

To add to the teacher's troubles, he is looked down upon by the whole community, because to share a wealth of knowledge is among the most beautiful of deeds, but to sell a meager stock of it is unworthy.

'One should not make an axe of the Torah,' it is said.

Almost every Jew in the shtetl knows enough to teach little children, but almost everyone would prefer to make his living at some other occupation.

The teacher who lives by selling what should be given, is not even a learned person. If he were, he would be a rabbi or a teacher of advanced students. It is generally assumed that a man who teaches little children has failed elsewhere.

'From the Kheyder to the Grave'
Part II Chapter 2 (pp.89-90)
in Zborowski, Mark, and Herzog, Elizabeth (authors)
Life Is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl
New York: Schocken Books (1952)
Introduction by Margaret Mead

When I look back on my life, I see that it has been a research project on schools and the corruption of democratic government. Timefordemocracy.com is a report on my research findings.

In the 1970s, on the excuse of segregation in southern states, someone filed a case against Chicago Public Schools and got a federal court order to desegregate Chicago schools by busing.

The problem was, 15-18% of CPS children were white, and the remainder weren't. Massive white flight from the city had already occurred. More would follow if CPS divided the number of white children by the number of city schools, and bused white children out of white neighborhoods and black children into them to integrate all schools the same. Someone pointed this out to the judge. He was a reasonable man and agreed to a plan by which parents of all colors could opt to send their children to magnet schools. Specialty schools would integrate by choice and by busing. Enrolment at other schools would reflect local demographics.

You don't know Chicago if you don't see the scam right off the bat. Most black Chicagoans didn't want integration, but preferred to think of certain neighborhoods and schools as 'theirs'.

So who filed the case in the first place?

The Hispanic population was growing. It seemed to be exempt from any obligations to integrate, and has proven to be even more territorial about neighborhoods and schools.

Only whites have been denied a right to say that a neighborhood or school is theirs.

The desegregation order was a goldmine for private entrepreneurs in the businesses of busing and security, and their employees, and the politicians who write contracts with them. The overall effect of the order was to privatize patronage jobs but continue to finance them with tax revenues. The desegregation order put many underachieving, unemployed Chicagoans to work.

In other words, incompetent, preexisting CPS employees failed to educate children for real world jobs. Politicians solved the problem by creating more jobs in the schools. As patronage jobs increased so did the number of people willing to let a stupid court order stand. The order expired, but the number of buses and security guards is the same or larger.

I opted to send my child to kindergarten at a specialty school that advertised a program for gifted children. When it was time for 32 children in the all-day kindergarten to start first grade, only 6 showed up. Two of the 6 first-grade parents yanked their children out of the school September-October. In November, I was the third, leaving 3 of the 32 gifted kindergarteners in the gifted first grade. One more transferred out while I was still on the grapevine.

What alienated parents? What alienated me?

The teachers were bullies. Teachers and administrators threatened to expel a child if his parents didn't force him to do two hours of homework week nights following the all-day kindergarten, ruling out normal after-school down time. More work on weekends, ruling out social life.

One mother had to fight tooth and nail to become a classroom assistant and find out what was going on in the room. She didn't like seeing the shade pulled down on the window of the classroom door. When she got in, she saw nothing much going on. At the end of the year, she saw that the 500 papers in her son's folder were papers he'd done at home.

She reported that the gifted program was used as a model nation-wide. The kindergarten teacher was often out of the room to entertain visiting 'educators' from schools around the country.

The principal saved the cost of substitute teachers by using 8th grade girls from a slow learners specialty program in the same school; and dull normal girls from bad neighborhoods abused the gifted 5-year-olds.

Not all parents enforced the homework rule equally. Some parents did the homework themselves, rather than fight with their children every night of the week and on weekends. Older siblings did the homework. Grandparents. Aunts and uncles.

The teacher may have noticed some discrepancies between test scores and homework turned in, but seems to have not minded.

I'd been an inner city high school special education for 6 years before I had my own children and stayed home. I worked in a school for physically handicapped children and adolescents. My students were labeled mildly retarded and some were also considered learning disabled.

To me, the 500 papers and other assignments looked a lot more like busy work my colleagues and I gave to retarded children when we were too lazy to do 'teacher-made' assignments. Nothing I saw resembled in any way, the best practices for gifted children that I'd read about.

