

An Unreliable College Botches Free Speech

The drama and humiliation suffered by the author of the book reviewed on page 2 of this issue of *Education Reporter* is a cautionary tale for professors, students, parents, and society as a whole. Erika Christakis' experience at Yale is the sort that leads some parents to decide college is an experience their offspring could well do without. The way Yale handled fallout from an email written before Halloween 2015 represents all that should be avoided when searching for a reliable college.

What happened to Christakis, a well-qualified woman with an excellent academic background, solid experience, and expertise in her field of study? What did she do wrong that ended up costing her and her husband their positions, as they were drummed out of the "society" where they taught? She wrote an email to students about Halloween costumes.

Christakis' email was in response to one sent out by Yale's Intercultural Affairs Committee and can be found online in its entirety. She sent it to students who lived in Silliman College, an undergraduate residence she and her husband were charged with overseeing. Her husband was master and she was associate master. Her email starts out, "Dear Sillimans."

More from the letter includes: "Nicholas and I have heard from a number of students who were frustrated by the mass email sent to the student body about appropriate Halloween-wear." "... I was speaking with some of my students yesterday about the ways in which Halloween — traditionally a day of subversion for children and young people — is also an occasion for adults to exert their control."

"... we seem afraid that college students are unable to decide how to dress themselves on Halloween."

Drawing from her area of expertise, Christakis told students that fantasy and play are part of the developmental process. She wrote, "Pretend play is the foundation of most cognitive tasks, and it seems to me that we want to be in the business of encouraging the exercise of imagination, not constraining it." She tried to explain the difference between fantasy, pretending, and cultural appropriation. It is the latter that she was later accused of encouraging.

Christakis wrote:

Even if we could agree on how to avoid offense — and I'll note that no one around campus seems overly concerned about the offense taken by religiously conservative folks to skin-revealing costumes — I wonder, and I am not trying to be provocative: Is there no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious... a little bit inappropriate or provocative or, yes, offensive? American universities

were once a safe space not only for maturation but also for a certain repressive, or even transgressive, experience; increasingly, it seems, they have become places of censure and prohibition. And the censure and prohibition come from above, not from yourselves! Are we all okay with this transfer of power? Have we lost faith in young people's capacity — in your capacity — to exercise self-censure, through social norming, and also in your capacity to ignore or reject things that trouble you?



She said, referring to her husband, "Nicholas says, if you don't like a costume someone is wearing, look away, or tell them you are offended. Talk to each other. Free speech and the ability to tolerate offense are the hallmarks of a free and open society."

The email ended:

What does this debate about Halloween costumes say about our view of young adults, of their strength and judgment? In other words: Whose business is it to control the forms of costumes of young people? It's not mine, I know that.

Fallout and Protests Over an Email

Erika Christakis' email caused an uproar among a group of outraged students and faculty members. She was accused of promoting cultural appropriation, racism, and even racial violence. She and her husband were leaders of an undergraduate living quarters and her husband was deemed guilty by association. There are online videos showing some over-the-top reactions to the email. In one, students are seen confronting and yelling at Christakis' husband, Nicholas, a physician and a sociology professor. One shows Dr. Christakis calmly listening as he was surrounded and berated by more than 150 students for over two hours. At one point a female student screams at him, saying:

It is not about creating an intellectual space! It is not! Do you understand that? It is about creating a home here!

As a result of one email in which an instructor attempted to educate students and better prepare them for the real world, to give them back the ability to make their own decisions, to encourage communication and personal responsibility, Christakis and her husband were

criticized, ostracized, and threatened.

Protests over racial insensitivity ensued, with other grievances brought into the mix. Yale President Peter Salovey, responded by issuing "a new set of campus initiatives, including recruiting a more diverse faculty and expanding institutional support at campus cultural centers." (*Time*, 12-9-15)

Both Christakis took sabbaticals during spring semester of 2016, and resigned as masters of the undergraduate residence hall Silliman College in July of that year.

