her important new book, Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms, education historian Diane Ravitch documents how the progressive movement, championed most notably by philosopher John Dewey, has exerted a powerful hold on American education from the early days of the 20th Century to the present. Ms. Ravitch argues powerfully that American schools must return to their basic mission of teaching knowledge.

There can be little doubt that most parents prefer the traditional, structured approach over progressive ways. Public Agenda, a nonpartisan research organization, repeatedly asked parents during the 1990s what they expected form their children's schools. Invariably parents of all races and backgrounds wanted schools that taught the academic basics, with attention to children being able to speak and write standard English. Parents also wanted schools where children were expected to obey rules, such as being ''neat, on time, and polite.'' But Public Agenda found quite different goals among professors in the teacher-training schools, where strains of progressivism still exert a powerful grip. True to the old-time gospel of John Dewey, most professional educators thought advancing ''social justice'' more important than teaching children knowledge. Unlike parents, these teachers of teachers wanted schooling that is less structured and more ''learner-centered.''

The Rise of Core Knowledge

In 1990, Dr. Hirsch and his allies convened a national conference at which 24 working groups finalized a draft Core Knowledge Sequence for use in elementary schools. The sequence was based on research into the content and structure of the highest-performing elementary schools around the world, as well as consultation with teachers, parents, scientists, curriculum specialists, and others.

In 1991, the Core Knowledge Sequence debuted in a year of implementation at Three Oaks Elementary in Ft. Meyers, Florida under the leadership of the principal, Dr. Constance Jones (who in 1999 became president of the Core Knowledge Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia). The Core Knowledge schools were born. The interest in and spread of these schools devoted to content-rich direct teaching has been phenomenal. This fall, there will be more than 1,100 full-fledged Core Knowledge schools in 46 states. (Hundreds of additional schools use portions of the Core Knowledge program.)

Particularly in the very early stages, adoption of Core Knowledge depended on principals and teachers who had to make the case to an often-skeptical school administration for importing a curriculum that rubs against the grain of education progressisivism. James Traub wrote about Jim Coady, a principal in liberal Cambridge, Massachusetts, who had to battle the administration's hostile curriculum supervisors to bring Core Knowledge to Morse Elementary School, which was a struggling school with a relatively high proportion of children from low-income and minority homes. The supervisors argued, among other things, that the Harvard Graduate School of Education was against the experiment. But Coady won the right to experiment and by 1998 all grades at Morse scored at or above the national norm in math and reading, and the first graders were third in the entire city in their reading scores.

With the emergence of the national charter school movement in 1992, Core Knowledge became a viable option for parents, teachers, and others seeking to secure charters to start their own schools. In Colorado, a state evaluation of the performance of 51 charter schools that have been in operation for at least two years found Core Knowledge distinguishing itself both in quantity and quality. Twenty-two of the public charter schools (or 42 percent) used the Core Knowledge curriculum. Among charter schools using a ''whole-school'' model Core Knowledge was clearly dominant—22 versus three for the next-most-used model. More important, Core Knowledge was delivering results. The evaluators concluded that 14 of the Core Knowledge schools ''exceeded expectations set for their performance,'' and the remaining eight ''generally met'' expectations.

Furthermore, Core Knowledge schools were a significant part of the reason Colorado charter schools scored, on average, 10 to 16 percentage points higher on basic subjects than public schools with comparable demographics. There is considerable research indicating that Core Knowledge is bolstering academic success. But first let's look at what the program is all about.

The Core Knowledge Sequence

''Shared'' is an important word in the Core Knowledge lexicon. In his 1996 book, The Schools We Need And Why We Don't Have Them, Dr. Hirsch emphasized the importance of shared knowledge. Citizens in a democracy need to share an extensive body of information in order to communicate and function fully in society. The same hold in the classroom: If students draw a blank at mention of the names ''Lee'' and ''Grant'' not to mention ''Bull Run'' and ''Appomattox,'' how can they be expected to engage in critical thinking about the Civil War?

Education progressives claim that knowledge is changing so rapidly that what children learn today will be outdated tomorrow; that schools therefore can at best only teach them ''accessing skills,'' such as how to surf the Internet. But such a rationale does a grave disservice to children, because there is a body of bedrock knowledge—pivotal events in world history, the development of constitutional government, principles of writing and mathematics. And there are masterworks of art, music, and literature—with which they should be familiar in order to be fulfilled individuals.

The Core Knowledge idea, as summarized on its Website (www.coreknowledge.org), is ''that for the sake of academic excellence, greater fairness, and higher literacy, elementary and middle schools need a solid, specific, shared core curriculum in order to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge, grade by grade.'' The Core Knowledge approach is not to throw tidbits of information helter-skelter at children. Rather the program specifies important knowledge in language arts, history and geography, mathematics, science, and the fine arts, and lays out a sequence for children to master what they need to know grade by grade.