I noticed that my son's personality changed the third week of school. It was popular then as now to blame behavioral problems on food. I blamed chocolate milk. My son had rejected lollipops when he was a toddler, and had no taste for sweets. I wrote the teacher a note and asked her to give my son white milk.

Many years later I read research literature that says a personality change is one of the symptoms of a bad fit between child and school.

The fifth year I was a special education teacher, a boy named John had bust through the door of my inner city classroom; and then executed an admirable leap across the room that ended with a karate kick on another boy named John.

John M. was on the giving end and John L. was on the receiving end. John M. was black. John L. was white and had hemophilia. The kick could have killed him.

I worked under the educational theory that teachers get paid to perform certain services during regular school hours, and one of these services is to keep children safe and another service is to send children home better at the end of the day than they came in at the beginning of the day. Parents pay for this service, and parents should get the benefit of it.

Therefore, I didn't assign homework. Neither did I call parents and complain about their children. If I couldn't handle the child, I wasn't qualified for my job and I should resign.

I did call John M's home because he endangered a life, even if he did exhibit physical skills to be proud of. The school was supposed to be a safe haven for disabled children, and he made it unsafe.

John M. told me the next day that his mother beat the living daylights out of him when he got home. I expressed shock. He said, 'Don't you know that when a teacher calls home it means the parent is supposed to beat the kid?'

No. I didn't know that.

The gifted kindergarten teacher called me at home the fourth week of kindergarten. She said my son sassed her. I spanked him.

I don't know why my son turned out to be one of the few children on the planet who doesn't tell tales, true or false, about other people.

I didn't get the story out of him till many months later. The school cafeteria sent lunch trays to the kindergarten room, and the children ate in their room instead of in the cafeteria. Lunch was a fried fish patty on the day the teacher called me. My son refused to eat it. The teacher stuffed it in his mouth, and he vomited it back at her.

People who worked in the gifted program told parents that giftedness is a mystery. Nobody knows where it comes from. Some children are gifted; some aren't. Who can say why? They took it for granted that no parent can take credit if his child is gifted, and for this reason parents had to respect and trust school employees but school employees didn't have to do the same for parents. I had my doubts about the validity.

In the nature v. nurture controversy, I gave my whole vote to nurture. All children have to make do with the parents God gave them. Some kids lucked out in the parent department and some didn't. But, if anyone else wants to vote for genetic inheritance and nature, logical thinking leads to the same conclusion.

I'd been arguing for nurture on behalf of black people since I was 20 years old.

The kindergarten teacher was a well-groomed 30-something black woman with two children of her own. There weren't many gifted programs in the city, and nobody mentioned that her children attended the school where she taught.

She seemed to be on staff because she made a pretty picture for visiting educators. She had a well-rehearsed song-and-dance routine, and nothing else.

The parents did all the work. Some of the children scored high on nationally standardized tests, despite the odds against it. The teacher took all the credit. She was the excuse for hundreds of thousands of teachers nationwide to put their work off on parents, and talk tough to any parent who refused to cooperate.

Three months into first grade, only two of the 32 kindergartners attended the gifted school.

If my first husband and I hadn't gotten divorced many years before, I would be the aunt of one of the two children. I knew my ex-husband's family. I knew why my ex-brother-in-law and his wife kept both their children in a program that so many other parents rejected.

My ex-husband and his siblings were third generation immigrants with a chip on their shoulder. They became social climbers. My ex-husband wound up with two nephews and one niece. Two or three of the three couldn't stand on their own two feet in competitions that prove academic excellence. My ex-husband became wealthy after the divorce. He paid his family's way to prestige and they still didn't get all that far.

The gifted first grade classroom wasn't air-conditioned. First grade assignments were even more retarded than kindergarten assignments. One of the rewards for making the teacher feel like she was a good teacher was permission to get out of one's seat and open a window.

During a science class devoted to filling out a mimeographed worksheet, my son raised his hand and asked the teacher why the wasps that flew in the room always flew to one girl and none of the other children.

The teacher told him to shut up and do his work.

She marked him down on a writing assignment because, according to her, he misspelled the name of an Illinois landmark. I sent her a brochure from the landmark and told her to mark him back up.

She called me a few days later to say that my son is bad.

I asked her what she did to provoke him.

She told me I was a bad mother because I didn't spend enough time with my child.

I'd waited to have children so I could manage my finances so I could afford to own my own home and afford to stay home with my children. I was, therefore, a stay-at-home mom.

