

Arne Duncan: Change or More White Chalk Crime?

As someone who has led a grass roots effort to out the truth about our schools for over a decade, many people have contacted me asking about the choice of Arne Duncan as our new secretary of education. I decided that this is a good place to post my thoughts as they reveal the simple solution for changing our schools.

Paul Vallas, former superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, who has had a shadow of scandal following his career in education, some of which is documented in my book containing the voices of 140 dedicated teachers, *White Chalk Crime: The REAL Reason Schools Failed*, initially selected Duncan to work under him. Also, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, who came to power as a former Texas lobbyist and who boosted a superintendent involved in a scandal of reporting false graduation rates, also documented in my book, supports him. This makes it hard for me to be enthused by this choice. However, guilt by association is wrong. In fact, logic tells me that he could be a good choice. Let me explain.

In one of Obama's speeches on education he said: "It's been Democrat versus Republican, vouchers versus the status quo, more money versus more reform. There's partisanship and there's bickering, but no understanding that both sides have good ideas." He left a whole other side out of this equation: White Chalk Crime has destroyed our schools and those with the power to bury the truth have silenced the whistleblowers with propaganda and smears. It appears that President Elect Obama does not know of White Chalk Crime, but hopefully not for long since this thoughtful man, who emulates Abraham Lincoln, will at worst make some mistakes his first year. But I am confident that at some point he will figure out White Chalk Crime. Thus, in response to what I think of Arne Duncan, I say this: if Duncan can put his ego aside while his fellow "reformers" pummel him with insults to keep him from doing so, and listen to those of us who know the answer to fixing our schools, he will be a good choice. But can he listen to the truth?

We know: eliminating White Chalk Crime is the answer, but so far no one in power will listen. We know: with White Chalk Crime rather than rule of law governing education, nothing can or will change. Propaganda forms a vacuum that makes our screaming futile. White Chalk Crime is organized. The prevalent media attacks on Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, the so-called establishment choice for this position, were clearly lacking against the "reformer" candidate Joel Klein, whose rubber room, a Guantanamo-like setting for teachers who politically disagree with him, epitomizes the covert system of White Chalk Crime. The "reformers" that the media peddle are masters of White Chalk Crime. The media is not the only moat keeping us from the truth. The unions also aid and abet White Chalk Crime, supporting bad teachers, while sabotaging dedicated teachers. Those who lead the schools but neglect to report that everything in the system is for sale – Governor Rod Blagojevich would be a stellar White Chalk Crime administrator – should not be leading our schools. Yet they are. With White Chalk Crime dismantling the rule of law and thus eliminating fear, the balancer our forefathers put in place, the scale has tipped and greed has enveloped education. ONLY discarded, dedicated teachers will talk about this, but our voices are muzzled. The media attacked an outsider who might expose them for helping to end our American dream, while supporting a very unpopular Joel Klein. With few exceptions, the media is not interested in reporting what we know.

We know there are incompetent, greedy types all over this system. Competent, honest types do not fit. EducRAT\$ will do anything to purge the latter. Our schools parallel our financial institutions. Disposing of excellent teachers is comparable to the use of derivatives and subprime mortgages – they are all tools that sustain greed and destroy systems. Those presently in power must damage the reputation of anyone who could change the system by ending practices akin to those that took down our financial world, one of which is trashing dedicated, ethical teachers so no one will report White Chalk Crime. Also, it must be understood that unions are accomplices, not the primary perpetrators if we ever expect change to happen. We need an honest leader who will listen since assigning blame in a wrong direction results in never figuring out the primary culprit.

It may seem unbelievable it could be this corrupt. But think about this: education is locally controlled. Our governors play a huge role in making sure things are right for children. We have only to look at my governor, Rod Blagojevich to remind ourselves that everything could be for sale in education. How could it not be with people like him, and my former governor, George Ryan, who is currently in jail, holding the power? Do you really think they care about children? Do you really think Illinois is the only depraved state?

