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Enculturation of the Young in a Political and Social Democracy

As the foundation of American public schools, democracy is critical to an educated citizenry. The importance of understanding educating for a democracy applies to all educators at every level.

If our nation is to repossess its civic soul, it needs to recapture the central civic responsibilities of public schools -- indeed of schooling in general... This means that if American schools are to be defined by the search for literacy, then civic literacy must take its place alongside science, math, English and cultural literacy... Lawyers and doctors are no more likely to make good citizens than dropouts if their training is limited to the narrow and self-interested world defined by vocational preparation and professional instruction. Youngsters preparing to turn their schooling to the purposes of economic competition with Japan and Germany must also be able to turn their schooling to the purposes of civic cooperation with their fellow Americans in making democracy work.

- Benjamin Barber

Arguments for compulsory education

have been based on the idea that the school is the only institution that can counter the accident of birth, guarantee quality of opportunity, and provide objective and fair ways to select and train talented individuals.

- Walter Feinberg

Educating young people to live in a democracy is more than teaching about American Heroes, saluting the flag, or singing the national anthem. It is a serious process of engaging in the renewal of a commitment to how we want to live as a people.

- Calabrese & Barton

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living.

- John Dewey

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