

Kenosha School Board Returns Sex Ed Books To Publisher and Requests \$72,080 Refund

The Kenosha (Wisconsin) Unified School Board voted 4 to 3 on January 10 to return its entire stock of sex education textbooks to the publisher and scrap the curriculum that was scheduled to begin on January 24. A two-and-a-half-year-old sex education battle ended in total victory for the parents who claim that the texts are too explicit, anti-parent, and promote unacceptable behavior. The dramatic meeting was attended by hundreds of local citizens.

The School Board also voted 6 to 1 to request a refund from the publisher for the \$72,080 supply of sex education books for kindergarten through grade 12, which had been previously approved for purchase in a 5-to-2 vote at a meeting on June 30. In addition, the School Board voted to develop an entirely new curriculum guide.

The Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, a division of the Bell & Howell Company of Columbus, Ohio, was the publisher of all the sex education textbooks except the one for grade 8, which was published by the Houghton Mifflin Company. When the Kenosha School Board approved the books on June 30, the members had never seen them. Heated controversy erupted later in the summer when they started to read the books.

At the January 10 meeting, letters objecting to the sex education curriculum and materials were presented from an impressive number of local clergy: 52 Protestant ministers, 9 Catholic priests, 1 Catholic sister, and 1 Episcopal priest.

Voting to terminate the curriculum were Irwin Stengert, James Metallo, Ruth Radatz, and pediatrician Dr. Robert Wilson. Voting in favor of retaining the curriculum were school board president Mary Jane Landry (who is the employed area representative of Planned Parenthood), William Neiman, and Carl Podella.

One of the motions during the January 10 meeting was to keep one copy of the sex education books in order to have the series available to the teachers but not the students. That motion was defeated.



Sex Ed Published Separately

The sex education (family life) was a supplement, published separately in paperback, to the hardback series of health textbooks called *Health Focus on You*. Community members speculate that the publisher printed the sex education pamphlets apart from the rest of the health books because it anticipated controversy and did not want to lose the sale of the entire series of health books because of the sex education component.

After the meeting last June at which the school board approved the sex education materials, a local citizen, Mrs. Jil Wilson, raised \$1,000 within 48 hours to run a half-page newspaper advertisement that consisted largely of comments from teachers who did not want to teach this sex education curriculum. "I wouldn't want these things taught to my children," was a typical comment from the teachers. The teachers' objections were included in the school board's June 30 agenda, but the general public would have been unaware of the criticisms if they had been published in the ad.

The sex education paperbacks consisted of the following: for K-3 there were two booklets, called *Strangers* and *Family Living*; for grades 4-6 there were three booklets, called *Family Living and Human Reproduction*, *Venerable Diseases*, and *Aging, Dying, and Death*; grade 8 had only one booklet, called *Human Sexuality*; and grade 10 had two booklets called *Sexuality*:

A Responsible Approach and *AIDS: Understanding and Prevention*. No booklets were designed specifically for grades 9, 11 and 12.

"Sophisticated Pornography"

Two of the mothers who were active in this sex education controversy, Mrs. Marla Yarbrough and Mrs. Debbie Bennetti, called the book used in senior high school, "sophisticated pornography."

Some parents noted that one of the authors of the grade 8 text on *Human Sexuality*, Frank Caparulo, is on the board of SIECUS (the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States). According to these parents, SIECUS is well known for promoting classroom teaching that any kind of sexual activity is acceptable "so long as it does not result in a live birth."

Parents also objected to the lessons on Death and Dying. The teacher's guide says to ask students how they would prefer to die, to imagine they have only one month to live, and to write their own eulogies.

Other parents objected to passages that appeared to encourage students to spy on their parents. A 6th grade lesson tells children to "make an inventory of substances found in the home medicine cabinet which could fit into one of the categories of abused substances and bring the inventory into discussion."

Who Was Responsible?

It is unclear who was responsible for making the decision to introduce this type of sex education into the Kenosha school district. In the middle of the summer, the district's curriculum administrator, Jerry Petersen, announced that he was resigning to take a new job as school superintendent in Oaklawn, Illinois at a salary with benefits of nearly \$100,000.

