

20TH EDITION

AMERICAN EDUCATION



Joel Spring

AMERICAN EDUCATION

Featuring current information and challenging perspectives on the latest issues and forces shaping the American educational system—with scholarship that is often cited as a primary source—Joel Spring introduces readers to the historical, political, social and legal foundations of education and to the profession of teaching in the United States. In his signature straightforward, concise approach to describing complex issues, he illuminates events and topics that are often overlooked or whitewashed, giving students the opportunity to engage in critical thinking about education. Students come away informed on the latest topics, issues and data and with a strong knowledge of the forces shaping the American educational system.

Thoroughly updated throughout, the 20th edition of this clear, authoritative text remains fresh and up to date, reflecting the many changes in education that have occurred since the publication of the previous edition, such as:

- The effects of the pandemic on schools, teachers, students, learning and social goals
- The latest U.S. Department of Education guidelines for school prayer, regulations on sexual harassment and Title IX and guidelines for writing IEPs
- Expanded discussion of institutional racism
- Coverage relating to transgender youth and athletics

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AMERICAN EDUCATION

20th Edition

Joel Spring

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PREFACE

American Education 20th Edition introduces readers to the goals, organization, legal rulings, controversies and politics related to American schools. My objective is to provide a balanced introduction where the reader must make their own decisions about controversial topics. Many of these topics require readers to decide such things as “Should the word ‘God’ be in the Pledge of Allegiance?”, “What should be the content of sex education?”, “Is there institutional racism in school texts?”, “How should the language and cultural diversity of students be addressed in schools?”, “Who should control American schools?” and “Should there be limits on school choice?” These are samples of the issues that readers must decide.

The reader should be aware that I don’t have personal answers to many of the controversies swirling around American schools. I’m like Larry, the fallen Wobbly in Eugene O’Neill’s *Iceman Cometh* who quits the movement because he sees both sides of an issue. “I was born condemned to be one of those who has to see all sides of a question. When you’re damned like that, the questions multiply for you until in the end it’s all questions and no answer.”

I did this revision of the 20th edition of *American Education* during the 2020 pandemic and drought-driven global wildfires, which I first experienced in Australia. Consequently, changes in this edition reflect the impact of the pandemic on students, teachers, administrators and school services. All chapters have been updated. Removing dated material and adding new material resulted in combining the 19th edition’s Chapter 7 (Student Diversity) and Chapter 8 (Multicultural and Multilingual Education) into a single Chapter 7 (Student Diversity) in this 20th edition.

Other changes include:

1. Chapter 1 Additions
 - a. Effects of pandemic on schools and social goals
 - b. The 2020 debate about American history: 1771 versus 1619

2. Chapter 2 Additions
 - a. 2020 U.S. Department of Education Guidelines for School Prayer
 - b. Six ways educators can support LGBTQ students during COVID-19
 - c. Opioid crisis
 - d. School lunch programs during the pandemic
3. Chapter 3 Additions
 - a. The effect of the pandemic on the ability of schools to prepare graduates for equal opportunity in the job market
4. Chapter 4 Additions
 - a. Reorganized material on human capital economics
5. Chapter 5 Additions
 - a. Section on institutional racism
 - b. Transgender youth and athletics
 - c. U.S. Department of Education 2020 regulations on sexual harassment and Title IX
 - d. U.S. Department of Education guidelines for writing IEPs
6. Chapter 6 Additions
 - a. Sections on institutional racism
7. Chapter 7 Additions
 - a. Section on the pandemic and online learning
 - b. Introduced concepts of the deep state, the administrative state and the shadow government
8. Chapter 8 Additions
 - a. Section on U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos
 - b. For-profit charter schools
 - c. Discussion of satirical piece in the New York Times about the possibilities of student surveillance written by the former head of communications for Google
9. Chapter 9 Additions
 - a. Teachers and the pandemic
10. Chapter 10 Additions
 - a. Global schools and the pandemic

CHAPTER 1

Pandemic and the Goals of Schooling

School lights darkened as students headed home “to stay in place” as the relentless pandemic spread across the nation in the spring of 2020. Online learning took over classroom instruction, isolating students and making the internet the connection to teachers and friends. Telemedicine took over as doctors isolated and parents described their children’s ills over the internet. Unfamiliar words became part of the educational language, such as ‘social distancing’, ‘mitigation,’ and ‘flattening the curve’. Educational goals, administration, teachers, students and building staff had to adjust as the entire population worried about ending up in a hospital’s ICU.

