

# SCHOOL, BEST QUOTES ON

Making the world a better place is, or ought to be, the most cherished function of any school in a democracy.

--Jim Haas

Let me explain why I like to pay taxes for schools even though I don't personally have a kid in school: I don't like living in a country with a bunch of stupid people.

—John Green

1st week of school: sandwich cut in a cute shape, sliced fruit, encouraging note. Last week of school: handful of croutons wrapped in foil.

—Simon Holland

I can't believe I spent 13 years at school and never got taught cooking, gardening, conversation, massage, Latin, or philosophy. What were they thinking? That I would somehow live off inorganic chemistry?

—Neel Burton

We might cease thinking of school as a place, and learn to believe it is basically relationships between children and adults, and between children and other children. The four walls and the principal's office would cease to loom so hugely as the essential ingredients.

--George Dennison

School: Four walls with tomorrow inside.

--Lon Watters

And the day inevitably comes when the scrapbook of summer, smeared with ice cream slurps and sweat stains, gives way to that new clean white notebook, spine unbroken, begging to be smudged with the enthusiasm of a number two pencil and a mind open to the possibilities.

—Toni Sorenson

For some students, school is the only place where they get a hot meal and a warm hug. Teachers are sometimes the only ones who tell our children they can go from an Indian reservation to the Ivy League, from the home of a struggling single mom to the White House.

—Denise Juneau

After four years of high school, I thought I was pretty smart. Then I moved up to sophomore, and things really got tough!

—Will Teed

So you think the best way to prepare kids for the real world is to bus them to a government institution where they're forced to spend all day isolated with children of their own age and adults who are paid to be with them, placed in classes that are too big to allow more than a few minutes of personal interaction with the teacher—then spend probably an hour or more everyday waiting in lunch lines, car lines, bathroom lines, recess lines, classroom lines, and are forced to progress at the speed of the slowest child in class?

—Steven James

Are you kidding? I'm supposed to put my books in this filthy tin coffin?

—Kami Garcia

I would rather see a school produce a happy street cleaner than a neurotic scholar.

—A. S. Neill

The Good Parent who naively assumes that preventing a teenager from drinking will help him or her in the college-admissions stakes is dead wrong. A teenager growing up in one of the success factories—the exceptional public high school in the fancy zip code, the prestigious private school—will oftentimes be a person whose life is composed of extremes: extreme studying, extreme athletics, extreme extracurricular pursuits, and extreme drinking. Binge drinking slots in neatly with the other, more obviously enhancing endeavors.

—Caitlin Flanagan

My schooling not only failed to teach me what it professed to be teaching, but prevented me from being educated to an extent which infuriates me when I think of all I might have learned at home by myself.

—George Bernard Shaw

May your walls know joy; May every room hold laughter and every window open to great possibility.

—Maryanne Radmacher  
Hershey

If a child comes to school hungry, the best school in the world won't help.

--Arthur Ashe

A visitor entering an American high school would likely be confronted, first of all, with a trophy case. His examination of the trophies would reveal a curious fact: The gold and silver cups, with rare exception, symbolize victory in athletic contests, not scholastic ones...Altogether, the trophy case would suggest to the innocent visitor that he was entering an athletic club, not an educational institution.

--James Coleman

I had a terrible education. I attended a school for emotionally disturbed teachers.

--Woody Allen

It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the Air Force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber.

--*Advertising Poster, New York City Schools*

No child...fails to learn from school. Those who never get in, learn that the good things of life are not for them. Those who drop out early, learn that they do not deserve the good things of life. The later dropouts learn that the system can be beat, but not by them. All of them learn that school is the path to secular salvation, and resolve that their children shall climb higher on the ladder than they did.

--Everett Reimer

Tomorrow's school will be the center of community life, for the grownups as well as the children: 'a shopping center of human services.'...It will employ its buildings round the clock and its teachers round the year. We just cannot afford to have an \$85 billion plant in this country open less than 30 percent of the time.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

When I went to school, all I had was a pencil and the kid next to me. And I think if he'd really applied himself, I could have been somebody.

--Unknown

If the school sends out children with a desire for knowledge and some idea of how to acquire and use it, it will have done its work.

--Sir Richard Livingstone

There is a grave defect in the school where the playground suggests happy, and the classroom disagreeable thoughts.

--John Lancaster  
Spalding

The things taught in schools are not an education but the means of an education.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

## **THE BLUEBERRY STORY: THE TEACHER GIVES THE BUSINESSMAN A LESSON**

'If I ran my business the way you people operate your schools, I wouldn't be in business very long!'

I stood before an auditorium filled with outraged teachers who were becoming angrier by the minute. My speech had entirely consumed their precious 90 minutes of in-service. Their initial icy glares had turned to restless agitation. You could cut the hostility with a knife.

I represented a group of business people dedicated to improving public schools.

I was an executive at an ice cream company that became famous in the middle 1980s when People Magazine chose our blueberry as the 'Best Ice Cream in America.'

I was convinced of two things. First, public schools needed to change; they were archaic selecting and sorting mechanisms designed for the industrial age and out of step with the needs of our emerging 'knowledge society.'

Second, educators were a major part of the problem: they resisted change, hunkered down in their feathered nests, protected by tenure and shielded by a bureaucratic monopoly. They needed to look to business.

We knew how to produce quality. Zero defects! TQM! Continuous improvement! In retrospect, the speech was perfectly balanced—equal parts ignorance and arrogance.

As soon as I finished, a woman's hand shot up. She appeared polite, pleasant—she was, in fact, a razor-edged, veteran, high school English teacher who had been waiting to unload. She began quietly, 'We are told, sir, that you manage a company that makes good ice cream.'

I smugly replied, 'Best ice cream in America, Ma'am.'

'How nice,' she said. 'Is it rich and smooth?'

‘Sixteen percent butterfat,’ I crowed.

‘Premium ingredients?’ she inquired.

‘Super-premium! Nothing but triple A.’ I was on a roll.

I never saw the next line coming.

‘Mr. Vollmer,’ she said, leaning forward with a wicked eyebrow raised to the sky, ‘when you are standing on your receiving dock and you see an inferior shipment of blueberries arrive, what do you do?’

In the silence of that room, I could hear the trap snap. I was dead meat, but I wasn’t going to lie. ‘I send them back.’

‘That’s right!’ she barked, ‘and we can never send back our blueberries.’

‘We take them big, small, rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened, confident, homeless, rude, and brilliant. We take them with ADHD, junior rheumatoid arthritis, and English as their second language.’

‘We take them all! Every one! And that, Mr. Vollmer, is why it’s not a business. It’s school!’ in an explosion, all 290 teachers, principals, bus drivers, aides, custodians and secretaries jumped to their feet and yelled, ‘Yeah! Blueberries! Blueberries!’ And so began my long transformation. Since then, I have visited hundreds of schools. I have learned that a school is not a business. Schools are unable to control the quality of their raw material, they are dependent upon the vagaries of politics for a reliable revenue stream, and they are constantly mauled by a howling horde of disparate, competing customer groups that would send the best CEO screaming into the night. None of this negates the need for change.

We must change what, when, and how we teach to give all children maximum opportunity to thrive in a post-industrial society. But educators cannot do this alone; these changes can occur only with the understanding, trust, permission and active support of the surrounding community.

For the most important thing I have learned is that schools reflect the attitudes, beliefs and health of the communities they serve, and therefore, to improve public education means more than changing our schools, it means changing America.

--Jamie Robert Vollmer

Socrates questioning an individual, Socrates expounding to an admiring circle of adolescents, and Socrates walking through the streets discussing with a friend such topics as the perfection of the soul may, in each situation, be referred to as schools in that learning is taking place, and yet the location is not firmly established or static.

—Dan L. Miller

Walden Pond was a school for Thoreau. At that period in his life he needed Walden Pond in order to, as he expressed it, ‘live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.’ Solitude was Thoreau’s teacher, and the pond was his school.

—Dan L. Miller

Helen Keller’s school was her home where she learned what was essential for her to know in order to develop as she did. Anne Sullivan helped Helen cross over from her third world of darkness, silence, and utter oblivion to one of understanding, feeling, and communication. School to Helen was her modest home and loving teacher.

—Dan L. Miller

Everyone’s needs or requirements for a school will differ. Socrates in solitude would have dried up and remained unproductive. He needed the dialogue with people and the opportunity to teach and learn through questioning. Thoreau would have been stifled in the teeming city of Athens. His education would have been hampered for lack of a place to think and the absolute freedom he needed to contemplate. Helen Keller would not have profited from life in the city and surely would have perished if left to herself. She needed a close and patient relationship in a familiar location in order to make progress. In order to make the learning process function effectively, these individuals had to define for themselves what a school was and work within their own established definition of a ‘school.’

—Dan L. Miller

A school is both a location and a process. Ideally, it should be and could be imagined as being any activity, at any location, at any time in which learning takes place.

—Dan L. Miller

There are only two places in our world where time takes precedence over the job to be done, school and prison.

--William Glasser

In all sincerity the school boards come to the conclusion that those schools will best perform their rightful task which turn out students with attitudes like their own.

--H. A. Overstreet

It is neither right nor possible to think of schools and academic learning as something apart from the life of the people and of the community which the educational system is supposed to serve.

--John Anthony Scott

The common school is the greatest discovery ever made by man. It is supereminent in its universality and in the timeliness of the aid it proffers. The common school can train up children in the elements of all good knowledge and of virtue.

--Horace Mann

For me, purpose and meaning are given to university service because I believe: That the public school system, including the colleges and universities, provides cohesiveness in American life. Schools are the neutral ground where partisans on all other issues—religious, economic, political, social—may join in a common effort for furthering the public welfare.

--David Dodds Henry

If year-round education were the traditional school calendar and had been so for a hundred years and if someone came along to suggest a 'new' calendar wherein school students were to be formally educated for only nine months each year, with another three months free from organized instruction, would the American public allow, or even consider, such a calendar?

--Charles Ballinger

It makes no sense to keep closed half a year the school buildings in which America has invested a quarter of a trillion dollars while we are undereducated and overcrowded.

--LaMar Alexander

Children would not be sent (to schools) by their parents at all if they did not act as prisons in which the immature are kept from worrying the mature.

--George Bernard Shaw

80% of our children enter 1st grade with high self-esteem. By the time they reach 5th grade, the number has dropped to 20%. By the time they finish high school, the number of children having a positive self-image has dropped to a staggering 5%.

--Jill Anderson

School days, I believe, are the unhappiest in the whole span of human existence. They are full of dull, unintelligible tasks, new and unpleasant ordinances, brutal violations of common sense and common decency. It doesn't take a reasonably bright boy long to discover that most of what is rammed into him is nonsense, and that no one really cares very much whether he learns it or not.

--H. L. Mencken

It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere—mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self.

--Charles E. Silberman

What is learned in high school, or for that matter anywhere at all, depends far less on what is taught than on what one actually experiences in the place.

--Edgar Z. Friedenberg

This business of being out for a walk, coming across something of fascinating interest and then being dragged away from it by a yell from the schoolmaster, like a dog jerked onwards by the leash, is an important feature of school life and helps to build up the conviction, so strong in many children, that the things you want most to do are always unattainable.

--George Orwell

We now spend a good deal more on drink and smoke than we spend on education. This, of course, is not surprising. The urge to escape from selfhood and the environment is in almost everyone almost all the time. The urge to do something for the young is strong only in parents, and in them only for the few years during which their children go to school.

--Aldous Huxley

The most significant fact in this world today is, that in nearly every village under the American flag, the school-house is larger than the church.

--R. G. Ingersoll

A school is a place through which you have to pass before entering life, but where the teaching proper does not prepare you for life.

--Ernest Dimnet

The schools of the country are its future in miniature.

--Tehyi Hsieh

The nation that has the schools has the future.

--Otto von Bismarck

When schools flourish, all flourishes.

—Martin Luther

School is the mouse race that equips you for the rat race.

--Ernest L. Easley

Better build schoolrooms for 'the boy'  
Than cells and gibbets for 'the man.'

--Eliza Cook

Let us reform our schools, and we shall find little reform needed in our prisons.

--John Ruskin

High school is closer to the core of the American experience than anything else I can think of.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Public schools are the nurseries of all vice and immorality.

--Henry Fielding

There is nothing on earth intended for innocent people so horrible as a school. To begin with, it is a prison. But it is in some respects more cruel than a prison. In a prison, for instance you are not forced to read books written by the warders and the governor.

--George Bernard Shaw

Jails and prisons are the complement of schools; so many less as you have of the latter, so many more you must have of the former.

--Horace Mann

Violence is black children going to school for 12 years and receiving 6 years' worth of education.

--Julian Bond

When it comes to racism, the public school is no different from any other American institution....The harrowing problems that beset Black men later in life...often begin in the classroom.

--David J. Dent

Governments have ever been careful to hold a high hand over the education of the people. They know, better than anyone else, that their power is based almost entirely on the school. Hence, they monopolize it more and more.

--Francisco Ferrer

A few decades from now people will regard the schooling of today with revulsion, as astonishingly primitive, in the same way we deplore the eighteenth century treatment of the mentally ill.

--James Moffett

I shall begin to believe that we care more for freedom than we do for imposing our own beliefs upon others in order to subject them to our will, when I see that the main purpose of our schools and other institutions is to develop powers of unremitting and discriminating observation and judgment.

--John Dewey

School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age.

--Ivan Illich

The first duty of schools is to impart the accumulated wisdom of the race to our children. Adjustment as an educational goal is a pricked balloon. To adjust to the twentieth century is to come to terms with madness.

--Max Rafferty

The school resembles a factory in that its duty lies in turning a certain raw material into a certain desired product. It differs from a factory in that it deals with living and active, not with dead and inert, materials.

--William C. Bagley

In the world if you are asked to do something and get it wrong, your boss would probably ask, 'Have you checked this with the people around you? How could you reach such a ridiculous conclusion?' If you said, 'no,' you'd be considered incompetent. In school, checking it out with the people next to you is called cheating. Most everything we do in school is the opposite of what we do in the world.

--Al Shanker

My teachers loathed me. I never did homework. I'm amazed they expected me to work on those sleazy projects. To this day I wake up in the morning, clutch on to the bed and thank God I don't have to go to school.

--Woody Allen

Without good schools, none of our problems can be solved. People who cannot communicate are powerless. People who know nothing of their past are culturally impoverished. People who cannot see beyond the confines of their own lives are ill-equipped to face the future. It is in the public school that this nation has chosen to pursue enlightened ends for all its people. And this is where the battle for the future of America will be won or lost.

--Ernest L. Boyer

## **A NEW CATECHISM**

Who is the pupil?

A child of God, not a tool of the state.

Who is the teacher?

A guide, not a guard.

Who is a principal?

A master of teaching, not a master of teachers.

What is learning?

A journey, not a destination.

What is discovery?

Questioning the answers, not answering the questions.

What is the process?

Discovering ideas, not covering content.

What is the goal?

Opened minds, not closed issues.

What is the test?

Being and becoming, not remembering and reviewing.

What is a school?

Whatever we choose to make it.

--Lola May

Compulsory schooling was an invention of the State of Massachusetts around 1850. It was resisted, sometimes with guns, by an estimated 80 percent of the population. The last town to surrender its children was Barnstable on Cape Cod in the late 1800s. The children were marched to school under guard. According to a report released by Senator Ted Kennedy's office, the state literacy rate at that time was 98 percent. After compulsory education was implemented, it never rose above 91 percent where it stands today.

--*Curriculum Review*

No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes or politicians in civics classes or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders. This is a great mystery to me because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators...but the institution is psychopathic, it has no conscience. It rings a bell and the young man in the middle of writing a poem must close his notebook and move to a different cell where he must memorize that man and monkeys derive from a common ancestor.

--John Gatto

No one drops out of something that is rational, enjoyable and through which they grow, progress, and gain respect.

--Ralph E. Robinson

The school is not the end but only the beginning of an education

--Calvin Coolidge

Criticism of American public schools has been consistent and continuous for a century. This may mean that educators are dumb S.O.B.s. Or it may mean the critics are wrong.

--Gerald W. Bracey

Schools are now asked to do what people used to ask God to do.

--Jerome Cramer

What the school wants first from any child, whatever the psychologists say, is that he gets his work done—if only because children who don't work tend to employ their spare time by making mischief.

--Martin Mayer

No one worries about kids going out for football and competing to be on the team—that's ability grouping, and so is the band and cheerleading squad. But when we do these things in academics, it becomes 'undemocratic, un-American.'

--Carol Mills

Nowhere else but in schools are large groups of individuals packed so closely together for so many hours, yet expected to perform at peak efficiency on difficult learning tasks and to interact harmoniously.

--Carol Weinstein

Going to our school is an education in itself which is not to be confused with actually getting an education.

—Charles M. Schulz

Academe, *n.* An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught. Academy, *n.* (from academe). A modern school where football is taught.

--Ambrose Bierce

The school imprisons the children physically, intellectually, and morally, in order to direct the development of their faculties in the paths desired. It deprives them of contact with nature, in order to model them after its own pattern.

--Francisco Ferrer

I'm only attending school until it becomes available on CD-ROM.

--Anonymous 5th Grader

As an agency of social discipline, the school...both reflects and contributes to the shift from authoritarian sanctions to psychological manipulation and surveillance—the redefinition of political authority in therapeutic terms—and to the rise of a professional and managerial elite that governs society not by upholding authoritative moral sanctions but by defining normal behavior and by invoking allegedly non-punitive, psychiatric sanctions against deviance.

--John H. George

A school should be the most beautiful place in every town and village—so beautiful that the punishment for undutiful children should be that they should be debarred from going to school the following day.

--Oscar Wilde

I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends.

--John Dewey

You send your child to the schoolmaster, but 'tis the schoolboys who educate him.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

The most American thing about America is the free common school system.

--Adlai Ewing Stevenson

The common school improved and energized as it can easily be, may become the most effective and benignant of all the forces of civilization.

--Horace Mann

The public school is in most respects the cradle of our democracy.

--William O. Douglas

School is not a place;  
School is a concept.

--Unknown

He who opens a school door, closes a prison.

--Victor Hugo

The little red schoolhouse in my community (c. 1920) was white. In fact, I do not recall ever seeing any red schoolhouse in rural Maine in the old days; usually they were white, or, more commonly, the color of weather-beaten shingles. It must be remembered that the reputation of town officials was measured by their reluctance to spend money on education.

--K. W. Carter

Any one who has been to an English public school will always feel comparatively at home in prison.

--Evelyn Waugh

I have not a single pleasant recollection in connection with my schoolboy days. The woods were full of temptations, the trees called me, the birds wanted me....It seemed cruel to be shut up. The brooks, birds, flowers, sunshine, and breezes were free; why not I?

--Henry Ward Beecher

I disliked school from the start. The classroom which had to serve us all, with its smell of ink, chalk, slate pencils, corduroy, and varnish, made me feel as if my head were stuffed with hot cotton-wool, and I realized quite clearly that I was caught and there was no escape. A map of the world covered one of the walls, a small, drab world, smaller even than the classroom; the light brown benches with the inkpots let into them seemed too hard and new; the windows showing nothing but the high clouds floating past. Time moved by minute degrees there; I would sit for a long time invisibly pushing the hands of the clock on with my will, and waken to realize that they had scarcely moved.

--Edwin Muir

Although most wooden schoolhouses in the United States are now painted white, a few generations ago it was customary, especially in New England and other north-eastern sections of the country, to paint frame schoolhouses red, not because that color was preferred, but because red paint was cheaper than any other kind obtainable. Thus the little red schoolhouse became a symbol of popular education in general.

--George Stimpson

In Mount Vernon High School the desks were bolted to the floor. Whatever the furniture lacked in comfort and charm, you could be sure of one thing: It would be right there in the morning, in the exact same spot. Furthermore, the desk of one scholar was an integral part of the seat of the one scholar in front of him. Communication was maintained by sticking your toe through the slot between desk and seat and boring into the behind of your friend or enemy. The ferocity of the thrust was tempered to the state of the relationship. Desks were of black cast iron and dark-brown wood, and every desk had a distinct character of its own—the nicks and challenges of former occupants defacing it and creating a link between generations, the cuneiform record of the interminable hours. Every desk had a pencil groove, a sunken inkwell surrounded by a Devil's half acre of blue-black stain, and a book well.

--E. B. White

Still sits the school-house by the road,  
    A ragged beggar sleeping;  
Around it still the sumachs grow,  
    And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,  
    Deep scarred by raps official;  
The warping floor, the battered seats,  
    The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;  
    Its door's worn sill, betraying  
The feet that, creeping slow to school  
    Went storming out to playing!

--John Greenleaf Whittier

School and education should not be confused; it is only school that can be made easy.

--Unknown

Promote then as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

--George Washington

Educational reform must focus on changing teachers, their teaching and their classrooms not because teachers are the problem; but because schools can change only to the extent that teachers change.

--Bill Page

Schools aren't what they used to be; they never were!

--Will Rogers

Great schools are little societies.

--Henry Fielding

A school should not be a preparation for life. A school should be life.

--Elbert Hubbard

School is where you go when your parents can't take you and industry can't take you.

--John Updike

Any place that anyone young can learn something useful from someone with experience is an educational institution.

--Al Capp

The things taught in school are not an education but the means to an education.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

I don't remember being frightened or unfrightened by school. My mother who had never played me false before, simply took me by the hand one morning and walked me three blocks down the street. Suddenly, I was alone in the middle of a large chunk of stone, inhaling chalk dust, staring at a row of scissors winking in the sun, and watching Miss Burdette tug with a long, hooked, wooden pole at the upper windows, which gave out onto the cement playground beyond. With one clap of the erasers I had moved into another dimension. School was something larger and more meaningful than myself.

--Phyllis Theroux

Our schools are still set up as though every mother were at home all day and the whole family needed the summer to get the crops in.

--Sidney Callahan

In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards.

--Mark Twain

The school of hard knocks is an accelerated curriculum.

--Menander

At a time when the traditional structures of caring have deteriorated, schools must become places where teachers and students live together, talk to each other, take delight in each other's company. My guess is that when schools focus on what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we now pursue so painfully and artificially will be achieved somewhat more naturally....It is obvious that children will work harder and do things—even odd things like adding fractions—for people they trust.

--Nel Noddings

We must have a place where children can have a whole group of adults they can trust.

--Margaret Mead

And yet, in the schoolroom more than any other place, does the difference of sex, if there is any, need to be forgotten.

--Susan B. Anthony

When our society looks at us and says our schools are troubled, what they are really saying is that our society is troubled and by implication they are saying, 'Help us, dear teachers. You are our hope.'

--Linda Holt

I should...prefer the broad daylight of a respectable school to the solitude and obscurity of a private education. For all the best teachers pride themselves on having a large number of pupils and think themselves worthy of a bigger audience.

--Quintilian

The school of the future will, perhaps, not be a school as we understand it—with benches, blackboards, and a teacher's platform—it may be a theatre, a library, a museum, or a conversation.

—Leo Tolstoy

Without clues from student dress and demeanor, a time traveler visiting the nation's schools would be hard pressed to distinguish between those of the 19th and 20th centuries. Schools today look much as they did more than a century ago—children in rows, teachers lecturing, homework assigned. Indeed, schooling today looks much as it did a thousand years ago or even in the time of the ancient Greeks. It is still labor intensive. Highly labor intensive. No modern corporation could survive if it were run like a modern school.

--*Business Week*  
*Magazine*

The same communications and computer technology enabling more and more workers to stay home at least part-time with their children while telecommuting to work can provide educational, health care, and other services at home for both parent and child. Looked at the other way around, such technology can permit educators to telecommute to the consumers of their services, without the encumbrance of a school building or classroom.

--Lewis J. Perelman

Thank goodness I was never sent to school; it would have rubbed off some of the originality.

--Beatrix Potter, Author

There is a social burden placed on schools by poverty, drug abuse, violence, and hopelessness. Troubled children carry the ills of their homes and neighborhoods into their classrooms every day. In too many parts of the United States, teachers must feed their students' bodies and souls before they can even begin to feed their minds.

--Nan Stone

The feeling that we had forgotten more than we had learned had shown us that school was no more than paying our dues for a place in life.

--William Banks

Going to school wasn't a requirement in our house, it was a sacrament.

--Julia Boyd

Enter to learn; depart to serve.

--Mary McLeod Bethune

## **ELEVEN RULES YOU WON'T LEARN IN SCHOOL**

Rule #1: Life is not fair; get used to it.

Rule #2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule #3: You will NOT make \$40,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule #4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss. He doesn't have tenure.

Rule #5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping; they called it opportunity.

Rule #6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes. Learn from them.

Rule #7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes, and listening to you talk about how cool you are. So before you save the rain forest, try cleaning up your own closet.

Rule #8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers but life has not. In some schools they have abolished failing grades; they'll give you as many times as you want to get the right answer. This, of course, doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule #9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off, and very few employers are interested in helping you find yourself. Do that on your own time.

Rule #10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule #11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

—Bill Gates

The development of desirable traits and characteristics—that intangible something which we style personality—is the chief work of the school.

--Dr. Frank Cody

Students need to see school as an integral, not a separate, part of their lives. Weaving strands of relevant learning into the fabric of their 'real lives' motivates students to become lifelong learners. This can happen in physical education classes where students learn ways of living healthy lives—or in language arts where a love of reading is fostered. Mediation and conflict resolution skills learned in middle school will make students better employees and citizens.

--Judy Pollack and  
Kimberly Hartman

Promote then as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

--George Washington

The school must have as one of its principal functions the nurturing of images of excellence.

--Jerome S. Bruner

Placing too much importance on where a child goes rather than what he does there...doesn't take into account the child's needs or individuality, and this is true in college selection as well as kindergarten.

--Norman Giddan

Good schools are schools for the development of the *whole child*. They seek to help children develop to their maximum their social powers and their intellectual powers, their emotional capacities, their physical powers.

--James L. Hymes, Jr.

Children learn and remember at least as much from the context of the classroom as from the content of the coursework.

--Lawrence Kutner

I've come to see that the real job of the school is to entice the student into the web of knowledge and then, if he's not enticed, to drag him in.

--Mara Wolynski

High school regulations are chillingly similar to the Army's.

--Ira Glasser

When autumn shadows throw their patterns across the land, they are not the images of fragile, dying leaves, not the bared arms of lofty elms, not shadows of a fading summer; but swinging shapes as of books upon a strap, of round and square boxes held under an arm, of hurrying little people heading toward the nearest school.

--Djuna Barnes

There were times when it seemed to [Peter] that all he had ever done in his life, and all he was ever going to do, was wake up, get up, and go to school.

--Ian McEwan

School just speeds things up...Without school it might take another seventy years before you wake up and are able to count.

--Louis Sachar

When I was a slave, I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study...would be about the same as getting into paradise.

--Booker T. Washington

We must shift the focus of our classrooms from obedience to understanding.

—Robert John Meehan

Parents and educators need to establish a culture in which security and clarity of expectations are balanced with the encouragement of playfulness, inquisitiveness and self reliance.