A Year Went By

Christakis broke her silence about the ordeal a year later in a *Washington Post* op-ed that began, "The right to speak freely may be enshrined in some of our nation's great universities, but the culture of listening needs repair." She wrote, "Nearly a thousand students, faculty, and deans called for my and my husband's immediate removal from our jobs and campus home." She also wrote, "Some demanded not only apologies for any unintended racial insensitivity (which we gladly offered) but also a complete disavowal of my ideas (which we did not) — as well as advance

warning of my appearances in the dining hall so that students accusing me of fostering violence wouldn't be disturbed by the sight of me."

According to Christakis:

Not everyone bought this narrative, but few spoke up. And who can blame them? Numerous professors, including those at Yale's top-rated law school, contacted us personally to say that it was too risky to speak their minds. Others who generously supported us publicly were admonished by colleagues for vouching for our characters. Many students met with us confidentially to describe intimidation and accusations of being a 'race traitor' when they deviated from the ascendant campus account that I had grievously injured the community.

Christakis also wrote:

For seven years I lived and worked on two college campuses, and a growing number of students report avoiding controversial topics — such as the limits of religious tolerance or transgender rights — for fear of uttering 'unacceptable' language or otherwise stepping out of line. As

(See *Unreliable College*, page 4)

A Reliable College in Virginia

Regent University is located in Virginia Beach, Virginia, a metropolitan area with a population of 1.6 million, and the largest city in the state. The school motto is "Christian Leadership to Change the World." The 70-acre campus is just 16 miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

Dr. M.G. "Pat" Robertson founded the university in 1978. A 1955 graduate of Yale Law School and a trained Baptist minister, Robertson counts having created the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) and The 700 Club among his many accomplishments.

Regent University was originally named CBN University and had an initial enrollment of 70 students. Today, more than 20,000 students from 89 nations are enrolled in 129 areas of study, including both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Online studies are an option for those who live elsewhere and/or must study part-time while supporting families.

U.S. News and World Report ranks Regent at the top of its Best Online Undergraduate Programs list and as the Best Online Graduate Education Program in Virginia. The 2018 magazine ratings also awarded Regent the rank of 4th in the state among Online MBA Programs and third among non-MBA Online Graduate Business Programs.

The school boasts a 19:1 student to faculty ratio. Regent is known for bringing top speakers to campus to engage both students and members of the sur-

rounding communities. At a time when many schools are struggling to recruit students, Regent has experienced a growth rate of 14% in the past two years, among the highest in the nation.

A former marine who served during the Korean War, Chancellor Robertson takes pride in how the university accommodates current and former military members and their families. Military Friendly® ranks Regent as the number one Most Military Friendly School among large private institutions, giving it the same high marks for Military Spouse Friendly School. As a Yellow Ribbon school, Regent puts no limit on the number of qualified military applicants accepted or the amount of funding they are allowed to receive for both undergrad and graduate programs, including the law school. Two online resources, G.I. Jobs and Military Advanced Education, rank Regent University in their top ten military-friendly schools.

Director of admissions Bob Habib says, "The values of Regent — integrity, excellence and innovation — directly tie in with the values of the military services, like honor, service, and commitment." He continues, "It's natural that we, as a Christian institution, walk the extra mile and remove some of the barriers that our military affiliated students face." Most members of Regent's military admissions division have themselves served

(See *Reliable College*, page 2)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Following a case of abuse by two parents who claimed to be educating their children at home, California lawmakers sought to mandate fire inspections for all homeschoolers, as well as a compilation of their names and addresses. Deborah Stevenson, attorney with the National Home Education Legal Defense (NHELD), said at a state hearing, “Homeschoolers are not going to be the scapegoats for the failed child protection system, not going to be scapegoats for the failed educational system, and not going to be scapegoats for the failed judicial system.” Thousands of Californians traveled to Sacramento to give legislators that message. (Breitbart.com, 5-21-18)

The Homeschool Legal Defense Association announced in May that it is working with Google to make the tech giant’s “popular education software available to homeschool groups.” Google has previously allowed only accredited schools to use G Suite software. (HSLDA.org, 5-30-18) Although this was heralded as a good thing by the HSLDA, which represents some homeschoolers, many would say any possible benefits are far outweighed by the near certainty that Google will gather data about students and their families and conceive of ways to track them and market products to them.

