

Voters Defeat School Tax



A referendum to raise taxes for "children" went down to a crushing defeat in Washington Township, Indiana, on December 5. It was another one of those elections where "everybody" was for the tax increase, the media supported it with generous favorable publicity, and the polls predicted victory, but it lost by two-to-one when the votes were counted.

The purposes of the tax referendum were to inaugurate a "parents as first teachers" program in the township and to raise teachers' salaries. Opponents of the tax increase met both arguments head on in radio interviews and in campaign literature distributed before the election.

They pointed out that the average teacher's salary in Washington Township is \$37,000, making that Township the second highest in the county. At the same time, students in Washington Township ranked second lowest in the county on the Indiana state test, called ISTEP. The voters concluded that higher teachers' salaries are not the cure for school problems.

Opponents of the tax increase argued against the "parents as teachers" program. It was modeled on the so-called Missouri plan developed by Professor Edward Zigler of Yale University, and piloted in Missouri. This plan is also the long-range objective of those who are promoting the so-called ABC Daycare bill in Congress.

According to Mrs. Joan Gubbins, a former member of the National Advisory Council on Educational Research and Improvement, who attended a conference on this plan in 1987, the concept is to promote "a partnership with parents" on the assumption that parents are not capable of rearing their own children. She described the plan as follows:

"Licensed child care specialists conduct group training sessions with parents and their children, and 'home educators' go into the homes in order to guide the parents in the proper development of their child's personality, emotional and physical health and academic achievement. The children are periodically subjected to developmental tests to determine if the approved rate of development is occurring — if not, further intervention is called for."

Mrs. Gubbins said that the proposal is designed to begin at conception, and "at age three the child enters one of the government-approved daycare centers which are satellites of a public school. At age five, the child enters the school, and daycare is provided before and after school, weekends and holidays, as needed, until age 13."

Those who opposed implementing this plan in Indiana asked voters this question: "Do you want schools to have the right to come into your home at the birth of your child and tell you what to do? How did schools get any such right?"

The advocates of the "parents as teachers" program put their proposal to a referendum after they failed to get the Indiana State Legislature to pass it. They are expected to try again in the State Legislature even though they were decisively rebuffed by a vote of the people.

Educators Admit Some Questions Should Not Be Asked of Pupils

An Indiana educators association has distributed a newsletter containing three pages of advice to all teachers in the district advising them to beware of asking privacy-invading questions of public school students. The instruction is a belated recognition by a teachers association that public schools are required to obey the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) passed by Congress in 1978 and for which regulations were issued in 1984.

The newsletter of the East Allen Educators Association was distributed to all teachers in the East Allen, Indiana school district on December 11. Entitled "Privacy: Important to Your Classroom," the newsletter starts off by asking the teachers the question, "Are we invading our students' privacy?"

The newsletter states that the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment "protects students' right of privacy under certain circumstances." The PPRA states: "No student shall be required . . . to submit to psychiatric examination, testing, or treatment, or psychological examination, testing, or treatment" in seven specified areas without the prior written consent of the parent.

The newsletter cites the 1984 book *Child Abuse in the Classroom*, which included hundreds of pages of testimony from parents, teachers and interested citizens about how classroom courses have confused schoolchildren about life, moral choices, religious loyalties, and relationships with parents.



According to the newsletter, "the book abounds with charges of invasion of student and family privacy."

The newsletter then states that this book "not only pointed up the issue, it also served as a call to action." The newsletter quotes at length from the portion of the book where it alerted parents to "22 objectionable" materials and activities. These include, among others, "autobiography assignments, values clarification, use of moral dilemmas, role-playing, survival games, life/death decision exercises, death education, instruction in nuclear war, globalism, discussions of attitudes toward parents, human sexuality, witchcraft, occultism, Eastern mysticism, critical appraisals of others, nonacademic personality tests, questionnaires on personal and family life and attitudes, contrived incidents for self-revelation, sensitivity training, group encounter sessions, magic circle techniques."

The East Allen newsletter states that the

book "asks only that schools obtain parents' written permission before using any of these approaches — and it specifically does not ask schools to remove any course of material. Even

so, thousands of parents used the letter not only in attempts to prevent their children from participating in certain courses and activities

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Parent Urges Board Policy To Accommodate Religion

An indignant parent appeared before the Mayfield City School Board in Cleveland, Ohio on November 15 because her 4th grade daughter Kristen had been prohibited from singing "Jesus Put a Song in My Heart" at a purely voluntary school talent show. School officials had said that it was their understanding of the law that "religion was not allowed in the public schools."

