

## Study Shows Teaching Abstinence Works

Students taught abstinence-based sex education in a pilot study showed much lower pregnancy rates after taking the class than the study's control group, according to an evaluation made by the Illinois group called Project Respect.

About 3,500 students participated in the follow-up survey to the five-year pilot study on sex education, which was conducted by Project Respect in 26 schools with funding from Title XX and the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Two-thirds of those students had been taught sex education in middle school with the text *Sex Respect: The Option of True Sexual Freedom*, which stresses sexual abstinence.

The evaluation's most significant finding among students who were still in school showed that students who had been taught with the *Sex Respect* textbook had far fewer pregnancies than those who did not. The female pregnancy rate for those taught abstinence-based sex education was 5%, both one and two years after the class. The females in the control group had a pregnancy rate of 9%. The national pregnancy rate is 10%.

For males, the rate was 4% for the first year after the class and 5% for the second year, both figures lower than the control group's rate of 7%. The male statistics are lower because males are not always aware that they have caused a pregnancy.

"Over the five-year period of the grant (1985-90), all schools demonstrated consistent attitudinal improvement from the pre to post test of the 10-unit course," said Kathleen Sullivan, director of Project Respect. "In fact, the attitudinal improvement has accelerated over the period of the pilot test."

She gave as a possible reason for this

improvement the "emphasis that *abstinence provides the healthiest approach* from diseases and emotional trauma, not just pregnancy." This observation is warranted "by studying the higher rate of response among young males over the years," Sullivan said. "These statistics show that the clear abstinence message not only provides healthier attitudes but indicates an effect on behavior as well."

When asked both before and after their participation in *Sex Respect* whether "the best way for young people to avoid an unwanted pregnancy is to wait until they are married before having sex," the percentage of students who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with that statement increased 9% after taking the course. There was a 20% increase in those who agreed that "the best way for young people to keep

from getting AIDS or some other sexually transmitted disease is to wait until they are married before having sex."

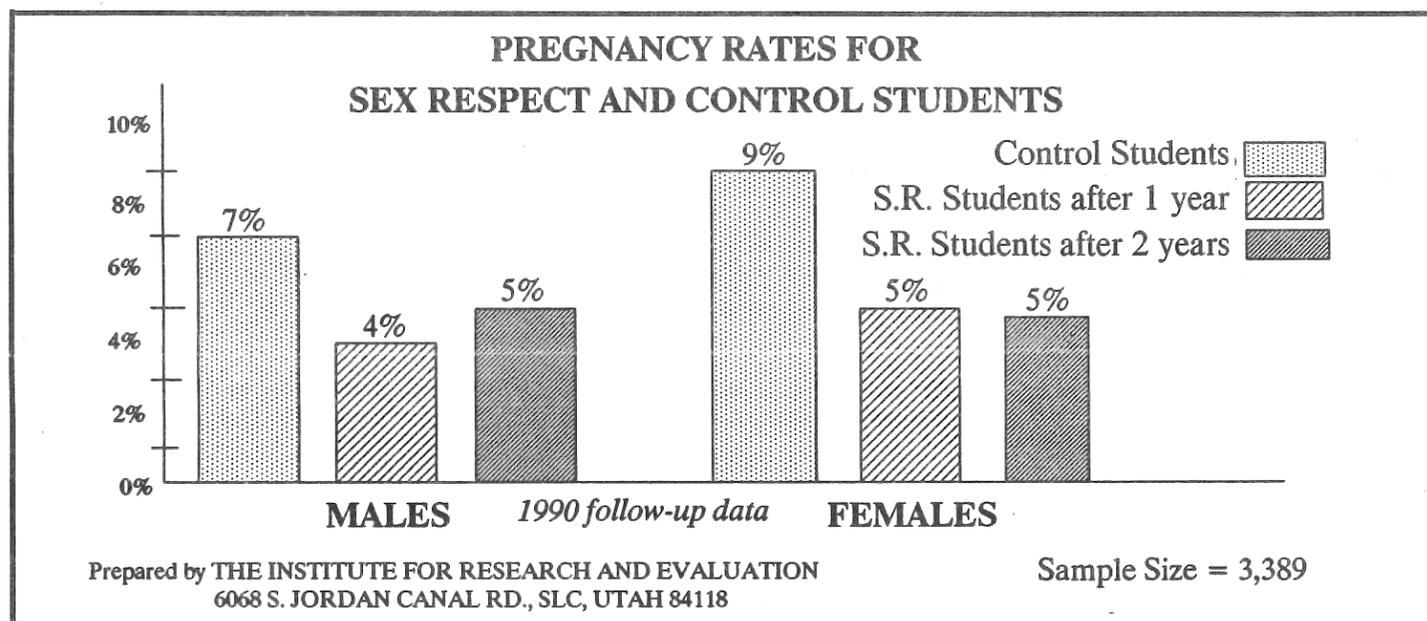
The program showed an average of a 20% increase in the number of students who agreed with the statement, "A teen who has had sex outside of marriage would benefit by deciding to stop having sex and wait for marriage" after participating in the program. There was also a 20% increase in the number of students who agreed that "sexual urges are always controllable."

