

## Parents Pushing Forward; Florida School Drops Drug Program

Parents are moving forward nationwide in their efforts to assert parental rights in education regarding non-academic, psychological curricula. Many parents who have contacted the Education Reporter attributed their successes to a growing spirit of cooperation from local school officials. The following event took place during the 1986-87 school year and is representative of similar initiatives across the country.

A parochial junior and senior high school in Jacksonville Beach, Florida has dropped the controversial drug education program, *Ombudsman*, from the school curriculum after one local father presented his concerns to faculty members. Upon a careful review of the materials, faculty members concurred that the federally-funded materials were inappropriate for students.

*Ombudsman* has come under attack in other school districts nationwide in its focus on students' feelings and beliefs, rather than on factual information about the dangers of drug use.

The Florida father, Mr. Sam Gilpin, Jr., said that he first became concerned when, following bedtime prayers, his seventh-grade son asked him about the effects of radiation poisoning.

The question "blew me away," said Mr. Gilpin.

Upon questioning his son, Mr. Gilpin learned that the boy's class had participated in a form of the Fallout Shelter Survival Game as part of the *Ombudsman* program. In the Fallout Shelter, students are typically given a description of 10 people and then asked to decide which persons they want to live or die, and why, in the event of a nuclear fallout when the shelter cannot hold them all.

Mr. Gilpin also learned that his son was disturbed about another *Ombudsman* exercise which the boy called the "Walk for Hunger." The seventh-grader told his father how students were given the following scenario.

Students were told that the "Walk for Hunger" was an event to raise money for

starving people in which the walkers solicited sponsors who pledged money for each mile the walker completed. However, one walker decided to complete his remaining miles by getting on a bus without telling anyone.

Students were then asked if it was (a) acceptable to lie about completing the walk since it would mean more money for the starving people, or (b) should the walker have told the truth and only collected money for the miles he walked, thus depriving the starving people of more food.

Mr. Gilpin said his son was in the minority of students who said that lying in this situation was unacceptable, but that the seventh-grader had been made to feel guilty about depriving the hungry people of more food.

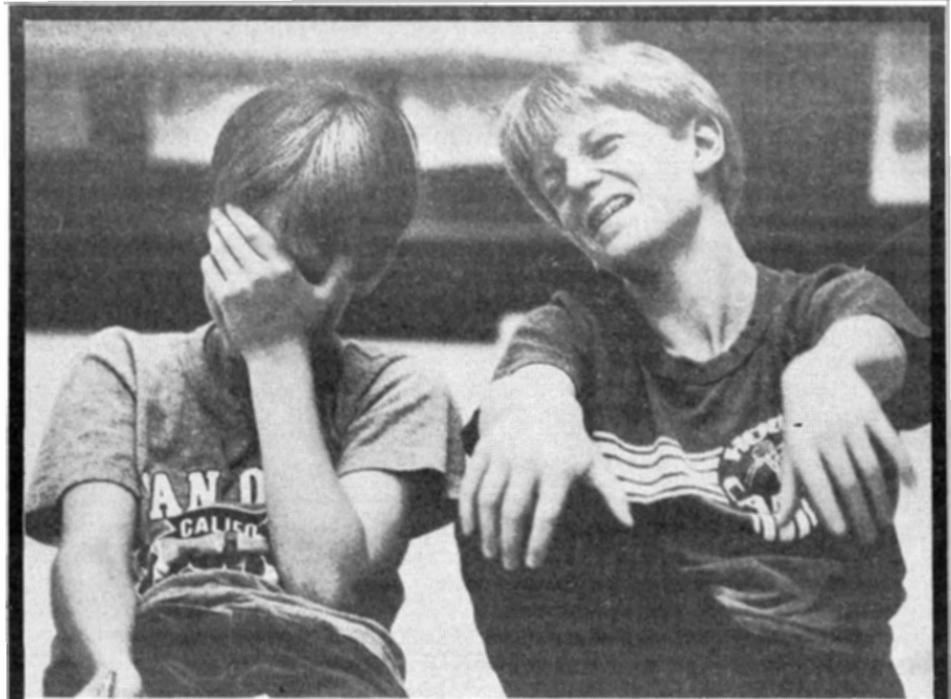
Mr. Gilpin explained that he was able to contact other potentially concerned parents based on his actions at a parent meeting in the fall of 1986. He said that, at that meeting, several parents had expressed their concerns about values clarification exercises in the schools. Although Mr. Gilpin had no specific concerns at that time, he obtained the names and telephone numbers of those parents for possible future reference.

When he used that list to contact parents about *Ombudsman*, the other parents agreed that something had to be done. But they expressed a "helpless feeling," said Mr. Gilpin.

Although Mr. Gilpin was new to the school and "had no influence," he met with the headmistress of the junior high who listened to his concerns and arranged for a later meeting with the school guidance counselor and other faculty.

As a result, Mr. Gilpin presented his concerns to three faculty members at a 1-1/2 hour meeting. Following the meeting, the faculty examined the *Ombudsman* curriculum and spoke with teachers who had been assigned to teach it.

