John Ewing  
"Valuing Education"

Americans have a history of ambivalence about the value of education, with periods of intense activity to improve public schools, but often tinged by an anti-intellectual fervor about the practical value of education as job training. We are in such a period of intense activity at the moment. This time, however, the anti-intellectual mood that pushed American schools towards vocational training in the early twentieth century has changed not what we value, but how we value—education, schools, and teachers in the twenty-first. As a consequence, our goals are increasingly short-term and focused on specific skills, defined by ever narrower measures. This will have a profound consequence for America schools and students in the coming decades.

Math for America has a mission to improve mathematics (and science) education in public schools throughout the nation. It believes the best way to do that is by attracting to the classroom teachers who know and love their subject so that they can inspire the next generation of students. Investing in great teachers is inherently a long-term proposition. What we value in education is important, but how we value—how we measure great teaching or how we assess great teachers—is equally important. It is the key to success not only for Math for America but for most education reform today.