



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 20, NO. 3, SECTION 1

BOX 618, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002

OCTOBER, 1986

Let Us Choose Our Public School

America has determined that the taxpayers will pay for Medicare and Medicaid, but recipients are not required to get these benefits from a "government" hospital or a "government" physician. The individual can freely choose his own hospital and doctor, and can shop around for the best.

America has determined that the taxpayers will pay for food stamps for the needy, but recipients are not required to get the benefits at a "government" grocery store or to take "government-selected or approved" food items. The individual can choose his food stores and foods, and can shop around for the best prices and produce.

A mighty uproar would surely greet any proposal that the recipients' benefit dollars be spent only on government-specified hospitals, doctors, stores, or foods. Americans are so accustomed to the high quality that we enjoy in medical services and food products that we take the environment of competition for granted.

Why, then, do we tolerate the prohibition of competition and choice in government-paid education services? Recipients of taxpayer-paid schooling are forced to get their benefits from a specified government school.

The National Governors' Association, at its August 24-26, 1986 meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina, asked that fundamental question. The question is so simple and so obvious that it's as sensational as the child asking why the emperor doesn't have any clothes on.

The Governors asked, "Why not let parents choose the schools their children attend? ... Parents should have more choice in the **public** schools they attend."

Of course, parents do have the choice to transfer their children to private schools if they pay the tuition after they've paid taxes for the public schools they are not using. That's equivalent to saying, "You can use Medicare benefits only if you use the government-selected hospitals and doctors; if you choose your own hospital and doctor, you must pay for them with your own money."

The Governors don't think that's good enough for education. Colorado Governor Richard D. Lamm pointed out that, "In virtually every area of our economic and private lives we have a smorgasbord of choice. We can choose among 100 breakfast cereals, 200 makes of automobiles, 300 different church denominations."

"Thus it is ironic," he continued, "that in this land of

choice there is so little choice in the public school system." The system controls both production and consumption. The system tells our children where they will learn, what they will learn, and at what speed and quality.

No matter how inferior or shoddy the product the school produces, or how dangerous the school environment from drugs or assault, children are not permitted to transfer to a different school. They are forced to endure the particular school that is mandated either by residence or by arbitrariness of court order.

The Governors recommend that we "unlock the values of competition in the educational marketplace." Schools then can compete for students, teachers, and dollars, and this will force changes that produce better products. Lamm predicts that we can "increase excellence by increasing the choices."

Suppose all those who live in the eastern one-third of America were mandated to buy a General Motors car, those who live in the central third a Ford car, and those in the western third a Chrysler car. The results would be predictable. When production and consumption have no relation to quality or price, prices would go up and quality would go down.

It was interesting to watch Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association, trying to rebut Governor Lamm in a television debate. She was visibly frightened at the prospect of competition. Her only argument was that the Governors' recommendation might discriminate against minorities. That's ridiculous; certainly minority parents would be given the same freedom to choose as majority parents.

Futrell's counterproposal was to urge more "parental involvement." For her, that's really a switch! Futrell has been bitterly fighting parental involvement at every turn, particularly the Pupil Protection Amendment which gives parents a say-so over psychological curricula in the classroom.

The Governors' report pointed out that "Our model of compulsory, packaged education, as it now exists, is an enemy of parental involvement and responsibility simply because it allows no choice," and, anyway, educators are "uncomfortable with parents serving as members of decision making or advisory groups."

The parental involvement which most parents would like most of all is being able to choose which school their children attend.

The 1986 NEA Resolutions

Even the liberal television networks have discovered the problem of illiteracy and other inadequacies of the public schools. But the nation's largest organization of teachers and school personnel is focusing on everything except the quality of education today.

The National Education Association's annual yearbook includes all its current, official policy statements. One would get the impression from this NEA journal, called "Today's Education," that everything is hunky-dory in the public schools and that the NEA members have the time to spend considerable energies promoting their leftwing political views.

In 1986, the NEA reaffirmed its resolutions, passed every year, in support of abortion, abortion funding, and gay rights legislation (euphemistically described as an end to discrimination against "sexual orientation").

In 25 pages of fine print giving the 1986 convention resolutions, legislative program, and new business items, no mention was made of reinstating or even trying phonics, the proven best method of teaching children to read. On the other hand, all kinds of mischievous proposals were made to use the public schools for things other than the basics.

The NEA is terribly eager to teach children "birth control and family planning, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest and sexual abuse." The NEA also wants to clutter the schools with trendy new courses such as "multicultural/global education," nuclear war curricula, and environmental studies.

