

“REFORMING EDUCATION IS LIKE TAKING A WOUNDED MOOSE AWAY FROM A
PACK OF STARVING WOLVES.” --Fred Keller

The Animal School

G.H. Reavis

Once upon a time, the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a “new world,” so they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming, and flying, and to make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming; better, in fact, than his instructor. He made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming to practice and running. This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn. As a result, he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school, so nobody worried about that except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but he had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed so much frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground-up instead of from the tree-top-down. He also developed charlie horses from overexertion. He ended up getting a ‘C’ in Climbing and a ‘D’ in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class he beat all the others, but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal eel who could swim exceedingly well (and also climb, run, and fly a little) had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their children to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

Does this fable have a moral?

*Reprinted by permission of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
from MISSOURI SCHOOLS, January 1948, p. 16*