

Seattle Schools Replace Mandatory 'Sex/Drug' Text

Seattle school officials have removed a controversial health textbook from area classrooms following a public hearing at which none of the school personnel was able to defend the contents of the text.

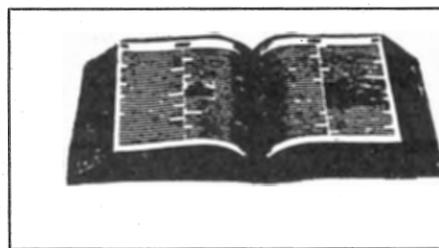
The action came after 18 months of investigation and debate concerning the appropriateness of *You and Your Health*, by William Fassbender (John Wiley & Sons publisher). The text has been used in a mandatory high school health class in Seattle public high schools since 1978.

Citizens questioned the text's contents and messages on such subjects as sex education as well as drugs and alcohol. One highly publicized passage focuses on "voyeurism," or Peeping Toms.

That passage reads: "A Peeping Tom is an

individual (usually male) who derives sexual satisfaction from watching other persons who are nude or are engaging in sexual activities. Such a person will look through windows, or holes in walls or use binoculars to peep into other peoples' homes. Voyeurs are often unable to participate successfully in sexual activities. By watching others, they are aroused and yet protected from participating themselves and facing failure."

Mr. Bud Turner, district consultant for physical education and secondary health, confirmed that the text goes on to state there are some people "who may derive pleasure" from this activity. But "if these individuals do this occasionally and not to the exclusion of other forms of sexual activity, then it is not considered



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deviant behavior."

Text loses all support

The debate over *You and Your Health* began nearly 18 months ago when Seattle parents Jim and Sally Bostad examined the text while their son was enrolled in the mandatory health class. The Bostads asked their son to bring home his health book after reading *Child Abuse in the Classroom*.

The Bostads became concerned that, instead of promoting health and healthy activities, the text promoted promiscuity and failed to teach students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. To support their claims, parents cited the

following passages as cause for concern:

- "Group marriage may be defined as a 'marriage' between three or more people. ... Do you feel you might be interested in becoming part of such a group?"

- "Often promiscuity is labeled as 'bad' by persons who do not accept this type of behavior. As with other patterns of sexual behavior, one should not pin a 'good' or 'bad' label on a practice."

- "Morality is individual; it is what *you* [sic] think it is."

- "It has been suggested by some marriage counseling authorities that all couples should live together before they are married."

Joined by other concerned parents, the Bostads brought these passages to the attention of Seattle school officials in early 1986. The school officials reviewed the book and then re-approved it for continued use. School officials also cited a lack of funds as one reason for retaining the book.

In a June 12, 1986 letter to Mrs. Bostad, Mr. Turner said the district's "overall feeling is that with careful guidance of trained staff, sensitive areas in the book would be covered professionally and objectively."

But concerned citizens did not throw in the towel. They contacted a number of other citizens about the text with photocopies and letters-to-the-editor. Early in 1987, pages from *You and Your Health* were included in a briefing book of public school sex education materials which circulated among Reagan Administration staff.

Following the continued public outcry and national attention given the textbook in March, 1987, the Seattle School Board scheduled a meeting of the district curriculum committee for April 13. The committee invited Mrs. Bostad to make a presentation.

When Mrs. Bostad arrived at the meeting, she passed out copies of pages, photos, and illustrations to reporters who were present. One drawing of a nude woman from the text appeared that night on the local television newscast. Likewise, a quote from the third edition of the text which states that "AIDS is NOT a sexually transmitted disease" received local television coverage.

Mrs. Bostad used her allotted time to restate her objections to the text. A representative for the Washington State Pro-Child Committee, Dr. Andrea Vangor, Ph.D., biologist and former college health teacher, told committee members that the book's promotion of prostitution and pornography was in conflict with state and local laws.

Throughout the public meeting, no one spoke up to defend the textbook. Two Seattle School Board members serving on the curriculum committee openly agreed that the book was "not appropriate and is misleading."

Faced with copies of a textbook that could not be defended and overwhelmingly negative publicity, the Seattle school officials agreed to replace the text for the next school year. For the first time, parents will be allowed to serve on the adoption committee for the new health textbook, and the normal six month testing period for new books will be waived. School officials reported that the funds for a new book had suddenly become available.