Ignoring the failure of the schools to teach basic skills, the NEA demands that schools get control of the children at an earlier and earlier age. The NEA demands legislation for "mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance" for five year olds, plus using the schools for "child care" of even younger children in order to equip them for "a successful kindergarten experience."

The NEA wants any kind of book, film or material about sex to be available to children without regard to age. Here's the way the NEA resolution expresses it: "To facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality."

Three NEA resolutions dance around the controversial sex clinics in public schools which dispense contraceptives and give abortion referrals. "The Association further urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel." In another resolution, the NEA endorses "Programs, such as direct services within the schools and referrals to and coordination with community and local governmental agencies, that work to resolve identified disabilities." Eager to transform the schools from places of academic learning to social welfare and health-care centers, the NEA demands that the schools should give "every student direct access to health, social, and psychological services."

The NEA demands that teachers alone have the authority to select or reject all materials used on pupils, and that the teacher's sole authority to choose whatever they want be protected from "interference" by parents. It is obvious that the NEA is hostile to the constitutional rights of parents to protect the religion, ethics, culture and attitudes of their own children.

The NEA's hostility to parents is again evident in the section about child abuse. The NEA wants "due process" for all school personnel accused of child abuse and "immunity from legal action" if they falsely accuse parents of child abuse, but the NEA resolution doesn't include similar due process and immunity for parents.

The NEA is vindictive in its attacks on private schools. The NEA not only opposes tuition tax credits and vouchers, but opposes the renting of any empty public school facilities to private schools even if such rent might be profitable to the taxpayers.

The NEA "condemns the \$100 million package (demanded by the Reagan Administration and passed by the Congress) to aid the Contra forces." The NEA further threatens to "publicize through its publications and in the press," NEA's opposition to the Contras.

The NEA demands a "nuclear freeze." The NEA demands gun control. The NEA opposes a Balanced Budget Amendment and demands repeal of tax indexing.

The NEA demands that the United States submit ourselves to the jurisdiction of the World Court. The NEA demands a constitutional amendment to treat Washington, D.C. as though it were a state.

The NEA policies sound more like those of a radical left front than an organization of people interested in excellence in education. And the NEA has a budget of \$108.5 million to pursue its goals.

Environmental Science Textbooks

"Science" is a magic word when it comes to education. Louisiana parents, however, have discovered what mischief can be concealed behind the word "science."

The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education decided this spring that, starting in the next school year, a new subject called "Environmental Science" will qualify as one of three science credits required for high school graduation. Apparently, the main purpose of this new regulation is to accommodate those students who are unable to pass the real science courses, chemistry and physics.

In order to expedite this change so it can begin in the 1986-87 school year, the Department of Education set up a special textbook adoption schedule. The Louisiana procedure involves citizen review of textbooks, and that is how parents found out about the political and social indoctrination hiding under the name "science."

The principal theme of the Environmental Science textbooks is a cardinal concept of liberalism: the scarcity of resources. Once the child is drilled in the dogma that the world's resources cannot support its growing population, then the child is ready to swallow the liberal "solutions" for this problem: (a) government control of population growth and (b) government control of resources, production and consumption.

The passion for population control, even by forcible methods and economic discrimination, is evident in all the textbooks. As a model for reducing births, the books point to Mainland China (where mandatory late-term abortions and cut-offs of food and housing allowances have dramatically reduced the birth rate).

A typical example is this passage from the textbook titled *Global Science: Energy, Resources, Environment* (Kendall-

Hunt Publishers): "It is possible that some of the social forces that exist in the United States, and to varying degrees in many other developed nations, may bring about a stabilization of population. These include the demand for: (1) new roles by women, the promotion of the benefits of smaller families, (2) the choice to begin a family at a later age, (3) the demand by many women for freedom over their reproductive functions, (4) the widespread availability of birth control devices and information, and (5) the removal of the tax incentives for having large families.

"If these types of indirect measures aren't adequate, an idea put forward by economist Kenneth Boulding would stabilize population. His plan is to have the government issue transferable birth licenses. Each woman would receive an allotment of reproduction licenses that correspond to replacement fertility. In the United States, the allotment would be 2.1 licenses.

"The licenses would be divisible in units of one-tenth, which Boulding calls the deci-child. Possession of ten deci-child units confers the legal right to one birth. The licenses are freely transferable by sale or gift. Thus, those who want more than two children and can afford to buy the extra licenses, or can acquire them by gift, are free to do so."

