



Student Protests Shake College

William Cunningham, president of the University of Texas at Austin, was hounded by an angry mob of 1,500 students when he tried to make a speech to the student body about racism on April 13. His attempt at a speech was a response to two racial incidents committed by fraternity members during the university's "Round-Up" weekend, where a member of Phi Gamma Delta designed a T-shirt showing a caricature of Sambo, and several members of Delta Tau Delta smashed a car which had racial slurs written upon it.

Although Cunningham's speech condemned the incidents — he said that "racial insensitivity will not be tolerated on this campus"—the university president was still forced to end his speech early. When confronted with the denial of the president's right to free speech, one student commented that it didn't apply to Cunningham because "he's not speaking—he's reading."

Marcus Brown, head of the Black Student Alliance (BSA), said that "when William Cunningham takes the stage, we will not allow him to speak." When Cunningham was forced to leave the West Mall and return to his office, the president said, "I think it's a sad day when we shout down people at the University. It does not reflect positively on the individuals who participate in that kind of activity."

Brandon Powell, another BSA member, said that Cunningham was only interrupted when the students decided that he had nothing important to say. "He wasn't allowed to continue because his speech was empty."

The two racial incidents President Cunningham intended to speak out against are just a few of the events this past semester months which have polarized the University of Texas, a campus traditionally politically apathetic.

The Black Students Alliance, along with the Students' Association and the Steve Biko Committee, has called for implementation of their "Project PRIDE." The groups are demanding that the university provide a Black Student Center, complete with a \$50,000 a year budget at their disposal. In an effort to bring "multiculturalism" to the university and counteract Western Civilization classes, Project PRIDE calls for all students to be required to take a mandatory African-American Studies class in order to graduate. The University of Texas currently has only six mandatory classes, and Western Civilization is optional even for history majors.

Scott Gaille, chapter chairman of the Young Conservatives of Texas, called PRIDE "an attempt to politicize the University of Texas curriculum." He said that forcing a mandatory "cultural diversity" class on the school's students would only polarize the campus even further.

Gaille said that "The notion that the University of Texas' core curriculum can be enriched by adding to its list of courses and readings topics about or by women and persons of color *not* because they are the best or most appropriate for the subject in hand, but because of sex or race — a kind of a affirmative action program in scholarship — is both patronizing and ludicrous."

He noted that his organization supports the studies of other cultures, but not at the expense of making the curriculum "Oppression Studies 101."

Tensions Rise on Campus

Todos Unidos, a newly-formed Mexican-American campus organization, has called for a program for Hispanics similar to that of PRIDE, with a mandatory class in Mexican-American Studies and a Hispanic Student Center, complete with an independently controlled budget.

The March election of Toni Luckett, a black lesbian political radical who was elected as president of the student government, has done little to ease racial tensions on campus. She is a strident advocate of racial separatism on campus and the Project PRIDE and Todos Unidos programs.

A law student staged a three-day hunger strike in an effort to force the university to remove a statue of Confederate war hero Jefferson Davis from the campus. The statue is still standing.

Conservatives are finally speaking out against the events of the past few months. When the University Atheists attempted to burn a flag last month as a protest against patriotism, they were thwarted by nearly 400 conservative students, many of whom were armed with fire extinguishers and water bottles. Andy Panos, a student attending the counterprotest, said that the attempted flag-burning was "a rehash of '60s liberalism," and the reaction "proves that people are really fed up, and that there's a prevailing change of thinking going toward moderate to conservative ideas." Paul Bartley, a graduate student in accounting, said that "we're not going to allow the loony left to come out here and burn our flag." ■

Parents Sue To Remove Pupils From "Michigan Model"

Parents from White Pigeon, Michigan have filed a federal lawsuit against their school district in an effort to remove their children from the Michigan Model for Comprehensive Health Education (MMCHE) program.

The lawsuit, filed by David Melton of the Rutherford Institute, charges that the school is engaging in "unauthorized, unlicensed, illegal and unconstitutional quasi-psychotherapeutic practices, psychological testing, substance abuse services, and projective and non-projective personality testing."

They are also seeking a declaratory judgment from the court stating that the Michigan Model is "unlawful" because of the risks inherent in the application of psychological techniques in the classroom. Additionally, the plaintiffs seek monetary damages for the harm caused by the use of these techniques on their children.