School administrators managed a world of empty classes with duties including supervising teachers working at home’ providing teachers and students with online resources and equipment, planning for students with disabilities and English Language Learners, getting food to kids on federal breakfast and lunch programs, arranging for homeless students and an endless list of other tasks. The closing of schools highlighted their diverse services.

By August 2020, schools struggled to open with teachers and students wary of being infected, parents worried about sending their children to school and politicians and businesspeople urging the schools to open so that parents could go back to work. The pandemic highlighted schools’ social and economic functions, such as providing free meals, classroom socialization, after-school activities, programs for students with disabilities, citizenship training and a whole host of other functions.

The response to the pandemic raised issues about the quality of online instruction and even telemedicine. There are no conclusive research studies on the effectiveness of online instruction and telemedicine. But with the pandemic, both have grown in importance. There are limited studies

concluding that online learning is less effective than classroom instruction. How good are the medical results for a student sitting in front of a computer explaining their symptoms to a doctor using telemedicine in contrast to an office visit? How does classroom interaction using video conferencing software like Zoom, which offered its usage free of charge to schools during the pandemic, compare with actual in-class discussions? There are no conclusive studies.

The structure of schooling will probably change based on the history of previous pandemics that have disrupted society. In the sixth century, Rome collapsed as a result of a plague and cooling temperatures caused by clouds of volcanic smoke filling the sky. In fourteenth-century Europe, the bubonic plague killed about a third of the population, and society became more violent. Europeans brought viruses to the Americas, destroying native populations and cultures. The 1918 Spanish flu upended societies and killed more than 50 million worldwide. It sparked, like today, tensions over wearing masks to protect others and oneself against infection.

Some claim that as a result of the Spanish flu, United States, culture in the 1920s changed, resulting in the 'Roaring Twenties,' 'Jazz Age,' 'Consumerism' and a loosening sexual morality as many tried to escape the horror of the pandemic. Writing about the pandemic, Andrew Sullivan reminds readers of the viruses brought by Europeans to the Americas: "It's strange that we now see America threatened by a plague. Because without plague, America, as we know it, wouldn't exist."

The pandemic shuttered schools without any clear understanding of the consequences. Problems quickly appeared, such as social class divisions on home conditions supporting online instruction, providing school services and teaching students with disabilities and those who are homeless. There were complaints that video conferencing software could be hacked, that students couldn't focus on learning at home and that teachers and administrators were unprepared for the quick transition to new roles. Achieving traditional educational goals that required classroom socialization became impossible as students hunkered down at home.

In the midst of the pandemic, there were mass protests over police shootings led by Black Lives Matter. The complaint was institutional racism. Do schools, textbooks and curricula reflect institutional racism? Later, I will define institutional racism and how it might be reflected in the organization and instructional content of American schools.

The pandemic highlights traditional educational goals. If more instruction goes online, can patriotic feelings be developed in students without classroom and assembly exercises like pledging allegiance to the flag and singing national songs? Learning cooperation, considered by some an important educational goal, might be undercut by online instruction

where a single learner sits in front of a computer screen. School life is supposed to prepare students for functioning in other institutional settings. It has often been said that learning to obey school rules is preparation for obeying a nation's laws. Learning social and emotional skills requires a classroom setting. The same thing is true of mindfulness instruction. What happens to these goals as learning moves online?

This book's first four chapters will explore and raise issues about these social and economic functions and how they may change in the aftermath of pandemic. These changes raise issues regarding online instruction, sending kids to small private schools, opening neighborhood instructional pods, home schooling and school choice.

In this chapter, I will focus on the political goals of education. While some of these goals are impossible without a populated classroom, many can be embedded in online courses such as developing patriotic feelings through online American history courses. In Chapter 2, I discuss the social goals of schooling that became problematic during the pandemic. In Chapters 3 and 4, I discuss equality of opportunity, highlighting the inequality of learning opportunities when schools switch to online learning.