New England Parents Object to Teen 'Party Lines'; New Service Rings Up Profits, Complaints, Investigation

Focus on cost, content

The traditional telephone "party line" has taken on a new meaning in New England where telephone conversation lines aimed at the teenage market are the subject of a hot controversy. At issue are cost and content: teens are ringing up tremendous phone bills, while, at the same time, they are often discussing sex and profanity with other party line callers. Meanwhile, the phone company and private vendors are reaping profits in the millions of dollars.

The conversation lines, known in the industry as "group bridging services," are new to the United States and are currently available only in the Boston area (area code 617). The service is provided by private vendors in conjunction with New England Telephone. The two largest vendor services are "Phone-A-Friend," operated by the NYNEX Development Company, and "Talkabout," operated by British Telecom.

To use the service, teens or adults call a telephone number which is typically advertised by the private vendor on the radio. Some of the vendors provide a pre-recorded message that informs the caller that he will be charged 20 cents for the first minute and 10 cents for each additional minute.

Following the message, the caller is connected to an open discussion line which can hold up to ten callers. Like the traditional party line, callers may simply listen or join in the conversation at any time. The topic of conversation is left up to the callers on that particular line.

Complaints about cost and vulgarity lead to investigation

The teen conversation lines have been a hot topic of discussion themselves due to the number of complaints from parents since the service began in January of this year. The escalating volume of complaints prompted the Massachusetts Department of Utilities to undertake an investigation of the service beginning in April.

According to DPU official Kathleen Hearne, the state regulatory agency will announce its decision on whether or not to revise the operating guidelines for the conversation lines later this month.

Both Miss Hearne and Steve Shinnick, prod-



uct manager at New England Telephone, agreed that the majority of complaints focus on the same points.

- The cost of the service. Many of the parents complained that they received phone bills for hundreds of dollars after their teenagers called the conversation lines without fully understanding how the service works.

- Vulgar language and sexual discussions. Since the discussions are infrequently monitored, callers are usually free to discuss any topics.

- The potentially dangerous exchange of names and phone numbers. Callers can and do exchange names and phone numbers, despite warnings not to do so on some prerecorded messages. One service, "Talkabout," even provides callers with an additional phone number for their "singles' line" during the prerecorded message. Critics of the system argue that this could place an unsuspecting caller in a vulnerable position.

One concerned Boston mother, Mrs. Charles Brassill, first learned about the service when charges appeared on her phone bill. Her son had placed 42 calls in one day.

Mrs. Brassill said she called one of the numbers and heard a male invite a 14-year-old girl to take a bus to Dorchester, MA to meet him. "The girl asked why," said Mrs. Brassill, "and he said 'to **** you.' The young girl giggled and asked him to repeat it. He did, then I hung up."

Profit motive is strong

New England Telephone official Steve Shinnick said that, despite the 1,800 complaints received by the phone company so far, the service is likely to continue, largely because of the tremendous profits.

According to Mr. Shinnick, billings for the conversation lines from January through the end of May totalled \$4.1 million. Over six million calls were logged in an area with a population of 5.5 million.

Mr. Shinnick said the billings transfer into \$2.6 million in profits for New England Telephone and \$1.5 million divided among the private vendors.

Regarding complaints about sexually-oriented discussions, Mr. Shinnick said "it is difficult to position the phone company" to police the phone lines and determine First Amendment rights.

In order to respond to customer complaints, Mr. Shinnick said that New England Telephone will (1) adjust the complainant's bill for any conversation line charges up until the date the complaint was lodged, and (2) refer complaints about call content to the district attorney's office.

He said that, although persons are assigned to monitor the conversation lines and can cut off offensive callers, each monitor is responsible for 10 separate lines of 10 callers each at the same time. As a result, objectionable conversations may continue uninhibited at considerable length.

Account of actual 'conversation'

In order to demonstrate how the new service works, Mr. Shinnick connected this reporter to "Phone-A-Friend" at 3:40 p.m. EDT on June 1.

Following the recorded message about the cost of the service, the first words this reporter heard were "Jesus Christ" used as an expletive. During the ensuing minute, one young man told how he had run up a \$500 phone bill for his parents by calling AT&T 900 numbers, and several of the teens asked if anyone had tried calling the "sex line."