This case could be a landmark decision in the continuing debate over the appropriateness of using psychological testing and techniques in a public school classroom.

The Michigan Model program is a comprehensive health education course developed by the Michigan Department of Education for use



in the state's schools. It includes classes on family planning, human sexuality, family life, reproductive health and communicable diseases, death and dying, substance abuse and suicide.

Although the Michigan Model has caused controversy since its inception, this is the first time parents have filed a lawsuit to allow their children to "opt out" of the program. Currently, the program is mandatory in the Michigan public schools; there is no substitute program for children whose parents do not want them to be enrolled in the program, nor are children currently allowed to "opt out" of the Michigan Model curriculum. ■

Roswell, New Mexico Rejects Project Re:Learning

The Roswell, New Mexico School Board refused to adopt a program entitled Project Re:Learning which has been criticized as a version of Mastery Learning, following a series of public meetings attended by hundreds of parents. In rejecting the project, Roswell forfeited the funds that the state legislature had appropriated to train teachers and implement the program.

An urgent last-minute personal visit by an official of the New Mexico Department of Education failed to persuade the board to adopt the state-funded program. Roswell is a school district of 11,000 students about 200 miles from the state capital in Santa Fe.

Implementation of Project Re:Learning had already begun before it was presented to the school board. Without board approval, eight Roswell teachers had traveled to Providence, Rhode Island at state expense to participate in a training course. Administrators had already selected three Roswell schools (one elementary, one middle, and one high school) to serve as pilots during the 1989-90 school year.

At the request of New Mexico Governor Garrey Carruthers, who serves with Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton on the Governor's Conference on Education, the Governor had specifically funded Project Re:Learning with \$250,000 for the 1989-90 school year and \$750,000 for the 1990-91 school year. The Education Commission of the States (ECS), an agency of the 50 Governors, has endorsed and promoted Project Re:Learning.

With all this high-level backing and funding, and with the teachers already trained, the Roswell administrators expected the school board to approve the project quickly. The board, however, surprised the administration by insisting on its right to vote on the proposal following a detailed study of the hundreds of pages of training materials which the teachers

had brought back from Rhode Island.

Five public meetings were held by the school board to deal with Project Re:Learning, three of them at the three schools selected to pilot the project. Over 200 people attended each meeting, and many views were expressed.

One of the main objections to the project was that a high-school diploma by "exhibition" or "demonstration" is not yet recognized by college admissions officers, virtually all of whom expect high school transcripts to record students' achievement in the universally-used Carnegie Units.

Other parents objected to a system of education in which teachers are divested of leadership and authority, and in which there are no correct answers to any question, leaving the student's peer group as the only authority.

Others objected to the fact that, once the district adopted the system, it would be binding and would commit the district to thoroughly implement all nine principles without exception or modification.

Linda Green, president of the Roswell school board, objected to the implementation of an "experimental" program that was being proposed "without real data to prove its worth for our students." Mrs. Green said that the only supporting data offered to the board was a survey of five at-risk urban high schools. "We don't have any idea about the validity of this program at the middle school or elementary level," she said.

After hearing these objections, the board voted at its final meeting to reject the project for the Roswell schools. However, other New Mexico school districts, including Santa Fe and Albuquerque, have agreed to implement Re:Learning in selected schools. The School of Education at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, from which many Roswell teachers

See Project Re:Learning, page 3

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Voters in nearly half of New Jersey's school districts have rejected school budgets in what the *New York Times* called "the most sweeping revolt against spiraling taxes since the state was forced to change its financing of education 14 years ago." Shortly before the elections, Governor Jim Florio had announced plans to increase sales and income taxes in the state.

The California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility, a state agency which has spent \$375,000 of taxpayers' funds on this mission, recently released the results of its three-year study on self-esteem. The report claims that instilling self-esteem in people will help solve problems ranging from illiteracy to drug abuse. The task force did not comment on whether having self-esteem will ensure a successful life.

Teachers in Overton High School in Nashville, Tennessee used unorthodox fundraising techniques to raise \$11,000 for two new copying machines. They charged the students \$2 to skip class on April 24. Many students paid \$10 so that they could skip school for the entire day. The teachers also participated in an "Ugliest Feet" contest, with students paying 50 cents each to vote. In addition to these fundraising activities, students could pay \$1 to wear hats, which is a violation of the high school's dress code.

