

developed new ways to encourage our girls at home that fit their natural need for verbal encouragement.

The proof of our success with girls is measurable today: the industrialized world has closed the female-to-male math and science gaps in our schools. Girls now receive grades as good as and better than boys in these classes. In California, girls are now actually outperforming boys in math and science. As we noted earlier, girls are no longer shortchanged in many schools—they are high performers. The changes we made to our educational system worked!

Changing our educational system to help boys will admittedly be harder, because the changes that have been made to help our daughters will actually make boys' education more problematic. Furthermore, in our consideration of girls' needs, we never had to fight the myth of

gender plasticity—we never said, "Our girls are defective." We always said, "The system is defective." Changing the system for our boys can be also accomplished—without hurting our girls—and it must be.

NOTES

1. Dewing, Phoebe, Tao Shi, Steve Horvath, and Eric Vilain. 2003. "Sexually Dimorphic Gene Expression in Mouse Brain Precedes Gonadal Differentiation." *Molecular Brain Research* 118 (1-2): 82-90; Schore, Allan N. 2001. "Effects of a Secure Attachment Relationship on Right Brain Development, Affect Regulation, and Infant Mental Health." *Infant Mental Health* 22 (1-2): 7-66.
2. Rhoades, Steven E. 2004. *Taking Sex Differences Seriously*. San Francisco: Encounter Books.

Michael Gurian is the author of twenty books, among them *The Wonder of Boys* and *The Wonder of Girls*. He is the cofounder of the Gurian Institute in Colorado Springs, Colorado. *Kathy Stevens* is the training director of the Gurian Institute.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Gurian and Stevens ask if we should "keep trying to change our boys" or should we instead "change the educational system in which they are now taught." How do they address this question? Do you agree or disagree with their position?
2. Does the information provided in the article about boys and learning match your experiences working with boys in schools? If not, what is different about boys you have worked with?
3. The authors conclude by offering a "model for protecting the minds of boys." What does their model call for educators (and others) to do? Do you think what they are suggesting is realistic? How might you bring this model to your current educational setting?