

## School-Based 'Sex' Clinics Soundly Defeated in Washington

*Pro-family forces win against all odds; mothers develop blueprint for winning strategy*

Pro-family leaders in Washington state recently did what they were told was "impossible" just three months ago. With the support of citizens statewide, pro-family leaders defeated legislation which would have established ten school-based health clinics throughout the state with a first year budget of \$1 million. The clinics would have been permitted to prescribe and dispense contraceptives to teenagers.

"We had been told in November, after the elections, that this bill would be impossible to stop," said pro-family leader Cindy Honcoop of Lynden. "Grassroots action is what made the difference."

The Lynden mother said that, as soon as citizens were alerted to the fact that the proposed health clinics could dispense contraceptives, the informed citizens were eager to voice their objection to the legislation.

"The Legislature was not prepared for the flood of controversy this bill would generate," said Mrs. Honcoop. "It actually made history as being the most called about issue in the hotline's history."

"Legislators received literally hundreds of letters and phone calls regarding this bill, with the overwhelming majority being opposed to the clinics. They could not ignore the people."

### Grassroots strategy: inform the community

Opponents of school-based "sex" clinics became aware of the sex clinic legislation following last November's election when they obtained a copy of a memo from the bill's sponsor, Representative Jennifer Belcher (D-Olympia), addressed to other House members.

The November 17 memo indicated that proponents had laid considerable groundwork for support of the measure. The memo included a list of organizations which had already agreed to either support or not actively oppose the legislation. Those organizations included the Washington Nurses Association, the Washington Education Association, Washington Association of School Boards, Washington Association of School Principals, School Nurses of Washington, United Way of Washington, Public Health Departments, and the city of Seattle.

Mrs. Honcoop said that, in the face of overwhelming odds, members of Whatcom County Eagle Forum decided "our biggest job was to inform the community on this issue. Our sole strategy was to stir up interest and opinions on the issue."

"We found that many people had never heard of, or read anything about school-based clinics," said Mrs. Honcoop. "If they had heard about them, they were certainly unaware that this was an issue in our state."

The Lynden mother explained how pro-family leaders planned and executed their successful grassroots strategy to defeat the sex clinics.

"Before our legislative session even began, we had our people contacting our legislators about our concern and opposition to school-based clinics," said Mrs. Honcoop. "We encouraged letters to our local paper as a way to inform the community. Then, we held a community workshop in January on the clinics. By this time we knew the actual bill and number."

Under H.B. 376, any interested community could apply for one of ten \$100,000 grants to be used for the establishment and operation of a school-based clinic. The clinic would be subject

to supervision by a local advisory committee, and that local committee could authorize the clinic to dispense contraceptives. A provision which would have allowed the clinics to provide abortion referrals was removed from the original bill.

"We fought the bill with facts and never let people forget them," said Mrs. Honcoop. "We found many people opposed to the clinics once they knew the facts. We let citizens know that the clinics would dispense contraceptives and that family planning promoters, not parents, were promoting the bill. We also let people know that the bill was asking for \$1 million for the first ten clinics, and that taxpayers would be held financially liable."

### Overflow crowd attends hearing

When sex clinic opponents learned that the bill would go to either the Health Care or Education Committee, they targeted both committee chairmen with letters and phone calls, asking them not to accept the bill in that committee. As a result, both chairmen initially refused to accept the legislation.

"It seemed that, in the few weeks that we had been working on this bill, it had become known in Olympia that this bill was a hot potato, and no one wanted to touch it," said Mrs. Honcoop. "What was once thought to be a sure thing was now hanging in the balance."

When the Health Care Committee finally accepted the legislation, Whatcom County leaders began lobbying committee chairman Dennis Braddock (D-Bellingham), who is also their district representative.

"We once again stirred up the grassroots to let him know how 'his' people felt about the bill," explained Mrs. Honcoop.

"He had not been opposed to the clinics, and he became quite nervous with all the local opposition."

"He was forced by the grassroots to reconsider, and, in the end, he claimed to oppose the clinics while expressing great concern about the problem of teen pregnancy."

Meanwhile, citizens statewide continued to write and call all the committee members expressing their opposition to school-based clinics.

According to Whatcom County pro-family leaders, the sex clinic opponents escalated their efforts to inform area citizens about the proposed sex clinic legislation with the following activities:

- Opponents organized a "postcard blitz" through local churches. Pro-family leaders purchased 1,400 mailing postcards and printed the committee chairman's name and address on it. They set up tables in the back of local churches where people could write their own individual message to their local representative, Committee Chairman Braddock. Then, the leaders collected and mailed the postcards, while accepting postage donations.

