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 **EDINA SCHOOLS:
SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE
– ARE THEY
COMPETING
FORCES?**



By Stephen L. Bakke  October 12, 2017

Here's what provoked me:

It could happen anywhere but right now it's happening in my home town of Edina Minnesota - i.e. dramatically increasing study of social justice issues while test scores plummet.

Here's my response:

Edina Schools: Social Justice and Academic Excellence – Are They Competing Forces?

We've been hearing about it for weeks and it continues. The goal of the Edina school district is to view "teaching and learning experiences" through a "lens of racial equity." One school's Principal states "We are grounded in our mission....." which is further explained as learning how to "embrace ancestry, genetic code and melanin."

I believe it's fair to assume that one result of this emphasis is for students to have social justice concerns and goals as central to their classroom activities. I believe it's fair to assume traditional educational programs must, as a result, receive less emphasis and attention. It's also fair to correlate a dramatic decrease in test scores with these new policies. Both the reduction in scores and the new social justice goals have occurred simultaneously over just a handful of years. For the non-Minnesota readers, Edina was once one of the highest-ranking schools in the nation on the basis of test scores as well as other measures of achievement.

I'm not saying those conclusions are right, but I believe it's fair to make those correlations and to have that opinion, at least on a preliminary basis. Those responsible for creating and supporting an emphasis on social justice deny any such correlation with test scores. But if that's not a relevant conclusion, what is?

Maybe a possible answer lies in David Goldstein's run for a second term on the school board. His website emphasizes climate change as one of his priorities. He's quoted as saying climate change should be dealt with "at a grass roots level." Is it possible the powers that be in the school system are blaming climate change for the decline in test scores?

But seriously, should we be willing to sacrifice traditional academics in this situation?