—Guy Claxton

Schools are like jigsaw puzzles. Each edge piece of a puzzle interlocks with two others to form the puzzle's framework and give structure and support to the puzzle as a whole. Each piece has a unique design and cut that ensure just the right place to fit within the puzzle. Each morning, staff members form the edge pieces that interlock to create a safe environment and give support to each other and the whole. Each morning, they provide just the 'right place' for each of the students to fit safely and securely. The staff members are strength and stability, and like the edge pieces, they do not stand alone in this responsibility. There are always others to support and assist, ensuring that each and every student has a place.

--Karen Hegeman

The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

The ultimate goal of the educational system is to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education. This will not be a widely shared pursuit until we get over our odd conviction that education is what goes on in school buildings and nowhere else.

—John W. Gardner

Education has been thought of as taking place mainly within the confines of the classroom, and school buildings have been regarded as the citadels of knowledge. However, the most extensive facility imaginable for learning is our environment. It is a classroom without walls, an open university for people of all ages offering a boundless curriculum with unlimited expertise. If we can make our environment comprehensible and observable, we will have created classrooms with endless windows on the world.

--R. S. Worman

Every child is a unique human being who grows at his or her individual rate—except in schools.

--Jim Grant

America's future walks through the doors of our schools every day.

--Mary Jean LeTendre

Attending school is an important element in the development of the 'whole child.' Schools, particularly public schools, are the one place where 'all of the children of all of the people come together.' Can there be anything more important to each child and thus to our democratic society than to develop virtues and values such as respect for others, the ability to communicate and collaborate, and an openness to diversity and new ideas? Such virtues and values cannot be accessed on the Internet.

--Dennis L. Evans

When I was a boy on the Mississippi River there was a proposition in a township to discontinue public schools because they were too expensive. An old farmer spoke up and said if they stopped the schools they would not save anything, because every time a school was closed a jail had to be built.

--Mark Twain

A child educated only at school is an uneducated child.

--George Santayana

The family is more important in improving schools than the schools themselves.

--William A. Sampson

The three R's of our school system must be supported by the three T's: teachers who are superior, techniques of instruction that are modern, and thinking about education which places it first in all our plans and hopes.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

No one can look back on his school days and say with truth that they were altogether unhappy.

--George Orwell

We think of schools as places where youth learns, but our schools also need to learn.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

The traditional school often functions as a collection of independent contractors united by a common parking lot.

--Robert Eaker

You know there is a problem with the education system when you realize that out of the three Rs, only one begins with an R.

--Dennis Miller

## **ABOUT SCHOOL**

He always wanted to say things. But no one understood.

He always wanted to explain things. But no one cared.

Sometimes he would just draw and it wasn't anything.

He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky.

He would just lie out on the grass and look up in the sky

and it would be only him and the sky and the things  
that needed saying.

And it was after that, that he drew the picture. It was a

beautiful picture. He kept it under his pillow and

would let no one see it.

And he would look at it every night and think about it.

And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he could still see it.

And it was all of him. And he loved it.

When he started school, he brought it with him. Not to show anyone, but just to have it with him like a friend.

It was funny about school.

He sat in a square, brown desk like all the other square, brown desks and he thought it should be red.

And his room was a square, brown room. Like all the other rooms. And it was tight and close. And stiff.

He hated to hold the pencil and the chalk, with his arms stiff and his feet flat on the floor, stiff, with the teacher watching and watching.

And then he had to write numbers. And they weren't anything. They were worse than the letters that could be something if you put them together.

And the numbers were tight and square and he hated the whole thing.

The teacher came and spoke to him. She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys. He said he didn't like them and she said it didn't matter.

After that they drew. And he drew all yellow and it was the way he felt about morning and it was beautiful.

The teacher came and smiled at him. 'What's this?' she asked. 'Why don't you draw something like Ken's drawing? Isn't it beautiful?'

It was all questions.

After that his mother bought him a tie and he always drew airplanes and rocket ships like everyone else.

And he threw the old picture away.

And when he lay out alone looking at the sky, it was big and blue and all of everything, but he wasn't anymore.

He was square inside and brown, and his hands were stiff, and he was like everyone else. And the thing inside him that needed saying didn't need saying anymore.

It had stopped pushing. It was crushed. Stiff.  
Like everything else.

—Juliet Bonnay

The best and deepest moral training is that which one gets by having to enter into proper relations with others....Present educational systems, so far as they destroy or neglect this unity, render it difficult or impossible to get any genuine, regular moral training.

--John Dewey

The good school sees the student, not as a vessel to be filled, nor a lamp to be lighted. Both metaphors suggest that the student is something to be done to, when in reality he or she is something that does, a body that moves, a mind that purposes, a spirit that soars, a life that lives. The good school sees the student as a life to be lived.

--Royce S. Pitkin

Purpose of school: without school there wouldn't be a reason for holidays and summer vacation.

--Unknown

The good school is that one is which in studying I also get the pleasure of playing.

--Paulo Freire

In short, my little school, like the great World, is made up of Kings, Politicians, Divines, L.D. (LL.Ds), Fops, Buffoons, Fiddlers, Sycophants, Fools, Coxcombs, Chimney Sweepers, and every other Character drawn in History or seen in the World.

--John Adams

A good school is the price of peace in the community.

--Ursula Franklin

We might stop thinking of school as a place, and begin to believe it is basically relationships.

--George Dennison

## **FABLE OF THE ANIMAL SCHOOL**

One upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of 'a new world,' so they organized a school. They, adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying, and, to make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming, better in fact than his instructor, and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming to practice running. This kept up until his web feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in this school, so nobody worried about that except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustrations in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground-up instead of from the tree-top-down. He also developed charlie horses from over exertion and then got C in climbing and D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well and also run, climb, and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their child to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

Does this fable have a moral?

--Dr. G. H. Reavis

Out of the public schools grows the greatness of a nation.

--Mark Twain

Attempting to fix inner city schools without fixing the city in which they are embedded is like trying to clean the air on one side of a screen door.

--Jean Anyon

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy.

--John Dewey

Telling children that school is valuable is a lot less effective than showing them it is by being involved in what they are doing there.

--Daniel Ordorica

The farm is a piece of the world, the school-house is not.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

A successful school is like a symphony. As the harmonizing of many parts results in powerful music, so too the appropriate blending of many factors in schools results in powerful experiences for students. Like symphonies, each successful school is different. Each group of students, each staff, each set of dynamics interacts to create unique climates for learning. This interaction of factors is especially critical in the middle grades. Studies of successful middle schools acknowledge their complexity. The outcomes of their success are like beautiful music. While they capture our attention and draw us close, the underlying 'score' is more difficult to describe.

--David Strahan, John  
Van Hoose, Mark  
L'Esperance

In many schools, sports are so entrenched that no one—not even the people in charge—realizes their actual cost. When Marguerite Roza, the author of *Education-  
al Economics*, analyzed the finances of one public high school in the Pacific Northwest, she and her colleagues found that the school was spending \$328 a student for math instruction and more than four times that much for cheerleading—\$1,348 a cheerleader. 'And it is not even a school in a district that prioritizes cheerleading' Roza wrote. 'In fact, this district's strategic plan has for the past three years claimed that *math* was the primary focus.'

--Amanda Ripley

The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.

--Mckinsey and Company

In the elementary grades, many teachers are experimenting with new ways to involve students in their own experience. There is pressure emanating from a growing force for more personalized living, to make schools human places, to return students to their life as children, to allow them to believe that it is worthwhile, perhaps even special, to be a child and not to be an ongoing performer seeking institutional rewards.

--Carl Weinberg

It is shortsighted to believe that better education comes from setting up schools that exclude the very children needing the most help.

—Robert John Meehan

We imagine a school in which students and teachers excitedly and joyfully stretch themselves to their limits in pursuit of projects built on their vision...not one that succeeds in making apathetic students satisfying minimal standards.

—Seymour Papert

Schools have to be the glue of our society; they are our greatest means of social stability.

--Shirley McCune

Try not to have a good time... this is supposed to be educational.

--Charles M. Schulz

That's the reason they're called lessons...because they lessen from day to day.

—Lewis Carroll

I was in enough to get along with people. I was never socially inarticulate. Not a loner. And that saved my life, saved my sanity. That and the writing. But to this day I distrust anybody who thought school was a good time. Anybody.

--Stephen King

Let's face it. No kid in high school feels as though they fit in.

--Stephen King

We learn not in the school, but in life.

--Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Everyone is in awe of the lion tamer in a cage with half a dozen lions—everyone but a school bus driver.

--Laurence Peter

I do not think that all physical school buildings will disappear, but I do believe forces beyond our control will force education to adapt its education model or wither from competition.

--Gary Shattuck

There is no such thing as a typical American high school. Furthermore, it is impossible to draw a blueprint of an ideal high school. A school that would be highly satisfactory in a small industrial city would be unsatisfactory in many suburban areas, and vice versa. Within a large city great diversity will be found from district to district; it would be most unwise to attempt to say what is correct curriculum or organization of all the high schools under the management of the city school board.

--James B. Conant

If life were one long grade school, women would be the undisputed rulers of the world.

--Carol Dweck

In societies where they are not needed as a cheap and nimble labor force, children between the ages of adorable and surly attend school. Here, unsuccessful adults known as teachers instruct young people in subjects like reading, history and math, providing them with the critical knowledge they need to pass tests on those subjects. Beyond their academic functions, schools also serve as social laboratories where children learn problem-solving and problem-solving skills.

--*Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

It is nothing short of a miracle that modern schools of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of learning.

—Albert Einstein

High school (or secondary school) is an educational institution that helps teenagers develop the basic insecurities needed to succeed at developing more advanced insecurities in college.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

No student knows his subject: the most he knows is where and how to find out the things he does not know.

—Woodrow Wilson

I think a lot of people don't have any idea of how deeply segregated our schools have become all over again.

—Jonathan Kozol

At school, our reading text was called *Fun with Dick and Jane*. By comparison, Seuss' characters were having loads more fun.

—Jack Hamann

The word *school* comes from *skholē*, the Greek word for 'leisure.' We used to teach people to be free. Now we teach them to work.

—Benjamin Hunnicutt

It seems axiomatic to say that the most intense thinking occurs when you want to fit some ideas together and you can't. Then when someone comes along and tells you how to put the things together, what the relationships are, you stop thinking about it and go on to the next problem. And if someone keeps on telling you answers, you just stop listening to what he is saying and start thinking about something that you *can* think about. Many youngsters find this sort of thing happening to them in school much of the time and some of them all of the time.

—W. R. Wees

A discipline was defined as a compartment of knowledge, and the way to teach the discipline, whether in elementary or secondary schools (or at university), was to get a certain segment of the compartment into the students' heads each year. This segment was presented in a textbook, usually written by university specialists in the discipline. Education was (and often still is) imparting knowledge of the disciplines. The first consequence of this way of thinking may be observed in a brief conversation:

'And what do you teach?'

'I teach history.'

I have never heard anyone ask, 'Whom do you teach?' Nor have I heard any high school teacher say, 'I teach people.'

—W. R. Wees

Zada is getting up. I hear his merry voice overhead. He looks out and sees that it is a pleasant morning, a good day for playing and amusing himself by a free range in the green fields to pick the flowers and listen to the birds and to enjoy without restraint the delightful things which he sees and hears. Is it not cruel to deny children, to shut them up as we cage birds in close school rooms and nurseries, to cramp their muscles by long sitting still in one position and confuse their brains with hard lessons for which they have no inclination? I have for a long time believed that children in many instances are confined too much in school, that they would grow up stronger in mind and body to have more indulgences of their natural inclinations, properly guarded and corrected.

—Zadoc Long (1870)

Public education's critics fantasize about the 'good old days' when schools allegedly taught only reading, writing, and arithmetic. But until families and communities are able or willing to again assume their traditional responsibilities, public schools will continue to feed students, check their hearing, vision, and teeth, instruct them in hygiene and nutrition, carry the main burdens of integrating neighborhoods and providing recreation, teach safe driving habits, prevent the abuse of drugs and alcohol, counsel the upset, encourage the listless, search for the absent, provide for the uninterested, motivate the lazy, and challenge the gifted.

—Dr. Matthew Prophet

Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw product (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life....It is the business of the school to build its pupils to the specifications laid down.

—Ellwood P. Cubberley

As a society becomes more enlightened it realizes that it is responsible not to transmit and conserve the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society. The school is its chief agency for the accomplishment of this end.

—John Dewey

Jesus' own recognition of the validity of certain separations was expressed in His words, 'Render unto Caesar the things that be Caesar's.' Thus the American public schools must be secular. It is my reasoned conviction that the day this secularism ceases, our cherished heritage of freedom is on its way out, no matter what names we pin on the pitiful skeleton that remains.

—Virgil M. Rogers

The mother's heart is the child's school room.

—Henry Ward Beecher

A positive school climate is perhaps the single most important expression of educational leadership.

—Scott Thompson

The ambience of each school differs. These differences appear to have more to do with the quality of life and indeed the quality of education in schools than do the explicit curriculum and the methods of teaching.

—John Goodlad

The brown bag, of course, had its imperfections. While some kids carried roast beef sandwiches, others had peanut butter. I have no way of knowing if all of those brown bags contained ‘nutritionally adequate diets.’ But I do know that those brown bags and those lunch pails symbolized parental love and responsibility.

—Charles Mathias, Jr.

Schools must stop being holding pens to keep energetic young people off the job market and off the streets. We stretch puberty out a long, long time.

—Toni Morrison

The pressure to succeed in high school is all too familiar to me. I distinctly remember being a freshman in high school, overwhelmed by the belief that my GPA over the next four years would make or break my life. My daily thought process was that every homework assignment, every project, every test could be the difference. The difference between a great college and a mediocre college. The difference between success and failure. The difference between happiness and misery...I felt the pressure coming from all around me—my parents, my peers, and worst of all, myself. I felt that I had one shot at high school and that my GPA, SAT score, and college applications were the only barometers of my success.

—Jeremy Lin

Prisons are instantly identifiable by their fencing (though some mega high schools can look similar).

—James Fallows

Whenever you hear a politician carry on about what a mess the schools are, be aware that you are looking at the culprit.

—Molly Ivins

Surely school can deliver more than one message. In addition to ‘get a job,’ we might add ‘get a life.’ A rich, full life where informed citizenship isn’t an afterthought, and where widely shared prosperity is one value among many.

--Jim Haas

How has the world of the child changed in the last 150 years? The answer is 'It's hard to imagine any way in which it hasn't changed. They're immersed in all kinds of stuff that was unheard of 150 years ago, and yet if you look at schools today versus 100 years ago, they are more similar than dissimilar.'

—Peter Senge

America's future will be determined by the home and the school.

—Jane Adams

Writing is the litmus paper of thought...the very center of schooling.

--Ted Sizer

The road to freedom--here and everywhere on earth--begins in the classroom.

—Hubert Humphrey

The difference between school and life? In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.

—Tom Bodett

No matter how much you hate school, you'll always miss it when you leave.

—*ILIKETOQUOTE.COM*

What is a classroom? A place for students and teachers. Students struggle, succeed, fail, give up, try again. Teachers struggle, succeed, fail, give up, try again.

--Esther Wright

Smartness runs in my family. When I went to school I was so smart my teacher was in my class for five years.

—Gracie Allen

Emergency psychiatric visits between 2009 and 2012 more than doubled when school was in session compared with during the summer and vacations. While the adult suicide rate has historically peaked in summer, the recent increase in youth suicides has shown the opposite pattern, with suicides dropping off in the summer and climbing when kids are back in school.

—Erika Christakis (2020)

My grandmother wanted me to have an education, so she kept me out of school.

—Margaret Mead

I was happy as a child with my toys in my nursery. I have been happier every year since I became a man. But this interlude of school makes a somber grey patch upon the chart of my journey. It was an unending spell of worries that did not then seem petty, and of toil uncheered by fruition; a time of discomfort, restriction and purposeless monotony.

—Winston Churchill

I loathed every day and regret every day I spent in school. I like to be taught to read and write and add and then be left alone.

—Woody Allen

If it is noticed that much of my outside work concerns itself with libraries, there is an extremely good reason for this. I think that the better part of my education, almost as important as that secured in the schools and the universities, came from libraries.

—Irving Stone

The philosophy of the school was quite simple—the bright boys specialised in Latin, the not so bright in science and the rest managed with geography or the like.

—Aaron Klug

Among my favorite tricks was raising my hand for the lavatory pass, and the heading out for an epic schoolwide spin. I was evolving into the kind of kid who knew the line between hijinks and delinquency, but had no sense of how easily the first led to the second.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Thomas Jefferson envisioned his public schools educating talented students ‘raked from the rubbish’ of the lower class, and argued that ranking humans like animal breeds was perfectly natural. ‘The circumstance of superior beauty is thought worthy of attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs and other domestic animals,’ he wrote. ‘Why not that of man?’ John Adams believed the ‘passion for distinction’ was a powerful human force: ‘There must be one, indeed, who is the last and lowest of the human species.’

—Alec MacGillis

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.  
It's just an expression, you say.  
If that's your opinion, then visit my school  
And watch as my brain melts away.

—Lincoln Pierce

No one who examines classroom life carefully can fail to be astounded by the proportion of the students' time that is taken up just in waiting.

--Charles E. Silberman

'Tis an old maxim in the schools,  
That flattery's the food of fools;  
Yet now and then your men of wit  
Will condescend to take a bit.

--Jonathan Swift

A piece of you cringes when you hear that your friend has been preparing for the SAT with classes since last summer, and that they're already scoring a 2000. (And what about...the girl taking a summer immersion program to skip ahead and get into AP French her sophomore year? And that internship your best friend has with a Stanford professor?) You can't help but slip into the system of competitive insanity...We are not teenagers. We are lifeless bodies in a system that breeds competition, hatred, and discourages teamwork and genuine learning. We lack sincere passion. We are sick...Why is that not getting through to this community? Why does this insanity that is our school district continue?

—Carolyn Walworth,  
High School Junior

Four key beliefs that, when embraced by students, seem to contribute most significantly to their tendency to persevere in the classroom:

1. I belong in this academic community.
2. My ability and competence grow with my effort.
3. I can succeed at this.
4. This work has value for me.

If students hold these beliefs in mind as they are sitting in math class, Farrington [Camille] concludes, they are more likely to persevere through the challenges and failures they encounter there. And if they don't, they are more likely to give up at the first sign of trouble.

—Paul Tough

Anyone who's been through middle school might agree that 'reputational aggression'—aka vicious gossip, or even verbal abuse—seems to play a role in the status struggles of teenagers. Using data from North Carolina high schools, Robert Faris uncovered a pattern showing that, contrary to the stereotype of high-status kids victimizing low-status ones, most aggression is local: kids tend to target kids close to them on the social ladder. And the higher one rises on that ladder, the more frequent the acts of aggression—until, near the very top, aggression ceases almost completely. Why? Kids with nowhere left to climb, Faris posits, have no more use for it. Indeed, the star athlete who demeaned the mild mathlete might come off as insecure. 'In some ways,' Faris muses, 'these people have the luxury of being kind. Their social positions are not in jeopardy.'

—Jerry Useem

Experience is a good school. But the fees are high.

—Heinrich Heine

Boyhood is the longest time in life for a boy. The last term of the school-year is made of decades, not of weeks, and living through them is like waiting for the millennium.

--Booth Tarkington

Preschool classrooms have become increasingly fraught spaces, with teachers cajoling their charges to finish their 'work' before they can go play. And yet, even as preschoolers are learning more pre-academic skills at earlier ages, I've heard many teachers say that they seem somehow—is it possible?—less inquisitive and less engaged than the kids of earlier generations. More children today seem to lack the language skills needed to retell a simple story or use basic connecting words and prepositions. They can't make a conceptual analogy between, say, the veins on a leaf and the veins in their own hands.

—Erika Christakis

New research sounds a particularly disquieting note....Although children who had attended preschool initially exhibited more 'school readiness' skills when they entered kindergarten than did their non-preschool-attending peers, by the time they were in first grade their attitudes toward school were deteriorating. And by second grade they performed *worse* on tests measuring literacy, language, and math skills. The researchers told *New York* magazine that over-reliance on direct instruction and repetitive, poorly structured pedagogy were likely culprits; children who'd been subjected to the same insipid tasks year after year after year were understandably losing their enthusiasm for learning.

—Erika Christakis

There is one blanket statement which can be safely made about the world's schools: the teachers talk too much.

--Martin Mayer

The things taught in schools and colleges are not an education, but the means of education.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

School is in the air. It is the time of year when millions of apprehensive young people are crammed into their parents' cars along with all their worldly gadgets and driven off to college.

--Niall Ferguson

Your brain can only absorb what your ass can endure.

--P. Dan Wiwchar

Whether it's for a fraternity, sports team, club, or some other selective group, guys put up with ceremonial degradation in order to be accepted, liked, and aligned with the in crowd.

--Scott Smith

Colleges could reemerge as cultural centers rather than job-prep institutions. The word *school* comes from *skholē*, the Greek word for 'leisure.' We used to teach people to be free. Now we teach them to work.

—Benjamin Hunnicutt

Elementary school: 30 friends. Middle school: 20 friends. High school: 10 friends. College: 3 real friends.

—*peanutbutterquotes.com*

Every maker of video games knows something that the makers of curriculum don't seem to understand. You'll never see a video game being advertised as being easy. Kids who do not like school will tell you it's not because it's too hard. It's because it's—boring

—Seymour Papert

We should see schools as safe arenas for experimenting with life, for discovering our talents... for taking responsibility for tasks and others people, for learning how to learn... and for exploring our beliefs about life and society.

—Charles Handy

There is something about the Procrustean bed about schools; some children are left disabled by being hacked about to fit the curriculum; some are stretched to take up the available space, others less malleable are labeled as having special educational needs.

—Chris Bowring-Carr  
and John  
Burnham West

Schools should be accountable—but accountable for what?... I would like to see schools accountable for developing students who have a love of learning—who are continually growing in wisdom and in their ability to function effectively (and happily) in the world.

—Judy Yero

Where I grew up, learning was a collective activity. But when I got to school and tried to share learning with other students that was called cheating. The curriculum sent the clear message to me that learning was a highly individualistic, almost secretive, endeavor. My working class experience...was disparaged.

—Henry Giroux

Towards the end of their first year in secondary school, pupils feel socially better adjusted than they did after two months, but their enjoyment and motivation have fallen away markedly....once the novelty of secondary school wears off, boredom all too often follows.

—Michael Barber

...a din sufficient to derail any train of thought: ceaseless PA announcements and interminable *bongs* between classes....Teachers hector students constantly: 'SIT UP STRAIGHT, EYES ON MRS. HEARN.' 'IF I HEAR VOICES, YOU—OWE—RECESS!' The worst of the yellers are paid bullies.

—Nicholson Baker

Basic assumptions that underlie the curriculum development and monitoring process are:

- Effective schools have focus
- The focus of schools should be student outcomes
- The principal is the person who has primary responsibility for monitoring outcomes
- The appropriate level for monitoring outcomes is the individual classroom
- Leaders communicate the importance of an areas by paying attention to it.

--Rick DuFour

The best schools are those in which all children—not just a few—are believed to be capable, where all are offered rich learning opportunities, held to rigorous intellectual standards, and expected to succeed.

--Jeannie Oakes  
and Martin Lipton

It is as though our society has simply decided that the purpose of schooling is economic—to improve the financial condition of individuals and to advance the prosperity of the nation. Hence students should do well on standardized tests, get into good colleges, obtain well-paying jobs, and buy lots of things. Surely there must be more to education than this?

—Nel Noddings

Only the schools' inefficiency can account for creativity surviving after age 25.

—George Leonard

The disposition to continue to learn throughout life is perhaps one of the most important contributions that schools can make to an individual's development.

—Elliot W. Eisner

The important outcomes of schooling include not only the acquisition of new conceptual tools, refined sensibilities, a developed imagination, and new routines and techniques, but also new attitudes and dispositions. The disposition to continue to learn throughout life is perhaps one of the most important contributions that schools can make to an individual's development.

—Elliot W. Eisner

Make the school fit the child—instead of making the child fit the school.

—A. S. Neill

Systems of schooling are over-managed and under-led.

Thomas J. Sergiovanni

The environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct his own experiences.

— Maria Montessori

School is a twelve-year jail sentence where bad habits are the only curriculum truly learned.

—John Taylor Gatto

School appropriates the money, men, and good will available for education and in addition discourages other institutions from assuming educational tasks. Work, leisure, politics, city living, and even family life depend on schools for the habits and knowledge they presuppose, instead of becoming themselves the means of education.

—Ivan Illich

Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. Most people learn best by being ‘with it,’ yet school makes them identify their personal, cognitive growth with elaborate planning and manipulation.

—Ivan Illich

Schools are designed on the assumption that there is a secret to everything in life; that the quality of life depends on knowing that secret; that secrets can be known only in orderly successions; and that only teachers can properly reveal these secrets. An individual with a schooled mind conceives of the world as a pyramid of classified packages accessible only to those who carry the proper tags.

—Ivan Illich

School prepares people for the alienating institutionalization of life, by teaching the necessity of being taught. Once this lesson is learned, people lose their incentive to develop independently; they no longer find it attractive to relate to each other, and the surprises that life offers when it is not predetermined by institutional definition are closed.

—Ivan Illich

The atmosphere of the home is prolonged in the school, where the students soon discover that (as in the home) in order to achieve some satisfaction they must adapt to the precepts which have been set from above. One of these precepts is not to think.

—Paulo Freire

Slowly I began to realize that the bells and the confinement, the crazy sequences, the age-segregation, the lack of privacy, the constant surveillance, and all the rest of the national curriculum of schooling were designed exactly as if someone had set out to prevent children from learning how to think and act, to coax them into addiction and dependent behavior.

—John Taylor Gatto

Despise school and remain a fool.

—German Proverb

So why go to school? We can no longer tinker with a broken and inhuman paradigm of schooling—We must stop schooling our children as if they were products and reclaim our schools as sacred places for human beings. We must rethink our classrooms as vibrant spaces that awaken consciousness to the world, open minds to the problems of our human condition, inspire wonder, and help people to lead personally fulfilling lives. If our democracy is to thrive, our schools must change into these exciting spaces. Otherwise, we will net be a democracy ‘of the people,’ but a corporate nation of workers, TV viewers, and shoppers. As professional educators, it is our responsibility to challenge our curricula and to create schools that are personally and socially transformative. That’s why we should go to school.

—Steven Wolk

It is quite strange how little effect school—even high school—seems to have had on the lives of creative people. Often one senses that, if anything, school threatened to extinguish the interest and curiosity that the child had discovered outside its walls.

—Mihaly  
Csikszentmihalyi

Every time you stop a school, you will have to build a jail. What you gain at one end you lose at the other. It’s like feeding a dog on his own tail. It won’t fatten the dog.