The teacher had two children of her own. She was obviously a working mom. Either she was insanely greedy for money or she was too stupid and conflicted to manage her finances well. At the end of her workday she carried home mountains of homework assignments she had to grade. She neglected her own children when she was at work. She neglected her own children when she was at home.

Was she talking to herself or was she talking to me when she said I didn't spend enough time with my child?

How much emotional anguish was she in day after day at work? How much of that anguish did she inflict on the children in her classroom?

Were her children in a gifted classroom somewhere in Chicago?

What skills did she bring to her job that were appropriate to it and useful to the parents who paid her to know best practices for gifted children and follow through?

I don't tolerate bullying, intimidation and disrespect as well as bullies, intimidators and disrespectful people expect.

I called the school principal. He said he'd get back to me. He called back to say my son is a discipline problem.

Can you explain the following facts, sir?

Of the 32 children in the gifted kindergarten less than 1/3 were boys. Of the 10 or so boys in the gifted kindergarten, the teacher labeled 6 of them bad and made them sit at a separate table. The other 4 boys sat at tables with girls. My son sat at a table with girls.

Is it possible that the gifted program entrance exams test for the wrong attributes and are biased against gifted boys?

Is it possible that the gifted first grade curriculum is inappropriate for gifted boys and girls because the teacher has dumbed it down for 26 children who didn't go through the kindergarten ordeal and graduate from it with high math and reading scores?

I called the area-wide gifted program office to speak with the head administrator.

He asked me to hold while he looked something up.

When he got back on the phone he said, 'your son is one of the gifted children.'

Not all the gifted kindergarten starters had been gifted. Some had tested regular. As gifted and non-gifted kindergarteners dropped out, administrators filled the slots with children who scored lower on the tests. By the start of the next year, gifted children were not to be found in the gifted first grade.

This fact is a blessing. It cut down on how many gifted minds the gifted program employees could destroy.

Almost every government official I've dealt with since the gifted program does the same switcheroo and psychiatric flip-flop. They are insane people who try to trade off their insanity for the sanity of intelligent people who figure them out.

They use their official power to defame character and punish whistle blowers under color of law.

One of my cousins home educated her children. I made some calls.

I transferred my child to an umbrella school for home education, rather than to a less obnoxious CPS, private or parochial school.

The father of my children was a CPS teacher. He did the legwork to transfer my sons to home schooling. He liked home schooling. What schoolteacher doesn't want to come home after a hard day at work, and not have to browbeat his kids into doing the homework that some other teacher assigned to make him or her look more competent than he or she is?

He worked at a school far from home and car-pooled with two other guys. When one of his car pool buddies heard about home-schooling, he said, 'If everyone else did that, we'd be out of a job.'

My husband said, 'Children aren't born to make jobs for teachers.'

He was 100% correct and then some. Life is just that simple.

As a rule of thumb, nobody has ever been born to make a job for anyone else ever born.

The more we do for ourselves, the fewer people we have to blame for things that go wrong and the less time we have to spend in court suing to get our money back.

Home schooling requires a happy marriage and a family business to keep everyone together days. I didn't have either.

I was taking a break from the stress of home schooling at a lunch counter not far from home, when a boy two stools over complained to his father three stools over that the teacher was bad. The father said she wasn't.

I wanted to butt in and say, 'Trust your kid. She's probably worse than he says.'

I home schooled my children as best I could under duress for six years. We spent a lot of time at museums, specialty classes, in parks and other places. I don't think I've ever seen a teacher not play favorites and not bad mouth children inappropriately. I advise all parents to encourage their children to tell tales. Parents can sort fact from fiction after they hear it all.

I subscribed to several home schooling periodicals. I read them cover-to-cover. I put in my two cents. I opted for a philosophy that says children teach themselves. Give them space and they'll learn everything the state curriculum says they should learn. Not on the same schedule, but on their own schedule.

One group of researchers pointed out that reading is a human thing to do. Most human children will want to read sooner or later same as they want to walk and talk, just because they see other humans doing it. You can force them to read or you can be patient.

The researchers pointed out the large number of children who wear eyeglasses for near-sightedness. The researchers said that reading is physical labor that uses muscles that focus the eyes. To force a child to read before his muscles are strong enough to focus for short and then long periods of time, is to strain the muscles. Near-sightedness is the result.

People who make money from schools one way or another talk often about foreign children and foreign schools. They're all better than American schools because they force so much more on children.