The results of the study also showed a strong correlation between drug and alcohol use and sexual activity rates. Of those who had been "drunk recently," 75% had had sexual intercourse, while only 12% of those who had never

had alcohol had ever engaged in intercourse. Only 28% of those students who never used drugs have had sexual intercourse, compared with an 89% sexual activity rate for those who have used drugs recently.

Project Respect directors say that these results show that "adolescents are the one group that can be removed from the 'at risk' category of AIDS if they are convinced to avoid drugs and/or sexual activity."

In Illinois, 70 schools are currently participating in another pilot study in the 1990-91 school year for the Project Respect program. It is estimated that 1,600 schools nationwide are currently using the *Sex Respect* textbook. There is a growing interest in teaching abstinence-based education in the public schools.



## Bush Finally Unveils Education Plan

After two years in office and a campaign pledge to be the "Education President," President Bush finally unveiled his nationwide education plan, *America 2000*, in the East Room of the White House before an invited audience including school officials, teachers union presidents, corporate executives, and Democratic Congressmen and Senators.

The plan is designed to emphasize four themes: "creating better and more accountable schools; creating a New Generation of American Schools for tomorrow's students; transforming America into a Nation of Students; and making our communities places where learning will happen." It requests at least \$690 million in new federal funds for education.

The most innovative part of the President's education plan calls for spending \$230 million (one percent of the \$27.1 billion federal education budget) for an Education Certificate Program Support Fund to "provide incentive grants to local school districts with qualified education certificate programs" that promote school choice and to establish national school choice demonstration projects.

Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander told the President that he supports real choice, in which the "dollars will follow the child." He said that "telling parents where they must send their children to school is an alien idea in

America."

Many parents and pro-family groups are questioning whether the Bush-Alexander choice plan will really include private and religious schools. The booklet entitled "America 2000: An Education Strategy," which was distributed at the White House in connection with the President's speech, states: "Such choices should include all schools that serve the public and are accountable to public authority, regardless of who runs them." Conservatives believe that, to require successful private and religious schools to be "accountable" to the same public authorities that are running the failed public schools would be to destroy the whole reason for private schools, and would be a fraudulent definition of choice.

The booklet further cautions, "Choice will apply to all schools except where the courts find a constitutional bar." That language could be construed to be an invitation to the courts to prevent allowing parents to choose religious schools, thereby enabling the Administration and Congress to avoid the blame for such discrimination.

The Bush education plan advocates establishing "world class standards" in five subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, and geography. Although he says he opposes a national curriculum, Bush does support setting

national standards for these five core subjects for all schools to follow.

The President's plan also establishes a "voluntary" system of national examinations in these subjects for 4th, 8th, and 12th grade students. These exams, to be known as the American Achievement Tests, would measure "higher order skills (i.e., they will not be strictly multiple choice tests)." National testing is a controversial idea on both the left and the right, both among teachers' unions and among parents' groups.

The *America 2000* plan would earmark \$40 million in federal funds to be granted to school districts that show "significant gains in student achievement." Bush has requested that all schools, school districts, and states issue "regular report cards" on their "results and progress toward achieving the national education goals."

In an effort to improve the training of teachers and principals, Bush's plan will establish Governors' Academies in each state to provide advanced training for them. The plan also sets up Presidential Awards for Excellence in Education, to be given to outstanding teachers, and would grant states the funds to set up alternative methods of teacher and principal certification. Bush said he wants to encourage the states to set up systems of merit pay for teachers.

Bush's plan focuses much of its attention towards research and development in designing a "New Generation of American Schools." Much of this research and development will be done in partnership with corporations; business leaders have so far pledged \$150 million in new corporate funding to be used for this purpose. The plan also asks businesses to establish a list of skills standards for schools to emphasize.

