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## The sky is falling

Commentary by edspresso, Yesterday, 5:28 PM

If you've picked up a newspaper or turned on the evening news lately, it's been all doom and gloom for schools, teachers and the future of American education.

First, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) <u>tag</u> <u>teamed behind Education Stimulus 2.0</u> in a hearing on the ED budget, claiming that another \$23 billion is "absolutely necessary" to save up to 300,000 teacher jobs, proving that everyday is Christmas for the unions (I guess last year's \$100 billion just wasn't enough).

Then the NEA asked us to remember the children.

Tons of federal money + jobs + children + tears + zero historical context = Media Tsunami

Former CER colleague Neal McCluskey, however, actually grabs the data and <u>puts it all into perspective</u>:

For one thing, in 2007-08 public schools employed more than 6.2 million people; even the 300,000 figure is tiny compared to that huge number.

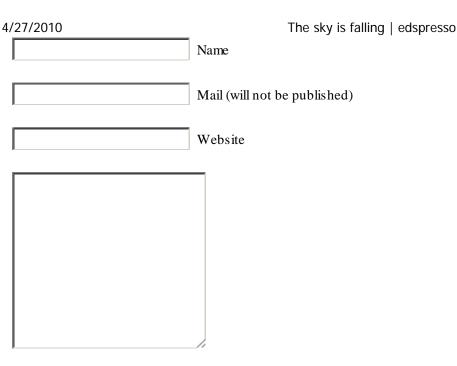
More importantly, preceding our schools' few recent years of financial woe were <u>decades of decadent plenty</u>. According to inflation-adjusted federal data, in 1970-71 Americans spent \$5,593 per public-school student. By 2006-07 we were spending \$12,463 – a whopping 123 percent increase that bought lots of teachers, administrators, and other shiny things!

And, he points out, it hasn't bought the student achievement demanded or intended.



Tags: Arne Duncan, education reform, Neal McCluskey, schools, Secretaryh of Education, teachers unions, Tom Harkin
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