President Elect Obama spoke of reclaiming the vision of public service. We cannot accomplish that with the current “reform” leaders as they have made education into a business rather than a service organization, and they tolerate White Chalk Crime the same way our states tolerate questionable politics. He pointed out that there are two views of politics: “what’s in it for me” and servicing people with a high standard of ethics. When you apply this template to schools, the thought that education has ever been about “what’s in it for me” is chilling. Yet, it has been and still is. Never has there been an education leader who stood up and pointed this out in the way Obama has pointed this out about politics in general. How can we expect change from any leader who hasn’t stood for this being the change we need? As long as the change we need is defined as more or less testing, better teachers, no tenure, modifying No Child Left Behind, focusing on early childhood, or changing the curriculum, we are allowing for more fraud. The change we need is ethical leadership. But we don’t hear that because no one in power either knows or will admit that White Chalk Crime is the problem. It is deeply flawed to theorize that people of good will can come together to change an institution controlled by White Chalk Crime. As long as those in power have the ability to discard those of good will, evil will prevail. With taxpayer funds to use the wheels of justice to crush dissent against White Chalk Crime, change is hopeless.

I believe this problem with our leaders can be attributed to the psychological practice of projection. Our governmental leaders have projected the evil found within them on others and created policies and practices to alleviate their personal fear of this evil. Our financial leaders have also projected the greed found within them on others and grabbed whatever they could get before others did, assuming everyone was like them. This new breed of “reformers” in education evolving from the business world seem to possess a balance of greed and evil or they would not tolerate White Chalk Crime, when what we need leading this institution to promote good citizenship and human potential is people filled with goodness and the desire to serve others.

But this very problem of projection afflicts people of good will too. Educators tend to be very other-centered; they project their concern for others, or their own goodness, on others and fail to realize that evil is taking over. They tend to trust those who are betraying them and give power to those who care only about themselves because they can’t envision that others care only about

themselves when they aren't that way. I believe this is how White Chalk Crime caused our schools to devolve in the first place, causing our educator/leaders to appear incompetent, when their incompetence stemmed from their inability to stop evil people amongst them, not from their knowledge of what schools needed to be. So then the Business Roundtable decided that the lack of good leadership meant lack of street smarts, which it did, but not in the way of the streets that does not belong in education, and brought in the business movers and shakers. Unfortunately, they are clueless about the process of education and its intricacies, which include how to attract and keep the right kind of teachers, while they also have allowed evil to take hold, bringing in a little more of it! They operate with a business bottom line, not a service bottom line and have actually made our schools worse – more evil White Chalk Crime - and less professional understanding of what works in education.

When the discussion about President Elect Obama's prospective secretary of education began, I realized that going back to people who project too much good on others won't bring us good schools. Yet, watching what "reformers" such as Joel Klein and Paul Vallas did to our schools, much of which is documented in my book, is even worse. The problem is that we must have a leader who learns about and stops White Chalk Crime. Anything less will mean no change. So my answer to what I think about Arne Duncan is this: the fact he didn't acknowledge White Chalk Crime could mean that he puts politics above service. Or it could mean he knew of White Chalk Crime, but also knew he didn't have the power to do anything about it, so he did his best to work around it. In time we will know.

It would have been preferable if President Elect Obama understood that White Chalk Crime was the cancer at the heart of our schools and appointed someone to rid our schools of it. What he acknowledged about politics in general, or that it had to shift from self-serving to other-serving, he has not noted in education. Maybe he does know. I sent copies of my book to his campaign. He does not miss much. Maybe he is too politically wise to reveal his intentions, aware that the forces of evil will crush any progress. He may be keeping his enemies close. We need to trust him at least for a while. Time will tell why he picked a "reformer." It could be a wise decision.

Furthermore, corruption is losing its popularity due to the sorry state of this nation. The lesson of Rod Blagojevich is not that corruption is intolerable but that stupid, obvious corruption is intolerable. He wasn't a team player who knew to have his back covered and his acts buried, and this has him labeled as insane or crazy when in reality too much power (evil) went to his head. He represents what you find at the bottom of the slippery slope. Meanwhile, myriads of people are operating on that very same slope, but unlike him hanging on in a place where they won't be discovered.

The category of "slope hangers" includes the attorney general who is so outraged with Blagojevich she tried to get the Illinois Supreme Court to remove him, yet had no problem helping the State of Illinois to silence me so my district could succeed at their White Chalk Crime. She supported the use of altered documents and harassment tactics such as forcing me to go to a psychiatrist who found that my complaining about harassment meant I was imagining harassment and hence I needed psychiatric testing. In other words, she helped hide White Chalk Crime. But she does not appear insane as does Blagojevich who on his own thumbed his nose at the law. He is being labeled a sociopath, while the others who ignore the rule of law are considered "normal." Perhaps, this is correct. A sociopath thinks only about himself, while the others dodging the law are

organized, team players. However, even a little of this corrupt thinking cannot survive in education where the players need to care about others, not their own political futures.