Each Congressional district will have a "New American School" if Congress agrees to fund the start-up costs of \$550 million. The President was vague on what exactly a "New American School" is, but critics say that much of the money will end up going to Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, an organization that stresses mastery learning and other non-traditional methods of education. Indeed, the Sizer plan was specifically praised in the booklet distributed at the White House.

The President's plan calls on parents to get more involved with their children's education and in the "work of the New American Schools."

The Bush-Alexander plan places much emphasis on making parents "more accountable," but did not say to whom schools should be accountable. Many parents groups say that real accountability means empowering parents

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## EDUCATION BRIEFS

The average high school principal earns nearly \$60,000, a 6.1% increase from last year, according to a survey by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The average salary for junior high and middle school principals rose 5.6% to \$55,083, while elementary school principals' salaries increased 6.2% to \$51,453. All of the salary increases exceeded the national rate of inflation of 5.4%.

Eighteen television sets donated by Whittle Communications to East St. Louis High School in East St. Louis, Illinois, have been stolen since last fall. The 19-inch Magnavox sets, donated by the corporation in exchange for the school's showing of the controversial Channel One television program, were stolen by a former student and sold on the black market for between \$40 and \$65 each. Their actual value is \$300 each.

In eastern Pennsylvania, the Montrose Area School District voted 6-2 against a one-half percent wage tax on all area citizens to fund education. The proposed plan would have generated \$325,000 for the district's schools, but it came under fire from area citizens already struggling from high taxes. If the tax had passed, the district would have been among the first in the nation to fund education with a wage tax. Most schools receive most of their funding from property taxes.

A Highland Park, Illinois student attempted to imitate a death plot scene in the movie *Bad Influence* by booby-trapping his girlfriend's mother's car because the woman objected to her daughter's relationship with him. Javier Vieyra, a senior at Highland Park High, put a device inside the car's gas tank, which was supposed to blow up the car. Fortunately, the woman noticed that something was wrong with the car before she started the engine, and called the police. The boy has been arrested for attempted murder.

Parents in Oakland, California are outraged over a state-funded children's newspaper which gave explicit sex-education information in its latest issue. *The Children's Advocate*, which receives most of its funding from the California Department of Education's Children's Development Division, ran an article called "Safe Sex Dialog or Rubber Repartee" which suggested various ways to encourage youngsters to engage in so-called "safe sex." The most controversial suggestion called for children to use their mouth to help put a condom on a partner.

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# Radicals Disrupt Speech at SUNY-Binghamton

The first meeting of a National Association of Scholars chapter at the State University of New York at Binghamton got off to a rocky start when more than 200 black activists disrupted the meeting.

The protesters showed up to disrupt the March 14 meeting after hearing a rumor that Ku Klux Klan members would be present at the session. The rumor was false; the meeting was actually a lecture by Eastern studies professor Richard Hofferbert on German reunification.

However, the activists apparently were still convinced that the NAS meeting was really a KKK rally in disguise, even though Hofferbert announced at the beginning of the lecture that his speech was only about his impressions on what the fall of the Berlin Wall had meant to him and his family.

The protesters stayed throughout the lecture, with many of them wielding canes and sticks. The protesters outnumbered the academics at the meeting by about eight-to-one and occupied not only every available seat in the lecture hall, but also the aisles and entrance. One activist student held a cane in his hand and paced back and forth behind Hofferbert during his lecture.

When Hofferbert tried to pass a framed photograph of his granddaughter at the site of the Berlin Wall across the room, a protester grabbed the photo and flung it across the room, barely missing hitting two professors seated in the lecture hall. When the lecturer demanded an explanation, the student claimed that he did not want to touch anything handled by a friend of the KKK.

This same student later deliberately blew his nose into a tissue and deposited the tissue into the coffee cup from which Hofferbert had been drinking. He then proceeded to spit into the coffee cup. The protester also spit out a wad of gum at NAS chapter president Saul Levin, hitting the professor in the cheek. The student eventually had to be restrained from hitting a professor who criticized his behavior.

During the question-and-answer session

following Hofferbert's speech, protesters attacked the NAS for being "politically incorrect," charged that the meeting was part of a "secret society," and criticized the lecture for viewing the collapse of the Berlin Wall from a "white male perspective." According to accounts of those attending the lecture, some of the protesters punched students who were sympathetic to the NAS at the end of the meeting.

