



**Communications
for Change**

douglas gould
and company
COMMUNICATIONS FOR CHANGE

interesting and useful information for clients and friends

douglas gould & co., inc. quarterly newsletter april 2004

COLUMNS

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● feature

Still Dreaming in Black and White: the Continuing Struggle to Realize the Promise of *Brown v. Board of Education* in America's Public Schools

May 17th will mark the 50th anniversary of one of the most important Supreme Court decisions in America's history, *Brown v. Board of Education*. The case ended official segregation in schools by declaring that "separate but equal" facilities do not grant all students the same opportunity for the best possible education. Unfortunately, a current snap shot of America's public schools reveals a reality far from the dream of Brown. Segregation by class, race, academic tracking and other factors remains painfully prevalent in public schools nationwide, despite the legal implications.

Douglas Gould & Co. has a long history of working with nonprofit organizations to help them further the goal of creating educational opportunities for public school students. Two of our current clients, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) which argued Brown, and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) are addressing different aspects of educational inequality. Their end goal, however, is the same: to create a country in which all students, regardless of their color or economic status, have a fair shot at a good education.

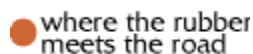
Last May LDF launched a year long public awareness campaign called, "Red, White, Blue and Brown: Why *Brown v. Board of Education* Matters to All Americans." The goal of the campaign, developed by Douglas Gould & Co., is to educate the public about the spirit of Brown and encourage them to challenge the increasing obstacles to educational equity in public schools. We helped LDF create a website to provide information about Brown, www.brownmatters.org, and placed nearly \$1 million worth of print public service advertisements in publications nationwide, including *Time*, *Essence* and *Entertainment Weekly*.

In the spirit of Brown, CFE is working aggressively to more fairly fund New York's public schools. In June 2003 the Court of Appeals ruled in favor of a suit brought by CFE requiring that New York State's school funding system be reformed to fulfill students' constitutional right to a "sound, basic education." The deadline for reform is July 30th, 2004. To ensure that the court's mandate is taken seriously, Douglas Gould & Co. helped CFE plan and implement an aggressive media campaign to urge state officials to build more funds for education into the state budget.

Whether it is through raising public awareness or achieving fairer funding, the work of organizations such as LDF and CFE brings us closer to celebrating the true intent of the Brown decision. Without the realization of these organizations' goals, we cannot be assured that our children have the opportunity to receive a quality

education that is the right of every American.

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Time Out From Testing Seeks Suspension of Excessive, High Stakes Exams in New York State

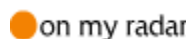
In opposition to the use of testing as a single measure of student achievement in New York State, concerned parents and advocates formed Time Out From Testing in September 2003. The coalition seeks a moratorium on the use of excessive, high stakes tests being administered by the NYS Board of Regents. Members believe that if a well-rounded picture of student performance is to be obtained, multiple indicators, such as a student's grades, attendance, and courses, must be considered in combination with tests.

Viewed alone, tests show only a sliver of the information needed to evaluate performance. In addition to being poorly constructed and misaligned with the state's educational curriculum, the standardized tests in New York disproportionately affect the same group of students who are affected by inadequately funded schools—those who are poor and of color. In a recent news conference, the coalition released data that clearly demonstrates that black and Hispanic students pass the Regents exams for graduation at rates much lower than those of their white and Asian counterparts.

The voice of Time Out From Testing has been heard. Ann Cook and Jane Hirschmann, co-founders of the coalition, are frequently called on to provide commentary for news stories. For example, *The Times Herald-Record*, a newspaper in the Hudson Valley, published a Time Out From Testing petition to the state legislature, calling for a moratorium on excessive testing. More than 1,000 of the paper's readers returned the petition.

With such growing public support, Time Out From Testing will not only increase criteria used to evaluate student performance, but encourage development of the diverse student body that comprises New York State's public schools.

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Single-gender Schooling

by Douglas Gould, President

Last month, the *New York Times* ran an interesting article about single-gender public schools. It outlined the Bush administration's proposal to give local public school districts the right to create either single-gender schools or single-gender curriculums within co-ed schools. The terminology used to justify separate school environments for boys and girls was "substantially equal," with the administration claiming that this proposal offers states the "flexibility" to create more productive

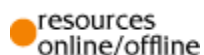
work environments for young students and their teachers.

