



Opinion



Examiner Opinion Zone

[\[Print\]](#)[\[Email\]](#)[Share](#)

Grading the Schools Bailout: F

By: [Phil Brand](#)

Special to The Examiner

06/29/10 11:35 AM EDT

The sky may not be falling on American public schools, but their roofs are certainly about to collapse. The situation is “an emergency,” according to Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, Representative George Miller (D-CA), and Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, David Obey (D-WI). Secretary of Education Arne Duncan calls it a “catastrophe.”

What calamity has evoked such dire rhetoric? At issue are potential public school teacher layoffs. Amid shrinking state and local government coffers due to the slumping economy, school districts are cutting back. Miller and Obey [write](#) in *USA Today* that without immediate action, 300,000 school employees could lose their jobs, with the result of “overcrowded classrooms, lost school days, closed libraries and the absence of educational services.” The immediate action they support is \$23 billion in federal aid to states via a “teacher jobs fund.”

The problem is that the rhetoric is overblown.

Schools won't retreat to the dark ages without the federal shot in the arm. Start with the fact that school officials tend to [overestimate](#) potential fall layoffs, “to ensure that every employee they might have to dismiss receives the required notification.” But even with 300,000 layoffs, schools will manage, according to a recent [article](#) in the journal, *Education Next*. The authors write that even in the worst of times, schools have money to spend: “School-related revenues and employment levels have increased even when the economy (as measured by Gross Domestic Product or GDP) turned down, unlike what typically happens in sectors such as manufacturing and retail sales, where recessions trigger cutbacks in personnel and profits.” Because of this trend, Andrew Coulson of the Cato Institute [reports](#), “Over the past forty years, public school employment has risen *10 times faster than enrollment*.” 300,000 layoffs would raise the student teacher ratio to 16.6 to 1—[about](#) where it was in 1997.

We should be hashing out how much taxpayer money to spend on education, but those discussions should be had at the state and local level; as George Will recently [wrote](#), kindergarten through 12th grade education is “the quintessential state and local responsibility.” At least it used to be.

This proposed \$23 billion comes little more than a year after the federal government gave in the stimulus bill \$100 billion to states for education spending. The federal component of education spending has *doubled* since 2000, to 15 percent.

More from Phil Brand

- [Grading the Schools Bailout: F](#)
- [Phill Brand: Sotomayor's race reversal](#)

Topics

[education](#) , [edu](#) , [education policy](#) , [stimulus](#) , [education stimulus](#) , [House Appropriations Committee](#) , [Arne Duncan](#) , [David Obey](#) , [George Miller](#) ,

Follow The Examiner



[Is Sen. Amy Klobuchar a 'Twilight Mom'?; Asks Kagan about 'Jacob vs. Edward'](#)

Sen. Amy Klobuchar managed to sneak in a Twilight reference into Kagan's confirmation hearings today. After noting that she went to the midnight debut of the blockbuster film...

—[Charlie Spiering](#)

[Republicans lead in Ky., Mo., riding anti-Obamacare wave](#)

The races are far more dicey in Ohio and Florida, but two other major defensive battlefields for the Senate GOP — Kentucky and Missouri — look more reassuring for...

—[David Freddoso](#)

[Politicizing the courts: Obama taps hemp lobbyist/DNC member](#)

Obama's new U.S. Attorney nominee, Tim Purdon, has an interesting background, as Rob Port reports on our Opinion Zone blog: After all the hullabaloo from Democrats a...

—[Timothy P. Carney](#)

[Slick Elena? Kagan evades questions on abortion memo](#)

Before the Senate Judiciary Committee a short time ago, Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan appeared reluctant to admit that she wrote a 1996 Clinton White House memo aimed at...

—[Byron York](#)

[More Beltway Confidential posts...](#)



The 2010 Election Calendar

Today's Featured Writers



[Michelle Malkin](#)

[Obama's "Coffee House" loophole](#)



[Noemie Emery](#)

[Too brilliant to fail](#)



[John Stossel](#)

[Entrepreneurship helps make America great](#)



[Walter Williams](#)

[Poverty in the U.S. is anything but](#)



[Timothy P. Carney](#)

[Politicizing the courts: Obama taps hemp lobbyist/DNC member](#)



[Michael Barone](#)

[Robert Byrd's life - good, bad and all American](#)



[Jonetta Rose Barras](#)

[Mendelson's strange magnetism](#)



[Congressman Pomeroy questions the integrity of ethics investigators](#)

Representative Earl Pomeroy, the nine-term North Dakota incumbent who has trailed his Republican

challenger by a significant margin in each of the last five months, is one...

—[Rob Port](#)
[Free to Consume](#)

The creepy quote of the day goes to Robert Harrington, director of the Casper-Natrona County Health Department in Wyoming, who asks, “Why is your home so safe that it...

—[Jacob Grier](#)
[Should American Banking Pain Mean Canadian Gain?](#)

Can you guess how many US banks have failed in 2010? Eighty six to date, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). Eighty six sounds like a lot, so...

—[Neil Hrab](#)
[More Examiner Opinion Zone posts...](#)

To view this site, you need to have Flash Player 8.0 or later installed. Click [here](#) to get the latest Flash player.

MOST POPULAR STORIES

[Sex complaint against Gore is detailed, credible](#)
[The credibility of the accuser's case against Al Gore](#)
[WSJ: Oil jobs start moving overseas](#)
[Podesta clan's close ties to Obama pay off big](#)
[Obama disappoints even lowered expectations](#)
[Obama and Dems heading for electoral disaster](#)
[Jon Stewart's Walter Cronkite moment](#)
[Steve Chapman: Citizenship should remain a birthright](#)
[Al Gore sex saga continues](#)
[Kos says his polls are bogus. Does this mean 2/3 of Republicans are not insane?](#)

```
.t_links_box { font-family: arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; width: 300px; height: auto; /* border: 1px solid #ccc; */ margin: 10px 0px 10px 0px; padding: 10px; /* line-height: 10px; */ line-height: auto; height: auto; } .t_links_box p { margin: 0px padding: 0px; /* line-height: 0px; */ } .t_links_box p.heading, .heading { font-size: 11px; font-weight:bold; padding: 0; margin: 0px 0px 20px 0px; /* line-height: 10px; */ } .t_links_box .t_links { /* padding: 0px 0px 5px 0px; */ padding: 0px 0px 10px 0px; /* border-bottom: 1px solid #ccc; */ } .t_links_box .text a { font-size: 12px; text-decoration: none; font-weight:bold; color: #333; } .t_links_box .text a:hover { text-decoration: underline; } .t_links_box .before_text a { font-size: 11px; text-decoration: none; color: #333; } .t_links_box .before_text a:hover { text-decoration: underline; } .t_links_box .after_text { font-size: 11px; }
```



.submission { display: none; } .submission { display: none; }

Reader Comments

All comments on this page are subject to our Terms of Use and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Examiner or its staff. Comment box is limited to 200 words. Comments that advocate violence, racism, or libel as well as comments written in ALL CAPS are not permitted.

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#)

Politics

[Sex complaint against Gore is detailed, credible](#)

The allegation that Al Gore sexually assaulted a woman... [Full story](#)

Crime



[Full acquittal for all 3 defendants in Wone trial](#)

It is “very probable” that the three men... [Full story](#)

World

[Petraeus enters crossfire on Capitol Hill](#)

As his confirmation process to head troops in... [Full story](#)



[RSS](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Intern](#) | [Video](#) | [Maps](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Rack Locations](#) | [Advertise](#)

Find this article at:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/blogs/Examiner-Opinion-Zone/Grading-the-Schools-Bailout-F-97393364.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.