The Kenosha superintendent, John Hosmanek, who up to that point had defended the controversial curriculum, then blamed selection of the books on Mr. Petersen. Mr. Petersen, however, told reporters that the Kenosha superintendent had been kept fully informed throughout the selection process.

Kenosha parents are grateful that local television regularly covers school board meetings. Parents felt that, during most of the months of controversy and until the last two months, the newspapers ignored the substance of the dispute, namely, what was actually in the textbooks. On television, the public could see for themselves what was said at board meetings.

For example, one parent read from the controversial book *Our Bodies, Our Selves* (written by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective) at a school board meeting to illustrate her objections to some of the resource books cited in the sex education curriculum. Other resources recommended in the textbooks were materials from *Planned Parenthood* and books by Sol Gordon.

"Truth Will Finally Win"

Jil Wilson, one of the leaders of the grassroots group that waged this battle over the last three years, said: "The final vote by the Kenosha School Board proves that, if you persevere, the truth will finally win out. Our victory shows that parents CAN win when it comes to protecting the minds of their children from textbooks that teach them such things as that sexual intercourse among unmarried adolescents is 'positive.'"

Kenosha is a town of 77,000 people, about 50 miles north of Chicago and about 50 miles south of Milwaukee.

Planned Parenthood Defunded in New Jersey County

Morris County Board of Freeholders voted December 20 to discontinue funding Planned Parenthood in Northwest New Jersey, saying that pro-life opposition requires too much time and staff to administer the program.

Planned Parenthood received \$22,000 in 1988 and had requested nearly \$70,000 for prenatal care and AIDS testing this year. The freeholders voted against all contributions, saying that there are other institutions that could fund prenatal care for low-income mothers.

The successful defunding of Planned Parenthood was attributed to the election of three new board members this year, which created a majority of anti-abortion freeholders.

The directors of Planned Parenthood's board of directors, Shirley Sheridan, was displeased with the freeholders' decision. She said that the prenatal care program was instituted to reach the eight percent of pregnant women who receive little or no prenatal care. She stated that Planned Parenthood would seek funding from another source.

Right-to-life supporters were pleased with the board's decision. Felix Auer, a Morris County Right-to-Life member, said, "The minute government funds an organization, it approves what the organization is doing."

Freeholder member Patrick J. Hyland agreed that there is a need for prenatal care but said that funds should come from somewhere else. The county has already started working with a local hospital to provide a program of prenatal care for low-income women.

The 'Chicken or Egg' Question: Which Came First? The Textbooks or the Curriculum Guide?

At the January 10 meeting of the Kenosha Unified School Board, one board member asked the board's attorney if the school district might be liable for "plagiarism" because of similarities in wording between the sex education textbooks selected by the Wisconsin school district and the district's curriculum guide.

About three years ago, the Kenosha School Board set up a committee of more than 20 persons to write a curriculum guide. It was completed in the summer of 1988. It was understood that, after the guide was written, the school board would look for textbook materials that would fulfill the objectives of the locally written guide.

Some citizens noticed that, in several specific passages, the wording of the locally-developed curriculum guide raised the question of whether it may have been written to induce the school board to buy the particular textbooks.

For example, the curriculum guide on page 132 stated that junior high school students should be able to "list positive factors that occur within adolescent sexual relationships." Despite the objections of parents that it is wrong and unhealthy to teach children that it is "positive" for unmarried adolescents to engage in sex, school administrators refused to delete that sentence.

When the Houghton Mifflin textbook *Human Sexuality* for grade 8 was examined this past summer, parents discovered that students were assigned on page 42 to "list the pros and cons of having sexual intercourse in the teen years."

Another example cited by parents was page 178 of the curriculum guide, which presented the following ways to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases: use condoms, wash with soap and water after sex, and urinate after sex. Page 50 of the Merrill text, *Venerable*



Diseases, listed those same three things, in the same order, as ways to "wash away" VD organisms and thereby prevent acquiring STDs.

Parents found this coincidence curious, first, because this information is false, and second, because the three methods appeared in the same sequence. They note that a physician from the Centers for Disease Control said there is no scientific study to prove that washing or urinating will reduce chances of getting VD.

EDUCATION
BRIEFS

Four-year-olds will no longer be accepted into kindergarten by New Jersey's Washington Township after the board's 6-3 vote on November 22. This change in the 12-year program is a result of "new educational philosophies which doubt the value of early entrance into kindergarten." The board held hearings on a resolution to abolish entrance testing for kindergarten in December.

