

## IMAGINING EDUCATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: VIEWS FROM TWO CAPITOLS

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In her latest work, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, educational historian Diane Ravitch writes:

Each generation supposes that its complaints are unprecedented. Critics of the schools in the 1980s looked back to the 1950s as a halcyon era; critics of the 1950s looked back on their own Depression-era schooling as a high-water mark. But those who seek the “good old days” will be disappointed, for in fact there never was a golden age. It is impossible to find a period in the twentieth century in which education reformers, parents, and the citizenry were satisfied with the schools (Ravitch, p. 13).

Will an early 22nd century educational historian say the same of 21st century American education? Are our efforts to imagine education for this new century thinly veiled complaints? Are they doomed not to be taken seriously? I believe they are not. As scholars and practioners involved in the business of preparing men and women for the teaching profession, I suggest that we must now weigh in and continue to weigh in on the question, “How do you imagine education for the 21st century?” Moreover, this cannot be done in a vacuum, even if that vacuum is defined as the larger academy. Our weighing in is credible to the extent that we have conversed and continue to converse with multiple educational stakeholders: members of the academy, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, members of the business community, politicians, tax payers, etc.

The focus of this essay, however, is more limited. It reports on an actual and a literary encounter I had with two members of two different and equally important leadership communities relative to

education: Carl T. Hayden, Chancellor of New York State's Board of Regents and Hillary Rodham Clinton, New York's Junior Senator. As you might guess, Chancellor Hayden and Senator Clinton imagine 21st century American/New York education in similar and different ways. Based upon a careful reading of Part 52.21, *General Requirements for the Registration of All Programs Leading to Classroom Teaching Certificates* (hereafter, Part 52.21), adopted by the New York's Board of Regents in 1999, a personal interview with Chancellor Hayden, and a careful reading of all of Senator Clinton's education campaign speeches as well as her text, *It Takes a Village*, this essay will identify the points of convergence between these two important people in terms of New York imagining education for its students in this new century. Also, this essay will identify and discuss some of the implications of these points for teacher preparation programs in New York State. Perhaps such a study will assist us, NYSFEA, in our efforts to imagine and facilitate education for this new century.

### **Chancellor Carl T. Hayden**

Carl T. Hayden was elected to the Board of Regents for the Sixth Judicial District in 1990. The Sixth Judicial District is comprised of the counties of Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Schuylar, Tioga, and Tompkins. Regent Hayden was elected Chancellor by his colleagues on March 16, 1995, reelected to that office on March 9, 1998, and reelected for a third, three year term on March 20, 2001.

When I met with Chancellor Hayden on Tuesday, March 20, 2001, I asked him how he imagines education for New York State over the course of this new century. The Chancellor was quick to point out that the world will change in ways that are unknown for those of us attempting to imagine so far into the future. However, he believes that imagining or visioning for briefer periods of time, for example, five to ten years is essential. It is with such a time frame, said the Chancellor, that the Regents passed Part 52 of the new Regu-

lations which, when stood back from, reveals at least four ways by which the Regents imagine public education, at least for the next decade:

- 1) Diverse Student Population;
- 2) Literacy;
- 3) Standards;
- 4) Professional Development.

### **Increased Student Diversity.**

It is estimated that by the year 2050, more than 50 percent of the total U.S. population will be composed of minorities, and by the year 2020, more than 50 percent of the K-12 student population (public and private) will be non-white while the teaching force will remain largely white (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). Such statistics in no way alarm Chancellor Hayden. Rather, they are what drive the “Field Experiences, Student Teaching and Practica” section to the new Regulations.

In this section the Regents state that the preparation for all teacher candidates in New York State “shall include at least 100 clock hours of field experiences related to coursework prior to student teaching or practica. The program shall include at least two college-supervised student-teaching experiences of at least 20 school days each; or at least two college-supervised practica with individual students or groups of students of at least 20 school days each” (Part 52.21, p. 15). Furthermore, the Regents specify the kinds of experiences they consider appropriate for 21st century teacher candidates in stating that New York State teacher preparation programs shall “provide candidates with experiences in a variety of communities and across the range of student developmental levels of the certificate, experiences practicing skills for interacting with parents or caregivers, experiences in high-need schools, and experiences with

each of the following student populations: socioeconomically disadvantaged students, students who are English language learners and students with disabilities” (Part 52.21, p. 15).

