

For the Love of Learning

Volume I: Mandate, Context, Issues

Chapter 4: Purposes of Education

In this chapter, we address the confusion around the appropriate purposes for Ontario schools, and attempt to clarify the focus for educators, parents, students, and community. We propose a set of purposes to guide Ontario schools, and develop a framework that places schools in the broader social context. We do not pretend that this set of purposes will satisfy everyone, but our framework responds to the issues raised in the public hearings and submissions as well as in professional and research literature.

The framework and suggested purposes are the foundation of our approach to learning, teaching, and curriculum, the basis for considering accountability and assessment, and the source of our suggestions around organizing education. Our position acknowledges and supports some diversity in what people want from our publicly funded schools. It gives some guidance, not only about what schools can be expected to do, but also, about the more contentious issue of what schools, or at least teachers, should not be expected to do. This seems necessary if we are to deal with the problems of focus and overload.

The issues

What should schools be for? As we noted in the previous chapter, the issue of purpose seemed to underlie many of the concerns raised in the public hearings and the submissions. A general feeling of unease accompanies much of the current discussion about education, a belief that schools may have lost the clear sense of purpose and direction that seemed to be characteristic of earlier eras. Expectations for schools are ever expanding, often contradictory, and frequently overwhelming.

In Chapter 2 we reviewed some of the societal changes that have led to the diffuse and often conflicting demands on schools. Concern about Canada's role in the global economy, a decline of confidence in all social institutions, increased pressures for high quality education for all students (especially those who have been disadvantaged in the past), changes in family structure and in the extent to which families can effectively support their children's development; all these factors have increased (and diversified) the pressures on schools.

Unless we address these profound demographic and social changes, many children may not achieve their potential, or what they learn may be irrelevant to their lives. In other words, if schooling is to make a difference in the lives of children, schools have a responsibility to review, critically, what they do in the light of changed social contexts.

North America has obviously moved far from the "common school" of the late 19th century and the earlier part of this century. In Ontario, the fact that schools are differentiated on the basis of language and religion is basic to any understanding of education in the province. While there are more similarities than differences, the "minority status," and consequently the protected constitutional rights, of Roman

Catholics and francophones in Ontario must be taken into account. We also have considerable variation in teaching strategies or organization of student learning across schools within each of the four components of the publicly funded system: public and separate, English and French.

We have, as well, a wide variety of voices demanding to be heard and responded to. As long as the economy was booming and the educational system was growing, the system seemed to respond to the demands of advocacy groups and of others by simply adding programs and policies. Now that resources are scarce, and education must compete with health and social welfare sectors for limited funding, programs and positions are often cut, but with little sense of unified purpose. The end result is a system increasingly characterized by distinct, and often competing, agendas.

When schools are pushed to meet so many agendas, there is a danger they will be diverted from their focus on teaching and learning. However, while there may be agreement that purposes are too vague, and that schools are increasingly expected to take on more and more, yet apparently with less and less in the way of resources, there is little agreement on how the situation should be clarified.

The best case for public education has always been that it is a common good: that everyone, ultimately, has a stake in education. Therefore, we start with the idea that publicly funded schools "exist to serve all children, not simply those with the loudest or most recent advocates."⁽¹⁾ At the same time, we articulate what people expect from their schools, and identify what schools do that makes them different from other institutions and agencies.

Although people often refer somewhat nostalgically to an earlier era in which educational issues were less contentious, Prof. Rebecca Coulter, in her paper written for the Royal Commission on Learning, points out that disagreements about purposes are not new:

The arguments about the purposes of schooling, for character formation, for social reform, for patriotism/nationalism and democratic citizenship, for economic prosperity, for vocational training or job training, persist in rather similar forms across the 19th and 20th centuries, as do the related critiques of those purposes.⁽²⁾

In the past, powerful groups and individuals found it easy to impose their views on the system, disregarding dissenting voices. The challenge now is to find common ground, and find ways of accommodating differences.