Mr. Shinnick later explained that the "swingers' line" for singles focuses on explicit discussions and is intended only for adults, but that teenagers only have to know the number to be connected to that conversation line. A monitor who suspects that a teenager has joined that line can disconnect the teen, but each line is not continuously monitored.

EDUCATION
BRIEFS

A Louisiana high school valedictorian was not allowed to give the graduation address on May 19 because some school officials objected to references to God in her prepared text. Despite the fact that the Lake Falls High School principal initially approved the speech, a school counselor objected to the student's statements that God was the most important force in her life. School officials subsequently asked the student to revise her speech to comply with what they called the separation of church and state. When the 4.0 student refused to change her speech, she was withdrawn from that portion of the program. In a related incident in Clear Creek, Texas, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is representing a local father who objected to a non-denominational invocation at the recent high school graduation. The ACLU filed suit against the school prior to the graduation ceremony, but the judge at the preliminary hearing refused to restrain the school from having an invocation written by students. According to one school official, the invocation was general in nature and did not mention God by name. The ACLU is still pursuing the case.

Citizens in the Midwest are fighting school-based sex clinics and promoting abstinence for teens on local radio stations through 30- and 60-second messages. The abstinence advocates solicit local businesses to sponsor the messages. One Belleville, Illinois citizen leader, Mrs. Madelon Genin, recorded and ran the following message on local radio station WCBW in April: "Controversy is growing over birth control clinics in Illinois schools, and Governor Thompson hasn't helped matters with his proposal to increase funds for Parents Too Soon. That organization provides funding to local community groups to set up birth control programs for children. The costly clinic in Rock Junior High in East St. Louis started with a clinic staff of five professionals. To receive free services, the parent must sign a blanket consent form, which lists a variety of services, from immunization to family planning. Complete secrecy is guaranteed, so no parent will know what sexual counseling and contraceptives are given the child in school, or by prescription. Illinois residents should write Governor Thompson and oppose his plan to increase Parents Too Soon funding from two to eight million dollars. Also, ask your state legislators to stop funds for school clinics and support legislation which bans providing contraceptives in schools. Mail to State Capitol, Springfield, 62706."

A Florida PTA chapter president said publicly she hopes to circumvent parents with Christian values when local citizens form a committee to propose a sex education program for the 1988-89 school year. As reported in the *Orlando Sentinel* (5-6-87), PTA President Diane Thornton of Seminole County, Florida, said she wanted to form the committee quickly, before parents who advocate abstinence and "Christian values" propose a curriculum to the school board. At the urging of the PTA, Seminole County school administrators will form a committee by August to study the sex education issue. Despite the PTA president's statement, a representative of the 100-member group called WAIT, Waiting for Abstinence in Teens, said the group will try to work closely with the district study committee.

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Homeschool Families Win Big in Texas Court

Texas families who engage in homeschooling are not in violation of any state law, according to a long-awaited decision by Judge Charles Murray. Instead, the Texas district judge ruled that under current Texas law, homeschools can be categorized as private schools and are thus entitled to the same rights as other private schools.

The eyes of many Texans, as well as educators and homeschool families nationwide, were upon the case of *Leeper et al. v. Arlington Independent School et al.*, for several reasons. In addition to the fact that homeschool families in Texas are now free from prosecution so long as they adhere to private school guidelines, the *Leeper* case is significant because a group of homeschool parents and four curriculum publishers filed a class action suit against the schools, rather than the schools pursuing the families.

The families and publishers asked the court to declare that school-age children who are enrolled in "a school within a home" fall within the private or parochial school exemption of the Texas Education Code as long as they are "pursuing in a bona fide manner a curriculum following an education plan of instruction designed to meet basic goals of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and a study of good citizenship."

The plaintiff families requested that "public school district attendance officers be permanently enjoined from bringing charges ... against plaintiff home school parents or their school-aged children" under the Texas Education Code.

Fort Worth District Judge Murray concurred with the families and publishers on both counts. His decision noted that Section 21.033 (a)(1) of the Texas Education Code reads as follows:

"The following classes of children are exempt from the requirements of compulsory attendance: (1) any child in attendance upon [sic] a private or parochial school which shall include in its course a study of good citizenship."

