

Maryland Drops Nosy Survey

Queries Rejected on Suicide, Sex and Drugs



Parents Turn Up Armed with Turnips to Protest 'Reform'

OLYMPIA, WA — "We just didn't fall off the turnip truck and the legislators shouldn't either" was the message coming from the 2,000 citizens gathered on the Capitol steps April 5 to protest Outcome-Based Education.

"Washington state citizens should brace themselves for a sellout of academic excellence if the educational reform bill currently before the state legislature is passed," said Cathy Mickels, president of Washington Alliance of Families. Her group was one of about a dozen groups opposing the bill.

SHB 1209 on education reform shifts the emphasis away from traditional academic methods, Mrs. Mickels claims. "Parents are concerned that a focus on academics in our state is being replaced by vague, unclear goals and their outcomes."

She told the crowd, "This legislature has no business taking one dime of taxpayers' money to pay for this controversial, expensive statewide experiment in education. If legislators pass this bill, they will be guilty of ignoring the growing grassroots opposition in our state to this brand of educational reform. There needs to be a full public debate on this issue and there has been none," Mrs. Mickels also said.

The parents asserted that they want education reform decisions put in the hands of the people, not the government. Many of the protestors showed up in legislative offices, giving turnips to their legislators. A security guard stated that the Senate Majority Leader had so many turnips on his desk, "he could plant a garden."

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Educators Launch Attack on 'Religious Right'

DENVER, CO — More than 200 education leaders from 30 states and Canada attended a 3-day I/D/E/A/ Institute entitled "Responding Democratically to Religious Agendas: Right-Wing Pressure Groups and School Reform" held May 3-5, 1993 in Denver, Colorado. The conference was designed to help participants identify and disarm school critics allegedly connected with national "religious right" organizations.

Keynote speakers included Michael Hudson, vice president of People for the American Way; Robert Marzano of the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory; Fritz Detwiler, associate professor of philosophy and religion at Adrian [MI] College; Charles Haynes, a leading authority on religious liberty issues; and Frosty Troy, editor of the *Oklahoma Observer*.

Presenters agreed that so-called religious

right groups are well-funded, well-organized, and well-trained, but disagreed on whether their agenda is political or religious. Detwiler insisted that the movement is just as religious as political, but Hudson and Troy saw religion as a front for political goals.

"They have a political agenda and they're using a religious rationale to press it. But what's new about that? Look what Hitler and Goebbels did in Germany," was Troy's comment. (That was one of many references linking the religious right with Nazism and racism.) Detwiler cautioned that, "on the most extreme end, there is the possibility of a kind of scenario we witnessed in Waco because these people are committed to that point."

In his opening remarks, Michael Hudson criticized the Christian Coalition (Pat Robertson), Eagle Forum (Phyllis Schlafly), American Family Association (Don

CHEVY CHASE, MD — The Maryland Department of Education has dropped plans to give an 87-question biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey to high school students after numerous county systems raised concerns over questions on suicide, drug use and sexual behavior. Four sample questions from the survey are:

- Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse the last time?
- During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?
- If you attempted suicide, did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?
- How far in school did your father go?

Maryland's Department of Education wanted about 4,500 9th and 11th grade students in 30 schools to take the 87-question survey this month. But it backed out after school officials in Montgomery, Howard, Anne Arundel, Dorchester, Worcester, Somerset and Kent counties refused it.

Developed in 1990 and promoted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the survey was turned down in January by the prestigious Montgomery County school system (near Washington, D. C.) following a complaint by Malcolm Lawrence, Coordinator of the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents (see *Education Reporter*, January 1993).

Articles on the highly controversial federal survey then appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Washington Times* and other papers.

"We thought that it would be considered offensive to many," said Tom Rhoades,

Anne Arundel County's director of management information services. "There were enough things on the survey that would cause difficulties with students and parents that it just wasn't worth doing. The mission of the Anne Arundel County school system is to instruct students, not to act as a research base."