Sharpening the focus: A set of purposes

Given all the confusion and uncertainty about purposes, and given the need to be aware of both explicit and implicit purposes and functions of schools, what do we suggest to guide Ontario schools?

We believe it is important that there be a basic set of purposes for Ontario's schools, primarily to help schools and school boards make difficult choices. Given the current state of uncertainty about directions, the Commission proposes such a basic set, which we believe should guide decisions about priorities and about how various needs should be addressed. Agreement on key purposes will thus help in choosing among alternatives, and deciding which programs are most important. The list is as follows, with the first purpose, that of promoting intellectual growth, being the most central:

Intellectual development

Ensure high-level literacies, beginning with basic reading and writing skills, leading to increasing

knowledge, intellectual understanding, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking in a wide range of subjects;

Learning to learn

Foster a love of learning as the foundation for continuous lifelong learning, by nurturing the natural curiosity of students;

Citizenship

Prepare young people to participate in and contribute to life in a modern, diverse, and democratic society, and to respond knowledgeably, flexibly, and appropriately to changing social conditions, from the local to the more global level;

Preparation for work/career development

Prepare students for the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and from school to employment (meant as "general employability" rather than specific training);

Instilling values

Support and instill cultural, moral, and/or spiritual values. Personal and interpersonal values such as non-violence, anti-racism, honesty, and justice, individual responsibility, and service to the community are basic ones our society upholds.

These purposes must be pursued within a safe, supportive environment for students, which values and supports diversity of race, culture, class, gender, and physical or intellectual ability. We believe that school organization, staffing, and curriculum should be organized around these identified purposes, and accountability mechanisms should also flow from acceptance of these as the key purposes of the school system.

We stress that any discussion of purposes of schooling in Ontario must acknowledge the unique framework for publicly funded education in the province. Although English and French, public and separate components share common purposes, the Catholic and francophone components also have particular and explicit mandates. Franco-Ontarian schools are charged with developing and supporting not only the French language but also the French culture, within the minority context of dispersed Franco-Ontarian communities. Roman Catholic schools operate within a framework of the heritage and tradition of Roman Catholicism. The right of these groups to have their own schools and to determine priorities is constitutionally guaranteed.

It is important to emphasize that we see the first priority of schools to be the intellectual nurturing of students. When we speak of literacies, we do so meaning a program that starts with, but goes well beyond, basic skills, to include problem-solving and critical thinking. We believe that schooling should be enriching, challenging, and intellectually rewarding. We also believe that when efforts are spread too thinly, teachers and schools find it difficult to provide such experiences to students.

In this chapter, we are simply introducing what we believe are the purposes for Ontario schools. Throughout all the chapters of this report, we will be developing in more detail how we believe schools might achieve these purposes. Agreement on purposes provides the basis for identifying and pursuing priorities, with the understanding that the latter may vary from group to group, community to community, and even year to year, as contexts and conditions change. As we have pointed out, however, you can hardly agree on priorities unless you agree on purposes.

We acknowledge that the list of purposes we have given will be controversial for some people. Preparing young people for employment or career education, for instance, is rejected or minimized as a purpose of schooling by those who value a traditional liberal education for all, or who are concerned about schools serving the agendas of business. On the other hand, we know that for most students and parents, preparation for employment ranks high, and thus needs to be stated as an explicit purpose.

Even for those who can support the list, the apparent consensus may fade somewhat when we move to action. What happens when purposes conflict? For instance, if most available jobs are low-level, requiring few if any skills, does this mean that schools are excused from providing high-quality programs to all students? We would argue that the central or primary purpose is intellectual development, including high levels of literacy and numeracy, and that preparing young people to participate in life in a modern democratic society requires quality programs for all.