Judge Murray further ruled that "the Texas Legislature has not defined 'private or parochial school' in the Education Code or in any other legislative intent" since the inception of the first compulsory attendance law in Texas in 1915.

The How and Why of Home Schooling, by Ray E. Ballmann, Crossway Books, ©1987, 157 pp., \$4.25.

Just as the homeschool movement continues to grow exponentially, so, too, does the number of books and resources designed to inspire and guide those families who choose to opt out of the school system. *The How and Why of Home Schooling* is a unique and welcome addition, especially for parents who are currently asking themselves, "should we or shouldn't we?"

This brand new paperback is primarily concerned with the "whys" of homeschooling. Author Ray Ballmann, a homeschool father and pastor himself, provides encouragement, factual evidence, and a heavy dose of Biblical reasons and references in support of homeschooling. His enthusiasm and power of persuasion — in combination with his documented facts on the failures of the public schools — are likely to convince families who are seriously considering homeschooling to forge ahead.

Mr. Ballmann further assists homeschool families with practical information on the nuts and bolts of getting started. Helpful chapters on the "hows" of homeschooling include advice on establishing a curriculum



and choosing educational material, planning a daily schedule, grading, and even how to involve grandparents. A chapter on "Common Questions Asked About Homeschooling" sheds light on matters including the legalities of homeschooling in different states.

Finally, for those who decide they are not yet ready to homeschool, the author suggests other private education alternatives.

Judge Murray noted that "the dictionary in use in Texas at the time of the passage of that compulsory school attendance law contained definitions of the words 'private' and 'school' which encompassed children being taught at home."

The decision cited the fact that the earliest prosecution of parents teaching their children at home in Texas did not occur until 1981 when the Texas Education Agency (TEA) changed its interpretation of what it considered to be a private school. The revised TEA guidelines were challenged by the Legislative Council.

Since the TEA did not prosecute homeschoolers from 1915-1981, and since the only

persons who have been prosecuted under the new provisions are homeschoolers, Judge Murray concluded that, "therefore, an unreasonable and arbitrary classification of private and parochial schools is being attempted by the Texas Education Agency. The essence of this unreasonable and arbitrary classification is location and regulation, not activity which constitutes a school."

Henceforth, Judge Murray said, "any prosecution of plaintiffs home school parents and the class they represent violates the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

Midwest Mother Proposes 'Model' Parental Consent Policy

A Wisconsin mother recently succeeded in stalling "depression testing" in local schools following her presentation to the local school board. School officials previously discontinued use of a suicide questionnaire following the same mother's protests.

The Janesville mother appeared before the local board in May to object to a new report of a local committee which recommended that students as young as junior high take part in filling out depression surveys.

The Janesville school district has previously administered the Reynolds Adolescent Depression Survey (R.A.D.S.), a program which is currently being promoted nationwide, to district high school students despite parental protests.

In addition to objecting to the negative focus of the surveys, the concerned mother told the board that, since parental permission slips are not required for students to take the survey, many parents were probably unaware of the depression program in local schools.

One new school board member said that, had she known about the intrusive, negative nature of the surveys, she would not have let her children fill out the questionnaires.

As part of her formal presentation, the Wisconsin mother presented school board members and the media with a model parental consent policy to be applied to all non-academic programs, such as sex education and death education exercises. (See model policy at right)

* Essential Elements of Parental Consent Policy *

The policy must require a *prior, written, informed parental consent* form. That means that:

— The consent form must be signed by a parent/guardian of each student and returned to the school in order for that student to participate in the program. It is *not* sufficient to require that parents return the form only if they do not want their child to participate because this method does not ensure that the parents ever saw the permission slip.

— The consent form must describe in detail the purpose, duration, and contents of the course, including a list of materials, books, films, field trips (e.g., to local funeral home), and topics of discussion (e.g., the students' feelings about death and dying, suicide). The consent form should also give the names and qualifications of those who will be program instructors. Only in this way can the parents give their informed consent.

— The consent form must also indicate if any follow-up procedures, such as individual counseling, are part of the program. Follow-up counseling must not be undertaken without a separate informed parental consent form.

— The course materials must be on display at the schools and at local libraries for parents to preview at their convenience, especially if both parents work outside the home. This is also a convenient process for school personnel, rather than individually handling each request to view the materials.

