It will not do the intellectual quality of educational debate much good to pose difficult and contentious issues in consensual forums. Moreover, it invites a process where the real standards are developed by test makers working out of the public eye.

The centralization of goal formation thus creates a dilemma. It creates political forums which need to decide contentious and open issues. It may produce results in which currently popular doctrines becomes ruling doctrines and minority views are subordinated. Or it may generate consensual processes in which disagreement is buried beneath platitudes. In both cases the free and open exchange of ideas and the process of criticism and debate is truncated.

Pluralism

My final concern is with pluralism. Pluralism might be at odds with centralized goal formation and systemic reform in three ways. First, there might be conflicts over content with claims that national or state wide frameworks promote cultural imperialism. Second, there might be issues of opportunity with claims that the mandated curriculum makes demands of time and resources of sufficient scope so as to preclude the opportunity to pursue studies of particular interest to some group or locale. This might be particularly burdensome to minorities to the extent that they bear higher "opportunity costs" for cultural reproduction (Kymlicka, 1989). Third is the issue of process, where it might be claimed that the centralization of goal formation takes certain discussions out of local communities and locates them at the state and national level. This diminishment of opportunity for participation might be viewed as inconsistent with the community constituting function of local deliberations.

To pursue these concerns I want to sketch the position of Harvard philosopher John Rawls (Rawls, 1971, 1993). For Rawls a central question of political philosophy is how we can have a shared view of justice, one consistent with the view that we are all free and equal, but which does not unreasonably constrain our ability to have and pursue our own vision of a good life. Part of Rawls's answer is that our shared view of justice should be philosophically shallow in that it does not presuppose religious or philosophical conceptions not widely shared. Rawls also emphasizes such liberties as freedom of conscience and freedom of association. People are entitled to form their own conception of their own good and to share and pursue it with like minded others. The state is expected to show neutrality between these competing visions of a good life. (For discussion see McCarthy, 1994; Okin, 1994; Scheffler, 1994.)

How might these ideas be applied to schooling? What may follow is that public schools may rightly seek to transmit to students a shared political culture rooted in a shared view of justice. They may thus promote citizenship appropriately conceived. They might also promote educational goals that are likely to be widely valued by people regardless of the vision of a good life they have. (See Strike, 1984.) However, they must seek to be neutral between different visions of the nature of good lives. Moreover, they may not understand the notion of justice or the character of civic education in such a way as to make second class citizens out of some because the vision of a good life of others is preferred.

Rawls's views place obstacles in the path of an extensive, common and legally mandated curriculum. It suggests that an obligatory common curriculum is consistent with a just and pluralistic society under one of three conditions. First schools might properly promote a common curriculum if it is necessary to for a just political culture. Second schools might promote a common curriculum that emphasizes "universal instrumentalities." Perhaps there are some knowledge and skills that are essential for the pursuit of one's vision of a good life whatever it is. Literacy is an example. Third, public schools might teach subject matter that is broadly uncontroversial given the range of differing conceptions of the good extent in society. Math is an example.

While the details of what is permissible given such criteria would be subject to much debate, it is certainly possible for reasonable people to doubt that the common academic curriculum envisioned by systemic reform can meet these criteria. They will be especially problematic in areas of controversy or areas replete with cultural diversity such as history, art or literature. Consider that while reformers have generally emphasized human capital formation as the purpose of reform, there has been a secondary claim that creating a shared curriculum is important for social stability, a democratic society, or equal opportunity (Hirsch, 1987). *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), for example, claims that "A high level of shared education is essential to a free democratic society *and to the fostering of a common culture* that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom." (p. 7) Or consider a passage from former Secretary of Education, William Bennett (1984).

We are a product of Western civilization. That our society was founded upon such principles as justice, liberty, government with the consent of the governed, and equality under the law is the result of ideas descended directly from great epochs of Western civilization--Enlightenment England and France, Renaissance Florence, and Periclean Athens. These ideas, so revolutionary in their times yet so taken for granted now, are the glue that binds together our pluralistic nation....(p. 30)

These passages are ambiguous with respect to the concerns I have raised. They do salute some form of pluralism. Yet they also seem to suggest a political role for a broadly shared culture that is difficult to reconcile with the kind of pluralism Rawls emphasizes. This view looks to schools to secure political stability by providing the kind of shared learning experience necessary for Americans to be a common people. (See Schlesinger, 1992.) However, the areas of commonality required to produce a common people are likely to be those least likely to meet my Rawlsian criteria, history, art or literature. Rawls's view of justice suggests that these aspirations go beyond the reach of a liberal polity rooted in the search for reasonable pluralism. (For discussion see Kymlicka, 1995 and Strike, 1991c.)

It is unlikely that we can justify an obligatory common curriculum of the sort required by standards driven systemic reform on the grounds that it provides knowledge and skills that are either broadly accepted or are universal instrumentalities. Different life plans are likely to require different kinds of learning. Different cultural or religious groupings of citizens are likely to have different pictures of the kind of education suitable for the lives their members seek to live. African American parents may want their art, literature or history emphasized in the instruction of their children. Religious parents may be frustrated by an antiseptic history of America that seems embarrassed to note its religious roots. (See Vitz, 1986.) And farming communities, Adirondack residents, and coastal dwellers may want a different biology curriculum for reasons having nothing to do with what is true in biology. While it is difficult to see how any school system could accommodate every demand for diversity, it is also hard to understand why we should resist a priori the idea that the educational programs available to Americans should not differ in ways so as to reflect their diverse aspirations, histories, locales, cultures, religions and visions of good lives. We are only likely to reject such diversity out of hand if we tell ourselves that Americans need more than a shared political culture and that they should be a common people.

Let me once more return to some comments by O'Day and Smith (1993). In the concluding section of their article on systemic reform and equal opportunity they recognize that liberalism poses issues for systemic reform. They proffer a solution they call dialogical pluralism which they attribute to me. They see the discussion required to legitimate curricular frameworks as similar to the dialogue I hold is educationally important. They write

An intriguing aspect of Strike's model of schooling is that it views schools and their students as undergoing the same learning process that we hope society will undergo as it works toward the goal of legitimate curriculum frameworks. The way that decisions are made about the content and pedagogical strategies of the frameworks is crucial to their legitimacy. There must be strong and continuing input from all the various stakeholders to ensure both the legitimacy of the content and the political buy-in of the stakeholders. (p. 297)

In the article to which they refer, I proposed a view in which both within group and between group dialogue is educationally important (Strike, 1991b). In the first case the point of dialogue is to deepen the understanding of one's own religion, philosophy or culture. In Rawls's language it is to develop one's capacity to have a conception of one's good. The emphasis on between group dialogue serves several purposes. One is the promotion of tolerance. The second is to subject one's own view to criticism, to learn from the other.