However the parent, Loren Loving Vail, who is an attorney, presented the School Board with a legal memorandum showing that constitutional law prohibits government- or school-initiated activities, but not pupil action. She demanded that the school board adopt a policy of "accommodating neutrality" in matters of religion in the schools and thereby "support, encourage and uphold the family value structure."

Mrs. Vail's memorandum asserted that, while the law prohibits the school from leading prayer, the law does not say the student cannot bow his head in prayer. Hence, because the student had initiated the religious song, Mrs. Vail asserted that the school's prohibition violated her constitutional rights under the First Amendment. Mrs. Vail's brief gave two reasons to support her argument.

First, the school violated the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment. She cited the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, which ruled that students "do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech at the schoolhouse gate." She also asserted that the school violated the student's right to freedom of speech because it discriminated on the subject matter of the song because the content was religious.

Secondly, Mrs. Vail asserted that the school violated the student's rights under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which requires that schools accommodate religion and not "inhibit or evidence hostility" toward religion. Mrs. Vail told the Board that prohibiting any semblance of religion in the school was "hostile" to religion because it sent a clear message to the students that their religion was either wrong or that it was inappropriate during the week.

Hence, she asserted, this position of hostility toward religion undermined the family value system, especially of those families who are teaching their children to live by the family's moral values every day of the week. Mrs. Vail cited another Supreme Court case, *Abington v. Schempp*, which held that "the state may not establish a 'religion of secularism' in the sense of affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion, thus 'preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe.'"

Mrs. Vail argued to the board that the Establishment Clause would further prohibit



Kristen Vail

the schools from taking the family's moral values and making them content neutral.

In her concluding remarks to the Board, Mrs. Vail advised that, because of the school's violations of the student's constitutional rights and liberties, the school was liable to the student for compensatory damages as recognized under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1983. In lieu of pursuing damages, Mrs. Vail stated that her client daughter demanded the following of the board: (1) that she be allowed to sing the song in the next school talent show, and (2) that the board adopt the policy statement as set forth in the *Florey v. Sioux Falls School District* case decided in the 8th Circuit.

Florey upheld the constitutionality of a school policy which set forth a position of "accommodating neutrality" in matters of religion. (It was the *Florey* case which found that Christmas programs in public schools were constitutional if the religious songs were presented in a "prudent and objective manner and only as part of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday.")

Parental support for Mrs. Vail's argument was apparent from the standing ovation she received from the approximately 100 persons who attended the Board meeting. Eileen Roberts, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Cleveland, however, predicted that the song won't be sung and religion will be kept from the classroom.

Mayfield Superintendent Robert G. Stabile said, "We even call this time of year the 'Winter Holiday' instead of Christmas." The School Board has referred Mrs. Vail's demands to a constitutional expert for an opinion.

Mrs. Vail won a significant case in an Ohio Common Pleas court in September 1988 when the court awarded her client a \$3 million verdict in the case of the wrongful death of a stillborn child. This is the first case in which damages have been awarded for pain and suffering of the unborn baby in utero. The unborn baby's life was valued at \$1.5 million and the parents were awarded the other \$1.5 million for their emotional distress.

(A copy of Mrs. Vail's memorandum to the school board including the *Florey* case is available from the *Education Reporter* @ \$25.)

EDUCATION
BRIEFS

High school students in the U.S. are unimpressed by the knocking down of the Berlin Wall. According to a *Washington Post* survey around the country, teachers who taped some of the dramatic news reports about events in Eastern Europe and then showed them to their classes found that their students were bored, confused, unconcerned, and saw no reason to cheer. The teachers came to the conclusion that their pupils didn't understand the meaning of the Berlin Wall because they are ignorant of history and of Communist ideology and reality. The students didn't even know the difference between a Soviet satellite (country) and a space satellite (in the sky). Some teachers expressed particular concern that their students were unable to empathize with other people at all.

"Men's studies" has become a trendy new subject on college campuses. More than 200 courses are now offered at U.S. colleges dealing with some aspect of "the male experience." The courses pose such questions as "How do these little male babies become men in our culture?" They explore male role stereotypes and what it means to be "a real man." Male studies are promoted by a professional journal called *The Men's Studies Review* and by a Men's Studies Association. However, since 7 out of 10 students taking men's studies are women, it appears that women are more curious about men than men are about themselves.

The United Way in Madison County, Illinois, has inaugurated a program in grades K through 6 in four local schools to teach youngsters how to cope with stress. The program will address such situations as divorce, separation and death of a parent and try to teach youngsters how to deal with those eventualities. The program will involve the children in group discussions, storybook reading, and non-competitive games.