Students in two Denver high schools were visited by the Grim Reaper in mid-December. For two days, every 11 minutes a student was removed from a class, had his face painted white to show he "died," and then returned to class not speaking to anyone for the rest of the day. A subsequent assembly explained the exercise, sponsored by the anti-drug and alcohol student organization ALL-STARS. The purpose was to remind students not to drink and drive so they would not join those who die during the holidays.

A call for the states to guarantee pre-kindergarten programs for every at-risk child was issued by the Council of Chief State School Officers in a national statement at their annual meeting November 14. The Chiefs recommend pre-kindergarten programs for children by the age of three, programs for new parents from prenatal through age 2, and minimum standards for pre-school education and day care outside of the home.

Georgia's chief state school officer will still be elected by popular vote as a result of the defeat of Amendment 1 in the November election. The amendment would have given the Board of Education the power to appoint the state superintendent.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation announced in its Fall newsletter grants awarded in July. These include: \$270,000 to the State of Idaho Public Health District No. 3 in Caldwell, Idaho for an adolescent pregnancy and parenting demonstration project; \$183,508 to the Lao Family Community of Minnesota in St. Paul, Minnesota for pregnancy prevention among Hmong refugees; and \$280,000 to Planned Parenthood of New York City for a family planning center-based AIDS prevention program.

A Waco, Texas teacher was awarded \$77,000 by a federal jury in November. The teacher, Sue Collins, told the University Interscholastic League in 1987 that she was "pressured into changing the failing grade she had given a football player on Waco High School's district championship team." Collins claimed she was unfairly disciplined by the school for her actions. The school suspended her from her teaching job and later transferred her to another school.

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Legislation Update: Federal Bill Dovetails with Carnegie Reform Plan

Senators Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Claiborne Pell (D-RI) are expected to reintroduce legislation they sponsored in 1988 to secure \$25 million for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The board plans to match the funds and then conduct research to develop tests and assessments for its new national teacher certification program.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created with generous funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Two-thirds of the 64 board members are members of the two top teachers' unions and include Mary Futrell of the National Education Association (NEA), Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and other senior NEA and AFT officials.

The legislation, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Act (S. 2698), is part of a nationwide response to the 77-page Carnegie Foundation report called *Teaching As A Profession — Teachers for the 21st Century* which was unveiled at the 1986 Governors' Conference at Hilton Head, South Carolina.

Carnegie sold 35,000 copies of this report, and task force members who produced the report traveled to 29 states that year to sell its ideas. Task force members include Futrell, Shanker, and John W. Gardner, founder of Common Cause.

The Carnegie report calls for "sweeping changes in education policy." The principal changes are the creation of a national certification board for teachers and the restructuring of schools to accept performance goals. Critics



have called this report "an innocuous title for a far-reaching strategy for taking control of public school education policies, plus a political plan to achieve that objective."

Observers say the Carnegie game plan to achieve this goal is "to define the problem so that it will point to a Carnegie-engineered solution, establish a partnership with prominent business leaders to give verisimilitude to Carnegie-written proposals, and then persuade selected Governors to push Carnegie's proposals through Congress and reluctant state legislatures."

As an example, they note the report's first-sentence appeal to the business community: "America's ability to compete in world markets is eroding." Prior to that, critics say, no one had thought that the number-one purpose of educa-

tion should be to enable American business to compete in world markets.

Governors who are promoting Carnegie's proposals or their own similar legislation are former North Carolina Governor James Hunt, New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, Kentucky Governor Wallace Wilkinson, and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

Even though this certification process is starting out to be voluntary, observers predict that national teacher certification would become the fulcrum of control. They maintain that colleges would inevitably try to train teachers so they would be accepted by the national certification board.

They note that when federal aid to schools became part of the education infrastructure, Congressmen wrote into the law a provision that prohibits the Federal Government from exercising any "direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration or personnel of any educational institution, school or school system." Members of Congress and their constituents held that public schools must be locally controlled to maintain "the American way of life."