O'Day and Smith's views differ from mine in two respects. First, the forms of dialogue I emphasize are not aimed at consensus. Second, if they are to serve their purposes, these forms of dialogue need to occur locally. They must involve conversations between students, teachers, and parents (although employing resources from the broader community). They are aimed at learning and character formation, not decision making. They are not reasonably viewed as conversations between (the representatives of) stakeholders.

O'Day and Smith, however, view dialogue as a means to decision making at the state or national level. When decisions need to be made, dialogue of the sort they recommend is a commendable way to make them. But the prior issue is whether we ought to have a shared curriculum of the kind envisioned in Goals 2000. Consider an analogy. We might view the process of legitimization that O'Day and Smith advance as akin to an attempt to achieve a democratic consensus about the proper American religion. I am certainly an advocate of religious dialogue. I do not view it as a means towards religious consensus. Curricular consensus is appropriate when it is necessary to produce a shared and just political culture or when it promotes universal instrumentalities, but in a society committed to real diversity (on my Rawlsian view) democratic dialogue does not warrant the imposition of a common curriculum that exceeds the bounds of reasonable pluralism.

Systemic reform is predicated on the view that the efficiency of any organization depends on its ability to specify its goals clearly and to order its resources to seek its goals. This is a perfectly coherent view of how to run a business. It is less clear that it is a viable view of education. Some authors (Wise, 1990) have claimed that teaching is the kind of activity that is inherently difficult to regulate because it requires considerable judgment and flexibility. Such claims point towards teacher professionalization as the key to school reform. The argument I have made above is analogous to this view, but it takes a somewhat different path. It claims that good education is difficult to regulate in the way in which systemic reform seeks to do because of the way in which the idea of a good education is entwined with notions of human freedom.

In schools, people and ideas, not objects, are the "output." In a free society people may wish a say in their own education, and they may have rights not overcome by collective decision making. Their education may have to accommodate the public interest, but peoples' voices and their rights cannot be brushed aside to accommodate the requirements of an efficient system. Moreover, a good education is often more about the argument, the evidence, the debate than it is about a prespecified outcome. Participating in the argument is educative. The need for participation and to follow the inquiry where it leads rubs hard against the idea of an efficient system. Finally, we live in a society in which people have diverse religions, cultures, and visions of a good life. People may reasonably want schools to educate their children in ways sensitive to their differences. If so, we need to be careful when we seek to structure an educational system by beginning with politically defined outcomes of sweeping scope. Consensus building and democratic legitimization are not always adequate to warrant intrusions into these areas of difference. In a free society, sometimes liberty trumps both democracy and efficiency.

Part II

In the previous section I described several reasons to suppose that standards driven, systemic reform, may erode important liberties. Nevertheless, in a free and democratic society, liberty is not absolute. It must be balanced against public interests

such as human capital formation, justice, political stability, and citizenship. In this section, I want to explore views about how liberty interests and their counterbalancing public interests might be conceived.

A "neo-classical" picture

Contemporary school reform is substantially motivated by the concern for productivity, international competitiveness and a changing job market. It thus seems reasonable to consider how liberty interests and public interest might be conceptualized within the framework of an economic view. Below I characterize a normative interpretation of a view that emphasizes the role of free markets. While I think the view will be recognizable as a version of neo-classical economics, its purpose is to conduct a thought experiment, not to rigorously describe a currently held position. Moreover, I am not so much concerned with whether this view is true or false as I am with what it makes possible to say or to argue. All theories provide a vocabulary and a conceptual framework for describing some range of human activities. Their conceptual resources may be more or less adequate for articulating diverse phenomena, and they can distort issues when concepts are generalized beyond their proper domains. What I suggest below is that the view I characterize suggests some things worth noting about the character of liberty interests and public interests, but that the framework is insufficient to represent all that is at stake.

A normatively constructed neo-classical account might claim the following:

1. People can be productively viewed as bundles of preferences.
2. Rationality can be understood as efficiency in maximizing the satisfaction of this bundle of preferences.
3. Other things being equal, markets are the most efficient way of maximizing aggregated preferences because they provide incentives for producers to provide what people want at the lowest cost.
4. The preferences that people have have normative force (Monk, 1990) in that, other things being equal, the mere fact that they are what is wanted is a reason why they, and not other preferences, ought to be satisfied. Markets are morally desirable as well as efficient (Friedman, 1962) because they are responsive to peoples' actual preferences expressed through their choices.
5. Government interference with markets and consumer choice can be justified when markets fail to be efficient or when certain important values are not realized.

Among the conditions that may warrant governmental interference are:

- a. When markets result in under investment in public or collective goods (such as human capital) because the benefits of such investment tend to accrue to people other than the investor (Friedman, 1962).
- b. When the results of market distributions are inconsistent with important political goods such as equal opportunity, justice, or political stability.

Centralized goal formation and systemic reform seem *prima facie* inconsistent with this picture and to a degree that exceeds more decentralized forms of public education. Most importantly, the goals of education are produced by highly centralized

public deliberations instead of through consumer choice. Also, accountability is to the center, to the state, not to the consumer. Consumer choice, responsiveness to consumer preferences, markets, and market incentives are thus not much in evidence.

However, these difficulties might be overcome either if there is some good such as human capital development or equal opportunity that meet the criteria for justifying exceptions to the desirability of markets. I would propose (a thesis of this magnitude cannot be argued here), however, that neither of these interests is likely to render systemic reform plausible from the perspective of neo-classical economics.

A preliminary observation: the choice is between the view that education should be publicly financed but privately administered and the view that it should both be publicly financed and publicly administered. Neo-classical economists are likely to grant that public funding is required in order to rectify under investment in education and to promote equal opportunity. It is public administration that is suspect.

