

# The Passy Press

## Letter to the Editor

**From:** [william.jastromb@undisclosed.com](mailto:william.jastromb@undisclosed.com)  
**To:** Nick Gardiner [enpg@thepassypress.com](mailto:enpg@thepassypress.com)  
**Date:** September 28, 6.45pm EST  
**Subject:** John MacMurray's Essay on US Education

Dear Sir,

John has done a good job of listing the many reasons for the poor performance of our public education system: status of the teaching profession (He might have mentioned what Finland does to recruit teachers from the top 10% of college graduates.); popularity of charter schools; poor performance on international tests; the lack of acceptance of national standards; the lack of thorough civics education; etc.

Although these reasons are relevant to his theme, they take up valuable space in the essay so that he has only a little space left to talk about civics in the curriculum and the importance of civics to students' understanding how our government works and what the options are. He introduces the topic in paragraph 4 but does not come back to the topic again until paragraph 10 with only two paragraphs left after that before the end.

After paragraph 4 he should have spent time on the reasons why civics should be an important part of the curriculum. He does mention some of the main points but only in passing. As a result he does not get across his main point about the importance of civics as a subject and the many student benefits that derive from it like an understanding of democracy and of the moral character that is required of the citizenry. He comes up short of explaining how to get there even though that is half of the title of his article. He does manage to get in a pitch for Legal Outreach, for which he is a board member, even though it is not illustrative of the kind of things that the public school system can do to improve the performance of its students.

Bill Jastromb

Bill Jastromb graduated from Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, in 1957 and graduated from Yale University in 1961 with a BA in English Literature. After a brief career teaching high school English, Bill received a MBA from Harvard Business School in 1969 and began his second career in marketing and sales in the software industry. In retirement Bill has begun a third career as a volunteer for non-profit Organizations that share his interests in education and environmental justice.