Observers note that there is no evidence that centralization or nationalization of public school policies or personnel would solve any of the problems we face today. Instead, they maintain there is considerable evidence that a major part of the problem is the nationalization that has already occurred as a result of the power wielded by the national teachers' unions. ■

St. Louis District Teachers Warned of "Far Right" Organizations

The National Education Association is striking back at parental and citizen supervision of public school curricula. In the Parkway School District in suburban St. Louis, Missouri, the NEA sent out a Bulletin in December alerting its members to the alleged danger from the "Far Right." This is a school district where two NEA-endorsed candidates for the school board were defeated in an April 1988 election. The December bulletin is printed below.

To: All Parkway NEA members
From: Bill Guinther President, Parkway NEA
Re: Curriculum Concerns
Date: 11/28/88

Dear Members,

The Parkway curriculum is being questioned by certain factions of the community. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information we have to date.

Last spring, the Board of Education questioned the word "globalism" as it pertained to the Social Studies framework and "humanism" as it pertained to the Science framework. The

term globalism remains as part of the Social Studies framework but humanism was changed to "humane". Globalism and humanism are two words that are often questioned and attacked by those commonly referred to as "The Far Right".

In the last few weeks, questions have also been asked regarding the lack of phonics in our K-6 reading curriculum. Phonics is the preferred method of teaching reading by The Far Right because it allows them the opportunity to rid the curriculum of any stories they feel are inappropriate for children. The Far Right tends to challenge any reading curriculum which incorporates critical thinking, opinion formation and decision making. They also feel that any child who cannot read appropriate items at home by the end of the first semester of the first grade should be placed in an intensified phonics program. No actions have been taken regarding the K-6 reading program at this time but you need to be aware that these questions are beginning to be asked.

In addition, a teacher in the district is currently being questioned by a parent regarding her writing curriculum, another area the Far Right often targets.

Of great concern is the fact that a member of the Board has requested that the Board Policy regarding the teaching of controversial issues be brought before the Board at the December 15 meeting. We have no idea what action, if any, will be taken at that board meeting.

We are concerned that these "attacks" may become more numerous, aggressive and severe. We have been reviewing the case which oc-

curred in Hillsboro a few years ago in which the curriculum was attacked. The chronology of events up to this point is strikingly similar.

We are asking teachers at this point to do two things: 1. keep yourselves informed, and 2. attend the December 15 board meeting to hear what will be said regarding the policy on teaching controversial issues. The meeting will be at Central Junior at 7:30 PM. We are not asking for anyone to make statements, only to be present as a sign of concern and awareness.

The Association will continue to update members as the leadership becomes aware of any additional "attacks" on the curriculum.

A citizens' group is also being formed and is keeping abreast of these events.

FAR RIGHT ORGANIZATIONS

CITIZENS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION (CEE)

Founded: 1983 by Dr. Robert Simmons

Headquarters: Costa Mesa, California

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA (CWA)

Founded: 1979 by Beverly LaHaye

THE EAGLE FORUM

Founded: 1972 by Phyllis Schlafly

Headquarters: Alton, Illinois

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ANALYSTS (ERA)

Founded: 1973 by Mel and Norma Gabler

Headquarters: Longview, Texas

MORAL MAJORITY

President: Jerry Falwell

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BETTER EDUCATION

Founded: 1983

Director: Sally Reed

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

NATIONAL LEGAL FOUNDATION (NLF)

Founded: 1985 by Pat Robertson

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS (SOS)

Founded: c.1980 by Dan Alexander

Headquarters: Washington, D.C. ■

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FOCUS: Policy Produces Religious Illiterates

Winifred Pushor has written pieces for the Indianapolis Star since 1983. She teaches German at the junior high level and has taught in public schools for 20 years. Mrs. Pushor has three grown children.

The public schools have been functioning for some time under the Supreme Court ban on religious activities or teachings.

To comply with the law of the land, the Indianapolis School Board voted in November 1963 no longer to allow the reading of scripture or reciting of the Lord's Prayer in Indianapolis public schools. Also banned was the use of release time to allow teaching of scriptures in adjacent structures.

We have lived with this ruling for 25 years, so it might be a good time to evaluate the results. I do so from a teacher's viewpoint, which leads me to believe we have produced a great number of children who are cultural and moral illiterates.

We have produced a generation of children who know a great deal about sex and rock music, but are totally ignorant of the Christian and moral culture that has formed western civilizations.