Evidence to substantiate the claim that systemic reform is more likely to promote human capital development than a market oriented approach is likely to be conjectural and controversial. (See Berliner, 1993 and Paris, 1995 for skeptical discussions of relevant empirical evidence.) But in policy when do we ever actually *know* something? We are almost always required to act on the basis of weak and conjectural evidence. This observation cuts two ways. On one hand, if the liberty interests at stake have only the force of "mere" preferences, decisive evidence may not be called for in order to override them. If we require the kind of evidence to overcome any preference of the moment that we should require to interfere with freedom of religion or some other liberty with constitutional standing, we will do nothing. On the other hand, a normal and reasonable response of academics to ambiguous evidence is to continue to affirm the basic assumptions of their "paradigm" or research program. (See Kuhn, 1970; Lakatos, 1970; and Strike, 1979.) They do this reasonably because a paradigm provides a fruitful picture of how the world works and because they believe that with additional research they can succeed in applying their view to new or recalcitrant cases. Since advocates of a neo-classical view are likely to be strongly committed to the view that markets in education (with public financing) ought to be more efficient than publicly administered schools, they are unlikely to be dissuaded by ambiguous contrary evidence. Thus, I doubt that those proponents of neo-classical economics who are otherwise predisposed to favor markets over the public sector will find that such evidence as exists for systemic reform provides sufficient reason to show that systemic reform is more likely to serve human capital formation than is a more market oriented system.

A second strategy to justify systemic reform from the perspective of neo-classical economics is to claim that public schooling serves desired political goods not served by markets. Among the political goals of schooling might be providing equal opportunity, creating the sort of shared culture required for a stable democratic society, or developing democratic character. (For discussion see Verstegen, 1991.) While no view of these political goods is strongly associated with neo-classical economics, its assumptions do constrain the view of justice that can be held.

There must be free labor markets. Thus, even where there is considerable leeway for redistribution of wealth, some income inequality resulting from differential possession of scarce talents or productive resources must be consistent with justice. Differences in acquired skills and ability to learn must be respected in hiring and in allocating educational resources.

Given this, neo-classical economics points to a view of justice in which equality of opportunity is a core conviction. Equal opportunity is consistent with a market economy and free labor markets and can be represented as a means to insure efficient

use of human capacities by allocating them and the educational resources that develop them on criteria related to their efficient use. Equal opportunity will be viewed as fair competition (Strike, 1982).

This core belief in equal opportunity is easily made the basis of an argument for public funding of education. Apart from public funding the talents of those who cannot afford an education may go undeveloped and their competition with the more affluent will be unfair. However, here, as with human capital formation, it is not apparent that a theory of fair competition requires schools to be operated by the public sector. Such a view would need to show that public funding apart from public administration is inadequate to promote fair competition. While there are no doubt an abundance of arguments to examine here, what is important is that the conception of equality at issue is narrowly framed as fair competition in the labor market. This is the view of justice most likely to be served by the public financing private schooling. If the argument for markets is otherwise strong, ambiguous evidence about equal opportunity as fair labor market competition is unlikely to provide persuasive grounds for public sector operation of schools.

It might be proposed that decentralization of the delivery of educational services in the public sector simulates market delivery. This seems implausible. Market efficiencies depend on consumer choice and competition neither of which is approximated by public sector reforms such as site based management or parental participation in school governance. The plausibility of public sector decentralization as an educational reform depends on arguments that see bureaucratic control as a principal cause of educational failure or which seek reform through professionalism, parental involvement, and the democratization of schooling (Malen and Ogawa, 1990 and Strike, 1993). These arguments may be good arguments, but any association with market strategies is illusory. Systemic reform and an emphasis on market delivery of educational services represent competing views of how to secure effective education. Their common emphasis on decentralization should not be allowed to cloud this point.

Thus, if my conjectures are correct, neither the interest in human capital formation nor the interest in equal opportunity are likely to provide a very compelling justification for public sector operation of schools, let alone systemic reform, from the perspective of neo-classical economics. However, this argumentative weakness might be seen as largely a consequence of the fact that the public interests in education, human capital formation and citizenship, are narrowly framed so as to be those most likely to be served by publicly funding of private sector schooling. What follows is that the strongest justifications for public sector reform are likely to depend on or presuppose political goods such as tolerance or democratic citizenship that seem more likely to require common schools for their achievement. (For discussion of the link between citizenship and the public character of education see Callan, 1966; Gutmann, 1995; Macedo, 1995.) If such political goods were able to secure the need for public education, we might then claim that systemic reform was the most efficient and equitable public sector means to deliver educational services.

This discussion is suggestive of three conclusions:

1. Many of the concepts required for a full discussion of how to balance various liberty interests in education against various public interests are external to the framework of neo-classical economics. Within the confines of neo-classical economics we are likely to represent the interests to be balanced as the liberty interest in preferences on one hand versus human capital development and equality of opportunity on the other. These are relevant interests. But there are other liberty interests, freedom of conscience,

intellectual freedom, or freedom of association, for example, that may be educationally significant, but which are not easily articulated via the concepts of neo-classical economics or in the language of markets and preferences. Similarly, there may be political goods such as democratic citizenship that need to be balanced against these liberties.

2. It may be that, as a view of efficiency in human capital development, systemic reform is justifiable only if we antecedently assume that education should be provided by the public sector. We are only likely to make such an assumption if we appeal to political goods, such as democratic citizenship, broader than those easily characterized by the concepts of neo-classical economics. Here we should note an irony. Systemic reform emphasizes goals such as human capital formation, economic productivity, and international competitiveness. However, if I am right, its plausibility in its competition with market views of reform depends largely on its accepting broader goals such as democratic citizenship.

3. Once we have begun to wonder whether we need to consider a wider range of goals than human capital formation and fair competition in labor markets in our discussions of reform, we also need to be concerned with how we frame choices about reform. Much current debate about reform might be simplified as a response to the question "Which is the best approach to improve our competitiveness, the market or the state?" But if we need to consider a wider range of values in our deliberations, it may be that market versus state misrepresents our choices.