— Public announcements of the course must be made in local media well in advance so that parents are aware of the program and expecting to receive the detailed consent form. Several public meetings must be held for parents so that parents can meet with instructors and ask any questions prior to implementation of the program.

— When parental consent is withheld, students must not be discriminated against or penalized academically for not participating in the program.

Chicago Coalition Presents Plan For Public School Reform

Chicagoans United to Reform Education have a plan they want to shout about. Their plan for "creating a school system that works" focuses on a drastic power shift in favor of parents and neighborhood officials and away from big city bureaucrats. The new plan also stresses that all school officials, like businessmen, must be held accountable for their product -- the students.

The citywide ethnic coalition, known by their acronym C.U.R.E., presented its written proposal to 400 parents and citizens at a meeting at Loyola University earlier this spring. C.U.R.E. also presented the Chicago Public Schools with a giant-sized report card.

The Chicago schools received an "F" on all counts from the C.U.R.E. coalition which includes Save Our City/Save Our Schools (a neighborhood action group from the Southwest and Northwest sides of Chicago), Designs For Change (a children's research and advocacy organization), and Dr. Michael Bakalis, Dean of the School of Education at Loyola University and founder of C.U.R.E.

At the Loyola meeting, C.U.R.E. cited a burgeoning and expensive school bureaucracy as well as a lack of competitiveness between schools as among the reasons that the Chicago public schools are failing to teach students the basic academic skills that are prerequisites to securing and maintaining a job.

The C.U.R.E. proposal noted that, "while the present Superintendent of Schools came into office claiming that he was going to concentrate on improving local schools, he has created 240 new job positions for bureaucrats in various administrative offices who provide no direct services to children."

"Another \$200 million, another few years, some better school board members, a few new faces in top administrative positions are not the answer," concluded C.U.R.E.

Instead, the C.U.R.E. "plan for making our 590 public schools work" recommends the following structural reforms:

- **Schools must be run by and held accountable to their neighborhoods.** According to the C.U.R.E. plan, "the most important single idea for achieving accountability and real improvement is to shift much of the control over key educational decisions to [elected] School Governing Councils at each school. ...

- "School Governing Councils at each school will be composed of parents, community representatives, and teachers. They will have power over hiring and firing, money, curriculum, and school improvement. One of their most important powers will be to hire the school's principal, who will play the key role in running the school day-to-day and will be held accountable."

- **Schools must attract creative principals and teachers.** "School Governing Councils will be able to choose [the principal] who best fits their needs. Further, principals will not have lifetime tenure, but will be hired for a set period of time, based on performance contract. ...

- "Teachers will also have greatly increased flexibility to do their job well. Through their representation on the School Governing Council and through working in a school that is not bound by hundreds of requirements imposed by distant administrative offices, teachers will function as professionals and also be held accountable for their work, as other professionals are."

- **A central school board will focus on "doing a few things well."** One function of the central school board, which would oversee multiple School Governing Councils, would be "to

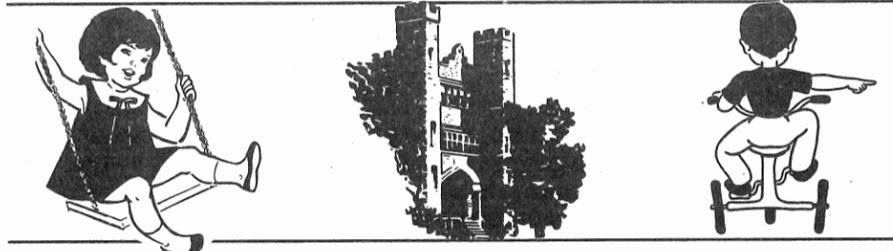
FOCUS: *Preparing Your Child For School*

Getting Ready for School What Kindergarten Teachers Would Like Your Child to Know

by World Book Inc., ©1987

Learning does not begin when a child walks through the schoolroom door. Learning begins at home. In fact, some experts believe a child's intellectual development is as great from birth to age four as it is from four to 18. This means that by age four, half of a child's intelligence has already been formed.

The early years, then, are vitally important in a young child's development. During those years, the young child is learning to learn. By the time your child enters school, at least five years of education have taken place — with you as the first and most important teacher and your home as the most important school. With your help, your child has begun to explore the ideas, the objects, and the experiences of the world.