Dr. Laura Kann, coordinator for the project in Atlanta, informed Mr. Lawrence that "an estimated 40 states" are participating in the survey for 1993. She would not identify the individual states. Nor did she reveal the names of the states that had rejected the survey, except to assert it was a "handful." Asked if the White House had been in touch with her office concerning the survey, Dr. Kann replied, "I don't know."

Lawrence advises local groups to call their own education headquarters to learn the status of the survey in their area and to obtain a copy of the questions. Or, they might wish to call Dr. Kann (404-488-5330).

Lawrence has received letters of support and requests for advice from many parents and education groups throughout the country. Lawrence has called on President Clinton to have the CDC survey canceled. In a February 8 letter, Lawrence wrote:

"Consider the cost factor of having legions of public administrators and educators at the federal, state, and local levels working year after year to place the harmful CDC survey into classrooms throughout the United States. Consider the cost of thousands of student/classroom hours devoted to such an exercise. Consider the benefits of having such classroom time freed up for the much-needed teaching of reading, writing and other vital subjects.

"For the benefit of taxpayers and parents, I urge you, Mr. President, to take immediate action to have the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey canceled and removed from the American public school system."

Lawrence is waiting for a substantive response from the White House, but he points out that, even if the President cancels this particular survey, many other nosy, privacy-invasive questionnaires are being foisted upon schools, much to the consternation of parents.

He advises that the most effective ammunition against the onslaught of classroom inquisitions is for each state or each local school district to adopt an effective rights of privacy policy. Thanks to Lawrence and the Maryland Coalition, such a policy was adopted by the Montgomery County school system in 1988, and that policy was the basis for rejecting the CDC survey. (See *Education Reporter*, Sept. 1989) Lawrence recommends that other parent groups use it as a model. The CDC survey will not be given again until 1995. ■

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EDUCATION
BRIEFS

Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film "Romeo and Juliet" was removed from circulation by school officials in Shelby County, AL because it contained nudity. The PG-rated film was shown to an 8th grade class at Calera Middle/High School, prompting a complaint to the school principal by a concerned parent. Rebecca Nail, director of instruction for Shelby County Board of Education, decided to remove the film from circulation saying that, "because of the nudity it was inappropriate for middle and high school students." Some critics claimed that removing the film is censorship and that it will deprive the students of a literary experience. Mrs. Nail disagreed. "We are not censoring Mr. Shakespeare," she argues, pointing out that three other film versions of "Romeo and Juliet" are still in circulation at the Teachers' Resource Center. "The other three tell the same story," Mrs. Nail said, "without the nudity."

A government panel has suggested that schools expand their student records and start collecting more information such as students' birth weights, prenatal care for the mother, vaccination history, dropout and graduation rates, and whether they register to vote at age 18. Members of the National Education Goals Panel say this would allow schools to monitor children's progress better, and enable governors to keep track of the progress schools make toward the six national education goals developed under President Bush.

According to an annual federally funded survey, illegal drug use among 8th graders is on the rise. The annual University of Michigan survey found "significant" increases in the use of marijuana, cocaine, LSD, inhalants and other illicit substances among 13- and 14-year-olds. The percent of eighth graders who tried marijuana in 1992 jumped to 11.2%, a full percentage point higher than a similar sample taken the previous year.

Letter grades should be "discouraged but not forbidden" beginning next year was the suggestion made to the Baltimore, MD school board by two committees studying alternatives to traditional letter grades. Instead of giving A's and B's, teachers would be encouraged to use checklists of skills such as "reads fluently" and "computes accurately." Schools all over the country are also studying alternatives to traditional letter grades. Some educators argue that traditional grades no longer measure what is being taught, label children as either good or poor students early in their education, and can damage their self-esteem.