A useful illustration of this point is the debate about charter schools. The policy making community has tended to see the point of vouchers and charter schools as the creation of quasi- markets in education. However, the motivation of those who have sought to create charter schools and of the parents who have sent their children to them often seems more communitarian in character. That is, people start charter schools because they have a distinctive picture of the character of a good education that they are unable to pursue within the confines of most public schools. Thus they seek a less regulated environment and a community of the like minded. (See, for example, the description of the City on a Hill Charter School.) Here the tension isn't between market and state. It is between a view that wish to pursue its own goals and to emphasize freedom of association as the organizing principle of school communities versus those who believe that common schools organized geographically best serve democratic interests. These latter issues which I think are difficult to articulate in the language of neo-classical economics also seem to me to be the more important. And the question is "What is the nature of educative communities given the range of values that ought to be served?"

Finally, in what has proceeded I have taken it as obvious that human capital formation is a public good. However, this does not commit me to any view of that in which human capital ought to consist. Moreover, our conception of human capital also needs to be informed by our political goals. A liberal democratic society needs a view of human capital formation that encourages the virtues of liberal democratic citizens. If so, it will also need to reject the idea that the requirements of labor markets are the sole relevant consideration in forming a conception of human capital. Market versus state may not adequately frame the question of what should count as human capital.

In the next section of **Part II** I shall explore some ways to expand our conception of these more robust interests.

The conservative compromise

Modern conservatism might be interpreted as a merger between a rightist interpretation of neo-classical economics and cultural conservatism. The salient features of the first is an emphasis on consumer sovereignty and markets, a corresponding antipathy to the public sector, and a view of justice that is narrowly focused on equality of opportunity.

The basic idea of cultural conservatism is that the traditional values and practices of a society have *prima facie* normative force because they have met the test of time (and perhaps of reason or God) and because they are the social glue that forms social bonds and political community. Some of the commitments that might be held to flow from this are (1) The need to affirm the centrality of a culture whose roots are largely European as basic to national solidarity and democracy and a pursuant emphasis on a "Eurocentric" liberal arts curriculum; (2) a commitment to traditional virtues (honesty, moderation, courage, family values, etc.) as central to moral education; and (3) a commitment to the moral principles (if not the theology) of a broadly Judeo Christian morality.

The account I will construct of liberty interests depends on the insight that the privatization of schooling that many conservatives advocate potentially permits people to associate together for educational purposes in ways that reflect their religions, ethnicity or their particular and distinctive views of a good life. If so, then the liberties at stake might include freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of information, and the freedom to form and pursue one's own conception of one's own good. Several of these liberties have constitutional standing. Others are akin to them. Thus, the conservative's support of consumer choice provides support for a robust pluralism in education, a pluralism that is inconsistent with the agenda of cultural conservatism.

Recall that one source for the emphasis on a shared academic curriculum that has characterized the excellence movement is the cultural conservatism of such as William Bennett. The importance of centralized goal formation to the cultural conservative's agenda can be seen by considering the significant multicultural and, indeed, libertarian, potential that is otherwise inherent in the rhetoric of market decentralization when applied to schooling. If we are to take consumer sovereignty seriously, we are likely to view education as a process in which choice reigns restrained only by the rather modest notion of the public interest characterized above. Given this, it is hard to see why people ought not to be entitled to freely associate to pursue such conceptions of education as seem good to them. Why not religious schools, academies for black boys, gay schools, even coven schools, or, minimally, a robust elective system (charter schools, perhaps) in the public sector? Let a thousand flowers bloom. Is this not where consumer sovereignty leads?

But consumer sovereignty in education is constrained by the public interest in productivity and justice. Are we to believe that these public interests are sufficiently weighty to deny to people their right to an education of their choice even if the choices are some of the one's described above? There are certainly some interesting conversations that we might have about the coven school and, no doubt, about some of the others as well. However, the discussion of the neo-classical view suggests that it is implausible to claim that these forms of diversity are inconsistent with either the minimalist notion of justice that can be gotten from neo-classical economics or that the public interest in productivity precludes them.

Note the shift in the character of the liberty interests now involved. I have assumed that a due regard for consumer sovereignty would serve a larger range of liberty interests than simply allowing people freedom to pursue their own bundle of preferences. The examples noted above assume that given the freedom to do so people would form educational associations that reflect their common religions, ethnic

backgrounds, or visions of the good. In doing so, I have begun to conceive the liberty interests involved in a way that makes them more important and thus less easily rebutted by claims about the need to develop human capital. The liberties involved now include freedom of association and freedom of religion. If such liberties are to be overcome by claims about the public interest, a more robust sense of what is involved in the public interest seems required.

Cultural conservatives have candidates for such interests. The following are possibilities. It might be argued, as Mr. Bennett does, that the political stability of American democracy requires us to affirm the centrality of European culture because it contains the roots of democracy. Political institutions are not easily maintained once divorced from their cultural roots. Moreover, any stable society requires significant elements of a common culture. People must understand one another to cooperate and to associate on amicable and equitable grounds (Hirsch, 1987). The degree of pluralism likely to result from the kind of application of consumer sovereignty envisioned above invites religious, ethnic, racial and cultural Balkanization.

Similarly, it might be argued that a commitment to traditional virtues (honesty, moderation, courage, family values, etc.) is central to moral education and to law, order and decency. Perhaps a shared Judeo Christian outlook is central to political stability, common understanding, and social order. (See Anthony Scalia's discussion of the importance of a civil religion in *Lee v Weismann*.)

What has changed? Essentially this: On one hand more robust claims for liberty in which the freedoms claimed are the freedom to associate and to pursue shared goals and group affiliations have been asserted. At stake now are our religions, our cultural identities, and our visions of a good life. The robust pluralism that potentially results has been met by a form of communitarianism that asserts the importance of the national community. This nationalist communitarianism has a more robust picture of the public interest involved in education. What is at stake is the stability and order of a democratic society. The public interest now links citizenship and virtue with a national culture. Conservatives have need of such public interests if they wish to constrain the plunge into diversity otherwise made available by their commitment to markets.

Both factions of the conservative compromise must give up something to participate in this vision. Market advocates must abandon the notion that preferences have moral force. In education, at least, they will need to see quasi-markets as means to more efficiently pursue agreed upon ends, not the means to pursue self-chosen ends. On the other hand, cultural conservatives need to believe that the cultural traditions they value can survive in a society otherwise dominated by the ethos of markets. (An implausible belief, I think. Cultural conservatives are not very astute as to who are their real enemies.) Both accommodations will be grudging and the resulting coalition unstable.