“Communism will win” is an unexpected phrase to see written inside any graduation cap, but seeing Spenser Rapone’s written statement was particularly disturbing since the school from which he was matriculating was the United States Military Academy, West Point. The holder of far-left political beliefs who was by then an officer attached to the 10th Mountain Division at New York’s Fort Drum was finally separated from the military in June, after an investigation that lasted a year. According to an attorney specializing in military law, due to his “other-than-honorable discharge” the military could seek reimbursement because Rapone failed to fulfill his contractual obligation to serve for five years in exchange for receiving a free education. (FoxNews.com, 6-19-18)

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‘Gaming Disorder’ and a ‘Sexual Health Condition’

2018 marks the year the World Health Organization (WHO) determined that “gaming disorder” exists as a disease but that those who believe they are born into the wrong body and wish to change their biological sex have a “predisposition” or a “sexual health condition.”

The WHO is an agency of the United Nations, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Its function is to address, influence, and inevitably determine the governmental health policies of all nations, worldwide.

The WHO aims “to address the underlying social and economic determinants of health through policies and programs that enhance health equity and integrate pro-poor, gender-responsive, and human rights-based approaches.”

The WHO also gets involved in environmental issues, intending to “address the root causes of environmental threats to health.” To many, this might sound like the WHO is a social-justice organization.

The WHO publishes and distributes the Internal Classification of Diseases (ICD), which it refers to as “the foundation for the identification of health trends and statistics globally, and the international standard for reporting diseases and health conditions.” The WHO website continues, “It is the diagnostic classification standard for all clinical and research purposes.” (WHO.int) This makes the ICD an influential piece of work.

The newest volume of the ICD was released in June. Two entries have particular significance in the realm of children and education.

The first is the determination that “gaming disorder is a disease.” The second is that “gender incongruence” is no longer classified as a disorder. Preferring to be anti-scientific and to disregard biology, body dysmorphia is instead to be called a “sexual health condition.” Gender incongruence is a term used to describe transgenderism, the feeling that one is born into a body of the wrong sex.

In the ICD-11, released on June 18,

2018, the WHO officially recognized “gaming disorder” as a disease. The WHO describes three signs of the disorder: 1. “Impaired control over gaming,” which includes “onset, frequency, intensity, duration, termination, context”; 2. Increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities; and 3. “Continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.” (TechCrunch.com, 6-18-18)

This same version of the ICD indicates that gender incongruence will now be classified as a sexual health condition. Referring to gender incongruence, Dr. Lale Say indicates, “It was taken out from the mental health disorders

because we had a better understanding that this wasn’t actually a mental health condition and leaving it there was causing stigma.” Say is the coordinator of WHO’s Adolescents and at-Risk Populations team. Say continues, “So in order to reduce the stigma while also ensuring access to necessary health interventions, this was placed in a different chapter.”

Dr. Jennifer Conti, a fellow at Physicians for Reproductive Health says, “By changing the class of this condition, the WHO is effectively saying to everyone and to the world that this is not a mental disorder and we support people who are transgender.” Conti continued, “It’s a really meaningful step because it promotes inclusivity, it promotes acceptance.”

A *USA Today* article reports, “While many believe gender incongruence shouldn’t be classified in the ICD at all, others argue that it’s easier for transgender people to seek hormonal or surgical treatment if gender incongruence is included.” (*USA Today*, 6-20-18)

The same organization that identifies “gaming disorder” no longer considers transgenderism as a disorder, but instead a predisposition to be treated with hormone therapy and surgery that corresponds with the feelings of the individual.



Reliable College (Continued from page 1)

the nation, some in each branch of the armed forces.

Nationally, more than 825 of Regent University’s alumni have been honored as Teachers of the Year. And these graduates are likely not indoctrinating students with left-wing social ideology. Regent is one of only 25 U.S. universi-

ties to receive an A rating for its liberal arts curriculum by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA).

The university website says, “Regent will equip you to put your knowledge and skills into practice with integrity, compassion, and purpose. It’s an approach that can change the world.”

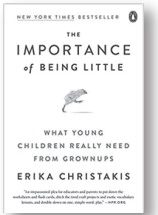
MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Book of the Month



The Importance of Being Little: What Young Children Really Need From Grownups, Erika Christakis, Penguin Books, 2017, \$17



Erika Christakis is qualified to address childhood development. She graduated from Harvard College with honors in Anthropology and was awarded masters degrees in public health, communications, and early childhood development. She is certified to teach in Massachusetts and Vermont and is a licensed preschool director. She has also lectured in Early Childhood Education at Yale University.