In any case, because we cannot predict in any precise sense which jobs will be available, or which jobs students might prefer, or what the characteristics of jobs will be over a long working life, we would argue that it is best to provide every student with a strong general education and an ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Schools in the broader community: A framework

We believe it is vital to situate schools in the context of other social institutions in the broader community, such as the family, religious institutions, and community agencies. In a brief to the Commission, Daniel Keating, from the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, calls for looking at "education as a system, interconnected with other broad social systems and with fundamental processes of human development."

We link our statement of purposes with an assumption that schools are a key component of a healthy community and a healthy society. Such a community supports and fosters healthy human development. This is the approach of the recent report of the Premier's Council on Health, Well-Being, and Social Justice, called *Yours, Mine, and Ours*.⁽⁴⁾ To grow into healthy functioning adults, children need care and nurturing over a long period of time. Families and communities are responsible for providing the kinds of social environments that support the health and well-being of children; foster their increasing ability to cope with change, stress, and new experiences; and build their growing academic competence. The Premier's Council report calls for a revamping of communities' approaches to child-rearing responsibilities.

How are schools different from other social institutions? We argue that the community's responsibility to children focuses on all aspects of care and healthy development, and the entire community shares in this task. Within this social context, however, it seems clear that schools have a particular responsibility for children's learning and the development of competence.⁽⁵⁾ Schools have been given the responsibility for children's formal education, and are thus "learning communities." This is the primary responsibility we assign them.

Obviously all social institutions need to work together, more frequently and more effectively than in the past, to provide the best conditions for the healthy development and growth of children. Families, businesses, social and recreational agencies, religious institutions, community groups, including those representing the arts, schools - all must contribute to what is really a collective responsibility. The

particular responsibility of each institution will vary, however, depending on what facet of child development is involved.

Within such a framework, we believe it is possible for schools to do two things: first, have reasonable (but high) expectations for learning, and second, ensure that these expectations are met. We believe that schools can do more in terms of student learning, but only if they (and particularly teachers) are not expected to assume sole responsibility for building self-esteem; compensate for parental abuse, impoverished backgrounds, and nutritional deprivation; offer new models for solving conflicts; provide for physical exercise; and make the Ontario workforce more globally competitive. Teachers and principals have told us that they feel caught on the horns of a dilemma with regard to these two sets of contradictory demands: we must find a way of supporting the focus of teachers on what should be their top priority, student learning.

Primary and shared responsibilities

It is unreasonable to expect the schools to pick up the slack when families fall apart, religious institutions no longer attract the young, children are malnourished, drug addiction is rampant, prime-time television programs are vacuous and educationally bankrupt, and gang members, athletes, and narcissistic celebrities are the admired adolescent role models.(6)

John Goodlad

We are arguing that schools are differentiated from other social institutions dealing with children (such as families, summer camps, and social welfare agencies) by having responsibility for formal teaching and learning, and they serve commonly (but not universally) accepted purposes. We can also distinguish between what could be termed primary and shared responsibilities of schools. The primary responsibilities of schools are, according to our framework, related to high-level competence, what we are terming literacies of a cognitive or academic nature.

By speaking of shared responsibilities, we are not implying that they are of lesser importance. The ability to form and sustain healthy relationships, for instance, is critical for children, but we argue that developing this ability is not a primary purpose of schooling, although schools share in the responsibility. Families, community agencies, youth groups, religious organizations, and schools all have a role to play, with families probably playing the biggest role.

In discharging social responsibilities that must be shared with a broad spectrum of other groups and agencies within the community, we do assign to the school, and especially to the principal, a pivotal role in brokering the delivery of these other services to children. We also make what we believe is a necessary distinction between what schools and teachers are responsible for. Teachers, we believe, are essentially responsible for the primary purpose of the school, namely learning. Many others join with the school in accomplishing its shared or secondary purposes.