—Mark Twain

We are students of words: we are shut up in schools, and colleges, and recitation-rooms, for ten or fifteen years, and come out at last with a bag of wind, a memory of words, and do not know a thing.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

A society’s competitive advantage will come not from how well its schools teach the multiplication and periodic tables, but from how well they stimulate imagination and creativity.

—Albert Einstein

They teach in academies far too many things, and far too much that is useless.

—Goethe

School is in many ways the beginning of those shark infested waters, when people, innocent children in this instance are hauled out of the utopia that is the family unit, hopefully full of love and warmth and protection, to be thrust instead into a whole other world where they are instantly told what they are and are not good at, who’s better than them and why they need to change immediately.

—Chris Evans

I've learned... that the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.  
—Andy Rooney

If I ran a school, I'd give the average grade to the ones who gave me all the right answers, for being good parrots. I'd give the top grades to those who made a lot of mistakes and told me about them, and then told me what they learned from them.  
—Buckminster Fuller

School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is.  
—Ivan Illich

I am entirely certain that twenty years from now we will look back at education as it is practiced in most schools today and wonder that we could have tolerated anything so primitive.  
—John W. Gardner

What did you ASK at school today?  
—Richard Feynman

The Schools ain't what they used to be and never was.  
—Will Rogers

There is less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.  
--Samuel Johnson

Our schools have become vast factories for the manufacture of robots. We no longer send our young to them primarily to be taught and given the tools of thought, no longer primarily to be informed and acquire knowledge; but to be 'socialized.'  
--Robert Lindner

My education was only interrupted by the twelve years I spent in school.  
--Mark Twain

My schooldays were the period when I was being instructed by somebody I did not know about something I did not want to know.  
—G. K. Chesterton

My daughter tells me she got a C on her math homework from the night before because she hadn't made an answer column. Her correct answers were there, at the end of each neatly written-out equation, yet they weren't segregated into a separate column on the right side of each page. I'm amazed that the pettiness of this doesn't seem to bother her. School is training her well for the inanities of adult life.

--Karl Taro Greenfeld

In schools the main problem is not the absence of innovations but the presence of too many disconnected... piecemeal, superficially adorned projects... We are over our heads.

—Michael Fullan

When I survey parents of preschoolers....they fear that the old-fashioned pleasures of unhurried learning have no place in today's hypercompetitive world....The stress is palpable: Pick the 'wrong' preschool or ease up on the phonics drills at home, and your child might not go to college. She might not be employable. She might not even be allowed to start first grade!

—Erika Christakis

It is indeed ironic that we spend our school days yearning to graduate and our remaining days waxing nostalgic about our school days.

—Isabel Waxman

One thing that keeps a lot of people from going to college is high school.

—Unknown

Schools are structured in a manner that allows us to deliver a wealth of information and ideas to young people who lack our experience of and sophistication about the world. For the most part, educators assume that, if we cover something, the students have learned it. We talk, they listen. We present, they absorb. At the end of a year, when we have covered everything according to our plan, the students are deemed ready for the next level—at least most of them are. In some cases, students who do not make progress are subjected to another year of the same material, usually presented in the same way, usually with the same books, and often with the same teachers. Then, if they fail for a second time, we usually move them ahead anyway, because keeping them back at this point makes even less sense.

—Ted Sizer

Elite education manufactures students who are smart and talented and driven, yes, but also anxious, timid, and lost, with little intellectual curiosity and a stunted sense of purpose.

—William Deresiewicz

Intellectual activity anywhere is the same whether at the frontier of knowledge or in a third grade classroom.

—Jerome Bruner

Nearly all children go to school nowadays, and have things arranged for them, that they seem so forlornly unable to produce their own ideas.

—Agatha Christie

The knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet.

--Lord Chesterfield

Sign on a high school bulletin board: 'Free every Monday through Friday—knowledge. Bring your own containers.'

--Unknown

We will be able to achieve a just and prosperous society only when our schools ensure that everyone commands enough shared knowledge to be able to communicate effectively with everyone else.

--E. D. Hirsch

Dry lectures never satisfy a thirst for knowledge.

—Unknown

People in school today can expect a lifetime in which knowledge itself will radically change—not only in its details but in its structures; so that the mark of a truly educated man will no longer be how much or even how variously he knows, but how quickly and how completely he can continually learn.

--Richard Kostelanetz

You must go to the school or to the books or on the field because knowledge doesn't come to you, you must go to the knowledge.

—Amit Kalantri

Students must be actively involved in constructing meaning...Learning must have utility. Often this is accomplished by linking learning to the world outside of school.

--David T. Conley

Too many parents regard school as a kind of free and convenient baby-sitting. They should realize that they are the first, best and most important teachers of all.

--Henry Johnston

Dad, if you really want to know what happened in school, then you've got to know exactly who's in the class, who rides the bus, what project they're working on in science, and how your child felt that morning....Without these facts at your fingertips, all you can really think to say is 'So how was school today?' And you've got to be prepared for the inevitable answer—'Fine.' Which will probably leave you wishing that you'd never asked.

—Ron Taffel

The best academy, a mother's knee.

--James Russell Lowell

The main business of the school is learning. One approach to learning is to view the school and the teacher as the storehouse of all, or most, of those things worth knowing. The basic role of the school in this view is to transmit this knowledge. Another approach to learning is to teach students the process of inquiry, of critical analysis, of experimentation. The first approach stresses the status quo and views the student as a more passive participant. The second approach sees the student as an active participant who will question what he sees, who will be prepared for, and more likely to demand change in the system.

--Samuel G. Christie

Of all the joyous motives of school life, the love of knowledge is the only abiding one; the only one which determines the scale, so to speak, upon which the person will hereafter live.

—Charlotte Mason

School and education should not be confused; it is only school that can be made easy.

--Emile Capouya

Most of us have learned a good deal more out of school than in it. We have learned from our families, our work, our friends. We have learned from problems resolved and tasks achieved but also from mistakes confronted and illusions unmasked....Some of what we have learned is trivial: some has changed our lives forever.

--Laurent A. Daloz

We have to abandon the idea that schooling is something restricted to youth. How can it be, in a world where half the things a man knows at 20 are no longer true at 40—and half the things he knows at 40 hadn't been discovered when he was 20?

—Arthur C. Clarke

The least of learning is done in the classrooms.

--Thomas Merton

If schools are operating at maximum efficiency, they are responsible for about 40 to 50 percent of what a child learns. The other 50 to 60 percent of learning comes from the family and the community. Without close articulation of and involvement with the family and larger community, schools will ultimately fail.

--Ted Sanders

If we could get our parents to read to their preschool children fifteen minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools.

--Dr. Ruth Love

The child to be concerned about is the one who is actively unhappy (in school)...In the long run, a child's emotional development has a far greater impact on his life than his school performance or the curriculum's richness, so it is wise to do everything possible to change a situation in which a child is suffering excessively.

--Dorothy H. Cohen

Students whose parents frequently meet with teachers and principals don't seem to improve faster than academically comparable peers whose parents are less present at school. Other essentially useless parenting interventions: observing a kid's class; helping a teenager choose high-school courses; and, especially, disciplinary measures such as punishing kids for getting bad grades or instituting strict rules about when and how homework gets done. This kind of meddling could leave children more anxious than enthusiastic about school.

--Dana Goldstein

One of the few ways parents can improve their kids' academic performance—by as much as eight points on a reading or math test—is by getting them placed in the classroom of a teacher with a good reputation....White parents are at least twice as likely as black and Latino parents to request a specific teacher. Given that the best teachers have been shown to raise students' lifetime earnings and to decrease the likelihood of teen pregnancy, this is no small intervention.

--Dana Goldstein

Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other.

—Edmund Burke

In one school year a child spends: 7800 hours at home & 900 hours at school. Which teacher should be the most accountable?

—Jim Trelease

Pesky parents are often effective, especially in public schools, at securing better textbooks, new playgrounds, and all the ‘extras’ that make an educational community come to life, like art, music, theater, and after-school clubs. This kind of parental engagement may not directly affect test scores, but it can make school a more positive place for all kids, regardless of what their parents do or don’t do at home. Getting involved in your children’s schools is not just a way to give them a leg up—it could also be good citizenship.

--Dana Goldstein

The flight to safety also happened at school. Dangerous play structures were removed from playgrounds; peanut butter was banned from student lunches. After the 1999 Columbine massacre in Colorado, many schools cracked down on bullying, implementing ‘zero tolerance’ policies. In a variety of ways, children born after 1980—the Millennials—got a consistent message from adults: life is dangerous, but adults will do everything in their power to protect you from harm, not just from strangers but from one another as well.

—Greg Lukianoff and  
Jonathan Haidt

A student, teacher, or counselor would look around to make sure no one was listening and then whisper a story about an Asian kid being punished or even kicked out of the house for a night after getting a B or failing to get into Stanford. I’d heard how new East Asian immigrant parents mistakenly transposed the reality of education in, say, China or Korea, which is that how you do on a single test can determine your entire future.

—Hanna Rosin

Curriculum, examinations, commencement, degrees are all part of the same system; they are all inherited from the Middle Ages, and in some form they go back to the twelfth century.

--Charles Homer Haskins

There’s a growing consensus that the most important input toward student achievement is child poverty and all the factors that go along with it. Unless and until we recommit ourselves to ending child poverty and reducing inequality, not just in schools but in families and communities, I don’t see us reinventing ourselves. We can’t put the cart before the horse. We’ve spent too long at this point saying, ‘If we improve schools we’ll erase poverty.’ I think it’s really time to try the other way around.

—Anya Kamenetz

Education begins at home. You can't blame the school for not putting into your child what you don't put into him.

—Geoffrey Holder

The scene is a familiar one: neatly aligned rows of desks, sharp, yellow No. 2 pencils in the hands of restless students waiting for the seal to be broken on stacks of freshly printed testing booklets. Inevitability permeates the room, as exam booklets are passed, one by one, through the rows. There is a strain of resignation to the teacher's voice as she reads from the scripted text: 'Clean off your desk. Fill in the circles completely. Press down firmly so the computer can read your answer sheets. OK, now begin; you have 20 minutes to complete this portion of the test. Answer the questions to the best of your ability.' The sound of scratching pencils fills the room as students work rapidly to complete analogies, recognize vocabulary words, and make simple calculations. With each question, students pause to select and carefully blacken the circles that punctuate the page. The work is serious, and the stakes are high. For better or worse, these students and this teacher are part of a drama in which all American education participates.

—Rieneke Zessoules and  
Howard Gardner

In some schools, tracking begins with kindergarten screening. IQ and early achievement tests designed to measure so-called 'ability' determine track placement in the elementary years, thus setting in place an educational trajectory for 12 years of schooling.

—Carol Corbett Burris  
and Delia T.  
Garrity

If you go to an elite school where the other students in your class are all really brilliant, you run the risk of mistakenly believing yourself to not be a good student.

—Malcolm Gladwell

In many countries, schools are preparing students to participate in a democratic environment; yet schools themselves tend to be extremely autocratic, with all high-level decisions being made by adults.

—Adora Svitak

Frankly, I'm not sure how far I would get if I attended public school today. It's not just that public schools aren't producing the results we want—it's that we're not giving them what they need to help students achieve at high levels. K-12 education in the United States is deeply antiquated.

—Eli Broad

Those who promote ability grouping, special education, gifted programs, and the myriad other homogeneous instructional groups in schools claim that these classifications are objective and color blind, rather than, as Goodlad suggests, reflecting myths and prejudices. Advocates of grouping explain the disproportionate classification of white students as gifted or advanced and of students of color as slow or basic as the unfortunate consequence of different backgrounds and abilities. They base their claims of objectivity on century-old (and older) explanations of differences that are neither scientific nor bias-free.

Both students and adults mistake labels such as ‘gifted,’ ‘honors student,’ ‘average,’ ‘remedial,’ ‘LD’ and ‘MMR’ for certification of overall ability or worth. These labels teach students that if the school does not identify them as capable in earlier grades, they should not expect to do well later. Everyone without the ‘gifted’ label has the de facto label of ‘not gifted.’ The resource classroom is a low status place and students who go there are low status students. The result of all this is that most students have needlessly low self-concepts and schools have low expectations. Few students or teachers can defy those identities and expectations. These labeling effects permeate the entire school and social culture.

—Jeannie Oakes and  
Martin Lipton

The schoolroom clock was worn raw by stares; and you couldn’t look up at the big Puritanical face of it and not feel the countless years of young eyes reflected in it, urging it onwards. It was a dark, old spirit that didn’t so much mark time as bequeath it.

—Tod Wodicka

The student’s biggest problem was a slave mentality which had been built into him by years of carrot-and-whip grading, a mule mentality which said, ‘If you don’t whip me, I won’t work.’ He didn’t get whipped. He didn’t work. And the cart of civilization, which he supposedly was being trained to pull, was just going to have to creak along a little slower without him.

This is a tragedy, however, only if you presume that the cart of civilization, ‘the system,’ is pulled by mules. This is a common, vocational, ‘location’ point of view, but it’s not the Church attitude.

The Church attitude is that civilization, or ‘the system’ or ‘society’ or whatever you want to call it, is best served not by mules but by free men. The purpose of abolishing grades and degrees is not to punish mules or to get rid of them but to provide an environment in which that mule can turn into a free man.

—Robert M. Pirsig

Running a school where the students all succeed, even if some students have to help others to make the grade, is good preparation for democracy.

—William Glasser

In the late 1950s, self-esteem hadn't yet been invented. High schools saw their sole mission as preparing students thoroughly for academic work.

—Edith Pearlman

Cope? Adapt? Uh, no. These are military kids. They roll with it. I once asked a new student, 'See any familiar faces?' She pointed out various kids and replied, 'Seattle, Tampa, Okinawa, New Jersey.' For military dependents school is literally a non-stop revolving door of old and new friends.

—Tucker Elliot

Service members will only stay on active duty if they can provide for their families—and DOD schools provide a world-class education that has proven time and again to be an incentive for sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines to reenlist. Military dependents that attend DOD schools are highly regarded by prestigious universities the world over for a number of reasons, but there's one that you'd have a hard time replicating in a stateside school system: they've lived overseas, traveled the world, seen and experienced other cultures, learned foreign languages through immersion, and they've gained an understanding of the world that you can't get in a traditional classroom. Add a rigorous curriculum and a long track record of high test scores throughout DOD schools, and it's pretty easy to see why military kids are in such high demand.

—Tucker Elliot

I hadn't gone to Andover, or Horace Mann or Eton. My high school had been the average kind, and I'd been the best student there. Such was not the case at Eli. Here, I was surrounded by geniuses. I'd figured out early in my college career that there were people like Jenny and Brandon and Lydia and Josh—truly brilliant, truly luminous, whose names would appear in history books that my children and grandchildren would read, and there were people like George and Odile—who through beauty and charm and personality would make the cult of celebrity their own. And then there were people like me. People who, through the arbitrary wisdom of the admissions office, might share space with the big shots for four years, might be their friends, their confidantes, their associates, their lovers—but would live a life well below the global radar. I knew it, and over the years, I'd come to accept it. And I understood that it didn't make them any better than me.

—Diana Peterfreund

Research shows that children do better in school and are less likely to drop out when fathers are involved. Engaged parents can strengthen communities, mentor and tutor students, and demonstrate through their actions how much they value their children's education.

—Arne Duncan

### **THE FIRST TEN LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL**

1. We are here to help you.
2. You will have time to get to your class before the bell rings.
3. The dress code will be enforced.
4. No smoking is allowed on school grounds.
5. Our football team will win the championship this year.
6. We expect more of you here.
7. Guidance counselors are always available to listen.
8. Your schedule was created with you in mind.
9. Your locker combination is private.
10. These will be the years you look back on fondly.

### **TEN MORE LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL**

1. You will use algebra in your adult lives.
2. Driving to school is a privilege that can be taken away.
3. Students must stay on campus during lunch.
4. The new text books will arrive any day now.
5. Colleges care more about you than your SAT scores.
6. We are enforcing the dress code.
7. We will figure out how to turn off the heat soon.
8. Our bus drivers are highly trained professionals.
9. There is nothing wrong with summer school.
10. We want to hear what you have to say.

—Laurie Halse Anderson

What a school thinks about its library is a measure of what it feels about education.

—Harold Howe

A long time ago, there was no such thing as school, and children spent their days learning a trade, a phrase which here means 'standing around doing tedious tasks under the instruction of a bossy adult.' In time, however, people realized that the children could be allowed to sit, and the first school was invented.

—Lemony Snicket

Ideally, what should be said to every child, repeatedly, throughout his or her school life is something like this: ‘You are in the process of being indoctrinated. We have not yet evolved a system of education that is not a system of indoctrination. We are sorry, but it is the best we can do. What you are being taught here is an amalgam of current prejudice and the choices of this particular culture. The slightest look at history will show how impermanent these must be. You are being taught by people who have been able to accommodate themselves to a regime of thought laid down by their predecessors. It is a self-perpetuating system. Those of you who are more robust and individual than others will be encouraged to leave and find ways of educating yourself — educating your own judgements. Those that stay must remember, always, and all the time, that they are being moulded and patterned to fit into the narrow and particular needs of this particular society.’

—Doris Lessing

‘Why aren’t you in school? I see you every day wandering around.’

‘Oh, they don’t miss me,’ she said. ‘I’m antisocial, they say. I don’t mix. It’s so strange. I’m very social indeed. It all depends on what you mean by social, doesn’t it? Social to me means talking to you about things like this.’ She rattled some chestnuts that had fallen off the tree in the front yard. ‘Or talking about how strange the world is. Being with people is nice. But I don’t think it’s social to get a bunch of people together and then not let them talk, do you? An hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running, another hour of transcription history or painting pictures, and more sports, but do you know, we never ask questions, or at least most don’t; they just run the answers at you, bing, bing, bing, and us sitting there for four more hours of film-teacher. That’s not social to me at all. It’s a lot of funnels and lot of water poured down the spout and out the bottom, and them telling us it’s wine when it’s not. They run us so ragged by the end of the day we can’t do anything but go to bed or head for a Fun Park to bully people around, break windowpanes in the Window Smasher place or wreck cars in the Car Wrecker place with the big steel ball. Or go out in the cars and race on the streets, trying to see how close you can get to lampposts, playing ‘chicken’ and ‘knock hubcaps.’ I guess I’m everything they say I am, all right. I haven’t any friends. That’s supposed to prove I’m abnormal. But everyone I know is either shouting or dancing around like wild or beating up one another. Do you notice how people hurt each other nowadays?’

— Ray Bradbury

School prepares you for the real world... which also bites.

—Jim Benton

It’s back to school time. Or as home-schoolers call it, stay-where-you-are time.

—Stephen Colbert

I've been making a list of the things they don't teach you at school. They don't teach you how to love somebody. They don't teach you how to be famous. They don't teach you how to be rich or how to be poor. They don't teach you how to walk away from someone you don't love any longer. They don't teach you how to know what's going on in someone else's mind. They don't teach you what to say to someone who's dying. They don't teach you anything worth knowing.

—Neil Gaiman

The preachers and lecturers deal with men of straw, as they are men of straw themselves. Why, a free-spoken man, of sound lungs, cannot draw a long breath without causing your rotten institutions to come toppling down by the vacuum he makes. Your church is a baby-house made of blocks, and so of the state.

...The church, the state, the school, the magazine, think they are liberal and free! It is the freedom of a prison-yard.

—Henry David Thoreau

I spent the next three hours in classrooms, trying not to look at the clocks over various blackboards, and then looking at the clocks, and then being amazed that only a few minutes had passed since I last looked at the clocks, but their sluggishness never ceased to surprise. If I am ever told that I have one day to live, I will head straight for the hallowed halls of Winter Park High School, where a day has been known to last a thousand years.

—John Green

Once you leave out all the bullshit they teach you in school, life gets really simple.

—George Carlin

'Mom, is the world coming to an end?' Jonny asked, picking up the plate of cookies and ramming one into his mouth.

'No, it isn't,' Mom said, folding her lawn chair and carrying it to the front of the house. 'And yes, you do have to go to school tomorrow.'

—Susan Beth Pfeffer

[On school uniforms] Don't these schools do enough damage making all these kids think alike, now they have to make them look alike too? It's not a new idea, either. I first saw it in old newsreels from the 1930s, but it was hard to understand because the narration was in German.

—George Carlin

## INSOMNIA

I cannot get to sleep tonight.  
I toss and turn and flop.  
I try to count some fluffy sheep  
while o'er a fence they hop.  
I try to think of pleasant dreams  
of places really cool.  
I don't know why I cannot sleep—  
I slept just fine at school.

—Kathy  
Kenney-Marshall

There was nothing like a Saturday—unless it was the Saturday leading up to the last week of school and into summer vacation. That of course was all the Saturdays of your life rolled into one big shiny ball.

—Nora Roberts

It was only high school after all, definitely one of the most bizarre periods in a person's life. How anyone can come through that time well adjusted on any level is an absolute miracle.

—E. A. Bucchianeri

[The public school system is] usually a twelve year sentence of mind control. Crushing creativity, smashing individualism, encouraging collectivism and compromise, destroying the exercise of intellectual inquiry, twisting it instead into meek subservience to authority.

—Walter Karp

School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age.

—Ivan Illich

To be changed by ideas was pure pleasure. But to learn ideas that ran counter to values and beliefs learned at home was to place oneself at risk, to enter the danger zone. Home was the place where I was forced to conform to someone else's image of who and what I should be. School was the place where I could forget that self and, through ideas, reinvent myself.

—Bell Hooks

School is one thing. Education is another. The two don't always overlap. Whether you're in school or not, it's always your job to get yourself an education.

—Austin Kleon

Everything I need to know... I learned in kindergarten.

—Robert Fulghum

Just don't take any class where you have to read BEOULF.

—Woody Allen

What is the most important thing one learns in school? Self-esteem, support, and friendship.

—Terry Tempest  
Williams

The human heart is my school.

—Anne Rice

High School: Oh, man. This is where boys and girls go from tweens to teens and become complicated and cruel. Girls play sick mind games; boys try to pull each other's penises off and throw them in the bushes. If you can, buy the most expensive jeans in a two-hundred-mile radius of your town and wear them on your first day. If anyone asks how you could afford them say that your father is the president of Ashton Kutcher. When they are like, 'Ashton Kutcher has a president?' answer, 'Yes.' Everyone will be in awe of you and you won't have to go through a lot of pain and cat fights.

—Eugene Mirman

There are quite a number of things taught in school that one has to unlearn or at least correct.

—Ambeth R. Ocampo

Because we were a poor area, the school had a small budget and was unable to teach the second half of the alphabet.

—George Carlin

I've never done acid, finding it hard to go willingly to a place that could be frightening, hellish, and totally beyond my control. A place much like high school.

—Libba Bray

I won't say ours was a tough school, but we had our own coroner. We used to write essays like 'What I'm Going to be If I Grow Up.'

—Lenny Bruce

### **AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL**

Dear Mr. Schneider,  
I attended your elementary  
School almost thirty years ago  
And I'm very sure that  
You will remember  
Me.

My name is Suzy.  
I'm that hyperactive girl  
From the Egyptian family  
Who used to always play dead  
On the playground during  
Recess.

You used to keep me  
After school a lot,  
And then my father would  
Force me to make the long  
Walk home in the cold or rain.  
Sometimes I would arrive  
After dark.

I'm writing to tell you  
That I was bored as a kid.  
I was bored by your curriculum  
And the way I was always taught a  
Bunch of useless  
Junk.

I did not like being locked up  
In a prison of scheduled time  
Learning about irrelevant material,  
And watching belittling cartoons and  
Shows approved by academia that

Made me even more  
Bored.

As a kid  
Who was constantly  
Growing, evolving, and  
Being shaped by all around me,  
I wanted to travel,  
See other kids  
In the world like me,  
To understand what was going  
On amongst us and around us,  
To know what we were here for  
And what was our real purpose  
For existence.

I have some questions  
I would like to ask you, Mr. Schneider,  
Now that I know that you are no  
Longer a school principal,  
But the new superintendent  
Of the entire school  
District.

I want to know  
Why racism today  
Was not clearly explained to me  
Even though we covered events  
That happened long ago.  
I want to know why you  
Never shared with us  
Why other countries  
Never liked us,  
Why we are taught to compete,  
To be divided in teams,  
And why conformity is associated  
With popularity, while  
Eccentricity is considered  
Undesirable?

I want to know  
Why my cafeteria lunches  
Were slammed packed  
With bottom-tier  
Processed junk food  
Only suitable  
For pigs?  
And why is it  
That whenever a bully  
Slammed a kid into a locker for  
His lunch money,  
Nobody explained to us  
That egotism, selfishness and greed  
Were the seeds of  
War?

I want to know  
Why we were never taught  
To stick up for each other,  
To love one another, and that  
Segregation sorted by the  
Occupations of our fathers,  
The neighborhoods we lived in, our houses,  
Choices of sport, wealth, clothing,  
Color of our skin  
And the texture of our hair  
Should never, ever  
Divide us?

And lastly,  
I want to know why  
Is it that whenever I pledged  
Allegiance to the flag,  
I was never told that I was  
Actually hailing to the  
Chief?

You used to say that  
I was a troubled child,  
A misfit, and that I needed

Obedience training,  
But you never acknowledged that  
I was the fastest runner in the district  
And that I took the school  
To State and Nationals to compete  
In the Spelling Bee among kids  
Grades higher than me.  
And that it was me,  
Who won that big trophy  
That sat in your office when you  
Used to detain me for hours  
And tell me I was no  
Good.

Mr. Schneider,  
If we are not taught truths as kids,  
Then how do you expect us to  
Grow up to be truthful citizens?  
If we are only being taught the written way,  
And it has not shown positive effects  
In societies of yesterday or today,  
Then how can we progress as a  
United and compassionate  
Nation?  
What good is it,  
To memorize the histories  
Of our forefathers,  
Without learning what could be  
Gained from their lessons and mistakes  
To improve our future  
Tomorrows?

And finally,  
I want to thank you;  
For I know you have a tough job  
Dealing with rebellious children like me.  
Your job of mass processing and boxing  
The young minds of America has not been an easy one,  
And I congratulate you  
On your recent promotion.

But I sincerely want to thank you,  
Thank you,  
And thank you,  
For always pointing out  
That I was  
Different.

—Suzy Kassem

Me, and thousands of others in this country like me, are half-baked, because we were never allowed to complete our schooling. Open our skulls, look in with a penlight, and you'll find an odd museum of ideas: sentences of history or mathematics remembered from school textbooks (no boy remembers his schooling like the one who was taken out of school, let me assure you), sentences about politics read in a newspaper while waiting for someone to come to an office, triangles and pyramids seen on the torn pages of the old geometry textbooks which every tea shop in this country uses to wrap its snacks in, bits of All India Radio news bulletins, things that drop into your mind, like lizards from the ceiling, in the half hour before falling asleep--all these ideas, half formed and half digested and half correct, mix up with other half-cooked ideas in your head, and I guess these half-formed ideas bugger one another, and make more half-formed ideas, and this is what you act on and live with.