Less than one week later, a school official called Mr. Gilpin to inform him that the program would be dropped.



Two boys react to sex education lesson in Maine

Portland Press Herald

"I was impressed that the school was willing to admit they had been wrong and make a change," said Mr. Gilpin who praised school officials for their cooperation.

### Parents nationwide question *Ombudsman*

Parents' concerns about *Ombudsman* have continued to climb since the program was introduced in the mid-1970s. Parents in North Carolina and Colorado testified at U.S. Department of Education Hearings in 1984 about the dangers and deceptive label of *Ombudsman* as a "drug education" program.

Critics expressed frustration that the U.S. Department of Education has given its stamp of approval to the program upon review by the Joint Dissemination and Review Panel both in 1979 and in 1985. The National Diffusion Network (NDN) catalogue of exemplary programs continues to list *Ombudsman* each year.

The NDN is a branch of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, but the catalogue is published privately.

Critics said that the NDN catalogue description supports their assertion that *Ombudsman* is not primarily a drug education program.

As described in the 1987 NDN catalogue, *Ombudsman* is a semester-long course "designed to reduce certain psychosocial and attitudinal states closely related to drug use. [It] does not emphasize information about drugs per se, although some drug topics are included for discussion as part of specific exercises."

Developmental funding for *Ombudsman* came from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, formerly a branch of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (now Health and Human Services).

## People for the American Way, ACLU Lose California Textbook Case

A California Superior Court Judge has affirmed the right of a local school board to exclude certain books from use in the classroom if the board decides that the books in question are inappropriate for students, despite challenges from individual teachers and students who may claim a violation of their constitutional rights.

Kern County Superior Court Judge Arthur E. Wallace ruled on June 9 that a local school board has broad discretionary powers in establishing curriculum for local schools, that the board can look to the mores of the local community as a guidepost for establishing the curriculum, and that the court should refrain from interference in such local decisions.

The decision put an end to a two-year dispute stemming from one teacher's use of the novel *Grendel* in her high school English classroom at Wasco Union High School.

*Grendel* is a 1971 adaptation of the epic poem *Beowulf* as rewritten by John Gardner. The 1971 version tells the story from the view of the monster, rather than from the hero who slays him.

Two years ago, a student complained to local Superintendent Douglas Fletcher that she was reading a book she couldn't even discuss with

her parents. Parents and citizens subsequently expressed their concern that the adaptation contained obscenities and presented a grim, hopeless world.

As a result, school trustees passed a policy saying that the district could require parents to sign permission slips before students would be allowed to read and discuss certain books. *Grendel* was the first book put on the list of books which required permission slips.

Another book, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez, was also added to the list.

Superintendent Fletcher summarized the Markez book for school board members as follows: "The subject is a macho South American man who spends most of the book in bedrooms of women that he is not married to."

Aided by attorneys from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Wasco High School teacher Lee McCarthy, who used *Grendel* in her English class, filed suit against the school district. She was joined in the suit by a student and her mother. Plaintiffs claimed that the student's constitutional rights were being violated and that the board had overstepped its

discretion. The plaintiffs received additional support from the American Library Association, People for the American Way, and the Freedom to Read Foundation.

### No violation of constitutional rights

Judge Wallace decided the case in two separate rulings without a trial. In December 1986, the court dismissed the complaint that the school board had violated plaintiffs' constitutional rights. The June 9 summary judgment ruled that the board had not exceeded its discretionary powers.

In his June 1987 decision, Judge Wallace stated the issue for the court's consideration as follows:

"Did the school board abuse its discretion in not including *Grendel* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in the required reading list for the English curriculum?"

He concluded that, "It is unquestioned that the board has broad discretion in establishing curriculum for the school that they govern and can look to the mores of the community that the school serves as part of the criteria in establishing that curriculum."

"This broad discretion should not be dis-

turbed by the courts except where there is flagrant abuse of that discretion — i.e., the board is clearly capricious or arbitrary. The burden is on the plaintiff in this case to establish that abuse of discretion and it is the opinion of this court that that burden has not been met.

"The court is satisfied that the facts ... clearly establish that the school board acted within their authority; that their action in not including the books in question in the current English curriculum was within a proper exercise of their discretion and motivated by appropriate objective standards not designed to control the exploration of ideas but rather the language, medium, and method of presenting those ideas and therefore does not violate the constitutional prohibition against the suppression of protected matters.

"The board's exercise of their discretion was clearly not capricious or arbitrary and this court should therefore not interfere."

The ACLU has appealed the decision. Wasco school district attorney Dwaine Chambers was quoted in the *Wasco Tribune* as saying that the ACLU knows "some benefit can be derived from the notoriety associated with keeping this issue alive."