"We literally buried Representative Braddock in postcards and word spread quickly around Olympia," said Mrs. Honcoop.

- Opponents informed the Whatcom County Republican Party of the bill. The party subsequently passed a resolution in opposition to the clinics and mailed the resolution to legislators.

- Opponents made themselves available to speak to local groups and organizations.



State Rep. Jennifer Belcher

- Opponents were invited to board meetings of local pro-life organizations which were asked to join the opposition movement. Mrs. Honcoop

said this was very effective since each group had its own established membership and active phone tree.

- Opponents printed and distributed a fact sheet on school-based clinics, as well as updated "Legislative Alerts."

- Opponents organized a media campaign, focusing on radio advertisements.

"During this time, we realized our best opportunity to reach our community would be through the radio, which would give us access to thousands of people," said Mrs. Honcoop.

"We then produced three 1-minute radio spots exposing the truth about school-based clinics. We used all the money we had left to get these spots on the air as often as we could. Human Life matched our financial commitment, which allowed us to double our air time."

On February 19, Planned Parenthood brought two speakers to Whatcom County to promote school-based clinics, including Ann Cathey, a nurse who supervises four high school

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## Do 'Death and Dying' Exercises Increase Teen Suicides? Suspicion, Evidence Mount

Do death and dying classes increase the number of teen suicides? Opponents of death and dying exercises point to two recent teen suicides in Kansas City, Missouri, as evidence that death and dying exercises may be a cause of teen suicides.

In late February, one 18-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy committed suicide in Kansas City within one week of each other. Both students attended O'Hara High School, and each died from carbon monoxide poisoning while sitting in a car parked in their family garage.

In addition, both high school seniors were taking the same "death and dying" class.

According to a Scripps Howard wire report (4-6-87), the man who found the male student's body on February 24 told the police that the young man had been depressed by the class and by the female student's suicide six days earlier.

Kansas City police and O'Hara High School officials said they do not know if the suicides were related to the death and dying class.

### Depressing exercises spark concern nationwide

One Chicago mother, whose high school son committed suicide in 1985, supported the claim that the depressing nature of death and dying exercises may be a causal factor in teen suicide.

The mother, who asked not to be identified, said that, without parental knowledge or consent, her son also had a unit on death and dying as part of a Health class in the spring of 1984. During that unit, she said that "a representative from a local funeral home visited the class to discuss the intricacies of his business."

Almost three months later, her son's close friend was killed in an accident, and his funeral was held at the same funeral home.

"I knew my son and his friends were traumatized from the death of their friend, but at that time I had no idea that they had just been taught, in the name of Health, the morbid details of embalming the body," the mother said.

Although her son committed suicide in 1985, the Chicago mother did not learn of the death and dying class until November 1986.

"It was also at that time that we learned that the same funeral home had taken the ashes of a 35 year-old, 120 lb., white caucasian female, called Jane Doe, to the school for display during the 1985-86 school year," she said.

"I am not looking for someone to blame. My son is dead and blame won't change the fact. At the same time, I did not give the public school system my permission to teach my son about death, dying, and suicide."

The Chicago mother also expressed concern that Kansas City officials are trying to "cover-up" the incident.

She explained that, immediately following the Scripps Howard wire report, her husband happened to be in the Kansas City area. He subsequently spent two days at a library near Kansas City "going through every edition of the two Kansas City Newspapers from February 16 through March 11."

"He did not find a single word of either suicide reported in any way," she said. "I feel the Kansas City high school did a massive cover-up of their death and dying class."

In a related event, due to parental protests, an obituary-writing exercise was eliminated from the junior high curriculum in Lincoln, Nebraska in mid-March. Lincoln parents complained to school officials that the optional writing assignment was too depressing.

### Inside...



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## EDUCATION BRIEFS

A textbook exercise which asks students to describe elderly people by using negative terms provoked publicity in Phoenix earlier this year. The *Arizona Republic* (1-1-87) reported that the textbook *Composition and Applied Grammar, The Writing Process* published by Allyn and Bacon (1982) includes an exercise which directs students to describe "old people" and to "use as many negative words and phrases as you can." Students are then told to "share your negative paragraphs with members of your group." The textbook is used in the Washington School District in Phoenix.