Arizona teachers are required to report to the police all suspected sexual activity between minors under a newly-revised state child-abuse statute. Several teachers in Mesa have posted signs in their classrooms saying, "Don't tell me. I don't want to know." Teachers say they would rather not delve into such problems, and the warning is meant to discourage students from asking teachers for advice on sexual matters. School personnel—and other child care professionals—who are found guilty of failing to report suspected abuse face a sentence of 6 months in jail, a \$1,000 fine, or both.

Education Reporter (ISSN 0887-0608) is published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund with editorial offices at Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002, (618) 462-5415. Editor: Susan Glover. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the persons quoted and should not be attributed to Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund, Annual subscription \$25. Back issues available @ \$2. Second Class postage paid at Alton, Illinois.

Parents Support Choice in Schools

U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos found his friendliest crowd on the issue of Choice in Schools at the U.S. Department's conference in Denver on November 17. About 1,000 parents and teachers showed up to hear the Secretary and other speakers advocate the school reform plan of giving parents the opportunity to choose which public school their children will attend. Where adopted, this system replaces the present system of requiring pupils to attend the specific public school to which they are assigned by the school administration.

When the microphones were opened for a "speak up" from the audience, many took the opportunity to voice criticisms of the academic failure of the public school system and to argue that allowing choice and options will improve the schools because that would bring competition and innovations into what many complain is a monopoly system.

"We must create differences between schools," Secretary Cavazos said. He urged people to think of a variety of ways to change schools so they can work for children.

Public school choice is not the same as a

Illinois Teachers Play Politics

Some Illinois public grade school teachers used their pupils for political activity prior to the November election and retaliated against pupils who failed to cooperate or whose parents failed to cooperate.

In the Belleville, Illinois (District 118) elementary schools, grade school children were told to take a 4-page political handout home to their parents. This included a form to be returned to the teacher on which both parents were to write their names and then check either the line promising they "will support the district's bond issue Nov. 7" or the line "will not support the bond issue Nov. 7." The form also provided space for the parents to request information on voter registration, polling place, and transportation to the polls.

Page 2 of the handout was a letter to parents from the PTA president, Dan Nollman, calling for a yes vote on the November 7 bond issue. The letter gave this political instruction: "(1) Each parent must be registered to vote. (2) Each parent must vote YES November 7. (3) Each parent must [sic] talk to as many other people within District 118 to spread the good word. Please talk to family, friends, neighbors, business people, and acquaintances."

Students were instructed to return the form to school by Sept. 27. According to some of the children, they were warned that those who failed to return the signed form would lose "merits" or be denied recess. No punishment was actually given, but the children were led to believe that it would be, according to those who reported this to their parents.

A registrar was set up in the school to register new voters.

The third page of the handout given to pupils was a yellow flier from a political group supporting the bond issue called "Citizens for Quality Education." No address or chairman's name were given, so community members felt the group could have been a group of school personnel. A blue flier giving a detailed sales pitch for the bond issue, which had no organizational identification at all, was the fourth page of the set of papers given to each student.

The bond issue passed on November 7. ■

tuition voucher system, which would give parents a certain sum of money to use at any school, public or private. However, a voucher system was advocated by some at the meeting, and spokesmen for the Department indicated that a voucher system is to be included in the debate about choice in education.

One of the most innovative ideas to come out of the audience was "cottage schools," a term which refers to homeschooling by certified public school teachers who have left the system in order to teach their own children at home and, at the same time, take in a number of neighborhood students for instruction, too. Those hearing this term for the first time expressed themselves as delighted with the idea and its potential. Some said it was like giving a child a private tutor.

The nation's largest teachers union, the National Education Association, is bitterly opposed to the concept of choice. NEA members spoke up against it at all six regional meetings. The 1989 NEA resolutions included one opposing all "federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans."

The Denver meeting was the fifth in a series



Secy. Lauro Cavazos

of six conferences on the issue of choice in education sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The principal argument against choice in schools is that choice will encourage more white flight from urban schools and promote more segregation. Secretary Cavazos disputed that this would be the result, pointing to successful choice plans in the state of Minnesota and East Harlem, New York.

Choice in education is one of the initiatives of the Bush Administration. President George Bush, who has said all along that he wants to be the "education president," gave a personal message to those in attendance by video on a large screen. Attendees came from many states for the two-day regional strategy meeting. ■

The newsletter advises teachers as follows: "To avoid being caught in a poor situation at best; being charged with invasion of privacy; you need to ask yourself some questions: (1) Do my assignments serve the educational objectives of East Allen? (2) Do the topics I assign or the questions I ask assist the student to understand the subject matter or add to their knowledge? (3) Could the answer to my query potentially cause harm to the student or his/her family? (4) Is it necessary to know the information the assignment/topic will gain? (5) What will be done with the information gleaned from the assignment? (6) Who will see or read this assignment? (7) Would some other type of question that does not require a personal/intimate revelation do just as well?"