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

The new telephone "party line" for teens which is under fire in the Boston area (see June 1987 Education Reporter) is now available to clients of Illinois Bell Telephone. The party line service has been the subject of hot controversy in New England due to concerns about vulgar and sexual conversations among teenagers, as well as complaints from parents who were surprised to receive large phone bills. The party line service is provided by private vendors in conjunction with the local phone company. British Telecommunications operates both "Talkabout" with New England Bell and "Connections" with Illinois Bell. Early profits in Boston ran well into the millions of dollars, according to one official of New England Bell. Illinois citizens who expressed concern about potential abuse and misuse of the service cited a quote from Cheryl LeTourneau, a staff member of a crisis and counseling hotline in Elk Grove Village. As reported in the Mount Prospect Daily Herald (6-14-87), the hotline worker said, "If we are getting a lot of kids calling us and all they want is someone to talk to, that will be someplace we can refer them ..."

The National Education Association (NEA) officially endorsed the distribution of birth control in schools at its annual convention in Los Angeles on July 4. The nation's largest teachers' union approved a resolution which endorses school-based health clinics that, "if deemed appropriate by local choice," provide "family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods and instruction in their use." According to an Associated Press report, some convention delegates hissed when an opponent of the resolution, a social studies teacher from Utah, said, "As educators we are trained to dispense knowledge, not contraceptives ... Teen pregnancy goes up where clinics exist."

A July 13 textbook adoption hearing in Texas aroused concern over the treatment of subjects including the Soviet Union and South Africa. Opponents of proposed social studies texts for state schools testified that the texts treat the Soviet Union as the moral equivalent of the United States. As reported in the Houston Chronicle (7-14-87), nationally-known textbook reviewer Mel Gabler noted that the social studies textbooks for 6th-grade students describe Siberia as a "land of opportunity" while failing to note Siberia has long been the location of Soviet labor camps. Mr. Gabler also said that "South Africa is severely treated regarding civil rights issues, but no attention is paid to other African nations which have gone from colonialism to either chaos or totalitarianism with no civil rights for citizens." Donna Blumer, a Dallas school teacher, also criticized the books' treatment of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. She said that one text claims the Sandinista's reforms are being "hindered" by continued fighting in the Central American country.

Female high school valedictorians still favor family and motherhood over the workplace, according to a new study released by the University of Illinois. As reported in the Chicago Sun Times (6-18-87), the study followed the careers of 80 Illinois high school valedictorians from the Class of 1981, including 46 women and 34 men, with an average age of 24. Researcher Karen Arnold and educational psychologist Terry Denny found that only 35 percent of the women valedictorians now plan to stay in the labor force, compared to 100 percent of the men. "The juggling of career and family seems to account for the women having lower career aspirations than men," said the researcher.

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# Junior Great Books Stir Debate

## Stories too depressing?

What's good for adults may not be good for children. That's the consensus of a growing number of parents whose children have participated in the Junior Great Books reading program.

According to parents from New York to California, the Junior Great Books program is deceptive in title and practice because many of the selections are not "great" in any sense of the word.

In a course called "Great Books," you assume your child is reading the classics, said one parent, but that is not always true. Instead, parents have been surprised to find their children reading many unfamiliar, depressing stories by relatively unknown authors which the parents consider inappropriate for the assigned grade level.

### Origins in adult program

The Junior Great Books program is an extension of the well-known Great Books program for adults. That program was established in 1947 to "provide a lifelong program of liberal education through the reading and discussion of great works of literature." Adults voluntarily participate in Great Books classes in their communities with an area leader who has taken the Great Books Leader Training Course. The adults read and discuss works by such authors as Shakespeare, de Toqueville, and Chekhov.

The Junior Great Books program was established in 1962 primarily as a voluntary, extra-curricular program to be conducted by parents who wanted to encourage their children to read and discuss the Great Books.

However, as more schools began to mandate special reading programs, especially for gifted and talented children, the Great Books Foundation began training large numbers of teachers to use the Junior Great Books program in school classrooms. Today, the Junior Great Books program includes 700,000 young people in all fifty states.

### Program guidelines prohibit right or wrong answers

The Junior Great Books program provides a separate paperback reading series for each grade, second grade through senior high, with an accompanying Leader Aid book that includes suggested discussion questions. The program recommends that students meet for twelve sessions, usually once a week, to discuss a selection that everyone has read at least twice.

Parents' concerns focus mainly on the depressing nature of some of the selections, particularly for the lower grades, and on the prescribed discussion questions and guidelines for discussion or "shared inquiry."

As stated in Junior Great Books promotional literature, "central to the program is a method of discussion called 'shared inquiry.' Shared inquiry begins when leaders, who are trained to develop and present issues of interpretation, pose a question about a problem of the meaning of the text. The leaders are not sure of the answer to the question that they pose. Students offer their own ideas and opinions in a joint effort to resolve the problem of meaning."

During the 1986-87 school year, parents in California's Pleasant Ridge school district expressed to their school officials that the "shared inquiry" methodology was inappropriate for the younger elementary school children because the method prohibits instructors from telling students about what is right and wrong in any given context presented in the reading materials, especially regarding moral dilemmas.