In this book, Christakis explains what many educators and parents do not fully understand; that young children need adults to help them make sense of the world. The closer the relationship between a child and an adult, the easier it is to determine what parts of the world are confusing to the child, where guidance is needed, and when the child can figure it out on her own.

The author points out that direct instruction, a teacher spouting off information, isn’t a good full-time fit for preschoolers. She also says a complete lack of instruction is undesirable, and suggests that children need predictability and order in their surroundings.

The optimal classroom is designed as a safe environment that encourages preschoolers to stretch their natural curiosity. The best teachers for our youngest students don’t offer answers until questions arise.

Christakis says “measurement” and “accountability” can become stumbling blocks to actual learning and that testing of very young children is almost always a mistake.

She says, “I share the worry of many eminent early childhood educators that Common Core was rushed to market without adequate testing or scientific basis for some of its assumptions about how young children learn.” The author does not say there should be no standards, or that teachers should not be held accountable for every child in their classrooms making yearly progress. But Common Core standards imposed on kindergartners has changed preschool, pressuring students to be “ready,” when they should be allowed to remain more playful.

An example of these divergent educational principles would be youngsters understanding the concept of “four” as they run and jump among four tires laid out on a playground, compared to the classroom environment where they are forced to sit in a chair, hold a pencil, and repeatedly trace the numeral “4” on paper.

Young children should be left in the world in which they belong until they are ready to move on from it. To do differently is to crush the curiosity and love of learning with which children are naturally hardwired.

FOCUS: The Danger of Online (Or Any) Pre-Kindergarten Assessment

By Nancy Bailey

Originally published at Nancy Bailey's Education Website, nancyebailey.com, May 16, 2018. Reprinted with permission.

When did we become a nation that harshly judges how young children learn? How does such inappropriate evaluation of children make our country great? The focus should be on the children and their needs.

Also, does online preschool assessment violate a young child's right to privacy? I think parents and teachers should be concerned.

I recently revisited one of my favorite books, *Your Baby & Child: From Birth to Age Five*, by British psychologist Penelope Leach. Leach's writings guided me through those early years, after I had my own child. The pictures and explanations in the book are straightforward and easy to understand. (I will share Penelope Leach's recommendations later.)

I wanted to double check what preschoolers should be expected to learn before starting school, because according to a report from Florida, "Nearly half of Florida's VPK (Voluntary Prekindergarten) students are not ready for kindergarten." VPK is another description for preschool.

One VPK director, in referring to the student test scores, said, "I was severely disappointed and unhappily shocked." Really? We are talking about 4-year-olds here.

Facts about Florida's VPK program

In 2016-2017, 33% of 4-year-olds and 5% of 3-year-olds were nationally enrolled in state-funded preschool. Schools participating in Florida's VPK program could be put on probation to obtain state funding if little ones don't

raise their test scores.

Florida's VPK enrollment is second in the country, only behind Washington, D.C., but, unlike D.C., it is close to the bottom in funding.

According to the annual State of Preschool Report, the State of Florida pays \$2,282 per child, compared to the District of Columbia's \$16,996 per child (page 29). According to the *Ocala Star Banner*, VPK providers there receive just \$4.51 per hour for three hours of daily care for children during the school year and \$6.93 per hour during the summer.

These preschools are apparently struggling to survive, in a state where politicians seem to care little for public schooling and children. In such a punitive atmosphere, every test score matters. Yet most child development specialists will question such testing.

Legislators and education reformers see this test as critical. They promised last year, after putting children through bad assessment, that this new test, called the STAR Early Literacy Assessment, would be the one. But the scores are not good, and it looks like another boondoggle.

Some teachers wonder if it's the test.

- It was administered online.
- The test is new.
- Many children speak Spanish.
- Isn't any testing questionable for this age? Where does this information go? Will the collected data brand a young child for the rest of his or her schooling?

A videotaped example of a VPK

child being tested in the past demonstrates that the tester is kind and patient, but that the little girl fidgets during the test. There is distracting noise in the background. The vocabulary she is being asked to repeat, as well as the assessment, seems restricted. The child's ability to speak is micromanaged. She must be polite and answer the questions she is asked. Think how much more confusing this must be online.