This chapter introduces readers to the effect of the pandemic on:

- The goals and history of U.S. public schools;
- Debates about the political goals of public schools;
- A discussion about whether these goals have been achieved;
- Questions designed to help readers formulate their own opinions about the purposes of American education.

EDUCATION GOALS ARE CONTROVERSIAL

Before the pandemic, many education goals were challenged in court. Consider the goal of educating patriotic citizens. As I alluded to before, the pandemic has made this goal more difficult, with online learning and expanding the right of parents to choose a school for their child. One controversial issue has been saluting the flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, which contains a reference to God. Some religious groups criticize flag salutes as worshipping false gods, while others complain about the reference to God in the Pledge.

Also, social goals have stimulated debates about how to reduce teenage pregnancy. Some advocate abstinence education, while others argue for instruction in birth control. An important traditional goal of schooling has been reducing crime by teaching moral and social values. But whose social values or morality should form the basis of instruction in public schools? Today, the economic goals of schooling primarily center

on educating workers to help the U.S. economy compete in the global economy. Will this goal increase or decrease economic inequalities in society? Are rich and poor kids educated for the types of jobs held by their parents?

The previous questions do not have right or wrong answers. They are questions that reflect real debates about the role of U.S. public schools. The questions also provide insight into the historical evolution of American education. For instance, what are your answers to the following questions?

- Do you think there are public benefits from education that should override the objections of parents and other citizens regarding the teaching of particular subjects, attitudes or values?
- Should elected representatives determine the subject matter, attitudes and values taught in public schools?
- What should public school teachers do if they are asked to teach values that are in conflict with their own personal values?

In answering the preceding questions, remember that public schools do not always operate for the general good of society. Most people assume that public schooling is always a social good. However, public schools are used to advance political and economic ideologies that do not improve the condition of human beings. For instance, in the 1930s, Nazis enlisted schools in a general campaign to educate citizens to believe in the racial superiority of the German people, to support fascism and to be willing to die at the command of Hitler. Racial biology and fascist political doctrines were taught in the classroom; patriotic parades and singing took place in the schoolyard. A similar pattern occurred in South African schools in attempts to maintain a racially divided society. In the United States, racial segregation and biased content in textbooks were used to maintain a racial hierarchy. Consequently, the reader should be aware that “education” does not always benefit the individual or society. Public and personal benefits depend on the content of instruction.

Educational goals are a product of what people think schooling should do for the good of society. Consequently, they often reflect opinions and beliefs about how people should act and how society should be organized. Since there is wide variation in what people believe, educational goals often generate a great deal of debate. I’m sure that in reading this book, you will find yourself taking sides on issues.

HISTORICAL GOALS OF SCHOOLING

The 2020 pandemic disrupted many of the educational goals that were part of the founding of public schools. The historical record provides

insight into current controversies surrounding public school goals. Public schools founded from the 1820s to the 1840s had as a goal the uniting of Americans by instilling in students common moral and political values. It was believed that if all children were exposed to a common instruction in morality and politics, the nation might become free of crime, immoral behavior and the possibility of political revolution. These educational goals have persisted into the twenty-first century, with government policies still calling upon schools to instill in students moral values, a common cultural identity and civic values. Will these goals survive the pandemic?

Since their founding, public schools have tried to provide equality of opportunity for graduates to succeed. Horace Mann referred to this goal as the “great balance wheel of society.” Worried about conflicts between the rich and poor, education was believed to be the key in giving everyone an equal opportunity to gain wealth. Equality of opportunity refers to everyone having the same chance to pursue wealth. It does not mean that everyone will have equal status or income but just an equal chance to economically succeed. It was hoped that the poor would not resent the rich when they realized they had an equal opportunity through schooling to become rich. Today, a major goal of schooling remains providing equality of opportunity.

When the pandemic closed schools in the spring of 2020, it still was obligated to carry out welfare goals established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Industrialization, urbanization and increased immigration from the 1880s to the 1920s turned public schools into welfare agencies that extended their reach to something called the “whole child.” This included concerns about the health, family and neighborhood conditions affecting students and resulted in school cafeterias, school nurses, playgrounds, extracurricular activities, after-school programs and intervention into families, and kindergartens became part of the expanded goals of schooling. Like political and moral education and equality of opportunity, these concerns extended into the twenty-first century. For instance, school cafeterias were originally introduced to ensure that children received proper nutrition. Today, this concern persists in the battle against childhood obesity. With the pandemic, schools began teaching how viruses spread and the importance of masks and hand washing.