Parents also questioned the advisability of posing problems to young children which even adults have difficulty handling, thus burdening the youngsters with unnecessary guilt.



Children gleefully murder parents in fifth grade story

One of the most controversial Junior Great Books selections is *The Veldt*, a short story in the fifth grade series by Ray Bradbury. *The Veldt* has recently been the source of debate in the Onteora school district in Ulster County, New York where Mrs. Linda Jones unsuccessfully asked school officials to remove the

## "Why aren't Peter and Wendy disturbed after their parents have been devoured by lions?" discussion question for *The Veldt*

selection from her son's gifted and talented reading program.

The story focuses on a family with two children who live in a futuristic house equipped with special effects, one of which is a nursery that the children can transform into any setting using their thought control. When the parents do not grant all the children's requests for privileges, the children turn the room into an African veldt (open grassland) and instruct the lions to threaten and eventually devour their parents. Then, the children sit down in a grassy glade to have tea while the parents are being murdered.

The Leader Aid book suggests the following discussion questions for *The Veldt*: "Why aren't Peter and Wendy disturbed after their parents have been devoured by lions?", "Who controls life in the Hadley's house: the parents, the children, or the house itself?", "Why do George and Lydia [the parents] die a brutal death?", and "Why is the nursery more important to the children than their parents are?"

Mrs. Jones learned about *The Veldt* when her fifth-grade son asked her to read the story because he "thought it was really disgusting." Mrs. Jones met with school officials who set up a review panel of five faculty members to examine the Junior Great Books reader.

The panel responded to her concerns in a letter dated January 30, 1987. The letter informed Mrs. Jones that the faculty panel found *The Veldt* acceptable for fifth graders.

### Questions stir debate

Additional reading selections which have come under question from parents include *Mousewife* by Rumer Godden. The story for third graders focuses on a young mousewife who becomes discontented with her life in the mousehole, and, despite her husband's admonitions, ventures to previously unknown parts of the house.

The mousewife befriends a caged morning

dove with whom she spends an increasing amount of time, listening to his stories of the world outside the house. After one prolonged visit, her husband bites her on the ear when she returns to her family in the mousehole, something he had never done before. She finally succeeds in freeing the caged bird and sees the stars for the first time. She returns home a little more contented and "a little different" from all the other mice now.

Suggested discussion questions for *Mousewife* include: "Why is the mousewife unwilling to accept her husband's view that the proper place for a mousewife is in her hole?", "Why does the author give the exceptional mousewife such a limited and unworthy husband?", "At the beginning of the story, what does the mousewife want that she doesn't have?", and "Why is it a good thing for the mousewife to want more?"

The ninth grade Junior Great Books series includes *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson, the highly controversial story in which a young boy helps to stone his mother to death during the annual lottery in which a citizen is killed in order to appease the gods of the abundant harvest.

### Third graders face tough moral dilemma

Mrs. Roseanne Holquist of Penn Valley, California, cited one third grade reading selection, *Ooka and the Honest Thief*, as cause for her concern that some of the reading selections present young children with moral dilemmas that, although acceptable for adults, are potentially disturbing for young children.

The short story by I.G. Edmonds focuses on an unemployed man who steals just enough rice from a rice shop every night to feed his own family. When the man gets a job, he secretly replaces the rice he stole, little by little.

Discussion questions for *Ooka and the Honest Thief* include: "Are we meant to think that it was wrong for Gonta to steal the rice?", "At the end of the story, does Ooka [the judge] still believe it is just as dishonest to steal one grain of rice as it is to steal a large sack?", "Why doesn't Gonta think he is being dishonest when he steals rice for his family?"

### A good idea gone wrong

Critics of the Junior Great Books program said that the inclusion of depressing and disturbing stories of little or no literary merit by virtually unknown authors seriously discredits what could have been a good reading program. Selections from well-known authors such as Rudyard Kipling, Hans Christian Andersen, A. A. Milne, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Alexis de Toqueville make up only a small fraction of the reading material.

Concerned parents asserted that the combination of the negative, depressing topics, the values clarification discussion techniques, and the abbreviated versions of the classics renders the Junior Great Books program unacceptable.

A Christian school in Monroe, Louisiana also rejected adoption of the program during the 1986-87 school year because teachers are not allowed to teach right or wrong answers.

But Howard Will, Vice President of the Great Books Foundation, strongly defended the 25-year old Junior program and the discussion techniques. He said that, during an "interpretive discussion," several interpretations are possible. An answer's validity is based on the amount of "convincing evidence from the book," said Mr. Howard, who added that *The Veldt* is a "hot one" for discussion.

Mr. Will explained that the books are chosen for the program largely based on if the work is "a grabber" for both children and adults. Other criteria for selection include: if the book is well written, if it is appropriate for the grade level, if it is relatively brief, if it "comes alive" during discussion, and if it is not "dumbed down" for young readers.