Especially troubling is that if you're the parent of a 2-year-old, you might get worried by these headlines. It might seem important to begin drilling your child so they will learn their letters and numbers. After all, it seems like a matter of survival!

Children can't help but detect the nervousness surrounding all this testing. What we're told is that the benchmarks in kindergarten are now so difficult that 3- and 4-year-olds better be "kindy" ready. Kindergarten is no longer a "garden."

Child Development & Penelope Leach

In reviewing Penelope Leach's book, I was struck that learning to read is never mentioned for this age group. The word "reading" can't be found in the index. Leach notes that most children get some preliminary experience before starting school, and the importance of reading to children is noted, but there's no mention of testing either.

What she does talk about is children learning how to play well with each oth-

er. As most of us know, play is critical at this age.

Learning some self-control is important too, like being able to go to the bathroom on their own (usually a school requirement). Children need to be able to pretty much dress themselves. This is the time when parents are grateful for elastic-waist pants, slip-on shoes, and Velcro.

But what Leach highly emphasizes is making sure that this early introduction to school is pleasant. Children need to feel comfortable when introduced to school. She states, "He needs to feel that you [parent], his most basic and trustworthy person, know the school, know the teacher and approve of them."

So pressuring children with online assessment, or assessments in general, is risky business. It could worry a child, make him or her fear school instead of liking it. Certainly hearing that children are failing at this age serves no purpose.

Instead of online testing, or any assessment, it would be better if assurances could be given that credentialed early childhood educators with college degrees are teaching in all preschools. Providing scholarships for preschool workers to obtain a degree would be lovely.

Task forces should also be set up to visit preschools to ensure that children are enjoying learning, and that what they are learning is developmentally appropriate. These task forces should be comprised of child developmental specialists and parents who understand the needs of children.

Until this country gets serious about early childhood and what learning at this age should be about, America will be guilty of neglect, and years down the road such disingenuous treatment of children will come back to haunt us all.



The Doctor/Music Connection and the Terrible Disregard for Music in Public Schools

By Nancy Bailey

Originally published at Nancy Bailey's Education Website, nancyebailey.com, Aug. 14, 2014. Reprinted with permission.

How does music help prepare students for life? Ask all the prestigious doctors in Boston!

The Boston Globe has a fascinating piece by Christoph Westphal about the importance of music to becoming and being a doctor. Westphal, himself an amateur cellist and physician/scientist, recently went to hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) welcoming its new conductor, Andris Nelsons. At the concert, he recognized a lot of physicians and scientists in the audience. It occurred to him that Boston is known as a world-class city in medicine and music. Was there an association?

Looking further into this possible connection, Westphal realized that many on the board of directors for the BSO were doctors. Then he learned that Allen

Steere, a Harvard Medical School professor, had determined that 70% of doctors have had some musical training. In addition, in Longwood, a suburb of Boston, doctors even have their own symphony orchestra! The proceeds go to a variety of charities, and the musicians/physicians emphasize the "healing" power of music. Lisa Wong, who is a doctor herself, is president of the orchestra and also wrote a book about this phenomenon called *Scales to Scalpels: Doctors Who Practice the Healing Arts of Music and Medicine*.

Wong looked into the link between doctors and music. It seems that there are a lot of similarities. An example of being a surgeon is given. Like surgery, doctors must be precise, breaking things

down and then repetitively rebuilding and incorporating the emotional side of the process.

To be clear, the *Boston Globe* article had criticism involving wealth and the dislike for pretentiousness. But my focus



is on the meaning of music, not just for doctors, but for all children. If music is so important to doctors, how important is it to young people growing up and learning about the world around them? Musical training should not be just for those who have wealth; music should be for the poor as well.

And yet for decades now, public schools have been cutting music programs, especially in poor schools, or replacing those classes with dull test

preparation. How many students who missed out on real music classes, like band, never found their inspiration to become _____? How many students have failed, when a music class could have given them support or provided just the right ingredient to motivate them in school?

In obsessively attempting to manage and observe every part of the learning process, today's education reformers callously dismiss the kind of learning that isn't exactly measurable, but, which research shows definitely improves learning.