Planned Parenthood of San Diego, CA, has used *The Wizard of Oz* to introduce students to contraceptives as part of a Teen Theater project. According to program literature, the New Image Teen Theater, a project of San Diego Planned Parenthood, "provides accurate information through a stage performance, encourages discussion between family members, and promotes responsible decision making." The following is an excerpt from the *Wizard of Oz* stage performance. *Wizard*: What did you want from the Wizard? *Scarecrow*: I'm Disco Joe, the Rappin Scarecrow. I need some rubbers to prevent a pregnant lover. *Wizard*: Oh is that all? You can get rubbers at any drugstore or clinic. When you use them with foam they are 90-97% effective. One size fits all, very inexpensive. Here, I have some left over from our last production of "Hair." *Scarecrow*: Now, I'm ready for sex. Get outta my way. If you aren't next. *Wizard*: Remember, don't put it in your pocket or you'll be a fool — cause a melted condom just ain't too cool. And don't ever use one more than once, cuz when it breaks you'll feel like a dunce." Planned Parenthood currently sells scripts of "The Wiz" to interested schools.

Only a few shanties remain standing on college campuses to protest South African investments, while many have been dismantled during the past year. According to *Insight* magazine (3-9-87), the shantytown at Harvard University effectively died last spring when anti-apartheid protesters installed a videocassette recorder in one of the shanties so people could watch anarchist films. Harvard frisbee players also protested that apartheid demonstrators were allowed to camp out in Harvard Yard, from which the frisbee players had been prohibited. The Harvard shanties have since been taken down, while Yale's remaining shanty is scheduled for removal.

"Standing Proud" is the theme of a Bicentennial essay contest for students sponsored by St. Louis Christian radio station KSIV. The essay contest especially encourages local Christian schools to participate in this project honoring the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. Students in grades six through twelve are encouraged to submit an essay about the U.S. Constitution. The two grand prize winners will receive a \$200 U.S. Savings Bond and a commemorative plaque. Each of seven runners-up will receive a \$50 Savings Bond. Judges will include station management and sponsors in addition to local and state government officials.

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## Midwest School Achieves 'Balance' on Controversial Issues

Schools can achieve a balance when it comes to presenting and debating current controversial issues, according to a St. Louis high school teacher who participated in one such "balanced" program.

Larry Baker, a history teacher at Clayton High School in St. Louis, Missouri, explained how his school has successfully dealt with controversial issues when he addressed a workshop for teachers at the regional conference of the International Reading Association in St. Louis on February 26.

Mr. Baker said that Clayton High School originally established a successful format for dealing with a controversial "issue of the year" during the 1985-86 school year. Students chose President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) as the issue for that school year.

As the first part of the formal program, 600 students initially attended an all-school assembly at which two films were shown, one for SDI and one in favor of a nuclear freeze. Mr. Baker said that neither film effectively changed any students' opinions.

Following the films, a military/defense specialist from nearby Washington University defined the vocabulary terms of the SDI debate and gave students an overview of the history of strategic weapons. He listed and explained the



meaning of words such as SDI, ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile), and MIRV (multiple independently-targeted reentry vehicles), and he explained to students what specific weapons can and cannot do.

Mr. Baker said that the specialist's role was much like that of a referee in laying out the rules of the game. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions.

At a second school assembly, a panel of students participated in a debate in front of their teachers and peers. Mr. Baker explained that students volunteered to be a part of the panel, but the students were not allowed to choose

their side. Instead, teachers assigned students to take the pro or con position, and students had one month to research and prepare their defense.

Mr. Baker said that, by assigning students to both sides, the students were more likely to produce a well-balanced debate and still do their best, since the students knew that their teachers and peers would be watching and evaluating their performance at the school assembly.

At two subsequent assemblies, students heard from a retired general living in the St. Louis area who spoke in favor of SDI and a representative from Physicians Against Nuclear War who spoke against SDI. Students had the opportunity to ask questions of the speakers.

Mr. Baker said that an important element of the "issue of the year" program was a "parents' night" when parents heard both sides of the issues so they could be actively involved and discuss the issue with their children.

Teachers throughout the school also received packets of educational materials on SDI so they could incorporate SDI into their own curriculum where appropriate, as in mathematics.

Mr. Baker said that, although the exercise "didn't solve any problems," the program did help students to "become aware of the issue."

"And history is argument and debate," he concluded.

## Ohio Parents and School Officials Produce Positive Agreement

Parental action has paid off in Sugarcreek, Ohio, where local school officials have begun to listen and respond affirmatively to parental concerns and requests.

Mrs. Russell Neiswander, mother of two middle school students, said that the following changes have occurred in the current school year as a result of parents speaking up and making their concerns known to area citizens and school officials:

- Permission slips are now required before sixth grade students view the film, "Epidemic, Kids, Drugs, and Alcohol," which is recommended by the National Education Association. Mrs. Neiswander said that, following implementation of the new permission slip policy, her sixth grade daughter reported that the film would not be shown because too few parents approved of the film.