Chancellor Hayden, and many others, knows, not simply imagines, that the classroom of tomorrow will be significantly more diverse, not only in terms of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic background, but also in terms of ability. The classroom of the 21st century will be more integrated among academically talented students, “general” education students, and students with special needs. Therefore, teacher candidates must be prepared to work in heterogeneous learning environments. In their preparation, New York’s 21st century teachers should have early and frequent experiences of working with diverse student populations. On all accounts, this section of the new Regulations makes sense.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, in their text, *What Teachers Should Know And Be Able To Do*, seems to agree when they write that accomplished teachers are committed to students and their learning. Accomplished teachers are those who understand that their mission must include an understanding of the totality of each and every student, his/her race, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs (if any), culture, academic and family backgrounds, etc. (NBPTS, p. 13-16).

The Chancellor recognizes that this kind of transformation will not be easy. In his words, New Yorkers had become quite comfortable with an education system in which there were multiple *parking garages*. There was one for the gifted and talented students, one for the general education students, one for the students with disabilities.” Now, said Hayden, “In New York State there will only be ONE parking garage, a garage in which ALL students will park.”

### **Literacy Skills.**

Second, if education is the fault line between those who will

succeed in the 21st century and those who will not, then literacy is the core of the fault line. Chancellor Hayden cited several studies that state that early literacy skills are the key to future educational success. This research finds a home in Part 52.21's section entitled "Pedagogical knowledge, understanding and skills." Here the Regents direct 21st century teacher preparation programs in New York State to provide study that will permit candidates to obtain pedagogical knowledge, understanding and skills in a number of areas not the least of which is literacy. Specifically, the Regents state that teacher preparation programs must provide study in the area of

language acquisition and literacy development by native English speakers and students who are English language learners-and skill in developing the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of all students, including at least six semester hours of such study for teachers of early childhood education, childhood education, middle childhood education, and adolescence education; teachers of students with disabilities; students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, students who are blind or visually impaired, and students with speech and language disabilities; teachers of English to speakers of other languages; and library media specialists (Part 52.21, p. 12).

The Chancellor and his colleagues believe that all teachers share in the responsibility of teaching New York's students to be literate, not just English, Language Arts or Reading teachers. This belief is also found in New York's English Language Arts Standards, specifically in the English Language Arts Core Curriculum. Here the Regents "recognize that teachers in all content areas share the responsibility for the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking competencies" (English Language Arts Standards, p. 2).

### **Higher Standards.**

Third, the Chancellor contends that because the world of the 21st century will be vastly different from the world as we know it

today, and because that new and different world will demand more from its citizens than it has ever done before, it would be “morally indefensible” and “economically self-destructive” for New York State, for these United States, not to expect more from its students. Hence, the Regents insistence on higher standards for students, teachers, and teacher preparation programs. This insistence is dealt with in detail in the document which, in many ways, drives Part 52.21 of the new Regulations governing teacher preparation programs, *Teaching to Higher Standards: New York’s Commitment*. Chancellor Hayden contends that new teachers, thus teacher preparation programs, must be thoroughly knowledgeable of these learning standards. According to him, this is the best way for graduates of New York schools to meet the increasing demands of the world of this new century.

### **Professional Development.**

Fourth, the Chancellor imagines education in the 21st century as embracing professional development in ways it has never done before. This piece to his imagining is reflected in the section of *Teaching to Higher Standards: New York’s Commitment* dealing with Gap 3, “Not enough teachers maintain the knowledge and skills needed to teach to high standards throughout their careers.” Here the Regents state that all teachers receiving a professional certificate on or after September 1, 2000 will be required to successfully complete at least 175 hours of professional development every five years, directly related to student learning needs as identified in the School Report Card, state initiatives and implementation of New York State standards and assessments to maintain their certificate in good standing” (*Teaching to Higher Standards*, p. 30). The timeline for this requirement has changed from September 1, 2000 to September 1, 2003 and from every five years to every three years. Regardless, the thinking here, according to the Chancellor, is self-evident. Because the world will change dramatically and rapidly, so must education, so must teachers, so must teacher preparation programs. If the students of

the 21st century are going to succeed in the larger world of the 21st century, they will succeed only to the extent that their teachers possess breadth and depth of the latest knowledge in their field, and continue to develop the skills necessary for their students to meet higher and higher standards.