—Aravind Adiga

You can't eat straight A's.

—Maxine Hong Kingston

The philosophy of the schoolroom in one generation is the philosophy of government in the next.

—Abraham Lincoln

I couldn't help but think about school and everything else ending. I liked standing just outside the couches and watching them—it was a kind of sad I didn't mind, and so I just listened, letting all the happiness and the sadness of this ending swirl around in me, each sharpening the other. For the longest time, it felt kind of like my chest was cracking open, but not precisely in an unpleasant way.

—John Green

Prison for the crime of puberty—that was how secondary school had seemed.

—David Brin

I must endure, fighting the temptation simply to become slack-jawed like most of my school ‘peers’ (they wish!), who will themselves into a collective, vacant, trance-like state for the duration of each class. (Although I sometimes secretly envy their ability to empty their minds completely for a full fifty minutes, reanimating only at the sound of a bell, like Pavlov’s dogs...)

—Beth Fantaskey

That is what is marvelous about school, she realized: when you are in school, your talents are without number, and your promise is boundless. You ace a math test: you will one day work for NASA. The choir director asks you to sing a solo at the holiday concert: you are the next Mariah Carey. You score a goal, you win a poetry contest, you act in a play. And you are everything at once: actor, astronomer, gymnast, star. But at a certain point, you begin to feel your talents dropping away, like feathers from a molting bird. Cello lessons conflict with soccer practice. There aren’t enough spots on the debating team. Calculus remains elusive. Until the day you realize that you cannot think of a single thing you are wonderful at.

—Sarah Shun-lien  
Bynum

The societies kids naturally form are tribal. Gangs, clubs, packs. But we’re herded into schools and terrified into behaving. Taught how we’re supposed to pretend to be, taught to parrot all kinds of nonsense at the flick of a switch, taught to keep our heads down and our elbows in and shut off our minds and shut off our sex. We learn we can’t even piss when we have to. That’s how we learn to be plastic and dumb.

—Marge Piercy

There’s a huge difference for taking responsibility for one’s actions, and taking credit, and in this scenario I think we need to give credit where credit is due. I won’t take responsibility for my teacher’s drinking problem, but I will take credit for it.

—Benjamin Tomes

Knightley Academy stood out against the moonlight in silhouette, a ramshackle collection of chimneys, turrets and gables. Both boys stopped to take in the sight of the manicured lawns and tangled woods, the soaring chapel and the ivy-covered brick of the headmaster’s house. They were home. For this, Henry felt, was home. Not some foreign castle encircled by guard towers, but this cozy, bizarre assortment of buildings with its gossiping kitchen maids and eccentric professors and clever students.

—Violet Haberdasher

School life is like being on a monkey mountain...monkeys in the same gang constantly fight and get back together again...and a hierarchy gets established.

—Shouko Akira

It is wrong to say that schoolmasters lack heart and are dried-up, soulless pedants! No, by no means. When a child's talent which he has sought to kindle suddenly bursts forth, when the boy puts aside his wooden sword, slingshot, bow-and-arrow and other childish games, when he begins to forge ahead, when the seriousness of the work begins to transform the rough-neck into a delicate, serious and an almost ascetic creature, when his face takes on an intelligent, deeper and more purposeful expression—then a teacher's heart laughs with happiness and pride. It is his duty and responsibility to control the raw energies and desires of his charges and replace them with calmer, more moderate ideals. What would many happy citizens and trustworthy officials have become but unruly, stormy innovators and dreamers of useless dreams, if not for the effort of their schools? In young beings there is something wild, ungovernable, uncultured which first has to be tamed. It is like a dangerous flame that has to be controlled or it will destroy. Natural man is unpredictable, opaque, dangerous, like a torrent cascading out of uncharted mountains. At the start, his soul is a jungle without paths or order. And, like a jungle, it must first be cleared and its growth thwarted. Thus it is the school's task to subdue and control man with force and make him a useful member of society, to kindle those qualities in him whose development will bring him to triumphant completion.

—Hermann Hesse

I don't believe in school prayer. I think it's total nonsense...who is the teacher there that is going to have them pray? And is the teacher going to be Catholic or Mormon or Episcopalian or what? It just causes all sorts of problems. And what are the kids praying about anyway? Does it really matter, does praying in school...what are you doing it for? The whole thing just opens up all sorts of elements of discussion. I think it's crazy.

—Charles M. Schulz

With large industries throwing out the factory model as counterproductive, it is long past time for schools to do the same. I wonder how many adults would do well at dealing with different job requirements and a different boss every 47 minutes.

—Susan Ohanian

The children start school now in August. They say it has to do with air-conditioning, but I know sadism when I see it.

—Rick Bragg

Books and school are great for learning but there is no substitute for life and living to provide a real education.

—Ken Poirot

The more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has—I'm not kidding.

—J. D. Salinger

Everyone who has ever been to school knows that school is prison, but almost nobody beyond school age says it is. It's not polite. We all tiptoe around the truth because admitting it would make us seem cruel and would point a finger at well-intentioned people doing what they believe to be essential. . . . A prison, according to the common, general definition, is any place of involuntary confinement and restriction of liberty. In school, as in adult prisons, the inmates are told exactly what they must do and are punished for failure to comply. Actually, students in school must spend more time doing exactly what they are told than is true of adults in penal institutions. Another difference, of course, is that we put adults in prison because they have committed a crime, while we put children in school because of their age.

—Peter Gray

Fifth grade was fourth grade with something wrong. Nothing changed outright. Instead it teetered. You'd pushed futility at Public School 38 so long by then you expected the building itself would be embarrassed and quit. The ones who couldn't read still couldn't, the teachers were teaching the same thing for the fifth time now and refusing to meet your eyes, some kids had been left back twice and were the size of janitors. The place was a cage for growing, nothing else. School lunch turned out to be the five-year-plan, the going concern. You couldn't be left back from fish sticks and sloppy joes. You'd retain at the least two thousand half-pint containers of vitamin D-enriched chocolate milk.

Two black guys from the projects, twins, were actually named Ronald and Donald MacDonald. The twins themselves only shrugged, couldn't be made to agree it was incredible.

—Jonathan Lethem

As long as high schools strive to list the number of Ivy League schools their graduates attend and teachers pile on work without being trained to identify stress-related symptoms, I fear for our children's health. I am not mollified by the alums of my daughter's school who return to tell everyone that the rigor of high school prepared them for college, making their first year easier than they'd anticipated.

If they make it that far.

—Candy Schulman

It wasn't for children, seventh grade. You could read the stress of even entering the building in the postures of the teachers, the security guards. Nobody could relax in such a racial and hormonal disaster area.

—Jonathan Lethem

### **WHAT I FOUND IN MY DESK**

A ripe peach with an ugly bruise,  
a pair of stinky tennis shoes,  
a day-old ham-and-cheese on rye,  
a swimsuit that I left to dry,  
a pencil that glows in the dark,  
some bubble gum found in the park,  
a paper bag with cookie crumbs,  
an old kazoo that barely hums,  
a spelling test I almost failed,  
a letter that I should have mailed,  
and one more thing, I must confess,  
a note from teacher: Clean This Mess!!!!

—Bruce Lansky

School is a terrible place, I have decided. There is nothing good about it except for math class. Everything else is a total waste of time. As I mentioned before I have done a lot of reading about prisons, and I notice that they always describe them as painted in very dull colors, and my school is also painted in these kinds of colors, with greenish lockers and brownish walls and grayish floors. Actually they recently fixed up one wing of the school, and now that part of the school is just the opposite—all the colors are really bright, with bright red and yellow lockers and blue doors and shiny white floors that are already all scuffed up. It's funny because I thought the other colors were terrible but these are much worse, because they make it seem like it's normal to be happy there when it isn't.

—Dara Horn

Immature citizens in several sizes were massed before a large factorylike structure where advanced techniques transformed them into true-thinking right-acting members of the three social classes, lower, middle, and upper middle.

—Donald Barthelme

Being a superhero is hard work. You have to save the world. But going to school is even harder. You have to save yourself.

—Lenore Look

School is learning things you don't want to know, surrounded by people you wish you didn't know, while working toward a future you don't know will ever come.

—Dave Kellett

In a universe where all life is in movement, where every fact seen in perspective is totally engaging, we impose stillness on lively young bodies, distort reality to dullness, make action drudgery. Those who submit—as the majority does—are conditioned to a life lived without their human birthright: work done with the joy and creativity of love.

But what are schools for if not to make children fall so deeply in love with the world that they really want to learn about it? That is the true business of schools. And if they succeed in it, all other desirable developments follow of themselves.

In a proper school, no fact would ever be presented as a soulless one, for the simple reason that there is no such thing. Every facet of reality, discovered where it lives, startles with its wonder, beauty, meaning.

—Marjorie Spock

Institutional wisdom tells us that children need school. Institutional wisdom tells us that children learn in school. But this institutional wisdom is itself the product of schools because sound common sense tells us that only children can be taught in school. Only by segregating human beings in the category of childhood could we ever get them to submit to the authority of a schoolteacher.

—Ivan Illich

When we first arrived at the school we received an extended introduction detailing what a wonderful place it was and how lucky we were to be there. But no one explained exactly why we were to be there. Yes, we understood the general objective was to accumulate knowledge, although learning Shakespeare and algebra did not strike us as particularly helpful to our future lives. I've yet to meet a single person who found a use for algebra in later life. The excuse proffered was that it developed intelligence. It struck me as extremely unintelligent not to give us the opportunity to study subjects that would be of practical use as well as develop our intelligence. I learned Boyle's law and Ohm's law parrot fashion without having a clue as to their meaning, yet left the school five years later incapable of changing a fuse or wiring a three-pin plug. Understandably, we formed the general impression that we were there for the same reason we were sent to Sunday school—to keep us out of mischief until we were old enough to work.

—Allen Carr

With homework, school prepares students for overtime. With reports, it prepares them for payday.

—Mokokoma

Mokhonoana

School, no matter how insignificant and annoying it may seem as we get older and can't wait to get away, sets us on our life's path. It plants ideas for us to thrive upon, teaches us where we want to go and who we want to be—feeding us the notion that our dreams are limitless, that we can do anything if we believe in it enough and truly set our minds to it. But, best of all, it encourages us to seek friendships of others, to learn to lean on them for support and to console them in return. After all, it's the people you meet along the way who really make a lasting impression and who will, if you're lucky, stick with you for the rest of your life.

—Giovanna Fletcher

Teachers who complain 'These kids have no work ethic' couldn't be farther off the mark. The problem is not that these kids lack a work ethic; the problem is that some of them see no connection between a work ethic and school. None of them would think, for example, to say to a customer at the MacDonald's drive-up window, 'Do you think I could get you those Chicken McNuggets some time tomorrow?' Yet we give sanction to that sort of request when it comes to school assignments.

—Garret Keizer

She was right: school was lonely. The eighteen and nineteen year olds didn't socialize with the younger kids, and though there were plenty of students my age and younger [...] their lives were so cloistered and their concerns so foolish and foreign-seeming that it was as if they spoke some lost middle-school tongue I'd forgotten. They lived at home with their parents; they worried about things like grade curves and Italian Abroad and summer internships at the UN; they freaked out if you lit a cigarette in front of them; they were earnest, well-meaning, undamaged, clueless. For all I had in common with any of them, I might as well have tried to go down and hang out with the eight year olds at PS 41.

—Donna Tartt

The butterflies in my stomach turn into vampire bats as we pull up to the school.

—Cat Clarke

Schools train you to be ignorant with style [...] they prepare you to be a usable victim for a military industrial complex that needs manpower. As long as you're just smart enough to do a job and just dumb enough to swallow what they feed you, you're going to be alright [...] So I believe that schools mechanically and very specifically try and breed out any hint of creative thought in the kids that are coming up.

—Frank Zappa

School was my solace, and studying let me escape, allowing me to live a thousand vicarious lives.

—Sarah Dessen

I think one of the problems [with raising intelligent children in modern society] is compulsory schooling...and that children are sitting there, and they are taught and told what to believe; they are passive from the very beginning—and one must be very, very aggressive intellectually to have a high IQ [...] the child is taught. Right from the beginning, it's a passive process. He or she sits there, and they simply try to believe everything they're told?

—Marilyn Vos Savant

The trouble with school is they give you the answer, then they give you the exam. That's not life.

—Ziad K. Abdelnour

In a traditional classroom, the spread between the fastest and slowest students grows over time, [and so] putting them all in one class cohort eventually makes it exceedingly difficult to avoid either completely boring the fast students or completely losing the slow ones. Most school systems address this by... putting the 'fastest' students in 'advanced' or 'gifted' class... and the slowest students into 'remedial' classes. It seems logical... except for the fact that it creates a somewhat permanent intellectual and social division between students.

—Salman Khan

School is one long illness with symptoms that switch every five minutes so you think it's getting better or worse. But really it's the same thing for years and years.

—Helen Oyeyemi

In brief, the teaching process, as commonly observed, has nothing to do with the investigation and establishment of facts, assuming that actual facts may ever be determined. Its sole purpose is to cram the pupils, as rapidly and as painlessly as possible, with the largest conceivable outfit of current axioms, in all departments of human thought—to make the pupil a good citizen, which is to say, a citizen differing as little as possible, in positive knowledge and habits of mind, from all other citizens. In other words, it is the mission of the pedagogue, not to make his pupils think, but to make them think right, and the more nearly his own mind pulsates with the great ebbs and flows of popular delusion and emotion, the more admirably he performs his function. He may be an ass, but this is surely no demerit in a man paid to make asses of his customers.

—H. L. Mencken

A true survivor is someone who, after 12+ years of being schooled, remains independent in their thinking.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

But I know I didn't love school for school's sake. I had never really been what people call an 'academic' person, nor did I see myself becoming one. Instead, I took pleasure in the fact that my work existed in a social setting, one that was based on the promise of a brighter future. I knew that what I adored about school was that each of my assignments - readings, essays, or in-class presentations - was inseparable from my relationships [...] If I loved school at all, I loved it for what it provided me access to: bonds with people I grew to cherish. And nothing was better than working toward my dreams alongside people I loved who were doing the same.

—Liz Murray

I speak up in class, I get sent to the office. Megan speaks up in class, she's a 'strong, assertive model student.' I post a few flyers saying that the vending machines on school property are a sign that our school has sold out to corporate-industrial establishment, I get (what else?) Saturday detention. Megan starts a campaign to serve local foods in the lunchroom (oh, and can we please maybe get rid of the soda machines?) and the local newspaper does a write-up about her. She's like me, only not. Not like me at all. She's the golden girl and I'm...tarnished. So forgive me if I hate her a little.

—Katie Alender

I was a born scientist, but my school turned me into just a student.

—Vijay Dhameliya

I don't know about you, but I find the idea of a school at night time—imagining the silent classrooms in total darkness and the playgrounds left lonesome and bare—creepily peculiar.

—Elizabeth Newton

Yet that is considered an excellent school, and I dare say it would be if the benighted lady did not think it necessary to cram her pupils like Thanksgiving turkeys, instead of feeding them in a natural and wholesome way. It is the fault with most American schools, and the poor little heads will go on aching till we learn better.

—Louisa May Alcott

The development of a tree depends on where it is planted.

—Edward Joyner

The best flower won't grow in the worst dirt, but the poorest flower will thrive in the richest loam.

--Greg Henry Quinn

School forces unique individuals to think, act, and, look alike.

—Mokokoma

Mokhonoana

So now, not only did my best friend leave, but the cheerleaders and their mindless followers assumed I was personally responsible for the petition (which, yeah, I was) and started being openly rude to me—shutting doors in my face, leaving nasty notes on my desk and in my locker, making fun of me when I could obviously hear them. That's when I started keeping really quiet in class, and finding ways to show the other kids I wasn't afraid of them—like staring them straight in the eye when they looked at me, taking a step toward them when they talked to me, or walking right up to them and getting in their personal space if I heard them say my name. Saying the meanest things I could think of whenever I had the chance—repeating rumors, embellishing them. I found out Kira Conroy had been arrested for shoplifting at the mall, and made sure everyone knew about it. The girl who burped in a boy's face during her first kiss, the girl who tripped and fell off the stage at the Miss Teen California pageant—I shared those stories the moment I heard them.

All's fair in war, right?

Suddenly I wasn't a nobody anymore.

I was a somebody.

Somebody everyone was afraid of.

—Katie Alender

She's called the secretary, but as far as I can tell she basically runs the school.

—Rebecca Stead

Kids didn't have huge backpacks when I was their age. We didn't have backpacks at all. Now it seemed all the kids had them. You saw little second-graders bent over like sherpas, dragging themselves through the school doors under the weight of their packs. Some of the kids had their packs on rollers, hauling them like luggage at the airport. I didn't understand any of this. The world was becoming digital; everything was smaller and lighter. But kids at school lugged more weight than ever.

—Michael Crichton

Beginning in 2011, Swanson Primary School in New Zealand submitted itself to a university experiment and agreed to suspend all playground rules, allowing the kids to run, climb trees, slide down a muddy hill, jump off swings, and play in a 'loose-parts pit' that was like a mini adventure playground. The teachers feared chaos, but in fact what they got was less naughtiness and bullying—because the kids were too busy and engaged to want to cause trouble, the principal said.

--Hanna Rosin

When Scythrop grew up, he was sent, as usual, to a public school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him; and he was sent home like a well-threshed ear of corn, with nothing in his head.

—Thomas Love Peacock

The senior year of high school has long been considered a lost year, a time when many students have earned most of their high school credits and have been accepted into college. With few requirements and little pressure, students often slack off in a common affliction known as 'senioritis.'

—Kelly Puente

Schools are structured in a manner that allows us to deliver a wealth of information and ideas to young people who lack our experience of and sophistication about the world. For the most part, educators assume that, if we cover something, the students have learned it. We talk, they listen. We present, they absorb. At the end of a year, when we have covered everything according to our plan, the students are deemed ready for the next level—at least most of them are. In some cases, students who do not make progress are subjected to another year of the same material, usually presented in the same way, usually with the same books, and often with the same teachers. Then, if they fail for a second time, we usually move them ahead anyway, because keeping them back at this point makes even less sense.

—Ted Sizer

What students lack in school is an intellectual relationship or conversation with the teacher.

—William Glasser

Is it not dangerous to have students study together for years, copying the same models and approximately the same path?

—Theodore Gericault

School in itself is a microcosm of society. These kids bring a lot of baggage with them, and as teachers with 30 plus kids in your classroom you have to take the time to get to know them, and not just see them as people you have to teach. And if they want to learn they will learn, and if they don't want to, then too bad. But you have to see them as your surrogate children.

—Charles Chuck Mackey

Our approach to education has remained largely unchanged since the Renaissance: From middle school through college, most teaching is done by an instructor lecturing to a room full of students, only some of them paying attention.

—Daphne Koller

Every day more educators are showing that they value students by involving them in meaningful ways in school. These teachers and administrators say that it is not about 'making students happy' or allowing students to run the school. Their experience shows that when educators partner with students to improve learning, teaching and leadership in schools, school change is positive and effective.

—Adam Fletcher

School is a factory where the raw material called student is turned into a product called employee.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

They were worried about keeping military families strong. They were worried about the stress and strain of prolonged military service and how it would affect our military readiness the next time a Hitler-wannabe reared his ugly head. As they made a list of pros and cons for sending families overseas, they never imagined that DOD schools would be the best possible solution to nearly every problem they could envision. The most unpredictable phenomena occurred. The DOD literally created a culture of kids whose life experiences were so rich, yet so different from where they'd come from, that as they grew in years the people they most related to, the people they most wanted to be around, were other military kids who had the same shared experience. Military kids became military members—and they've kept us strong, our families, armed forces, our country, all of us.

—Tucker Elliot

My junior high was dreadful. I see a lot of my fellow alumni on *America's Most Wanted*.

—Yancy Butler

There are two kinds of books in the world—the boring kind they make you read in school and the interesting kind that they won't let you read in school because then they would have to talk about real stuff like sex and divorce and is there a God and if there isn't then what happens when you die, and how come the history books have so many lies in them.

—LouAnne Johnson

The first few weeks of school were always surreal, like you landed on an alien planet with strange teachers and unfamiliar classrooms, even though the lockers and cafeteria seemed familiar.

—S. M. Stevens

Music, dance, painting, and theater are keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment. Children should be handed these keys at an early age. Yet, according to the *Council of Chief State School Officers*, boards of education in only 13 states specified the arts within formal statements of educational goals....A study by George Hardiman and Andra Johnson in *Art Education* found that elementary schools commit only 4 percent of their school week to art instruction, with only a quarter of that provided by trained art teachers. An elementary school that treats the arts as the province of a few gifted children, or views them only as recreation and entertainment, is a school that needs an infusion of soul. Children's imaginations yearn for the chance to transcend the ordinary, to hear and see what they have not heard and seen.

—William J. Bennett

(Because) it is the intellect which dominates schooling...the specifically soul making subjects—literature, drama, music, the visual arts—are progressively 'de-souled' as the child progresses through school.

—Dr. Bernie Neville

I believe that one reason why it is hard to interest some children in school today is that their minds have been filled and their imagination thrilled with too vivid motion pictures, and, when these children come to school, they are disappointed because the teacher cannot make the subject as interesting as a motion picture.

—Peter Olesen, School  
Superintendent,  
(1914)

It is a melancholy fact that in spite of the millions of dollars expended upon our schools, grammar and high, upon our colleges and our public libraries, a genuine love of literature is imparted to only a very small portion of our population.

--Sam Walter Foss

School made us 'literate' but did not teach us to read for pleasure.

—Ambeth R. Ocampo

In a school community, someone who reads a book for some secretive purpose, other than discussing it, is strange. What was she reading for?

—John Irving

...we're in English class, which for most of us is an excruciating exercise in staying awake through the great classics of literature. These works—groundbreaking, incendiary, timeless—have been pureed by the curriculum monsters into a digestible pabulum of themes and factoids we can spew back on a test. Scoring well on tests is the sort of happy thing that gets the school district the greenbacks they crave. Understanding and appreciating the material are secondary.

—Libba Bray

It's certainly no secret that American students are taught less and less about the canonical literary masterpieces of the past, and there is no shortage of people who believe that what little they're required to learn in school is still too much.

—Terry Teachout

In school we learn one of the most amazing and difficult feats man has ever accomplished—how to read—and at the same time we learn to hate to read the things worth reading most.

--Steve Allen

The elementary school must assume as its sublime and most solemn responsibility the task of teaching every child to read. Any school that does not accomplish this has failed.

—William J. Bennett

The benefits of recess might seem obvious—time to run around helps kids stay fit. But a large body of research suggests that it also boosts cognition. Many studies have found that regular exercise improves mental function and academic performance. And an analysis of studies that focused specifically on recess found positive associations between physical activity and the ability to concentrate in class. Perhaps most important, recess allows children to design their own games, to test their abilities, to role-play, and to mediate their own conflicts—activities that are key to developing social skills and navigating complicated situations.

—Alia Wong

Finnish kids get more than an hour of recess each day. More surprising, though, is the fact that in East Asian countries like China—the land of nine-hour school days and weekend cram classes—most schools give kids a 10-or every 20-minute break after each class, or about every hour.

—Alia Wong

Some claim that, a big source of reading problems is the deadening quality of what children are given to read. Children who go through the considerable work of learning to read can lose their appetite for it if all they get is drab monosyllabic vignettes in ‘readers.’ According to a *Department of Education* study, elementary schools tend to use basal readers up to the later grades—far beyond the point for which they were originally intended.

—William J. Bennett

He kissed me for a long moment, holding my shoulders, perhaps to keep me from pressing my whole body against his. Then he tried to lift my bag.

‘My God,’ he said. ‘What happened?’

‘I found out one may check out twenty books at a time from the school library.’

—Laura Whitcomb

English teachers and their students must have freedom to read and see and think and discuss and learn if there is any hope of reality entering the classroom. Where censors grant teacher ‘limited’ freedom as long as students read only ‘wholesome’ books and ‘uplifting’ magazines about ‘good’ Americans and ‘happy’ things, view only ‘suitable’ and ‘clean’ and ‘Christian’ films, create only ‘optimistic’ and ‘positive’ and ‘inspirational’ media materials, and discuss only ‘noncontroversial’ and ‘safe’ topics, there is no possibility of education and the search for truth, only the indoctrination into the community’s contemporary mores.

—Kenneth L. Donelson

Children who watch television every night will go down in history—not to mention arithmetic, geography, and science.

--Unknown

Our schools may be educating our children, but for better or worse; it’s television that’s teaching them.

--Peter Herrndorf

The electronic environment makes an information level outside the schoolroom that is far higher than the information level inside the schoolroom....The child knows that in going to school he is in a sense interrupting his education.

--H. Marshall McLuhan

There has been this new rash of surveys reporting that ‘kids don’t like computers’ or that schools are losing interest in them. That is a little like saying the child doesn’t like pencils; the child doesn’t like paper.

--Sherry Turkle

Frankly, it’s shocking that almost every other enterprise in this country—from banks to airlines to hotels to places of commerce—has, quite literally, been transformed by technology. These companies simply could not carry on their work without it. But if all the technology were suddenly removed from schools, hardly anyone would notice. How can we be serious about educating our children for the next century when we’ve barely equipped them for this one?

--Ernest Boyer

We need to recognize that our public schools are low-tech institutions in a high-tech society. The same changes that have brought cataclysmic change to every facet of business can improve the way we teach students and teachers. And it can also improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how we run our schools.

--Louis V. Gerstener, Jr.

Timid and unimaginative leaders who have tried to modernize their institutions by clinging to the status quo need to move aside. Visionary leaders, who can see the full potential of technological innovations in schools are what schools need.

--Dr. Terrel Bell

People who accept the idea that offices and factories need the latest in technology if they are to be productive and competitive often consider technology for schools a frill.

--Albert Shanker

We are still using 19th Century technology to educate the work force of the 21st Century....the nation’s school system lags far behind private business, and behind other sectors of government, in adopting the new technology needed to improve quality and productivity.

--*New York State  
Business Council*

The technological gap between the school environment and the ‘real world’ is growing so wide, so fast that the classroom experience is on the way to becoming not merely unproductive but increasingly irrelevant to normal human existence.

--Lewis J. Perelman

The philosophy of the classroom today will be the philosophy of government tomorrow.

—Abraham Lincoln

The school can compel to knowledge; the library must allure to knowledge.

--John Cotton Dana

The potential of the new technologies of Information and Communication should lead one to rethinking the role and functioning of schooling and schools in general...their content, their focus, their purpose, and their values. The technology will be very important, but primarily because it should force us to DO NEW THINGS rather than because it will enable us to do old things better.

--Peter Drucker

Since the introduction of microcomputers into elementary and secondary schools in the early 1980s, stories have blossomed of children who hate school, discovering the joy of learning through computing or who perform precocious intellectual feats at the keyboard.

--Pamela McCorduck and  
Avery Russell

A school without football is in danger of deteriorating into a medieval study hall.