While some places provide public-private partnerships to give students an awareness of music, these programs rely on the charity of others. They provide programs that might not be around tomorrow. They also don't always place a credentialed teacher at the head of music classes.

Public schools need more than an (See *Doctor/Music Connection*, page 3)

Doctor/Music Connection *(Continued from page 3)*

occasional music appreciation class, or some free market fly-by-night substitute program. They need consistent, time-honored programs that will be there year-after-year to assist students in playing real music.

I liked the *Boston Globe* article because it demonstrates the importance of music to highly educated individuals who do a great thing in their world, fixing us up when we are broken and healing us when we are ill. The fact that music helped them get to where they are today is a sure sign of the importance of music for students.

And music doesn't have to lead you to a career in medicine. Music can lead students to a wide variety of other highly regarded careers. Who can forget the wonderful scene in the movie "Mr. Holland's Opus" where the governor shows up at the end. She had been Mr. Holland's former clarinet student, a shy girl who struggled to play her instrument over difficult odds. Of course, this is a movie. But students do develop self-confidence in programs like this.

Music can also be a career in and of itself. Music can help anyone, no matter

their vocation, to be a better person and to focus on life more clearly. It is well-known that music helps many students in math.

I also don't think it is any longer necessary to provide study after study that emphasizes the importance of music to learning. We don't need more research to tell us what we already know. Students in our care deserve and require music education. Music helps children learn in other subjects and it provides some variety in schooling. As a former flute player in my high school band, I can personally tell you that music matters.

We need to return music programs to public schools, or if you are lucky and still have those programs, you need to see to it that your school district does not drop them.

Every student in America, through their public schools, should have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, sing, dance, and/or do art or act. It should not be through a nonprofit group or organization someone sets up on a whim. It should be a consistent offering, a part of a free public school system—like it used to be, but better!

Unreliable College *(Continued from page 1)*

a student observed in the *Yale Daily News*, the concept of campus civility now requires adherence to specific ideology — not only commitment to respectful dialogue. (10-28-16)

Erika Christakis resigned as a lecturer at Yale. She wrote *The Importance of Being Little*. Her husband, who in 2009 was named to *Time* magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world and in 2010 named by *Foreign Policy* magazine to its list of top global thinkers in the world, remains at Yale. He is the Sterling Professor of Social and Natural Science and he directs the Human Nature Lab and is co-director of the Yale Institute for Network Science.

The President and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), Greg Lukianoff, was on campus speaking at a conference about free speech in higher education when some of the events unfolded at Yale in 2015. He witnessed the student demanding that Dr. Christakis make her as comfortable as if she'd stayed at home.

FIRE has as its mission "to defend and sustain the individual rights of students and faculty members at America's colleges and universities." FIRE says, "These rights include freedom of speech, freedom of association, due process, legal equality, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience—the essential qualities of liberty." Here's what FIRE has to say about the Yale incident:

Yale students have every right to express their anger and frustration with Yale faculty. But FIRE is concerned by yet another unfortunate example of students who demand upsetting opinions be entirely eradicated from the university in the name of fostering 'safe spaces' where students are protected from hurt feelings. Practicing free speech does not merely

entail the right to protest opinions you object to — it also means acknowledging people's right to hold those opinions in the first place.

(theFIRE.org, 11-6-15)

After Christakis told her story in the *Washington Post*, FIRE called attention to an article Yale President Peter Salovey wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*. Salovey's commentary is titled "Yale Believes In Free Speech—and So Do I." He claims that free speech is alive and well at Yale. (10-17-16)

But FIRE says, "Christakis' experience illustrates with painful clarity that a campus may indeed claim a commitment to open discourse, while quietly cultivating an atmosphere where students and faculty are expected to adhere to a single, authorized ideology — or else." (theFIRE.org, 10-28-16)

In an interview with *Time* magazine about the protests that ensued after the email, Yale University Dean Jonathan Holloway said, "It is all of our hopes that pushback is civil and courteous as often as it can be." He continued:

There are times when it should be but it isn't, and there are times when it can't be. I don't think this instance was in the latter group. I think it could have been civil and it wasn't — and that is disappointing. But I don't see it as an assault on free expression. (12-9-15)

That seems like a university dean nearly excusing unacceptable behavior by out-of-control students.