Many who had attended the lecture were shaken by the protests. Michael C. Mittelstadt, a classics professor, said that "the atmosphere was incredibly tense and frightening." Aldo Bernardo, emeritus professor of Italian and comparative literature, agreed and commented that "everybody was shocked and some were petrified." According to Bernardo, one professor with a history of heart trouble was "trembling and holding his head."

The lecturer remarked after the meeting was over that he had brought along large stones and a retaining pipe from the Berlin Wall but did not display them during his speech for fear that the protesters would use them as weapons.

NAS national president Stephen H. Balch called the protests "a despicable effort to manipulate students. Those are storm-trooper tactics."

Professor Levin said that he was considering filing criminal charges against the main disrupter at the meeting. In a letter to Public Safety Director John Schwartz, Levin said that the student "was seething with pathological, irrepressible hatred for the white race," and suggested that the student be examined by a psychiatrist "before he does great bodily harm to some innocent person, whether white or black." Levin also said that the student should be kicked off campus "as long as his behavior is dangerous."

University administrators have so far not disciplined any of the students involved in disrupting the meeting. ■

# School Bars Girl From Praying During Recess

Parents of an 11-year-old girl whose school prohibited her from praying during recess have filed a lawsuit against the school officials in federal court.

Monette Rethford, a student at Lakeview Elementary School in Norman, Oklahoma, read the Bible on the school playground and prayed for fellow students, parents, and teachers during her lunch period. She was joined in these activities by several other students.

After a complaint from a parent, school principal Lynn Miller forbade Monette to pray any more at school and, according to the lawsuit, "admonished Monette that such activity was illegal on school property."

The girl's father, Stanley Rethford, complained to the school about the treatment of his daughter and was also told that praying at school is illegal, even if it is initiated by the child during recess.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Oklahoma City, charges that school officials censored the girl's constitutional right to free speech solely because it was religious speech. The suit also claims that the girl has been

ostracized because of the school's vendetta against her, causing "humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish."

The defendants in the suit are the school's principal, the district's superintendent, and the Norman Public School System. The suit seeks a declaration from the court that the school officials violated Monette's rights to free speech and free association and asks for a court order barring the school from violating the girl's constitutional rights again. The lawsuit also requests compensatory damages and attorneys' fees to be paid by the defendants. "The so-called separation of church and state doctrine does not give school officials the right to ban and censor wholly student-initiated and voluntary prayer or religious activity," said Larry Crain of the Rutherford Institute, the girl's attorney.

In a syndicated column about the case, civil libertarian Nat Hentoff supported Rethford's rights to pray during recess and charged, "It is no wonder that students across the country know so little about the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment — considering who runs the schools." ■



## Book of the Month

**A Parent's Survival Guide to the Public Schools** by Sally Reed. National Council for Better Education, Alexandria, VA, \$23.95.

Sally Reed, a former high school teacher, founder of the parents support group National Council for Better Education, and author of the book *NEA: Propaganda Front of the Radical Left*, has provided parents with a new and valuable resource guide.

This book explains succinctly the vast changes that public education has undergone in our nation's history, especially over the last 30 years. She calls today's public schools "indoctrination centers for collectivism." This may sound a bit inflammatory, but after reading the evidence, this statement sounds like an apt assessment of the state of the public schools.



Mrs. Reed shows the radicalism of the National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest teachers union. It is leftwing both in and out of the classroom. The book discusses how the NEA has instituted its agenda through peace education, nuclear disarmament discussions, and other methods of re-education. In fact, the NEA's anti-war course *Choices: A Unit in Conflict and Nuclear War* was so biased that even the liberal *Washington Post* called it "propaganda."

Other remnants of the NEA's radical, anti-family agenda are evident in the proliferation of sex education, drug education, death education, suicide education and all the other psychological classes masquerading as education in the nation's schools.

Mrs. Reed resents the intrusion of the public schools into family life and poses the question, "Do we want them to keep private records, function as psychoanalysts and professional babysitters who will teach our children everything from how to brush their teeth to driving, cooking, CPR and how to use contraceptives?" If not, Reed says, "parents must re-define what they want and expect from the public schools and demand that educators stay within the boundaries which the taxpayers in a local community have drawn."

Mrs. Reed criticizes the look-say reading method as contributing to our current massive illiteracy rate. She calls for a return to the tried-and-true phonics reading method.

