

LONG BEACH, California (Reuters)

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Wednesday that failing public schools pose her greatest national security concern; one she warned could undermine the United States' ability to lead and to compete in a global economy.

Equal access to educational opportunities; she said; also lies at the heart of one of the nation's most important core values; the belief in the United States as a true meritocracy. Rice; a Stanford University professor before joining the Bush administration; spoke at a conference of women organized by former TV journalist Maria Shriver; the wife of California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

As an educator; Rice said it broke her heart to see "kids who might be the next Nobel Prize winner; trapped in some public school that's just basically warehousing them."

"But as a secretary of state; it makes me terrified because; if we cannot do better in educating all of our people, then we are not going to be competitive in a global economy"; she said. "We're going to become protectionist; we're going to turn inward; the United States is not going to lead." Moreover; she said; the lack of quality education for all children jeopardizes the fundamental American belief that every citizen has the opportunity for success; no matter their background or place of origin.

"If we can't keep that true for every American; we're going to lose who we are and then we won't lead; and so it is for me the most pressing national security issue" she said.

Rice offered little in the way of concrete solutions for addressing inequities in public schools; suggesting part of the answer lies in "the best practices" adopted by schools that succeed and "having high standards."

Also she acknowledged that education has not been one of the more pressing issues addressed in the presidential campaign.

Asked if she harbored any political aspirations for herself in the near future, Rice said she planned to return to Stanford University once she leaves public office to teach; write books and to "work on these issues of educational opportunity."

"The people have a right to the privilege of education,  
and it is the duty of the state to guard and maintain that right"

(Article 1; Section 15; NC Constitution)

Has everything become so political that we have forgotten the fundamentals of everything? Or are we just so worried about our own pockets that we neglect the things that matter because there's no "Incentive" to do so? Or perhaps, it's just too hard? What about the Mission, Goals & Objectives that we set out for the schools around here in WNC or North Carolina?

We teach our kids valuable things, but when does common sense come into play? How many college grads do you see out working construction jobs or becoming Whopper Flopper of the year? I can name a bunch right now off the top of my head. The point I'm making here is that times have changed and not for the worse. I would love to know what the government has been thinking or how we got so far away from common sense. Teach kids things they can use in real life and be successful with.

I'm a young man. I'm only 21 years old and yes I have some college experience. I'm not a stupid man, by any means. Problem is that I look around at the kids who are in school now and they aren't learning anything productive it seems. Do you know there are so many kids who can't tell you what the second or third amendment is? This is a disgrace; it's pathetic so many of our kids and young adults simply don't know what they should. The mission and goals have yet to be initiated and put into action. They say it has to do with morale fiber and higher learning, but it's yet to be implemented. Then the government wonders why people think that the educational system is becoming a joke. Half of the classes offered or the things taught will never be used outside of the classroom. Think like a parent or a man or woman with common sense instead of a politician for once. Use your common sense; not all the red tape. Wake up people, and realize what you're doing and what you're not doing. Put the kids and the teachers first. How can you have quality education without quality educators? You can't!

Now I'm not saying make the procedures more strenuous but at least recognize what the teachers are doing and for how little of pay on top of that. Where is their appreciation?

Leaders of the State, someone has to do something and it all starts with you and parents. Leaders of the state hear the outcry from the people and realize that we are strapped enough with everything that is going on with the economy and in our own lives, but please help implement things that will help our children so they don't end up in this same mess as so many of us have.

Thank you for your time and for lending an ear to a concerned citizen.

"You cannot have a Quality Life or Quality Government without Quality Education!" - NCCQG