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SEL: The Social and Emotional Learning Trap

On January 25, 2017, about 300 people attended the Minnesota Safe and Supportive Schools Conference. According to the Minnesota Department of Education website, “Teachers, school support staff, school administrators, students, parents, education stakeholders, and community members convened in St. Paul to learn the latest strategies in bullying prevention, bullying intervention, and school climate improvement.”

Providing safe and supportive schools and preventing bullying are admirable goals. But sometimes words are used to mask what is actually intended by certain groups. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) are code words that signify an agenda.

The Welcoming Schools campaign, which is what the Minnesota conference was based on, is promoted by the Human Rights Campaign and other organizations that many believe are intent on radically changing attitudes and belief systems. The Human Rights Campaign is a national LGBT advocacy group.

At the Welcoming Schools website (Welcomingschools.org), the main goals of the program are listed as preventing “name-calling” “bullying,” and “gender stereotyping,” as well as promoting “family diversity.”

According to the Minnesota-based Child Protection League, the St. Paul Safe and Supportive School Conference actually provided training that educators could use to indoctrinate and pressure students to change what they’ve been

taught at home and in their churches and synagogues.

The Child Protective League (CPL) monitored and reported on the Safe and Supportive Schools Conference. The Child Protective League “is about protecting children from exploitation, indoctrination, and violence.”

The CPL says that at the conference and in Minnesota schools, “Safe and Supportive” are terms that actually mean promoting and supporting certain social justice ideas and other controversial world views. This trend was legislated into existence when Minnesota passed a law in 2014, called the *Safe and Supportive Schools Act*. The Child Protection League opposed this law, fearing that it would be misused in exactly the manner that is currently happening. No Republican lawmaker in either the Minnesota House or Senate voted for the bill, according to CPL.

One tactic of movements that seek to indoctrinate students is called “social and emotional learning,” or SEL. The National Education Association (NEA) teachers union promotes SEL, as reflected in the Resolutions passed at their last few annual conventions.

CPL notes, “Since ‘safe and supportive’ school policies are purportedly about stopping real bullying, it is quite troubling that under the guise of ending bullying, SEL is being used to chart students’ personal cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs, and then measure, record, and ultimately change them.”

According to CPL, “Schools will track how students change over time, and make this tracking data part of the child’s permanent school record.” The students will also be subjected to “targeted SEL interventions.”



Observers at the Minnesota Safe and Supportive Schools Conference in January noted that the main focus was on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) issues, and outright promotion of Islam.

Those who pay attention to public schools shouldn’t believe this is just an issue in Minnesota because school districts across the nation are training teachers and hiring social and emotional

learning specialists and coordinators.

Presentations at the Conference

The keynote speaker at the Minnesota conference was Karen VanAusdal, the director of practices for CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. CASEL uses what some view as manipulative tactics.

CASEL gathers data about individual students, analyzes what the students believe, and then sets about to change those beliefs to coincide with the preconceived ideas the promoters wish to advance. This is in direct violation of the sanctity of family, freedom, and of independent thought. If a student learns at home that marriage should be between one man and

one woman, do they stand a chance of remaining true to their family and religious belief systems when they are taught at school that such beliefs are wrong, biased, and bigoted?

One of the sessions at the St. Paul conference was titled “LGBTQ: Early Conversations Promote Healthy Identities and Build Allies.”

(See SEL, page 4)

Islamic Attack at OSU Terrorizes Students

There was an attack on students at the Ohio State University (OSU) on Monday, November 28, 2016, as they returned to campus following Thanksgiving break. A Somali refugee who had been granted status as a legal permanent resident of the U.S. drove a car into a crowd of students. He then exited the car and continued attacking fellow students with a butcher knife. Several people were injured, one critically, before a campus police officer arrived on scene and shot dead 18-year-old Abdul Razak Ali Artan.

The attack started just after 10 a.m. in an area outside an engineering building, where Artan’s car “barreled onto the sidewalk.” Some students at first thought it was a traffic incident but quickly became aware it was something else when Artan began attacking them with the knife. One student said, “I thought it was an accident initially until I saw the guy come out with a knife.”

Eleven victims were injured. Five were hit by the car, five others were stabbed by the butcher knife, and one additional person had “orthopedic injuries,” with the exact cause unknown. Reports state that at least half the victims were OSU students, faculty, or staff.

All classes were cancelled for the rest of the day of the November attack.

The Muslim student, Artan, had been interviewed by the OSU campus newspaper in August. He said then he was concerned that others didn’t understand his need to pray publicly several times daily.