Against this background, centralized goal formation might be viewed as serving two purposes of cultural conservatives. First, it constrains the excessive curricular pluralism and Balkinization that is a possible consequence of a market emphasis in education. Decentralization will be a decentralization of means. We will view decentralization as debureaucratization or as the means of pedagogical experimentation. If there are to be vouchers or charter schools even these may be expected to serve national or statewide goals (Finn, 1996). We will see markets as a means to promote efficiency in education, but not as an encouragement to individualism or pluralism. Second, centralized goal formation sustains a shared culture. It seeks to ground schooling in common curriculum that reflects a Eurocentric, a North Atlantic, or even a distinctively American (Schlesinger, 1992) shared culture that can be the basis of a

stable political culture, of common understandings, and of moral coherence.

Here cultural conservatism has triumphed over neo-classical economics in several ways. (1) Goal formation is left to the public sector. (2) Human beings are no longer looked at as bundles of preferences. They are now seen as culturally embedded - as formed and oriented to their lives by their religions, ethnicities, histories, and communities. However, the kind of communitarianism involved in cultural conservatism is nationalistic more than pluralistic.

In the American context this nationalistic communitarianism is likely to be most problematic to those whose religions or cultures do not easily fit within national norms. Here we need especially to note the implications of the suggestion that jobs and opportunities for further education are to be made contingent on educational attainment. Such an alignment of incentives now threatens educational and economic exclusion to those who fail to pursue a curriculum that they might see as an instrument of cultural imperialism. To put the matter differently, this nationalistic communitarianism has sought to confront a stronger interest in liberty with stronger claims about the public interest in education. Regardless of whether these claims can be sustained, there is no doubt that the kind of liberty interest eroded is more fundamental and that the level of coercion involved in any articulation between educational attainment and further education, jobs or income is correspondingly higher.

The picture of people as culturally embedded that has begun to emerge in this description is suggestive of a another approach to student engagement than the one often assumed by educational reformers. This approach emphasizes paying more attention to student alienation and the social and cultural conditions of student engagement. It is widely claimed that students are disengaged from schooling (Goodlad, 1984; Sebring, 1996; Steinberg, 1996; and Toch, 1991) They do not experience the school's goals or its culture as their own. The idea that people are culturally embedded permits an account of alienation predicated on the assumption that people are socially formed (Taylor, 1992). Every human being is born into a cultural context. This culture provides both a sense of identity and a sense of orientation to life. It may be associated with something like a religion or a moral tradition, but it need not be. To say that people are socially formed is to say that their enculturation will have given them a sense of who they are and who are theirs, and it will have initiated them into an orientation to what is worthwhile in life (Taylor, 1989). People have a strong interest in their culture not only in that culture is a background condition of the choices available to people, but also in that culture forms their capacity to choose (Kymlicka, 1995).

If so, then educators who wish to engage students need to think less in terms of incentives to get students to comply with adult expectations and need to be more concerned to ask questions as "How can we constitute schools as communities in which students see themselves as participants in a shared effort in the pursuit of worth while activities?" "How can we provide an education that is culturally appropriate and extends and shapes the values that students bring to schools in ways that they come to value what is educationally worth while?" and "How can we build relations of trust between the adults and the students in a school so that students find the fact that adults value something to be a reason why they should?" Viewing students as socially constituted and culturally embedded instead of seeing them as bundles of preferences tends to transform the question of engagement from one of providing incentives to one of building community. However, it is not clear that what is required is a national community. As a remedy for disengagement, educators need to build on the culture that students bring to school with them, not on one reformers think they ought to have. (For a sketch of a communitarian view of student engagement see Strike, 1991a.)

While I have developed the idea that people are socially constituted and have identities and values formed by their cultures out of the discussion of cultural conservatism, the argument that leads to a desire to form a national culture requires two basic premises. The first is that people are culturally embedded, and the second is that it is difficult for human beings to cooperate in civil and political society unless they are also, in some way, a common people. (For discussion see Kymlicka, 1995.) If we reject the second claim while continuing to hold the first, we may come to a view that regards how people have been enculturated as an important factor in how they are educated, but which also is consistent with a more robust pluralism that is more accepting of diverse cultures and less inclined to want to create a common national culture. The picture presented by Rawls in which society is viewed as a "union of social unions" (Rawls, 1971) and in which political society is held together by a shared view of justice, not a broadly based shared culture, is more consistent with this understanding of multiculturalism than is either the economic picture of human beings that sees them as bundles of preferences or the cultural conservatives picture which seeks the ties that bind in a shared national culture.

This discussion suggests that centralized goal formation and systemic reform may involve some unarticulated and inconsistent assumptions about human nature and human motivation which assumptions may point to doubtful views about how schools are to interact with students. The emphasis on incentives seems at least loosely associated with the economist's picture of human beings as bundles of preferences and suggests a picture of engagement that seeks to manipulate student engagement through external rewards. The emphasis on a shared culture sees people as culturally embedded, but proposes a shared national culture that will be experienced by many as a form of cultural imperialism. Standards driven, systemic reform, may lack a view of student engagement that addresses student alienation and which is decently multicultural.

I do not think that the educational agenda represented by what I have called the conservative compromise is coherent enough to be successfully pursued over a long period. (But consistency does not always rule.) The first and obvious reason is the tension between neo-classical economics and cultural conservatism. And in the American context it is unlikely that there can be agreement on the culture to be conserved. Alan Bloom and Pat Robertson may wish to conserve a culture, but surely they lack a shared idea of what it is. Also, so far as educational standards are concerned, the agenda of cultural conservatives is likely to be inconsistent with the professional cultures of the various scholars and educators who are likely to execute the task of developing educational goals and who may well produce standards unacceptable to cultural conservatives. The considerable hostility to the history goals seems a forceful illustration. Moreover, one important component of the current Republican coalition is very much of two minds about all of this. On one hand the desire to promote school prayer, teach creation science and abstinence, to elect conservative Christians to school boards, and, broadly, to reclaim public schools for a Christian America might be viewed as consistent with the agenda of cultural conservatism. On the other hand, the desire of the religious right to opt out of the public schools at public expense via vouchers is also strong. Many among them have become adept at making liberty arguments in favor of such arrangements (Baer, 1993). The similarity of these arguments to those made by some multiculturalists for schools emphasizing their cultures is evident (Kirp, 1991). I doubt that religious conservatives can make such arguments consistently without legitimating a demand for educational pluralism more broadly. (But consistency does not always rule.) Finally, while conservatives may find something to like in centralized goal formation, they are unlikely to transfer this affection to systemic reform. That they will

see as so much big government and as the continued rule of public education by intellectual elites.

