The Great School Debate: Which Way for American Education
Beatrice Grass and Ronald Gross, editors

Reviewed by Bill Morrison, Professor of Education, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, Connecticut

A Nation at Risk. High School, A Study of Schooling, Educating Americans for the 21st Century, The Paideia Proposal, and other prominent reports on the condition of education have created a major controversy that will have far-reaching consequences for education at all levels. The Great School Debate presents the recent commission reports and reform proposals, dissects them through a series of excellent pro and con dialogues, and then raises serious questions regarding their essence and impact with respect to excellence, equality, politics, and the very nature of the reform movement.

This broad spectrum of contemporary and future educational issues is well developed from a variety of perspectives, including those of the "new conservatives." The Great School Debate is a rich resource of readings on contemporary educational proposals for reform and should be read by all educators who are now, or soon will be, caught up in the currents and eddies of educational reform.

One Hundred Good Schools
Jack Fremdier, Catherine Combleth, Robert Domnoyer, Bruce M. Gansneder, Jan T. Jeter, M. Frances Klein, Marian Schwab, and William M. Alexander
West Lafayette, Indiana: Kappa Delta Pi, 1984

Reviewed by Robert Crumpton, Minnesota State Department of Education, St. Paul, Minnesota

The Good Schools Project report identifies common characteristics of 106 good schools throughout the United States. It presents information from more than 30,000 individuals concerned about education—principals, teachers, parents, and students—who have transformed their schools into high-quality educational programs. Focusing on the positive aspects of the human experience in a holistic, realistic way, the report examines these schools carefully to determine what made it possible for them to develop over time. The report reminds educators of the importance of value issues in education and is an antidote to the effective schools literature, which tends to focus narrowly on academic achievement.

Available from Kappa Delta Pi, P.O. Box A, West Lafayette, IN 47906.

Challenge to American Schools: The Case for Standards and Values
John H. Finzel, editor
New York: Oxford University Press, 1985

Reviewed by Thomas McDaniel, Converse College, Spartanburg, South Carolina

The 11 articles in this volume examine issues in the "excellence" reform movement, with emphasis on the troubled secondary school. Joseph Adelson and Robert Hawkins, none too optimistically, call for political change, while Chester Finn urges teacher unions to become part of the solution. Diane Ravitch, Nathan Glaser, Denis Doyle, and others examine such related issues as curriculum reform, testing for competence, the effect of Fourteenth Amendment cases on education, the growing importance of private schools, and the challenge to universities faced with underprepared high school graduates. Throughout, one senses the problem, as well as the promise, of meaningful reform of what one author calls a "corrupt progressivism."

Although only loosely connected, the articles are literate and informative. Together they present the complaints, correctives, and continuing concerns of those educators who argue that the drive for intellectual and moral virtue must head an agenda for school reform.