--Vince Lombardi

We have a responsibility to represent the name on the front of our jerseys, on and off the field, in such a way that our fellow students, faculty, administrators and alumni have good reason to say...‘He’s one of ours.’ We have a responsibility to represent the name on the back of our jerseys in such a way that our parents, brothers, sisters, and family members have good reason to say...‘He’s one of us.’

--Kirk Cousins

I learned in school that money isn’t everything. It’s happiness that counts. So Momma sent me to a different school.

--Zsa Zsa Gabor

We don’t learn anything there [school]. The difference between schoolteachers and philosophers is that school-teachers think they know a lot of stuff that they try to force down our throats. Philosophers try to figure things out together with the pupils.

—Jostein Gaarder

Our woeful ignorance and lack of curiosity about the world beyond our borders amount almost to a national character flaw. Part of the reason is the short shrift given by our schools to geography.

--Alex Shoumatoff

I'm somewhat horrified because I don't think the young people today even know what history is. Some of them don't even study History at school anymore or Geography and they don't know where one place is from another.

—Joan Sutherland

The numbers are stark: One in four U.S. students will witness or experience a traumatic event before the age of 4, and more than two-thirds by age 16. These children do not—they cannot—simply close their eyes to what they've seen or experienced. With each forced eviction, each arrest of an adult in their home, each abuse to their own bodies, an instinctive trigger to 'fight or flee' is pulled over and again. Over time, a child's developing brain is changed by these repeated traumatic experiences. Areas that govern the retention of memory, the regulation of emotion, and the development of language skills are affected. The result is a brain that has structurally adapted for survival under the most stressful circumstances,—but not for success in school.

—Mary Ellen Flannery

How come we are not taught in school when to do our taxes, or how, or why, or even what taxes are, but if we get it wrong we go to jail?

—Ged Backland

If boys and girls do not learn discipline in their school days, money and time spent on their education is so much national loss.

--Mahatma Gandhi

By some strange perversity we are taught all sorts of useless things, but nothing is done about the art of conduct. We are supposed to be getting trained for society but are taught as if each one of us were going to live a life of contemplation in a solitary cell.

--Jean Jacques Rousseau

It is true that many of the causes of discipline problems lie within the nature of our society as well as within the nature of our schools.

--Eugene R. Howard

If a boy be of a mischievous, wicked inclination, no school will ever make him good.  
--Henry Fielding

Most American schools today operate according to a philosophy of discipline that has its roots in the 1980s and '90s, when a belief that schools would be safer and more effective if they had 'zero tolerance' of violence, drug use, and other types of misbehavior led to a sharp rise in suspensions. In 2010, more than a tenth of all public-high-school students nationwide were suspended at least once. And suspension rates are substantially higher among certain demographic groups. African American students, for example, are suspended three times as often as white students. In Chicago public high schools (which have particularly good and well-analyzed data on suspensions), 27 percent of students who live in the cities poorest neighborhoods received an out-of-school suspension during the 2013-14 school year, as did 30 percent of students with a reported personal history of abuse or neglect.  
—Paul Tough

In their landmark survey of single parenthood, Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur showed that children in single-parent homes do not do as well as children who are living with both biological parents. They are more likely to have trouble in school, more likely to drop out of school and, later, more likely to become single parents themselves. Some of this is simply the fact that unstable people are more likely to become single parents and also more likely to have difficulty parenting. But even the children of widows and widowers do worse on many measures than children of intact homes—a problem that was recognized back in the 19th century, when disease and work accidents frequently carried off parents in their prime. Something about living with only one parent holds kids back. That 'something'...is fewer resources. The Internet overflows with essays on the resourcefulness, grit, and sheer heroism of single parents who manage to be 'both mother and father' to their children. But while we should have nothing but admiration for people who do their best in a bad situation, we should still recognize that for the child, and often for the parent, it's a bad situation.

--Megan McArdle

Regardless of GPA, race or prior offenses, students who have been arrested are nearly twice as likely as their peers to drop out of high school, even if they never go to court, according to a 2006 study by the criminologist Gary Sweeten. 'Just being arrested can have long-term consequences,' says Josh Gupta-Kagan, an assistant professor specializing in juvenile justice at the University of South Carolina School of Law. 'Teenagers start to see the school as out to get them.'

—Amanda Ripley

Black girls are 20 percent of preschool girls, but 54 percent of the girls facing out-of-school suspension in preschool. That number, and also the disparities around corporal punishment, are two points that show how schools are assessing threats among really young children. Those of us who have seen a 6-year-old throw a tantrum know they can throw a mean tantrum—but there are ways we can respond without pushing them out of school. What this says to me is that Black girls, from a very young age, are treated as disposable. What it also says is that we need to find ways to support them.

—Mary Ellen Flannery

The ‘gay boy’ you punched in the hall today committed suicide a few minutes ago. That girl you called a slut in class today. She’s a virgin. The boy you called lame. He has to work every night to support his family. That girl you pushed down the other day. She’s already being abused at home. That girl you called fat. She’s starving herself. The old man you made fun of cause of the ugly scars. He fought for our country. The boy you made fun of for crying. His mother is dying. You think you freaking know them. Guess what? You don’t!

—Fabiana Pereira

‘Mr. Vey, you cannot be stuffed into a locker without your consent.’ Dallstrom said, which may be the dumbest thing ever said in a school. ‘You should have resisted.’ That’s like blaming someone who was struck by lightning for getting in the way.’

—Richard Paul Evans

Schoolboys are a merciless race, individually they are angels, but together, especially in schools, they are often merciless.

—Fyodor Dostoyevsky

I could sum up my younger life in one word—Misunderstanding. Most of my school life was spent in protection mode. Which made any ‘benefit’ I could get from socializing, useless.

—Tina J. Richardson

Children who are without parental guidance and care before and after school are twice as likely as children with care to be users of alcohol. The same relationship holds true for smoking behavior and for marijuana behavior...There also is a strong predictive [link between] a child’s friend using drugs—cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana—and that child’s risk for subsequent use....One of the best protective factors to help a child ward off drugs is achievement and motivation—being successful in school.

—Dr. William Bukowski

How sad that physics is viewed as more important than psychology and human development [in high school], as parents struggle to raise children wisely and families work hard to understand one another.

—Grant Wiggins

During my research in the Los Angeles area, I interviewed a couple of gang members. They said that the schools are doing some really neat things, but that the problem they have in terms of prevention and intervention is they target mainly kids in the sixth grade. That's too late.

—Carlos Jimenez

Go to a parent meeting on some topic like 'Teens and Drinking' and you're likely to get an earful about how to keep your teen drinker safe. Teach her to recognize signs of alcohol poisoning in her friends; tell her it's always okay to call 911; advise her to check in on conked-out partygoers every 15 minutes or so to make sure they're just sleeping it off and not unconscious. The message doesn't involve any moral or emotional imperatives; it has to do only with not ending up dead or in jail.

—Caitlin Flanagan

Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?

—Michel Foucault

Most law-enforcement officers are trained to assert authority, to take control of the situation. In a school context, that's bad advice.

—Mark Soler

When students cheat on exams it's because our school system values grades more than students value learning.

—Neil deGrasse Tyson

I think if you cheat in an ethics class then there's really no hope for you.

—Joe Hill

The first gold star a child gets in school for the mere performance of a needful task is its first lesson in graft.

--Philip Wylie

I hated school. Even to this day, when I see a school bus it's just depressing to me.  
The poor little kids.

—Dolly Parton

We have become obsessed with what is good about small classrooms and oblivious about what also can be good about large classes. It's a strange thing isn't it, to have an educational philosophy that thinks of the other students in the classroom with your child as competitors for the attention of the teacher and not allies in the adventure of learning.

—Malcolm Gladwell

The single most important factor in determining the climate of an organization is the top executive.

—Charles Galloway

No institution can survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized to get along under a leadership of average human beings.

--Peter Drucker

One should guard against preaching to young people success in the customary form as the main aim in life. The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community.

—Albert Einstein

If we go to school to learn, and knowledge is power and power is corrupt and corruption is crime and crime doesn't pay then why the hell do we go to school?

—Unknown

President John F. Kennedy often invoked Lord Gladstone's quote, 'Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan.' If we apply this to our secondary schools, we see this rings true. Those who are successful in academics, athletics, or activities have no trouble finding adult advocates. In fact, many of them have several adults to give them guidance or complete recommendations supporting their applications for more challenging coursework, organizations, or institutions of higher learning. Many high schools even formally celebrate the signing of grants-in-aid by their athletic stars. Unfortunately, it is the lower-achieving students, who compose the bulk of a secondary school's students, that often lack the adult guidance they need.

—John M. Jenkins

When you ask students aged 11 to 15 ‘Where in school do you feel important?’ they look at you as if to say, ‘that’s ridiculous! Of course you don’t feel important in school.’

—William Glasser

The *National Association of Mediation in Education* suggests many reasons for implementing conflict resolution programs in the school, including:

1. Conflict is a natural human state often accompanying changes in our institutions or personal growth. It is better approached with skills than avoidance.
2. More appropriate and effective systems are needed to deal with conflict in the schools setting than expulsion, suspension and detention.
3. Conflict resolution programs can result in improved communication between and among students, teachers, administrators and parents.
4. Conflict resolution can result in a reduction of violence, vandalism, chronic school absence and suspension.
5. Conflict resolution programs provide a forum for addressing common concerns and improve the school climate.
6. Conflict resolution training helps both youth and adults to deepen their understanding about themselves and others and provides them with lifetime skills.
7. Shifting the responsibility for solving conflicts from adults to students frees administrators and faculty to concentrate on instruction and rather than discipline.
8. Recognizing that youth are competent to participate in the resolution of their own disputes encourages student growth and develops skills such as listening, critical thinking and problem solving that are basic to all learning.
9. Conflict resolution training with its emphasis upon listening to other’s points of view and finding common ground, assists in preparing students to live in a diverse world.

—*National Association  
of Mediation in  
Education*

The root causes of alienation and its extraordinary impact on the American high school are numerous and complex. Poverty, ethnic discrimination, inadequate nutrition, physical and psychological child abuse, unemployment, and the availability of drugs and alcohol, comprise some of the significant conditions that generate discontent in our nation’s youth. Such factors create a foundation from which alienation grows rapidly.

— Clement A. Seldin

Caring is crucial to the development of young adolescents into healthy adults. All youth of this developmental period need guidance as they move through this critical period replete with a variety of biological, psychological, and social changes. There is a crucial need for middle level schools to help young adolescents acquire (a) durable self-esteem, (b) flexible and inquiring habits of mind, (c) reliable and relatively close human relationships, (d) a sense of belonging in a valued group, and (e) a sense of usefulness in some way beyond the self.

Many counselors have recognized the typical school for what it is too often—an affective desert—and have retreated to their offices where they have attempted to create an ‘affective oasis,’ one place in the school where students can come for affective revitalization.

—Gary W. Mauk and  
Matthew J. Taylor

### **ADOLESCENCE: NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN**

For many adults, adolescence is a forgotten time in our lives—forgotten because we prefer to forget it. At no other time are we confronted with so many dramatic changes, and at no other time are we so poorly equipped with understanding to cope with those changes. Our bodies change, and we feel it, but we don’t understand it. Our feelings change and we don’t understand why. Our friends change and we feel the peer pressure, but we feel it without understanding it.

Middle level schools are where understanding happens. It is where young adolescents come to understand what is happening to them, what is happening in their world, and what is going to happen in their future. Middle level schools are full of people who care about helping these youngsters develop the understanding that leads to a healthy, productive adulthood. As a nation, we can be grateful for the support of schools to which we have entrusted the care of our young adolescent children.

—J. Howard Johnston

The best preparation for good work tomorrow is to do good work today.

--Elbert Hubbard

Schools have used the team concept classrooms less than any other part of society... you sit and work by yourself, keep quiet, don’t share, don’t relate to one another.

—William Glasser

Poetry is so vital to us until school spoils it.

—Russell Baker

A good citizen is one who continues to vote for new schools even after his children have grown up.

--Evan Esar

Diversity without unity makes about as much sense as dishing up flour, sugar, water, eggs, shortening, and baking powder on a plate and calling it a cake.

--C. William Pollard

Schools are language-saturated institutions. They are places where books are thumbed, summarized, and 'revised'; notes are dictated, made, kept, and learned; essays are prepared, written, marked; examination questions are composed, and the attendant judgments made. Teachers explain, lecture, question, exhort, reprimand. Pupils listen, reply, make observations, call out, mutter, whisper, and make jokes. Small knots gather over books, lathes, easels or do nothing in classrooms, laboratories, workshops, craftrooms, corridors, and toilets to chatter, discuss, argue, plan, plot, and teach one another.

—Douglas Barnes

The child learns more of the virtues needed in modern life—of fairness, of justice, of comradeship, of collective interest and action—in a common school than can be taught in the most perfect family circle.

--Charlotte Perkins  
Gilman

We need to nurture uniqueness and independence....Ours must be schools for ego-strength—the child's ego, not the teacher's. 'You can do it!' has to be the teacher's consistent, over-and-over steady slogan: 'You can hang up your own coat....' 'You can pour your own juice....' 'You can climb to the top....' 'You can figure it out.' We have no stake in schools where children learn to color within the lines. No stake in pushing for unnecessary conformity, no stake in children submerging themselves in the group, no stake in everlasting lessons in obediently following the directions.

--James L. Hymes, Jr.

Have you noticed how the cleverest people at school are not those who make it in life?

People who are conventionally clever get jobs on their qualifications (the past), not on their desire to succeed (the future).

Very simply, they get overtaken by those who continually strive to be better than they are.

—Paul Arden

We frail humans tend to harbor the fantasy that when our ship finally comes in, our best efforts will no longer be required. In fact, 'making it' is one of the most dangerous things that can happen to a human being. And when that malady infects an organization, it's even worse.

--Jeff Ward

I think one of the worst things schools have done is taken out all of the stuff like art, music, woodworking, sewing, cooking, welding, auto-shop. All these things you can turn into careers. How can you get interested in these careers if you don't try them on a little bit?

—Temple Grandin

One goes through school...learning little or nothing about goodness but a good deal about success.

--Ashley Montagu

My school days were the happiest days of my life; which should give you some indication of the misery I've endured over the past twenty-five years.

—Paul Merton

Manufacturing, construction, auto repair jobs, and dozens of other industries are feeling the...pinch of hiring and retaining sufficient trained workers. There is, however, a larger context to the problem...the state has sorely neglected vocational education in the popular, if wrongheaded, drive to direct every high school student into college, even though no more than a fifth of high school graduates will, in fact, obtain four-year degrees. A recent survey by the *Public Policy Institute of California* found that nearly two-thirds of Californians believe that someone must have a college education to succeed, which is patently wrong, as the highly paid technical and blue-collar jobs now going begging attest. Politicians and the education establishment feed that canard through policies that elevate college preparation above all other considerations....

At the same time, however, California is losing millions of potential replacements for those aging baby boom workers by allowing nearly a third of high school students to drop out without obtaining diplomas.

—Dan Walters

I was raised in a small town called Critz, Virginia. It was so small that our school taught Driver's Ed and Sex Ed in the same car.

--Mary Sue Terry

Experience is an expensive school, but a fool will learn from no other.

—Japanese Proverb

School is disappointing. If science is exciting and art is exhilarating, the schools and universities have achieved the not inconsiderable feat of rendering both dull. As every scientist and poet knows, one discovers both vocations in spite of, not because of, school. It takes years to recover from the stupor of being taught Shakespeare in English Lit and Wheatstone's bridge in Physics.

—Walker Percy

Too much learning, too soon, before the child is ready and dealt out too hard is a 100% guarantee of failure both for the child as he attempts to learn, and for the school which is attempting to teach. Too little learning, too late after the learner is ready for it and needs it, and too lightly presented without depth and emphasis upon its worthwhileness, is a 100% guarantee of producing a whole new generation of mediocre achievers, regardless of their capacities and abilities.

—Genevieve B. Syverson

In school we learn that mistakes are bad, and we are punished for making them. Yet, if you look at the way humans are designed to learn, we learn by making mistakes. We learn to walk by falling down. If we never fell down, we would never walk.

—Robert T. Kiyosaki

To separate (Negro children) from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone....We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

--Chief Justice Earl  
Warren  
(1891-1974)

What the small boy needs to know is that there are men in this world who are like him, black men, African-American men, who read and write and find the whole process of academics something valuable....The epidemic of academic failure in the African-American male population is not going to stop unless we, African-American men, begin to do the job that we can do.

--Spencer Holland

Black girls make up 16 percent of girls in U.S. public schools, but 42 percent of girls' expulsions and more than a third of girls' school-based arrests.

—Mary Ellen Flannery

People don't change. The way someone is in high school is who they are, period!

—Cate Plys

The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section or the state in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby, born in the same place, on the same day; one-third as much chance of completing college; one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man; twice as much chance of becoming unemployed; about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year; a life expectancy which is seven years shorter and the prospects of earning only half as much.

--John F. Kennedy

Education remains the key to both economic and political empowerment. That is why the schools which are in charge of educating African Americans have, perhaps, the longest, the greatest, the deepest challenges of all...to get into the minds of young African Americans so that they who recognize opportunity will come to those who are prepared.

--Barbara Jordan

The children start school now in August. They say it has to do with air-conditioning, but I know sadism when I see it.

--Rick Bragg

The whole gangster mentality, it's killing our youth. Black males, we're really just choking ourselves with this whole macho shit, where you can't show any tenderness, no vulnerability, no nothing. You have to be granite, 100 percent. And that's just not natural. And another thing: you have a hundred thousand black kids across this country failing class's on purpose because of peer pressure. And if you speak proper English, and you get straight A's in school, then you're considered a white boy or a white girl. But if you're hanging on the corner, scratching your nuts, drinking, then you're down. So, you know, the whole value system is fucked up; ignorance is being championed over intelligence.

--Spike Lee

The child is surrounded by so much authority, so much school, so much dignity, so much law, that it would have to break down under the weight of all these restraints if it were not saved from such a fate by meeting with a friend.

--Dr. Wilhelm Stekhel

Alabama joined other southern states in passing laws allowing or requiring school boards to shut schools to avoid having even a handful of black children sit in classrooms with white ones. Some states helped fund the all-white academies popping up across the South. State officials encouraged white parents to remove their children from public schools, helping to set off the white flight that continues to plague school systems today. Two years after the Brown ruling, not a single black child attended school with white children in eight of the 11 former Confederate states, including Alabama.

--Nikole Hannah-Jones

Black Americans who attended schools integrated by court order were more likely to graduate, go on to college, and earn a degree than black Americans who attended segregated schools. They made more money: five years of integrated schooling increased the earnings of black adults by 15 percent. They were significantly less likely to spend time in jail. They were healthier.

--Nikole Hannah-Jones

Approximately 1,000 high school students will drop out with each hour that passes in a school day in America. This means that 30 percent of the class of 2007, or 1.2 million students, were estimated to have dropped out last year. The high school dropout crisis has received significant recent attention from researchers, policy makers and the media. It has been widely reported that one in three boys, and nearly 50 percent or more of some racial and ethnic groups of boys, will fail to graduate from high school with a diploma in four years. This is an alarming finding that demands prompt remedial action. What has been generally overlooked, however, is that girls, too, are dropping out of high school at dangerously high rates. In fact, one in four girls overall do not finish high school, and the numbers are worse for girls of color. One in two Native American female students, four in ten Black female students, and nearly four in ten Hispanic female students fail to graduate with a diploma each year. There are significant costs to be paid by both the individual and the nation as a whole for each and every student who drops out of high school. In general, dropouts face significant challenges to obtaining employment and achieving economic security. Female dropouts are at particular economic risk. As compared to their male peers, girls who fail to graduate from high school have higher rates of unemployment; make significantly lower wages; and are more likely to need to rely on public support programs to provide for their families. With so many students dropping out of high school each year, the aggregate drain on our nation's economy—through foregone income tax revenue and increased public spending—is substantial. At a time when every hour counts, the dropout rates and educational experiences of female students cannot be ignored.

—*National Women's Law  
Center*

Black progress did not come at the expense of white Americans—white students in integrated schools did just as well academically as those in segregated schools. Other studies have found that attending integrated schools made white students more likely to later live in integrated neighborhoods and send their own children to racially diverse schools.

--Nikole Hannah-Jones

Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it in summer school.

—Josh Stern

We like to think of college as a meritocracy, a place where only the dedicated and smart survive. But it seems to be something else. Between 1970 and 2012, the proportion of American 24-year-olds who came from affluent families and had a bachelor's degree rose from 40 percent to 73 percent—quite an enlightenment period for privileged kids. But over the same period, the proportion of American 24-year-olds who came from low-income families and had a bachelor's degree rose from 6 percent to just 8 percent. The country's uneven public-school systems cannot be blamed entirely for this state of affairs. Too many people come to college unprepared academically, it's true. But even those low-income students who outperform their affluent peers on tests are less likely to graduate from college.

—Amanda Ripley

During my eleven years as a New York City public school teacher, I saw firsthand the impact that poverty has on the classroom. In low-income neighborhoods like Sunset Park, where I taught, students as young as five years old enter school affected by the stresses often created by poverty: domestic violence, drug abuse, gang activity.

—Sal Albanese

To me, summer has always been about potential. This was especially true when I was in high school. Those 3 or so months between 1 school year and the next always meant change. People got taller or wider or smaller. They broke up or came together, lost friends or gained them, had life experiences that you could tell had transformed them even if you didn't know what they were. In the summer, the days were long, stretching into each other. Out of school, everything was on pause and yet happening at the same time, this collection of weeks when anything was possible. As a teenager, I was always hoping to change, to become someone other than who I was. Each summer, I felt I had the chance to do that. All I had to do was wait and see what happened.

— Sarah Dessen

Autumn was her happiest season. There was an expectancy about its sounds and shapes: the distant thunk pomp of leather and young bodies on the practice field near her house made her think of bands and cold Coca-Colas, parched peanuts and the sight of people's breath in the air. There was even something to look forward to when school started—renewals of old feuds and friendships, weeks of learning again what one half forgot in the long summer. Fall was hot-supper time with everything to eat one missed in the morning when too sleepy to enjoy it.

— Harper Lee

Don't you love New York in the fall? It makes me want to buy school supplies.

—Nora Ephron

There's an energy to these autumn nights that touches something primal inside of me. Something from long ago. From my childhood in western Iowa. I think of high school football games and the stadium lights blazing down on the players. I smell ripening apples, and the sour reek of beer from keg parties in the cornfields. I feel the wind in my face as I ride in the bed of an old pickup truck down a country road at night, dust swirling in the taillights and the entire span of my life yawning out ahead of me.

— Blake Crouch

Striving for perfection in mind, body and spirit is a Korean way of life, and the cult of endless self-improvement begins as early as the hagwons, cram schools that keep the nation's children miserable and sleep-deprived, and sends a sizable portion of the population under the plastic surgeon's knife.

—Gary Shyteyngart

Friends aren't any more important than breath or blood to a high school senior.

--Betty Ford

This life's hard, man, but it's harder if you're stupid!

—Steven Keats  
in *The  
Friends of  
Eddie Coyle*

Apply yourself at school and at work. And to cover all your bases, marry a man with money.

—Daniela Drake

Life is a learned skill, but instead of teaching it, our culture force-fills developing minds with long division and capital cities—until, at the end of the mandatory period of bondage that’s hyperbolically called school, we’re sent into the world knowing little about it. And so, left on our own to figure out the most important parts of life, we make mistakes for years until, by the time we’ve learned enough from our stumbling to be effective human beings, it’s time for us to die.

—Neil Strauss

I found one day in school a boy of medium size ill-treating a smaller boy. I expostulated, but he replied: ‘The bigs hit me, so I hit the babies; that’s fair.’ In these words he epitomized the history of the human race.

--Bertrand Russell

The true birthplace is that wherein for the first time one looks intelligently upon oneself; my first homelands have been books, and to a lesser degree schools.

—Marguerite Yourcenar

I realized everyone around me was wearing a uniform. Black pants, white button-down shirts, green ties. Gotta love the smell of institutional equality in the morning.

—Francesca Zappia

When girls feel bad about their looks, 60 percent avoid normal daily activities like raising their hand in class or even going to the doctor. That means that girls do not show up for life when they don’t feel good enough or pretty enough. A role model can help girls see beauty as a source of confidence, not anxiety.

—Mandy Moore

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again. And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them....‘Do you know what you are?’ You are a marvel. You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed there has never been another child like you. And look at your body....what a wonder it is! You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work; we all must work to make this world worthy of its children. The love of one’s country is a natural thing. But why should love stop at the border? We are all leaves of a tree and the tree is humanity.

--Pablo Casals

The house is a prison, the schoolroom's a cell;  
Leave study and books for the upland and dell.

--Joseph H. Green

I hate when I see some old person and then realize we went to high school together.

—Unknown

If nothing else, school teaches that there is an answer to every question; only in the real world do young people discover that many aspects of life are uncertain, mysterious, and even unknowable. If you have a chance to play in nature, if you are sprayed by a beetle, if the color of a butterfly's wing comes off on your fingers, if you watch a caterpillar spin its cocoon-- you come away with a sense of mystery and uncertainty. The more you watch, the more mysterious the natural world becomes, and the more you realize how little you know. Along with its beauty, you may also come to experience its fecundity, its wastefulness, aggressiveness, ruthlessness, parasitism, and its violence. These qualities are not well-conveyed in textbooks.

—Michael Crichton

What is done by the family in the home environment has far greater influence on children than anything a school can do or undo. Unstable homes, with parents in motion day and night and over weekends make the school's job difficult, if not impossible.

--Terrell H. Bell

Labor Day is a glorious holiday because your child will be going back to school the next day. It would have been called Independence Day, but that name was already taken.

—Bill Dodds

I can say anecdotally that every kid I knew who was chronically truant came from a home in chaos. I had a student last year who was absent about half the time because his father had been shot and his mother, who had lost her job, cried every night because she didn't know how she would pay the rent. My student walked the streets day after day looking for a job, even though no one would hire him because he was only 15. His mother begged him to stay in school and graduate, assuring him she would figure something out. Our counselor referred the family to public services, but because my student's mother was undocumented, she was afraid to seek them. And my student continued to be absent about half the time.

—Ellie Herman, Teacher

The amount of educational programming on television today is simply desensitizing. The only reason left to go to school is to see gun violence.

--Bauvard

You've never seen a Columbine done by a black child. Never. They always say, 'We can't believe it happened here. We can't believe it's these suburban white kids.' It's only them!

—Van Jones

Any child who can spend an hour or two a day, or more if he wants, with adults that he likes, who are interested in the world and like to talk about it, will on most days learn far more from their talk than he would learn in a week of school.

—John Holt

There's nothing like castrating 20 pigs before lunch. I did that during school whenever the need arose. They'd call out the agricultural class and put us in trucks to go help the local farmers.