He said, “If people look at me, a Muslim praying, I don’t know what they’re going to think, what’s going to happen.”

Artan lived in an off-campus apartment. Neighbors reported he “was always polite and attended daily prayer services at a mosque on the city’s west side.”

The motive behind the Somali refugee’s attack might never be fully understood since Artan is dead. He followed “online extremist propaganda” that suggests “lone wolves” spread terror using whatever is easily accessible, like a vehicle and a knife, as suggested by Islamic terrorism websites. “Law enforcement sources told Fox News the FBI was examining a Facebook post that may have been written by Artan earlier Monday.” That post was apparently about “U.S. military action in Muslim countries.”

House Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul, R-Texas, said “we do not yet have confirmation of terrorist connections” to the attack. But Rep. McCaul did say that “this is the type of indiscriminate violence our enemies are urging their followers to use against us.”

Artan had recently transferred to OSU where he sought a degree in “logistics management,” a specialty offered in the Business School.

The Columbus, Ohio area has been the scene of several other terrorism-linked incidents perpetrated by Somali refugees, including a machete attack on restaurant diners on February 11, 2016. (FoxNews.com, 11-28-16)

What the Dept. of Education Does

There has been much focus on Betsy DeVos as the Trump administration’s choice to lead the Department of Education. Some hope to eliminate the department established during President Jimmy Carter’s administration. It’s instructive to examine the work of the department.

According to the U.S. Department of Education website, there are 4,400 employees and the department has a \$68 billion annual budget. The website says the Dept. of Education is “dedicated to”:

- Establishing policies on federal financial aid for education, and distributing as well as monitoring those funds.
- Collecting data on America’s schools and disseminating research.
- Focusing national attention on key educational issues.
- Prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to education.

What do these goals look like in the states and how are they achieved?

One example is currently ongoing in Texas. The state wanted to reduce the cost of special education services. It looked at how many students were funneled into special education programs and wondered if that number could be reduced.

According to an *Education Week* statistical analysis, the number of school children across the nation aged 6-21 years who received disability services in fall of 2011 was 5.67 million. By the fall of 2014, the most recent year for which statistics are available, there were 5.83 million students diagnosed with disabilities requiring special education, an increase of 160,000 students within just three years.

The increase in 2014 followed what had been years of decreases. *Education Week* says the figures don’t demonstrate an “actual increase or decrease of young people with disabilities in the country” because “child-count data are sensitive to policies that encourage, or discourage, special education identification.”

(See Dept. of Education, page 4)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

National Geographic magazine's choice to feature transgenderism as the cover story for the January edition sparked controversy and perplexed many. This issue seems to support what some believe to be the unscientific idea that biology is fluid and that it is good for children born female to live as males, and vice versa, including taking hormones and having surgery to make changes to their anatomy. Titled "Gender Revolution," the cover statement accompanying the photo of a young transgender person says, "The best thing about being a girl is now I don't have to pretend to be a boy."

In January, a Texas judge dismissed defamation lawsuits against defendants including Fox News, Glenn Beck, the Center for Security Policy, the mayor of Irving, Texas, and others. The father of Ahmed Mohamed, the "Clock Boy" who was arrested after bringing to school an item resembling a suitcase bomb, sought to punish those who questioned whether his son's action was a publicity stunt or other incitement to get the Muslim boy expelled or to otherwise draw attention to himself and his family. The judge agreed with defendants that the lawsuit had no merit and represented a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP), intended as an abuse of the legal system and aimed at denying defendants' Constitutional right to free speech. (DailyCaller.com, 1-10-17)

The Talladega College Marching Tornado Band took part in the inauguration of President Donald Trump although they took some heat from those who believed the historically black college in Alabama should not participate. The school was rewarded with donations of over \$300,000 in support of participation. (TheHill.com, 1-19-17)

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Abstinence Always Works

First in a series about making healthy choices

Abstinence is the healthiest choice for the physical and emotional health of young people and it is also the only birth control method that works every time.

Propaganda from abortion advocates and birth control purveyors would have students and other unmarried people believe a baby is the worst outcome that can result from sexual relations between unmarried people. But the psychological damage to those who become physically and sexually attached to another person without commitment can be lifelong when the relationship (inevitably) ends. Physical damage can also result when promiscuous students end up with various sexually transmitted diseases.

All of this damage and heartache can be avoided if children are taught that sex should be exclusively engaged in by married couples. The false idea that "they are going to have sex anyway" is as ridiculous as saying children will necessarily take illicit drugs, drink to excess, steal, cheat on tests, or engage in any other risky behavior that will do them harm. Children rely on adults to teach them to avoid dangerous behaviors.

