

American History Research Paper:
Factors Responsible for the Decline of
the Education System in America

CHA 3UR

Mr. Read

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Education was not always a right for American citizens, however, in present day America it has become a requirement for individuals to attend primary and secondary schooling. This happened in the United States when a call for free, mandatory education at both primary and secondary levels occurred in the mid 1800's and was all across the nation by the end of the century (A Brief History). Attending school is mandatory in America from approximately age six until at least age sixteen, as a law was implemented to improve literacy rates and discourage the practicing of child labour during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Compulsory Education Laws). Education laws, much like the ones in place today, have been in place since the beginning of mandatory schooling. In Massachusetts in 1852, a compulsory education law required towns and cities to have primary schooling which taught basic grammar and arithmetic; this law also disciplined parents who did not send their kids to school (Compulsory Education Laws). While attending school was, and still is, mandatory, the focuses in the early days of schooling were quite different compared to the curriculum taught today. The initial education system, which was primarily offered to white males, had main focuses which were based around religion, family values, and morality; until academics became more popular in the mid 1800's which influenced the introduction of subjects such as math and reading (The History of Education). From then on, the education system has evolved and changed to the current state that it is in today. While the history and time for progress of the American education system has been long, it still does not come without its problems. In 1990, America was ranked sixth for education in the world, and as of 2016, the United States has dropped twenty-one spots to a rank of twenty-seven (Bendix), which shows a notable decline in the schooling system. Today's primary and secondary education systems have been noticeably failing for multiple reasons

dependent on variables which occur within the schools. The factors influencing the decline in the American education system at primary and secondary levels include the socioeconomic status of the school's location, the teaching styles and views being forced on students, and the use of technology in the classroom.

The socioeconomic status of a school's location plays a major role in the amount of funding the school receives. There are notable nationwide funding gaps between schools within the United States. This has contributed to the decline of America's education system of primary and secondary facilities, as not all students are receiving equal opportunities in equal school environments. According to The Education Trust, seven percent less is spent for each student enrolled in a school situated in areas with high poverty rates than wealthier areas across America (Amerikaner). This is relevant as it reveals the reality of the education system working against many American students and influencing its decline by taking away opportunities from students based on their socioeconomic status. The majority of the funding for schools is determined by the wealth of the area they are situated in. Many States across America use property tax to fund local schools which benefits facilities in richer neighbourhoods with more expensive houses and properties than poor neighbourhoods with properties that may not be worth as much (Three-Quarters). This has impacted the decline of the education system as multiple schools that are located in areas with high poverty rates are not receiving the same amount of funding as schools located in richer areas due to the fact that the funding is dependent on the wealth of the area. This proves the statement that not all students are being provided with the same chances due to the socioeconomic factors of the area where the school they attend in located. According

to a report done by The Education Trust in 2018, it was stated that the funding gaps appear even worse when considering that students from lower poverty areas require more support to succeed than someone living in a wealthy location (In Most States). This statement is applicable to the education system decline because it argues that students who are living in areas with higher poverty rates may need more resources to receive proper education; but with funding gaps dependant on the wealth of the location of a school, the education system is working against these students by not being able to provide the resources needed, influencing its downfall. The decline of the education system in America is largely impacted by the socioeconomic status of a school based on the wealth of the area the school is located in, which has caused funding gaps between schools in different locations across the United States.

Along with the socioeconomic status of the location of the various schools, the views that are being pushed on students will also be analyzed in the reasons for the education systems decline. Education facilities across the United States have implemented the common core standards in their teaching. Common core are educational standards that were created in 2009 for teaching and assessing english and mathematics in America from kindergarten to grade 12 (Frequently Asked Questions). These standards outline the abilities that students should gain from all public schools. The common core standards have made a large impact in the decline of the education system in America. These standards have received a lot of backlash as they do not take into consideration that various students learn differently nor does it consider the students who are non-traditional learners (Jackson). This is relevant as it reveals how Americans disagree with the education styles being forced on students and that not all students are able to receive the

level of education they are entitled due to the fact that they may not learn the traditional way, which has been impacting the decline of the schooling system. Since the start of the implementation of the common core standards, students have been notably less prepared for society and post-secondary expectations. According to The Federalist, many of students academic achievements have declined. For example the ACT scores released in 2018 reveal the math scores are at a 20 year low and english at college level was at its lowest point (Education). This is relevant as it reveals that the belief that these standards would benefit the American education system, in certain cases, has been false, and that many of the students have not been excelling in school. Teachers have also been struggling with the common core system with its lack of flexibility for lessons and how much they must fit into the school year resulting in the removal of joy from classrooms (Jackson). This is relevant in the decline of schooling in America as there has been a negative impact on students and their motivation to learn from the lack of enjoyable activities that teachers are able to fit into their lessons. This also has a large impact on the deterioration of the education system through the disagreement, even by teachers, on the views that are being forced on students. The views being pushed on students learning through the common core standards have negatively impacted the American education system influencing its decline.

With the socioeconomic status of a school and the views being pushed on students, another factor to be discussed in the decline in the schooling system in America is the access to technology in the classroom. The education system across America and many other parts of the world, has changed drastically due to the introduction of constantly evolving technology into the

classroom. While there are positive impacts of the access of technology, there have been many notable negatives to the use of technology in the classroom. Students have gained many shortcuts to their learning through the use of technology in their education. Technology prevents the necessity for the development of basic skills in the classroom in areas such as math, literacy, and communication, which are beneficial in modern day society, as students are able to use calculators for basic math and spell check for written works (Is Technology Affecting). This is relevant as it plays a role in the future lives of students and the basic skills that they need which they may not be learning in school. Technology has impacted the education system in a way so that the necessities that students should be gaining from school are not there anymore which has influenced its decline. With the use of technology wired into teens daily lives there is an apparent impact on school related activities. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2017), with the current society based largely upon fast moving technology, people have more trouble focussing their attention for long periods of time on one specific task due to the brains excessive exposure to stimulation (Attention Spans). This statement provides insight into the realization that there is a connection between technology and the decline in the education system as students are unable to focus for prolonged amounts of time affecting the students ability to learn and process what is being taught in school. Having access to technology for academic purposes may also involve electronically submitting assignments in many modern day schools. Having the option to do a large portion of school work online, as well as submit the work online, removes the need for teacher-student communication which can be vital in students learning and development of skills, this option also impacts attendance at school as it may not seem necessary to attend on a regular basis when everything is accessible online (Negative Impact). With the

excess availability of technology in most school settings, it may not appear necessary for students to maintain a solid attendance which would influence the decline of the education system as students are not receiving the information and learning required. Technology usage in the classroom has played a large role in the decline of the American education system.

The education system in America, though its history long and changes constant, holds certain flaws that have contributed to its downfall. The decline in the American education system has been influenced specifically by the socioeconomic status of the school, the views being pushed on students, and the easy access to technology in the classroom. The status of the school and its location can cause major funding gaps between schools located in areas with high poverty compared to areas with low poverty rates. For those schools located in poorer areas, the students are negatively impacted by these funding gaps which has played a part in the decline of the education system. The common core curriculum that has been put in place in the American education system has received a lot of backlash from students and teachers for the lack of flexibility in the classroom and the lack of consideration for the different learning styles which has in turn affected the decline in the American education system. The access to various forms of technology in classrooms has impacted the decline in the education system as the learning of basic strategies needed in the future is not necessary in school as they can be easily done using technology. The American education systems decline has been influenced by a school's socioeconomic status, the views of the common core standards being forced on students, and the use of technology in the classroom.

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