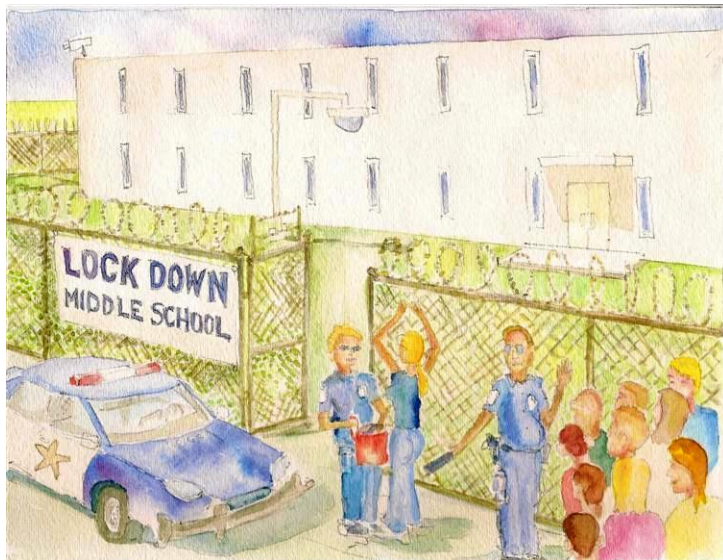


SCHOOL OF A NEAR FUTURE

Society is always changing. Yet one thing has not changed – politicians – misguided people compulsively focused on “*balancing the books*” that breaks the back of education necessary to carry us towards prosperity. Like suicide, that which holds promise, is sacrificed by “*cutting the throat*” of education budgets and raising tuition. Politicians ought to labor on authentic projects improving society – like creating schools meant to change the *status quo* of a broken economy - not just regulate everything into a state of paralysis.



I have been a university professor, and I can safely say most students I taught needed remedial work in reading, writing and mathematics; partly due to public schools, upon which most are dependent, being political and social battlegrounds desperate for rational solutions. To the extent that public education has devolved into may be immaterial to some, but for many, is quite disheartening. Public schools are a semi-literate educational system that can't teach society's own language to semi-literate public servants and college graduates employed by corporations.

When educated people reflect a degree of illiteracy, then truly public schools are petrified institutions. Like most types of bureaucracies, they are seemingly incapable of adaptation because they are dominated by polarizing, failed ideologies feeding off public ignorance, self serving bureaucratic inertia, unions which neither serve students nor teachers – nor are willing, or incapable of any real innovation, and an apathetic public rendered hostile or indifferent by the *status quo* of knowing it's an institution of control – not learning.

Public schools are large scale factories where we warehouse people, and whose manufacturing outcomes are alienated and semi-illiterate people in need of a qualitative education – not locked down in a camp of concentrated social ills. But, that is the gist of it: quantitative numbers driven by the cost of how to cheapen education, or quality which requires adequate expenditures; or a choice between public school mediocrity and private school quality. Somewhere, there must be some middle ground for most citizens who cannot afford private schools! That is the idea of charter schools – financed publically by educational district taxes, but accountable to the local community because it's able to move forward unfettered by the ideas and practices of a failed past shared by all; a new type of collaboration between administration, faculty and students governed by the idea of merit by all parties; measurable by quality, literate graduates.

It's incredulous, perhaps unconscionable that those who desire to escape taxation would oppose the creation of new types of public charter schools in poor, middleclass and affluent communities. But for most who pay - wanting input on how to create new schools – that's understandably democratic. The idea of teaching skills and ethics – growing the next generation into a self sustaining, ethical people has always been, in all cultures the primary function of humanity – hence a moral purpose for our existence; and though humanity falls short on both – still we are duty bound to keep trying. That is why proposals for charter schools by idealists and pragmatists alike will not expire – until its struggle to be birthed as a

practical solution to paralysis is realized. It is an issue that can bring together what appears to be hostile opposition and habitual indifference concerning public life, to the aid of establishing and carrying-out a moral purpose that nobody really disagrees with – improving social life through education.

Generally, people are not opposed to the idea of establishing any type of school, but have practical, valid concerns about where to locate schools, the means of securing the space through imposition of eminent domain, and how to fairly manage the increasing density of people and buildings on limited space. In short, stances that appear to be without compromise creating opposition among people already suspicious of the motives of others; a situation that perhaps can be lessened by transparent political conversations motivated by a common belief in schools; a process assuaging the fear of compromise over usages of public and private lands that acknowledges the individual while serving the greater needs and gains for society. Unfortunately, the penchant to separate ourselves into cultural, religious and economic groups in competition for resources and recognition reinforces suspicions of motives, when rationally we ought to be united in our belief to create and grow institutions of education, the glue of society under the corrosive effects of misguided motives; a situation endemic of the human condition.

As idealists, many believe that merit ought to count more than birth or wealth. Yet as pragmatists, we are saddened to say that merit walks – money talks; and it is because of that troubling reality that both idealists and pragmatist propose the creation world class schools whose conditions are open admissions with continued enrollment based on merit. This model of an authentic community schools with an excellent curriculum and teachers free from a dysfunctional past are possible through charter schools financed by state dollars, unencumbered by existing school board politics, petrified bureaucracy and unions. Despite who pays, citizens are supportive of the idea of creating new kinds of schools - open to the idea of students, parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders democratically creating schools with quality curriculums and new methods of teaching; a center where knowledge and its ethical management necessarily for future human survival is a model to be replicated in other communities.

Most of us profess a belief in a *God of Creative Intelligence* - and so, we too are able to endeavor on our highest and best purpose in creating things and situations arising from conflicting views that sustain the life of all villages. I don't know if charter schools created through the process of combative cooperation among differing views, yet steered by a common belief in a noble and practical idea, will ever be realized in a society with the financial and civic wherewithal to support such endeavors, yet I suspect that one day one will see many small, campus schools, founded on a reading curriculum, centered around municipal libraries – an indicator of an affluent, cultured society; a school where philosophical contemplation and diligent study under local auspices will produce graduates capable of managing society long after many of us are gone and our frail, tired vanities are put to rest. What else could be nobler and in keeping with the idea of taking public dollars to create a new type of school free from the crippling effects of the failed education policies of and their limits on the future of a multilingual society like America – the emphasis of a multi linguistic curricula. I am convinced that communities can have world class charter schools that are inclusive of some sound aspects of both right and left political ideologies – do not both views have some merit?