Texas Governor Bill Clements vetoed a legislative compromise designed to reform Texas' school financing system because the bill would have raised taxes. This was the state's second attempt this spring at complying with the Texas Supreme Court's *Edgewood v. Kirby* decision which mandated that the state find a way to equitably distribute education funds by May 1. The court agreed to extend the deadline by 30 days after the latest deadlock. Clements has called for the third special legislative session this year to resolve the school finance problem but vows that he will still veto any legislative compromise which raises taxes.

Derrick Bell, a black tenured professor at Harvard Law School, has taken an unpaid leave of absence from the university and vows not to return to work until Harvard grants tenure to a black female law professor. Bell says that this hiring is necessary because minority students have held protests calling for more minority and women professors. Harvard Law School Dean Robert C. Clark blasted Bell's decision as "inappropriate" and said that the university "should make appointments based on the merits, not because of protests."

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Nation's Report Card Shows No Improvement in 20 Years

The U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) recently released the results of its Nation's Report Card study, which found only "subtle changes in reading performance at the national level" since the first such study in 1971. Students' writing abilities are in even worse shape; the study found no improvement in writing performance.

The report said that "the overall picture suggests a nation of students who were reading better than their counterparts did in 1971, but it must be emphasized that the progress is slight and could be short-lived." Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos called the slight improvement in reading skills "dreadfully inadequate."

The Reading Report Card judged students' abilities on five levels of proficiency: rudimentary, basic, intermediate, adept, and advanced. According to the study, only 4.8 percent of the nation's 17-year-olds could read at or above an advanced level, which is "the ability to synthesize and learn from specialized reading materials." Less than 11 percent of 13-year-olds could read above the intermediate level. Only 18 percent of 9-year-olds have acquired reading abilities above the basic level, which covers "short, uncomplicated passages."

The results of the Writing Report Card, which surveyed approximately 18,000 4th, 8th, and 11th grade students, were even more dismal. Like the Reading Report Card, the results were graded on a five-tier system. 32 percent of 11th graders couldn't write an "adequate" job application. Over 20% of junior high school students could not even write a letter which had "minimal" writing skills. The study also showed that the average 11th grader makes six grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors in a hundred-word essay.

On a writing proficiency scale from 0 to 500, the average 4th grader's proficiency was 173.3, a rise of less than three points since the 1984 study. 8th graders' and 11th graders' writing skills actually decreased since 1984, sinking to 208.2 and 220.7 respectively on the proficiency scale.

Secretary Cavazos stated at the news conference announcing the results of this report that, "As a nation we should be appalled that we have placed our children in such jeopardy. Reading and writing are the basic tools of

learning, the crux of the academic enterprise." Cavazos said that the results of the study show the need "for change at an elemental, fundamental level. I have said it repeatedly. Our education system must be restructured. We need a revolution in teaching and learning." ■



These are unedited responses to some of the questions from the "Writing Report Card" study.

An 11th grader's essay, which was a brief description of a summer job he would like to have:

"Me kind of job that I don't have to wook hard and get paid a good wage."

One 8th grader's report about food on the frontier after reading an essay on it:

"Well food on the frontier it ain't as good as food today. Because food today is like cake or fish or ice cream or meat that's how it's different."

An 11th grader's letter to a senator regarding funding of the space program:

"I think we should give funs to the space program, but I do feel we have many problems already that we need to look out. I dont think we should leave unfinished problems behind. I think the space program should work toward colonies but we shouldnt go ahead until we are OK here on our own planet."

University President Caught Making Obscene Phone Calls

When American University president Richard Berendzen resigned abruptly last month, claiming "exhaustion," there was much speculation as to the real reason behind his sudden departure. But no one suspected the true story behind the university president's resignation — officials learned that he had allegedly been making obscene phone calls to women from his private office phone.

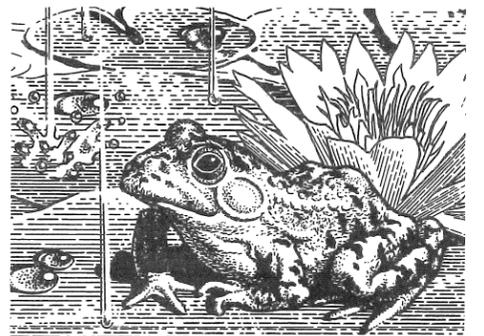
Berendzen was a well-respected man in his ten years as American University's president. His tireless fundraising had boosted the university's coffers by millions of dollars, and his public relations methods had significantly increased the school's prestige.