Experts recognize the importance of children's early learning experiences. They know that a parent's lively interest and interaction stimulate a young child's mind — and influence, in turn, a lifetime of learning ability. In other words, they recognize that the things you do with your child now — before school begins — can help your child to later success in school.

It's important, then, that you know how to help stimulate your child's mind. It is important for you to know what kinds of skills and knowledge you can provide to prepare your child for learning in the years to come. And it's important for you to know how to turn everyday interactions into learning adventures that your child will enjoy.

These are important responsibilities, but they need not overwhelm you. There are many enjoyable things you can do that will truly make a difference — with a little bit of planning that will help you make learning an important and exciting part of your child's everyday life.

World Book surveyed specialists in early childhood education to determine what skills and knowledge a child needs in order to begin kindergarten successfully. Over 3,000 kindergarten teachers throughout the United States and Canada responded to *World Book School: Readiness Skills Study*. The results identify 105 desirable readiness skills that will help children get off to a good start when they begin school. In the chart below, [some of] these skills are organized into the groups discussed:

collect honest data about how well children are doing in local schools, as the basis for school-level planning and accountability to the public." The central board, whose members would include elected regional representatives and Mayoral appointees, would also negotiate collective bargaining agreements, oversee financial disbursements, administer payroll, enforce civil rights regulations, and oversee handicapped programs.

The C.U.R.E. plan states that the "basic conception of the central board is consistent with recent research about effective corporations, whose top management encourages initiative and creativity at the local plant or branch office, while maintaining control over a few

Size
Understands big and little
Understands long and short
Matches shapes or objects based on size

Colors and Shapes
Recognizes and names primary colors
Recognizes circles
Recognizes rectangles
Matches shapes or objects based on shape
Copies shapes

Numbers
Counts orally through 10
Counts objects in one-to-one correspondence
Understands empty and full
Understands more and less

Time
Understands day and night
Knows age and birthday

Reading Readiness
Remembers objects from a given picture
Knows what a letter is
Has been read to frequently
Has been read to daily
Looks at books or magazines
Recognizes some nursery rhymes
Identifies parts of the body
Identifies objects that have a functional use
Knows common farm and zoo animals
Pronounces own first name
Pronounces own last name
Expresses self verbally
Identifies other children by name
Tells the meaning of simple words
Repeats a sentence of 6-8 words
Completes incomplete sentence with proper word
Has own books
Understands that print carries a message
Pretends to read
Uses left-to-right progression
Answers questions about a short story
Tells the meaning of words heard in story
Looks at pictures and tells a story
Identifies own first name in manuscript
Prints own first name

Social-Emotional Development
Can be away from parents for 2-3 hours without being upset
Takes care of toilet needs independently
Feels good about self
Is not afraid to go to school
Cares for own belongings
Knows full name
Dresses self
Knows how to use a handkerchief or tissue
Knows own sex
Brushes teeth
Crosses a residential street safely
Asks to go to school
Knows parents' names
Knows home address
Knows home phone number
Enters into dinner table conversation
Carries a plate of food
Maintains self-control
Gets along well with other children
Plays with other children
Recognizes authority
Shares with others
Talks easily
Likes teachers
Meets visitors without shyness

In teaching, it is important to remember that every child is different from every other child. The advantage of being your child's first teacher is that *you know and understand your child better than anyone else*. With that knowledge, you are able to teach the skills that are right for your child. And you can teach them at your own pace, having fun as you share the experience together.

This article is excerpted from the report "Getting Ready for School," World Book Inc., P.O. Box 4140, Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago, Illinois 60654. Price: 10 for \$2. Reprinted with permission.

Motor Skills
Is able to run
Is able to walk a straight line
Is able to jump
Is able to hop
Is able to alternate feet walking down stairs
Is able to march
Is able to stand on one foot 5-10 seconds
Is able to walk backwards for five feet
Is able to throw a ball
Pastes objects
Claps hands
Matches simple objects
Touches fingers
Able to button
Builds with blocks
Completes simple puzzles (5 pcs. or less)
Draws and colors beyond a simple scribble
Able to zip
Controls pencil and crayon well
Cuts simple shapes
Handles scissors well
Able to copy simple shapes

Position and Direction
Understands up and down
Understands in and out
Understands front and back
Understands over (on) and under
Understands top, bottom, middle
Understands beside and next to
Understands hot and cold
Understands fast and slow

crucial aspects of the organization's operation."