The teaching of multiculturalism and racial harmony were highlighted in schools during the civil rights movement from the 1950s to the 1980s. Prior to this period, schools attempted to strip Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and Mexican Americans of their languages and cultures and replace them with the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. After the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, educators began to closely look at whether their books and teaching reflected institutional

racism. The result, as I discuss in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, is a continuing struggle over the language and culture of schooling.

Since the 1960s, an important goal of education has been to increase economic growth and prepare students for jobs in the global economy. During the period from the 1820s to the 1840s, champions of public school argued that mass schooling would end poverty and increase national wealth. This argument persisted into the period from the 1880s to the 1920s, when schools introduced vocational education, vocational guidance and high school programs designed to educate students for particular jobs in the labor market. These economic goals continue to the present.

In summary, schools try to achieve many hopes for political, social and economic improvement. The dreams of public school advocates of the early nineteenth century persist in the form of civic education, patriotic school exercises and character education. Providing equality of opportunity to pursue wealth remains a dream of school people. Growing the economy and preparing students for work are central to political policies affecting schools. “Reform the individual rather than society” is the message of those who trust schools to end crime, poverty, broken families, drug and alcohol abuse and myriad other social troubles. How will these goals be accomplished after the impact of the pandemic?

PANDEMIC: PROTECTED OR PREPARED CHILDHOOD

The problems in shutting down schools during the pandemic highlighted the concept of protected childhood. Many school functions were designed to protect children by providing opportunities to play, be healthy, use their imagination and be happy. Educational practices that traditionally reflect protected childhood include:

- recess;
- availability of playgrounds;
- emphasis in instruction on intellectual enjoyment and the interests of the student;
- gym;
- school clubs;
- extra-curricular activities;
- free meals;
- health care and instruction;
- kindergarten for imagination and personal development in contrast to preparation for the first grade;
- education for enjoyment of the arts;
- personal development for a happy life.

Social concepts of childhood are another way of thinking about educational goals. Is the educational goal designed to protect or prepare children for some future life? In *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, Steven Mintz argues there was a transition in American thought from the concept of "protected" childhood to "prepared" childhood. "Protected childhood" focuses on the happiness and well-being of the child. In "prepared childhood," attention is given to the child's future as an adult rather than concern about the child's immediate happiness.

Preparation for work or college impacts many of the practices associated with protected childhood, including:

- preschool learning skills for work and later schooling;
- kindergarten as preparation for first grade in contrast to time for social and imaginative development;
- reduction of arts programs and recess time for more class time and test preparation;
- career education.

POLITICAL GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Besides protection and preparation of children, schools are often considered necessary for the functioning of the United States political system.

The major political goals of American schools are:

- Teaching a common set of political beliefs
- Learning to obey the law by obeying school rules
- Providing an equal opportunity for all to be elected to political positions
- Emphasizing voting as the key to political and social change
- Learning about the workings of government
- Educating patriotic citizens
- Educating students to be involved in community activities

Before the actual establishment of public schools, American political leaders wanted schooling to create a national culture and to educate qualified politicians for a republican government. The role of schools in determining national culture continues into the twenty-first century, particularly with increasing tensions over immigration.

After the American Revolution, many worried about national unity and the selection of political leaders. Some who wanted national unity were slaveholders, such as Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. For later generations, government protection of their ownership

of other humans would raise questions about their political doctrines and calls for political education.

In his first message to Congress in 1790, President George Washington proposed a national university for training political leaders and creating a national culture. He wanted attendance by students from all areas of the country. What was hoped was that a hereditary aristocracy of the British would be replaced by an aristocracy of the educated. Washington's proposal was criticized as elitist. Requiring a college education, some protested, would result in politicians being primarily recruited from the elite. If none but the rich had access to higher education, then the rich could use higher education as a means of perpetuating and supporting their social status. To avoid the problem of elitism, Thomas Jefferson suggested that education could provide an equal opportunity for all non-slave citizens to gain political office. All citizens were to be given an equal chance to develop their abilities and to advance in the political hierarchy.