Increasing Student Diversity. Literacy. Higher Standards. Professional Development. In terms of responding to the question, "How do you imagine education in the State of New York in the 21st century?", Chancellor Hayden's responses can hardly come as a surprise. They are reasonable responses. They are responses that many education stakeholders might offer. However, in meeting with the Chancellor, what intrigued me was the Chancellor's comment regarding what one is TO DO with such imaginings. For him, and for the fifteen other Regents, imaginings ultimately must find root in common, daily practice otherwise they remain simply the musings of the *intelligentia* or politically ambitious. Hayden believes that if left to its own devices, the education system, would remain "inured to mediocrity, or worse, chronic dysfunction." The Chancellor believes that the Regents must act as New York State's Constitution mandates that they do, that is, by creating a vision from which policies or regulations will follow, regulations and policies which will direct the common, daily practice of education in New York State. According to the Chancellor, the Regents must "stay the course" if New York's 21st century students are to be given any real opportunity to participate fully in our American democracy and in our world's economy.

### **Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton<sup>1</sup>**

As one who now represents New York's interest in Washington, it is important to include Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's views on education for the 21st century. As Senator Clinton often says, "Though I am new to New York, the issues that New York faces are not new to me." Clinton, a native of Chicago, former First Lady of Arkansas and former First Lady of the United States, has been involved in educational issues for more than thirty years. Her involve-

ment in educational issues began in the early 1970s when she was fresh out of Yale's Law School and working for the Children's Defense Fund.

As a long-time advocate for children and their right to a quality education, Clinton believes that children are our greatest resource and thus all children must receive quality education. From a social standpoint, today's children will become active members of society in the 21st Century. Economically speaking, the children of today must have a quality education because the economic future of America depends on their ability to compete in the global marketplace. Senator Clinton emphasized these points in her speech at Central Islip High School.: "We have to face up to the fact that there isn't anything more important, not only to our children's future but to all our futures than providing a world-class education"(Clinton, *Central Islip High School*).

The Senator also subscribes to the notion that all children are capable of learning. All children should be given access to a quality education, one that will enable them to graduate as students who have received a world-class education. Senator Clinton re-affirmed her commitment to this idea in her UFT Paraprofessional speech when she said, "All children can learn -no exceptions, no excuses"(Clinton, *UFT Paraprofessionals*).

Senator Clinton's educational imaginings are based on these two fundamental beliefs. Emerging from these bedrock beliefs are five ways by which she imagines education for America and for New York State for this new century

- 1) Education and Economic Opportunities;
- 2) Stepping-Up the Federal Government's Role;
- 3) A Well-trained, Accomplished Teaching Force;
- 4) Education's Greater Social Role;

### 5) It Takes a Village to Educate a Child.

#### **Education and Economic Opportunities.**

The fact that education is linked to economic opportunities is not something new. However, it is important to understand that as the American economy becomes more and more globalized, the importance of quality education increases. A quality education, in the Senator's mind, is the "fault line" between those who succeed and those who will not. She stressed the effects of such a rapidly changing economy when she spoke to the New York City Council of School Superintendents saying, "And so we know that just within the space of really about thirty years that the economy has changed so dramatically, that so many of the jobs that used to be available are no longer there" (Clinton, *New York Council of School Superintendents*).

Furthermore, globalization of the economy has resulted in the increased role of technology. Only those who have access to quality education, one permeated by the latest technology, will succeed. The Senator recognizes this and believes that the future of quality education partially depends on the availability of technology in the classroom. "We cannot permit there to be this so-called digital divide where some children because of what their homes can provide or what their schools can provide are so much farther advanced in their use and understanding in computers"(Clinton, *Watkins Glen High School*). Thus, for Senator Clinton, a quality education is suffused with cutting-edge technology.