- The Ungame will no longer be used as part of the Garaway School District Health curriculum. The Ungame directs students to respond to a survey containing over 40 questions about the students' personal values. Last fall, both sixth and seventh graders in Sugarcreek participated in the Ungame without parental knowledge or consent.

Ungame questions included: "what are three things that you believe about God? what do you dislike most about yourself? what is your definition of sin? what epitaph do you want on your tombstone? what do you daydream about? what does the church mean to you?"

The Ungame also told students to "share a time when you were embarrassed, say something about war, talk about one of your bad habits."

After parents learned that their children participated in the Ungame, they voiced their concern to the teachers and school administrators. Angry parents repeated the reports from their children who said that the classroom teacher told them they could not take the survey out of the classroom.

School officials initially told the parents that the Ungame was written and approved by Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family, but a letter to Mrs. Neiswander from Focus on the Family denied that assertion.

Instead, the March 2, 1987 letter stated that, "Dr. Dobson had nothing to do with the

creation of the Ungame or the composition of its questions. ... His recommendation that appears on the box of the Ungame extends solely to its use as a conversation facilitator by families and churches."

In a February 10 letter to Mr. and Mrs. Neiswander, local Superintendent Donald Brown assured the parents that, "increased efforts are being made by the school administration to make parents aware of curriculum content and courses of study as approved by the County Board of Education; and that your written suggestions to the Garaway staff regarding objectionable classroom material will be honored with the assignment of alternative assignments."

Mrs. Neiswander credited much of the parents' success to determination and persistence. The Ohio mother added that she kept a careful chronological journal of events, assignments, and correspondence as a reference for

## Teachers' Unions Raise Costs, Not Achievement

A new study on the cost and effects of teachers' unions shows that, while teachers' unions raise the cost of public education by as much as 15 percent, the unions do not significantly improve student achievement.

The study, which was conducted by two University of Oregon economists and published in *Economic Inquiry* in October 1986, set out to answer the question: Do teacher unions affect the cost of public education?

In order to answer that question, economists Randall W. Ebert and Joe A. Stone looked primarily at two national surveys of school districts to estimate district expenditures. Those two databases were the *Sustaining Effects Study*, which was collected during the mid-1970s under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, and *High School and Beyond*, a project conducted for the National Center of Education Statistics by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

The researchers concluded that "our analysis supports those critics of teacher collective bargaining who claim that teachers' unions benefit teachers at the expense of the taxpayers."

They found that teacher unions raise the cost of public education in school districts by 7 to 15

percent. That figure is true for large and small school districts.

The economists' analysis determined that the dominant reason for the higher costs in unionized districts is "union-induced teacher compensation costs."

The study also shows that unionized teachers are paid about 17 percent more than non-union teachers.

However, the study did not find that increased costs corresponded to an increase in student achievement.

Instead, "The union cost differential appears unrelated to average student achievement, since overall levels of achievement (community and student background factors the same) are virtually the same in unionized and nonunionized districts. Consequently, the cost differential primarily represents a transfer of benefits from taxpayers to teachers, with no apparent change in average student achievement."

"On the other hand," the economists noted, "our estimates, combined with other studies, do not support the criticism that unions have reduced the average level of student achievement."

The dropout rates were found to be about the same in unionized and non-unionized districts.



## Legislation Update...

### AIDS Education in Oklahoma

**OKLAHOMA:** A bill to mandate AIDS education in Oklahoma public schools has stirred up a controversy which continues to grow, with both sides getting tangled in a web of hotly debated amendments.

Oklahoma H.B. 1476 would mandate "AIDS prevention education" as part of the "basic skills" curriculum in state schools for grades five through 12. The legislation directs the state Department of Education to "develop curriculum and materials for such education."

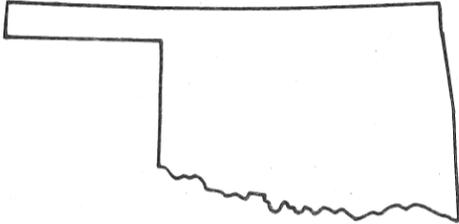
The bill passed the House after a fierce floor debate on March 17 by a vote of 55-42. No amendments were allowed. The Senate passed an amended bill in early April, but the House sponsor immediately ignited a battle to remove the amendments.

Representative Mike Morris (R-Ripley) was reprimanded for passing out materials from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation to fellow legislators as an example of the explicit and graphic nature of "safe sex" educational materials. The House leadership objected to the materials as being too offensive.