Jefferson was concerned with finding the best politicians through a system of schooling. In the 1779 Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, Jefferson proposed three years of free education for all nonslave children. The most talented of these children were to be selected and educated at public expense at regional grammar schools. From this select group, the most talented were to be chosen for further education. Jefferson wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "By this means twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually, and be instructed, at the public expense."

The details of Jefferson's plan are not as important as the idea, which has become ingrained in American social thought, that schooling is the best means of identifying democratic leadership. This idea assumes that the educational system is fair in its judgments. Fairness of selection assumes that judgment is based solely on talent demonstrated in school and not on other social factors such as race, religion, dress and social class.

Besides educating political leadership, schools were called on to educate future citizens. However, opinions were divided on how this should be accomplished. Jefferson proposed a very limited education for the general citizenry. The three years of free education were to consist of instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. He did not believe that people needed to be educated to be good citizens. He believed in the guiding power of natural reason to lead the citizen to correct political decisions. Citizens were to receive their political education from reading newspapers published under laws protecting freedom of the press. Citizens would choose between competing political ideas found in newspapers. For Jefferson, the most important political function of schools was teaching reading.

Interestingly, while Jefferson wanted political opinions to be formed in a free marketplace of ideas, he advocated censorship of political texts at the University of Virginia. These contradictory positions reflect an inherent problem in the use of schools to teach political ideas. There is always the temptation to limit political instruction to what one believes are correct political ideas.

In contrast to Jefferson, Horace Mann, often called the father of public schools, wanted to instill a common political creed in all students and an obligation and desire to vote as part of maintaining a republican form of government. Mann developed his educational ideas and his reputation as America's greatest educational leader while serving as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education from 1837 to 1848. Originally a lawyer, Mann gave up his legal career because he believed that schooling and not law was the key to creating a good society.

Without commonly held political beliefs, Mann believed, society was doomed to political strife and chaos. According to Mann, it is necessary to teach the importance of using the vote, as opposed to revolution and violence, to bring about political change. This was an important issue during Mann's time because the extension of universal male suffrage took place in the 1820s. Before that time, the vote was restricted by property requirements. In reference to the vote replacing political violence, Mann stated:

Had the obligations of the future citizen been sedulously inculcated upon all children of this Republic, would the patriot have had to mourn over so many instances, where the voter, not being able to accomplish his purpose by voting, has proceeded to accomplish it by violence?

Also, Horace Mann worried that growing crime rates and social class conflict would lead to violence and mob rule. Commonly held political values, along with the belief in the power of the vote, Mann hoped, would maintain political order. For Mann, the important idea was that all children in society attend the same type of school. The school was to be common to all children. Within the public or common school, children of all religions and social classes were to share in a common education. Basic social disagreements were to vanish as rich and poor children, and children whose parents were supporters of different political parties, mingled in the schoolroom.

Within the walls of the public schoolhouse, students were to be taught the basic principles of a republican form of government. Mann assumed there was general agreement about the nature of these general political values and that they could be taught without objection from outside

political groups. In fact, he opposed teaching politically controversial topics because he worried that conflicting political forces would destroy the public school idea. The combination of social mingling in school and the teaching of a common political philosophy would establish, Mann hoped, shared political beliefs that would ensure the survival of the U.S. government. Political liberty would be possible, according to Mann's philosophy, because it would be restrained and controlled by the ideas students learned in public schools.

Is there a common set of political values in the United States? Since the nineteenth century, debates over the content of instruction have rocked the schoolhouse. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, conservative and liberal political groups pressured local public schools to teach their respective political viewpoints.

SHOULD SCHOOLS TEACH POLITICAL VALUES AND PATRIOTISM?

There is a strong tradition of dissent to public schools teaching any political doctrines. Some argue that teaching of political ideas is a method of maintaining the political power of those in control of government. In the late eighteenth century, English political theorist William Godwin warned against national systems of education because they could become a means by which those controlling government could control the minds of future citizens. Writing in 1793, Godwin stated, "Their views as instructors of a system of education will not fail to be analogous to their views in their political capacity: the data upon which their instructions are founded."

In addition to teaching political doctrines, the organizational features of schools were to instill political values. Simply defined, *socialization* refers to what students learn from following school rules, interacting with other students and participating in school social events. Socialization can be contrasted with academic learning, which refers to classroom instruction, textbooks and other forms of formal learning.