--Fred Ward

Schools have always occupied prime space in the excitable American imagination. For decades, if not centuries, politicians have made hay of their supposed failures and extortions. In 2004, Rod Paige, then George W. Bush's secretary of education, called the country's leading teachers union a 'terrorist organization.' In his first education speech as president, in 2009, Barack Obama lamented the fact that 'despite the resources that are unmatched anywhere in the world, we've let our grades slip, our school crumble, our teacher quality fall short, and other nations outpace us.'

—Erika Christakis

Thomas Jefferson, among other historical titans, understood that a functioning democracy required an educated citizenry, and crucially, he saw a education as a public good to be included in the 'articles of public care,' despite his preference for the private sector in most matters. John Adams, another proponent of public schooling, urged, 'There should not be a district of one mile square, without a school in it, not founded by a charitable individual, but maintained at the expense of the people themselves.'

In the centuries since, the courts have regularly affirmed the special status of public schools as a cornerstone of the American democratic project. In his vigorous defense of students' civil liberties—to protest the Vietnam War, for example, or not to salute the flag—the Supreme Court has repeatedly held public schools to an especially high standard precisely because they play a unique role in fostering citizens.

—Erika Christakis

I cannot help but wonder whether, by continuing and expanding the school lunch program, we aren't witnessing, if not encouraging, the slow demise of yet another American tradition the brown bag. ... Perhaps we are beholding yet another break in the chain that links child to home.

—Charles Mathias, Jr.

'But why,' he said with animation, 'do the English not read their own great literature?'

Victor laughed triumphantly, and said, 'Because at school they are made to hate it.'

--Olaf Stapledon

The most important thing I learned in school was how to touch type.

—Joichi Ito

The main vehicle for nineteenth-century socialization was the leading textbook used in elementary school. They were so widely used that sections in them became part of the national language. Theodore Roosevelt, scion of an elite New York family, schooled by private tutors, had been raised on the same textbooks as the children of Ohio farmers, Chicago tradesman, and New England fishermen. If you want to know what constituted being a good American from the mid-nineteenth century to World War I, spend a few hours browsing through the sections in the *McGuffey Readers*.

--Charles Murray

Analyses of schools that have been successful in promoting independent reading suggest that one of the keys is ready access to books.

--*Becoming a Nation of Readers*

The brown bag, of course, had its imperfections. While some kids carried roast beef sandwiches, others had peanut butter. I have no way of knowing if all of those brown bags contained 'nutritionally adequate diets.' But I do know that those brown bags and those lunch pails symbolized parental love and responsibility.

—Charles Mathias, Jr.

From the very beginning, public schools always have had mixed purposes. In the 19th century, there was a strong civic component—it was about preparing citizens for democracy. Of course there were people left out, like African-Americans, but the goal was to create common ground. There also was this idea around developing human beings, investing in our nation's economy.

—Johann Neem

We've reduced our notion of public schools to meeting the needs of the global economy. We talk about college and career readiness, and really about career readiness. We are not talking about the liberating experiences that come with education, in the possibility of creating more fulfilled lives.

—Johann Neem

Emotionally stressful school environments are counterproductive because they can reduce students' ability to learn. Self-esteem and a sense of control over one's environment are important in managing stress. Highly evaluative and authoritarian schools may promote institutional economy, efficiency, and accountability, but also heighten nonproductive stress in students and staff.

—Robert Sylwester

One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child.

--Maria Montessori

At traditional public schools, the various layers of government are responsible for both steering and rowing. They steer by supplying funding and deciding what schools should broadly aim for: what kids should learn, and by when. The government also rows, hiring the bureaucrats and superintendents and teachers charged with meeting those goals. In the charter school model, government responsibility ends at steering—providing funding, deciding which measures of success matter, and holding schools accountable for results. Choosing whom to hire (and fire), what to pay them, what else to spend money on, how to design curricula—all those decisions are contracted out to private, mostly nonprofit organizations. Those are in turn governed by boards usually... made up of wealthy donors.

—Elizabeth Green

There was a time in our schools when teachers and administrators seemed quite insensible to the fact that children differed in ability, aptitude, interests, and therefore in achievement. If a pupil did not learn well, it was assumed that this was a sign that he was lazy and the way to cure that was by application of the rod. Today we know that children do differ in almost every conceivable way and that these individual differences, very large in some cases, have much to do with school achievement as well as personal adjustment, and success in school as well as out. Modern tests and testing procedures have done much to bring out the fact of such differences and to quantify them. That is, tests not only reveal that the differences exist but also tell us their extent or size.

—J. Wayne Wrightstone

I do not know what ‘moss’ stands for in the proverb, but if it stood for useful knowledge...I gathered more moss by rolling than I ever did at school.

—Ernest Shakleton

Neighborhood schools institutionalize housing segregation, making a child’s zip code his educational destiny.

—Eva Moskowitz

you know...i still don’t understand why my parents and teacher always said if you drop out of school your gonna regret it...i left school and i have never ounce looked at going back. haha.

—Internet Meme

What if, instead of making schools more prison-like, we addressed the issue of school violence by implementing strategies used by many churches to make them safer places filled with more love and kindness? Here are 10 ideas:

1. Ensure all who enter feel welcomed. Try using posters, front door greeters, or music.
2. Treat the community like family. Let people know you’re glad to see them and ask how they’re doing.
3. Embrace those around you. Provide comfort and find appropriate ways to demonstrate caring and support.
4. Find a simple and meaningful model that guides the work and tells others that they matter.
5. Live stream and record so that those who can’t be there in person can still learn remotely.
6. Appreciate performance and the arts. All the arts can be used as tools for inspiration.
7. Celebrate the success of community members. Make time each day to recognize these successes.
8. Have a strong social media presence. This allows everyone to connect and share and keep abreast of what’s happening.
9. Invite guests to observe. When others from the local community or further afield come to see what’s happening, they’re inspired and they encourage those who are at work in the community.
10. Support others in need. Be aware of these needs and have adequate support services available.

—Lisa Nielsen

Over recent years, [there's been] a strong tendency to require assessment of children and teachers so that [teachers] have to teach to tests and the test determines what happens to the child, and what happens to the teacher...that's guaranteed to destroy any meaningful educational process: it means the teacher cannot be creative, imaginative, pay attention to individual students' needs, that a student can't pursue things [...] and the teacher's future depends on it as well as the students'...the people who are sitting in the offices, the bureaucrats designing this—they're not evil people, but they're working within a system of ideology and doctrines, which turns what they're doing into something extremely harmful [...] the assessment itself is completely artificial; it's not ranking teachers in accordance with their ability to help develop children who reach their potential, explore their creative interests and so on [...] you're getting some kind of a 'rank,' but it's a 'rank' that's mostly meaningless, and the very ranking itself is harmful. It's turning us into individuals who devote our lives to achieving a rank, not into doing things that are valuable and important.

It's highly destructive...in, say, elementary education, you're training kids this way [...] I can see it with my own children: when my own kids were in elementary school (at what's called a good school, a good-quality suburban school), by the time they were in third grade, they were dividing up their friends into 'dumb' and 'smart.' You had 'dumb' if you were lower-tracked, and 'smart' if you were upper-tracked [...] it's just extremely harmful and has nothing to do with education. Education is developing your own potential and creativity. Maybe you're not going to do well in school, and you'll do great in art; that's fine. It's another way to live a fulfilling and wonderful life, and one that's significant for other people as well as yourself. The whole idea is wrong in itself; it's creating something that's called 'economic man': the 'economic man' is somebody who rationally calculates how to improve his/her own status, and status means (basically) wealth. So you rationally calculate what kind of choices you should make to increase your wealth—don't pay attention to anything else—or maybe maximize the amount of goods you have.

What kind of a human being is that? All of these mechanisms like testing, assessing, evaluating, measuring...they force people to develop those characteristics. The ones who don't do it are considered, maybe, 'behavioral problems' or some other deviance [...] these ideas and concepts have consequences. And it's not just that they're ideas, there are huge industries devoted to trying to instill them...the public relations industry, advertising, marketing, and so on. It's a huge industry, and it's a propaganda industry. It's a propaganda industry designed to create a certain type of human being: the one who can maximize consumption and can disregard his actions on others. It's massive, and it starts with infants.

—Noam Chomsky

## THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S ROLE IN PROMOTING READING

Strategies to promote reading within the school building, attract students to the library, and help students appreciate the library through the initiative of the library staff:

- Book of the day—Each day school announcements will ‘advertise’ a book. The announcement reader can summarize the description on the book jacket to interest students in the book. The library staff will display the book in the library for a day and then check it out.
- Extended library hours —8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with students using the library before school with a pass.
- Racks of paperback books—Create high interest, attractive, and easy-access book displays for students.
- Spontaneous rewarding of students for carrying a leisure-reading book with them during the school day. The principal could ask to see students’ library books at any time and reward them with certificates or other incentives.
- Sponsor reading competitions such as Battle of the Books among homerooms or between schools.
- Conduct research scavenger hunts.
- Hold a luncheon for select students and give them the first opportunity to preview new books.
- Encourage teachers to hold events and activities in the library so that students come to view the library as an interesting and popular school destination.
- Sponsor a paperback book exchange.
- Create bibliographies for different interests and also for various problems students face.
- Promote the library and library activities in the school newspaper and parent newsletter.
- Award certificates or other incentives after a student reads and completes a librarian-created survey/questionnaire.
- Prepare a brochure or other handout for students and parents explaining library services and policies.
- Deliver book talks or talks on topics that students can later explore in specific books.
- Create a bulletin board or display case where students can post their reviews of favorite books they have read. Encourage them, also, to post their reviews on such websites as Amazon.com.

—Dan L. Miller

The growing influence of the mass media—particularly television and popular music—raises troubling moral questions. Through simplistic coverage of issues, many television programs project a ‘quick fix’ mentality that discourages thoughtfulness and encourages violence and questionable social mores. Television programs and commercials encourage such values as materialism, overconsumption, superficiality, and casual sexual behavior, and reinforce racial, ethnic, and sex-role stereotypes. How can school encourage more responsible attention to the values content of the mass media or, failing that, counteract this influence?

--*Moral Education in the  
Life of the School*

The mother lode of all affirmative action programs for the wealthy, of course, remains the private school. Only 2.2 percent of the nation’s students graduate from nonsectarian private high schools, and yet these graduates account for 26 percent of students at Harvard and 28 percent of students at Princeton.

—Matthew Stewart

How I hated schools, and what a life of anxiety I lived there. I counted the hours to the end of every term, when I should return home.

—Winston Churchill

More young children than ever (about two-thirds of 4-year-olds) are in some form of institutional care, and recent trends in early-childhood education have filled many of their classrooms with highly scripted lessons and dull, one-sided ‘teacher talk.’ In such environments, children have few opportunities for spontaneous conversation.

—Erika Christakis

My father was pretty well fixed, and I being the only male son he tried terribly hard to make something out of me. He sent me to about every school in that part of the country. In some of them I would last for three or four months. I got just as far as the fourth reader when the teachers wouldn’t seem to be running the school right, and rather than have the school stop I would generally leave.

Than I would start in at another school, tell them I had just finished the third reader and was ready for the fourth. Well, I knew all this fourth grade by heart, so the teacher would remark:

‘I never see you studying, yet you seem to know your lessons.’ I had that education thing figured down to a fine point. Three years in McGuffey’s Fourth Reader, and I knew more about it than McGuffey did.

—Will Rogers

I have regretted all my life that I did not at least take a chance on the fifth grade. It would certainly come in handy right now, and I never go through a day that I am not sorry for the idea I had of how to go to school and not learn anything.

—Will Rogers

Nowhere are the mechanics of the growing geographic divide more evident than in the system of primary and secondary education. Public schools were born amid hopes of opportunity for all; the best of them have now been effectively reprivatized to better serve the upper classes. According to a widely used school-ranking service, out of more than 5,000 public elementary schools in California, the top 11 are located in Palo Alto. They're free and open to the public. All you have to do is move into a town where the median home value is \$3,211,100. Scarsdale, New York, looks like a steal in comparison: The public high schools in that area funnel dozens of graduates to Ivy League colleges every year, and yet the median home value is a mere \$1,403,600.

—Matthew Stewart

For too long, we financed our schools in a way that has systematically left large segments of our population behind.

—Ruben Hinojosa

My wife bought 24 Hostess cupcakes for my son to take to school tomorrow for his birthday treat. I didn't know that's what they were for. I hope 8 kids are absent tomorrow.

—Internet Meme

But to go to school in a summer morn,  
O! It drives all joy away;  
Under a cruel eye outworn,  
The little ones spend the day  
In sighing and dismay.

—William Blake

When I die I want all the people I worked with on group projects to lower me in the ground to let me down one last time.

—Internet Meme

School is not designed for you and your aspirations. Therefore, you must always be on the lookout for new and exciting ways to learn skills that will aid you on your path toward achieving mastery.

—Chris Erzfeld

Joining company with those who can succeed where you can't do so alone is sometimes a solution to a difficult problem. For example, one person alone cannot change a law—so he joins an organization composed of people who feel the same way he does, and jointly they may succeed. When anyone joins in working with a group, whether large or small, he identifies himself with that group; he considers himself a part of it. This is normal and healthy. We all do it when we want to solve a big problem and can't do it by ourselves. If you sincerely want to be able to attend school regularly, for instance, one of the surest ways is to develop an interest in school. You can develop an interest by joining a club, organization, activity, or sport. You'll be making a new set of friends, you'll be having fun, and you'll begin to enjoy coming to school. School will become a more happy place than it may now be.

—Dan L. Miller

No one likes to feel used. When the perceived focus becomes the content over the person, people feel used. When teachers are valued only for the test scores of their students, they feel used. When administrators are 'successful' only when they achieve 'highly effective school' status, they feel used. Eventually, 'used' people lose joy in learning and teaching. Curriculum does not teach; teachers do. Standards don't encourage; administrators do. Peaceable schools value personnel and students for who they are as worthy human beings. ... If your mission statement says you care, then specific practices of care should be habits within your school.

—Lorraine Stutzman  
Amstutz

Cheating is so common in middle school and high school that after a while 'you just get used to it. It's not even a moral issue for high schoolers. Kids have become immune to it.'

A popular method of cheating is networking, which...is 'the easygoing smart kid gives the answers to some other kid.'

'There was one time in a science class in freshman year when I was networking with some other girl and we didn't get caught. We both got A's. It was a great feeling, actually, I'd have to say with no regret, mainly because I knew I would never have to use that information ever again.

Technology is a catalyst, but text-message cheating is big because the cheaters are sending out the message. Some people keep their integrity, but some fall into the trap when it's suggested.

—Pirouz Mehmandoost,  
High School  
Student

Athletes in the high-profile male sports such as football, baseball and basketball are more willing to cheat than other athletes. The one women's sport that yields similar results is softball. For generations, sports have been perceived as an endeavor that builds character and instills positive values in youth. Study results prompted many to ask: Just what are the coaches teaching these kids?

The major male sports seem to be spawning a win-at-any-cost mentality that carries over into the classroom. Thirty-seven percent of boys and 20 percent of girls said it was proper for a coach to instruct a player to fake an injury. Forty-three percent of boys and 22 percent of girls surveyed said it was proper for a coach to teach basketball players how to illegally hold and push, for example. Now that is clearly illegal. Whether you call it cheating or just breaking the rules, it's illegal. It changes the game. You're not supposed to hold. In a survey, a substantial number of the young people thought that was permissible. So you have to ask yourself, what is that telling us about the values that sports are generating?

The minimum-GPA factor and the time-management issue—fitting studying in amid the practices and games. I think what allows them to succumb to it is also the fact that there's a sort of mental attitude that it's not that big a deal. I don't think they lose a lot of sleep over it. So as an ethicist, that's the piece of it I worry about. Is there no conscience operating?

—Michael Josephson

We call it the morning scramble. In the morning at a high school, you see a ton of kids sitting around copying each other's homework. Because a percentage of their grade is based on their turning in their homework. And a lot of these kids are doing so many classes and after-school activities that there's no way they could possibly do all the work required of them. So kids don't even count that as cheating. That's just sort of survival for them: divvying up the work. That's why they're IM-ing (instant messaging) all the time while they're doing homework. It's another way of divvying up the work. It's a way of ensuring that you get it done. It doesn't matter how you do it, just get it done and get it in.

—Denise Pope

Six processes at work in children who got along with their peers: First, these children were able to communicate clearly and correctly. Second, they exchanged information about themselves and their families. Third, they established common play activities. Fourth, they identified more similarities than differences among one another. Fifth, they could resolve conflicts in a more positive way. Sixth, they could share private thoughts and feelings. Herein lies clues that will help us help children develop friendships and, therefore, experience school success.

—John Gotten and  
Jeffrey Parker

Discipline continues its reign and is education's king of problems, and we'd like to see it reduced to prince or knave. Misbehavior receives a great deal of media attention. Some of this attention is exaggerated, some is underrated and some is deserved. The point is, general breakdown of discipline in today's classroom is common. What the media sometime neglect to mention is the direct connection between family breakdown and classroom breakdown. Both kinds of breakdowns are inextricably linked yet teachers and schools tend to be blamed for children's total behavior and functioning, in and out of the classroom. Unfair!

The truth is, today's child often brings to school a body that can't sit and attend, a mind that has absorbed too many adult themes, a vocabulary that is more street-wise than wisdom-wise, an attitude influenced by memorization of students' rights, not responsibilities, a philosophy of 'Me-ism,' not 'We-ism,' and overt behavioral patterns that invite continual conflict and disruption during precarious instructional time.

—Stanley T. Dubelle, Jr.  
and Carol M.  
Hoffman

One of the most disturbing trends is that behavior once considered cheating is no longer thought to be so. Copying homework, for example. An eighth-grader in private school says, 'That's not cheating, it's helping.'

—Regan McMahan

The old school made the amazing mistake of supposing that...by removing a situation a person likes or setting up one he doesn't like—in other words by punishing him—it was possible to reduce the probability that he would behave in a given way again. That simply doesn't hold. It has been established beyond question. What is emerging at this critical stage in the evolution of society is a behavioral and cultural technology based on positive reinforcement. We are gradually discovering—at an untold cost in human suffering—that in the long run punishment doesn't reduce the probability that an act will occur. We have been so preoccupied with the contrary that we always take 'force' to mean punishment....We haven't really altered his potential behavior at all. That's the pity of it. If he doesn't repeat it in our presence, he will in the presence of someone else. Or it will be repeated in the disguise of a neurotic symptom. If we hit hard enough, we clear a little place for ourselves in the wilderness of civilization, but we make the rest of the wilderness still more terrible.

—B. F. Skinner

I hated high school. I don't trust anybody who looks back on the years from 14 to 18 with any enjoyment. If you liked being a teenager, there's something wrong with you.

—Stephen King

Most reasonable persons would agree today that the legitimate functions of the school extend beyond the development of intellectual skills and the transmission of subject-matter knowledge. The school also has undeniable responsibility with respect to mental health and personality development, simply because it is a place where children spend a good part of their waking hours, perform much of their purposeful activity, obtain a large share of their status, and interact significantly with adults, age-mates, and the demands of society.

—David Paul Ausubel

Large numbers of persons move from childhood into adult years with a burden of emotional distress... whatever might be the origins, students' emotional difficulties infect their minds when they are at school and after they leave. This fact... should be a challenge to educators, especially those who say that a major aim of education is to help students to use their minds effectively. Nothing could demonstrate the sincerity of this aim better than an effort to help a student use his resources to cope with conditions that encumber his mind.

—Arthur T. Jersild, Eve  
Allina Lazar, &  
Adele M. Brodtkin

Children experience in school virtually every challenge of life, including failure, disappointment, achievement, reward, rejection, hope, and despair. No other social institutions has as much opportunity as do schools to work with children regularly, alter trends in their personal growth and development, and help them solve personal problems and better manage their lives. Childhood problems are common and normal, but they need to be dealt with quickly and firmly or they are likely to persist.

—Dan L. Miller

There are three general correlates identified with dropping out. One correlate addresses personal problems of youth which tend to be independent of class and family background, including:

- Substance abuse (alcohol and/or other drug use and abuse),
- Problems with the law,
- Low self-esteem/lack of self identity,
- Peer pressure,
- Mental health problems such as depression (suicidal tendencies), and  
Pregnancy

A second correlate shows the relationship between dropping out and family background, including:

- Socioeconomic status,
- Educational level of parents,
- Child rearing practices,
- Single parent families, and
- Dysfunctional families (including child abuse).

The final correlate addresses school factors, including:

- Bilingualism,
- Cultural differences/cultural discontinuity,
- Academic achievement/failure including grade retention and tracking,
- Attendance: truancy/absenteeism/detention/expulsion,
- Teacher attitudes and expectations, and
- Racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

—Ardy Sixkiller Clarke

## **SCHOOL UNIFORMS:...WHY THEY WORK**

A safe and disciplined learning environment is the first requirement of a good school. Young people who are safe and secure, who learn basic American values and the essentials of good citizenship, are better students. In response to growing levels of violence in our schools, many parents, teachers, and school officials have come to see school uniforms as one positive and creative way to reduce discipline problems and increased school safety.

They observed that the adoption of school uniform policies can promote school safety, improve discipline, and enhance the learning environment. The potential benefits of school uniforms include:

- Decreasing violence and theft—even life-threatening situations—among students over designer clothing or expensive sneakers;
- Helping prevent gang members from wearing gang colors and insignia at school;
- Instilling students with discipline;
- Helping parents and students resist peer pressure;
- Helping students concentrate on their schoolwork; and
- Helping school officials recognize intruders who come to the school.

—*U.S. Department of  
Education*

## THE NEED FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

A well-conceived and relevant curriculum attuned closely to the needs of young people can generate a mood of positivism within a school and thusly reduce the need for rigid administrative control. So also does the classroom teacher stand as a major deterrent to infringements against school order. Although a dynamic curriculum and a professional staff can certainly reduce behavioral deviations, guidelines for student behavior are mandatory. Adolescents at the high school level are fast approaching adulthood. Indeed, many of them have physically reached adulthood by the time they graduate, but in reference to emotional growth and maturity they are several years removed from adulthood. Inherent in the teenager is the desire and often passion for freedom from authority. A large part of maturity is the responsible control of one's emotions and urges, and many adolescents have not yet reached that stage of maturity. Those excesses of the adolescent, therefore, which do not succumb to controls from within must be modified from without.

Limits for student behavior must be clearly understood and accepted within the school. Adelaide Johnson attributes 'a sizable incidence of juvenile delinquency to the inability or refusal of adult authority figures to establish clear limits for youth to operate within.' Such limits are needed by all, in differing degrees depending on maturity levels. For the insecure teenager in a world of conflicting values, interests, and behavior these limits are mandatory. Just as our American society bases its order on the Constitution of United States of America so must the school prepare a carefully written code of behavioral management. The purpose and procedure of this code should reflect the school's philosophy of education and the worthwhile values of the community. This codification of the laws of the school should serve as a guide for the educational program in that it makes discipline a working part of the school's philosophy of education, clarifies each student's status, minimizes hasty and emotionally influenced action, and establishes a clear-cut support for teachers and administrators. Once a well-defined philosophy of discipline is in hand and clearly understood, the school community has a strong base from which to work toward the positive emotional growth of the student body.

—Dan L. Miller

When asked the question 'What is a school?' Most people would describe the neighborhood institution. The popular notion of a school has come to be the idea of a building with rectangular classrooms within which are found rows of seated children facing a lecturing teacher. When one says 'school,' it would be refreshing if people were to imagine various alternatives to the traditional brick and mortar schoolhouse. People's needs in life differ greatly. Also, as an individual develops through life one's needs are going to change.

Everyone's needs or requirements for a school will differ. Socrates in solitude would have dried up and remained unproductive. He needed a dialogue with people and the opportunity to teach and learn through questioning. Thoreau would have been

stifled in the teeming city of Athens. His education would have been hampered for lack of a place to think and the absolute freedom he needed to contemplate. Helen Keller would not have profited from life in the city and surely would have perished if left to herself in the woods. She needed a close and patient relationship in a familiar location in order to thrive. In order to make the learning process function effectively, these individuals had to define 'school' for themselves and work within their own academic configuration.

The location and process of learning that one defines and establishes for oneself resides in a school. Conventional student desks in a stuffy environment comprise that place in which children, in most cases, get close to but don't quite reach optimal learning. Many fit and function well within the confines of the school, but others still need, whether they realize it or not, to define for themselves and perhaps even become instrumental in establishing for themselves their school based solely on their unique needs.

A location and a process define a school. Ideally, it should be and could be imagined as being any activity, at any location, at any time in which learning takes place.

—Dan L. Miller

**School Attendance Philosophy:** This school is committed to the philosophy that every student should attend every class every day. Regular attendance and promptness are expected in all classes and are essentials of good performance of any job. Learning to participate in group discussions, developing an appreciation for the views and abilities of other students, and forming the habit of regular attendance to one's tasks are legitimate objectives of any course. Learning that is lost due to absence can never be adequately replaced. Each student should be aware that attendance is part of his or her evaluation in each class. A student should understand that excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, will drastically affect the class grade.

—Dan L. Miller

Everyone is born creative; everyone is given a box of crayons in kindergarten. Then when you hit puberty they take the crayons away and replace them with dry, uninspiring books on algebra, history, etc. Being suddenly hit years later with the 'creative bug' is just a wee voice telling you, 'I'd like my crayons back, please.'

—Hugh MacLeod

Stressful conditions from outside school are much more likely to intrude into the classroom in high poverty schools. Every one of ten stressors is two to three times more common in high poverty schools—Student hunger, unstable housing, lack of medical and dental care, caring for family members, immigration issues, community violence and safety issues.

—Robert D. Putnam

‘Why were teachers colleges called ‘normal schools?’ Thank France; the phrase is derived from ‘*école normale*,’ which was used for institutions designed to instill standards of pedagogy and curriculum in teachers-to-be.... America’s first state-sponsored normal school opened in Massachusetts in 1839, at the urging of public-education champion Horace Mann; it is now Framingham State University. More arose through the mid-19th century, in parallel with the development of public schools, then called ‘common schools.’ By the 1930s, however, most normal schools were calling themselves ‘teachers colleges.’

—Anna Diamond

When Nannie Helen Burroughs opened a school for young African-American women in 1909, its motto was ‘We specialize in the wholly impossible.’ Burroughs initially managed to fund the school entirely from within the black community, largely through small donations from other women. The school was unlike any other at the time: It offered vocational training alongside high school and junior college academics. Graduates entered the work force with the skills to become domestic workers or bookkeepers, but they also had a financial savvy and independence their mothers had never had. Burroughs also insisted that students learn African-American history. As she declared in a 1934 speech: ‘I want you to take the struggles, the hardships, and the handicaps of this civilization and turn them into stepping-stones.

—*smithsonian.com*

Schools themselves aren’t creating the opportunity gap: the gap is already large by the time children enter kindergarten and does not grow as children progress through school. The gaps in cognitive achievement by level of maternal education that we observe at age 18—powerful predictors of who goes to college and who does not—are mostly present at age 6 when children enter school. Schooling plays only a minor role in alleviating or creating test score gaps.