Opponents of mandated AIDS education, including the Tulsa Pro-Family Coalition, hope that a battle over amendments will help to mitigate the effects of the bill if passed. Pro-family leader Darlene Barrett suggested that pro-family advocates nationwide propose the following amendments to any AIDS education proposals.

\* *Available material.* The educational material should be made available for review before an intelligent evaluation of the intent and a vote can be attempted.

\* *Parental mandate.* AIDS education should not be mandated. Furthermore, in accordance with U.S. Supreme Court decisions, objectionable material should be pulled from class, not the child. To accomplish this end, the material must be presented to every parent for their voluntary acceptance and written approval before the subject can be given in the school. No child should be permitted to attend AIDS classes without the specific written approval by parents



for the literature and visuals to be used.

\* *No safe sex.* As stated, the bill must specifically require teaching that there is no such thing as "safe sex" outside of abstinence or a lifelong, mutually faithful monogamous relationship. Dr. C. Everett Koop, U.S. Surgeon General, and William J. Bennett, U.S. Secretary of Education, in a joint statement released January 30, 1987 stated: "But an AIDS education that accepts children's sexual activity as inevitable and focuses only on 'safe sex' will be at best ineffectual, at worst itself a cause of serious harm."

\* Nothing in this act shall be construed to mandate, encourage, allow, or provide funding for an AIDS education program which in whole or in part, encourages or presents the view that homosexuality is a normal, natural, or acceptable lifestyle practice or activity.

\* *Superfluous information.* The teaching and explanation of the unusual activities participated in by homosexuals must be prohibited. In a March, 1987 interview, Dr. Koop stated, "When you teach children sexual technique without responsibility and morality, they will do what the car driver does and go out and drive."

\* *Futility of condoms.* The teaching of use of condoms has been widely argued. It is abused to promote the virtues of an appliance that even the homosexual community rejects as useless. *The Gay Advocate* condemns the condom as a safeguard.

\* *AIDS is a communicable disease* and must be taught as such. The danger of the AIDS epidemic must be addressed as a public health problem. Protection of the public requires the mandatory testing of health care workers and premarital testing. The existing state laws concerning sodomy and communicable diseases must be enforced.

### Sex Ed Battle in Illinois

**ILLINOIS:** Pro-family forces rallied in the Capitol Rotunda in Springfield on April 1 to publicly announce their support of proposed legislation which would require Illinois public schools to teach abstinence as part of any sex education program, as well as prohibit the use of state funds for the establishment of school-based "sex" clinics.

Illinois pro-family supporters also expressed their opposition to Governor James Thompson's recent endorsement of school-based "sex" clinics. On March 12, Governor Thompson, who has been named as a possible Republican presidential or vice-presidential candidate in 1988, told the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C. that he is in favor of school-based clinics. Last November he assured pro-family supporters that he would oppose the sex clinics.

The Illinois Governor told the Washington group he plans to raise the annual budget of the Illinois "Parents Too Soon" program from \$2 million to \$8 million if his proposed tax hike passes. "Parents Too Soon" promotes explicit sex education and school-based clinics to disperse contraceptives.

Among the specific bills endorsed by pro-family leaders at the Springfield press conference were Illinois House Bill 988 which would amend the School Code so that "no [school] boards shall use State funds for the establishment or operation of any school-based health clinic."



Governor James Thompson

H.B. 925 takes the prohibition on sex clinics one step further. As stated in the executive summary, H.B. 925 "prohibits the use of school grounds, school buildings or other school facilities for the purpose of providing any contraceptive drugs, products, or devices to students or to other persons under 18 years of age."

Pro-family leaders also endorsed legislation to mandate abstinence education in Illinois public schools. Illinois House Bill 1225 would amend the Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act to require "sexual abstinence until marriage" as part of the basic curriculum.

Another bill, H.B. 1226, would prohibit the explicit teaching of homosexual activities as part of any AIDS education program.

At the same press conference, pro-family citizens expressed support for proposed state legislation to require a couple to take a blood test for AIDS and syphilis before receiving a marriage license.

## FOCUS: White House Speaks Out on AIDS

Remarks by President Ronald Reagan to the College of Physicians of Philadelphia April 1, 1987



President Ronald Reagan

... Almost every disease we know can be rapidly diagnosed and treated. The most obvious and disturbing exception is AIDS. And yet here, too, medicine is vaulting ahead. Six years ago the world had never heard of AIDS. Since then the AIDS virus has been isolated and identified. A test has been developed that is helping to ensure that transfusions are free of contamination. One drug, AZT, has been developed that may help treat AIDS

### "don't medicine and morality teach the same lesson?"

patients, and it received FDA approval just two weeks ago. Other medicines are on the way. And American researchers will soon begin testing vaccines.