- **School systems must drastically cut the bureaucracy.** The C.U.R.E. plan "limits the percentage of school district funds that can be spent on central administration through state law, and cuts out unnecessary layers in the bureaucracy -- the District and Field offices. Funds previously spent on central administration will be passed on to local schools."

- **Parents must be able to choose their public school.** The C.U.R.E. plan proposes to "increase family choice within the public school system so that parents and students can 'vote with their feet' about which schools should continue to operate [on a space available basis].

... Evaluation information about each school collected by the central school board will be publicly available and serve as a guide for informing family choice, giving schools an additional incentive to become effective."

The C.U.R.E. members formulated their recommendations based upon extensive research, including investigations of management ideas that guide effective corporations, as well as the experiences of effective urban and suburban schools, and especially urban Catholic schools which succeed despite limited resources.

C.U.R.E. hopes to introduce legislation in the Illinois Legislature next year which would enact some of their reform proposals.

Poll: Americans Lack Knowledge of U.S. Constitution

A majority of the American people do not know what the Bill of Rights is, according to a just-released national survey which measured the knowledge of the American people about their own United States Constitution in this Bicentennial year.

The Hearst Corporation sponsored the survey whose purpose it was to "determine exactly how much the American public know and understand about the fundamentals of the U.S. Constitution — its contents, meaning, and evolution throughout the years."

The polling was conducted by Research & Forecasts, Inc., a national research and consulting organization based in New York.

Hearst Corporation President Frank A. Bennack, Jr. told the National Conference of Bar Association Presidents in February that, "when the results of this survey arrived on my desk, they confirmed what I had already suspected. Americans today have a confused understanding of many of the Constitution's basic tenets and provisions."

Mr. Bennack said the American public proved most knowledgeable about the criminal justice system, but the overall awareness of personal rights was very inconsistent. The majority of Americans also overestimate the domestic powers of the President and the responsibilities of the Supreme Court, and citizens are largely unclear about the governmental authority outlined in the Constitution.

Results reveal public's knowledge or lack of
The first of four sections of the survey asked respondents about their knowledge of the history and purpose of the Constitution. Only 54 percent knew the original purpose of the Constitution was to create a federal government and define its powers, while 26 percent said the purpose was to declare independence from England.

The responses showed that many Americans confuse the Constitution with the Declaration of Independence. Eight in ten Americans (80 percent) mistakenly believe that the phrase "all men are created equal" is in the Constitution.

In addition, 82 percent of Americans also believe the Gettysburg Address phrase "of the

people, by the people, for the people" is found in the Constitution. Nearly half of Americans (45 percent) said the Marxist declaration "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" is found in the Constitution.

Fifty-nine (59) percent of Americans do not know that the Bill of Rights is the first 10 amendments to the original Constitution. One in five Americans (19 percent) believes the Bill of Rights is any bill involving personal rights that passes Congress.

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the American public falsely believe the U.S. Constitution establishes English as the national language.

Concerning constitutional authority and the power of the President, 49 percent of Americans incorrectly believe the President can suspend the Constitution in time of war or national emergency.

With regard to a knowledge of state and local laws, 75 percent of Americans know that states have the right to levy a tax on goods sold within the state, but only 46 percent know that states have the right to maintain a separate state militia.

Two-thirds (68 percent) of Americans correctly say that individual states are responsible for their own voter registration requirements, while just 21 percent are aware the states can require citizens to take literacy tests before they become registered voters.

A majority of Americans (57 percent) incorrectly believe that local schools may require children to pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag, while 50 percent also wrongly believe that local schools may order a moment of silence for prayer. Furthermore, 46 percent incorrectly say a state can give money to religious schools as long as it gives to all religious schools equally.

Sixty-eight (68) percent of Americans say there should be a constitutional amendment that would require Supreme Court Justices to be reappointed after specific term of years, rather than being appointed by life as the Constitution now stipulates.

Only 30 percent of Americans know the landmark *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court case dealt with abortion.

Miracle at Philadelphia, by Catherine Drinker Bowen, ©1966, republished in paperback 1986, Little, Brown, and Co., 346 pp.