The Stormont Dundas and Glengarry County Board of Education, for instance, states in a recent report:

Schools cannot continually assume the responsibilities of society and hope to attain the high standards and expectations set by that same society in ... relationship to educational goals.(7)

This school board suggests that schools take lead roles in relation to reading, writing, and mathematics competencies that go beyond the basic skills, as well as use of information technology, analysis of data, and thinking skills. Other responsibilities, often now assumed by schools alone, are better shared with the community (including parents, social agencies, industries, and other community resources), because schools cannot do the job alone. If students are to understand advanced technology, for example, they will need opportunities to learn and work with business and industry.

Ensuring that students develop flexibility, eagerness to learn, and the ability to work in teams is a responsibility shared by schools, parents, and other community organizations, as are citizenship, social responsibility, leadership and initiative, and coping with change. In some cases, schools and community may share equally, while in others, family and community may take the lead.

Linking purposes with responsibilities

Looking back at our set of purposes, only the first one, intellectual development and ensuring high-level literacies, is primary. The rest are shared with parents, the religious organizations, and community groups. It remains our conviction, this being said, that teachers want to deal with their students with care and compassion. This means, at times, getting involved in individual counselling and giving special attention to children and adolescents living under difficult circumstances.

One of the reasons for trying to clarify purposes, and for distinguishing between exclusive and shared responsibilities, is to support a stronger and more focused sense of accountability in public education. If schools are responsible for everything, they are accountable for nothing. A clearer set of purposes will help schools focus their efforts and gather information about how well they are doing in achieving such purposes.

At the same time, it would be both foolish and irresponsible to ignore needs beyond academic learning; we are talking rather about a shift in emphasis. Teachers and schools must respond to students as human beings, with all the wonderful complexity this involves. Although the highest priority for teachers is to develop competence in literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and so on, they do this within a rich community context. If no other persons or institutions are ready and able to pick up non-academic needs, schools can hardly ignore them, especially in the short term.

We argue, however, that such non-academic needs should not be the responsibility of teachers. Teachers need to be able to focus on what they are trained and prepared to do, that is, to teach, knowing that they and their students are well supported by others in the community. What we suggest is a focused strategy of building alliances with other persons and agencies who can work with schools. In other words, to meet a wide range of health, social, and emotional needs, and to prepare students for the world of work and for building families of their own, schools share responsibility with families, with business and labour, with health and social agencies, and with the rest of the community. And when families, for any number of reasons, are not able to provide the support needed, schools are among the other institutions that must work together to support young people and assist their families.

How can this be done without compromising the primary purposes of schools in the teaching/learning area? Teachers need to know that resources are available for students who need them, but teachers themselves are not usually the ones to provide such services directly. In many cases, community resources can be brought into the schools, and students can also be encouraged to move out into the

community. Such links will help with community awareness, with building knowledge about possible career and life choices, and with developing a variety of life skills in students. The strategies for building such alliances and partnerships will be developed throughout this report.

With regard to gender and ethno-cultural equity concerns, some of the questions are similar, but there is an important distinction: differences of gender, race, language, and culture are not deficits, and must not be treated as such. Rather, they represent different contexts, knowledge, and skills that children may bring to school, and if these are not acknowledged and valued by schools, children are likely to be less able to learn.

We believe that schools and teachers are responsible for providing supportive learning environments for all students. But again, if schools are to be able to deal sensitively and effectively with children from diverse backgrounds, they will do well to draw on additional resources to help. In this case, however, the most accessible and perhaps valuable resources may be those of the students themselves and their parents, supplemented by others in the community.

Although we are clarifying purposes, we are quick to acknowledge that this is a difficult and elusive task. In a diverse society like ours, it will not be easy to get agreement, even on general guidelines. In different contexts and different times, priorities will, and should, change. Judgments still need to be made, and disagreements will still be pervasive. The answers to the question "what are schools for?" will never lend themselves to easy agreement.

The hidden curriculum

In considering what schools are for, there is an important distinction between what people think schools ought to do and what they actually do. We have identified purposes that include developing literacies, preparing young people for life in a modern democratic society, and preparing them for productive work.