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School Assn. Attacks Parents

ALEXANDRIA, VA — The National School Boards Association has launched a full-scale attack against parents who want to be involved in the curricula taught to their children. This attack is spelled out in eleven pages of text in the April 1993 issue of the organization's publication, *The American School Board Journal*.

The principal article, entitled "Targets of the Right," purports to describe the "arsenal of tactics and takeover strategies" used by the "far right," which allegedly includes the Christian Coalition in Virginia Beach, VA, Citizens for Excellence in Education in Santa Ana, CA, Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, CO, Eagle Forum in Alton, IL, Concerned Women for America in Washington, D.C., Education Research Analysts in Longview, TX, and Christian Educators in Santa Ana, CA.

The article accuses these "far right" groups of opposing a variety of public school curricula, including "Impressions," "Positive Action," "Dungeons and Dragons," "Quest," "Here's Looking at You 2000," "Pumsy," "Outcome-Based Education," and "Children of the Rainbow," as well as values clarification, situation ethics, and New Age practices.

The article states that "over the last decade, the far right's strategies and tactics have become significantly more sophisticated, intrusive, and effective." This means, according to the article that, whereas during the 1970s and 1980s groups usually just challenged textbooks at school board meetings, in the 1990s these groups "now provide how-to materials, training sessions, and support for citizens and parents."

The *School Board Journal* article states that "one of the most effective tools in the religious right's tool box" is the use of the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (sometimes known as the Hatch Amendment). The *Journal* advises school board personnel to contact the National Association of Secondary School Principals,

'Religious Right'

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Fritz Detwiler, whose wife was a co-author of the Adrian, Michigan restructuring plan, echoed Hudson's fears, calling the religious right a "national threat that really does pose a very frightening scenario for public education in this country." He asserted that the civil war of values is about power and is being waged by those who "seek to impose their worldview and its values on the entire culture." According to Detwiler, "the Christian right has identified that the most significant institution to control is the public schools because the public schools have the power to define and transmit reality and national identity."

Speakers who were the most critical of the religious right were enthusiastically applauded, while the more moderate and democratic views of Robert Marzano and Charles Haynes were met with skepticism. Marzano admitted that "there is in fact a worldview that educators unknowingly have inherited," which contradicts much of the conservative Christian worldview and which is based on "equally improbable assumptions." He stated that public education currently is not the free marketplace of ideas which it should be, and that concepts such as transformational Outcome-Based Education have definite religious overtones. Haynes cautioned against labeling, stereotyping, and bashing religious groups; said

the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Education Association for materials and sample letters that schools can use to avoid compliance with the federal law and to persuade parents that it does not apply to whatever material is being challenged.

A typical example of how this article is being used at the local level is a five-page "alert" purporting to warn against "Religiously Based Far Right Groups" which is now being distributed to school superintendents by the American Association of School Administrators. This document accuses these "Far Right" groups of such offenses as being "active in electoral politics and local curriculum issues," "backing Christian candidates in local and other political races," "reemphasizing family values," and "analyzing textbooks."

The document then gives public school personnel 39 pointers on what school systems "need to do to respond effectively to criticism." These include the following:

- "Provide media training for administrators, mainstream parents and others who will fight the religious right in their own communities."
- "Have a plan for handling school board election campaigns."
- "Develop a cadre of organized key communicators within the community."
- "Keep open lines of communication with the press."
- "Alert the economic development cabinet that these networks are in place and are disrupting your community."
- "Alert your school attorney immediately."
- "Use national organizations as a resource."
- "Focus your attention on the 30% of the community who are moderates."
- "Keep school board moderates 'in the loop.'"
- "Develop questionnaires that can be used for school board candidates." ■

that he had found the Focus on the Family staff reasonable rather than extremist; and encouraged participants to seek a common ground with religious groups.

Conference participants — about half of them district superintendents or administrators and the rest mostly school board members, state education officials, union officials, consultants, principals and education professors — met after each speaker's presentation in small discussion groups as well as in larger question/answer sessions with each presenter.