When naval aviator Rear Admiral Jeremiah A. Denton returned to the United States in 1973, after being held for seven years and seven months in a North Vietnamese prison camp, he was appalled by our nation's moral decline.

(Denton is famous for blinking "t-o-r-t-u-r-e" in Morse Code while his captors televised propaganda interviews of POWs, thus telling the world about the mistreatment he and others were enduring during captivity.) This heroic man, who went on to become a U.S. senator from Alabama, wanted to do something to help turn things around.

Denton approached Phyllis Schlafly for help. She in turn sought out one of her most loyal foot soldiers, Kathleen Sullivan. Together, Denton, Schlafly, and Sullivan created a program to teach young people how to make good choices.

The program Sullivan started in Illinois was called Project Reality. Teachers were pleased with the course that helped boys and girls focus on making healthy choices and sound decisions. Teachers had seen first hand the fallout of "love" affairs gone wrong and the detrimental effects they had on their students. Teachers want children to come to school

healthy and ready to learn. Sending students off to get condoms at the school clinic or to get an abortion (often without parental consent or knowledge) results in psychologically damaged and distracted kids, unable to learn history, language, science, or anything else teachers train to teach them.

School "health" clinics (that are often sponsored by Planned Parenthood) are funded by Title X federal dollars.

Sullivan, Denton, and others developed Title XX dollars to get grants to supply schools with abstinence curriculum.

Millions of dollars were available under Title X to pick up the pieces of drug addicted, sexually ac-

tive and sometimes infected students, or to provide daycare for the children of the children.

Sullivan's Project Reality program stopped all that heartache before it got started, simply by teaching children a better way. The curriculum allowed students to examine their potential using clever and attractive workbooks, and encourages them to see how the big picture is impacted by their daily choices. These workbooks engage students where they are, even if they've already made unfortunate or detrimental choices, and seek to steer them toward making good choices in the future.

In approximately 2009, enemies of healthy choices banished this successful and positive curriculum from Chicago and other Illinois schools. History and current statistics about that city show how well this has turned out for the Chicago community. When abortion is rampant, all human life is devalued. After experiencing the bond of sexual intimacy, broken relationships are confusing and devastating for young people. They end up emotionally and spiritually broken, and sometimes turn to alcohol, marijuana, opioid abuse, and other destructive behaviors that impact not only their own futures but society as a whole.

Currently, public schools in Collier County, Florida, are using the abstinence workbooks and achieving great success. The same results could be achieved in many more places if this abstinence program spreads. There are four workbooks in the series, and next month's *Education Reporter* will explore exactly what this course offers to students.



Book of the Month



Schools on Trial: How Freedom and Creativity Can Fix Our Educational Malpractice, Nikhil Goyal, Doubleday, 2016, \$26.95



The author of this book hasn't yet celebrated his 25th birthday, but he's been heralded on *Forbes* magazine's "30 Under 30" list and received praise from educators like John Taylor Gatto.

What does Goyal have to say about education? Mainly that he doesn't like traditional schools. He believes they stifle creativity, ingenuity, and often crush the spirit of students.

He explains and demonstrates this with examples in the first part of the book. Observers won't be unfamiliar with the problems he cites: teaching to tests and over testing, lack of recess, boredom and monotony, and the failure to address the individuality of students.

Goyal offers alternatives to what he disdains, citing successful and innovative ways communities across the nation are responding.

Homeschooling is one way Goyal believes children can be well educated. He notes that even the best colleges and universities now seek homeschooled individuals. Any disadvantages that may once have existed are overcome these days by homeschool groups that offer field trips for younger students or advanced classes for students whose knowledge has expanded beyond a parent's comfort level to teach.

Goyal says "unschooling" promotes the theory that "learning and living are inextricable." Some might explain unschooling as a way to homeschool without sitting at a desk or table. Often self directed, parents offer the curriculum but do not really lead students into it, particularly once children are old enough to be self directed. In its uniqueness, this style of education, like other options, is suited to some but not all personality types.

"Maker movement" schools often operate in stem fields. In such schools, students share information on technical topics; they learn how to better manufacture products from modular homes to high-mileage vehicles.

Goyal offers examples of U.S. schools and students that are doing things differently, and doing well. This book is valuable for its introduction to resources for those who hope to walk away from the one-size-fits-all government school system.

Perhaps Goyal's best suggestion is that the media stop reporting on education in a polarizing "us vs. them" manner, "pitting one side against the other." He recognizes that certain types of schools and learning concepts suit certain students best. Parents and students have a variety of choices and must be allowed the freedom to choose education methods that best suit the individual student and their family culture.