The passion for tight government control of our economy is evident in another selection from *Global Science*: "The idea of enoughness recognizes that a given individual or family can only handle and enjoy a fixed number of goods. Possessions, beyond that, are mere greed. For each individual, there is a state of adequacy... One possible way of accomplishing this is by establishing maximum and minimum income levels and all the gradations between... As your income rose, you'd pay more tax until you reached the point where all your increased income went for taxes."

Naturally, the myth of a no-growth economy and blind faith in government controls lead to animosity toward the free market. Here is a typical example from *Global Science* of how the students are poisoned against the private enterprise system.

"Arguments against the Market system... 1. Markets can be manipulated and made non-competitive... 2. Since it takes money to make money, the free market can allow the rich to hold onto economic and political power... 3. Free market forces by themselves do not provide for social needs (such as schools and police protection)... 4. Free markets tend to be unstable... 5. The coldness of the market causes alienation between the labor force and management..."

Louisiana is the first state to adopt Environmental Science textbooks. Louisiana could do a service for the rest of the country if it would alert other states to the phoniness of the "science" in the textbooks available for this subject.

Amateurs Should Not Deal With Suicide

Suicide legislation has become very trendy. Surfacing in Congress and in many state legislatures, "suicide" bills call for "grants" to various agencies, the opening of "centers," the promotion of "awareness" programs, and putting "courses" and "strategies" into the public schools.

These bills talk vaguely about "prevention," but there is customarily nothing whatever in the bills to do with prevention. They are designed only to provide costly "services" that require large and growing amounts of taxpayers' money.

These expensive experiments are merrily moving forward

without any evidence that they are beneficial, and without the legislators hearing from witnesses who could explain why the programs would be counterproductive. Many people believe the bills have no merit whatsoever in preventing teen suicide and are actually harmful.

A National Conference on Prevention and Interventions in Youth Suicide was held in the summer of 1986 in Oakland, CA. If any one message came out of this conference, it was that there is no clear and consistent evidence that suicides can be prevented by any of the programs now being offered.

Dr. David Shaffer, director of the Division of Child Psychiatry at Columbia University and one of the conference participants, reported that he had made a major review to identify studies which have used reasonable methodologies to evaluate the success, or otherwise, of youth-suicide prevention activities. He concluded, "We have identified no such studies."

The TV networks aired four dramatizations of teen suicide, with much advance publicity stating that they were intended to promote public awareness of the problem. They even offered coordination with local community services.

Afterwards, several studies were made comparing teen suicides before and after the programs with the expected suicide rate. Results showed that suicides increased significantly during the ten days after three of the four television programs.

The conclusion of the researchers was, "Television programs are effective in publicizing the availability of services. However, they do not reduce the number of suicide attempts and may, in fact, increase them. They also appear to have a provocative effect on suicide deaths."

Anyone who watched the ABC-TV program called "Surviving" could easily understand why. The program dramatized teen suicide as romantic and painless (a customary false belief of teen suicides) and the parents as totally devastated (a purpose of many teen suicides).

Now let's look at "suicide" courses in the public schools, which are becoming increasingly frequent, established either by state legislation or on the school's own initiative. Is this a good or bad idea?

At the Suicide Conference in Oakland, the experts reported that there has been almost no evaluation of in-school programs. Many experts believe that suicide courses in the schools are sources of harm.

Such courses may be designed to identify signs of potential suicides, particularly depression. But many experts think this approach is bad because depression affects 1,000 to 3,000 times more teenagers than suicide does. To link the more common problem of depression to the uncommon problem of suicide may serve to promote referrals to agencies (thereby increasing the need for tax-funded services), but it may also introduce the notion of suicide to teenagers who were not suicidal at all.

Can we afford to take this chance? The "suicide" curricula in the classroom really consist of group therapy by unlicensed psychologists, an extremely dangerous exercise.

It is clear that the prominent display of the news of a suicide leads to an increase in suicide deaths during the period immediately following. There is also the phenomenon known as suicide clusters, where children imitate what they have seen others do. Studies show that young suicide attempters have had more close contacts with those who had made a suicide

attempt than nonsuicidal teenagers.

Classroom discussions will surely "raise awareness" of the topic. But we must also consider the real possibility that, in so doing, these discussions will, as the conference report stated, "introduce *de novo* suicide into the range of contemplated behaviors for the teenage pupil."

In laymen's language, that means, "put ideas into their head" that weren't there until a classroom discussion required them to focus on suicide and discuss it (perhaps even role-play about it) as though it were a rational and normal response to circumstances.

Teen suicide is not an area where government-funded personnel or teachers should tread. They are more likely to do harm than good.

Group Therapy in the Classroom

Group therapy in the classroom conducted by unlicensed psychologists consumes many hours of the school day which should be devoted to teaching knowledge and basic skills. A good example of this is the following questionnaire given in the 11th grade of some public schools.