—Robert D. Putnam

It was bad, but what in high school is not? At the time we’re stuck in it, like hostages locked in a Turkish bath, high school seems like the most serious business in the world to just about all of us. It’s not until the second or third class reunion that we start realizing how absurd the whole thing was.

—Stephen King

This was a factory, a sorting house. We were no different from dogs and pigs and cows: all of us were allowed to play when we were small, but then, just before reaching maturity, we were sorted and classified. Being a high school student was the first step toward becoming a domestic animal.

—Ryū Murakami

Consider the research of the sociologist James Coleman, of the University of Chicago. He found that students from similar economic and social backgrounds consistently do better at Catholic high schools than at public high schools.

The immediate explanation is simple: Students at Catholic schools take more rigorous courses in math, English, and history, and they do nearly 50 percent more homework. But why do Catholic schools make these demands when public schools don't?

The difference, Mr. Coleman concluded, lies with parents. 'Parents [of public-school students] do not exercise as much authority over their high-school-age students as they once did,' he recently told a conference at the Manhattan Institute.

Since the 1960s, public schools have become less demanding—in discipline, required coursework, and homework—because they can't enforce stiffer demands. By contrast, parents of parochial-school students impose more control. 'The schools therefore [are] able to operate under a different set of ground rules,' Mr. Coleman said.

—Robert J. Samuelson

Middle school students learn a whole lot better when they are not being lectured to, being directed, forced, or ordered, but when choice is given and learning is interactive. Traditional classrooms in our society today define teacher and the classroom in general as a straight-answer, fact-feeding, dictatorship that cares little for the opinions and interests of the pupils, and that teaches little about the reasons behind the facts. Schools are meant to prepare kids for life and make them more apt to be successful in their life. One would suppose that the government having authority over public schooling would want the generations of the future to be more successful in life, thus feeding the needs of the economy and the requirements of democracy, the spread of freedom, the reduction of discrimination in all forms, and exercising the rights and morality of citizens. One would assume that the government—wanting such a society—would encourage the development of these attributes through schooling. However as we look at the teaching of present schools, we see suspension of constitutional rights, undemocratic classrooms, and the implementation the fact-feeding teaching methods and passive roles for students. Now maybe it's just me, but I would have to think that we should be promoting the opposite of these things. Am I wrong?

—Anonymous 8th Grader  
quoted by Nancy  
Doda & Trudy  
Knowles

In a democracy, the principle of human dignity insists that people have a say in decisions that affect them and that their say counts for something. For this reason, probably no idea is more widely associated with democratic classrooms than the involvement of young people in making decisions about what and how things are done.

—James Beane

I think every middle school teacher should know, or try to understand, the social whirlwind of statuses that form and so quickly harden with every student in their place. What may seem, to a teacher, a classroom full of students peacefully working, may be exactly the opposite to a student. It becomes a room full of pitfalls, danger signs, and safe havens situated carefully in familiar territory. Every student, throughout the day, moves cautiously on 'safe' paths from room to room. They will not read in another level (or) territory. They will not mix; everyone knows their place. Only a teacher or a student from a higher level will cause them to mix. The separation between boys and girls is even more pronounced. Boys have territory separate from girls, and their own divisions in that. Boys and girls will absolutely not mix, except in the rare groups of girls and boys that are friends; these groups are either absolute highest status, or the very bottom. Every student, boy or girl has this place, their territory, their paths, the people they can stay with on their level. I think middle school teachers should know of and try to understand this code of the students. This network of statuses and levels is ever present in middle schools. While some students may not be directly aware of it, they always have a subconscious understanding of where they fit. This is very important for middle school teachers to know.

—Anonymous Middle  
School Student  
quoted by Nancy  
Doda & Trudy  
Knowles

Young adolescents do not just want friendly peer relationship, they want respectful, collaborative, and equitable relationships. They want to feel psychologically safe, they want others to also feel safe, and they are seeking adult assistance in securing such safety. In the current educational milieu, with heightened attention to student achievement as measured by standardized tests, many middle level schools are choosing to devote less rather than more time to the affective dimension of school life. Packaged anti-bullying programs are not what these middle schoolers are asking for. Instead, they are asking for the quality of human exchange in schools and classrooms to be more democratic, humane, and respectful.

— Nancy Doda & Trudy  
Knowles

Teachers, teachers, teachers, when will they learn. I have the attention span of a raisin. I need to be kept busy with things that are fun. Teachers need to find out what interests kids and what stuff they like to do. So for a less whiny, annoyed, and temperamental class, make it fun.

—Anonymous Middle  
School Student  
quoted by Nancy  
Doda & Trudy  
Knowles

What do students think about school? The picture from national surveys is not encouraging....10 percent of high school students are highly engaged and 15 percent are disengaged. Those in between lack strong connections with teachers and find school work irrelevant or dull....two-thirds of students are bored in class every day, and 17 percent are bored in every class....just 45 percent of students believe teachers care if they are absent from school.

—Laura Pappano

Students' decisions to drop out of school [are] not...a single momentous action but...the culmination of a long path of disengagement from school. Schools must stop looking at what kids are doing—the risk factors or attributes that make them likely to disengage—and look at what the school is doing. Does your school make kids feel anonymous? Impose excessively strict discipline? Teach courses that feel irrelevant to students? Fail to support students academically or socially in the classroom?

—Jeremy D. Finn

Anonymity is the curse the overloaded, overspecialized, overcomplicated American comprehensive high school....the specialness of each adolescent is denied—unless that adolescent is 'special' for some specified reason. The 'unspecial majority'...drifts through school genially—until there is a crisis....This organizational cornucopia denies teachers the opportunity to take each student carefully through his or her education, one by one. Humans differ, and adolescents are humans. Their humanness begs to be respected. It can be respected only if the institutions serving adolescents make respect a practical possibility by arranging their staffs so that each child—and each child's family—can be known truly well.

—Theodore R.Sizer

What's wrong with high school?...Too many high schools are overly large and impersonal; their schedules are too regimented; adults are too busy to get to know students; athletics are more valued than academics. All too often, critics say, high school is place that stifles creativity while fostering competition, conformity, intolerance, and the kind of mean-spiritedness that seems to be increasing in society at large.

—Lawrence Hardy

Middle schools...are more impersonal, more formal, more evaluative, and more competitive than elementary schools. Some researchers have argued that this shift in school environment does not fit the needs of young adolescents. Just as these youngsters are bidding for more autonomy, the middle school controls them more; just as they are entering a period of increased self-consciousness, the middle school promotes social comparisons.

—Gerald W. Bracey

Where do alienated youth spend six hours a day, five days a week? The answer is school. Just as department stores are perceived as responsible for defective merchandise, schools are blamed for alienated youth. Alienation is a massive construct which, like the full moon or Friday the 13th, is cited as the primary cause of adolescent discontent. The high school is held responsible.

—Clement A. Seldin

Adolescents have little opportunity to share their feelings in school regarding such concepts as friendship, love, sex, guilt, parents, siblings, aggression, peace, their future, etc. Many students simply hold their feelings inside and share little. This only serves to exacerbate their sense of isolation. Others may share with a friend who may be supportive but who also is struggling with questions of personal power and identity.

—Clement A. Seldin

We require them to follow rigid rules and, in schools particularly, we cause children to learn in ways which are the very antithesis of actual learning. We force them to remember and regurgitate large quantities of rote-remembered facts for certain rituals that we call 'examinations,' and those who have the highest disgorgitive capacities are considered the most intelligent and the most brilliant and so are the most highly rewarded.

—Ashley Montagu

High schools are filled with nascent adults—bored, unchallenged, and alienated by the institution’s rigid rules and schedules....High school is a lie. The rules of high school are not the rules of life.

—Leon Botstein

This the philosophy I am trying to change—the philosophy, inherent in much of our education, that if you fail a child that will cause him to buckle down and work hard; it will make a new man of him. It just doesn’t work that way. Most of us...know that all you learn from failing is how to fail. And in our schools we are teaching many, many children how to fail.

—William Glasser

The pressures upon youth are awesome. The consequences of these pressures have prompted rises in suicide, changes in sexual and adjustment patterns, and alterations in family and interpersonal relationships. Society has changed. The political and economic milieu has been irrevocably transformed. Unsurprisingly, these conditions have produced a new and perplexing world for our young people. Educational experience have reached a point where these also must be changed. Emphasis upon individual, personal, and social objectives is necessary to prevent an education for a one-dimension existence when the future will demand multiple abilities.

The schools must be places where identity, responsibility, and integrity are promoted. Experiences must include opportunities for adulthood and citizenship. Growing up is difficult. Many of us, if it is not too painful, remember it well. As educators, we can, if we will, help young people not only to survive but to enjoy and appreciate these golden, precious days. Perhaps this will include the richest rewards of teaching.

—J. Merrell Hansen

High school is worse than having to swim through multiple piranha-filled lakes—and that's before the truckload of homework.

—Taylor Gaskins

Small children take it as a matter of course that things will change every day and grown-ups understand that things change sooner or later and their job is to keep them from changing as long as possible. It’s only kids in high school who are convinced they’re never going to change. There’s always going to be a pep rally and there’s always going to be a spectator bus, somewhere out there in their future.

—Stephen King

High school is that four-year asylum where they put teenagers because we have no idea what else to do with them.

—Anthony Esolen

The leading cause of death among teenagers is road traffic accidents, and in this regard, even the slightest dose of insufficient sleep can have marked consequences, as we have discussed. When the Mahotomedi School District of Minnesota pushed their school start time from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m., there was a 60 percent reduction in traffic accidents in drivers sixteen to eighteen years of age.

—Matthew Walker

Dad: When I was your age, I had to walk two miles uphill to school in the snow while holding a hot potato...

Son: I had to hide in a closet while a mass shooter killed my teacher and friends.

—*www.facebook.com/Pension-101-Haismans-Pension-Page*

I was made for the library, not the classroom. The classroom was a jail of other people's interests. The library was open, unending, free.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

I am a librarian. I discovered me in the library. I went to find me in the library. Before I fell in love with libraries, I was just a six-year-old boy. The library fueled all of my curiosities, from dinosaurs to ancient Egypt. When I graduated from high school in 1938, I began going to the library three nights a week. I did this every week for almost ten years and finally, in 1947, around the time I got married, I figured I was done. So I graduated from the library when I was twenty-seven. I discovered that the library is the real school.

—Ray Bradbury

Learned institutions ought to be favorite objects with every free people. They throw that light over the public mind, which is the best security against crafty and dangerous encroachments on the public liberty.

—James Madison

**SCHOOL SECRETARY** noun [skool sek-ri-ter-ee] Someone who solves a problem you did not know you had in a way you do not understand. See also wizard, magician.

—*First Grade Fun Times*

## BROKEN GIANT

1925

A giant fortress crowns the hill,  
A bouldered, stone facade.  
The yawning doors sit  
High atop the broad, steep stair,  
As students amble up and in  
To dedicate the virgin beast.

1970

I scale the massive stair,  
Begin my walk of life.  
I worked; I taught.  
The Giant nurtured my success.  
My work bore challenge, passion, joy.  
Passion turned to romance,  
And romance bred a wife.

2025

Homecoming.  
The wrecking ball looms large.  
The Giant's massive stairway  
Offers me a challenge now.  
My classroom's changed,  
My hangouts hard to find.  
Flaking paint and warping floors.  
The Giant needs to rest.

My mood grows dark.  
The life, the joy, the spirit's died.  
The Giant now must sleep,  
And so, in fact, must I.

—Dan L. Miller

We should do everything we can to improve our public schools. But our education system can't compensate for the ways our economic system is failing Americans. Even the most thoughtful and well-intentioned school-reform program can't improve educational outcomes if it ignores the single greatest driver of student achievement: household income.

—Nick Hanauer

For all the genuine flaws of the American education system, the nation still has many high-achieving public-school districts. Nearly all of them are united by a thriving community of economically secure middle-class families with sufficient political power to demand great schools, the time and resources to participate in those schools, and the tax money to amply fund them. In short, great public schools are the product of a thriving middle class, not the other way around. Pay people enough to afford dignified middle-class lives, and high-quality public schools will follow. But allow economic inequality to grow, and educational inequality will inevitably grow with it.

—Nick Hanauer

Because we ain't got an alarm clock  
Dug in the dirty clothes basket,  
Cause ain't nobody washed my uniform  
Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark,  
Cause the lights ain't on  
Even got my baby sister ready,  
Cause my mama wasn't home.  
Got us both to school on time,  
To eat us a good breakfast.  
Then when I got to class the teacher fussed  
Cause I ain't got no pencil.

—Joshua T. Dickerson

I taught elementary school in Boulder, Colorado, and Erie, Pennsylvania. The experiences were night and day. Both schools, in my opinion, had adequate economic resources; the difference was the income and education levels of the students' parents. In Boulder I wanted for nothing, and going to school each day was a joy. It's easy to be a great teacher when you have super-prepared children. In Erie I saw firsthand how money in schools doesn't negate the effects of poverty. All the stressors in the home come right to school, which is something no amount of money can change.

—Tina Brown

The original purpose of the 'common schools' established by Horace Mann in the mid-19th century: to instill in children the knowledge and morality necessary for the success of republican government, while 'embracing children of all religious, social, and ethnic backgrounds.'

—George Packer

## WHY SCHOOL?

Life is hard.

Life becomes easier if you have tools to help get you through.

School is a way to get, learn about and practice using these tools...for free!

Science is a very powerful tool.

If you learn to use science and the other tools school gives you, you have a bigger shot at a better life.

If you have a better life, you can help the one's you love have a better life too, because...

Life is hard.

—Internet Meme

Our city's are among the most racially and economically segregated in America. The gaps in proficiency that separate white and Asian from black and Latino students in math and English are immense and growing.

—George Packer

More money is put into prisons than in schools. That, in itself, is the description of a nation bent on suicide.

—Jonathan Kozol

Among the many purposes of schooling, four stand out to us as having special moral value: to love and care, to serve, to empower, and, of course, to learn.

—Andy Hargreaves and  
Michael Fullen

There was, they argue, a time when our schools were better. Nonsense! There are more good schools today than at any time in the past. If there are also more bad schools it is because there are more schools trying to educate children who, in the good old days, would have been working in factories and sweat shops.

—Phillip Schlechty

Everything America is or ever hopes to be depends on what happens in our school's classroom.

—Frosty Troy

Children need all school workers. A person is not 'just a janitor,' not 'just a custodian,' they're partners in education. We need each other to make this work.

—Rev. Jesse Jackson

Schools cannot shut their door and expect a ‘safe castle’ where outside influences don’t enter.

—Carl Bosch

I have found nothing more toxic to a healthy learning environment than an overdose of constant criticism.

—Roland S. Barth

Quality schoolwork...can only be achieved in a warm, supportive classroom environment. It cannot exist if there is an adversarial relationship....Above all, there must be trust.

—William Glasser

### **THE FIRST TEN LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL**

1. We are here to help you.
2. You will have time to get to your class before the bell rings.
3. The dress code will be enforced.
4. No smoking is allowed on school grounds.
5. Our football team will win the championship this year.
6. We expect more of you here.
7. Guidance counselors are always available to listen.
8. Your schedule was created with you in mind.
9. Your locker combination is private.
10. These will be the years you look back on fondly.

### **TEN MORE LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL**

1. You will use algebra in your adult lives.
2. Driving to school is a privilege that can be taken away.
3. Students must stay on campus during lunch.
4. The new text books will arrive any day now.
5. Colleges care more about you than your SAT scores.
6. We are enforcing the dress code.
7. We will figure out how to turn off the heat soon.
8. Our bus drivers are highly trained professionals.
9. There is nothing wrong with summer school.
10. We want to hear what you have to say.

—Laurie Halse  
Anderson Speak

Inclusion is not a matter of political correctness. It is the key to growth.

—Jesse Jackson

Of course class size is important! You have to find the child to teach the child.

—Unknown

Middle school is a nightmare. It's like prison with homework, or a pitiless social experiment. For three very long years, half-adults with raging hormones and underdeveloped empathy glands prey on their peers, pouncing on any weakness, securing through cruelty their own place in the Darwinian pecking order. You don't graduate from middle school. You survive it, if you can.

—*The A.V. Club*

Too often, when we talk about 'school' we really mean 'child care'—and also nutrition, medical care, mental-health services, and social-skills support.

—Erika Christakis

Beginning in preschool, Black students are disproportionately disciplined in schools, from teacher-issued referrals, to corporal punishment, to police arrests and their attendant violence. And it is not simply that black students are over-represented in these areas, but rather it is about the ways our bodies—our skin, our hair, our clothes, our voice, our body language, our cadence, our presence—have always represented a dangerous intrusion within educational institutions structured by anti-black solidarity.

—Kihana Miraya Ross

While W.E.B. Du Bois reminds us that the idea of universal, state-supported public education was originally 'a Negro idea,' students and their families are still living in what I call the afterlife of school segregation. Black students remain systematically dehumanized and positioned as uneducable....Overall, schools have historically and contemporarily failed Black children.

—Kihana Miraya Ross

There is no school equal to a decent home and no teacher equal to a virtuous parent.

—Gandhi

[Homeschooling]...recipe for genius: More of family and less of school, more of parents and less of peers, more creative freedom and less formal lessons.

—Raymond S. Moore

What is most important and valuable about the home as a base for children's growth into the world is not that it is a better school than the schools, but that it isn't a school at all.

—John Holt

Homeschooling and public schooling are as opposite as two sides of a coin. In a homeschooling environment, the teacher need not be certified, but the child **MUST** learn. In a public school environment, the teacher **MUST** be certified, but the child need **NOT** learn.

—Gene Royer

We can get too easily bogged down in the academic part of homeschooling, a relatively minor part of the whole, which is to raise competent, caring, literate, happy people.

—Diane Flynn Keith

Homeschooling is not head-to-head, it's heart-to-heart.

—Tamara L. Chilver

It is hard not to feel that there must be something very wrong with much of what we do in school, if we feel the need to worry so much about what many people call 'motivation'. A child has no stronger desire than to make sense of the world, to move freely in it, to do the things that he sees bigger people doing.

—John Holt

Any child who can spend an hour or two a day, or more if he wants, with adults that he likes, who are interested in the world and like to talk about it, will on most days learn far more from their talk than he would learn in a week of school.

—John Holt

Homeschool doesn't give you a get out of teenage jail free card. It just gives you fewer opportunities to become the butt of someone's lame Facebook joke.

—Kim Culbertson

To confuse compulsory schooling with equal educational opportunity is like confusing organized religion with spirituality. One does not necessarily lead to the other. Schooling confuses teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new.

—Wendy Priesnitz

The state has not the right to monopolize education. Education is a legitimate form of private enterprise, subject indeed to a certain amount of government regulation, but there is nothing in its nature that makes it a public or private monopoly. The reason is that the primary right to educate their children belongs to the parents. In understanding the work of education, the state is simply supplying the parents with facilities to fulfill their duty. If the parents have other facilities at their command, they have no obligation to use those the state provides.

—Austin Fagothey

For me, homeschooling was out of the question—not even worthy of investigation. I could quickly recite a laundry list of ‘reasons’ why homeschooling was a stupid idea, and I genuinely believed every one of them. The education of my kids was serious business, best left to professionals. Homeschool, really?! I wasn’t about to let my family become lab rats in some fringe social experiment!

—Kent Larson

### **MY TOP TEN REASONS FOR HOMESCHOOLING:**

- (10) Birthdays become school holidays. I love celebrations!
- (9) I always get to be the chaperone on field trips. Lucky me.
- (8) I can sleep in on rainy mornings. (Okay, I wrote that before my last two babies were born—no more sleeping in for Mom now.)
- (7) My pajamas are sometimes my work uniform until noon. Shhh!
- (6) The teacher-student ratio can’t be beat!
- (5) I can kiss the school principal in the faculty lounge. ♥
- (4) Integrating God in our school lessons is always encouraged.
- (3) I do not have to stay up late at night helping my children study for tests and complete homework assignments.
- (2) I have the opportunity to instill the love of learning.
- (1) I am the recipient of hugs and kisses all day long.

—Tamara L. Chilver

Homeschooling allows you the freedom to step off the highway of learning and take a more scenic route along a dirt road.

—Tamara L. Chilver

School is about learning to wait your turn, however long it takes to come, if ever. And how to submit with a show of enthusiasm to the judgment of strangers, even if they are wrong, even if your enthusiasm is phony.

—John Taylor Gatto

The problem with the evangelical homeschool movement was not their desire to educate their children at home, or in private religious schools, but the evangelical impulse to 'protect' children from ideas that might lead them to 'question' and to keep them cloistered in what amounted to a series of one-family gated communities.

Frank Schaeffer

The philosophy of project-based homeschooling — this particular approach to helping children become strong thinkers, learners, and doers — is dependent upon the interest and the enthusiastic participation and leadership of the learners themselves, the children.

—Lori McWilliam Pickert

So you think the best way to prepare kids for the real world is to bus them to a government institution where they're forced to spend all day isolated with children of their own age and adults who are paid to be with them, placed in classes that are too big to allow more than a few minutes of personal interaction with the teacher—then spend probably an hour or more everyday waiting in lunch lines, car lines, bathroom lines, recess lines, classroom lines, and are forced to progress at the speed of the slowest child in class?

—Steven James

Cheating in school is a form of self-deception. We go to school to learn. We cheat ourselves when we coast on the efforts and scholarship of someone else.

— James E. Faust

School pushes us out of our comfort zone, teaches us to dream big, and encourages us to achieve our potential.

Natalie Seale

The chief reason for going to school is to get the impression fixed for life that there is a book for everything.

—Robert Frost

There's no use going to school unless your final destination is the library.  
— Ray Bradbury

It is clearly absurd to limit the term 'education' to a person's formal schooling.  
—Murray N. Rothbard

The fundamental purpose of school is learning, not teaching.  
—Richard Dufour

If all your problems are behind you, you might be a school bus driver.  
—Internet Meme

Respect your parents. They passed school without Google.  
—Internet Meme

Based on my experience in school, I assumed a three hole punch would figure into my everyday life more often than it has.  
—Anna Kendrick

It's remarkable how little schools have changed over time; most public elementary schools are stuck with a model that hasn't evolved to reflect advances in cognitive science and our understanding of human development. When I walked into my 10-year-old son's fourth-grade classroom a year ago, it looked almost exactly like my now-28-year-old son's classroom in 2001, which in turn looked strikingly like my own fourth-grade classroom in 1972. They all had the same configuration of desks, cubbies, and rigidly grade-specific accoutrements. The school schedule also remains much the same: 35 hours of weekly instructional time for about 180 days. The same homework, too, despite the growing wealth of evidence suggesting that homework for elementary-school children (aside from nightly reading) offers minimal or no benefits.

—Erika Christakis (2020)

Elementary education...values relatively superficial learning that's too focused on achieving mastery of shallow (but test-friendly) skills unmoored from real content knowledge or critical thinking. School hours are marked by disruptions and noise as students shift, mostly en masse and in age-stratified groups, from one strictly demarcated topic or task to another. Many educators and child-development experts believe that some of the still-standard features of pre-K and elementary education—age and ability cohorts, short classroom periods, confinement mostly indoors—are not working of many children.

—Erika Christakis (2020)

If school were a drug, it would not receive FDA approval.

—Peter Gray

In a mixed-age [school] group, [Angela Duckworth] says, ‘the 10-year-old takes the hand of the 5-year-old and looks both ways crossing the street. The 5-year-old looks up to the 10-year-old with admiration and trust, and does as they are told. In contrast, when you throw hundreds of kids of exactly the same age together, attention goes, unhelpfully, to comparisons within the group: Who is smartest? Who is fastest? Who is prettiest?’ This steers children’s values away from kindness, trust, and community and toward status competition, which can generate stress and bullying.

—Erika Christakis

‘Special’ classes, such as music—as well as periods like recess, physical education, and even lunch—provide children with important opportunities for emotional growth and independent learning. For many children, they are what make school bearable.

—Erika Christakis

Teach the ignorant as much as you can; society is culpable in not providing a free education for all and it must answer for the night which it produces. If the soul is left in darkness sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness.

—Victor Hugo

The nature of the labyrinth, I scribbled into my spiral notebook, and the way out of it. This teacher rocked. I hated discussion classes. I hated talking, and I hated listening to everyone else stumble on their words and try to phrase things in the vaguest possible way so they wouldn’t sound dumb, and I hated how it was all just a game of trying to figure out what the teacher wanted to hear and then saying it. I’m in class, so teach me.

—John Green

The most necessary task of civilization is to teach people how to think. It should be the primary purpose of our public schools. The mind of a child is naturally active, it develops through exercise. Give a child plenty of exercise, for body and brain. The trouble with our way of educating is that it does not give elasticity to the mind. It casts the brain into a mold. It insists that the child must accept. It does not encourage original thought or reasoning, and it lays more stress on memory than observation.

—Thomas A. Edison

Schools and schooling are increasingly irrelevant to the great enterprises of the planet. No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes or politicians in civics classes or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders. This is a great mystery to me because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators, but the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions. Although teachers do care and do work very, very hard, the institution is psychopathic—it has no conscience. It rings a bell and the young man in the middle of writing a poem must close his notebook and move to a different cell where he must memorize that humans and monkeys derive from a common ancestor.

— John Taylor Gatto

Schools teach you to imitate. If you don't imitate what the teacher wants you get a bad grade. Here, in college, it was more sophisticated, of course; you were supposed to imitate the teacher in such a way as to convince the teacher you were not imitating, but taking the essence of the instruction and going ahead with it on your own. That got you A's. Originality on the other hand could get you anything—from A to F. The whole grading system cautioned against it.

—Robert M. Pirsig

One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.

—Malala Yousafzai

Most of these students are so conditioned to success that they become afraid to take risks. They have been taught from a young age by zealous parents, schools, and institutional authorities what constitutes failure and success. They are socialized to obey. They obsess over grades and seek to please professors, even if what professors teach is fatuous. The point is to get ahead, and getting ahead means deference to authority. Challenging authority is never a career advancer.

—Chris Hedges

Home is a child's first and most important classroom.

—Hillary Rodham  
Clinton

There can be no greater stretch of arbitrary power than to seize children from their parents, teach them whatever the authorities decree they shall be taught, and expropriate from the parents the funds to pay for the procedure.

—Isabel Paterson

Schools assume that children are not interested in learning and are not much good at it, that they will not learn unless made to, that they cannot learn unless shown how, and that the way to make them learn is to divide up the prescribed material into a sequence of tiny tasks to be mastered one at a time, each with its appropriate 'morsel' and 'shock.' And when this method doesn't work, the schools assume there is something wrong with the children—something they must try to diagnose and treat.

—John Holt

I couldn't see how anyone could be educated by this self-propagating system in which people pass exams, and teach others to pass exams, but nobody knows anything.

—Richard Feynman

The teachers are afraid of the principals. The principals are afraid of the superintendents. The superintendents are afraid of the board of education. The board is afraid of the parents. The parents are afraid of the children. The children are afraid of nothing!