## Legislation Update

### Parental Consent for Abortion in Alabama

A new parental consent law in Alabama mandates that minor girls obtain written parental permission before an abortion is performed. The 1987 Alabama Legislature passed the measure with tremendous public support, as well as with the support of Governor Guy Hunt and the Speaker of the Alabama House.

Jubilant pro-family forces attributed their victory to a unified political campaign among many conservative groups which resulted in a tremendous amount of public pressure on state legislators.

"The Senators complained about the large number of telephone calls" they received at the office, at their businesses, and even at home, said a coalition representative. The Senate finally passed the legislation 31-0.

"We needed to pick one fight and win," said one pro-family organizer. The leader explained how pro-family supporters had tried to pass a similar bill in previous years, but that the conservative, pro-family groups, did not work together with a unified strategy.

All that changed in 1987 when the leaders of different pro-family groups, including anti-pornography groups, coordinated their strategy and delegated job responsibilities in advance of the 1987 session.

Important elements of the legislative campaign included a rally attended by the Governor and approximately 500 people on the opening day of the 30-day legislative session. In addition, pro-family representatives wore and distributed brightly-colored "stick-on" buttons at legislative hearings. The buttons read "Yes to Parental Consent."

#### Bill is all-encompassing

As stated in the preamble of the H. 346, "It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this parental consent provision to further the important and compelling state interests of: 1) protecting minors against their own immaturity, 2) fostering the family structure and preserving it as a viable social unit, and 3) protecting the rights of parents to rear children who are members of their household.

"The Legislature finds as fact that 1) immature minors often lack the ability to make fully informed choices that take account of both immediate and long-range consequences, 2) the medical, emotional and psychological consequences of abortion are serious and can be lasting, particularly when the patient is immature, 3) the capacity to become pregnant and the capacity for mature judgment concerning the wisdom of an abortion are not necessarily related, 4) parents ordinarily possess information essential to a physician's exercise of his best medical judgment concerning the child, and 5) parents who are aware that their minor daughter has had an abortion may better insure that she receives adequate medical attention after her abortion. The Legislature further finds that parental consent is usually desirable and in the best interests of the minor."

The legislation provides that any person who "intentionally performs or causes to be performed an abortion in violation of the provision of this act or intentionally fails to conform to any requirement of this act, shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. Any person found guilty under this section shall immediately forfeit any professional license they may hold."

The legislation also provides a procedural guideline for juveniles who may wish to petition the court to waive the parental consent requirement. The bill also stipulates specific provisions when the life of the mother is threatened.

## FOCUS: The Move Toward Independent Schools

Joan Davis Ratteray is President of the Institute for Independent Education, Inc. She delivered the following speech at the City Club Forum, Cleveland, Ohio, March 6, 1987.

Ohio is a State that has meant so much to Black Americans, a State that in the past has been a symbol of freedom.

It was this State that held its arms open to fugitive slaves from the South, forming a valuable link in the first "underground railroad." It was this State that held "Christian anti-slavery conventions" in 1850. It was this State that enacted "personal liberty laws" which, among other things, prohibited the use of jails to confine fugitives, slaves.

It was also in this State that a black man named John Brown, in the early 19th century, started some of the first independent schools for black children. And it was here that Harriet Tubman was buried with full military honors. Thus, the "underground railroad" and the State of Ohio are inextricably linked in the history of America's search for freedom.

I have come to tell you today that I have found another "underground railroad" in America. This time it's helping inner-city youth all across this country escape the slavery imposed on them by traditional mass education in our inner cities. It is helping them escape these modern plantations of desolation so they can later return and build stronger communities.

This "railroad" is a network of independent schools, usually operated by minority-group teachers and parents right in their own neighborhoods. They serve African-American, Hispanic-American, American-Indian, and Asian-American youth. Like its predecessor, it's not an actual "railroad," nor is it "underground." It's a system for helping slaves escape. ... These schools are not well known to the general public, but parents who need them are finding them so they can get their children from one academic level to another.

The original underground railroad was only able to rescue a tiny fraction of the slaves who needed to escape. Today's independent schools are also serving a small number of people. Constant escapes on the first railroad helped keep alive the issues of abolition and freedom. They gave people who were left behind a vision that one day, they, too, could be free. Similarly, independent schools today provide hope to minority-group communities in the heart of America's cities. They also may be one alternative that ultimately will lead to freedom for all.

Why do I say that minority-group youth in America are living in a form of slavery? Consider for a moment the experience of one minority group, Black Americans.

Fifty percent of all black children are in the 12 largest inner-city school systems. As the nation's school-age population declines between now and 1995, minorities will increase, and they no doubt will be concentrated in these same 12 cities. By the year 2,000, half of all minority-group men, aged 16 to 24, will have few skills and will not be groomed in the same work ethic as the rest of society. The illiteracy for 17-year-old minority-group youth has reached 47 percent, and most urban schools already have a dropout rate of between 40 and 70 percent. For these young people, there is already little hope, because they have been *intellectually assassinated* by the system in which they are held captive.