At a recent national consultation on education sponsored by the Council of Ministers of Education, Norman Henchey, the keynote speaker, pointed out that schools, from kindergarten through graduate schools, perform several functions that may not be officially acknowledged, among them the following: to socialize and control students; to "sort, sift and certify" students; to provide custodial care; to train in useful skills; and to use the implicit or hidden curriculum of rituals and relationships to prepare the young for the job market.⁽⁸⁾ Henchey's point is that schools do these things, and are expected to continue doing so, although such functions are not usually recognized in more deliberately stated purposes or goals of education.

Take an example so obvious we rarely stop to consider it. From the beginning of universal public education, and never more critically than today, schools have provided what Henchey calls custodial care to society; in plain language, they baby-sit our children. Heaven alone knows how working families would cope if schools did not look after children for a substantial portion of each weekday. No-one came to us to complain of this expenditure by the state; indeed, no-one mentioned it at all.

Sandro Contenta, the former education reporter for the *Toronto Star*, argues that the hidden curriculum in our schools teaches students submissiveness and passivity, because "submitting to the status quo is prized and rewarded."⁽⁹⁾ That this teaching is not deliberate and explicit often makes it more difficult to recognize and to change, in spite of the fact that it may fly in the face of statements of purpose that stress developing critical thinkers. In other words, the rhetoric of statements of vision or purpose may be quite

different from the reality of practice.

The same can be said of rote learning. Drilling by rote, a historian says, "required, above all, docility and obedience in the pupil, and in the teacher an ability to make punishment an imminent reality ... No occasion was given, if it could be avoided, for requiring the pupil to think."(10) In a somewhat modified form, this critique still resonates today. It has both intellectual and social consequences. It produces, as Harvard educator Howard Gardner has demonstrated, children with some knowledge but little understanding. It also contains clear messages about how the real world really works. "The separation of knowledge into sequential bits, the hierarchical flow of authority, the spoon-feeding of information: all of it preaches a tale where submitting to the status quo is prized and rewarded."(11)

Others say that the very process of repeatedly drilling students is a recipe for passivity, and wonder how such rigid and mechanistic techniques can produce the kind of creative young people with critical thinking skills that society claims it wants and needs to see. Getting the right answer becomes the be-all and end-all, while knowing how to solve a problem or apply learning takes a back seat.

But it must be said that for us the proper purpose of the school system is not to produce young women and men who are mostly characterized by deference, docility, passivity, or submissiveness. We want schools to develop students - all students - who are feisty, questioning, creative, imaginative, autonomous, and independent; and in the course of this report we will describe the kind of school system that we believe will achieve that exciting objective.

Another major but hidden contribution of schools is that they reinforce the belief that success in school is a relatively simple matter of merit. Those who are brighter, work harder, behave properly, and follow the rules, are the successful ones. That is, they will go on to university, and eventually to society's best paid and highest status jobs. By definition, then, those who don't make it have only their own moral and intellectual inadequacies to blame.

It is true that schools can make a crucial difference in helping a child overcome the deficits of a disadvantaged background, if they deliberately and systematically set out to do so. But not enough schools do so. The fact remains that study after study continues to show that while schools matter, the best indicator of success in school is the income and status of one's parents. Students who are streamed into the basic- and general-level high school programs, instead of the advanced, are disproportionately from non-professional backgrounds.

It is at least arguable that while educational success is substantially a function of chance - the luck of being born to certain parents in certain neighbourhoods - the role of the school system is to legitimize the process by making it appear that merit is the main determinant of such success. As one academic wryly says, "Statistically speaking, the best advice we can give to a poor child keen to get ahead through education is to choose richer parents".(12)

For the past quarter century, the Toronto Board of Education has been one of the few school districts in Canada to track regularly the background of its students. Its 1991 survey, for example, found that 92 percent of students whose parents were professionals ended up in the schools' university-bound programs, but only 60 percent of those whose parents were unskilled labourers did the same.(13)

There is also evidence that students in advanced-level classes are challenged academically in a way that is a world apart from the treatment given children in other levels. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, for as Andrew Nikiforuk puts it, education's first maxim is "What you expect, you get."(14) If

little is expected, students aren't likely to work hard to master difficult concepts and subject matter, and in fact will be given few opportunities to do so.