Several recurrent themes were voiced repeatedly in these sessions: e.g: (1) members of religious right groups have no ethics, no regard for the truth, and do not play by any rules; (2) the tactics and philosophy of the religious right mirror those of Nazi Germany; (3) the underlying motivation of the religious right's opposition to public education is racism; (4) the ultimate agenda of the leadership is the destruction of public education (although the rank and file may not be aware of this); (5) mainline clergy must be enlisted to help in the fight against the fundamentalist "Christian soldiers"; (6) "stealth" religious right school board members (or candidates) must be exposed and teacher interviews used to identify (and weed out) religious right applicants. ■



Book of the Month

Back To
Basics
Reform
Or...
Skinnerian
International
Curriculum?*

*NECESSARY FOR UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION IN A SOCIALIST ONE-WORLD GOVERNMENT SCHEDULED FOR THE EARLY YEARS OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Charlotte T. Iserbyt

Everything predicted in this book, written in 1985 by a former Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, has happened or is happening in 1993. The author focuses on federal and tax-exempt foundation funding and development of "politically correct" values-changing Outcome-Based Education/Mastery Learning (OBE/ML); Higher Order Thinking Skills; computer assisted instruction; instructional management systems; individualized education plans; state, national and international assessments (testing); and many other controversial, innovative programs and teaching methods which originated in the office in which she worked from 1981-1992. The book gives the reader the officially-documented *who, why and what* behind the goings-on in our nation's schools.

Copies of the updated 1993 printing of *Back to Basics Reform or...Skinnerian International Curriculum?* may be purchased by writing or calling:

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1-10 copies @ \$7.00; 10-500 @ \$3.50; 500 or more @ \$2.00; postage and handling included. Make checks payable to: Charlotte T. Iserbyt.

Turnip Continued from page 1

Superintendent of Public Instruction Judith Billings, who received a box of turnips, called the opposition to education reform "misinformed." She claims that the details of the education reform are not yet available because it is an evolving process. "That is also why it cannot be proved that it will or won't work," she said.

The media were shocked by the large number of people who turned out to protest at the rally, since the organizers had only six days to plan it. Mrs. Mickels attributed the high turnout to extensive telephoning and to radio interviews she and Sandy Vanderberg did beforehand, but even more so to the growing grassroots opposition to Outcome-Based Education. ■

FOCUS: Outcome-Based Education

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is sweeping the country in the name of school "restructuring." OBE calls for a complete change in the way children are taught, graded and graduated, kindergarten through 12th grade. Since the American people seem ready to accept drastic surgery on our failed public schools, state departments of education are seizing this opportunity to promote OBE as the cure. But OBE has parents even more agitated than they are about explicit sex education. Crowds of a thousand or more parents are known to have gathered in Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Ohio, and Washington. Here is a summary of the ten major objections that parents have raised against OBE.

1. Misleading Jargon

OBE is packaged in a deceptive language that appears to be mischievously chosen to mislead parents. Public school administrators have an obligation to present their "reform" plans in plain English so that their "reform" easily understand the objectives, the methods, the content, and exactly how OBE is different from traditional schooling.

OBE advocates use obscure and double-entendre expressions that parents assume mean one thing but really mean something different in the new OBE context. When they talk about "higher order thinking skills" or "critical thinking," they mean a relativistic process of questioning traditional moral values.

The following statement from OBE literature is typical: "OBE schools are expected to become 'success based' rather than 'selection oriented' by establishing the instructional management procedures and delivery conditions which enable all students to learn and demonstrate those skills necessary for continued success." OBE salespersons don't tell parents that "success" for all children means "success" in demonstrating only the dumbed-down outcomes that the slowest learners in the class can attain. OBE means "success" in mediocrity rather than excellence.