According to the Fairfax County police department, Berendzen allegedly made repeated obscene phone calls to numbers listed in the *Washington Post's* child care classifieds. Police were able to trace the calls to Berendzen because one of the women he called was the

wife of a Fairfax County police officer. She had the department put an electronic tracing device and tape recorder on her phone after the first obscene phone call.

The woman, who wishes to remain anonymous, said that Berendzen asked her if she had an "open family," and said that he and his family walked around their house naked. He also allegedly told her about his family, "We share everything, and I do mean everything."

Police say that Berendzen's claims were merely sick fantasies. The former university president is currently being treated for psychiatric problems at Johns Hopkins University's Sexual Disorders Clinic in Baltimore. Students at American University are upset and embarrassed over the Berendzen scandal. One professor said that "several students have told me they think this lessens their degree. Another told me, 'This is like having a weirdo for a father.'" ■



Girl Sues College For Right Not To Dissect Frog

Jennifer Routh, a student at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, is suing the college in an effort to avoid taking part in a frog dissection experiment in a biology class. The class, Biology 151, requires students to either participate in or watch a frog dissection. The course is not a university requirement or even a natural sciences requirement; completion of the course is necessary only for biology and biochemistry majors. Routh is planning to major in biochemistry because she said she is considering a career in medicine.

Routh, who will not eat meat or dairy products and refuses to wear leather, said that frog dissection violates her moral and ethical beliefs. "I don't want to have anything to do with dead animals," she said, "and I don't think it's necessary to know what the inside of a dead frog looks like."

In other classes where dissection is a course requirement, she was given an alternate assignment. However, her professor, Barbara Bentley, would not provide her with another assignment. "I have concluded that there is no appropriate alternative work suitable to replace dissection in the laboratories for Bio 151," wrote the professor in response to Routh's request.

Although students have successfully sued high schools in efforts to avoid dissecting animals, Routh's lawsuit marks the first time a university has been sued. The suit also marks the first time that the disputed course was not a graduation requirement. Her lawyer, Gary Francione, said he hopes that this lawsuit "would finally crystallize what is a clear rule of law, that the state can never make a person engage in conduct inimical to religious and moral beliefs under these sorts of circumstances."

He added, "What the state is saying is, if you're a resident of the State of New York and want to take advantage of state-provided education, we won't give you a degree in biochemistry unless you compromise your religious and ethical beliefs."

Dan Forbush, a university spokesman, said that students enrolled in Biology 151 "are free to determine between themselves who will do the actual dissecting and who will observe. There is no penalty for students who observe." ■

To keep informed on the latest issues in education today, be sure to listen to **Radio Live with Phyllis Schlafly** every Saturday morning from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. central time. **Radio Live** is a nationally syndicated call-in show which discusses the hottest topics facing your children. Past topics have included sex education, the National Educational Association, reading methods, drug education, college education, parental choice, homeschooling, and the New Age. Ask your local station to carry **Radio Live with Phyllis Schlafly**, broadcast live on the USA Radio Network.

FOCUS: Why Mandate "Cultural Diversity"?

The following statement against mandated "cultural diversity" was published by the Young Conservatives of Texas, a student group at the University of Texas at Austin. What is described in this article is not unique. There is an ongoing battle at many colleges and universities about multiculturalism and politicization of the curriculum. Stanford University recently eliminated its required course in Western Civilization after charges that it included too many DWEMs (Dead White European Males) such as Homer and Shakespeare. Many Western Civilization professors across the nation are having to defend themselves against charges that they and their classes are ethnocentric, racist, sexist, or homophobic. Some believe that such activism is a new manifestation of 1960's-style radicalism.

This is the Young Conservatives of Texas' official position regarding the Project PRIDE proposal. PRIDE (see page 1) is ostensibly supposed to foster cultural diversity at the University of Texas at Austin. However, we oppose it because it threatens to do just the opposite.