Summary: This discussion of modern conservatism has provided another window on the liberties and public interests that might be at stake in standards driven systemic reform. We can represent the liberty interests as our interest in freedom of association, freedom of religion, and the freedom to form our own conception of the good and to pursue it with the like minded. Arrayed against these interests is a kind of communitarian nationalism that sees a widely shared American culture as a requirement of democracy and of social stability. Not only have we altered the conception of the liberty interests and the public interests at stake, we have also altered the picture of human nature. We have moved from a picture of human beings as bundles of preferences to a picture of people as culturally embedded.

I have also suggested that centralized goal formation might be smiled upon by conservatives because it promises to provide markets without pluralism. It thus suggests an educational program that can fuse the interests of two inconsistent forms of conservative ideology. However, I have also argued that the conservative compromise is unstable.

This analysis suggests a key dilemma that standards driven systemic reform must resolve. On one hand, its plausibility against market views of schooling depends on its ability to assert and pursue goals other than efficiency in human capital production and equal opportunity. Goals such as tolerance and democratic citizenship that are plausibly associated with public education seem required. However, if it is to avoid the charge of cultural imperialism, it also needs to take care in linking the agenda of reform to aspirations for a national culture. Such a view is inconsistent with reasonable pluralism and is likely to prove unstable.

Conclusions

The main arguments of this paper can be summed up in two ideas.

1. Standards driven, systemic reform raises a number of serious questions about liberty. It may be inconsistent with some liberty interests of students. It is likely to pose serious questions about academic freedom and about pluralism. These concerns should make us cautious about systemic reform and should motivate us to a broader discussion of its assumptions and consequences and to a less ambitious view of its implementation.

2. The liberty interests at stake in standards driven systemic reform can be represented in at least two ways. Within the framework of neo-classical economics, the essential tension is between a view that emphasizes consumer choice because it is efficient and because it makes schools attentive to the preferences that people actually have and a view in which the state, at a central level, determines the ends to be sought and seeks efficiency through improved public administration. The second framework see the tension as one between freedom of association and pluralism and a kind of nationalistic communitarianism. I have argued that the first framework does not give an adequate picture of what is at stake and that a defense of any view of reform, but especially systemic reform, that emphasizes pursuing efficiency in the public sector needs to assert a stronger set of values than those associated with human capital formation. I have also suggested that the conservative view of reform that links

neo-classical economics with a kind of nationalist communitarianism is potentially oppressive and unstable.

Has the argument provided a general case against standards driven, systemic reform. Surely not. But these arguments do suggest a framework in terms of which a view of systemic reform needs to be articulated. Systemic reform needs to accept two basic premises. First, it needs to recognize that arguments capable of defending a public sector emphasis in reform need to assert not just human capital formation as the end of education, but also political values such as democratic citizenship or tolerance. Second, it needs to avoid articulating these political goals within a framework of nationalistic communitarianism. What I believe is called for is a conception of reform that takes seriously the commitment to what I earlier called "centralized localism" and that seeks to broaden it to include pluralism as well as localism. The key to centralized localism is to recognize where it makes sense to weaken demands for centralized goal formation and where it does not. If we are to have an educational system we need to emphasize clearly that and how its is to be a flexible system capable of local variation and respectful of diversity.

How? The arguments of this paper suggest a few directions that should be considered as well as questions to be asked.

First, we need to ask how we can encourage a climate of excellence by means other than centralized goal formation and high stakes tests. The idea is hardly absurd. It is what good universities and public schools have often found ways to do. Developing standards might be part of such an effort so long as we develop alternative visions of voluntary standards (McLaughlin and Shepard, 1995) and are restrained in how we embed standards in a network of requirements and obligations. We need to think more in terms of providing models of excellence and less in terms of designing a system.

Second, we need a picture of reform more consistent with pluralism. Rawls's picture of reasonable pluralism has more to offer us than the picture of a national culture envisioned by cultural conservatives. We need to be satisfied with people who pursue excellence in ways consistent with their own cultures or religions so long as legitimate public interests are also satisfied. We need to be less concerned with what people do in schools and more concerned that they do it well. And we need to tailor accountability requirements so that they insist only on what is clearly justified by the public interest and so that they do not preclude reasonable pluralism. A key feature of such an approach may be to develop some assessment and accountability measures that emphasize accountability to parents and the local community as well as or instead of to the state. This would be important in those areas where pluralism is most important. Accountability to the state might emphasize seeking out areas of intersection between different views of education and asking for high performance on essential areas of knowledge.

A flexible approach to accountability is crucial. Two slogans might be useful. One is that *the state should seek to set a high, but narrow bar*. Here the height of the bar is the level of achievement expected. The width of the bar is the range of what schools or students are responsible to the state for. Setting a high, but narrow bar means that governments should expect schools and students to meet high standards, but only for those topics that are clearly linked to the public interest. (Literacy is an example. It is central both to human capital development and citizenship, and it will be a part of any plausible view of education.) In other areas the state might seek ways to inspire excellence, but should avoid accountability mechanisms that detail that in which it consists. Detailed history standards are a mistake when they are so detailed so as to

preclude appropriate local variations. A second slogan is that *in areas where diversity is important but where the public interest is also involved, states should promote standards that are thick, but vague.* (History, again, is an example.) Thick vague standards would seek to characterize and illustrate an approach or approaches to some subject matter, but would also do so in a way that permitted local diversity in implementation. Assessments, if they are deemed necessary, should be designed so as to not undercut such local diversity in implementation. Standardized tests should probably be avoided. A decent respect for pluralism may mean restraining the need to hold schools accountable to state government for everything they do.

Third, states need to provide exemptions to standards when schools are able to show that they have good reasons to pursue alternative approaches. These might range from course specific exemptions to charter schools.

Fourth, while it is a central responsibility of schools to produce good citizens, we need a conception of citizenship that emphasizes justice, mutual respect, reasonableness and reciprocity, but which carefully avoids explicating the requirements of citizenship in terms of a thick, shared national culture.