For some educational leaders, socialization is a powerful means of political control. Learning to obey school rules is socialization for obedience to government laws. Advocating the use of schools for political control, Johann Fichte, a Prussian leader in the early nineteenth century, wanted schools to prepare students for conformity to government regulations by teaching obedience to school rules and developing a sense of loyalty to the school. He argued that students will transfer their obedience to school rules to submission to government laws. According to Fichte, loyalty and service to the school and fellow students prepare citizens for service to the country. The school, according to Fichte, is a miniature community where children learn to adjust their individuality to the

requirements of the community. The real work of the school, Fichte said, is shaping this social adjustment. A well-ordered government requires citizens to go beyond mere obedience to written constitutions and laws. Fichte believed children must see the government as something greater than the individual and must learn to sacrifice for the good of the social whole.

To achieve these political goals, Fichte recommended teaching patriotic songs, national history and literature to increase a sense of dedication and patriotism to the government. This combination of socialization and patriotic teachings, he argued, would produce a citizen more willing and able to participate in the army and, consequently, would reduce the cost of national defense.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE CONTROVERSY

In the United States, patriotic exercises and fostering school spirit were emphasized after the arrival in the 1890s of large numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. In 1892, Francis Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance and introduced it in the same year to educators attending the annual meeting of the National Education Association (NEA). A socialist, Bellamy wanted to include the word “equality” in the Pledge, but this idea was rejected because state superintendents of education opposed equality for women and African Americans. The original Pledge of Allegiance was: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Bellamy’s Pledge of Allegiance became popular classroom practice as educators worried about the loyalty of immigrant children.

In the 1920s, the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution thought that the Pledge’s phrase “I pledge allegiance to my Flag” would be construed by immigrants to mean that they could remain loyal to their former nations. Consequently, “my flag” was replaced by “the flag of the United States.” It was during this period that schools initiated Americanization programs that were precursors to current debates about immigrant education. Americanization programs taught immigrant children the laws, language and customs of the United States. Naturally, this included teaching patriotic songs and stories. With the coming of World War I, the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of patriotic songs, participation in student government and other patriotic exercises became a part of the American school. In addition, the development of extra-curricular activities led to an emphasis on school spirit. The formation of football and basketball teams, with their accompanying trappings of cheerleaders and pep rallies, was to build school spirit and, consequently, prepare students for service to the nation.

In the 1950s, the Pledge of Allegiance underwent another transformation when some members of the U.S. Congress and religious leaders campaigned to stress the role of religion in government. In 1954, the phrase “under God” was added to the Pledge. The new Pledge referred to “one nation, under God.” Congressional legislation supporting the change declared that the goal was to “acknowledge the dependence of our people and our Government upon . . . the Creator . . . [and] deny the atheistic and materialistic concept of communism.” For similar reasons, Congress in 1955 added the words “In God We Trust” to all paper money.

Reflecting the continuing controversy over the Pledge, a U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in 2002 that the phrase “one nation, under God” violated the U.S. Constitution’s ban on government-supported religion. The decision was later dismissed by the U.S. Supreme Court because the father in the case did not have legal custody of his daughter for whom the case was originally brought. The suit was filed by Michael Newdow, the father of a second-grade student attending California’s Elk Grove Unified School District. Newdow argued his daughter’s First Amendment rights were violated because she was forced to “watch and listen as her state-employed teacher in her state-run school leads her classmates in a ritual proclaiming that there is a God, and ours is ‘one nation under God.’” While the issue remains unresolved, the suit raised important questions about the Pledge of Allegiance.

In reaction to the Court’s decision, Anna Quindlen wrote in the July 15, 2002, edition of *Newsweek*, “His [Bellamy’s] granddaughter said he would have hated the addition of the words ‘under God’ to a statement he envisioned uniting a country divided by race, class and, of course, religion.” Another dimension of the story was that Bellamy was a socialist during a period of greater political toleration than today. In contrast to the 1890s, today it would be difficult to find a professional educational organization that would allow an outspoken socialist to write its patriotic pledge.