The newsletter advises teachers to "answer these questions honestly, and if you can honestly say you are following the curriculum and are developing the minds of your students by using the personal questions and techniques, then you probably have a defensible court case. So do your thing. If you have any doubts about the techniques you are using, then adopt some new procedures that fit the test and avoid problems. But don't quit probing and challenging your students. We cannot allow ourselves to be censored. Yet, we must be wary and careful that our own skirts are clean."

So far as is known, this is the first time a teachers' union or other organization has ever admitted that the the 1978 Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment has merit, or that there are any questions or techniques used in the classroom to which parents or students have a right to object. The newsletter appears to be based on an article in the November 1989 *American School Board Journal* entitled "Classroom Questions: Respect for Student Privacy Isn't Asking Too Much" by Indiana University Professor Edward Jenkinson. His article concluded with the caveat: "Avoiding invasion of privacy goes to the heart of teaching and learning. Making sure it doesn't happen is not easy. But it's essential—because crossing that line can lead to unnecessary grief for all involved." ■

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THROUGH
YOUR CHILD WEDNESDAY
SEPT. 27 SEPT. 27 SEPT. 27 SEPT. 27

NAME: _____

SPOUSE'S NAME: _____

PLEASE CHECK

I AM A REGISTERED VOTER
 I AM NOT A REGISTERED VOTER
 MY SPOUSE IS A REGISTERED VOTER
 MY SPOUSE IS NOT A REGISTERED VOTER
 I WILL SUPPORT THE DISTRICT'S BOND ISSUE NOV. 7
 I WILL NOT SUPPORT THE BOND ISSUE NOV. 7
 MY SPOUSE WILL SUPPORT THE BOND ISSUE NOV. 7
 MY SPOUSE WILL NOT SUPPORT THE BOND ISSUE NOV. 7
 WE DO NOT WANT TO COME TO OUR HOME ON _____ AT _____ TIME

TO REGISTER US FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION
 WE NEED TRANSPORTATION ON NOV. 7 AT _____ TIME
 IN ORDER TO GET TO MY POLLING PLACE
 WE KNOW WHERE WE VOTE (POLLING PLACE)
 WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE WE VOTE (POLLING PLACE)

NOTE: IF YOU ARE NOT SURE IF YOU ARE REGISTERED, PLEASE CALL THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 277-6600 FOR VERIFICATION. YOU CAN ALSO VERIFY THE LOCATION OF YOUR POLLING PLACE THROUGH THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE THANK YOU.
 DAN NOLLMAN PTA PRESIDENT

Questionnaire Which Pupils Were Required to Take Home to Their Parents and Return to Their Teachers

Question

Continued from page 1

but, also, to ask for removal of such activities from the school."

According to this newsletter, testimonies recorded in the book *Child Abuse in the Classroom* show that parents have charged teachers and counselors with asking students many hundreds of nosy questions. The newsletter quotes 22 of them, including: "Are you going to practice religion just like your parents? Do you believe in a God who answers prayers? Have you ever had problems so bad you wished you could die so you would not have to face them? Who has the last word in your family? How many of you ever wanted to beat up your parents? Would you like to have different parents? How important is making out with a girl? Do you like girls who have sexual experiences? How often do you normally masturbate?"

After stating the law and the parental criticisms, the newsletter gives this stern advice to teachers: "If you are asking questions or assigning topics that are similar to the aforementioned, you are treading on dangerous territory. We don't condone censorship, nor do we wish to aid those who do. But this issue should not be taken lightly." ■

FOCUS: Public Schools Need Drastic Change

by Albert Shanker

Mr. Shanker, longtime president of the American Federation of Teachers, the nation's second largest teachers union, delivered this address to a conference of teachers and school administrators sponsored by the Gates Foundation in Denver, Colorado, September 20-23, 1989.

... The bad news, however, is what we see when we take a look at what are the top categories. Generally, the National Assessment asks the question: How many are illiterate? How many are above illiteracy, but not that far? How many can perform adequately at some low level? And, how many can really perform?

To give an example, an "adequate" letter would be a letter of application to a manager of a supermarket where you write one or two paragraphs which have some spelling and grammatical errors, but you do manage to convey why you should get the job, some idea which convinces the manager.