Propagandists use Asians more often than other races to put down Americans.

I urge you to keep a running tab on the Asians you meet, especially the boys, both those who purport to be better than you and those who don't.

How many wear eyeglasses?

How many are functionally partially sighted?

How many squint?

How many blink their eyes far more than you do?

Are they blinking to produce tears for dry eyes or are they blinking to block out reading matter because parents and teachers rubbed their noses in so much of it when they were little?

Home-schooling mothers remarked that their children didn't seem to be learning disabled before they went to school. Nor did they act learning disabled after their parents pulled them out of school. Learning disabilities seem to be iatrogenic. People who ask that children be diagnosed for learning problems actually create them.

Many parents believe mandatory education law kicks in when a child is 3 months old. Mother goes to work. Kid goes to a babysitter who will teach him the three Rs. Then he'll be way ahead of other women's babies throughout his life.

Illinois mandatory education law hadn't been revised when I got into home schooling.. It still respected what people believed to be true of children in the 1800s and before. Children should be with their mothers at least until age 7. Therefore, a parent shouldn't be sent to prison for his child's truancy until that age or later..

Illinois curriculum law does provide guidance for younger children, but it's unenforceable.

I didn't send my second child to school. I didn't come up with any assignments for him. His father, his father's sister, my sister, and some of my cousins all reported that somebody had called them learning disabled when they were young.

If learning disabilities are genetic, my younger son might have the genes; even though the older boy tested above grade level, rather than below, in both reading and math.

I hung on with a bad marriage just to get long-term educational research data on both my sons.

For the younger child, my home school was a way to protect his right to develop at his own speed.

He drew a lot of pictures. I noticed that some pictures reversed what he looked at, from left to right orientation. Many teachers use reversals as evidence of a learning disability, though experts say they're evidence only of immaturity.

I noticed that when tv news reporters caught witnesses at traumatic evidences, the witnesses tended to reverse and perseverate. Alleged symptoms of learning disabilities are really normal reactions to stress.

My older son made a lot of things out of found objects and tried to make things with a lot of tools. I learned a trick from him. If your plan isn't working out, reverse up and down or left to right, and you might get what you want. Reversals are signs of an elastic and intelligent mind. Other researchers had published studies that say the same.

In the sixth year of home schooling, and the first year of divorce, In the space of a month or two when the younger boy was 7 going on 8,, he made great leaps forward in math and reading skills, in an informal and casual kind of way.

When the court ordered his father to enroll my children in school, both boys scored ahead of grade level on placement tests.

Quite a few people that children should go to school to learn how the world really works.

How the world really works is one of the things children don't learn in school. School is a minimum of four walls that separate children from the real world.

The four walls lock each child into a room with 30 or more other children who've been snatched from parents who love them and might allow them to develop naturally. Children learn a variety of bad habits to cope, and these habits stay with them for life.

Children hate homework assignments and put them off until the last minute. When a child becomes a junior executive in adult life, he puts off his job assignments until the last minute, and then forces his secretary to stay late and make up for his faults.

Some children take the class clown route, and make terrible spouses because they can't take anything seriously.

Many children put all their attention on what other children wear. Then all they want is money and they'll lie, cheat and steal to get it the rest of their lives, just to keep up with the Joneses.

Some children avoid schoolwork by disrupting the class with bad behavior. They spend the remainder of their lives being punks, even though many of them wind up with jobs in law enforcement.

It's difficult to maintain order in classrooms. Adults in classrooms are drill sergeants and bullies. They praise each other for their ability to discipline large groups of children. They aren't teachers.

I took a lot of graduate level classes regarding disabilities, reading instruction and psychology before and after I had children. I took the last two in the late 1990s and then got a series of special education teaching jobs that lasted four years, until I was fired for blowing the whistle on violations of special education law.

I worked full years at several schools. I also accepted several positions from which I resigned after a day or a week.

The school culture was about test scores to make teachers look good and about discipline and corporal punishment to intimidate children. Some teachers clearly provoked bad behavior to give themselves an excuse to beat children or hit them.

I resigned from a job the 10th day because a boy with asthma got himself admitted to a hospital instead of coming to school the first day. I wondered why. I knew why a few days later. School stressed him. When I had time at home, I looked up asthma and schools. Chicago children were having lethal asthma attacks in schools and just outside schools. There was an epidemic of childhood asthma deaths nation-wide.