This is unprecedented progress against a major virus. It took 40 years of study to learn as much about polio. It took 19 years to develop a vaccine against hepatitis B. But then our battle against AIDS has been like an emergency room operation — we've thrown everything we have into it.

We've declared AIDS public health enemy number one. And this fiscal year we plan to spend \$416 million on AIDS research and education and \$766 million overall. Next year, we want to spend 20 percent more on research and education and a total of \$1 billion. That compares to \$8 million just five years ago. Spending on AIDS has been one of the fastest-growing areas of the budget.

And that's not all. Recently, French Prime Minister Chirac and I announced an agreement that opens the way for cooperation between researchers in France and the United States. We are also unlocking the chains of regulation and making it easier to move from the pharmaceutical laboratory to the market with AIDS drugs.

AZT received FDA approval in just four months, and that is one-fifth the average time for reviewing drugs. No, the limit on AIDS research today is not money or will, but the physical limits of research facilities and the number of people trained in the necessary techniques.

**But all the vaccines and medications in the world won't change one basic truth—that prevention is better than cure, and that's particularly true of AIDS, for which right now there is no cure. This is where education comes in. The Public Health Service has issued an "information and education plan" for the control of AIDS. The federal role must be to give educators accurate information about the disease. Now how that information is used must be up to schools and parents, not government. But let's be honest with ourselves. AIDS information cannot be what some call "value neutral." After all, when it comes to preventing AIDS, don't medicine and morality teach the same lessons?**

Some time ago I heard the story of a man who received what turned out to be a transfusion of blood contaminated with the AIDS virus. He was infected, and in turn his wife was infected. And within two years, they both had died. Well, I'm determined that we'll find a cure for AIDS. When the Carthaginian general Hannibal was preparing to cross the Alps and was told there was no way across, he said, "We'll find a way, or make one." And that's the kind of determination we all have about curing AIDS. We'll find a way, or make one. ..."

## Teen Pregnancy Linked to Poor Basic Skills

Teenagers with poor academic skills are consistently more likely to become parents at an early age compared to students with average or above average basic skills, according to data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans (NLS).

In addition, the NLS survey revealed that teens with similar family incomes and basic skills levels had nearly identical rates of teenage childbearing, regardless of whether they were white, black, or Hispanic.

The survey results were published by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in Washington, D.C. in September 1986. Although the CDF is under fire from pro-family forces for its promotion of school-based "sex" clinics, pro-family leaders have used the NLS data from the CDF report in testimony to local and state officials in order to show conclusively that a better basic skills education, not school sex clinics, is the first step toward reducing teen pregnancy.

The NLS study is based on a survey of a nationally representative sample of youths ages 14 to 21. The NLS evaluated their basic academic skills by administering the Armed Forces Qualifying Test to the sample youths.

Dr. Andrew Sum at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University provided an analysis of the statistics for the

Children's Defense Fund. Dr. Sum summarized the findings as follows:

- Eighteen and 19-year-old women with poor basic skills are 2.5 times as likely to be mothers as those with average basic skills.

- Eighteen and 19-year-old men with poor basic skills are three times as likely to be fathers as are those with average basic skills.

- Teens with poor basic skills are five times as likely to become mothers before age 16 as are those with average basic skills.

- Young women with poor or fair basic skills are four times as likely as those with average basic skills to have more than one child while in their teens.

- Young women with poor basic skills, whether black, white, or Hispanic, are more than three times as likely to be parents as those with average basic skills.

- Almost all racial differences in the incidence of teen parenthood disappear when income and skills deficits are taken into account.

Taking these factors into account, CDF recommends that "these data very strongly suggest that school-based pregnancy efforts must include basic educational improvement and dropout prevention efforts." (*Copies of the September CDF report are available at \$4.50 from the Children's Defense Fund, Publications, 122 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001*)

## New Study: Mastery Learning Gets Low Marks For Poor Results

The controversial teaching method called "Mastery Learning" has not produced better student achievement and deserves reconsideration by schools which currently use it, according to a new study released earlier this year by Johns Hopkins University.

The most recent finding comes at the same time that parental complaints about Mastery Learning are on the rise. Parents in states including Arizona, Tennessee, and Maine have cited negative physical and emotional effects on children as the result of Mastery Learning, such as increased anxiety and depression.

