

Let Children Change The World?

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ABSTRACT

Do mandated content standards encourage children to change the world for the better? A search was made of the main content standards in the most populous state in the United States, California. Of the more than 2400 standards for grades Kindergarten through 12, less than 0.5% of them ask teachers to engage learners in forming ideals, practicing virtues, developing skills toward social action, or learning about problems such as poverty, intolerance, or environmental degradation. Unless the teacher takes it upon herself to attend to these goals, it seems likely that the unintended curriculum learned by many students will be that character and ideals are not of prime importance, and that changing the world -- or even preserving what's good -- is either unnecessary or impossible.