The first demand in PRIDE's proposal is a mandatory class in African studies. The Young Conservatives of Texas opposes this because it is impractical:

1. Students have a difficult enough time getting into the existing required classes.
2. Demands for one mandatory ethnic class will lead to a perpetual spiral of requests by a multitude of ethnic and political groups demanding equal justice and their own classes.
3. Other classes such as HIS 309K and HIS 309L (Western Civilization) can make a stronger case for mandatory status.
4. University of Texas students are responsible for the choices they make concerning classes and degrees. They should be allowed to decide which courses will broaden their personal perspectives and knowledge.
5. Undergraduate students will take approximately forty classes before completing their degrees. Time places a reasonable limit on the number, variety, and types of required classes.
6. Racism is based on cultural differences. A mandatory class in African American studies would only serve to further emphasize those differences. The University of Texas should focus its mandatory curriculum in areas where the courses will tend to demonstrate what we all share as human beings and citizens of the United States of America.

PRIDE's second demand is for an African-American Student Center. We oppose this because:

1. UT should not waste space and \$50,000 a year when existing facilities are more than adequate.
2. If UT provides special favors to the Black Student Alliance, all other ethnic and political groups should be entitled to similar benefits.
3. Providing a student center and \$50,000 to each group could get expensive. One could compile a significant list of ethnic groups at the University of Texas.
4. Student tension would increase as groups scramble to receive benefits. How will black students react to a White Students' Association with a similar center and budget?
5. The Black Student Alliance again demonstrates a frightening trend toward separatism. The Texas Union is the official UT student center. In the American Heritage Dictionary, union is defined as "the condition of being united." What the University of Texas needs is more uniting and less separatism. If members of the BSA would spend their time socializing

with other students rather than trying to find ways to avoid them, racial harmony would be enhanced.

"What then is the American, this new man? He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. Here individuals of all races are melted into a new race of man."

Crevecoeur's words are most applicable today at the University of Texas. In response to a recent racism, members of the BSA stated in a proposal called PRIDE: "We of the African American community require that the University repoint to and counteract this attack upon the African American community." At a time when we should be searching for those common threads which hold us together, Toni Lockett and the BSA wish to highlight our differences. Rather than stressing the culture, citizenship, and university we share — Lockett and the BSA stress their separate African American identity and the need to demonstrate this separatism to all students with a mandatory African American studies class. PRIDE will not bring the University of Texas together. It will only further tear it apart.

A Monday, April 23, 1990 *Wall Street Journal* editorial by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. entitled "When Ethnic Studies are Un-American" summarizes YCT's position quite eloquently:

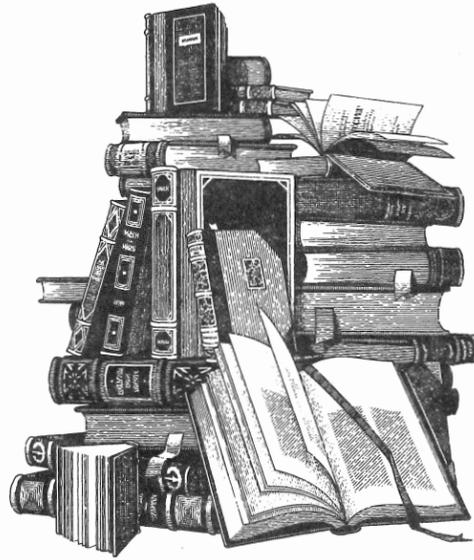
"Let us by all means learn about other continents and other cultures. But lamentable as some may think it, we inherit an American experience, as America inherits a European experience. To deny the essentially European origins of American culture is to falsify history. We should take pride in our distinctive inheritance as other nations take pride in their distinctive inheritances. Certainly there is no need for Western civilization, the source of the ideas of individual freedom and political democracy to which most of the world now aspires, to apologize to cultures based on despotism, superstition, tribalism and fanaticism. Let us abjure what Bertrand Russell called the fallacy of 'the superior virtue of the oppressed.'"

Whether our skin color is black, brown, or white, we are all Americans first. We all share an important American culture and history which binds us together as the greatest nation this world has ever seen.

Schlesinger continues: "If we repudiate the quiet marvel of our heritage that history has bestowed on us, we invite the fragmentation of our own culture into a quarrelsome spatter of enclaves, ghettos, and tribes. The bonds of cohesion in our society are sufficiently fragile that it makes no sense to strain them by encouraging and exalting cultural and linguistic apartheid."

The University of Texas should use its considerable influence to promote togetherness, not separation as Toni Lockett, the BSA, and PRIDE have demanded.

