In the professional dialogue about education reform, gender equity received the silent treatment.

Gender: Our National Blind Spot
The reform reports and the professional dialogue they have spawned fail to take into account the substantial body of research concerning different educational experiences and outcomes for boys and girls. Consider the following:

- Between 1970 and 1984 the National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted three assessments of reading achievement. While girls continue to outperform boys at the 9-, 14-, and 17-year-old levels, the achievement gap between the sexes has narrowed as girls' performance remains stable and boys continue to make achievement gains. A 1985 National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that by ages 21-25, males have caught up with females in reading and literacy proficiency (Mullis 1987).

- Males outperform females substantially on all subsections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Program Examination (ACT). The largest gap is in the math section of the SAT followed by the ACT natural science reading, the ACT math usage, and the ACT social studies reading (Dauber 1987).

- On the College Board Achievement Tests, which are required for admission to more selective colleges and universities, males outperform females in European history, American history, biology levels 1 and 2, and mathematics (Stanley 1987).

- Girls attain only 36 percent of the National Merit Scholarships (more than 6,000) awarded each year. These awards are based on the higher Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) scores attained by boys (PEER 1987).

- On tests for admission to graduate and professional schools, males outperform females on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), and the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) (Brody 1987).

- Girls encounter sex bias in the classroom as well as on the athletic field (Sadker and Sadker 1985). Report card grades, awarded for compliance as well as achievement, mask much of this educational deficit; but other measures, including standardized tests, highlight the need for gender equity in schools. Girls are the only group who enter school scoring ahead and 12 years later leave school scoring behind. The decline of academic achievement experienced by half our population remains an invisible issue.

The Case for Real Reform
To ensure all America's children a window of opportunity in the nation's classrooms, a reformed movement...