Finally, we need a better approach to the disengagement of students than one that emphasize external incentives and high stakes tests. Setting high standards will do us little good if students have no concern with meeting them (Toch, 1991). But asking how we can get students to be motivated to pursue something educationally worthwhile because the education they are asked to pursue is internal to a worthwhile conception of life that they share is a better question than asking how we can generate external incentives to get students to learn what we believe they should learn.

The key to getting this right is to have a vigorous public discussion about the public purposes of education and how those purposes might be accomplished in ways that respect pluralism and localism. A crucial part of such a discussion is how we may balance the public and the private purposes of education and freedom of association and geography as ways of constituting school communities. Another is how we can provide for vigorous local participation in the full range of educational decisions.

I do not intend this paper to be a blanket endorsement of educational decentralization or localism. Some local agencies will be incompetent or even corrupt. Some reforms, especially fiscal reform, require centralization. Moreover, local jurisdictions can be oppressive and may need to be restrained by central government agencies. Slavery, after all was once a local option. And it is, after all, federal courts that protect our civil liberties often against local jurisdictions. Moreover, what I have argued here seems to me to be perfectly consistent with a vigorous state role in ensuring that all schools meet reasonable minimum standards and with accountability to excellence in subject areas narrowly construed to emphasize the public interest. Nevertheless, the messiness of localism may, in some cases, protect our liberty and our pluralism.

We need a broader debate -- one in which the influence of systems theory is tempered by a deeper concern for a wider range of educational and political considerations. We do not want to wake up some day to find that standards driven, systemic reform has given us an efficient educational system inconsistent with the liberties of a free people.

Post Script: Confessions of a Liberal Communitarian

I have tried to construct the arguments in this paper so as to appeal to widely shared political values central to all liberal democratic societies. However, my concerns

about centralized goal formation and systemic reform flow from a more distinctive set of political and educational commitments as well. Here I want to outline these. What follows may help the reader understand why I care about these issues and to avoid projecting an erroneous set of commitments on these arguments.

Communitarians (of my sort) claim that much of human life is and ought to be lived in particularistic communities and is and ought to be conceptualized within particularistic moral traditions. By "particularistic," I mean that these communities and their values and traditions are not and need not be shared with everyone in the larger society. Examples of such communities are (or might be) churches, voluntary fire associations, extended families, small towns, ethnicity based institutions, choirs, service agencies, neighborhood pubs, unions, and work places. Examples of particularistic traditions are religions, cultures, philosophies, and conceptions of human flourishing.

Particularistic institutions are the places in which we form valued human connections, where we teach, refine and pursue shared values and commitments, and where we develop the capacities that are important to the meaningfulness of human relationships and to excellence and competence in shared pursuits. They are important sources of citizenship. Particularistic moral traditions are repositories of intellectual and cultural resources which enable us to articulate, reflect on, and transform views of a good life. These resources often help us to understand what we are trying to accomplish in our particularistic associations. Sometimes, as in the case of religions, a moral tradition may be constitutive of a community. More often, as in the case of choirs or pubs, this is not the case. Nevertheless, moral traditions are important to understanding what we are doing in these communities. Communities in turn are important because they form human connections and socialize people into moral traditions and valued practices.

I think of myself as a communitarian because I believe that these particularistic institutions and traditions are essential to well lived human lives. My kind of communitarianism is in part a view of what some of the goods of human life are (they are human relationships and the common pursuit of shared goods), but it is more a view of how people ought to construct a view of a good life. Good lives are not best constructed by a process in which untutored children shop through a cultural cafeteria of goods filling up their personal shopping basket with assorted values. (For an example of such a view example see Ackerman, 1980.) Building a picture of the good life is more a matter of initiation into practices human beings have found valuable, of applying the resources of some moral tradition(s) to the choices life presents, and of subjecting the result to criticism and debate. (See MacIntyre, 1988; Strike, 1991a; and Strike, 1994.) Moral traditions are resources for the examined life. Apart from them children are not so much free as they are victims of untutored desire.

I am a liberal because I believe that participation in particularistic communities should not be coerced by the state and that a society needs to be bound together by a shared political culture the center of which is a shared view of justice. In order to be widely shared, this view of justice needs to be constructed so as to not privilege any one of the various competing moral traditions or views of a good life so long as they are consistent with justice. Liberal justice is focused on a fair distribution of social resources so that people have an equal opportunity to pursue a self chosen conception of their lives. While a liberal view of justice may resist views of the good that are unjust, it must otherwise seek a decent and principled neutrality between them. I view both freedom of religion and multiculturalism as expressions of this notion of neutrality. Unlike some liberals, I also believe that we are unlikely to succeed in helping our children to achieve a sense of justice if we do not first succeed in initiating them into some worthy, but

particularistic culture or moral tradition.

One understanding of democracy sees the primary function of democratic institutions as vectoring interests. People have various interests which they express through their votes. In order to get elected, candidates must create a package of policies combining many of the interests of voters so as to create a majority among the electorate. Similarly in order to get legislation passed, legislators must integrate interests in such a way that there is a majority in favor of some policy. When this process works well, policies result that give as many people as much of what they want as is practicable. A good democracy is an effective bundler of preferences.

A deficiency of this view is that it does not legitimate a means whereby the interests or the views of a good life that underlie them, can be made objects of criticism or discussion. My preference for a more deliberative view of democracy is essentially a preference for an understanding of democracy in which criticism of interests and views of the good life is a part of the political process. (For discussion see Benhabib, 1996.) The purposes of such criticism are to subject views of the good that are unjust to effective criticism, and, second, to promote more effective deliberation on the nature of good lives.

These comments suggest several tasks that a good education ought to accomplish.

1. Every child needs to be initiated into some moral tradition(s) or cultural outlook(s) that provide cognitive resources for reflecting on a good life.
2. Every child needs to develop a sense of justice, to be initiated into the civic culture, and to develop the capacity for democratic deliberation.
3. Every child needs to be acquainted with and to engage in dialogue with other traditions and cultures. The purposes of this are the development of tolerance and the opportunity to assess one's own culture or moral tradition.