The most valuable parts of the book are the guides the author gives to help parents become involved with their children's education. She shows how parents can write effective letters to school administrators and elected officials, lists what parents' rights are, and illustrates methods to guide parents who want to fight a bad school curriculum.

This book can be ordered for \$23.95 from the National Council for Better Education, 101 North Alfred Street #202, Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 739-2660. ■

# FOCUS: Schools Lack Traditional Values

By William T. Jahn

The decline of the American public school system has in part been brought about by profound negative changes that have occurred over the past 25 years. The most important has been the decline in influence of the traditional family.

Educators and lawmakers in California have structured a school system that is taking more and more responsibility away from families while it builds a bigger and bigger bureaucratic system to deal with those responsibilities.

The state has couched its educational philosophy in benign-sounding euphemisms such as diversity, multiculturalism, human relations, self-esteem enhancement, humanistic psychology and secular humanism. These terms are used to teach our children "politically correct" social attitudes, which some educators think are necessary to adequately teach reading, writing and mathematics.

In contrast, the state does not emphasize concepts such as character, respect, individuality, responsibility, conscience, competition, the work ethic and spirituality.

Secular humanism is the new pseudo-religion of our educators. It denies the existence of a Creator and any objective standards of morality. Spirituality has always provided the foundation for our culture. Without it, goals for societal behavior have become results-oriented, and materialism has replaced spirituality.

The secular humanists stand for a host of policies that have discredited both religion and the traditional family. They seek the creation of more and more social programs that undermine the roles of parents, and justify their position by ignoring that the traditional family is dead.

Diversity denotes "variety," but too many

educational programs have come to promote differences and accentuate division, all under the guise of diversity. According to some prominent multiculturalists, certain classifications of people deserve special treatment. Other groups, which have not taken on this new victim status, have to get by on their own merits.

Instead of emphasizing *diversity*, teachers should encourage students to cope with *adversity*. Children grow up with all sorts of personal challenges that they need to overcome. Whereas neither race nor ethnicity should be one of them, nevertheless that is precisely what happens when special interest groups insist upon placing emphasis on the differences between groups rather than emphasizing the common ground they share.

Furthermore, children are more likely to feel there is more, not less, truth about racial or cultural prejudicial beliefs, if inappropriate behavior in these areas is treated with more severity and emotionality than other behavior that may be just as inappropriate, but not involving race or ethnicity.

It is part of the maturing process that children from time to time make fun of each other and tease one another, and because the immature behavior is often about one child's being different in appearance in one way or another, race and ethnicity will inevitably come up.

When parents or teachers overreact to a racial or ethnic situation the result is to draw emotionally laden attention to the offended child's group rather than change any attitude of the offender. Our children unwittingly are being taught to make judgments about each other within the context of the group to which they belong.

The United States is a product of many

cultures. The men whose ideas formed the basis of and contributed to the writing of the Constitution have left us with an enduring system of government that emphasizes individual liberty, justice and rule of law. These freedoms are what have led many people from other cultures to leave their countries and become Americans.

Because many of these ideas originated with or were advanced by European white males, the term "Eurocentric" has come under attack from some who see the influence of "dead white males" on society as negative.

"Deconstructionism" is the notion that literary value should be judged on the political correctness of its content. To these deconstructionists, there is no hierarchy of knowledge or literature; William Shakespeare has no more relevance than Danielle Steel.

Some black extremist groups (members who insist upon the label "African-American") are pushing the notion that the ideas of the ancient Greeks were stolen from black cultures in Africa. Gay activists are insisting that textbooks highlight the "sexual preference" of important historical figures who may have been homosexual.

While none of these ideas has found its way into the mainstream, nevertheless the California State Board of Education allocates taxpayers' revenues for the funding of a newspaper titled *Children's Advocate*, which contains material that is anti-racial and offensive. The school curriculum should include contemporary and historic role models relevant to all races and cultures without devaluing Western ideas nor rewriting history books for the sole purpose of "balance."

The reason self-esteem enhancement is in vogue is that some educators (without any conclusive evidence) are convinced that groups

that do poorly in school do so because their self-esteem is low. In California teachers are being told that, because of this, they are at fault if children from other cultures do not perform well.

In truth, success in the classroom might be the best way to increase self-esteem, but here again the unintended consequence of this doctrine of victimization is the removal of responsibility for learning from the individual to his environment. If our children are going to be competitive in a global economy, the focus needs to be on setting high standards and encouraging all students to take the responsibility to aspire to these high levels.