You see I traveled that very same Illinois court system. I documented that a self-serving body needs just one person with power, in my case the Hearing Officer, to decide something totally absurd and the rest of the court system will uphold it based on "broad authority." In my case, the Hearing Officer decided I had no right to present evidence about that my district was trumping up charges against me so they could silence me and continue their White Chalk Crime, which included unlawfully discriminating against older teachers as well as harming children. I documented that even the U.S. Supreme Court did not care if the lower courts supported such a ludicrous position. So Blagojevich, who knows how these courts work, figures he has an opportunity. Law is flexible if you have enough power and power is for sale. Blagojevich is to Attorney General Lisa Madigan and the State of Illinois as Attorney General Lisa Madigan and the State of Illinois were to me. Power trumps less power. Nothing needs to make sense or be lawful when power supplants rule of law, which it obviously did in my case and will in his case - at least until their power overcomes his power as an elected official. Even an impeachment may not work since how can you impeach someone who is by law innocent until found guilty?

I was amused that he could retain his position and salary based on the innocent until proven guilty premise. I, a teacher, was terminated from my position in April of 1999 while no finding of "guilt" occurred until July of 2002. Furthermore, the State withheld my decision for 18 months over the 30 days mandated by law. Even their clearly manipulated withholding of the decision didn't disturb Attorney General Lisa Madigan enough to think: *something fishy is going on here. Looks like a power play.* No, she just dove right in and headed up the trashing of my career because my district needed that done. So a dedicated and popular teacher accused of insubordination for keeping an audio tape that proved the harm my district was doing to children and who caused disruption by speaking about their wrongdoing, could be purged while he, someone who may be selling everything in his power, gets to keep that power. And, by the way, I made sure she and all subsequent courts knew that teachers were being disenfranchised in similar devious ways all over this nation.

As long as the powers that be want to control and evade the law, loopholes are in place for them to do so! Although it disgusts me to think he can use his power at the expense of the public, it delights me to know that just maybe his doing this will shine a light on what needs to change: if anyone has the power to evade law, everyone in power can do it too. Loopholes for those in power to use against those under them are loopholes for those in power to use for their own advantage. Also, most people believe that Blagojevich is deluding himself. I believe that the public is deluding themselves. He may only have the power to buy limited time, but he is going to buy what he can. He has little to lose as even technical mistakes could work in his favor.

Now, keep in mind that I wrote to Governor George Ryan about the power plays ruining our schools. He was apparently too busy selling his power, which is why he is now in jail. I wrote to Lisa Madigan when she was a state representative, begging her to do something about the power plays ruining our schools. In fact, I wrote to the entire legislature. No response. I wrote to Governor Blagojevich about the same. He was apparently too busy selling his power. Lisa Madigan then became attorney general and defended the Illinois State Board of Education against me, with apparently no qualms. The truth was all over my case, but she was too busy going down that path

that Blagojevich is using. And we hear that she aspires to be governor. Is anything going to change? (I also heard that Paul Vallas, a superintendent clouded with White Chalk Crime scandals also wants to run for Illinois governor. And perhaps Ronald Gidwitz, head of the Illinois State Board of Education that ignored my appeals too, might decide to run for governor as he did last time. Is anything going to change?)

And do not think for a minute this is just Illinois. Teachers from all over this nation have documented state systems that used their power to silence them. On December 14, 2008, *The San Diego Union Tribune* reported: "The District Attorney's Office has cleared everyone involved in a land sale to the San Diego Community College District that benefited two politically connected developers." It said that the district attorney "looked into a September 2006 real estate deal in which the district paid \$1.28 million for a 15th Street duplex for a campus expansion downtown.Questions arose about the purchase after *The San Diego Union-Tribune* reported that the developers, Mike Madigan and Paul Nieto, had bought the parcel eight months earlier for \$750,000 and used a private trust held by Nieto's father-in-law to sell it to the college district."