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



FOCUS: 4 Ways Society Needs To Change So Kids Don't Hate School

'In a misguided effort to raise the bar, we are depriving our children of many of the experiences they need to develop healthy, open minds, and a love of learning.'

by Laura Hanby Hudgens

Originally published in The Federalist, January 5, 2017. Reprinted with permission.

My high school oral communication class is a requirement for graduation, and Leo is repeating the class because he failed at his first attempt. Let me rephrase that. Leo is repeating the class because the first time he took it, he didn't try. He rarely turned in assignments. He didn't study for exams. And when he did give a presentation, he was usually winging it.

The second time around, things are different. Leo works hard, turns in his assignments, and gives solid, well-researched presentations. When I asked him about this change Leo responded, "I've decided to try this year. I think I might want to go to college, so I need to get my grades up."

While I am proud of Leo's efforts and ambition, I am concerned, too. Leo is a junior, and his academic history certain-

Read more at <http://thefederalist.com/2017/01/05/4-ways-society-needs-change-kids-dont-hate-school/>



FOCUS (Continued from page 3)

Continue reading at

<http://thefederalist.com/2017/01/05/4-ways-society-needs-change-kids-dont-hate-school/>

that sleep is a contributing factor to the epidemic of apathy and many other educational problems.

There are no quick fixes to the problems facing American education. But we can start by escaping the notion that the answer is always more—more techniques, more technology, more work, more rigor.

The one thing our children do need more of is respect. Parents and educators must respect childhood and give children freedom to experience it. We must respect where our children are developmentally and meet their needs at each

phase. We must respect their needs to be active and to socialize. And we must respect their need for rest, sleep, and quiet. If we can't give our children more of these things, no amount of educational reform will save them.

NOTE: Leo's name and the details of his story have been changed to protect his privacy.

Laura Hanby Hudgens is a part-time high school teacher and a freelance writer living with her husband and children in the Arkansas Ozarks. Her work has appeared in The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, Parent.com, and elsewhere. You can learn more about her at charmingfarming.com, where she occasionally blogs about faith, food, education and family life.

Dept. of Education (Continued from page 1)

Among the various disabilities there are wide disparities in diagnosis, possibly because some disabilities are allotted larger amounts of money in schools. *Education Week* reports: A student with autism could be granted more state aid than a student with a speech or language impairment. Other states pay for students with disabilities based on the services those students require—say a student in a self-contained classroom with a dedicated aide receives more funding than a student in a general education classroom.

Education Week states that “the numbers have real implications for states and localities, which pay by far the largest share of costs for special education students.” (*Education Week*, 4-20-16)

Texas Tries to Cut Costs

Beginning in 2004, Texas tried to limit the number of students educated under the federal law requiring that all eligible students get extra help. That law is the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, or IDEA, which ensures services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. According to the Department of Education website, “IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.” (ED.gov)

Texas encouraged schools to limit the number of special education students to 8.5% of all students. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) believed that was a number that would adequately offer needed services to students. According to the TEA, 8.5% was a goal, not a cutoff. Penny Schwinn, the TEA's deputy commissioner of academics says, “It has been alleged that some school district personnel and others may have interpreted the [benchmark] to mean that districts are required to achieve a special education enrollment rate of no more than 8.5%.” Schwinn says, “This interpretation is incorrect.” (*Education Week*, 11-30-16)

Back to the federal Department of Education, now headed by Betsy DeVos, and

what they do. They go to Texas to make sure the state is following federal law.

Representatives from the U.S. Dept. of Education will visit 12 school districts and 24 schools in Texas, starting the week of February 27, 2017.

Staff from the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services are looking into Texas's provision of special education services, partially in response to a *Houston Chronicle* newspaper investigative series of articles published in 2016 and entitled “Denied.” After that report, the Dept. of Education sent an official letter to the Texas Education Association concerning the number of students served.

The *Chronicle* article says, “In 2015, for the first time, [the students served number] fell to exactly 8.5%.” The report continues: “If Texas provided services at the same rate as the rest of the U.S., 250,000 more kids would be getting critical services such as therapy, counseling, and one-on-one tutoring.”

It should be noted that in many Texas school districts, the percentage of special education students remained above 8.5% and TEA says there was no punishment for exceeding the goal. Some say schools that achieved the 8.5% goal were rewarded. The TEA dropped the percent goal program in November of 2016.

The federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) says several factors were considered in deciding which Texas schools to visit, including comments received during listening sessions in December of 2016; comments on the OSERS blog in December and January; location of the school district; and trends in percentage of students identified as needing special education.

Staff from OSERS will visit (inspect) the following Texas school districts: Aldine, Ector County, Everman, Fort Bend, Harlandale, Houston, Laredo, Leander, North East, and United.

After analyzing the data collected from the visits (paid for by taxpayers) the Department of Education will issue a report of its findings.

Education Reporter will follow up on this investigation in a future issue.

SEL (Continued from page 1)

Another session was presented by the Executive Director of the Minnesota Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Jaylani Hussein. Hussein gave “a detailed presentation about Islam, its beliefs and religious practices.” Hussein “expects schools to accommodate Muslim foot washing, Ramadan observance, Friday prayer days, and to provide quiet places for students to wash and pray.”

Whose Social and Emotional Standards?

Social and emotional learning involves assessing the viewpoints of students and if they don't meet certain prescribed beliefs then they must be changed. The change involves coercion and emotional manipulation.

Some of what the NEA teachers union and other social justice organizations believe to be wrongheaded beliefs don't align with traditional family values or common sense. The NEA wholly encourages same-sex marriage and the belief that “sexual identity” is fluid, not necessarily aligned with biology. If a child has been taught that there are inherent differences between males and females, they will be re-educated at school. These organizations also don't focus attention on the importance of married mothers and fathers raising and teaching values to their own children. They don't support abstinence education that teaches sexual intercourse should be reserved for a man and a woman within a committed marriage relationship.

CASEL boasts that they have enjoyed “systemic districtwide SEL implementation” in Anchorage, Austin, Cleveland, Chicago, Oakland, Sacramento City, Nashville, and Washoe.”

Having a relatively small population, Washoe is a county in Nevada that includes Reno. Unsurprisingly, Common Core is part of the Washoe County School District's integration of Social and Emotional Learning into all subjects, from grades K-12. According to CASEL:

As part of a central strategy for improving its graduation rate, Washoe County School District integrates SEL into their Common Core instructional framework and professional development. With training and support from the district, each principal and leadership team implements SEL in the context of their school.

All that manipulation and brainwashing isn't free. For the 2014-15 school year, the various components of SEL cost the relatively small Washoe County district almost \$455,000. This includes teacher training, salary and benefits for a SEL coordinator and adminis-

trative assistant, travel and conferences. “Curriculum Resources & Evidence Based Program Materials” expense in that school year amounted to \$63,000. (By comparison, Chicago Public Schools SEL operating costs for the same time period were over \$9.5 million.)

In that same school year, an organization called the NoVo Foundation gave Washoe County, Nevada, a grant of \$295,000 for SEL. The school district has received similar grant amounts from NoVo since 2012 and the Washoe County School District Social and Emotional Learning Budget and Financial Sustainability Plan shows these grants are expected through 2018. (FinancialSustainability.CASEL.org)

The NoVo Foundation claims to protect women and girls “from a world of domination and exploitation,” and that it wants to end violence against girls and women. Nonetheless, the organization supports indoctrinating children to be accepting and supportive of Islamic teachings. Subjugation of women is prevalent in Islamic nations and Sharia law teaches that women and girls are chattel. Apparently progressives and Common Core don't need to make sense.

At the NoVo Foundation website the following statement can be found: “In addressing violence and promoting collaboration, we invest in advancing Social and Emotional Learning to support girls and boys with skills that help them work well together for success in academics and in life.” And: “NoVo Foundation is dedicated to catalyzing a transformation in global society, moving from a culture of domination to one of equality and partnership.” (NoVoFoundation.org)

Peter Buffett, the youngest son of multi-billionaire investor Warren Buffett, is the co-president and co-chair of the board of directors of NoVo, along with his wife. This funding source probably won't dry up anytime soon.

Whether under the guidance of CASEL, the NEA, other promoters, or simply the desire of an individual teacher, social and emotional learning techniques and practices are coming to schools across the nation.

Ideologues only have tolerance for their own viewpoints. Anyone who doesn't agree with them is deemed bigoted, ill-informed, or wrong. Only their own values, including holding LGBT in high esteem and promoting Islam, are seen as virtuous. Those wishing to respect the viewpoints of others but still maintain their own religious identity and values are demeaned, devalued, and their children are sentenced to re-education.



Introducing new 'Quote of the Month' in *Education Reporter!* In Their Own Good Words

“Conservatives should affirm the importance of marriage and the legal norm that children be raised by their own married mother and father, not only as a moral objective but also as an economic and political good.”

— Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) *A Choice, Not An Echo*