Parents should demand that the school system be structured around the healthy family institution. Families of all races and ethnicities share common challenges in the ongoing battle of raising children. The system should be color-blind and have no need for hyphens in front of native (non-first-generation) Americans.

From the standpoint of elevating self-esteem, it does little good to boost one group's collective ego at the expense of the children from another group. Every child needs to learn that self-esteem is not bestowed by others, it is something in his control, nurtured by the family.

We have an obligation to teach children to be responsible for their own lives, for unless a child learns that in the end he or she is responsible for his or her own decisions (good or bad), he or she truly will become "society's child" and those who preach the politics of social victimization will have created a self-fulfilling prophecy. ■

Mr. William T. Jahn of Davis, California, was the head swimming coach at the University of California at Los Angeles, 1982-1988.

# FOCUS: Vouchers Could Bring Real Education Reform

By Oliver Starr Jr.

Spurred by falling SAT scores, strenuous efforts were made throughout the nation to reform elementary and secondary education during the 1980s. Government at all levels poured in money to accelerate the change. Schools raised graduation requirements. Administrators and teachers restructured curriculum and management.

But these efforts have produced meager results. Average SAT scores have risen only 13 of the 90 points they fell prior to 1980. American teenagers ranked dead last in math and science in a recent international test. Businesses report an inordinate percentage of high school graduates require remedial education: Motorola, Inc., for example, must test ten job applicants to find one who can meet 7th-grade reading and 5th-grade math standards.

Much of this poor performance stems from costly, stultifying school bureaucracies. Excessive bureaucracy is the main reason spending per pupil averages \$4,500 in government ("public") schools, compared to just \$2,690 in Catholic secondary schools.

In a study of 400 American high schools and some 20,000 students, teachers, and principals, Brookings Institution fellow John E. Chubb and Stanford University political science professor Terry M. Moe found that the "current system of public education is built to control the schools from above. Politicians and bureaucrats are vested with authority to tell the schools what to do, and they are under constant pressure from constituents and interest groups to put that authority to use."

"The result is that schools are buried in policies, rules, and regulations that specify what they are supposed to be doing and how they are supposed to be doing it. This destroys school autonomy and with it, the foundations for effective learning."

The way to escape the crushing embrace of the authoritarian school bureaucracy, say Chubb and Moe, is "to give schools the legal

said it all came to no avail because that state's huge school bureaucracy and teachers' unions nullified the reforms by watering them down, ignoring them, improperly implementing them, and challenging them in court.

Ms. Ducote says that public school bureaucracy in Louisiana is "a gigantic, ever-growing sponge that ingests but never digests constructive change." As a result, the quality of

to school. Instead of funding education through stifling bureaucracies, the government would issue tuition vouchers for every student. These could be cashed at any state-certified public or private school, or perhaps any parochial school as well. Faced with competition, public schools would have to reform themselves or risk losing large numbers of students to competing schools offering higher-quality education.

Evidence of the increasing support for vouchers was seen in Wisconsin last year when state legislator Polly Wisconsin, appalled by the poor quality of education offered in Milwaukee's inner-city schools, pushed through a bill establishing a one-year pilot program that pays each of 1,000 low-income Milwaukee students \$2,500 to attend private, non-sectarian schools.

School vouchers would weaken the bureaucracy and bring parents back into the education process. Though some observers criticize voucher proposals because they do not go far enough to remove government interference in education, vouchers are nevertheless a viable mechanism for increasing parental choice. Vouchers are attractive to parents and politically feasible. State legislators and citizens who are committed to quality education should become active in the national movement for choice. Such a reform would do far more to improve education than any that have gone before.

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authority to design their own programs, to grant parents the ability to choose any public school, and fund those schools on the basis of their ability to attract students."

But reforming elementary and secondary schools is much easier said than done. Jackie Ducote, a consultant to the Louisiana Right to Learn Committee, helped push through 50 new laws and policies over a ten-year period to reform education in that state. But Ms. Ducote

education in Louisiana remains dismally low. Forty percent of ninth graders don't graduate from high school, the state has the highest illiteracy rate in the nation, and 50 percent of Louisiana college freshmen are in remedial classes.

In *Capitalism and Freedom*, published in 1962, Milton Friedman proposed reforming America's public school system by allowing parents to choose where they send their children

# Suicide Questionnaire Angers Parents

A questionnaire ostensibly designed to prevent teenage suicide has been causing controversy across the country.