Yale administrators supported Christakis on the surface yet did nothing to stop students from verbally attacking her and her husband. Some may question the need for an Intercultural Affairs Committee, the group that sent the email warning students to wear appropriate Halloween costumes and to be careful that their cos-

Beware of Tech Titans Bearing Gifts

By Nancy Bailey

Originally published at Nancy Bailey's Education Website, nancyebailey.com, May 6, 2018. Reprinted with permission.

Chicago is getting \$14 million through the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) that will be used for personalized learning, placing children online for their schooling. They are advertising their gift as "Supporting Chicago's Teachers in Personalized Learning."

Mark Zuckerberg is the creator of Facebook. The Chan Zuckerberg website motto is "We believe in a future for everyone." Here's my question. Do they believe in a future for professional teachers?

Is the CZI goal to replace teachers? Ask them that question. Get them to tell us yes or no. It's a great question to start off Teacher Appreciation Week.

Many teachers will jump on the tech bandwagon. No one can deny that technology is a useful tool. But there's no research to indicate that total tech without teachers will succeed in getting children ready for their college and career futures.

The CZI money in Chicago will also go to LEAP Innovations—a nonprofit that pushes tech with "Appy Hours" (tech instruction at the local bars?).

One of the CZI administrators is James H. Shelton. He used to work for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and also had the powerful position of Assistant Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Education under President Obama. Shelton oversaw the Office of Innovation and Improvement where he managed competitive programs involving teacher/leader quality, Promise Neighborhoods, school choice,

and, of course, technology.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation may appear to support teachers and public schools, but their past actions show otherwise. They have supported charter schools and groups like Stand for Children, Teach for America, and many other anti-public school, anti-teacher nonprofits. Their Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) was an insult to teachers

facebook

everywhere. In Memphis, where Gates had a prominent presence, teachers wore ear buds

with coaches (called experts) in the back of the room directing them how to teach.

The CZI gift likely means huge changes for schools across the country. We've known for a long time that Chicago school experimentation is usually the country's pilot project. And the CZI isn't just putting money into personalized learning in Chicago. It's tied to all-tech Summit Charter Schools (unfairly called public schools) and the College Board. They are also working in Massachusetts.

And LEAP calls for more tech company involvement.

Nancy E. Bailey, Ph.D. is a former special education teacher and taught students with a wide range of beautiful differences. She can be found advocating for democratic public schools on her blog, Nancy Bailey's Education Website, at www.nancyebailey.com. She is the author of *Misguided Education Reform: Debating the Impact on Students and Losing America's Schools: The Fight to Reclaim Public Education*.



tumes didn't upset anyone. Such entities operate in the same vein as Black student unions, Latino organizations, LGBTQ groups, and other "safe spaces," which are actually physical or less well-defined zones where thought police reign. What supposedly are means of protecting certain students are actually dividing people into categories, segregating them and destroying open communication and true equality. They keep students from growing up and getting used to ideas and opinions that differ from their own, such as they'll encounter in the real world.

University administrators should stop behaving in ways that lack common sense. They should also not behave so hypocritically, claiming one set of standards while adhering to an entirely opposite set. And students should never be allowed to "take over the asylum."

Erika Christakis said in the *Washington Post*:

I didn't leave a rewarding job and campus home on a whim. But I lost confidence that I could continue to teach about vulnerable children in an environment where full discussion of certain topics — such as absent fathers — has become almost taboo. It's never easy to foster dialogue about race, class, gender, and culture, but it will only become more difficult for faculty in disciplines concerned with the human condition if universities won't declare that ideas and feelings aren't interchangeable.

She concluded, "My fear is that students will eventually give up trying to engage with each other, a development that will echo in our wider culture for decades."

IN THEIR OWN (GOOD) WORDS

"I believe that the pursuit of truth and right ideas through honest debate and rigorous argument is a noble undertaking. I'm grateful to have played a small role in the conversations that have helped guide this extraordinary nation's destiny."

— Charles Krauthammer, Psychiatrist, Pulitzer Prize winner, conservative political author and commentator
March 13, 1950 — June 21, 2018

From his final letter published in the *Washington Post* on June 8, 2018, in which he announced that he had only weeks to live.