Evidence of Core Knowledge Success

As cited earlier, the 1998–99 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study showed that Core Knowledge schools were contributing in a big way to the success of charter schools in that state. Core Knowledge schools accounted for almost half the charter schools that were studied. And the charter schools outperformed their home districts and schools with comparable socioeconomic profiles.

From other states and researchers evidence of the positive effects of Core Knowledge has begun tumbling in. One of the most impressive studies was done by Gracy Taylor and George Kimball of the Oklahoma City Public Schools. Their study paired 300 Core Knowledge students with 300 students in other schools who had the same characteristics as the CK students on seven critical variables: grade level, pre-score, sex, race/ethnicity, eligibility for free lunch, Title I services, and special education. The control students were randomly selected via computer according to those variables.

The researchers studied the effects of implementing one year of Core Knowledge in grade 3, 4, and 5. The well-validated Iowa Test of Basic Skills was the measuring stick. Given the almost identical backgrounds of the two groups of students, one might have expected one-year differences to be less than pronounced. However, the study found that Core Knowledge students made significantly greater gains in reading comprehension, vocabulary, science, math concepts, and social studies. Moreover, the greatest gains, which came in reading, vocabulary, and social studies, were judged to be ''highly significant.'' The effect of raising vocabulary—the best predictor of academic success—was particularly noteworthy, because it shows hope for closing the socioeconomic gap in student achievement.

The researchers remarked that ''according to the literature and personal conversations with Dr. Hirsch prior to the analyses, the impact on student achievement related to Core Knowledge instruction should be most pronounced in vocabulary and comprehension. The implementation of the Core Knowledge scope and sequence is intended to provide and develop a broad base of background knowledge that children utilize in their reading. According to Dr. Hirsch's cultural literacy theory, the more background knowledge a child has, the greater facility in reading the child will have. The initial results of this study do appear to support that notion.''

In other words, the evidence so far is that the Core Knowledge approach accomplishes what it sets out to do. And if its adherents are right that knowledge builds on knowledge, the results should only grow more striking over the years.

Liberty School

Liberty Common School opened as a Core Knowledge school in Fort Collins, a pleasant community in the Rocky Mountain foothills of northern Colorado, three years ago. Today it enrolls more than 540 students in grades K–9, with a waiting list of close to 1,000. ''It is our goal,'' says headmaster Kathryn Knox, ''to equalize the playing field for all students through a common and rich foundation of content and skills, high expectations and good citizenship.''

Liberty's Board of Directors is composed of seven elected parents. The board establishes and oversees the school's educational and operational policies. It meets twice a month in sessions open to the public.

Liberty Common is serious about meeting its academic goals. One of them was that the school would exceed state standards as well as the district's, which it did. In all of the reading and writing tests for grades 4 and 7, Liberty Common School ranked No. 1 in the local school district.

THE PAST YEAR IN INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, as we draw to the close of this legislative year, I wanted to highlight what has been perhaps the best year in U.S.-India relations. This first year of the new century has been a year of record setting in a wide range of categories, all highlighting the steadily improving relationship between two of the world's great democracies.

On September 14, 2000, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee became the first, and only, foreign Head of Government to be invited to address a Joint Meeting of Congress in the 106th Congress. The fact that this unique invitation was extended to Prime Minister Vajpayee is evidence that the Congress recognizes that Indo-American ties will continue to emerge as one of our most urgent foreign policy priorities in the 21st century.

I'm proud that both Houses of Congress came together in a bipartisan manner to adopt Resolutions welcoming Prime Minister Vajpayee, and stating in strong terms the commitment on the part of the Legislative Branch to work for closer U.S.-India relations. I'm particularly encouraged that the House Resolution contained a provision urging that the U.S. Government ''consider removing existing unilateral legislative and administrative measures imposed against India, which prevent the normalization of United States-India bilateral economic and trade relations.''

The year 2000 witnessed the first State Visit by an American President to India in more than 20 years. This year actually marked the second time that India's Prime Minister and the United States President exchanged summit visits in the same year: President Jimmy Carter traveled to India in January of 1978, and Prime Minister Morarji Desai came to the U.S. in June of that year. With all the changes that have taken place in both nations during the past 22 years, the exchange of top-level visits between the U.S. and India was particularly momentous this year.

President Clinton's highly successful and productive visit to India in March helped to cement Indo-American relations as no other single act could have. Additionally, the joint statement that was signed by the two leaders also produced many substantive firsts. It establishes a framework for long-term, institutional cooperation in many areas, including a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, an Indo-American Financial and Economic Forum, a bilateral Commercial Dialogue, and an Indo-American Working Group on Trade. Agreements were signed on energy and environmental and scientific cooperation. Recognizing the unique similarities of both Indian and American security concerns for Asia, both countries pledged a new partnership on regional and global security issues. The Joint Indo-American Statement, which was issued during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington in September, reaffirmed all of these unprecedented agreements.