—Milton Berle

No doubt to teach one's own children...takes special qualities. But these are qualities that many people have, or with a little help, can get. ...The home-schooling movement is full of such people, ordinary people doing things that they never would have thought they could do—learning the law, questioning the experts, holding their ground against arrogant and threatening authorities, defending themselves and their convictions... Seeing them, other ordinary people think they can do the same, and soon they do. This is why it may be a little misleading to speak of the homeschooling movement. Most people think of a movement as something like an army, a few generals and a great many buck privates. In the movement for home-schooling, everyone is a general.

—John Holt

The long-term effects of racism on the achievement gap should not be underestimated. Schooling for whites in this country extends back for several centuries. Though not equally distributed even among whites, free public education has nonetheless an expectation that education leads to success—at least for those in the majority. For people of color no such centuries-long positive history exists. From the slave codes that forbade educating those who were enslaved, to the Jim Crow laws that followed, to the institutional racism that has only been weakened, not eliminated, all have had a devastatingly negative impact on the education of children of color, an impact that continues to this day.

—David Gardner

Schools that are closing the...gap share these characteristics:

- ❑ They have an unwavering commitment to prepare all students for college or other postsecondary education.
- ❑ The instructional program acknowledges this commitment by focusing on students' intellectual development through inquiry, higher-order thinking skills, and authentic learning.
- ❑ The schools are caring, personalized communities where faculty members assume the role of adviser to a small group of students over several years.
- ❑ The teachers are supported through regular professional development, cross-curricula collaboration, and coaching.
- ❑ Extended-day and extended-year learning opportunities give students the time, attention, and other supports necessary for success with the challenging curriculum.
- ❑ The schools communicate regularly with parents and guardians about their children's progress and engage parents in the life of the school.
- ❑ The schools use many forms of data to continuously assess student progress and effective instruction.

—N. Gerry House

Schools were designed by Horace Mann and Barnard Sears and Harper of the *University of Chicago* and *Thorndyke of Columbia Teachers College* and some other men to be instruments of the scientific management of a mass population. Schools are intended to produce through the application of formulae, formulaic human beings whose behavior can be predicted and controlled.

—John Gatto

One day I overheard the teacher tell the inspector that I was 'addled' and it would not be worthwhile keeping me in school any longer. I was so hurt by this last straw that I burst out crying and went home and told my mother about it. Then I found out what a good thing a good mother is. She came out as my strong defender. Mother love was aroused, mother pride wounded to the quick. She brought me back to the school and angrily told the teacher that he didn't know what he was talking about, that I had more brains than he himself, and a lot more talk like that. In fact, she was the most enthusiastic champion a boy ever had, and I determined right then that I would be worthy of her and show her that her confidence was not misplaced.

—Thomas Edison

Imagine how different U.S. schools and society would be if every child entering 5th grade had 5th grade reading and math skills.

—Robert E. Slavin

A different way to learn is what the kids are calling for....All of them are talking about how our one-size-fits-all delivery system—which mandates that everyone learn the same thing at the same time, no matter what their individual needs—has failed them.

—Seymour Sarason

A joyful classroom atmosphere makes students more apt to learn how to successfully solve problems in potentially stressful situations.

—Robert Sylwester

American education has always been controlled by local communities more than outside agencies, and that habit will not and should not be broken. All schools are only as good as the communities in which they are located, and the quality of the teachers who work in them.

—William Edwards  
Deming

Money matters a great deal in education, but people matter more. Having classmates who have big dreams and are academically engaged; parents who actively volunteer in the classroom; and great teachers are the key ingredients to an excellent education—even more than high per-pupil expenditure.

—Richard Kahlenberg

#### **THE FOUR [EDUCATION] MYTHS:**

- Learning is essentially a function of effort.
- There is a recipe for good schools, as there is for apple pie and shrimp scampi, and the master chefs hang out in state legislatures and governor's mansions.
- Teaching is simple, and the evidence of good—and bad—teaching is clearly visible.
- There truly was a golden age in American education, and it can be recaptured.

The mythology has its roots in a total lack of concern for the unsuccessful learner. Belief in this...mythology increases the likelihood that educators will embrace values and engage in practices which, in turn, will increase the likelihood that unsuccessful learners will continue to be pushed out of our public schools in increasing numbers.

—James Albrecht

The obligation of the American common public school is to educate all the children of all the people and that failure to honor that obligation will eventually endanger the very fabric of American society. The secret is for principals to take seriously and thoughtfully their roles as educational leaders, to resist the popular easy answers... and instead to search for ways to cast all students in active learner roles in programs which increasingly emphasize higher cognitive processes.

—James Albrecht

The fact is that real learning often can't be quantified, and a corporate-style preoccupation with 'data' turns schooling into something shallow and lifeless. Ideally, attention to learning signifies an effort to capture how each student makes sense of the world, so we can meet them where they are. 'Teaching,' as Deborah Meier has reminded us, 'is mostly listening.' (It's the learners, she adds, who should be doing most of the 'telling,' based on how they grapple with an engaging curriculum.) Imagine how American classrooms would be turned inside out if we ever really put that wisdom into action.

—Alfie Kohn

Although school climate is hard to define or describe, there can be no doubt it is a real factor in motivating teachers and students to hold expectations for themselves and perform at their best academically. Most principals believe that the school's climate highly influences students' achievements and self-concepts. Climate is sometimes referred to as school environment, learning climate, social climate, or organizational climate. In fact, there seem to be many sources of climate in a school: school discipline procedures, physical layout of the school building, noise levels, presence or (or absence) of enthusiasm, amount of litter or vandalism, and so forth....It is possible to single out one aspect of school climate—school learning climate—that affects achievement levels. Luckily, the factors that appear to most significantly affect students' learning are limited in number. Perhaps the most important factor is the set of beliefs, values, and attitudes teachers and students hold about learning. Lawrence Lezotte and his colleagues define learning climate as 'the norms, beliefs, and attitudes reflected in institutional patterns and behavior practices that enhance or impede student learning.'

—James Weber

School is a place of learning. It is not a place of entertainment or relaxation, like a theater or like the beach. That means that school is essentially a workplace and that the pleasure to be derived from school is integrally related to the satisfaction derived from accomplishing a hard job.

—*National Education Association*

Bullies differ from other aggressive children in that they single out students who are weak or unpopular, or who are unable to retaliate. Studies have shown that bullies tend to be unwilling to accept the ideas of others or to negotiate during play. Many bullies have a history of physical punishment or abuse at home. Significantly, 40% of elementary and 60% of middle school students...report that teachers try to stop bullying behavior only infrequently. Because a climate conducive to learning must be maintained...bullying must not be tolerated or regarded as simply a natural part of growing up....an habitual victim of even minor abuse is likely to perceive school as an unhappy place and that such a student can be expected to perform poorly and develop little self-esteem.

—John Hoover and  
Richard J. Hazler

### **SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS:**

- A safe environment conducive to learning
- Clear school goals
- Instructional leadership from the principal
- A climate of high expectations
- A high percentage of time on task
- Frequent evaluation of student performance
- Community support

—Daniel U. Levine and  
Robert J.  
Havighurst

A school is in business to cause and promote learning. It should therefore model for all institutions what it means to be a learning organization. A school is not merely a place that expects students to learn; it must encourage and support everyone's learning.

For a school to be a model learning organization, all faculty members should be professional learners: They should engage in deep, broad study of the learning they are charged to cause. What works? What doesn't? Where is student learning most successful, and why? How can we learn from that success? Where are students struggling to learn, and why? What can we do about it? Effectively tackling these questions is why the 'professional' in 'professional practice' means.

—Grant Wiggins  
and Jay  
McTighe

According to some studies, many pupils experience so much criticism, failure, and discouragement in school that their self-confidence, level of aspirations and sense of worth are damaged.

—Goodwin Watson

School matters, but only insofar as it yields something that can be used once students leave school.

—Howard Gardner

We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years & come out at last with a bellyful of words & do not know a thing...The farm, the farm is the right school...The farm is a piece of the world, the School house is not.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

45% of students never used things when they were outside of school that they and learned in school, never read during leisure about school subjects, and never talked with friends outside of school about school subjects.

—Gerald W. Bracey

Schools with high student achievement and morale show certain characteristics:

- vigorous instructional leadership,
- a principal who makes clear, consistent, and fair decisions,
- an emphasis on discipline and a safe and orderly environment,
- instructional practices that focus on basic skills and academic achievement,
- collegiality among teachers in support of student achievement,
- teachers with high expectations that all their students can and will learn, and
- frequent review of student progress.

Effective schools are places where principals, teachers, students, and parents agree on the goals, methods, and content of schooling. They are united in recognizing the importance of a coherent curriculum, public recognition for students who succeed, promoting a sense of school pride, and protecting school time for learning.

—U.S. Department of  
Education—*What  
Works*

The most important thing we learn at school is the fact that the most important things can't be learned at school.

—Haruki Murakami

Good instruction flourishes when teachers collaborate in developing goals that emphasize student achievement. Effective schools have a climate of staff collegiality and use mutual support as a means of improving pupil achievement. School leaders in such schools set aside time for faculty interaction and provide specific opportunities for teachers and administrators to work together on such tasks as setting school policies, improving instructional practice, selecting textbooks, and strengthening discipline.

—U.S. Department of  
Education—*What  
Works*

The big mistake in schools is trying to teach children anything, and by using fear as the basic motivation. Fear of getting failing grades, fear of not staying with your class, etc. Interest can produce learning on a scale compared to fear as a nuclear explosion to a firecracker.

—Stanley Kubrick

Children learn what they live. Put kids in a class and they will live out their lives in an invisible cage, isolated from their chance at community; interrupt kids with bells and horns all the time and they will learn that nothing is important or worth finishing; ridicule them and they will retreat from human association; shame them and they will find a hundred ways to get even. The habits taught in large-scale organizations are deadly.

—John Taylor Gatto

Our great mistake in education is, as it seems to me, the worship of book-learning—the confusion of instruction and education. We strain the memory instead of cultivating the mind. The children in our elementary schools are wearied by the mechanical act of writing, and the interminable intricacies of spelling; they are oppressed by columns of dates, by lists of kings and places, which convey no definite idea to their minds, and have no near relation to their daily wants and occupations; while in our public schools the same unfortunate results are produced by the weary monotony of Latin and Greek grammar. We ought to follow exactly the opposite course with children—to give them a wholesome variety of mental food, and endeavor to cultivate their tastes, rather than to fill their minds with dry facts. The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn. What does it matter if the pupil know a little more or a little less? A boy who leaves school knowing much, but hating his lessons, will soon have forgotten almost all he ever learned; while another who had acquired a thirst for knowledge, even if he had learned little, would soon teach himself more than the first ever knew.

—John Lubbock

We could jettison our cultlike devotion to homework, which burdens children across the socioeconomic and learning spectrums by fueling the specious view that ‘learning’ happens under the auspices of an institution, rather than within the unbounded human brain. Some children need to be left alone after a long school day to juice their learning mojo; others may need much more comprehensive support to unleash their potential than is found in a pack of multiplication flash cards.

—Erika Christakis

Whoever had decided that school should start so early in the morning and last all day long needed to be hunted down and forced to watch hours of educational television without the aid of caffeine.

—Heather Brewer

Under the United States Constitution, the federal government has no authority to hold states accountable for their education performance...In the free society envisioned by the founders, schools are held accountable to parents, not federal bureaucrats.

—Ron Paul

If you want to find somebody to blame for the way I am, I guess you’d have to start with the public education system.

—Jeff Kinney

It is clearly absurd to limit the term ‘education’ to a person’s formal schooling.

—Murray N. Rothbard

The greatest service we can do to education today is to teach fewer subjects. No one has time to do more than a very few things well before he is twenty, and when we force a boy to be a mediocrity in a dozen subjects, we destroy his standards, perhaps for life.

—C. S. Lewis

We have to go from what is essentially an industrial model of education, a manufacturing model, which is based on linearity and conformity and batching people. We have to move to a model that is based more on principles of agriculture. We have to recognize that human flourishing is not a mechanical process; it's an organic process. And you cannot predict the outcome of human development. All you can do, like a farmer, is create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish.

—Ken Robinson

The pursuit of knowing was freedom to me, the right to declare your own curiosities and follow them through all manner of books. I was made for the library, not the classroom. The classroom was a jail of other people's interests. The library was open, unending, free. Slowly, I was discovering myself.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

One of the greatest problems of our time is that many are schooled but few are educated.

—Thomas More

Education is a process of love formation. When you go to a school, it should offer you new things to love.

—David Brooks

Public schools were not only created in the interests of industrialism—they were created in the image of industrialism. In many ways, they reflect the factory culture they were designed to support. This is especially true in high schools, where school systems base education on the principles of the assembly line and the efficient division of labor. Schools divide the curriculum into specialist segments: some teachers install math in the students, and others install history. They arrange the day into standard units of time, marked out by the ringing of bells, much like a factory announcing the beginning of the workday and the end of breaks. Students are educated in batches, according to age, as if the most important thing they have in common is their date of manufacture. They are given standardized tests at set points and compared with each other before being sent out onto the market.

—Ken Robinson

When you wage war on the public schools, you're attacking the mortar that holds the community together. You're not a conservative, you're a vandal.

—Garrison Keillor

At its best, schooling can be about how to make a life, which is quite different from how to make a living.

—Neil Postman

The problem in our society and in our schools is to inculcate, without overdoing it, the notion of education, as in the Latin *educere*—to lead, to bring out what is in someone rather than merely to indoctrinate him/her from the outside.

—Joseph Campbell

All the world is my school and all humanity is my teacher.

—George Whitman

Great teachers had great personalities and that the greatest teachers had outrageous personalities. I did not like decorum or rectitude in a classroom; I preferred a highly oxygenated atmosphere, a climate of intemperance, rhetoric, and feverish melodrama. And I wanted my teachers to make me smart. A great teacher is my adversary, my conqueror, commissioned to chastise me. He leaves me tame and grateful for the new language he has purloined from other kings whose granaries are filled and whose libraries are famous. He tells me that teaching is the art of theft: of knowing what to steal and from whom. Bad teachers do not touch me; the great ones never leave me. They ride with me during all my days, and I pass on to others what they have imparted to me. I exchange their handy gifts with strangers on trains, and I pretend the gifts are mine. I steal from the great teachers. And the truly wonderful thing about them is they would applaud my theft, laugh at the thought of it, realizing they had taught me their larcenous skills well.

—Pat Conroy

Independent study, community service, adventures and experience, large doses of privacy and solitude, a thousand different apprenticeships—the one-day variety or longer—these are all powerful, cheap, and effective ways to start a real reform of schooling. But no large-scale reform is ever going to work to repair our damaged children and our damaged society until we force open the idea of ‘school’ to include family as the main engine of education. If we use schooling to break children away from parents—and make no mistake, that has been the central function of schools since John Cotton announced it as the purpose of the Bay Colony schools in 1650 and Horace Mann announced it as the purpose of Massachusetts schools in 1850—we’re going to continue to have the horror show we have right now.

—John Taylor Gatto

What is most surprising of all is how much fear there is in school. Why is so little said about it. Perhaps most people do not recognize fear in children when they see it. They can read the grossest signs of fear; they know what the trouble is when a child clings howling to his mother; but the subtler signs of fear escaping them. It is these signs, in children's faces, voices, and gestures, in their movements and ways of working, that tell me plainly that most children in school are scared most of the time, many of them very scared. Like good soldiers, they control their fears, live with them, and adjust themselves to them. But the trouble is, and here is a vital difference between school and war, that the adjustments children make to their fears are almost wholly bad, destructive of their intelligence and capacity. The scared fighter may be the best fighter, but the scared learner is always a poor learner.

—John Holt

Once upon a time, all children were homeschooled. They were not sent away from home each day to a place just for children but lived, learned, worked, and played in the real world, alongside adults and other children of all ages.

—Rachel Gathercole

A fourth-grade reader may be a sixth-grade mathematician. The grade is an administrative device which does violence to the nature of the developmental process.

—B. F. Skinner

By the time a student gets to college, he's spent a decade curating a bewilderingly diverse resume to prepare for a completely unknowable future. Come what may, he's ready—for nothing in particular.

—Peter Thiel

The home is the chief school of human virtues.

—William Ellery  
Channing

While one is young is the time to investigate, to experiment with everything. The school should help its young people to discover their vocations and responsibilities, and not merely cram their minds with facts and technical knowledge; it should be the soil in which they can grow without fear, happily and integrally.

—Jiddu Krishnamurti

Parents at elite private schools sometimes grumble about taking nothing from public schools yet having to support them via their tax dollars. But the reverse proposition is a more compelling argument. Why should public-school parents—why should anyone—be expected to support private schools? Exeter has 1,100 students and a \$1.3 billion endowment. Andover, which has 1,150 students, is on track to take in \$400 million in its current capital campaign. And all of this cash, glorious cash, comes pouring into the countinghouse 100 percent tax-free.

—Caitlin Flanagan

The home-schooling movement has quietly grown to a size where one and half million young people are being educated entirely by their own parents; last month the education press reported the amazing news that, in their ability to think, children schooled at home seem to be five or even ten years ahead of their formally trained peers.

—John Taylor Gatto

What we're learning in our schools is not the wisdom of life. We're learning technologies, we're getting information. There's a curious reluctance on the part of faculties to indicate the life values of their subjects.

—Joseph Campbell

The chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody concerned in it, teachers and taught.

—Henry Adams

A public-school system, if it means the providing of free education for those who desire it, is a noteworthy and beneficent achievement of modern times; but when once it becomes monopolistic it is the most perfect instrument for tyranny which has yet been devised. Freedom of thought in the middle ages was combated by the Inquisition, but the modern method is far more effective.

—J. Gresham Machen  
(1923)

Less than 2 percent of the nations' students attend so-called independent schools. But 24 percent of Yale's class of 2024 attended an independent school. At Princeton, that figure is 25 percent. At Brown and Dartmouth, it is higher still: 29 percent. The numbers are even more astonishing when you consider that they're not distributed evenly across the country's more than 1,600 independent schools but are concentrated in the most exclusive ones....In the past five years, Dalton has sent about a third of its graduates to the Ivy League. Ditto the Spence School. Harvard-Westlake, in Los Angeles, sent 45 kids to Harvard alone. Noble and Greenough School, in Massachusetts, did even better: 50 kids went on to Harvard.

—Caitlin Flanagan

The god of private school is money. At an independent school, there are no tax dollars, no municipal bonds, no petitions demanding additional funding for the district. Everything seen and unseen was paid for with funds the school raised itself: every blade of grass, smartboard, academic building, office hour, soccer ball, school psychologist, new paint job, and historic chapel with stained-glass windows spilling colored light onto honeyed pews.

—Caitlin Flanagan

Whereas the math curriculum at most American high schools tops out at Calculus I, multivariable calculus and linear algebra—subjects normally reserved for college sophomores or juniors—are widespread among moneyed high schools.

—Liam O'Connor

Many schools for the richest American kids have gates and security guards; the message is you are precious to us. Many schools for the poorest kids have metal detectors and police officers; the message is you are a threat to us.

—Caitlin Flanagan

The Founding Fathers in their wisdom decided that children were an unnatural strain on parents. So they provided jails called schools, equipped with tortures called an education. School is where you go between when your parents can't take you and industry can't take you.

—John Updike

Grit, persistence, adaptability, financial literacy, interview skills, human relationships, conversation, communication, managing technology, navigating conflicts, preparing healthy food, physical fitness, resilience, self-regulation, time management, basic psychology and mental health practices, arts, and music—all of these would help students and also make school seem much more relevant. Our fixation on college readiness leads our high school curricula toward purely academic subjects and away from life skills. The purpose of education should be to enable a citizen to live a good, positive, socially productive life independent of work.

—Andrew Yang

Keep those faces in mind, the little girls and boys in the early grades, all trusting the adults to show them the way, all eager and excited about life and what will come next, and then just follow those faces over time. Follow the face of a little girl who doesn't read very well and is told to try harder; who tends to daydream and is told she better pay attention; who talks out in class when she sees something fascinating, like a butterfly on the windowpane, and is told to leave the class and report to the principal; who forgets her homework and is told she will just never learn, will she; who writes a story rich in imagination and insight and is told her handwriting and spelling are atrocious; who asks for help and is told she should try harder herself before getting others to do her work for her; who begins to feel unhappy in school and is told that big girls try harder. This is the brutal process of the breaking of the spirit of a child. I can think of no more precious resource than the spirits of our children. Life necessarily breaks us all down somewhat, but to do it unnecessarily to our children in the name of educating them—this is a tragedy. To take the joy of learning—which one can see in any child experimenting with something new—to take that joy and turn it into fear—that is something we should never do.

—Edward M. Hallowell

7 schools in New York City look exactly the same because they only had money for 1 set of blueprints.

—*theChive*

Shouldn't schools be the place where students interact with interesting books? Shouldn't the faculty have an ongoing laser-like commitment to put good books in our students' hands? Shouldn't this be a front-burner issue at all times?

—Kelly Gallagher

I want to oppose the idea that the school has to teach directly that special knowledge and those accomplishments which one has to use later directly in life. The demands of life are much too manifold to let such a specialized training in school appear possible [...] The development of general ability for independent thinking and judgement should always be placed foremost.

—Albert Einstein

One of the essential problems for education is that most countries subject their schools to the fast-food model of quality assurance when they should be adopting the Michelin model instead. The future for education is not in standardizing but in customizing; not in promoting groupthink and deindividuation but in cultivating the real depth and dynamism of human abilities of every sort.

—Ken Robinson

There is, on the whole, nothing on earth intended for innocent people so horrible as a school. To begin with, it is a prison. But in some respects more cruel than a prison. In a prison, for instance, you are not forced to read books written by the warders and the governor. . . . In the prison you are not forced to sit listening to turnkeys discoursing without charm or interest on subjects that they don't understand and don't care about, and therefore incapable of making you understand or care about. In a prison they may torture your body; but they do not torture your brains.

—George Bernard Shaw

[E]ducation is a thing you get past and forget about as quickly as possible. This is particularly true of elementary and secondary education, of course.... I began to remember what it had been like: the tremendous excitement of the first couple of years, when kids imagine that great secrets are going to be unfolding before them, then the disappointment that gradually sets in when you begin to realize the truth: There's plenty of learning to do, but it's not the learning you wanted. It's learning to keep your mouth shut, learning how to avoid attracting the teacher's attention when you don't want it, learning not to ask questions, learning how to pretend to understand, learning how to tell teachers what they want to hear, learning to keep your own ideas and opinions to yourself, learning how to look as if you're paying attention, learning how to endure the endless boredom.

—Daniel Quinn

Our schools will not improve if we continue to close neighborhood schools in the name of reform. Neighborhood schools are often the anchors of their communities, a steady presence that helps to cement the bond of community among neighbors.

—Diane Ravitch

The idea that girls are somehow responsible for ‘provoking’ harassment from boys is shamefully exacerbated by an epidemic of increasingly sexist school dress codes. Across the United States, stories have recently emerged about girls being hauled out of class, publicly humiliated, sent home, and even threatened with expulsion for such transgressions as wearing tops with ‘spaghetti straps,’ wearing leggings or (brace yourself) revealing their shoulders. The reasoning behind such dress codes, which almost always focus on the girls’ clothing to a far greater extent than the boys’, is often euphemistically described as the preservation of an effective ‘learning environment.’ Often schools go all out and explain that girls wearing certain clothing might ‘distract’ their male peers, or even their male teachers....in reality these messages privilege boys’ apparent ‘needs’ over those of the girls, sending the insidious message that girls’ bodies are dangerous and provoke harassment, and boys can’t be expected to control their behavior, so girls are responsible for covering up....his education is being prioritized over hers.

—Laura Bates

I wouldn’t have minded school if they taught you important things like how to have good sex and what brand of wine is the best... But for some reason they were hell bent on teaching me algebra.

—Ben Mitchell

The U.S. is the only nation to fund elementary and secondary education based on local wealth. Other developed countries either equalize funding or provide extra funding for individuals or groups felt to need it. In the Netherlands, for example, national funding is provided to all schools based on the number of pupils enrolled, but for every guilder allocated to a middle-class Dutch child, 1.25 guilders are allocated for a lower-class child and 1.9 guilders for a minority child, exactly the opposite of the situation in the U.S. where lower-class and minority children typically receive less than middle-class white children. Regional differences in per-pupil costs may exist in other countries, but the situation in which underfunded urban or rural districts exist in close proximity to wealthy suburban districts is probably uniquely American.

Of course, even equality in per-pupil costs in no way ensures equality in educational services. Not only do poor districts typically have fewer funds, they also have greater needs.

—Robert E. Slavin

Part of our problem is that those twelve years of schooling are in large part an enormous waste of time, because very little of the true, the good, and the beautiful is learned there. School is the asylum where we send children whom we do not know what to do with otherwise. They learn no grammar there, very little history, no geography, very little of their language's literary heritage. They get some math, but in a protracted and mind-dulling way, and some science, but very little of the world that is near their hands and eyes.

—Anthony M. Esolen

Our schools cannot be improved if we ignore the disadvantages associated with poverty that affect children's ability to learn. Children who have grown up in poverty need extra resources, including preschool and medical care.

—Diane Ravitch

...when I'd stopped going to school and the weird uneasy feeling I'd gotten afterward, like I was forgetting to do something. My life until that point had pivoted around some form of education, and all of a sudden, it was gone. Homework, classes, running around, and then—bam—nothing but a life of work stretching out before you. No one prepares you for that feeling or even mentions it. You just suddenly have a gap and have to decide how to fill it.

—Lish McBride

Schools must remember that they are not primarily for helping children acquire jobs, get into college, or develop a better self-concept. As worthy as these goals may be, they are less important than the schools' distinctly civic mission: to educate students to be capable of—and passionately committed to—meeting the challenges of the democratic way of life.

—Walter Parker

Social control has spawned grouping practices that expose only some students to important content and enlightened instruction. In the early grades, students are divided into three groups—for example, canaries, robins, and sparrows. The canaries get the best curriculum, the sparrows the most mundane. By 12th grade, the groups are still intact. Now, the canaries are doing advanced placement coursework, the sparrows are taking auto mechanics or clerical training, and the robins are getting something in between. Such patterns indicate either that remediation was never the goal of these grouping practices, or that schools do not know how to remediate.

—Walter Parker

I dreamed I stood in a studio  
And watched two sculptors there.  
The clay they used was a young child's mind,  
They fashioned it with care.

One was a Teacher—  
The tools he used were books, music, and art.  
One was a Parent with a guiding hand,  
With a gentle loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled,  
With touch that was deft and sure;  
While the parent labored by his side  
To polish and smooth it over.

And when at last their task was done,  
They were proud for what they had wrought  
For the things they molded into the child  
Could neither be sold or bought.

Each agree he might have failed  
If he had worked alone  
For behind the parent stood a school  
And behind the teacher a home.

--Ray A. Lingenfelter