These views might be institutionalized in various ways, but they require three things of an educational system. First, particularistic traditions need to be more important than they now are. This requirement might be met by a higher level of care on the part of schools not to compete with a child's church or religion. It might be accomplished, in part, through a diversity of extra curricular activities of the sort legitimated by the Equal Access Amendments and *Westside v Mergers*. Such practices bring freedom of association within the common school. I also suspect that for minority cultures it will require a higher degree of control over the education of their own children. The opportunity costs of cultural transmission are higher for minorities (Kymlicka, 1989). In some cases, it may require opportunity for people to fully operate their own schools so long as the public interest is also served. I do not know the mix of public and private institutions that might be optimal here. I would assume that this would much depend on the mix of cultures, races, and religions in an area. There are both public and private purposes of education, but we should not uncritically assume that private purposes can be served only by private institutions or public purposes by public institutions.

Second, schooling needs to be infused with more local and discursive forums. Such forums are educative because they promote democratic participation and because (1) participation is essential to developing democratic character, (2) local face to face dialogue is the best way to meet those who are different from ourselves, to learn to respect them as equals, and to consider their views in relation to our own, (3) participation is community constituting, and (4) participation promotes a sense of ownership.

Third, schools need to provide real opportunities for students to discuss and argue about different views of a good life.

Forth, we need to think of engaging students in their own education in ways which emphasize the initiation of students into moral traditions which will enable them to see the value of the education adults wish to provide.

To see why I see these aspirations are in tension with comprehensive centralized goal formation consider two different pictures of national standards.

One picture sees national standards as an expression of a kind of nationalist communitarianism, of a view that believes that we need more of a shared culture than is likely to be provided through the attempt to create a shared political culture built around a shared view of justice. Alternatively, we might claim that national standards assert only content that is objectively true or widely held and that is, therefore, neutral to our diverse cultures and moral and religious traditions. Math, it seems oft said, is everywhere the same.

Here there is a dilemma. On the first view, national standards are too thick (on liberal standards) and as a consequence they are oppressive to minority cultures or moral traditions. On the second, they are too thin. They do not accomplish the initiation of students into the moral tradition(s) of some particularistic moral community(s) or put these traditions on the table for discussion and debate. If they dominate the time and resources for education, they may prevent them from being accomplished elsewhere.

Unless national standards can be made consistent with a fairly robust form of what I have called "centralized localism" they will be either too thick or too thin. Like our civil religion - a faith too thin to satisfy the real purposes of a serious theological tradition, but thick enough to offend the religious sensitivities of many - they may be simultaneously too thick and too thin. In a deeply pluralistic society such as ours a centralized curriculum will have considerable difficulty evading this dilemma.

Localism is important in other ways that standards and systemic reform may inhibit. The standards movement takes discussions about what is educationally worthwhile - about goals and curriculum content - and locates these discussion in national or state forums. What is left to locales is implementation. Because it constrains local participation, the educative and the community constituting functions of local discussions is diminished.

Also the standards movement and systemic reform abet the tendency to conceptualize schooling as a government service to be efficiently provided to clients. Parents and students are thus not likely to be seen as community members, citizens, participants, or owners of the education to be provided. While inefficiency is no virtue and efficiency no vice, we should consider whether the framework in which questions about efficiency are asked poses the issues in a wrong or misleading way. Possibly in an educational system in which there is a stronger sense of community and ownership, efficiency will be easier to achieve. Perhaps we need to focus more on what makes schools good communities and less on what makes them efficient organizations.

Finally, the standards movement and systemic reform view students as consumers of a service and as resources for national productivity wars. It sees them as having interests in further education, jobs and income. Thus it seeks to motivate them to serve the collective interest in productivity and their own interest in employment and income by linking these interests to the mastery of a centrally defined curriculum. Nothing in these proposals seeks either to transform student interests or to reduce their level of alienation and disengagement. Instead, it generates incentives to comply with the system's expectations. A more communitarian approach would seek the causes of disengagement and seek to motivate students by helping them to become participants in

shared purposes.

It is noteworthy that the Chicago school reform initiative, one that self consciously emphasizes democratic localism, is one of the few visible reform efforts to link student engagement to any notion of community (Sebring, 1996). In contrast one of the more visible recent discussion of student disengagement, Steinberg's (1966), is largely silent on the communal aspects of schooling preferring the use of high stakes tests as a principle device of reengagement. This is particularly perplexing in that one of the main causes of student disengagement is held to be the peer culture, an analysis that seems to invite a more communitarian solution.

I regard the tendency to conceptualize the debate about reform as between those who emphasize markets or quasi-markets and those who want to make the public sector more important as an unhappy construction of our choices. The primary choice is not between market and state. It is how we can have schools that are educative communities that serve both the public and private functions that schools need to serve.

Perhaps the current system of public schools does not serve these aspirations well and systemic reform is unlikely to make things worse. Moreover, my aspirations for schooling are not easily achieved in a modern nations where so many forces undermine community. Perhaps they are beset with what one author calls terminal wistfulness (Stout, 1988). But we will never know unless we try, and we will never try if we do not give the matter some thought. My deepest concern with standards and systemic reform is that they focus attention on the wrong questions and that they perpetuate our inability to ask the right ones.

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Kenneth A. Strike is Professor of Philosophy of Education at Cornell University where he has taught since 1971. He has a B.A. from Wheaton College and M.A. and Ph. D. degrees from Northwestern University. He has been a distinguished visiting professor at the University of Alberta, is a past president of the Philosophy of Education Society and is a member of the National Academy of Education. His principal interests are professional ethics and political philosophy as they apply to matters of educational practice and policy. He is the author of several books and over a hundred articles. Recent works include *The Ethics of Teaching* (with Jonas Soltis), *The Ethics of School Administration* (with Jonas Soltis and Emil Haller), *Liberal Justice and the Marxist Critique of Schooling*, *Ethics and College Student Life* (with Pamela Moss), "Professionalism, democracy and discursive communities: Normative reflections on restructuring" in the *American Educational Research Journal*, "The moral role of schooling in a liberal democratic society" in the *Review of Research in Education*, and "The Moral Role of Educators" in *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. He has had a durable interest in questions of religious liberty and schooling and in using liberal political philosophy as a lens for conceptualizing educational issues. His current work emphasizes the exploration of the normative aspects of school reform. Also Professor Strike is an enthusiastic canoeist, and, while he duly notes the academic irrelevance of this fact, he mentions it because it speaks to his good character, aesthetic sensitivity, sound body, and (possibly) sense of humor.

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