The questionnaire was titled "Is it normal for your age group?" Students were required to read 100 items, to decide "if the behavior described is normal, abnormal, or if you are unsure," and then to fill in the boxes with the answers.

This questionnaire is a combination of a waste of precious class time, an invasion of the students' privacy, and objectionable psychological manipulation. No wonder so many high school graduates are emotionally confused and have failed to acquire essential academic learning! Read the questions for yourself.

(1) Dreaming of seeing oneself as dead. (2) Smoking at least one joint every day. (3) Saying hello to every person one sees in a given day. (4) Hearing voices telling one to do things that one knows are wrong.

(5) Sleepwalking. (6) Sleepwalking. (7) Being attracted only to individuals of the same sex as oneself. (8) Flunking out of school.

(9) Expecting every person one knows to love him or her. (10) Being always afraid of something or somebody. (11) Becoming physically violent if one doesn't get one's own way. (12) Feeling tense most of the time.

(13) Feeling inferior to everyone most of the time. (14) Dreaming about killing one's parents. (15) Always being worried that one has a physical disease but not really having it. (16) Frequently feeling ugly.

(17) Having no friends. (18) Feeling awkward at parties. (19) Usually preferring to be alone over being with other people. (20) Feeling that individuals or groups are laughing or whispering about oneself.

(21) Wanting to kill someone. (22) Having crushes on instructors. (23) Never feeling responsible for one's destructive actions even when one is objectively responsible. (24) Wondering about the best way to handle sexual relationships.

(25) Being angry with one's parents all the time. (26) Wanting to be independent of one's parents as soon as possible. (27) Liking one parent much more than another. (28) Not being able to understand one's friends or parents.

(29) Frequently being unable to make decisions. (30) Being afraid of the snow or rain. (31) Not wanting to grow up.

(32) Not knowing what one wants to do after graduation.

(33) Not wanting to work at anything. (34) Always putting things off. (35) Feeling that one is a victim of the school administration. (36) Frequently thinking about committing suicide.

(37) Actually attempting suicide. (38) Frequently feeling confused. (39) Feeling like one has a void or empty space inside. (40) Feeling like one is never able to make any progress.

(41) Fearing death. (42) Constantly rehearsing an upcoming event. (43) Feeling that everyone seems to belong to a group except oneself. (44) Worrying over grades. (45) Always feeling awkward and clumsy.

(46) Always feeling depressed but not knowing why. (47) Getting drunk every day. (48) Running away from home. (49) Being a member of a gang that occasionally destroys property. (50) Constant headaches.

(51) Being unable to learn the alphabet or to count to five. (52) Seeing several lions walk into a room and being sure they are there even though no one else sees them. (53) Thinking one is a famous historical character, such as Napoleon or Joan of Arc....

(78) Biting one's nails until they bleed. (79) Believing that one's food may be poisoned. (80) Losing the ability to hold a pencil or pen and write even though nothing is physically wrong with one's hand.

(81) In the middle of class, screaming out obscenities at the instructor for no apparent reason. (82) Cutting school all day once a week for two months. (83) Being unable to stop eating chocolate cake. (84) Setting open fields on fire.

(85) Turning on the faucet for a bath or shower and "seeing" blood come out. (86) A girl becoming pregnant out of wedlock and insisting upon having the child. (87) Falling asleep in classes every day. (88) Wishing one were somebody else.

(89) Wanting to play with one's rubber ducky in the bath tub. (90) Watching TV six hours or more every day. (91) Thinking one should never make a mistake or an error. (92) Believing one should love everybody.

(93) Believing that UFOs exist, are from outer space, and are trying to contact humans. (94) Going to see the same movie twenty times. (95) Shoplifting. (96) Brushing one's teeth six times a day.

(97) Being afraid of math classes. (98) Being uninterested in the opposite sex. (99) Raising one's hand automatically at the dinner table in order to get permission to speak. (100) Feeling that one is never taken seriously.

Phyllis Schlafly has her B.A. from Washington University, her M.A. from Harvard University, her J.D. from Washington University Law School, and an honorary L.L.D. from Niagara University. She is the author of 12 books and over 1,000 network television and radio commentaries. Before her marriage, she was a librarian. She taught all her six children to read before they entered school. Two are lawyers, one is an orthopedic surgeon, one has his Ph.D. in mathematics and is the author of a book on Rubik's Cube, one is an electrical engineer and one is a journalist.

The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by The Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois.

Subscription Price: \$15 per year. Extra copies available: 50 cents each; 4 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.