On May 9, 2014, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance did not discriminate against non-religious students. However, the ruling did recognize that the Pledge was voluntary according to a 1942 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. In the 1942 decision, a group of students refused to say the Pledge because it violated their religious beliefs against worshiping graven images. The U.S. Supreme court ruled that students could not be forced to say the Pledge and that it had to be voluntary. Many students are not told about this Constitutional right and that they do not have to participate in saying the Pledge.

But the controversy over the Pledge has not ended. In 2017, a 17-year-old at Houston’s Windfern High School was expelled for refusing to

stand for the daily Pledge of Allegiance. The student's parents sued, and she was allowed to return to school. In 2018, a Waterbury, Connecticut, student sued her teacher for mocking and shaming her for refusing to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance in protest over racial injustice in the United States.

In conclusion, political education in American schools has consisted of teaching a national culture, performing patriotic exercises, political socialization through the life of the school, the study of government and national history and the teaching of a dedication to voting as a means of social change. Like any other political agenda, political education in public schools is surrounded by controversy.

THE 2020 DEBATE OVER AMERICAN HISTORY: 1771 VERSUS 1619

The content of American history instruction has always been a point of controversy. I'm sure readers will have different opinions on the following story, as citizens have had throughout American history. If you feel personal emotions reading about this debate, then you understand how patriotism and emotions are intertwined. You should ask others how they would respond to this debate.

On September 17, 2020, President Donald Trump declared: "left-wing rioting and mayhem are the direct result of decades of left-wing indoctrination in our schools . . . it's gone on far too long." He stated that the National Endowment for the Humanities "has awarded a grant to support the development of a pro-American curriculum that celebrates the truth about our nation's great history."

What is at issue? President Trump singled out the *New York Times* 1619 Project, which was proposed by Nikole Hannah-Jones, a writer for the *New York Times Magazine*. She proposed dedicating the Sunday magazine to examining the ways the legacy of slavery continues to shape our country.

President Trump stated the 1619 Project "rewrites American history to teach our children that we were founded on the principle of oppression, not freedom." In other words, by focusing on the enslavement of Africans and the conquest of Native Americans, it teaches that the United States was not founded on liberty but began on the suppression of Africans and Native Americans.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," President Trump argued; the founding of the nation "set in motion the unstoppable chain of events that abolished slavery, secured civil rights, defeated communism and fascism, and built the most fair, equal and prosperous nation in human history."

As a result, President Trump created the 1776 commission to promote "patriotic education" and "encourage our educators to teach our

children about the miracle of American history and make plans to honor the 250th anniversary of our founding.”

How would you present American history to elementary and secondary students?

CENSORSHIP AND AMERICAN POLITICAL VALUES

What should be the political values taught in public schools? Horace Mann assumed that schools could just teach the basic principles of government free from controversy. Time has proved his assumption naïve, as the schools became embroiled in censorship issues, textbook struggles and court decisions about freedom of speech.

Textbooks are a traditional means of instilling political values. But, as I will describe, textbook content is highly politicized, with many conflicts over what values should appear on their pages. These controversies are highlighted by the state adoption policies in California and Texas and pressures on textbook publishers by special-interest groups. Oddly, given the struggle over their content, textbooks appear bland, with history and civics texts often being just plain boring and seeming like compendiums of facts containing no political messages. In part, this appearance is caused by the wish of textbook publishers to avoid controversy. But embedded in the blandness are facts and ideas that are the product of a whole host of political debates and decisions.

Texas’s textbook hearings are extremely important for publishers. This situation has changed in recent years as California is replacing textbooks with open-source readers. This action is making Texas the major determiner of the content of textbooks. Texas represents 8 percent of the \$2.2 billion national market in textbooks.

Texas’s selection of textbooks is the most controversial. Writing for the *Washington Post* in 2014, Valerie Strauss stated, showing her bias against the Board’s actions,

Back in 2010, we had an uproar over proposed changes to social studies standards by religious conservatives on the State Board of Education, which included a bid to calling the United States’ hideous slave trade history as the ‘Atlantic triangular trade.’ There were other doozies, too, such as one proposal to remove Thomas Jefferson from the Enlightenment curriculum and replace him with John Calvin.

Exemplifying the problem of finding common political values, the Texas State School Board was sued in 2003 for rejecting the textbook *Environmental Science: Creating a Sustainable Future* (sixth edition) by David D. Chiras. The board rejected the book for “promoting radical