This, then, is what in practice too many schools do, in spite of the best efforts of many devoted teachers and however much the rhetoric insists that merit and fairness are at play. This Commission, however, believes strongly that it is time rhetoric became reality, and many of our recommendations are aimed at giving all students, whatever their backgrounds, the same opportunity to make the most of the challenging schools we envisage.

What can be learned from this discussion of the hidden curriculum and these unacknowledged functions of schools? The danger of the hidden curriculum is that as long as it remains hidden, the assumptions and values on which it is based are not examined. It is argued, for instance, that the bureaucratic nature of the school system was appropriate when students were being prepared for a factory economy, in which most jobs required people to follow rules, learn a particular and unvarying sequence of skills, and fit into a hierarchical work structure. If, however, these are no longer the characteristics and skills needed for the world of the 21st century, schools have to change.

It is important to note that the hidden curriculum is usually the agenda of society, not just of the school. The challenge for schools is to become aware of society's expectations and their own practices, and then to socialize students into organizational life without stifling them, to foster creativity and critical thinking within a setting that balances the needs of the individual and the group. No discussion of purposes of education can afford to ignore the dangers of the hidden curriculum.

Values

Although we have not elaborated on all the purposes we propose, we want to say more about the teaching of values, because it is such an important issue. The role of schools in transmitting values is both complex and at times controversial, and we have had no easy time coming to grips with it. There is no such thing as value-free education. Sometimes values are taught explicitly, while in other cases, as we have seen, they are part of the hidden curriculum. Again, we suggest it is important for educators to be critically aware of the values they are transmitting, not least the inadvertent ones.

While many parents and educators want education to be based on a strong coherent set of values, there is less agreement on exactly what that set of values should be. For both the supporters of traditional education, as an example, and for those who are particularly concerned with inclusiveness and equity, values are a top priority. It is not always self-evident, however, that these two groups, or others, would agree on precisely which values schools are to be inculcating. Yet these are extreme positions. The question remains as to whether we have a centre that will hold.

Schools have the responsibility of helping students develop values related to the welfare of society. What happens, however, when good jobs become more problematic, as university admissions tighten up, as economic anxiety and technological uncertainty continue to cast their shadows, is that pressure to compete for individual success, for playing by whatever rules are required "to make it," becomes irresistible, and never mind what the Education Act says are the goals of the system.

Although these conflicting views were certainly well represented among those who spoke to us, there were also many students, teachers, parents, and trustees who spoke to us of schools that would both reflect and communicate attitudes of care and compassion, of trust, honesty, integrity, and of opposition

to violence and racism.

All this puts the members of this Commission in a peculiar quandary. We prove to be an old-fashioned group in certain respects. Not only do we love the world of learning, we happen to believe in certain traditional values.

*I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:
Gas chambers built by learned engineers;
Children poisoned by educated physicians;
Infants killed by trained nurses; and
Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.
So, I am suspicious of education.*

My request is:

Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.

A holocaust survivor

It should be unmistakably clear from this cri du coeur that we have the highest expectations of what we would love schools to accomplish.

We are convinced that, as difficult as it sometimes seems, and as incomplete as it will always be, a part of the task of schools must be to transmit to students some sense of honesty, truth, civility, social justice, and co-operation, and a determination to combat violence, racism, gender inequality, and environment degradation. Some of these values relate to personal morality, and others to social issues. We have no illusions that all our fellow Ontarians will agree with this list any more than we feel they will be unanimous in agreeing with all our other recommendations. But we do feel that the vast majority of Ontarians support these as values necessary for any kind of equitable and caring society. And we believe all schools in Ontario should seek to transmit them to their students.