We also oppose PRIDE because it is an attempt to politicize the University of Texas' curriculum. In a report to Congress on "The Humanities in America," Lynne Cheney, the present chair for the National Endowment for the Humanities, deplored attempts to institute mandatory ethnic studies classes. This is how she characterized efforts to politicize curriculums: "Truth and beauty and excellence are regarded as irrelevant, questions of aesthetic and intellectual quality are dismissed." Indeed this is what Project PRIDE intends to do.



The notion that the University of Texas' core curriculum can be enriched by adding, to its list of courses and readings, topics about or by women and persons of color not because they are the best or most appropriate for the subject in hand, but because of sex or race—a kind of affirmative action program in scholarship—is both patronizing and ludicrous.

The motivation to make race central in the study of the humanities is not pedagogical but political. They explain that the needs of the oppressed have been unrecognized and that fairness requires a mandatory course to amplify the perspective of African Americans. However desirable this political agenda may be, its place is the public and legislative forum, not the institutions of higher education and the humanities curriculum.

The University of Texas should recognize the PRIDE proposal as an attempt to politicize its curriculum. The value of the students' education should be placed ahead of a minority's desire to further its political agenda. ■

Project Re:Learning

Continued from page 1

graduate, has already incorporated the principles of Re:Learning in all of its courses.

What Is Project Re:Learning?

Project Re:Learning is a comprehensive system or method of education for elementary, middle and high schools. It is not a curriculum, but a process of presenting material that involves a radical restructuring of traditional ideas of how schools function. Under Re:Learning, schools would abandon the goal of offering a "comprehensive" education. Instead, schools would focus on allowing students to "master a limited number" of skills unrelated to any objective standards. The skills or objectives would be the same for all students.

Project Re:Learning would abolish the traditional prescribed subjects, courses and grades. Instead, students would be allowed to develop their own unstructured activities during the school day. The only assignments would be ones which the teacher thinks the student can successfully complete. Teachers would have a passive role like a coach, counselor, or guide.

Project Re:Learning would also abolish the traditional high school diploma, which represents the completion of a specified number of Carnegie Units (credit hours in required subjects). Instead, a diploma would be based on an "exhibition," or "final demonstration of mastery," without any indication that the student has completed a standard curriculum with passing grades. Since there are no grades, there are no failures.

Adoption of Re:Learning would mean the virtual end of school boards. Under the buzzword of "school-based management," all curriculum decision making would be transferred from the school board to principals and teachers. One of the nine principles of Re:Learning is that "the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff" (with no mention of parents).

Project Re:Learning is published by the Coalition of Essential Schools with funding by the Carnegie Corporation. It is the brainchild of Dr. TheodoreSizer, a professor at Brown University and author of the books *Horace's Compromise* and *The Shopping Mall High School*. In *Horace's Compromise*, Sizer calls for a paradigm shift in education. It is time, he says, to stop rearranging the current system and

instead to remodel it.

At the present time, 56 schools in the states of Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, New Mexico and Rhode Island have made the 5-year commitment to test and implement Project Re:Learning. Teachers receive initial training by Sizer's Coalition for Essential Schools in Rhode Island.

A series of closed-circuit, interactive video teleconferences entitled "From Schoolhouse to Statehouse, Restructuring Our Schools Through Re:Learning" is co-sponsored by the Coalition for Essential Schools, the Education Commission of the States, Public Broadcasting Service, and Simon & Schuster. The first teleconference, "Student as Worker, Teacher as Coach" was held on January 10, 1990.

Fight Is Not Over

Despite overwhelming opposition by the elected members of the school board, advocates of Project Re:Learning have not given up. Not long after the school board vote, Governor Carruthers came to Roswell and told a high school audience, "I hope someday Roswell changes its mind on Re:Learning."

The Governor continued, "Project Re:Learning is the most exciting thing that's happening in education today in the country as far as I'm concerned." He went on to warn the Roswell parents and others who criticized the program, "We already have Project Re:Learning in three schools, and ultimately it will go throughout all the school systems in New Mexico."