The Suicide Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ), given to junior and senior high school students under the name *About My Life*, is a test distributed by a Florida-based company called Psychological Assessment Resources. The test, written by University of Wisconsin at Madison psychology professor William M. Reynolds, is supposed to identify which students are most likely to commit suicide. However, many feel that the questionnaire is of questionable value at best, and that it invades the privacy of all students in order to "help" a few.

An information guide for the SIQ admits that the test is not "a diagnostic or predictive measure" but only "provides valuable clinical information on suicidal thoughts of adolescents." The guide stresses that, "in order to avoid the possibility of mood induction," the test "should not be introduced as a suicide questionnaire."

According to the developers of the SIQ, students who ask about the purpose of the test are not to be told that the test is to measure students' attitudes toward suicide. Instead,

## Boston University Requires Classics

Boston University has developed a new three-part course for education majors which emphasizes the importance of Western civilization. The course is in sharp contrast to the growing trend at many colleges to move away from teaching Western civilization and towards multiculturalism.

BU's School of Education has developed the course to instill in its students "an obligation as teachers to transmit Western culture's key ideas to the young," according to the school's dean Peter Greer. The new course is mandatory and is designed to fight not only cultural illiteracy among education majors but also moral illiteracy.

Greer said that it is important that teachers know and understand the significance of Western culture before they graduate. "Our teachers-to-be will have sampled from the best that man has thought and written about, and will know how to teach it to others," he said.

Some of the writings studied in the class include Dante's *Inferno*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Plato's *Republic*, and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Students will also be required to read writings by Homer, Virgil, and Chaucer, as well as the Bible.

The course is divided into three semester's worth of work. The first semester covers ancient Greece, the second semester covers the time between ancient Rome's beginnings and the Renaissance, and the final semester includes texts from the 18th through the 20th century. Students in the classes will not only learn the significance of the works studied, but how they can teach that information to children.

Stephen Tigner, developer of the course, said that despite the push at many schools toward global and multicultural education, Western civilization is still important for students to learn. "The course is showing people around our hometown," he said. "I've nothing against other cultures. But when you are showing people around your hometown, you've got to show them what's here first."

Dean Greer said the course is designed to help education majors "understand their own culture and be able to pass it on and feel obligated to pass it on."

teachers are encouraged to tell them that "the questionnaire is being completed by all students in school and the purpose of the questionnaire is to find out how students are thinking about themselves."

Teachers administering the SIQ are told to display a demeanor which is "neither overly positive nor overly negative — present the questionnaires in a neutral, professional manner and communicate that this is a brief but important activity."

Parents are concerned about the privacy-invading questions in the questionnaire, plus the fact that these questions are written with the assumption that most teenagers are at risk of committing suicide.

The publishers of the questionnaire require that anyone who wishes to obtain a copy of it must fill out a "qualification form" and "certify" that he either has "a general knowledge of measurement principles and of the limitations of test interpretations," or is a graduate student who has his professor's permission to obtain the test. Critics say that this form's real purpose is to prevent parents from seeing the examination. All must pay a \$70 fee to obtain the questionnaire. Copyright © 1987 by Psychological Assessments Resources, Inc., P.O. Box 998, Odessa, Florida 33556. ■

## Bush *Continued from page 1*

to take their children out of one school and put them in another.

Pro-family groups expressed dismay about the number-one goal which the Bush plan hopes to reach by the year 2000: "All children will start school ready to learn." No details were spelled out. Parents wonder if some people are planning for the Federal Government to take over the raising of pre-school children.

The Bush education plan fails to address what many believe is the fundamental education problem — that 25 million adults who have been through the public schools are illiterate and that another 25 million adults read too poorly to realize the American dream. Teaching children to read in elementary school is not one of the six goals we are supposed to reach by the year 2000. ■

**The most innovative part of the Bush education plan is Choice: giving parents the right to choose their children's school and having their school tax dollars follow the child. We don't know how a real choice system would operate since each of the 50 states would have to pass its own version. But here are some of the different varieties of choice that parents are seeking today.**

(1) Choice to attend any public school in the same district.

(2) Choice to attend any public school in the state. Currently, at least eleven states and many individual school districts allow some form of choice among public schools, but there is little or no choice of curriculum.