The article also reported: "Deputy District Attorney Mike Still, who investigated the land transactions, said Madigan, Nieto and their broker may have made misleading statements, but a one-year statute of limitations had expired on any possible misdemeanor charges. Felony fraud charges also were considered but dismissed as too harsh, Still said. ... 'We found some misrepresentations on the front end, but they may have been misunderstandings as well,' he said."

Do you really believe that this land purchase was something other than White Chalk Crime? Do you really believe that real estate parcel appreciated 66% in eight months? Isn't it interesting that when the people holding power do dubious things, they are mistakes, but when teachers allegedly do questionable things, they warrant full punishment with no honest investigation? Furthermore, letting the statute of limitations run out is just one example of how something can be for sale where power is for sale. This article illuminates the path of White Chalk Crime! It shows that arbitrary law, or the power to bypass rule of law keeps good people down and bad people up, particularly in education! And we wonder why we have the country we have these days? This article illustrates how taxpayers' funds are often left unprotected in the education world.

However, getting back to Blagojevich, a case could be made that those of us who insist on speaking about the unethical practices in education are also "crazy." We are the antithesis of Rod Blagojevich. We saw the evil in education and did not have the street smarts to realize that speaking of it would harm us professionally and personally. Or worse, many of us realized that and did not care. We put the children first. We suffer from too much goodness. That makes us as crazy in regard to goodness as he is crazy in regard to evil. What's a culture to do with its crazies? I would say learn from them. They are telling us that something is wrong. I do believe I finally got the help from my governor he denied me years ago, as he is going to change the face of corruption by teaching the public, as well as its officials, why rule of law must be followed. Goodness, which is incompatible with our schools, includes the universal values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. None of these applied to the way Attorney General Madigan treated me, a dedicated teacher trying to protect our children. She helped push me down the truth-for-sale path that Blagojevich now hopes will vindicate him. Goodness cannot coexist with White Chalk Crime and those of us "crazies," the only one's that will talk the truth, cannot be heard in a system of power. And we wonder why we aren't producing good citizens?

There is hope that whoever leads education will learn from this corruption wake up call. I must admit that given the choice between an education professional and a savvy business person, the latter has more ability to clean house. But so far none of these savvy business people have even touched upon White Chalk Crime as the problem and instead most have partaken in it. Could Arne Duncan be the one to lead this fumigation process? The fact that he has worked in education for seven years and did not mention White Chalk Crime does not bode well for him. Yet, the fact that he did not end up in my book that included carefully researched examples of White Chalk Crime occurring in this nation during his tenure says that just maybe he is a good guy who did what he could understanding what us "crazies" don't understand: you cannot disrupt evil without power. He may have had the power to run one big district, but not the power to run these crooks out of the system, so he knew he had to keep his mouth shut. Or maybe he excels at dodging the media, and thus dodged my book, but belonged in it! Only time will tell. I have certainly let Obama's team know I am ready and able to help with a team of real truth as opposed to for-sale-truth tellers.

Let's see what he does with the power to end White Chalk Crime. Let's give him a chance while we continue to teach him about White Chalk Crime. Let's do our best to post mini lessons in White Chalk Crime at President Elect Obama's site. Let's be the dedicated and talented teachers that drove us to this grass roots mission to expose the truth, and keep preparing and posting the lessons that Arne Duncan needs to learn. Let's hope that with some education about White Chalk Crime, his higher angels will lift him from it regardless what if any role he played helping to keep it alive. (Our position is everyone who remains in education and does not admit what is going on plays a role albeit on a continuum from situational wisdom that given our bigger government it would not have helped to report it, to pure evil where people enjoyed their power to do wrong. In fact, we have one NAPTA member who admitted to practicing White Chalk Crime as an administrator and told me that it is like using drugs – you know it is wrong but it feels so good. Power is addictive and I am sure many Illinois officials are working hard to figure out a way to take Blagojevich's power from him without revealing the path they greased for the others who they agree dodge the law in ways they find mutually acceptable. In other words, damage control over someone who fell off the slippery slope is in progress rather than abolishing access to the slope for all in power!

Thus, this is our time to prove what we have been saying all along: a little injustice means the end of rule of law. White Chalk Crime must end. Those of us in NAPTA, National Association for the Prevention of Teacher Abuse, at EndTeacherAbuse.org, need to teach what we know. I can think of no better place than President Elect Obama's www.change.gov to teach the following: to change our schools we MUST end White Chalk Crime.