These unprecedented agreements were reaffirmed, and expanded by the Joint Indo-U.S. Statement issued on September 15, during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington. Indeed, during the five short months between summits, significant progress was made. We have seen regular foreign policy consultations at the ministerial and senior policy levels. Our two countries have played a major leadership role in the launch of the Community of Democracies. In the economic arena, three ministerial-level economic dialogues and the High-Level Coordinating Group are working to improve the bilateral trade environment, facilitate greater commercial cooperation, promote investment, and contribute to strengthening the global financial and trading systems.

In their September summit meeting, President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee welcomed the progress of the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, and agreed that it would also examine linkages between terrorism and narcotics trafficking and other related issues. They noted the opening of a Legal Attache office in New Delhi designed to facilitate cooperation in counter-terrorism and law enforcement. The two leaders expressed satisfaction that the joint consultative group on clean energy and environment met in July and agreed to revitalize and expand energy cooperation, while discussing the full range of issues relating to environment and climate change. They welcomed the establishment of the Science and Technology forum in July and agreed that the forum should reinvigorate the traditionally strong scientific cooperation between the two countries. In that connection, they noted the contribution of the two science and technology related roundtable meetings held in March and September.

The two leaders also welcomed the recent initiatives in the health sector, including the joint statements of June 2000, as examples of deepening collaboration in improving health care and combating AIDS and other major diseases of our time. They pledged their strong commitment to addressing the global challenge of the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS through the close involvement and cooperation between the governments and civil society in the two countries. They expressed support for the collaborative program for research in various areas, including HIV/AIDS vaccine development, through the Joint Working Groups of scientists envisaged by the Joint Statement of June 2000. They agreed to encourage the formation of a business council to combat HIV/AIDS with the active involvement and participation of business and industry to raise awareness in the industrial workplace.

While relations between India and the United States have generally been cordial over the past half-century, the agreements signed this year in New Delhi and Washington represents a new chapter in bilateral cooperation.

During Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Washington, the Official Dinner hosted by President Clinton was the largest banquet at the White House during the eight years of the Clinton Presidency, with more than 700 guests in attendance. This number reflects the growing size and success of the Indian-American community, a community which finds itself at or near first place in terms of levels of education, income and professional attainment among ethnic groups in our country. The guest list also demonstrates the growing interest and support among Americans from all backgrounds of closer ties with India.

A final marker of the strong relationship that has been formed was seen with the dedication of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi across from the Indian Embassy on Washington's Embassy Row. The ceremony to dedicate the statue was led by President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee. For Americans, Gandhi's influence on the civil rights movement has a special place in our collective memory.

It is one of my most profound hopes that the relationship between the United States and India continues to deepen and expand as we move into the years to come. I have full confidence that our policies towards Asia will recognize the importance of India to our National economic and security well being.

HONORING CLIFF HARTLE ON OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, today I honor Mr. Cliff Hartle, President/CEO of the Gasser Foundation. Mr. Hartle is retiring this year, at the age of 85, after serving the community in this organization since its creation in 1989.

Cliff Hartle is a remarkable, dedicated and vital community member of Napa County. He graduated from Napa High School in 1933. He worked diligently for Berglund Tractor, starting part-time in high school and then working his way up the ranks until he retired as vice-president after 36 years of loyalty and dedication.

When Vernice and Peter Gassar began the Gassar Foundation for the betterment of life for the residents of Napa County, they looked to Cliff Hartle to help shape this organization. They know him as a kind, generous, intelligent and hard-working businessman. He has exceeded expectation and has been instrumental in the foundation's success. His co-workers and associates have a deep respect and love for him.

Under Cliff Hartle's leadership and guidance, The Gassar Foundation has given $9 million to 275 recipients and 150 schools. The two main beneficiaries have been Justin Siena High School and the Queen of the Valley Hospital Foundation. However, almost all of Napa County's non-profit organizations have been supported by the generosity of the Gassar Foundation with Cliff Hartle working diligently on its behalf.

Specifically, the Gassar Foundation has been instrumental in building an Emergency Room, a new maternity wing and a media center for students. It has helped in the acquisition and preservation of Napa-Solano County Wetlands for Ducks Unlimited. The Foundation has contributed greatly to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa, St. Helena and American Canyon, the Napa County Homeless Shelter, the Napa Valley Symphony, the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts, Little League and countless other non-profit agencies that help the homeless, disabled, and underprivileged. Cliff Hartle and the Gassar Foundation have touched the lives of thousands in our community.

Cliff Hartle has received numerous awards and recognition from non-profit agencies, including last year's Queen of the Valley Hospital's President's Crystal Clock Award.

Cliff Hartle is a dedicated family man. He and his wife, Louetta, married for 64 years, are blessed with one daughter, Patty and two grandchildren, Sean and Sara.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to represent Mr. Cliff Hartle as his Congressman. His distinguished service to the community has been immense and his dedication and leadership is inspirational to all. For these reasons, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize Cliff Hartle for his meritorious service to the people of Napa and Solano County, California.