I resigned from the next job the 1st day. Two middle aged black women besieged the classroom and sabotaged my work.

At the end of the day a fat blonde woman wielded a 6 foot stick and chased a black boy into the room, intending to beat him, until she saw me standing there.

When she left, another boy who witnessed the event said, 'I wouldn't be here unless I had to. Don't you come back.'

I stated my reasons for resigning in letters I faxed to Teacher Personnel. They pretended they didn't get them, and the principals of other schools continued to call me for interviews for similar jobs.

At one school, several teachers had a loud conversation as I passed. It was their way of saying, stay out of this hellhole. We wish we had.

A pair of professors at Southern Illinois University published a thesis in the 1970s that said schools are doomed to fail and were proven failures by the 1970s.

Professors of education classes I took in the late 1960s and early 1970s covered the same ground.

Actually, the original study on tax-financed formal education for the masses ended in failure. Two Scotsmen, Bell and Lancaster, diagrammed classroom management in the heyday of mechanical tinkering in the late 1700s. American colonists wouldn't buy it, but the British Foreign Office allowed Bell to experiment on orphans in India. When the English government gave Lancaster permission to experiment on underclass children in England, they had to reassure higher classes that mass education wouldn't spread to their children.

The fathers of both men were the headmasters of Scottish public (private schools). When a boy's father spends his days giving his attention to the boys of other men and women, a boy might become jealous of other boys. His plan for the education of other boys might turn out to be very cruel.

By 1820, English government officials had to admit that the model didn't work. There is no other model available: one adult, a roomful of somebody else's children. Only the number of children varies, model to model. Private tutoring is for the rich.

Nonetheless, by the 1840s, American officials had pulled a lot of devious stunts to misrepresent the intent of the founding fathers regarding mandatory education and school financing and forced the so-called public schools on taxpayers.

In a variation on Pin The Tail On The Donkey, list all the years 1820-2011 on a sheet of foolscap, blindfold yourself, and pick a year. Go to the newspaper morgue for that year, or the year before or the year after, and tally the articles on school reform. If schools could be reformed, they wouldn't need reforming now.

The Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois General Assembly have instituted reform plan after a reform plan in an attempt to fix what can't be fixed.

There's a huge disconnect between how children learn and what they suffer in schools.

The number of children who are labeled learning disabled increased dramatically in the 1970s-1990s, following a decrease in the number of children who were labeled mildly mentally retarded.

A team of black psychologists in California pointed out that most children labeled mildly retarded were black, and the label was based on their IQ test scores. The psychologists said IQ tests don't test intelligence. They test experience and cultural background. Black children grow up with different experiences and culture than white children on whom the tests were normed.

A court agreed.

When teachers couldn't blame their classroom failures on a child's low IQ, they began to blame their failures on learning disabilities.

The learning disability label originally referred specifically to glitches in neural pathways common to children born with cerebral palsy. They were assigned to small classes with specially trained teachers to overcome specific physical neurological wounds.

Over time, educators and psychologists tampered with the definition of learning disabilities so that it meant only that a child scored two or more years below grade level in reading and/or math. Teachers were still supposed to hunt for defective neurons, but they didn't have to find any.

Psychologists were supposed to test for personality disorders and rule them out before calling a child learning disabled instead of emotionally and behaviorally disabled. Psychologists didn't want the job of telling parents their children are screwed up.

Special education became a dumping ground for teacher failures and the minds that teachers boggled..

The cost of providing special education services to masses of LD students stopped being cost effective from the bean counters' perspective. Taxes would have to go up or services would have to go down.

Darned if somebody didn't file a case against the Chicago Public Schools in a federal court located in Chicago, in the Northeast Illinois District Court, and get a federal judge who specializes in bankruptcy cases to force learning disabled and all other special education children into regular classrooms. As a compromise he ordered that one special education teacher would be assigned to each classroom where special education students were mainstreamed.

An appeals court ruled on a follow-up case in the Arkansas District Court that if a regular classroom teacher gets pre-menstrual and uncooperative when a special education teacher tries to implement best practices for learning disabled students in the classroom, the school principal is obliged to discipline the special education teacher, not the regular education teacher, for making a scene and disrupting education.

I got back into special education teaching at that very moment. I wasn't the first person with knowledge of special education rules and best practices to get upset. But I didn't have a pension riding on any disciplinary action a principal took against me, so I spoke up whenever the spirit struck.