This conclusion was graphically illustrated to me when I recently prepared a German class for viewing slides of the world-famous passion play in Oberammergau in the Tyrolean Alps. My first clue that the class did not understand that this play concerned the Passion of Christ was when a titter went around the class. They had expected a sexual presentation. I had not expected to have to explain what the "Passion" in this context meant, but I did.

AS WE viewed the history of the town and some slides of the actual play, one scene featured Christ on the cross along with the two thieves crucified with him. The commentary related that the thief on the right had been promised salvation because of his repentance, while the one on the left had not. This prompted a student to ask, "But what happened to the guy in the middle?"

For an appreciable number of students who do not attend church and have had no instruction in Bible school or from their parents, any references to biblical characters, stories or even Christian holidays are totally foreign to them. An appreciable number of students do not know what we celebrate at Christmas besides Santa Claus. Easter to

them means candy, eggs and bunnies.

The teaching of art and literature is somewhat meaningless to students who do not understand the myriad biblical references and the history of Christianity.

An art teacher knows there can be little understanding of Raphael's works without some knowledge of Mary the mother of Jesus. Shown a picture of *Madonna and Child* by Raphael, a student looked puzzled. "That doesn't look like Madonna," he said. The only "Madonna" he had heard of was the rock star.

Students can't be expected to understand a story or poem in which they run into references to Daniel in the lion's den, the Tower of Babel, Methuselah or Jonah and the whale if they have never heard of them.

THE SIMPLEST references to the culture and history of Christianity are not understood. Coming across the word "saint" in a reading, I sensed incomprehension and asked, "What is a saint?" No hands went up until one student ventured, "I think it's a rock group."

Education administrators have bent over backwards to keep religion out of the history books to comply with the Supreme Court ruling. The consequence is comparable to a lie being taught. The influence of religions on the mass movements, wars, and cataclysmic events of history has been considerable. The religious beliefs of our American forefathers had considerable effect on the founding of our nation and the Constitution.

Should the schools get back into the business of fostering not only cultural but moral literacy because nobody else is doing the job? The American family is fragmented and the influence of religion continues to decline.

"Today's children have been left rudderless in a turbulent world," said Herbert I. London, a dean of New York University. "A generation of kids never learned about the glue that helps this country hang together," said an official of the California department of education.

A teacher in my school tried to counsel a student about "right" and "wrong" behavior. "What helps us know what is right and wrong?" the teacher asked. The student couldn't answer, so the teacher suggested the Ten Commandments. The student didn't know what he was talking about.

Students Watch Porn for Credit

Guest Editorial by Ray Kerrison

When Frank Russo heard that Nassau Community College was illustrating a course in human sexuality with a film of couples engaged in sexual intercourse, he wrote asking permission to see the film.

A bank executive from Port Washington, Russo, reasoned that as a Nassau County resident, taxpayer and father of seven, he was entitled to see what the taxpayers were getting for their money. State and county residents pay more than \$60 million a year to subsidize Nassau Community College, which has 18,000 students.

See the film? No deal, said the college. Its attorney, Anna Marie Mascolo, wrote Russo, "Please be advised that I am denying your request, since this [film] is an item not covered by the Freedom of Information Law. A film



Ray Kerrison

which is shown as part of the development of a curriculum is not a record which is contemplated by the Freedom of Information Law."

She told Russo he could appeal her decision to the college president, Dr. Sean Fanelli. So Russo wrote Fanelli. Russo said, "As a resident and parent, I believe that in a free, open and democratic society, I should be entitled to view material in the possession of a government institution, paid for with my tax dollars, and which may be viewed by my children."

No way, said Fanelli. Quoting the same catch phrases about curriculum development and Freedom of Information Law, Fanelli said, "I hereby deny your appeal for access to this item."

So here we have a state college banning parents from viewing sex films it is screening for their teenage children. Is this what is called an institution of higher learning?

Nassau Community's sex course was outlined

here [in an earlier column]. It told how students were required to go on "field trips" to talk with prostitutes, visit gay bars or check out nude beaches. They were encouraged to collect signatures from students who might have seen their parents naked, had sex with a prostitute, seen a porno movie or made love in the back seat of a car.