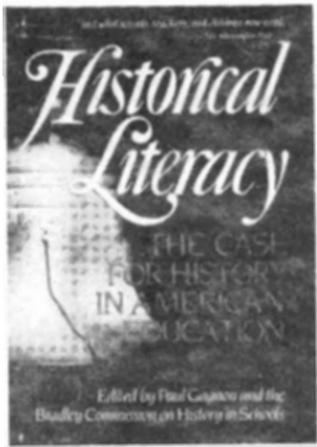
In his Roswell address, the Governor also suggested that he favored proposals to lengthen the school year from 180 to 200 days and lengthen the school day to 8 hours. The extra time, he said, could be used to bring professionals into the schools to counsel students about teen pregnancy, drug abuse, and other social problems. Governor Carruthers, a Republican who cannot run for re-election, has made no secret of his ambition to replace Lauro Cavazos as U.S. Secretary of Education when his term as Governor expires next January.

For a critical analysis of Mastery Learning concepts, the best source is *Back to Basics Reform* by Charlotte T. Iserbyt, a former school board member and official in the U.S. Department of Education. This 46-page booklet is available for \$3.50 from Charlotte Iserbyt, 4 Union Street, Camden, Maine 04843. ■



Book of the Month

Historical Literacy — The Case for History in American Education edited by Paul Gagnon and the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, \$24.95, Macmillan Publishing, 1990.



As one might guess from the title and authors, this book is a collection of essays by some of the nation's leading historians regarding the state of history in today's schools. All the authors agree that students are historically illiterate today. They also all agree that schools need to put a greater emphasis on teaching history — no surprises here either. However, these historians do disagree on which aspects of history need to be stressed and how history should be taught.

The book touches on the biggest trends in teaching history: the rising importance of multiculturalism, the emphasis on back-to-basics studies, the use of history to instill civic virtue among youth, and the recent push to place a greater emphasis on geography. Some of these trends conflict with each other, such as the emphasis on cultural history at the expense of basic historical facts and figures.

But the arguing about what students really need to learn in history classes is what makes the book interesting. If you have any opinions on how history should be taught in the public schools, chances are you'll find one essay here to back up your point of view and another to contradict it. No one will like every essay in the book, but just about everyone will find a few to agree with.

The main problem with this book is that it is not written for the layman. Many of the authors are afflicted with what Charles Sykes calls "ProfSpeak" — the babble which passes for intellectual discourse in university circles. Even history aficionados might find many of the discussions of the different methods and ideologies behind the teaching of history boring or incomprehensible. This is a shame because, when one gets past the jargon, many of the suggestions for improving history classes are useful for teachers, parents, and especially homeschoolers. It's ironic that the book is so difficult to get through since it was published for the mass market, not for university professors. Yet professors may be the only ones who will read this book all the way through.

If you want tips on how to improve your pupils' or children's education, *Historical Literacy* could be very useful — if you can get past the jargon.



L.A. Schools End Junk Food Ban



The Los Angeles Unified School District voted April 30 to lift its decade-long ban on the sale of "junk food" in school cafeterias. Officials said that a \$10 million deficit in the district's cafeteria fund prompted an end to the ban. Stephen Garcia, the district's food-services director, said that the selling of junk food should raise nearly \$1.5 million annually.

Under the new policy, Los Angeles cafeterias will be able to sell tortilla chips, potato chips, ice cream, cookies, and fruit bars. The school board has not yet lifted the ban on selling soft drinks in the cafeterias; this vote is expected in a few weeks.

Roberta Weintraub, the school board's

president, led the fight to allow junk food in the cafeterias, even though she was the original sponsor of the 1980 ban.

She said that the ban was not as effective as she had hoped, since many Los Angeles schools have circumvented it for years by selling candy and soft drinks through student stores, with the proceeds going to pay for student activities. "It's a little hypocritical," she said, "to say that your student stores can sell it and you can't."

The L.A. School Board also voted to raise the prices of school meals by 10 cents for elementary school students and by 25 cents for secondary school students.