Mastery Learning is the instructional process developed by Benjamin Bloom which requires students, and sometimes the class as a whole, to completely master a certain concept before proceeding to the next learning task.

According to Dr. Bloom, one of the goals of



in the range of 80-90 percent correct, is established for this test. Any students who do not achieve the mastery criterion on the formative test receive corrective instruction, which may take the form of tutoring by the teacher or by students who did receive the criterion level ... Following the corrective instruction, students take a parallel or 'summative' test. ... All students who achieve the mastery criterion at any point are generally given an 'A' on the unit, regardless of how many tries it took for them to reach the criterion score."

Professor Slavin examined and analyzed the most current research data available concerning the results of Group-Based Mastery Learning in schools across the country. He focused especially on 16 previous Mastery Learning experiments and on the corresponding students test scores. Those studies included student achievement scores from schools in cities including inner-city Philadelphia, suburban Chicago, rural Minnesota, suburban Houston, and Lorain, Ohio.

All the schools included in the study met the following criteria: (a) students were tested on their mastery of instructional objectives at least once a month, (b) before each formative test, students were taught as a group, (c) Mastery Learning was the only principal teaching method, (d) the Mastery Learning unit lasted at least 4 weeks.

Professor Slavin concluded that "the best evidence from evaluations of Group-Based Mastery Learning indicated that effects of these methods are moderate at best" on tests which were designed by the people conducting the experiment and thus closely tied to the objectives taught in the Mastery Learning class.

He also found that the effects of Mastery Learning "are essentially nil on standardized achievement measures" which test for a broader range of skills and knowledge.

"These findings," concluded Professor Slavin, "do not support the 'strong claim' [proposed by Mastery Learning proponents] that mastery learning is more effective than traditional instruction given equal time and fair achievement measures."

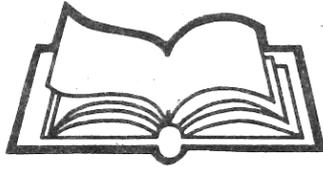
Professor Slavin's paper suggests the following reasons for the failure of Group-Based Mastery Learning to produce more significant

When Committee Chairman Braddock scheduled the first hearing on the bill for March 4, he told clinic opponents that it was simply a token hearing to appease clinic proponents.

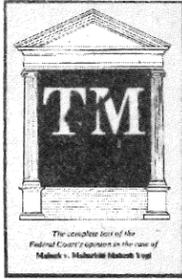
"Representative Jennifer Belcher, the primary sponsor of the bill, was making his life miserable in Olympia," said Mrs. Honcoop. "He assured us that it would not be brought up for a vote, but we went to the hearing."

Mrs. Honcoop said that many people from Whatcom County drove the 300 mile round trip to the hearing so that the committee chairman would see his own constituents there.

When an estimated 300 people from around the state showed up to attend the March 4 hearing, the hearing was moved to a larger room. Nearly 200 persons signed up to testify, but each side was limited to only several witnesses.



### Book of the Month



**TM in Court: The complete text of the Federal Court's opinion in the case of *Malnak v. Maharishi Yogi*.** © 1978, Spiritual Counterfeits Project, Inc., P.O. Box 4308, Berkeley, California 94704, \$1.95, 75 pp.

The use of Transcendental Meditation (TM) techniques in school classrooms continues to be a source of heated debate nationwide. Parents object that TM is a religious practice, and therefore violates the First Amendment under the Supreme Court's rule that prohibits the promotion of religion in the classroom. Many school officials disagree; they say that TM is simply a relaxation technique without religious underpinnings.

So, who is right? And what exactly is TM? The answers to these questions are found in a 75-page paperback reprint of a 1978 Federal Court decision in *Malnak V. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*. In that case, New Jersey U.S. District Court Judge H. Curtis Meanor ruled in a summary judgment that both TM and the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) are religious in nature and, therefore, the teaching of those techniques in New Jersey public high schools violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Plaintiffs in the case included four parents of students who attended a New Jersey public high school at which SCI and TM were taught.

Defendants included the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, whom the court described as "the principal deviser of SCI and primary exponent of TM," as well as officers of the World Plan Executive Council, and a person who taught the SCI/TM course in New Jersey high schools.

It was the court's task to determine whether these techniques had a religious foundation. To reach that conclusion, the court examined the fundamental doctrine of TM and SCI as written and espoused by TM promoters.

This printed edition of the Federal Court's decision includes the analysis of evidence submitted by opposing parties, quotations from sections of the teaching material in question, and includes a discussion of the broad meaning of "religion" under the First Amendment.

