

**AMERICAN EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, LLC**  
**BRADFORD HARTLEY**  
**TWELVE WAYS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION**

1. For any school to be successful, the students must feel safe, teachers must be able to teach without disruption, and the school must operate in an orderly fashion. Each state should have a statewide discipline code. For example, West Virginia has a Safe Schools Act which was passed by the legislature. It specifically states a code of conduct and disciplinary actions associated with violations of the code. Each school should have a plan to implement the state code and make sure all the students understand that plan. Schools should have low tolerance for disruptive students. Each school district should have a tough alternative school for students who repeatedly violate school rules or violate a rule that would require an out of school placement. Students should be disciplined based on their individual behavior, not a member of a group. School districts should do whatever they can to improve security in the schools. This could be done by having a single entrance into the school with a mantrap type door possibly with a security guard or metal detectors. This may also include a fence around the campus with camera inside and out. All schools should have an armed security guard or resource officer. These measures are expensive, but I cannot think of a better use of money. Although it is difficult to do, particularly in a large school, schools should create an environment where students feel comfortable in reporting to teachers, administrators, counselors, and resource officers about other students who may be about to commit a violent act or have already done something. Some schools have programs where teachers are assigned a group of students that they meet with occasionally to talk about their school experiences and they stay with these students their entire school career. Some large schools have a school within a school situation where students can have the same teacher more than once and have the same counselor and administrator. I know a parochial school principal who required his teachers to know the name of every student within the school. I taught and was the disciplinarian in a small school. I taught three different classes so I had some students for three years. Countless times students came to me to report that someone was about to get into a fight or was being bullied and I was able to intervene before something happened. Many of the major problems, drugs, thefts, or bomb threats, were solved because students gave us information. In some of the school shootings across the country, someone knew that something was going to happen but it did not get reported. In some cases, administrators failed to act on information that they had received. This should never happen.
2. Require all students to pass a college entrance exam, ACT or SAT, as a graduation requirement. Each state could decide what score is required for passage. For example, many colleges require a score of 18 for entrance. I recommend that schools require a score of 16 to graduate. Schools should pay for the first test and the test should be taken at a neutral testing site, not at

school. Schools should also give a pre-test the sophomore year to prepare students for the ACT or SAT. Our present system of testing is invalid because students in most states have no stake in the test. The test means nothing to them so they don't try their best, making the test invalid. Some students don't even bother to read the test. I realize that not all students may want to go to college but they should be prepared for that option if they change their mind.

3. Require all students to pass a basic skills test to enter high school. High School teachers should not be spending time teaching basic skills (fractions, writing, and reading skills) that students should have learned earlier.
4. Expand the high school curriculum to include a semester of world geography, a semester of US geography, a semester of economics, and a semester of personal finance. This can be done by having an 8 instruction period day (45 minutes periods) which allows for 32 possible credits. Another advantage of having an 8 period instruction day is that it allows students to take some electives that they want (art, music, vocational classes) while still getting their college requirements.
5. Require all students to have 180 days of instruction. They should be required to make-up all days missed, snow days, etc. Activities should be limited to no more than one hour per week lost instruction time or school day disruption.
6. Reduce class size for elementary grades k-5 to 15 students per class (15-22 if there is an aide, but no more than 22 per class).
7. Do not allow teachers (and all public employees for that matter) to go out on strike. When employees of a private company go on strike, they negotiate with that company and it costs the owner of the company money to meet the demands of the employees who lose money when they strike. When public employees go on strike, they hold the public hostage to their demands, but negotiate with politicians who are negotiating with other people's money (taxpayers).
8. Reform the teacher education program. High School teachers should have a major in their chosen field and a minor in education. Many teachers today have a major in education with coursework in their field which is not as rigorous as the major would be. For example, your kid's biology teacher may have a degree in biology education instead of biology or related field. We should increase the math and science requirements for elementary school teachers and improve alternative pathways to the teaching profession. It should be easier for a retired engineer to become a math teacher.
9. Eliminate the US Department of Education. According to the tenth amendment of the US Constitution, education is a state function. This is to prevent a strong central government from controlling what students learn, indoctrinating student knowledge and thought, and changing history. In addition, this would save a lot of money. There should no role for the Federal Government in education.
10. For those states that have not already done so, repeal common core. This program of standards was developed by a small group of people with questionable qualifications. It was adopted quickly by states and in many cases without legislative oversight and without proper review. These

standards, particularly in math, will reduce our ability to compete with students around the world. They were promoted and supported by the US Department of Education even though education is a state function.

11. Resist the temptation to evaluate and pay teachers based on student performance, especially in states (like West Virginia) where students have no incentive to do well on the tests.
12. Raise standards and allow teachers to fail students that do not meet them. In many school systems, principals and administrators put pressure on teachers to pass students. Administrators use the excuse that failing students hurts their self esteem. The truth is that they don't want to put up with the parents who don't want their children to get an "F".