Average Teachers' Salaries

1. Alaska	\$43,153	27. Kansas	28,671
2. Connecticut	40,496	28. Florida	28,525
3. California	38,996	29. Wyoming	28,184
4. New York	38,800	30. Georgia	27,892
5. Washington, D.C.	36,450	31. North Carolina	27,814
6. Maryland	36,092	32. Texas	27,502
7. Rhode Island	36,057	33. Missouri	27,229
8. New Jersey	36,030	34. South Carolina	27,076
9. Michigan	36,010	35. Tennessee	27,052
10. Massachusetts	34,225	36. Maine	26,881
11. Delaware	33,480	37. Iowa	26,747
12. Illinois	33,014	38. Kentucky	26,275
13. Pennsylvania	32,809	39. Alabama	25,500
14. Wisconsin	32,320	40. New Mexico	25,120
15. Minnesota	32,190	41. Montana	25,081
16. Hawaii	32,047	42. Nebraska	24,751
17. Ohio	31,170	43. Mississippi	24,363
18. Virginia	30,926	44. Utah	23,652
19. Colorado	30,700	45. Idaho	23,494
20. Nevada	30,587	46. Oklahoma	23,070
21. Oregon	30,563	47. North Dakota	23,016
22. Indiana	30,493	48. Louisiana	22,993
23. Washington	30,475	49. West Virginia	22,842
24. Arizona	29,600	50. Arkansas	22,009
25. New Hampshire	28,939	51. South Dakota	21,300
26. Vermont	28,798	National Average	31,304

Teachers' Salaries Increase; No Relation to Performance

The results of the Department of Education's seventh annual "wall chart" measuring state educational progress indicates that student achievement has "reached a plateau," according to Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos, as he challenged the nation's educators to do better.

"The latest wall chart makes it clear that as a nation we are still not seriously committed to improving education for all Americans," Cavazos said. "We can no longer afford to accept the status quo and merely hope for improvement, or to make a few superficial changes while leaving deeper structural problems untouched."

According to The 1990 State Education Performance Chart, teachers' salaries rose an average 19 percent, and per pupil expenditures increased 21 percent. Yet the nation's average graduation rates, SAT scores, and ACT scores remained virtually unchanged over that same period of time.

Minnesota has the nation's highest graduation rate at 90.9 percent, and Florida has the lowest at 50.8 percent. There is a salary gap of 104 percent between Alaska's average teacher salary of \$43,153 a year and South Dakota's \$21,300 average salary. Alaska also spends the most per pupil at \$7,971, while Utah spends the least, \$2,454. New Hampshire has the highest average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores at 932 on a 1,600 point scale; the lowest in the nation is North Carolina at 836. American College Testing (ACT) scores are highest in Wisconsin, with 20.1 on a 28-point scale, while the average ACT score in the lowest-ranked state, Mississippi, is only 15.9 points.

The Department of Education's study found little or no correlation between teachers' salaries, per pupil expenditures, and student performance. Alaska, which at \$43,153 has the highest salaries in the nation and also ranks first in per pupil expenditures at \$7,971, ranked only 43rd in its high school graduation rate. The District of Columbia, which is fifth in salaries and per pupil expenses, has the second lowest graduation rate and the 3rd lowest SAT scores.

New York, which has the 4th highest (\$38,800) average teacher's salary and has the second highest per pupil expenditures at \$7,151, is 46th in its graduation rate. California's

teachers have the third-highest average salary in the nation at \$38,996, yet only 65.9 percent of its students graduate, giving the state the 10th lowest graduation rate.

Low teacher salaries and low per pupil expenditures in many states have not stopped their students from high educational achievement. Utah, which spends less per pupil than any other state in the nation, has the 12th highest graduation rate at 79.4 percent.

Arkansas ranks 47th in per pupil expenditures and 50th in teacher salaries, but has the 17th highest graduation rate in the nation. South Dakota's teachers receive the lowest average salary in the nation and per pupil spending is only \$3,249, the country's 10th lowest, yet students there have the 7th highest ACT scores and the 10th highest graduation rate.

Several education leaders feel that the Department of Education's wall chart should be eliminated since the statistics emphasize state progress instead of the achievement of national education goals. Timothy Dyer, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, said that the wall chart "has about as much to offer educational improvement as the Edsel offered the automotive industry." Dyer added that the Education Department "should wake up to the fact that this nation is adopting national goals on education," and that it should "suggest new ways to assess success in meeting these goals instead of promoting this antiquated goal chart. It's time to rip the 'chart' off the wall."

National Education Association (NEA) President Keith Geiger agreed. "It is evident that the report only continues to confuse and frustrate the public."

Bill Honig, California's superintendent of public instruction, claimed that the test was politically motivated in order to push the Bush reform agenda. "It's almost as if he went out of his way to kick teachers and schools," Honig said. "What's the point — that we need to make more progress? We know that."

But Cavazos defended the chart, noting, "It's the only national measure that we have to assess education performance. Until we develop other measures, we will rely on it."