A really good letter would be one, two or three pages, with practically no errors and expressing lots of ideas. Reading at the highest level would be some complicated stuff, some of the editorials and articles in some of our better magazines and newspapers, with long sentences and complex ideas.

So the question is, how many of our 17- to 18-year-old youngsters — the kids who are still there after about 29-30 percent have dropped out — our "successful" kids (not the at-risk kids, not the dropouts) — what percentage of those kids are able to really read something that's fairly difficult? What percentage of them can write a letter or an essay of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 pages and do a good job? What percentage of them can solve a two-step mathematical problem?

Well, the answer is, depending upon whether you take reading, writing, math, or science, the percentage of those still in school at age 17 and about to graduate who are able to function at that top level is: 3, 4, 5, or 6 percent.

3, 4, 5, or 6 percent.

The percentage of those able to write that 1 or 2 paragraph letter with lots of errors in it is only 20 percent. In other words, 80 percent of those who have not dropped out cannot even write two paragraphs loaded with mistakes which have a single idea in it.

80 percent cannot!

What does this mean? It means, very clearly, if you take a look at college entry examinations in Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Germany, France, or any other industrial country in the world, you can say with absolute assurance that any kid who gets into college in any one of those countries would easily be in the top category in the United States.

In Germany, 28 percent of the youngsters pass the college entrance examinations. In Great Britain it's 16 percent. In all the other countries, it's somewhere in between. In other words, we're producing 3, 4, 5, or 6 percent of top kids who are able to function in this world compared to 16 to 28 percent — of students in other industrialized countries.

By the way, while all those in the other countries who pass foreign college entrance examinations would definitely be in this top category of ours, not all of our top category people would be able to pass their college entry examinations. What does this mean?

What it means, translated into very rough and nasty terms, is that the overwhelming majority of kids who go to college in the United States would not be accepted in any institution of higher education anywhere in the world.

Probably about 90-95 percent of our kids going to college could not get into college elsewhere. They can only get into college here because we have relatively low standards for college entry compared to all those other countries.

What this means is that mostly white, middle and upper-middle class, advantaged kids — some of the most advantaged kids who ever walked the face of the earth — are doing very, very, very poorly in terms of education. It also means that colleges in these other countries

80% of high school graduates cannot write a 2-paragraph letter.

essentially have an entry standard which is similar to that of our elite institutions in the United States.

One conclusion that one can draw from this is that every teacher in Germany or France or these other countries is essentially the equivalent of a graduate of Harvard or Stanford or the University of Chicago in terms of ability to compete academically.

You can see it in many, many indicators. One of them is that the United States today is producing half the number of PhDs in engineering that we produced in 1965, and half of those we are producing are foreign nationals who have announced that they intend to go back to their own countries. There are lots and lots of indicators.

Does anybody really think that we can overtake these terrible results, these massive differences that we have with these other countries, if we merely get a slightly better teacher, slightly better teacher training, a little bit of alternative certification, a little better textbook, a little smaller class size, a little better early childhood education, a little more Head-start?

I'm not saying I'm against any of those things or that any of them are bad. That isn't the point. The point is that you have this huge problem! It's not just some slight problem, where some slight movement would move us a few points so we're right where we want to be. We've got to make a massive leap! I think that it strains belief for one to accept the notion that any small changes will bring about the results that we need.

What's wrong? Why is this happening? That would take a couple of hours, but I'm going to give you just a little glimpse. Let's take a look at the whole question of teachers in the United States. We get our teachers from our colleges, and our college standards are quite different from European standards.

Right now, as I stand here today and as you sit listening, there are states like Florida and California that give teachers examinations before

they hire them. What is the examination, let's say for an elementary school teacher in California, or Florida, or New York State? What is the mathematics part of the examination?

Well, it consists of a number of questions — the same questions that are given to 6th grade kids in an elementary school. They're the kinds of questions I used to get as a kid as "warm up" — you know, no-pencil no-paper — and that I used to give to kids when I once taught the 6th grade the same way, no-pencil no-paper. These are the questions that teachers are asked on these examinations.

What's the passing mark for a prospective teacher — on a 6th grade arithmetic test? The passing mark is 65 percent, the same as it would be for a kid. And between 30 and 40 percent of prospective teachers cannot get the 65 percent on a 6th grade arithmetic test. They fail!

Many of them are hired anyway because there are shortages in certain areas. But many who are hired, are hired because they passed with 65 percent. And I ask you, what is the future of mathematics education in elementary school? What are the chances of a kid who enters secondary school with those deficits? What are the chances that those kids will be able to catch up, or will even think that it's important to know mathematics?