They are shown films of couples copulating and close-ups of male and female anatomies. They study a textbook which explicitly encourages masturbation. ("Experimentation with vibrators is in order.")

The book has detailed instructions (with illustrations) on how to engage in oral sex.

Some of its advice is pure poison. For example: "The discovery of infidelity does not necessarily erode the quality of a marriage."

Swinging? "Many believe swinging to be far more acceptable morally than a secretive affair."

Dr. Joseph Dondero, who chairs this course, told The Post that there have been few complaints since the course was introduced 10 years ago.

"They don't get any complaints because 99 percent of the parents have no idea what's going on," said Russo.

"What they are teaching is truly alarming. They make no moral distinction between monogamous marriage and wife-swapping. They imply they are equal and it's only a matter of taste.

"They are imposing their value system on the kids and it's alien to the values of the community."

Nassau Community is the largest of 30 two-year colleges [operated by New York state]. "I'm terribly disappointed at the example we're getting from the trustees who allow this sort of thing," said Russo. "Gov. Cuomo has called for the Decade of the Child and stressed the need for the restoration of values. He should start here."

The bizarre effect of this course is that students may earn three college credits by watching porno movies, visiting a prostitute, going to a gay bar and discussing their sexual experiences with a "trained" physical education teacher in front of the class.

It is apparent that parents should make it their business to find out what their children are being taught, not only in college but in grade and high school.

The education system has been taken over by secularists who are stripping it of all values.

Weep for the kids. They are being corrupted at a frightening rate.

Ray Kerrison is a columnist for the New York Post and has worked for the Post for twelve years. An Australian, Mr. Kerrison is the father of seven and has nine grandchildren, all living in the United States.

U.S.-U.S.S.R. Student Exchanges Begin This Month

This January marks the beginning of student exchanges in the U.S.-U.S.S.R. High School Academic Partnership Program. While many students and faculty are excited about the program, others were surprised to learn that any such program exists and have concerns about the broader implications of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. educational exchange. Some critics say that this exchange may be one part of the current trend in education of teaching our children how to become "citizens in our global community" or, as Dr. William Pierce of Harvard stated, a "true international child of the future."

Jeannie Georges of Lynnville, Indiana said, "It is interesting that Afghan children were taken from their parents to be educated by the Soviets in the Soviet Union, but the Soviets

have found a much more economical way of 'retraining' the American children — through the Soviet-American agreement. . . . This [exchange] is promoted to give us an understanding of the Soviet people so we will 'give up blaming' the Soviets. No doubt there are good people in the Soviet Union, people we may prefer as neighbors over the ones we have. But we are naive if we think the exchange will not include propagandists who will encourage students to believe the Soviet government is as kind as they as individuals are."

Schools in the United States will send their students to the Soviet Union and host Soviet students in return. Most U.S. schools will entertain the Soviet students during January, while most American students will return the

visit in March. Following is a list of U.S. schools chosen to participate in the exchange.

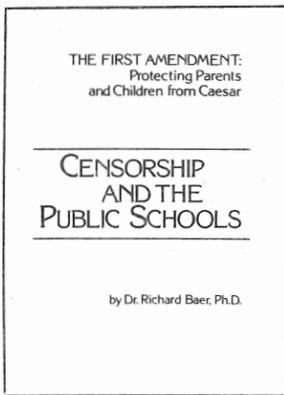
East Anchorage High School, Anchorage, AK
Central High School, Phoenix, AZ
Rangeview High School, Aurora, CO
Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, CT
Choate Rosemary Hall, Wallingford, CT
Friends School, Baltimore, MD
John Carroll High School, Bel Air, MD
Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, Bethesda, MD
Phillips Academy, Andover, MA
Buckingham, Browne and Nichols, Cambridge, MA
Newton North High School, Newtonville, MA
Wylie Groves High School, Birmingham, MI
South High School, Minneapolis, MN
South St. Paul High School, South St. Paul, MN

St. Louis University High School, St. Louis, MO
Exeter Area High School, Exeter, NH
Princeton Day School, Princeton, NJ
Sparta High School, Sparta, NJ
La Cueva High School, Albuquerque, NM
Staten Island Tech High School, Staten Island, NY
Princeton High School, Cincinnati, OH
Columbus Alternative High School, Columbus, OH
Cleveland High School, Portland, OR
AC Flora High School, Columbia, SC
Sam Houston High School, Arlington, TX
Bellaire High School, Bellaire, TX
Episcopal School, Alexandria, VA
Mariner High School, Everett, WA
Garfield/Northwest, Seattle, WA
Lakeside High School, Seattle, WA



Book of the Month

Censorship and the Public Schools — The First Amendment: Protecting Parents and Children from Caesar, by Richard A. Baer, Ph.D., Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, 1985, 37 pp.