(3) Choice to attend a public school dedicated to teaching the basics, including phonics and other traditional skills, and to enforcing traditional discipline. Only a handful of districts with such a school exist, and those traditional schools are so popular that parents camp out overnight for days to be in line to enroll their children for the limited slots available.

(4) Choice of curriculum content in the public school; e.g., choice of learning how to

## Excerpts from Suicide Questionnaire

Listed below are a number of sentences about thoughts that people sometimes have. Please indicate which of these thoughts you have had in the past month. Fill in the circle under the answer that best describes your own thoughts. Be sure to fill in a circle for each sentence. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. [Identify] This thought was in my mind: Almost every day, Couple of times a week, About once a week, Couple of times a month, About once a month, I had this thought before but not in the past month, I never had this thought.

1. I thought it would be better if I was not alive.
2. I thought about killing myself.
3. I thought about how I would kill myself.
4. I thought about when I would kill myself.
5. I thought about people dying.
6. I thought about death.
7. I thought what to write in a suicide note.
8. I thought about writing a will.
9. I thought about telling people I plan to kill myself.
10. I thought that people would be happier if I were not around.
11. I thought about how people would feel if I killed myself.
12. I wished I were dead.
13. I thought about how easy it would be to end it all.
14. I thought that killing myself would solve my problems.
15. I thought others would be better off if I was dead.
16. I wished I had the nerve to kill myself.
17. I wished that I had never been born.
18. I thought if I had the chance I would kill myself.
19. I thought about ways people kill themselves.
20. I thought about killing myself, but would not do it.
21. I thought about having a bad accident.
22. I thought that my life was not worth living.

23. I thought that my life was too rotten to continue.

24. I thought that the only way to be noticed is to kill myself.

25. I thought that if I killed myself people would realize I was worth caring about.

26. I thought that no one cared if I lived or died.

27. I thought about hurting myself but not really killing myself.

28. I wondered if I had the nerve to kill myself.

29. I thought that if things did not get better I would kill myself.

30. I wished that I had the right to kill myself.

Listed below are some sentences about how you feel. Read each sentence and decide how often you feel this way. Decide if you feel this way: almost never, hardly ever, sometimes, or most of the time. Fill in the circle under the answer that best describes how you really feel. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Just choose the answer that tells how you usually feel.

1. I feel happy.
2. I worry about school.
3. I feel lonely.
4. I feel my parents don't like me.
5. I feel important.
6. I feel like hiding from people.
7. I feel sad.
8. I feel like crying.
9. I feel that no one cares about me.
10. I feel like having fun with other students.
11. I feel sick.
12. I feel loved.
13. I feel like running away.
14. I feel like hurting myself.
15. I feel that other students don't like me.
16. I feel upset.
17. I feel life is unfair.
18. I feel tired.
19. I feel I am bad.
20. I feel I am no good.

read by the proven phonics method instead of discredited word-guessing methods; choice of traditional and inspiring books and stories instead of violent and depressing ones; choice of a healthy abstinence-based sex curriculum instead of an explicit contraceptive-based sex curriculum; and choice of alternate reading when parents find school materials offensive. Only a handful of public schools allow this kind of choice.

(5) Choice to allow parents to opt out their children from curricula, books, classes, surveys, or methodology which parents consider privacy-invading or offensive to their religion, morals or values. Choice to allow parents to remove their children from any group therapy, psychological curricula, or counseling in the classroom. Such choice, of course, would require parents to be notified before such things take place, and no penalty should be attached to this choice.

(6) Choice to attend a private school. Milwaukee and Vermont are the only areas that currently allow this. Only low-income families are allowed to exercise this choice in the Milwaukee plan. The Vermont plan, which has been in effect since 1869, "tuitions" many thousands of students to

nonsectarian private or public schools when local school districts do not have their own high school.

(7) Choice to attend any public, private or religious school. No state in the country now allows students to use taxpayer funds to enroll in a religious school.

(8) Choice to attend a school where the administrators and teachers are not members of the National Education Association.

(9) Choice for high school juniors and seniors to complete high school at a community college. Only Minnesota permits such transfers.

(10) Choice to attend a single-sex elementary or secondary public school (which has proved so successful in pilot projects for black boys in the inner city).

(11) Choice to homeschool. Only one district (in California) is known to have a plan that allows some public money to go to homeschoolers.

(12) Choice to homeschool combined with attending selected courses or activities in a public or private school, such as math, science, football, or band. Only Washington State allows such partial enrollment in public schools.