After all, there's a teacher there who, in a way, either explicitly or implicitly, says: "Look I never learned the stuff, and here I am. I went to college, and I'm a teacher. Everything's okay. You don't need to know this."

So we need to ask ourselves. This is not Europe. We don't have that supply of teachers right now. Maybe 20 or 30 years from now we'll have that supply. But how do we build a school system which assumes that we can find 2.5 million teachers who are very literate and very numerate and very knowledgeable in their subjects and also know something about children and about teaching and about grouping practices and everything else?

We don't have them now, and given the demographics of this country with the decline in overall population and with the labor shortages coming today, things are going to get worse. There will not be more people in the teacher pool in the future. There will be fewer people, even if we do more and more to make the job more attractive, because everybody is going to be in there competing for a smaller number of people.

So, one of the questions we need to ask is, "How do you run schools if you can't get 2.5 million people of the caliber that you need?" There was some talk here about smaller class size. I spent many years of my life with banners saying, "Smaller Class Size." But, if some of the teachers who are being hired now are not very literate or numerate, if you reduce class size, you've got to hire more teachers. And if you hire more teachers, you have to dig lower and deeper into the talent pool.

If all of you could find the money in this state and in every other state to substantially reduce class size nationally, and get teachers not to teach five periods a week but to teach four, let's say, so that they'd have lots of time to mark papers and talk to each other, you'd need to hire another 2, 3, 4, 5, 600,000 teachers, and you would go lower and deeper into the talent pool and get a lot of people who are pretty dumb and shouldn't be teachers.

In other words, you can't do it that way. If we are going to bring teachers closer to kids, it cannot be done by hiring huge numbers of new people. We've got to think of new ways of organizing things and not think of the old ways — just going out and hiring some more people — because they're not there.

The main thing that's wrong with our schools is the way we treat students. Just because European schools and Canadian schools and Australian schools do better than we do, I do not think they do a good job with most of their students, or as good a job as they could with many of them because, essentially, schools are set up for the kids who can sit still for five hours a day (not many adults can do that), and listen to somebody talk and remember most of what the person said (not many people can do that). Peter Drucker says that the most important part of the human anatomy that determines success in education is the rear end. We really need to change that. You are fortunate if you happen to be in a class where the rate at which you learn is the rate at which the teacher is talking.

It is not a good system. We all know from our own experience that we all learn at different rates. Yet, when we make teaching something where a teacher talks, we say, "You may all learn at your own rate, but you had damn well better learn at the same rate that I'm talking because I can't talk at different rates for each and every one of you."

The main thing that's wrong is that kids are passive throughout this whole thing. They are sitting there. And learning is something that is active. . . .

What about the kid who can't sit and listen very well? What alternatives do we have for him? If the doctor gives you a pill and you don't respond to it, he doesn't blame you and tell you to double the dose. He says, "I'm sorry. That works on most people. Here, try a different one. If that doesn't work, come back. We'll try something else."

Why don't we in schools have alternatives? Why don't we say to the kid who can't sit and listen all day long: "Here's a video tape. Here's an audio tape. Here's a simulation game. Here's a computer model. Here's something you can do with 6 other kids and a discussion, and come back with a report. Here's some place you can go and come back and bring this information." There are lots of different ways.

No, we tell kids, you learn it this one way, or otherwise we'll make you do it again the same way, and again and again. Essentially, we have a school system which does not take individual differences into account. It essentially says, there is one way of doing things. You do it at the same time and in the same way, and those of you who are lucky enough to make it — that's great, you're smart. The rest of you, we're going to brand as being stupid. . . .

Change is painful. Think about what happens, what might happen in a school tomorrow, if all the teachers, and the principal, and the assistant principal, and others got together and said, "Well, let's really improve this school." Well, they might say that, "There are three teachers who are really very, very bad. They're really harmful to the kids. They should either get help or they should go. We've never had a math teacher in this school. Maybe we need to get somebody who works in a nearby business who is not certified. Maybe we need to do it

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through some distance-learning, through technology. Maybe we need to go out to a high-tech firm, and maybe we need to take some of our budget money in this school and pay the math teacher more than we pay other teachers. We don't like the idea of doing that. We've never done that before. But if out there in the world, people who know mathematics get paid more, we're not going to get math teachers if we pay them the same as the salaries of other people. Maybe when three teachers retire we shouldn't replace them, but we should get more technology around here because we want to get away from talk and we want to get different ways of doing it."

