

A. Jean Arnold – November 17, 2023

Testimony for PA House Appropriations and Education
Committees

Thank you for embarking on this "Education Tour". If you were in one of my classes, we would have great fun dissecting this idea, which I am sure you have done and continue to do.

Thank you, also, in advance for listening to my potpourri list of comments.

Of the 24 hours in a day, 8 are devoted to sleep. Of the remaining 16 hours, our children, by law, spend 8 in school. This means that 1/2 of our children's waking lives is spent in school: a structured and financed environment that determines, in part, the quality of life they will live and in some school communities determine **if** they will live. All of us, on a much higher level, need to understand the power school has in the life of a people and to **not** do so is criminal for America is as good or bad as its schools.

In some districts, school is **the haven** for the children's lives as schools are forced more and more to take on the role of many other components of their community. We hear about these schools efforts to providecoats for the winter, closets with toiletries and personal care products, the only nutritional meal for the day, packed meals sent home for the weekend for every child enrolled in the district, a safe place

to be without fearing for bodily harm or for your life, washing machines and dryers to launder clothes when needed, day care for the young parents still in secondary school, translations of other languages into English, training to learn about other cultures new to their community, practices to curb cell phone use in the classroom, basic school supplies like paper and pencils every day. The list seems endless.

As adults, who have chosen careers where you are mandated to lift the lives of society, allow me to now offer some questions for you to ponder on your "Education Tour".

Where did you first learn about Robert's Rules of Order ?

Where did you first pick up a clarinet ?

Do you care if our children can read and write cursive writing ?

Do you care if our children can read ?

Do you want your constituents to know how a law is created step by step ?

What is your vision for what a high school graduate should know and be able to do ?

Did you have a teacher who made a difference in your life ?

Is there really a school-to-prison pipeline ?

Is there a way for every student to have a mentor in their school ?

Is keeping the lawn cut and trimmed at the schools of value ?

All of the above can be considered 'old school' because THEN CAME COVID and the school community we knew

before covid returned to the classroom different. I think America experienced a different trauma yet to be understood.

As we go forward, it is critical that we learn what happened and how we should teach now.

As we go forward, let us then produce evidence that we are not insane and do something different.