The Illinois Board of Education allowed Chicago Public Schools to put a higher percentage of special education students in regular classes than it allowed other school districts. I worked in classes where 16 of 17 students were labeled learning disabled. Regular teachers dumbed down the curriculum to accommodate the LD students, gave passing grades and awarded regular credit to both regular and special education students. Therefore, a high school diploma had no more value than jellybeans at an Easter Egg hunt.

Schools warehoused severely handicapped students in regular classrooms. The Chicago federal judge dealt with the problem by requiring regular teachers to take a few special education classes of their choice when they had time.

The multiply handicapped students could be blind, dumb, and quadriplegic, and a welfare attendant assigned to the child could do all the assignments herself that the teacher assigned to the child, and the teacher gave credit, and the child got regular course credit and a regular diploma.

I worked with a welfare attendant who tilted a severely disabled child's rolling bed into sleeping position and kept her asleep most of the day.

The child couldn't follow through on hand exercises that allowed her to communicate with an electronic device, and the muscles of her hand atrophied. She required surgery. Surgery is painful. The welfare attendant was abusive. The welfare attendant attended the school principal's church and the job was a patronage job. The principal didn't follow through with family services to investigate the educational and physical abuse.

When the attendant lied about me, the principal followed through. The Board of Education fired me before I got to the next stage of blowing the whistle. It also closed the school.

Illinois was a pioneer in special education law that requires a group of adults who know a child to meet once a year or more often to write up an educational plan, known as an IEP. Each team of adults and each plan must be tailor-made for each child.

Chicago school psychologists, special education teachers, began to play act at team meetings. Every team came up with the exact same plan as every other team. All special education students belong in regular classrooms because the foundation of special education law is a belief that disabled children must spend all day socializing with non-disabled children.

The US Supreme had ruled otherwise. Nobody pointed this out to the Chicago federal judge, and he didn't look it up himself. The Supreme Court said the purpose of special education is to meet a child's special needs so he can reach or exceed his grade level in reading and math.

One of my downstairs neighbors when I first started teaching had a friend who worked in the Chicago Board of Education computer department, processing standardized test scores. My friend reported that his friend's boss ordered him to tamper with the data to make test scores higher. Television and newspaper reports come up with variations on the same story from time to time.

The story is worse on special education students. Some are excused from standardized math and reading tests. When a learning disabled student takes a test, his scores show up in the database momentarily, and then they disappear.

However, because of the mandated IEP team meetings, somebody may have grabbed test scores when they were available and reported on them at a meeting, and they'll appear in the report.

I dug through thick files on students I was responsible for, before I was fired, and wrote up a report after I was fired, showing that their test scores improved in elementary school when they were in special classes before the federal court decision. Their test scores stagnated or dropped below elementary school levels when they appeared in high school when they were put in regular classes - dumbed down classes with jealous and corrupt regular teachers.

I mailed my findings to parents, and the rest was up to them.

I was a taxpayer before I was a teacher and after I was a teacher.

Each of us has to inventory the various roles we have in life, and act appropriately for the strongest roles we have.

I now advocate for me, the property tax payer. My other roles play second fiddle.

My tax bill for the Chicago Public Schools went up after CPS mainstreamed special education students. It didn't go down. I don't know what the bankruptcy judge was thinking. Was he worried about bankrupting school employees or taxpayers?

The less children learn during regular school hours, the more money school districts can bill taxpayers for after school services. Never mind that the regular school day burned the kids out and they're in no mood for education after the bell rings.

School violence increased after the bankruptcy judge's decision, providing an excuse to hire more private security guards at taxpayer expense, and put more Chicago Police Department police in the schools.

Then came the epidemic of drive-by shootings and killings in the neighborhood.

Police department officials then griped that they need more manpower, and lobbied for more tax financed CPD jobs.

The Cook County jail got full to overflowing, as did the state prisons, requiring more tax revenues to build prisons, hire more guards, get more county police on staff, and create more jobs in jail cafeterias.

It was a gold mine for licensed attorneys and social workers. Rich people got more tax breaks for charitable contributions to community agencies.

I'm sure you've got the picture now.

Keep it in mind.

A lot of people make more money when schools fail than when they succeed, if there is a model for school success, but there isn't.

Teachers are falsely named. They are testers, not teachers. They present a lesson. Send it home for parents to follow through on. Then they test. They blame everyone but themselves when children don't pass tests. They don't credit everyone but themselves when children do pass tests.