When schools attempt to communicate values that students know are often ignored by the society around them, by different social institutions, including the schools themselves and the teachers within them, cynicism about and disrespect for the larger mission of the schools can easily result. We, however, have a higher regard than this for the majority of schools and teachers. Students will see their flaws and recognize their inconsistencies. Teachers are not gods, but, as we have said, they are our heroes, and we believe that in the general day-to-day life of schools they will reflect these basic values we have mentioned. To suggest that educators quit the field of values because both individuals and society fail to live up to them is a vision of despair that ultimately serves students not at all.

We should point out that implicit in the question of values are the views we transmit of our identity as Canadians. The issue is particularly sensitive at this turbulent point in our history, with the difficult quest for a renewed relationship with Quebec in the federation, the urgency of finding a new partnership with the aboriginal populations, and the diverse cultural input of newcomers from all over the world. We often feel that forces pulling us apart are stronger than those nurturing our cohesion as a country. Schools are the locus of many such cultural encounters and shocks.

Throughout our report we encourage the many wonderful initiatives and projects developed to foster the mutual respect and understanding so necessary in both Ontario and global societies. As part of this emphasis, we stress the celebration of our differences, especially as they should be reflected in the teaching of literature and history. In so doing, however, we do not intend to downgrade or diminish in any way the sense of pride, the identity, and the values that Canadians celebrate in the stories, the events, the practices, or heroes that give meaning to our heritage and tradition. They are an important part of our very roots. We need to nurture our roots, since without them, individuals and societies cannot grow. That, too, must be a purpose of schooling.

Schools may attempt to represent values - respect for knowledge, for example - to which society merely pays lip service - and the students know it. Benjamin Barber, writing in Harper's, illustrates the point with some quiz questions, including the following:

A good way to prepare for a high-income career and acquire status in our society is

- a) win a slam-dunk contest
- b) take over a company and sell its assets
- c) start a successful rock band
- d) earn a professional degree
- e) become a kindergarten teacher...

Familiarity with *Henry IV, Part II*, is likely to be of vital importance in

- a) planning a corporate take-over
- b) evaluating a budget cut in the Department of Education
- c) initiating a medical malpractice lawsuit
- d) writing an impressive job resume
- e) taking a test on what our 17-year-olds know. (15)

When schools attempt to communicate values that students know are routinely ignored by the society around them, cynicism about and disrespect for the larger mission of schools can easily result.

Conclusion

We start with the idea that publicly funded schools exist to serve all children, and we identify that what makes them different from other institutions and agencies is their responsibility for formal teaching and learning.

We propose a basic set of purposes focused on intellectual development, learning to learn, citizenship, preparation for work/career development, and instilling values. In addition, we acknowledge that within the unique framework for publicly funded education in Ontario, the Roman Catholic and francophone systems have particular mandates in addition to fulfilling the common set of purposes.

We also distinguish between the school's primary responsibility related to high-level competence and what we call literacies of a cognitive or academic nature, and the shared responsibility for the health and well-being of children in which the family, religious organizations, and a broad spectrum of other community agencies also have a role to play.

We discuss briefly the hidden curriculum, noting that it is usually the agenda of society, not just of the school. We believe that the assumptions and values on which this hidden curriculum is based need to be

examined, in order to ensure that what people think schools ought to do is what they actually do.

We stress certain values that we believe are necessary for any kind of equitable and caring society and we believe all schools in Ontario should seek to transmit them to their students. We emphasize that among these values are the views we transmit of our identity as Canadians. This must include both a celebration of our differences, and a sense of pride in the stories, events, practices, or heroes that give meaning to our heritage and tradition.

Endnotes (Chapter 4)

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2. Rebecca Coulter, "An Introduction to Aspects of the History of Public Schooling in Ontario, 1840-1990," p. 21. Paper written for the Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1994.
3. Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 8.
4. Premier's Council on Health, Well-Being, and Social Justice, *Yours, Mine and Ours* (Toronto: Ontario Children and Youth Project, 1994).
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