#### **Stepping-Up the Federal Government's Role**

Second, in terms of 21st century education, Clinton imagines that the Federal government will have an increased role in education. There are several implications of this idea. The first is that the Federal government should be more involved in providing resources to public schools. Senator Clinton stresses the need for more federal assistance to schools repeatedly throughout her many speeches. "Many

of the communities in New York cannot afford to tax themselves any longer, or any higher...I believe the federal government should do more in terms of grants and loans to school districts, so that the work that needs to be done can get done”(Clinton, *Watkins Glen High School*).

The second implication of the federal government’s role in the future of education is that the government will create a vision and that the states will strive to meet this new vision of education. That is to say, the federal government recognizes the fact that local communities know what works best in their own school, but that the government should assist them in raising standards for students so they may be prepared to enter the 21st century. Senator Clinton has always believed in the Federal government acting as a visionary. In fact, she states it in her book, *It Takes A Village*, when she discusses the education program of Goals 2000. “The Genius of Goals 2000 is that it marries the ideas for what children should learn, local control over how children learn, and accountability for whether children learn”(Clinton, *It Takes a Village*, p. 260). Evidently, the role of the Federal government in Senator Clinton’s imagination does more than just provide resources; it helps set higher standards and ensures accountability, while allowing autonomy of local control.

### **A Well-Trained, Accomplished Teaching Force**

The need for well-trained accomplished teachers is a third way by which Senator Clinton imagines education for the future. For the 21st century, more teachers will be needed to fill the inevitable teacher shortage that will effect the nation. To provide an answer to this dilemma, Senator Clinton envisions the establishment of a National Teachers Corps. This program provides a resolution to the teacher shortage while at the same time ensuring that teachers are well-trained. Senator Clinton really drove this point home in a speech at Syracuse University when she spoke about this program. “With a National Teacher Corps, I would provide scholarships to sixty thousand young people annually....we would also like to provide bonuses and train-

ing for fifteen thousand mid-career professionals....this program would promote alternate pathways to certification so that people from fields like engineering or computer technology would feel that they could enter the teaching profession” (Clinton, *Syracuse University*).

Along with advocating for well-trained teachers, the Senator’s vision for the future also calls for a pragmatic way for people to find information about teaching. She envisions the establishment of another program, called the National Clearing House. This program, as stated by the Senator, would allow people to “go online to learn about teaching jobs and the skills they’ll need to succeed in that job. Prospective teachers could get on-line information about certification requirements, teacher education programs, alternative certification routes, and schools could put on-line all of the jobs that are available”(Clinton, *Syracuse University*). Senator Clinton believes that the future of education will be effected by the severe teaching shortage. However, she acknowledges that some people will be affected more than others will. “We know who will be most disadvantaged. It will be the children who are already in poor schools under difficult circumstances”(Clinton, *UFT Paraprofessionals*). Her plan for the future seeks well trained teachers as well as those from other professional experiences that can step in and make sure students are properly educated for the future.

### **Education’s Greater Social Role**

Clinton imagines 21st century education in yet a fourth way in that she sees the need for public education to take on a greater social role. For the Senator, this means that the education system will attempt to sponsor programs that will assist student learning outside of the classroom. In a speech at Syracuse University, she explains how schools in the future should offer “pre-school and after school and summer school and mentoring programs”(Clinton, *Syracuse University*). This promotes learning outside the classroom and is conducive to academic achievement. For example, if a child is living within a single parent household, it is important to understand that the parent

has to work in order to support the family. Therefore, it is necessary to offer programs that will ensure that children will be academically productive instead of just sitting in the house. Senator Clinton recognizes the fact that education does not occur only within the classroom and is a strong advocate of providing childcare. "We also have to make sure that we do have access to quality childcare and we're just not doing a good enough job of that"(Clinton, *New York Council of School Superintendents*). With adequate childcare programs, single parent and dual-earner families would be better able to provide for their children while at the same time allowing them to work. This concept extends further than childcare and can include programs mentioned before like after-school tutoring.