It's a bold and interesting way of talking about a subject that clearly needs to be researched further and one where the rational arguments on both sides of the issue are rarely heard. In 2001, Douglas Gould & Co. handled promotion of a study to assess the relative merits of a handful of single-gender public schools in California. Funded by the Ford Foundation and conducted by lead researcher Amanda Datnow of the University of Toronto, the research revealed significant discrepancies between the actual educational experience of the children involved and supporters' portrayal of the benefits of single-gender schools. (Access a copy of the study at <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/tps/adatnow/research.html#single>.)

The supposed benefits of single-gender schooling include increased attention span, better grades and calmer classroom environments that are more conducive to learning for both girls and boys. While the findings of the Ford study did not strongly support these advantages, it did uncover some disadvantages. Perhaps the most troubling was an increase in teasing and harassment of students in single-sex schools by their peers who attended coeducational institutions. This was apparently based upon a presumption by the students in co-ed classrooms that students who attend single-sex schools are homosexual.

At this point, I have no firm opinion one way or another on single-gender environments in public schools. What gives me pause, however, is the uncomfortably close resemblance between the phrases "substantially equal," as used to compare all-girl and all-boy school environments, and the notorious "separate but equal" that justified segregated public schools prior to the Brown decision. It seems to me that "equal" is just that – "equal," without qualifiers or modifiers. And I wonder why our national education policy focuses on unproven side issues like single-gender classrooms when school funding formulas, high-stakes testing and other failed practices call out for reform.

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Online Resources

Brown v. Board of Education

www.brownmatters.org – NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

www.brownat50.org – Howard University

www.law.columbia.edu/news_events/2004/brownvboard – Columbia University Law School

www.douglasgould.com/pages/NAACP_LDF_BrownMatters_2.htm – Douglas Gould & Co. (Brown v. Board print public service ads)

Public School Equity

www.cfequity.org – Campaign for Fiscal Equity

www.douglasgould.com/pages/noteworthy.htm -- Douglas Gould & Co. (Summary

of CFE v. State of New York)

www.singlesexschools.org – National Association for Single Sex Public Education
www.douglasgould.com/pages/media.htm -- Douglas Gould & Co. (Op-ed on school segregation in Charlotte, NC)

www.enc.org/topics/equity -- Ohio State University's Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Math and Science Education

www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/deseg/reseg_schools02.php -- The Civil Rights Project of Harvard University

Education Policy

www.ed.gov -- U.S. Department of Education home page

www.ecs.org -- Education Commission of the States

www.tc.columbia.edu -- Teachers' College at Columbia University

www.douglasgould.com/pages/resources.htm#NoChildLeftBehind – Douglas Gould & Co. (Download public opinion research reports on NCLB)

News and Media

www.edweek.org – Education Week magazine

www.ewa.org – National Education Writers' Association

Offline

Crusaders in the Courts: Legal Battles of the Civil Rights Movement – Anniversary Edition

by Jack Greenberg

New York: Twelve Tables Press, 2004

ISBN: 0974728608

orders@twelvetablespress.com

Brown v. Board of Education: Witness to a Landmark Decision – Student Edition of Crusaders in the Courts

by Jack Greenberg

New York: Twelve Tables Press, 2004

ISBN: 0974728616

orders@twelvetablespress.com

Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education

by Gary Orfield, Susan E. Eaton, Elaine R. Jones

New York: New Press, 1997

ISBN: 1565844017

Gender in Policy and Practice: Perspectives on Single Sex and Coeducational Schooling

by Amanda Datnow (ed.) and Lea Hubbard (ed.)

London and New York: Routledge Falmer, 2002

ISBN: 0415932718

Courts as Catalysts: State Supreme Courts and Public School Finance

Equity

by Matthew H. Bosworth

New York: State University of New York Press, 2001

ISBN: 0791450147

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● and another thing

Marching for Women's Lives, April 25th

The March for Women's Lives, a major rally for women's reproductive rights, takes place on April 25th in Washington DC. It will be the first time seven of the leading national women's rights organizations have joined forces to promote and organize the march. The event should prove historic in the fight for freedom for all women. We will be working with our client, Ipas, which has been fighting for 30 years to prevent deaths from unsafe abortions around the world. For more information, check out any of the sites below:

www.ipas.orgwww.marchforwomen.orgwww.saveroe.comwww.feminist.orgwww.now.orgwww.rightwingeye.com[top](#)**[For a listing of current clients select here](#)**Send your comments or information to newsletter@douglasgould.comSelect this link to [unsubscribe](#)*Communications for Change* © 2004 [Douglas Gould & Co., Inc.](#)