However, the problems facing the black community are but part of a larger national crisis, for everywhere in America, we are losing our freedoms. And when we talk about a lack of freedom for minority groups, we must also discuss the curtailment of freedom for the majority. ...

What freedoms have we lost? We have

already lost the freedom to use our tax dollars to send our children to schools of our choice. ...

We have lost the freedom of choice in voluntary association, as we are bused to schools where we do not want to be and where we may even learn less.

We are losing the freedom to use our own language and culture while we learn, because some people think that having English as the official language will stop us from being what God made us — very different and proud of it.

We are no longer free from violence in our classrooms, and through our nationwide decline in achievement, we have lost the freedom to excel in technology. Our schools poorly prepare children in mathematics, language, and the sciences, and we wonder why we're still "a



Joan Davis Ratteray

Nation at risk." In addition to a lack of academic preparation, our youth have lost the freedom to achieve because we have given them no invigorating sense of purpose and no vision of the future. Black children in particular have been stripped of their identity, and "Black History Month" only solves a tiny piece of the problem.

Blacks who have escaped to middle-class predominantly-white private schools have found that they are not free either. They now face cultural alienation in their new environments, at the same time losing their ability to relate to the other Blacks they left behind in their old neighborhoods.

Even the youngest minority-group children have lost their freedom in a very real way. They are unnecessarily shunted into remedial education and kept there, simply because it benefits the institution financially to keep these children in that tragic state, year after year. All this through government subsidy, no less!

As we have come to accept a world without freedom, we see the devastating effects everywhere, even in the black community. Over the years, Black America gradually surrendered its independent option in favor of public education, closing large numbers of black-owned private schools and colleges. We have now reached the point where most Americans (Blacks and Whites) assume that the *only* proper place for the masses of Blacks to be is in government schools. Whites say it in the name of patriotism, for they want to instill our *common culture* and protect "the American dream." Blacks say it out of fear that without continued government protection, white America would wipe out the gains we have made. We also suffer from the romantic notion that we are getting equal access to quality education. In reality, we are not. It is a facade.

The middle class bends over backwards to maintain public education because they owe their livelihoods to this destructive system. They want to protect their jobs, their standard of

living, and the other choices this income provides. For example, in Chicago, 43 percent of public school teachers send their children to private schools. In the District of Columbia, a member of the city council has just launched a study to find out why parents in a middle-income black neighborhood have been taking their children out of the public schools in that ward and sending them to private schools.

Why is this happening? Otherwise caring people have become caretakers who can't control their own bureaucratic machines. The middle class is refusing to stand up and protest conditions. They are not standing up for freedom like the citizens of Ohio did in the 1850s. On one hand, they loudly defend the public system, claiming that its critics are guilty of heresy and treason. On the other, they're quietly abandoning the system, leaving the dregs behind for the poor to consume. It's the ultimate hypocrisy, and the poor should be very angry.

Let me say at this point, there are *some* in the school system, who are really trying to make a difference, but they are too few, too late, and overpowered by the rest.

But is there anything we can do about the freedoms we have lost, especially in education? Yes, there is! We can follow the example of minority-group parents all across America who support independent neighborhood schools.

These parents will no longer allow their children to be fodder in a system that seems not to care — that cannot respond in a timely manner and help children when they need it most. They don't want to watch while politicians and educators continually tinker with a system that even the Carnegie Commission admits cannot be fixed. They want their 14-year-olds to read at grade level, to be prepared for the job market with not only skills but the spirit to participate in today's economy.

They know that if they do not take their children out of these traditional schools, the future will be lost to drugs, crime and early parenthood. In spite of all this, they have found a way out. Through the hope that independent schools represent, these families are not just escaping *from* slavery; they are escaping *to* freedom.

The Institute has identified over 200 five-day schools, many of which were started in the last decade but some are much older. They are not "elitist" institutions but have an "open door." They survive mainly on tuition, offering a basic curricula. They are providing options for families early enough in a child's schooling career to make a difference.

These schools have curricula that are guided by family values, cultural traditions, and religious doctrines — all of which provide a context for the acquisition of knowledge. They pride themselves on their results, turning around children others have labeled "underachieving" and producing students who achieve above national norms. These schools challenge the public sector to develop more productive members of society, and some of them are models for innovation as they give children incentives to succeed.

We at the Institute believe that self-help in education is the cornerstone for building national partnerships and increasing the productivity of America's workforce tomorrow. We must have forward planning if we are to continue and to win our global strategy for America's growth. We cannot afford to have large segments of our population festering discontent, alienation, and purposelessness. We must restore some of the freedoms on which this country was built, allowing parents to have greater options and the resources to make those choices.

The Institute for Independent Education, Inc. P.O. Box 42571, Washington, DC 20015.

# A Look at 'Offensive' Student Surveys in Nation's Classrooms

## CA: Stress Test

Elementary schoolchildren in Irvine, California, answered the following *Stress Mess* survey as part of a Stress Reduction Program during the 1986-87 school year without prior parental notification. The survey was compiled by the Junior Ebell Club of Irvine. Parents received notification of the survey immediately after it was administered.

