



The United States is a world power with a poor educational system — what a paradox! — and bickering over education reform may be a permanent feature of American society. In a further paradox, much of the problem lies outside the schools themselves but rests in the chaotic amalgam of competing bureaucrats, boards, associations, agencies and unions that make up the education “system,” the broad social environment, and political divides.

In the past fifty years, despite all the wrangling between the two main political parties, the nation has been unable to develop a successful education strategy. Even among politicians there is a mindboggling lack of cohesion and consensus on public education. Although representatives of both parties advocate a good education for children, Democrats insist on increasing federal involvement in education accompanied with lavish federal funding while Republicans oppose the intensive involvement.

From elementary school to the university level, *Improving Education in the US* navigates readers through the confusing and often contradictory information about the problems facing education. The book shows the deficiency of the existing education system and compares it to more efficient, effective systems. It explains the basics of the organizational structure of education, the role of the federal government, state governments, and local governments in running school systems and how they are all different. The author considers various aspects of public education systems from elementary school through university, the genesis of public schools in the United States, issues that still need to be addressed, trends in education and reform and analyses of what is working or not working.

This book has as its main goal to explain the current American education system and why it is a failure despite ongoing efforts at reform. The author shows that the existing approaches to improve education are based on the same foolish idea that as long as government spending on education is great enough, improvement will follow. The author shows that multiple research attempts to improve the functioning of the existing education system were unable to bring any tangible results because they dealt with separate, purely educational problems, rather than the global one, and were conducted by experts in education rather than experts in system analysis, operation research and optimal theory who are able to approach complex problems using the appropriate tools. He uses his knowledge in these areas to explain what should be done for progress in the US education system to become reality.

Bombarded by the unrealistic promises of politicians, parents want to believe them because the promises coincide with their desire to give their children a better education. But such promises have

little chance for success, especially when any real analysis must inevitably show some portion of the huge educational bureaucracy and various educational organizations around the public school system to be redundant or dysfunctional, and that would cost someone's jobs and put them out of business. Those responsible for doing the analysis have no incentive to do it well. Without any doubt, education is a national problem. Many or most Americans feel it is the government's obligation to resolve it, but it cannot be resolved without the active cooperation of all parties to the project.

Everyone who cares about America's future must be armed with information related to the US public system of education. Is it not paradoxical that the richest and most advanced country in the world has an unsatisfactory system of public education that threatens the country's future prosperity? It is a dangerous sign of a possible future decline. The author hopes that this book will help readers to understand some of the difficulties in rebuilding the existing public education system.

## Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1. The Wealth of a Nation</b>	<b>5</b>
The Gold Standard	6
The Race to Mediocrity	7
The Teacher Becomes the Student	8
The Department of Education — Myth or Reality?	9
First Response	10
A Sinking Ship	11
<b>Chapter 2. The Founding Fathers and the History of Public Education</b>	<b>13</b>
In the Beginning	13
A Missed Opportunity	18
The Winds of Change	20
Goals in Education	20
<b>Chapter 3. Destiny's Child</b>	<b>25</b>
America's Achievements	25
Disparities Between Goals and Achievements	27
Educational Statistics	29
Why Are Americans Behind other Leading Industrial Countries in Education?	34
<b>Chapter 4. How the US Education System Works</b>	<b>39</b>
Department of Education	39
Boards of Education	41

<b>Bureaucracy in Action</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Education and Its Environment</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Chapter 5. Education and Politics</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>A History of Government Initiatives</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>A Call to Arms</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Politics and Educational Progress</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Trade Unions and Educational Progress</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Democrats and Republicans on Education</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Chapter 6. I Learn Therefore I Am</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Testing and Grading Systems</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>The Truth of the Test</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Admission Standards</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Chapter 7. Climbing To the Top</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Curricula and Education Standards</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Necessity of Textbook Examination</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Chapter 8. Teach the Teacher</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Teachers' Qualification</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Maintaining the Status Quo</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Bureaucracy in Classrooms</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Chapter 9. A Parent's Job is Never Done</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>The Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Parents' Voices Must Be Heard</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Chapter 10. Public Versus Private</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Chapter 11. Charting the Way for Charter Schools</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Chapter 12. System Approach to Educational Problems</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Education and National Goals</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Achieving Goals</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Trust But Verify</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Deficiency of the Existing Educational Structure</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Chapter 13. Improving the System of Higher Education</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Accreditation and Quality of Education</b>	<b>173</b>

<b>Reasons for the Increasing Cost of Education</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Should Tenure Be Abolished?</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>The Ivy Universities — Dreams and Reality</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Chapter 14. Money Makes the World Go Around</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Appendix 1. Post-World War II American Nobel Prize Laureates</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Appendix 2. A Hypothetical Curriculum for Basic Subjects</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Afterword</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>251</b>