How many really believe that that could happen in a school? By the way, it couldn't happen anywhere if there were nothing at stake. For the most part, people are nice. They don't like to get into arguments with the people who work next door. They don't like to get into fights, especially if you're a teacher. . . .

So, basically, people don't make any changes unless they are changes that are not harmful to anyone, unless they're changes that don't involve conflict. But you know something, those changes that you can make without any conflict, those changes that can be made by unanimous decision are very unimportant and they're very small.

It is my view that the only way you can get people in education to make the painful decisions that need to be made to really shape up the institution, is to create a world in public education which is very similar to the world out there in the market which business operates in, where people make decisions, not because they enjoy fighting with others, or they enjoy letting people go, or they enjoy having technology in some cases replace people. They do it because they have to — because if you make the right decisions, you may make it — and make it real big. And if you don't make the right decisions, you may lose — and you may lose an awful lot.

I think without the incentives, and by incentives I mean, without a system in which there are winners and losers, people aren't going to make the right decisions. And that's not just teachers. . . .

The fact is that we have a Soviet system of education in this country. And by "Soviet" I mean, there you have a system which for all these years you got treated exactly the same way if you continue to fail as if you succeed. As a matter of fact, if you really succeed, you're in trouble because everybody will say you are cheating, you're lying, you've cooked the figures, and everything else. If you're really doing well, you're in big trouble in this business.

We need a system in which people do the right things because it's in their own interest to do the right things. And if they don't do the right thing, there's an automatic system which moves them out of the scene and brings new actors in.

Now, how could this work? First, you need to decide on what you want to get out of the system. And I need to spend a minute or two on this because, if we don't solve this problem, then we can't do anything with education. And that's the whole question of goals and standards.

I don't think we need to agree on which 672 items we need to learn about in History. I don't think we would agree on it. But, I talked a while ago about the fact that only 3, 4, 5, or 6 percent of our youngsters can read at a high level, can write, really write, and can do mathematical

problems. Couldn't we agree that we are going to give examinations, periodically, assessments to youngsters to see whether we can move that 3, 4, or 5 percent up to 20, 30, 40, 50 percent who are really able to read, who are really able to write an essay?

By the way, we need different examinations. We don't write essays here because we've spent all of our lives taking these idiotic multiple-choice examinations. In every other country in the world, the teacher knows "I'm preparing my kids to succeed, and to succeed means that the kids I'm teaching are going to have to sit for 2, 3, 4, or 5 days and write essay examinations."

Every American teacher knows that at the end of this year, at the end of next year, and finally with the SATs, my kids are never going to have to write an essay. They're never going to have to organize their thoughts. They're never going to have to worry about how to express themselves. They're merely going to need a passive knowledge of which things to knock out and which one or two to guess from. . . .

Suppose that the state legislature were to do the following: It would set aside a sum of money which is equal to, let's say, \$500 for each teacher in the state and put that into a fund called "Colorado Merit Schools Fund." Now if you were to give that to each teacher, obviously everybody'd get \$500. Don't do that. I'm not saying you shouldn't give them their normal salary increases. You should take care of that. This is over and above. This is a fund.

The idea is that, at the end of a certain period of time, we're going to give some big prize money to all the individuals in the 10 percent of the schools that make the greatest percentage of progress on these things that I just talked about, that is, the ability to write essays, the ability to read complicated material, and the ability to perform in terms of doing multiple-step problems in mathematics.

It will be done in such a way that every school will have a chance of winning. That is, there'll be different leagues. A school that's at bottom now will not be competing with a school that's on top now, but will be competing with all the other schools that are in pretty bad shape right now. Schools that are on top will be competing against comparable schools.

If we were to decide that only one-tenth of the schools will get the prizes, that would mean that \$500 per individual becomes \$5,000 per individual per year. I do not think that prizes should be awarded after one year because no one has the ability to change things in one year. When you change things you make mistakes, and for a little while, as you're reorganizing things actually get worse than they were before when you were doing things wrong, but at least they were well organized wrong.

You were doing things that were routinely destructive whereas now things just get very messy. So, if you want to encourage people to win this prize, they'll never change their habits if you only give them one year. In one year, they will only have a chance to do the same stupid things better, a little better.

So, if you were to say, "Look, you've got 5 years. At the end of 5 years, only 10 percent of the schools are going to win. There will be \$5,000 each year put into an account. \$5,000 over each of those years will be \$25,000, and it earns interest as it stays, so that's \$30,000 per individual as a prize after 5 years for all the faculty members in 10 percent of the schools."

I would also say that the schools that make no progress at all, or are in the bottom 1 or 2 percent, ought to be closed down, faculties maybe look for jobs elsewhere, and students given a choice of going to nearby schools. In other words, there's something in it for winners and there's also something negative for those who are in very bad shape.