In *Censorship and the Public Schools*, Dr. Baer says that the monopolistic structure of the public school system makes it impossible to resolve the censorship problem. He thinks that various forces, such as the increased power of state boards of education in textbook selection and federal rules with which schools must comply or lose federal aid, have eroded local control of schools.

Baer labels pre-censorship the practice of teachers and librarians pre-selecting instructional materials and library books. When they include some books, that automatically excludes others.

The author says that some false assumptions about education and religion are prevalent in public schools. One is that it is "legitimate to require a child to be exposed to a multiplicity of values rather than only a few." This presupposes that, for the sake of what is viewed as a good cause, the state has the right to violate parents' wishes for the children's moral and religious development. This poses the question, "Why should the state have a right to compel parents to submit their children to a curriculum which may lead the child to defect from parental values?"

A second assumption is that it is possible to achieve a religion-neutral curriculum without violating the First Amendment rights of students and their families. An examination of the pervasive humanistic assumptions of much sex education, school counseling and teaching method, such as values clarification, leads him to conclude that many public schools are not value neutral but have put Christianity and the entire Judeo-Christian tradition at a state-sponsored disadvantage.

Professor Baer advocates a voucher system as a way to resolve the present "censorship" dilemma. Since censorship is rooted in a power shift from parents to educational professionals, parents whose values conflict with those imposed by the school curricula have little clout to change curriculum content. The only way to solve the problem is parental choice of schools, by which he means a choice of both public and private schools.

Baer concludes, "Rather than glibly labeling protesting parents as 'censors,' we need to understand that we face far more serious and fundamental issues. As a nation conceived in liberty under God, we must address in a new way what it means as a free people to educate our children."

New Age Courses in Business Spark Controversies and Lawsuits

"New Age" education techniques are being used increasingly by corporations as part of their job training programs for employees, but not without controversy. The Wall Street Journal has reported that this growing trend has sparked many lawsuits by employees who raise religious and philosophical objections.

New Age is a label that can refer to a wide variety of programs from Eastern mysticism to positive thinking. Although often called by such innocuous titles as "human potential sessions," some of them use meditation and hypnosis.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects workers from discrimination based on religion as well as race, sex, age or national origin, and requires employers to "reasonably accommodate" a worker's religious beliefs unless it creates "undue hardship." Until recently, most of the cases brought by employees under this section involved workers who wanted to take their days off on the Sabbath.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the agency that handles discrimination complaints in the work force, says it is receiving an increasing number of complaints about infringements of religious rights, and that most of the increase involves New Age training programs.

The *Wall Street Journal* listed a number of the recent cases that involve New Age techniques. In Pierce County, Washington, Steven Hiatt sued Walker Chevrolet, a Tacoma car dealership, claiming he was fired as sales

manager after he objected for religious reasons to a program called "New Age Thinking to Increase Dealership Profitability." The president of the firm that staged the training program denied that the sessions touched on religion, but admitted that it was a cognitive-psychology training program.

Franklin Marsengill, who has filed suit against DeKalb Farmers Market Inc., refused on religious grounds to attend what he alleges was a New Age training session, and he was fired. Seven other workers who say they were fired or pressured to quit have joined his suit, which seeks back pay as well as damages for psychological trauma.

Dong Shik Kim, a supervisor at the DeKalb Market, claims in the suit that he went to the sessions at his boss's order, but found they required "emotional confessions, psychological conditioning and programming" designed to produce a breakthrough "equivalent to being 'born again.'" Kim says he was urged to shed his beliefs and see the world through new eyes.

Ranjana Sampat, a bookkeeper, says in the suit that she was asked to confess intimate details of her life, including sexual relations. The Market denies the allegations and says workers were "encouraged, not coerced" to attend the sessions.

