From: Touch The Future
To: michael mendizza;
Subject: A Higher Vision from TTF
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So pleased to share this collaborative draft.
It is inspiring.
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Educating for Human Greatness
A Higher Vision
of
Teaching, Thinking and Learning

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"There is nothing progressive about being pig-headed and refusing to admit a mistake." --- C. S. Lewis

In 1983 a National Commission on Excellence in Education issued a "Nation At Risk Report" and set in motion a series of government-imposed reforms, all based on a false goal, student achievement in curriculum. The latest of these reforms, "No Child Left Behind," put extra pressure on teachers to ignore the diverse needs of students and to standardize them in reading, writing and math. This top-down pressure is evidence that public school teaching is not regarded as a profession in our society.

Over many years our culture has become so obsessed with curriculum we have lost sight of our purpose – curriculum for what? Student achievement in curriculum has become a false goal, an end in and of itself. Grade-point-averages have become the main indicators of achievement in education. We have a cultural cramp – a mass mind-set that spawns counterfeit reform movements.

For genuine reform of public education we must start with a crystal-clear purpose.

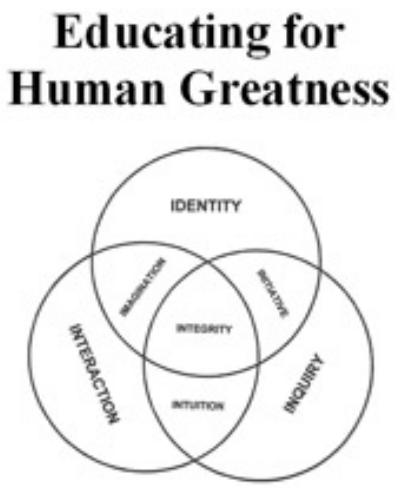
In 1973, ten years before "Nation at Risk," the teachers at Hill Field Elementary School in Clearfield, Utah decided to ask parents about their priorities for the education of their children. In interviews with thousands of parents, over several years, teachers were surprised to learn of three needs that parents felt were more important to them than the need to have a child achieve in reading, writing and arithmetic.

- First, parents wanted teachers to respect children as individuals, to pay attention to each child's special needs, and to help youngsters develop their unique talents and abilities.
- Second, they wanted children to increase in curiosity and passion for knowledge – they wanted children to "fall in love with learning."
- And third, parents wanted teachers to help children learn how to express themselves, communicate and get along.

The priorities were so consistent with nearly every parent; the teachers surmised that these may be the core needs of people in every culture – the need to know who we are and what we can become (identity), the need for knowledge (inquiry), and the need for respect and love (interaction).

This finding led to a new concept – curriculum should not be viewed as a goal, but as a tool to help students grow in identity, inquiry and interaction. Even though the concept was temporarily smothered by the standardization movement, it remained alive all these years and has now evolved to become a framework for authentic changes of public, private and other forms of education with four priorities added as shown in the next column:

A Crystal-Clear Purpose for Education:
Develop great human beings to be contributors (not burdens) to society.



Focus: 7 Dimensions of Human Greatness:

1. Identity – Help students learn who they are – as individuals with unlimited potential, develop their unique talents and gifts to realize self-worth and develop a strong desire to be contributors to family, school and community.

2. Inquiry – Stimulate curiosity; awaken a sense of wonder and appreciation for nature and humankind. Help students develop the power to ask important questions.

3. Interaction – Promote courtesy, caring, communication and cooperation.

4. Initiative – Foster self-directed learning, will power and self-evaluation.

5. Imagination – Nurture creativity in all of its many forms.

6. Intuition – Help students learn how to feel and recognize truth with their hearts as well as with their minds – develop spirituality and humility.

7. Integrity – Develop honesty, character, morality and responsibility for self.

SURPRISE: When reading, writing, math and other disciplines are taught as tools rather than goals, students learn everything faster and better.

This "higher vision" allows teachers to perform as professionals who involve parents and inspire students to accomplish amazing things.

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