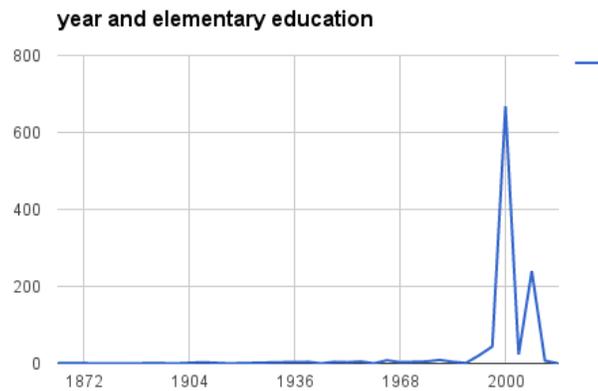


Emma Hess

Elementary Education in Presidential Nomination Speeches

Based off of my personal interest in early childhood, I thought it would be interesting to further investigate the topic of elementary education.

Interestingly, up until the year 2000, this topic was ultimately never mentioned in presidential nomination speeches. After 2000, the topic had a sharp decline, but then had another small peak (around 2008).



Around 1968, there is slight ripple. Around 1968, events that occurred were: The Brown v Board of Education (1954), Little Rock, Arkansas public schools were federally ordered to be integrated (1957), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act made standardized testing a requirement (1965) African American parents and white teachers clashed in New York City over community control of schools (1968), and Milliken v Bradley, which ruled that schools may not be desegregated across school districts (1974). These small events may have been briefly mentioned in speeches around this time, which created the very minute change in the topic of elementary education. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act was introduced into the House by republican John Boehner, and signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002. This act states to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. In 2006, the Commission on the Future of Higher Education evaluated higher

education. In 2015, President Obama replaced the No Child Left Behind act with the Every Student Succeeds Act.

I also thought it was interesting to consider that since education is primarily a topic that democrats are more interested in, that both parties seemed to equally mention this topic in their presidential nomination speeches. I also thought it was interesting that children's future is one of the six most mentioned topics by both parties (.3% more by republicans). However, for this topic, the top-ranked speech was Gore's in 2000, followed by Bush in 2000, then McCain in 2008. Gore speaks investing in education and making education accessible for those who cannot afford it, Bush speaks about how "one size does not fit all" for children's education, and McCain speaks about how education is the civil rights issue of this century. Interestingly to me is that two of the top three speeches on elementary education are by republican nominees, though this is generally thought of as a democratic topic. Although the reason for the spike in of interest in this topic is seemingly very obvious, I think it is surprising to find that although Bush endorsed the No Child Left Behind Act, yet in that year, his opponent, Gore, mentioned the idea/topic of elementary education more, yet I'm not sure why. Was this one of the strengths Bush had and Gore wanted to prove that he could compete with in the realm of elementary education?