"If you weren't in a 'stress mess' before, you would be after" taking the survey, said the grandmother of one student.

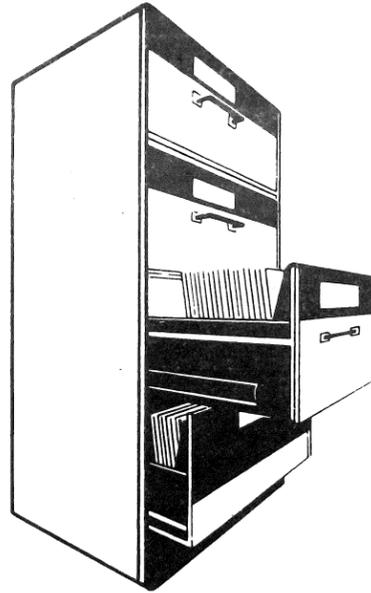
### Part I:

"Below are some things which might make a boy or girl feel stress. There are also some ways to help the person make the stress bother him or her less. Put the letter 'S' by the things which could cause stress. Put 'R' by the ways to help get rid of stress.

1. Your bike got a flat tire on the way to school.
2. A book report is due tomorrow and you left your book in your desk at school.
3. Mom is fighting with Dad.
4. Find a quiet place to sit down and remember your favorite vacation.
5. Breath (sic) deeply and slowly and let your muscles relax.
6. Your good friends began teasing you about your new haircut.
7. The playground supervisor blamed you for a fight another kid started.
8. Going to your room to listen to your favorite record and relaxing on the bed.
9. Accepting the bad thing that happened that you cannot change now but trying to not have it happen again.

### Part II:

1. Write your own example of a stress for you.
2. Write your own way to relax when stress bothers you."



## NY: Death Ed

High school students in Oriskany, New York, completed the following surveys in a required health class at Oriskany Central High School during the 1985-86 school year. Students answered these and numerous other surveys relating to personal feelings and behavior without parental knowledge or consent. The following surveys are included in Unit 11 on Aging & Death in a Health workbook written and distributed by The Center for Learning, Inc., © 1972.

### Euthanasia

"Below are a few statements concerning the issue of life and death. See if you can make a choice that most fits you.

1. You just read that a 19-year-old boy was in a car accident that left him completely paralyzed with some degree of brain damage. Would you (mark one):

- a. refrain from giving him medication that may save his life?
- b. Keep him alive as long as vital signs are normal and/or stable.
- c. Ask him if he would like to live or die?
- d. Tell him of the consequences and then ask him what the doctors should do?
- e. Let him die?

2. You and your spouse just had your first child. The doctor has informed you that your baby is Mongoloid and also has a small hole in her heart. With several expensive operations and much treatment, she may eventually be saved but will need constant care. What would you do?

- a. Allow her to die?
- b. Refuse to allow the operation and medication and take what comes?
- c. Use any means possible to keep her alive but if she lives, place her in an institution?
- d. Use any means to keep her alive, and if she lives, keep her?
- e. Tell the doctors it is up to them?

3. You have just been told that you have an illness that will get progressively worse. In a few weeks or so, you will go into a coma and remain that way until you die. The doctors tell you that there is a machine that could keep you alive for about three to seven months but you will have to remain in bed and there is no guarantee that you will ever come out of the coma. Would you want

- a. To be given a medication to induce death?
- b. The doctors to refrain from giving you a medication that would prolong your life?
- c. To be allowed to die slowly?
- d. To use any means possible to keep you alive as long as possible?"

### On Living and Dying

"Look over the various statements below. They relate to death, dying and living. Ask yourself the question, 'Would this idea be acceptable or unacceptable to me?' Use a rating scale as follows: 1-Very Acceptable, 2-Acceptable, 3-Unsure, 4-Unacceptable, 5-Not Acceptable At All.

- Possibilities:
1. Being killed in an auto accident.
  2. Living forever.
  3. Dying slowly.
  4. Dying of cancer.
  5. Being saved through medical help but unable to walk again.
  6. Being able to choose when you will die.
  7. Dying before your spouse.
  8. Living to age 110.
  9. Dying after your spouse.
  10. Choosing how you will die.
  11. Living but unable to function.
  12. Dying at home.
  13. Dying quickly.
  14. Dying before you are 50 years old.
  15. Giving up your life for another person.
  16. Giving up your life to save someone else.
  17. Dying in your sleep.
  18. Being very sick and close to death but not being told.
  19. Dying with the hope that there is a life after.
  20. Trying a new "miracle" drug that may save you or kill you instantly."

## IN: Study Queries Students' 'Critical Thinking' Skills

Students in Twin Lakes, Indiana, filled out multiple questionnaires concerning "Critical Thinking Skills" during their history classes throughout the 1986-87 school year. The questionnaires were administered by representatives of a Purdue University research project without parental knowledge or consent. Students confirmed that surveys were given to high school students as well as to students as low as the fifth grade. Students also said that they were told to put their names on the survey.