A government school is a child's first experience of government.

He learns that government is big people who don't do what they're paid to do and spend a lot of time bossing little people around. Government is arbitrary, illogical, painful and cruel.

Schoolteachers are the first line of defense for bureaucracies that use and abuse people from the cradle to the grave.

The United States Department of Education published a booklet the second year I home schooled my children.

The booklet is called What Works.

Wheat farmers teach their children to separate wheat from chaff. Chicken farmers teach their children to separate fluff from meat.

An accurate reading of What Works requires a similar skill. It summarizes significant studies of what does and doesn't produce student success in school.

At the heart of the book is a summary of the studies that say homework makes the difference between success and failure.

What teacher wouldn't want to hear this? What school board wouldn't mandate and enforce a heavy homework requirement?

What was that gifted kindergarten really about that distressed so many families and alienated so many parents? It was obviously not about gifted education for gifted children.

Other gifted parents had done their homework. They reported that the head administrator, a middle-aged Jewish man from California, had marketed the gifted program to several school boards in the United States. All had turned him down until he got to the Chicago Board of Education.

Two psychologists worked under him. Teachers test. Psychologists test.

It should be quite clear that the two psychologists sent acceptance letters to the parents of children who didn't test gifted as well as to the parents of children who did.

Then they had a study group they could use to compare and contrast standardized math and reading test scores for gifted and regular children at the end of the year.

It is almost certain that their study is one of the studies that the US Department of Education used to come to the conclusion that homework makes the difference between school success and failure.

The gifted program was an experiment. It had to respect parental rights regarding experiments on children.

Program administrators were obligated to advise parents that the gifted program was an experiment, and get their written consent to perform the experiment on their children.

Administrators didn't advise parents of the experimental nature of the program. They didn't get written consent.

When the intake tests showed that a particular child is gifted, the program administrators were obligated to make sure the child got the benefit of research about best practices in gifted education. The administrators didn't follow through on best practices. Instead they browbeat parents into enforcing the homework component against the best interests of their children.

The administrators violated a provision of the Illinois State Constitution when they did so. The constitution guarantees an appropriate education for every child.

I'd been a home schooler a few weeks when one of my neighbors said to me, 'You're such a good teacher, I'm surprised it took you so long.'

Indeed. Why did I put up with the crapola of the gifted school as long as I did?

One of my grandfathers was an immigrant from a Jewish shtetl in western Ukraine, in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, near the Moldavian border. He and my Anglo-American grandmother both attended a prestigious school of journalism and did postgraduate work in New York before they came to Chicago in the early '1920s. My grandmother wrote short stories for a living. My grandfather covered the federal courts and the Chicago Board of Education.

He retired early, when my grandmother died, and his birth family died in the Holocaust. He became nostalgic late in life and published stories about shtetl life. His memories of the shtetl school are identical to a chapter about primary education in the research study I quoted at the beginning of this essay.

I saw that the gifted kindergarten was like the kheyder. I thought my grandfather turned out okay, therefore my child and the other children would turn out okay. But I don't think any of them did.

I think the kheyder model influenced all formal childhood education throughout Europe; and Europeans carried the model throughout the world. I think the model creates cruel and greedy people and has caused a tremendous amount of conflict and misery in modern history, though proponents of mass education say it makes the world better.

A dozen or more neighbor children played at my house during the 12 years I was a stay-at-home mom.

One of the puzzles was a sadistic boy who had the nicest parents on the block. Why were they so good and he so cruel?

It took me 20 years to figure out the answer to the question.

His mother sent him to a Catholic school around the corner with a teaching staff that was notorious for being cruel. I heard about them from other student teachers when I was a student teacher. My neighbors talked about them, but continued to send their children to them, after I bought my house. My neighbors are cruel.

Teachers blame parents when children turn out bad. The shoe should be on the other foot.

Cruel and greedy people who get rich selling and buying municipal school bonds know who they are. Executives from three giant multi-national banks sat on the school board when the school board fired me, Dutch, Puerto Rican, and mystery country, by national origin. Jesse Jackson got some of his people into the municipal bond business. Black people can be their own worst enemies.

Specialists who manage endowment funds for major universities like the University of Chicago and Northwestern University got their money out of internet stocks before they failed and put it into municipal bonds next. The universities compromised their intellectual integrity regarding the property tax and schools when they did so.

People who profit from bad education span the globe and walk every path on it.