

Update

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Public Education Under Attack

On November 30, Chicago Public Schools announced an extensive privatization plan.

If the plan goes through as proposed, 7 schools will end up in the hands of the Academy of Urban School Leadership (AUSL), a private Educational Management Organization. An additional 6 schools will end up under the oversight of AUSL in "partnership" with the CPS Office of School Improvement (OSI) and 4 will end up in the hands of private charter school companies (2 entire schools and 2 facilities shared with others.) In addition, CPS will reassign students and redraw the boundaries of a number of schools in order to accommodate privatization plans.

The city government and the Chicago Board of Education (BOE) are turning control of the public schools over to business. The AUSL – in partnership with the CPS Office of School Improvement – manages school "turnaround" which includes "turnaround" from public to private jurisdiction. The AUSL-OSI "business-education partnership" launches initiatives which allow businesses to take on a greater role in school governance including by helping to determine course content and standards. In addition, the official policy of the BOE gives leading business groups a direct and decisive role in school closings, setting up new schools and approving charters.

"Restructuring" of education along similar lines is taking place throughout the country. 15 states, for example, are operating State Scholar Initiatives. In order to receive funds under a State Scholars Initiative,

school districts must implement redesign programs led by a "viable business-education coalition," in which "key corporations" must serve as "flagship sponsors." The responsibilities of business explicitly include helping to determine course content and standards. In turn, the corporations are "encouraging scholars to apply for employment at local businesses."

The Obama administration is accelerating the turn-over of our country's schools to big-business through its "Race to the Top" program. Under the Race to the Top program, the U.S. Department of Education provides funds to states to finance aggressive education "reform." A competitive point system is used to reward states which support school "turnaround" initiatives.

Make no mistake about it, government and business are pushing towards the complete take-over of public education by the capitalist class.

The program of business and government to "redesign" our country's schools is a program for turning the modern school from a place of learning and broadness of outlook into a training ground which tracks requisite numbers of students into the job classifications needed by business. Already, in high schools across the country, some students are tracked to college preparatory schools, others to technical or vocational schools and still others are consigned to military schools. In program after program, in school after school,

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Greater Arbitrary Power Behind the "School of the Assassins"

On November 19, more than five thousand people turned out for a demonstration to demand the closing of the U.S. Department of Defense WHINSEC (also known as the School of the Americas) at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia.

The demonstration was staged to protest U.S. militarization and intervention in Latin America and the fact that the school is used by the U.S. government as a training ground for foreign military officers. Labeled by many as the "School of the Assassins," the school has produced thousands of officers subsequently linked with assassinations, "death squads," drug-trafficking, and

human rights abuses in Latin America. For example, the school taught and trained the "Contra" mercenary soldiers of Nicaragua in tactics which included assassination, kidnapping and murder, and terrorist bombings. Other SOA/WHINSEC graduates include the notorious fascist Roberto D'Aubuisson of El Salvador, as well as Manuel Noriega of Panama.

Military "training" institutions like the SOA/WHINSEC and others like it are used to further U.S. imperialism's program of economic and military domination of other countries. During the last half cen-

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tury, U.S. imperialism has waged hundreds of counter-revolutionary wars and military interventions – in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, Haiti, Colombia, Cuba, etc. In addition to its own troops, it has used foreign officers to help prop up the most reactionary and fascist regimes in the region. The legacy of such intervention has been to leave behind a huge trail of blood throughout the region.

Despite sustained public outcry, the U.S. government has shown that it is hell-bent on refusing the demands of the people. Indeed, the government is usurping still more

arbitrary power of the President and executive branch in order to conduct its aggressive foreign policy behind the backs of the American people. In 2010, Obama signed into law a bill which authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Defense to deny any request for release of information about the SOA/WHINSEC if he, "determines it to be in the national interest." Since 2005 the U.S. Department of Defense has refused all requests for information about the SOA/WHINSEC curriculum, names of graduates, or any of its operations.

The fact is that such lawless, police-state tactics are part and par-

cel of the U.S. government's war program. Using the veil of "national security," the government, and the executive branch in particular, more and more conduct foreign policy behind the backs of the American people and in violation of accepted norms and international laws pertaining to relations between states. This foreign policy is dictated by the interests of the U.S. multi-national corporations who are willing to commit any crime in order to keep various countries "safe" for their investments and exploitation.

But this lawlessness shows the great weakness of the government and its fear of the growing anti-war struggles. The capitalists and their government know that they cannot win the political allegiance of the people; they are suppressing people's rights because they know that their program cannot stand the light of day and that the people will keep coming forward to oppose them. The Workers Party calls on people everywhere to speak out against the lawlessness of the government and its over-all conduct of foreign policy. The veil of secrecy must be lifted and all governmental affairs conducted in the open and according to the will of the people. The people must fight to insure that the government pursues a democratic foreign policy which renounces all interference and intervention in the affairs of other countries and recognizes the sovereign equality of all nations and peoples.

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tracking measures and standardized curriculum designed to meet the job training demands of "educational entrepreneurs" and the military are taking over, depriving students of the right to a modern education as well as trampling underfoot such rights as the freedom of conscience.

From the very beginning, the American people fought against the feudal system which left education as the exclusive preserve of the rich. Even in colonial days, and especially in the early and mid-19th century, broad sectors of the population, with workers in the forefront, came out to assert that education was a right. All the movements for the extension and reform of education started from the point of view that education belonged to the whole society and was a public matter and that in order to fulfill its minimal responsibility for the general welfare, government had to invest in the resources necessary to guarantee education for the people. In the 1960's, this movement for pub-

lic education extended its program to include university education and again demanded that government make the necessary investment.

But today, instead of making the investments necessary to modernize the schools and insure equality, the government is pushing backwards. The main priority is training and tracking students to fill the job requirements of business. Profit-making and war supersede enlightenment as the aims of education. Private capitalists are given power over public funds and public schools. Public accountability and control are being eliminated and with it, a dual school system is further entrenched, undermining the people's right to equality in education.

The capitalists and the government are destroying our country's system of public education. To turn things around, the people must demand that the state and federal governments properly invest in public education so that the right to a modern and equal education is guaranteed for all.

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