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What's Your Public School Saying About Global Warming?



by Sabrina Schaeffer
March 31, 2010, 5:38pm

My friend [Neal McCluskey over at The Cato Institute wrote a great article](#) a few years back in the USA Today Magazine: *Public Schooling's Divisive Effect*.

As Neal points out, public education is often touted as a means of instilling a common culture and national identity in our young – in short, it should prepare our children for citizenship. While in theory, this sounds like a wonderful idea, in reality it hasn't panned out quite so well:

All public school conflicts have the potential to inflict social pain, but the most wrenching are those that pit people's fundamental values— values that cannot be proven right or wrong, and that deserve equal respect by government— against each other. Whereas most conflicts have unique immediate causes, there are several common refrains that arise time and again.

... From the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn to The Catcher in the Rye, fights over what books should or should not be in school libraries or taught in classes have been a permanent feature of public schooling. The basic problem is this: Government neither has the right to censor speech nor to compel people to support the speech of others, yet public schooling does both. Whenever a school district buys a book with public funds, it forces every district taxpayer to support the speech contained in it, and whenever it removes a book from a library, it condemns that speech.

This is the heart of the matter when it comes to the issue of global warming, or climate change. While there are [valuable debates](#) taking place between scientists on the issue of man-made global warming, our schools are only providing one side of the story.

Too often when it comes to the environment, public schools push both an alarmist and distorted point of view. Even though Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" has been found to contain serious flaws when it comes to the science behind global warming, schools tend to show the movie as if it's the only perspective. But, as Neal points out above, **"Government neither has the right to censor speech nor to compel people to support the speech of others, yet public schooling does both."**

The green movement may have been able to sell youngsters on embracing the anti-global warming thesis, even if the science is dubious. But our public schools are supposed to be beyond trying to stay in vogue.

Our schools and teachers have a responsibility to students and their families to provide them with a balanced perspective when it comes to global warming. So this Earth Day when your child comes home and says they watched "An Inconvenient Truth," be sure to ask the school also to show ["Not Evil, Just Wrong"](#) – a movie that offers the other side.

Stay tuned for more about **Balanced Education for Everyone (BEE)** from IWF soon.

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