George Washington described the United States Constitution as "little short of a miracle." James Madison also used the word "miracle" to describe the document whose 200th anniversary we celebrate this year. Did our Founding Fathers overestimate the document that came out of that hot summer in Philadelphia in 1787? Those who read Catherine Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia* will answer with a resounding "No!"

Unlike dry historical textbooks, Catherine Bowen's book brings the 1787 Constitutional Convention to life, dramatically and colorfully, from the arrival of the delegates in Philadelphia to the ratification of the Constitution by the individual states.

As described in the Foreword by former Chief Justice Warren Burger, Mrs. Bowen tells the story of the Constitution in a narrative style, based on information "from contemporary reports of the Federal Convention, from newspapers, diaries, the letters and utterances of delegates and their friends." The richness of detail about the personalities, politics, places, and conflicts makes the narrative anything but dull.



Readers will learn and relearn why the delegates threw out the Articles of Confederation in favor of a new Constitution, how men of many diverse ideas forged a new and enduring system of governance based on the Separation of Powers, how the supporters of the final document won the battle for ratification by the states, and much, much more.

Miracle at Philadelphia is a book for all Americans of all ages, especially during these Bicentennial years. It should be on everyone's "must" reading list.

The American public's knowledge of their individual rights as guaranteed by the Constitution proved to be very sporadic. Seventy-five (75) percent of the American public mistakenly believe that the Constitution guarantees every citizen's right to a free public education. Forty-two (42) percent of Americans falsely believe the Constitution guarantees every citizen's right to adequate health care. However, 69 percent of the public do know that the Constitution does not guarantee a citizen's right to hold a job.

Regarding the First Amendment freedom of the press, 54 percent of the public know that the

right to publish and distribute hard-core pornography is restricted.

The American public scored best on questions concerning the criminal justice system. Ninety-two (92) percent of Americans know that they must be provided with a lawyer if they cannot afford one in a criminal trial. Eighty-three (83) percent are aware they must be given a trial by jury, while 81 percent know that their spouse cannot be forced to testify against them. A 94 percent majority know the police can search a private home without permission of the residents if they have obtained a search warrant.

Legislation Update . . . A sex education law that works

Proposed legislation to mandate a uniform state sex education curriculum for grades kindergarten through 12 in Nevada was doomed from the outset of the current legislative session due to lack of support for the measure.

Opponents of mandated sex education said the proposed law lacked the votes to pass because Nevada already has a sex education law which has been well received by the public and school districts statewide.

The current law gives schools the option to adopt a sex education program, but in order to do so, the law stipulates specific adoption procedures which include parental input and consent.

Pro-family forces in Nevada recommend their state sex education law as a model for other states and school districts which may consider or reconsider a sex education policy.

The current Nevada law reads as follows:

The subject matter of a course in sex education, as well as the decision to include the topic of sex education in the curriculum is left up to the local school district according to NRS 389.065.

389.065:

Instruction in human reproductive system, related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility.

1. The board of trustees of a school district may establish a course or unit of a course instruction on the human reproductive system, related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility.
2. If a school board establishes such a course, it shall appoint an advisory committee consisting of:
 - (a) Four parents of children who attend schools in the district; and
 - (b) Three representatives, one from each of three of the following professions or occupations:
 - (1) Medicine or nursing;
 - (2) Counseling;
 - (3) Religion; or
 - (4) Pupils who attend school in the district.

This committee shall advise the district concerning the content of and materials to be used in the course of instruction, and the recommended ages of the pupils to whom the course is offered. The final decision on these matters must be that of the board of trustees.

3. The subjects of the course may be taught only by a teacher or school nurse whose qualifications have been previously approved by the board of trustees.
4. The parent or guardian of each pupil to whom the course is offered must first be furnished written notice that the course will be offered. The notice must be given in the usual manner used by the local district to transmit written material to parents, and must contain a form for the signature of the parent or guardian of the pupil consenting to his attendance. Upon receipt of the written consent of the parent or guardian, the pupil may attend the course; otherwise, he must be excused from such attendance without any penalty as to credits or academic standing. Any course offered pursuant to this section is not a requirement for graduation.
5. All instructional materials to be used in the course must be available for inspection by parents or guardians of pupils at reasonable times and locations prior to the conduct of the course, and appropriate written notice of the availability of the material must be furnished to all parents and guardians.

(Added to NRS by 1979, 836)



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