In another case, William Gleaton sued Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. in Albany, Georgia after he was fired for refusing to participate in a training



program. That case was settled out of court.

The training programs are put on for corporations by consulting firms which generally avoid or deny the New Age label because they fear it conjures up notions of cults and the bizarre. They state that their programs aren't religious or manipulative and don't intrude on personal beliefs. Consulting Technologies Inc., Warner Erhard & Associates, and Pacific Institute are some of the firms that conduct such sessions for Fortune 500 companies.

Critics say the programs include controversial psychological techniques dealing with theology and attempt to alter employees' fundamental belief, and that is where the controversy arises.

The New Age methods used in corporate training seminars are similar to those used in some public school curricula, especially those courses that involve stress, Transcendental Meditation, and higher order thinking skills. ■

Letters to the Editor

More Trouble With *The Witches*

Dear Editor:

I am a new subscriber to the *Education Reporter*, so it wasn't until the last week in November that I received the October 1988 issue. As I scanned the front page, the article about the book *The Witches* caught my eye. As I read the article, I vaguely remembered my eight-year-old



son telling me about a story his teacher had read in class. It, too, had been about witches and had frightened my son. At the time I dismissed the incident as unimportant because I know his teacher and had confidence in her judgment; therefore, I felt there was no need for concern.

However, my interest was piqued by the article so I called my son over and questioned him about the events in his classroom. He began to tell me and then stopped, and, pointing to the picture of the book in the paper, exclaimed, "That's the book."

Tears welled up in my eyes as he explained how fearful and uneasy his encounter with *The Witches* had left him. He was afraid to go outside by himself, had nightmares and even expressed fear that his teacher might be a witch (I was beginning to have similar misgivings). He explained in great detail the entire story of

the witches' meetings led by the "Grand High Witch" and how their main goal was to turn children into mice so they could kill them. I felt upset and betrayed by what I considered to be poor judgment shown by this teacher entrusted with the care and education of my son.

I resolved to take action. A visit with the teacher seemed the best place to start. I called and set an appointment. Before the visit scheduled for the following morning, I spoke with two other parents who had children in the class. They too were appalled and, upon questioning their children, found that they had voiced the same fears as my son.

As I sat opposite my boy's teacher the next morning, I expressed my concern about her choice of subject matter and asked why *The Witches* had been chosen when there were so many wonderful stories and books to choose from. She seemed genuinely surprised at my reaction and explained that she thought it would be a fun book for the children. Furthermore, she felt that the children were old enough to distinguish between fact and fiction. She also went on to say that the book had been "approved" for my son's age group and was currently available in the school library.

My son's teacher apologized and later spoke to the principal and librarian requesting a review of the book for possible removal from the library. If I were a betting person, I would wager that *The Witches* remains in the McAlister School Library. I'm sorry to say that since I spoke out about this book and other books at the school, my young son was harassed by two librarians when trying to check out a book in the library yesterday. At least I feel assured that one small step has been taken to make the faculty of the school feel more accountable for their actions.

I am grateful to the *Education Reporter* for

bringing this nasty little book to my attention. I can assure you that I shall read each future issue with interest. Thank you for the wonderful work you're doing to educate concerned parents about the pervasive and pernicious material being passed off as literature in the public school systems here in Sumner and elsewhere. I'm extremely appreciative.

Diana Bowen
Puyallup, Washington

Benefits of Updating Language

Dear Editor:

Among the many beauties of present-day American English is the total replacement of the archaic word man by the charming word "guy." Think what an improvement it would have been if Macbeth had said to his wife, "I dare do all that may become a guy," or if Nathan had said to David, "Thou art the guy." An American Hamlet would beautifully say of his father, "He was a guy, take him for all in all."

Another example of greatly improved diction in American English that must cause the hearts of all of us to rejoice is the ousting of the old-fashioned (and square) terms child and young woman and young man by that exquisite, felicitous word kid. What a pity that Housman did not have the taste to call his famous book "A Shropshire Kid." What a pity that Poe did not have the genius to hit upon the precise word and write, "She was a kid and I was kid in this kingdom by the sea." The kid is father of the guy, and as Hamlet said, "What a piece of work is a guy!"

Philip Mankin
Richmond, Kentucky
Reprinted from 1975.