

information to homes, schools, social policies, and universities and colleges. You can help your community notice how tough the myth of gender plasticity is making life for our sons. When you notice males in educational distress, you can point out that we are creating for our sons an educational system not well suited to certain aspects of their brains; a system that claims they are defective, disordered, or incorrigible because they can't learn; a system that insists that they should be able to change—even further, that their inability to change is yet another flaw in their character as males, one that supposedly requires medication.

If our civilization continues to buy into the myth of gender plasticity, larger numbers of our sons will continue to do poorly in school. They will emerge from years of waste and failure without the normal development and skills we've all assumed for years that they would acquire, and, during this entire struggle and conflict, *they* will continue to frustrate us by "not changing."

#### IV. A BOY-FRIENDLY MODEL FOR PROTECTING THE MINDS OF BOYS

If you agree with our argument that the current educational system often fails to accommodate the hardwiring of boys' brains and does not provide them with an appropriate system of learning, and if you agree that our homes and schools should do less to try to change our boys and more to help them learn naturally, then you can become an ambassador for boys, a protector of their minds. As an ambassador you'll join us, not in trying to alter the nature of boys or girls, but instead in working toward two goals:

1. *Expression and development of the natural self of the child.* The child's genetic self is most important to his or her learning, and those who aid the child are charged with helping that self become fully expressive and developed within the frameworks of a humane society.

2. *Compensation for areas of inherent disadvantage or fragility.* These areas of disadvantage emerge for any child because of particular genetic or environmentally caused weaknesses in his or her learning brain or because the child as an individual carries learning characteristics that don't fit the mass.

Our suggestions detailed in other sections of *The Minds of Boys* avoid joining with any ideologies that measure success of the child's education by *measuring significant alteration* of the child's mind, whatever part of the gender-brain continuum the child is on. We believe that to base a child's education on the hope of altering a brain's inherent method of self-development is an affront to freedom and ultimately leads to suppression or disengagement of the child's true self and potential for success.

A child who expresses himself and learns to compensate for weaknesses is following one of the most natural instincts of our species: to *adapt*. We as adults protect the minds of children when we help the children adapt, using their own natural skills and talents, to the needs of a society. We don't protect their minds by putting a generation of schoolboys on drugs or watching them gradually fail.

Breaking down the myth of gender plasticity is not necessarily a simple thing to accomplish. But our culture has, in a few decades, successfully confronted a great deal of the patriarchal, sexist, and industrial system that was hurting girls, and improved the lives of girls and women. There's still a way to go, but there has been substantial change. And in this process, our culture did not force girls' brains or nature to change in order for them to succeed in our educational system. All of us came together to change the system in order to fit girls.

Specifically, we brought more verbal functioning to our math and science classes, trained teachers to use more writing and group conversation in teaching those subjects, changed our testing of those subjects to include more explanative and discursive essay answers, and