In order to participate, the union and the school board would have to do something. The school board would have to say, "Look. In order to allow the faculty to compete, we now waive all rules and regulations of the board of education, except those pertaining strictly to the health and safety of students and those mandated by federal law on civil rights and aid to the handicapped, etc. . . .

Secondly, because each school is now going to be different, because the faculty of this school is going to say, we've got *this* theory of running it just the same way businesses are going to try and develop different products, we can no longer compel parents to send their kids to a given school. So give parents choice. So if they come to you as a school board member and say, "I don't like what those teachers do in my school." You say, "Okay, take your kid to another school."

Third is, since the teachers and the principal are now going to be very, very, highly motivated to win the prize, and they're going to be working like mad to do that, you no longer need to keep 50 percent of all the school money for central bureaucracy to go around watching these people. You turn over that budget to the faculty of the school. **You know, we've got about one teacher to every 25 kids in this country, but we've got one supervisor for every 6 teachers.** That's because teachers are harder to handle, I guess.

One of the major differences between American schools and all the others in the world is that we spend half of our money on bureaucracy, whereas the other schools in the world don't spend more than 20 percent. Martin Mayer in 1961 said that New York City had more supervisors and administrators than the entire nation of France, and New York State has more administrators and supervisors than all of Western Europe.

You read about leaner management as part of the improvement of American business. We are going to get no improvement in public education in this country without leaner management. There are billions of dollars out there and they've got to be shifted closer to children, and away from bureaucracy, and this is one of the ways to do it.

Now, what does the union do? The union has to give the right to the faculty of the school to lift any provision of the contract. That is, both the board and the union lift their provisions. Both sides deregulate in order to allow each school to compete in this contest.

Is five years too long? Should you give prizes every three years? Or should you award 1st prizes and 2nd prizes? Should more than 10 percent have a chance of doing it? The answer to those questions is, "I don't know, and neither do you." The important thing is that we need to find out what incentives will work. . . .

It seems to me that the biggest problem we have in American education — yes, we need early childhood education, we need professionalization of teachers, we need better salaries, we need more open entry, we need *all* these things

— but the one thing we need more than anything else is to create in American public education an institution which is capable of revitalizing and renewing itself. It's a dead institution. It's the same now as it was 30 years ago and 40 years ago, and 50 and 70 years ago.

We know it isn't working, but nobody is doing anything about it. In every other field of life, where there's competition, if you're running a lousy show, and if you don't change, you die. Someone else comes along who's got a better idea, and that better institution lives. . . .

Why should I, a union leader, be standing up here proposing this? There is absolutely no question that American education as it exists today will not be tolerated by the American people, by our business community, by our policy leaders for more than another few years. We cannot survive as a country continuing as we are going. There is going to be change. There is going to be drastic change. The only question is, what will be the nature of the change and who will lead it?

We see change in Chelsea, Massachusetts where a school system has been given over to a private university for a period of 10 years without any public meetings, no conflict of interest laws, no public information access, nothing. That's one form of reform. Take public schools and privatize them, in a sense, under contract for a period of time.

Chicago schools are moving in another direction. In another three weeks, every school in Chicago will have a separate board of education for each school, with a majority of parents selected by the Iowa Democratic caucus system. As a bunch of parents walk into an auditorium, they look at each other and they select from among their numbers. Those school boards, school by school, will have the right to hire and fire the principal, which means that they essentially have the right to do anything they want if the principal wants to keep his job.

The other road is to give professionals the responsibility, but to hold them accountable. You've heard that phrase 10 or 20 times in the course of this conference. What I've proposed just now is a way of holding them accountable.

To hold them accountable: (1) Decide on what your goals are and how you're going to assess them. (2) Allow them to make decisions as teams. (3) Give them the resources to do it. Deregulate both from the board and the union side. (4) Then provide a system of rewards for those who succeed and punishments for those who fail.

I think that's the central issue. Now, once you have schools that are competing to win those prizes, they will ask themselves, What will do a better job in helping these kids to learn? A longer school day? A longer school year? Paying some teachers more than others? Loosening the tenure regulations? More technology? Or more early childhood education? More summer programs?

None of us can run the schools from the top any more than top business people can run their whole business, if it's a large-scale business, from the top. What you've got to do is set your objectives, make sure the incentives are right, and then let the thing work, and every once in a while, we'll take a look down there to make sure that people aren't cheating, because that also happens in any competitive system. All the other things that we're talking about will fall into place if we do this. . . .