

Hank Warren says, October 27, 2010 at 5:37 pm (in a response to An Upset Educator's Letter to Oprah — 'Ask teachers.' September 24, 2010 by Cynthia McCabe)

Unfortunately, the current conversation regarding the state of American public education has been commandeered by an entrenched bureaucracy of administrators, politicians, and media pundits who have little practical knowledge or understanding of the teaching process. The truth about what is actually happening in our public school classrooms has been precluded from the debate. This is precisely my purpose for writing "It Simply Must Be Said—A View of American Public Education from the Trenches of Teaching." While the book has been acclaimed by critics, teachers and general readership as a "must read" for anyone concerned with the state of our educational system, those in a position of influence on educational issues have shown little interest. Despite my sending or offering complimentary copies to most of the individuals on Oprah's panel, as well as U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Time Magazine's Joe Klein and Amanda Ripley, Journalism Online's Steven Brill, and even President Obama, I haven't received a single response. It seems as though the "blame teachers, tenure, and the unions" agenda is now so firmly established that any viewpoint deviating from this narrow focus is disregarded.

While Davis Guggenheim's film, "Waiting for Superman" has thankfully resulted in some pundits realizing that you can't hold teachers accountable for everything, active public school teachers continue to be conspicuously absent from the "educational reform" discussion. As a practicing 34 year veteran teacher, it is terribly frustrating to have written a comprehensive book detailing the issues facing classroom teachers, including numerous recommendations for truly meaningful school reform, only to be ignored by those in power. If Foreword Clarion Reviews is correct in stating that "Warren's is a voice that deserves to be heard in the national debate on the quality and progress of education," I, like millions of others, am more than ready to participate.

The following is a review of Warren's book from Amazon.com:

5.0 out of 5 stars

A constructive criticism of US public schools, July 24, 2010

By

Feathered Quill Book Reviews (Goshen, MA) - [See all my reviews](#)

(TOP 1000 REVIEWER)

This review is from: It Simply Must Be Said: A View of American Public Education from the Trenches of Teaching (Paperback)

In 1983 Ronald Reagan's "National Commission on Educational Excellence" issued a report called A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Author Hank Warren, in his book, It Simply Must Be Said, highlights the parade of reform initiatives, both national and local, that have followed the report, each promising change in schools and higher-performing students. In fact, Warren points out, Educational Reform has become an industry, "an institution unto itself, with extensive studies, reports, assessments, recommendations, lobbying efforts, curriculum developments, and a vast network of in-school workshops, lectures, and teacher training initiatives." (pg. 57). Reforming schools is profitable for private businesses and for "experts" in the field of education.

Teachers, who are undoubtedly experts in the field, have not been allowed to contribute much to the discussion of reform thus far. It Simply Must Be Said contains the insights, opinions, and teaching stories of one veteran teacher. Warren writes that few people know what really happens inside classrooms, except for the teacher and students, of course. Parents rarely visit classrooms during the school day. Readers may be surprised to learn that school administrators visit classrooms almost never. Warren points out that even a teacher can't really know what happens in the classroom next door. This book gives readers a rare glimpse into public-school classrooms.

We hear that our public schools are "failing" so frequently that few people take the time anymore to question that assertion.