### "...the effects of Mastery Learning are essentially nil on standardized achievement measures."

Mastery Learning is to reduce the variation in student achievement and to reduce or eliminate any correlation between aptitude and achievement.

While critics said that Mastery Learning sounds good in theory, they said that it does not work in practice.

Professor Robert E. Slavin of the Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools at Johns Hopkins is the author of the new study entitled "Mastery Learning Reconsidered" which was funded by the U.S. Department of Education. As stated in the study, his review "focuses on the effects of Mastery Learning in practice, not in theory."

His analysis "found essentially no evidence to support the effectiveness of Group-Based Mastery Learning on standardized achievement measures."

By the researcher's own admission, "these conclusions are radically different from those drawn by earlier reviewers."

#### Analysis reveals method's weaknesses

Professor Slavin's study focused on the goals and results of Group-Based Mastery Learning, the most commonly used form of Mastery Learning in elementary and secondary schools. As defined in the study, in Group-Based Mastery Learning "the teacher instructs the entire class at one pace. At the end of each unit of instruction a 'formative test' is given, covering the unit's contents. A mastery criterion, usually

improvements:

- Mastery Learning requires the teachers and students to focus on a narrow set of objectives.

- The amount of corrective instruction is simply not enough to adequately remediate the learning deficits of low achievers. The corrective instruction to help students pass a specific mastery test may only be enough to get students up to criterion on very narrowly defined skills, but not enough to identify and remediate serious deficits, particularly when corrective instruction is given in group settings or by peer tutors.

- The amount of corrective instruction given in practical applications of Group-Based Mastery Learning may be not only too little, but also too late. It may be that one or two weeks is too long to wait to correct students' learning errors; if each day's learning is a prerequisite for the next day's lesson, then perhaps detection and remediation of failures to master individual skills need to be done daily to be effective. Further, in most applications of Mastery Learning, students may have years of accumulated learning deficits that one day per week of corrective instruction is unlikely to remediate.

- Time for corrective instruction in Group-Based Mastery Learning is purchased at a cost in terms of slowing instructional pace.

- Mastery Learning benefits the low achievers, while holding back the high achievers from progressing to higher levels. Professor Slavin calls this the "Robin Hood approach to learning." He noted that, in several studies he examined, positive effects of Mastery Learning were found for low achievers only. This effect is inherent to Mastery Learning because Group-Based Mastery Learning "trades coverage for mastery." That is, because rapid coverage is likely to be of greatest benefit to high achievers while high mastery is of greatest benefit to low achievers, the high achievers are robbed for the sake of the low achievers.

Professor Slavin recommends that, "the disappointing findings of the studies ... counsel not a retreat from this area of research ... [Instead] This best evidence synthesis has attempted to clarify what we have learned from research on mastery learning in the hope that this knowledge will enrich further research and development in this important area."

## Clinics continued

school-based clinics in Portland, Oregon.

Pro-family leaders said they were undaunted by Planned Parenthood's program, and they continued to run their radio spots during Planned Parenthood's visit.

"We were not only ready for them, we were way ahead of them," said the Lynden leader. "We attended their meeting which was a real eye opener."

"Until Planned Parenthood made this move, we could not get the local paper to even write about the issue. Obviously, Planned Parenthood's side of the story was more important to the paper despite the hundreds of letters, phone calls, and postcards which Olympia legislators had received in opposition to the clinics."

Sex clinic proponents testified first, followed by the opposition. Witnesses in favor of the bill included Ann Cathey of Portland and Teresa Everett, a 17-year old mother from Ranier Beach.

Clinic proponents "presented a very emotional case for the clinics," said a clinic opponent. "Children were portrayed as insecure and in great need of health care as well as just a friend to talk to. Parents, on the other hand, were portrayed as stressed out, insensitive, abusive, and unable to provide the care their children needed."

Witnesses for the opposition included Mr. Stan Weed, a researcher from the Institute for Research and Evaluation in Salt Lake City, who explained how statistics show that an increase in teen family planning programs actually results in an increase in teen pregnancy

and abortion rates.

The Health Care Committee did not vote on the bill at the March 4 hearing. Since legislative rules required that the bill had to come out of the committee by Friday, March 9, it died in committee without a vote in the current session.

Clinic proponents subsequently tried to attach the measure to another House bill on March 16, but the amendment was withdrawn the very same day after the opposition learned of the amendment and sounded an alarm.

The pro-family leaders said they are encouraged by their first legislative victory. They are the same citizens who were responsible for persuading the Lynden School Board to remove *Here's Looking at You Two*, the controversial drug and alcohol program, from their district just one year ago.