In the future it is important for education to take on more of a social role because social interaction is a large part of the educational process. Senator Clinton agrees, and believes that the most important years of school are the pre-school years. This idea was conveyed to the audience in her UFT Paraprofessional speech when she said "we also need to support programs like Head Start and pre-school so that children are given the kind of help in those very early years that will equip them to be successful in school"(Clinton, *UFT Paraprofessionals*). This idea is important because from a social perspective, the education system should provide opportunities to make sure that children arrive at school ready to learn. In this sense, these programs would encourage social interaction that are educationally related. Specifically programs like mentoring and tutoring provide children with extra help where they need it and also allow for students to come to school prepared to learn. Even more so, Senator Clinton believes that education in the future through these programs, will affect children socially because it will "keep them off the streets, keep them out of trouble" (Clinton, *New York Council of School Superintendents*).

### **It Takes a Village to Educate a Child**

The fifth component of Senator Clinton's plan is that it will be

necessary in the future for all facets of society to contribute to the educational process. For Senator Clinton, it is important that the education system alone does not have sole responsibility for children's education. Her point on shared responsibility is expressed in her speech to the New York Council of School Superintendents: "Schools need to be partnered by businesses, colleges and libraries and others throughout every community within the state" (Clinton, *New York Council of School Superintendents*). This partnership can only aid in the education and development of children.

Each institution can make its own contribution to the education of children. Senator Clinton again emphasized this idea when she describes how important society as a whole is in raising a child. "Each of us plays a part in every child's life: It takes a village to raise a child" (Clinton, *It Takes A Village*, p. 12). Senator Clinton gave even more credence to this idea stating that "When I think about education I don't just think about schools" (Clinton, *New York Council of School Superintendents*).

Out of all of the institutions that aid in a child's education, the family of the child is perhaps most influential. Senator Clinton recognizes this and believes that in order to prepare for the future, Parents have to take a more active role in the children's education. "I believe that parents are a child's first teacher and that the home is a child's first school. I think that we have to do more than we currently do to help parents understand their responsibilities" (Clinton, *Syracuse University*). This is why Senator Clinton encourages parents to read to their children and become active members in the school system.

### **Points of Convergence and Some Implications for Teacher Educators**

Chancellor Hayden and Senator Clinton imagine 21st century American and New York education in remarkably similar ways. They both believe that equal access to public education must translate into

equal access to a quality education. Furthermore, quality must be understood as including but not limited to early literacy education, greater infusion of cutting-edge technology, and a well-trained and professionally developing teaching force. Both the Chancellor and the Senator imagine the responsibility for educating children as a shared responsibility among various educational stakeholders. Finally, Clinton and Hayden agree that the federal and state governments must be more proactive relative to their roles as visionaries and/or policy makers.

The Senator and Chancellor's imaginings are neither profound nor revolutionary. In the words of Senator Clinton: "There is nothing magic to them or so complex we can't figure it out. We know what needs to be done. But we need to make this a national commitment" (Clinton, *Central Islip High School*). "National Commitment" seems to be a code word for greater government involvement and/or intervention in public education of the 21st century. Perhaps this is what is of greatest significance for us, members of the academy, men and women who are involved with education issues from the "inside." Chancellor Hayden and Senator Clinton seem to suggest that the educational system, which includes all those who work from the "inside," is incapable of bringing about the kind of reforms necessary for our 21st century graduates to participate or compete in a world that is becoming ever more a global village. As previously mentioned, Chancellor Hayden (and to a certain degree, Senator Clinton) believes that the "educational system is incapable of reforming itself because it is inured to mediocrity, inured to chronic dysfunction."

Is this so? Have those of us on the "inside" become so accepting of educational mediocrity that we lack the critical distance to imagine education differently? Have we become too comfortable with enabling a dysfunctional system that we cannot move ourselves to change? Have we reduced ourselves to being incessant complainers such that no one listens to us anymore? Do we lack the imagina-

tion, creativity and drive to take what we imagine here and help it find a home in common, daily educational practice? I do not believe so IF we insist that no one view, no two views (even if they are from the important capitols of Washington, DC and Albany, New York) are sufficient in terms of imagining and reforming education for this new century. Truly, it takes a village; it takes all educational stakeholders' involvement in and commitment to imagining and establishing just and challenging learning communities for all students, no exceptions, no excuses.

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