The surveys "really cut away from our learning time," said one student.

### High School Survey

"Respond to each statement using the following key: A-strongly agree, B-agree, C-uncertain, D-disagree, E-strongly disagree

1. It's O.K. for a teacher to come to his own conclusions, but he ought not use his position to try to sway students.
2. When parents differ with their high school-age children, they should take a strict stand with them regarding their beliefs.
3. When preparing a paper on a controversial issue, I would develop my own point of view even though I may not have all of the facts to support it.
4. I think that a lot of times in school they're trying to get too complicated.
5. When the correct answer to a question is not known, then any supported answer can be correct.
6. When asked to remove controversial books, the librarian should not make an issue of the situation

and protect her job.

7. When parents differ with their high school-age children, they should try to persuade them by a presentation of facts.
8. In choosing a course, it is most important that I like the teacher.
9. When preparing a paper on a controversial issue, I would try to present the point of view found in current newspapers and magazines.
10. When analyzing a problem situation, I feel certain that there is only one really correct solution; the problem is finding it.
11. I can trace my own attitude change to confrontations with problems and conflicts in myself.
12. In preparing an assignment when the test (sic) is unclear, I would save the question until the next class meeting and try to get the right answer from the teacher.
13. When analyzing a problem situation, I feel intrigued since many different things can influence the solution to different situations.
14. I would go to hear a speaker because he may offer facts that confirm my ideas.
15. I would seriously consider modifying my views on moral issues if others could show me good alternatives.
16. When preparing a paper on a controversial issue, I would review the arguments offered by the teacher without particular emphasis on either side.
17. When parents differ with their high school-age children, they should let them form their own opinions.
18. In choosing a term paper topic, I would pick a universal topic that is sure to agree with everyone's beliefs.
19. It is the obligation of the teacher to present other sides of an issue even if he doesn't believe them.
20. If a man lives in this country, particularly a teacher, he has no right to attack the system.
21. I am not sure how much I would change if my moral beliefs were challenged, but I certainly believe that values should be examined.
22. In choosing a term paper topic, I would use a topic the teacher suggested in order to be sure I have what the teacher wants.
23. I think I know where I stand on most issues, but I can view the opposite side in ways in which I am comfortable.
24. In choosing an elective course, it is most important that the course requires little effort to get an 'A'.
25. When analyzing a problem situation, I feel uncomfortable because there can be no single solution to such a problem.
26. On most issues, the truth is there for anyone to see.
27. No one can tell us if we are right or wrong when we make a career decision.
28. When asked to remove controversial books, the librarian should stress the constitutional rights to freedom of speech, press, and free thought.
29. Some uncertainties are to be expected, but we will resolve them when the answers are found.
30. I would go to hear a speaker because he may view the topic from a different perspective.
31. In choosing a term paper topic, I would use the term paper as a chance to present my side of an issue, even if the teacher might disagree.
32. All will be well if we work hard to learn the right answers.
33. Students can be held responsible only for what is in the text.
34. When controversial issues come up, I avoid getting involved."

## NY: Family Life Survey Probes Students' Behavior

Students in Baldwinsville, NY took time out of physical education classes in junior high and high school to complete the Family Life Preliminary Student Survey without prior parental knowledge or consent during the 1986-1987 school year. In addition, 10th grade students answered a more detailed survey about their behavior and family.

Local officials administered the surveys to assess the need and contents for a proposed Family Life Education course for grades K-12.

### Tenth Grade Survey:

"Circle the appropriate response(s)  
With whom do you live?  
Mother Father Step parent/s Foster parent/s  
Relative Other  
Your natural parents are:  
Married Separated Divorced Never married  
Other

Employment status of parents:  
Father: Employed or self-employed  
Unemployed  
Mother: Employed or self-employed  
Unemployed  
Does your parent have any of the following?  
Alcoholism Drug dependency Mental illness  
Physical disability Chronic illness  
Institutionalization  
Has there been a death in your family?  
Mother Father Brother Sister  
Do You  
Have a learning disability?  
Receive special help from the school?  
Have frequent absences from school?  
Chew tobacco?  
Smoke tobacco?  
Smoke Pot?  
Drink alcoholic beverages? Ever been drunk?  
Use illegal drugs?  
Have You  
Ever been arrested?"

Been physically abused by an adult?  
Been sexually abused by an adult?  
Been raped?  
Been treated for a mental illness?  
Had sexual intercourse?  
If so, was some method of contraception used?  
Had sex with more than one partner?  
Had VD?  
Are you worried about AIDS?  
If you are a girl have you ever been pregnant?  
Had a baby?  
Had an abortion?  
If you are a boy have you ever made a girl pregnant?  
Are you a father?  
Do you consider yourself a heterosexual?  
a homosexual?  
Have you ever considered or attempted suicide?  
Have you ever been in Alternate School?  
In Foster Care?  
In drug or alcohol rehabilitation?  
In Youth Detention?  
Do you have a chronic disease?  
A physical handicap?"