2. No Research Proves OBE Works

OBE uses experiments as guinea pigs in a vast social experiment. OBE advocates are not able to produce any replicable research or pilot studies to show that it works. OBE is being forced on entire state school systems without any evidence that it has been tried anywhere and found effective.

The best test of an OBE-type system was Chicago's experiment in the 1970s with Professor Benjamin Bloom's Mastery Learning (ML), which is essentially the same as OBE. ML was a colossal failure and was abandoned in disgrace in 1982. The test scores proved to be appallingly low and the illiteracy rate became a national scandal. Bloom, the father of ML, is well known for his statement that "the purpose of education is to change the thoughts, feelings and actions of students." (*All Our Children Learning*, page 180.)

Dr. Bill Spady, sociologist and director of the International Center on Outcome-

Based Restructuring, defined the connection between OBE and Mastery Learning in an article entitled "On Outcome Based Education: A Conversation with Bill Spady" (*Educational Leadership*, Dec. 1992-Jan. 1993): "In January of 1980 we convened a meeting of 42 people to form the Network for Outcome-Based Schools. Most of the people who were there — Jim Block, John Champlin — had a strong background in Mastery Learning, since it was what OBE was called at the time. But I pleaded with the group not to use the name 'mastery learning' in the network's new name because the word 'mastery' had already been destroyed through poor implementation."

The major OBE/ML experiment, which took place in Utah in 1984-86, shows how federal funding enabled OBE to spread nationwide. A letter applying for the federal grant, written by Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction G. Leland Burningham to then U.S. Secretary of Education T. H. Bell (July 27, 1984), stated: "This [project] will make it possible to put Outcome-Based Education in place, not only in Utah but in all schools of the nation." Spady's Far West Regional Laboratory received the federal grant and he was made director of this pilot project, which is now implementing OBE/ML nationwide.

3. No Accountability to Anyone

OBE offers no method of accountability to students, parents, teachers, or taxpayers. Since OBE includes no objective standards of achievement that are measurable, it will be years and millions of tax dollars into the future before we know whether schoolchildren are learning anything important or are wasting their time. Educators admit that OBE is very expensive since each student works at his own pace at mastering every outcome/skill/behavior until he succeeds. Perhaps this is what they mean by "lifelong learning."

For as long as most of us can remember, secondary schools have been structured on a measurable grid called the "Carnegie units." The traditional high school curriculum includes four units of English; three units each of mathematics, science and social studies; two units each of arts and humanities; a unit of health and physical education; and several electives. After you complete enough units (usually 21), you receive a high school diploma and colleges will admit you.

Outcome-Based Education tosses these traditional units out the window and replaces them with vague and subjective "learning outcomes" that cannot be measured objectively by standardized tests and for which there is no accountability to parents and taxpayers. OBE will make it virtually impossible to conduct any kind of tests that allow comparisons with students in other schools, other states, or prior years. Under OBE, grades have no relation to academic achievement and knowledge. Colleges will have no criteria by which to judge whether students are ready for admission.

In the elementary grades, OBE does not teach children essential reading, writing, and arithmetic skills (such as addition, subtraction and multiplication tables), but pre-

tends to teach them "higher order thinking skills" instead. OBE ignores the obvious fact that one can't engage in "higher order thinking" until one has some facts to think about. For example, an Iowa State OBE assessment test for the 11th grade shows no requirement of math skills beyond the fundamental computations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

4. Mediocrity, Not Excellence

OBE is a dumbed-down egalitarian scheme that stifles individual potential for excellence and achievement by holding the entire class to the level of learning attainable by every child. To accomplish this, children are placed in "politically correct" groups (race, ethnicity, gender, class) for "cooperative learning" and may be given a group grade instead of individual grades. Cooperative learning researchers admit that the purpose of this strategy is to eliminate grading and competition in the classroom. This is the essence of OBE and explains why all measurable criteria standardized tests, the Carnegie units, traditional subject matter, and report cards must be eliminated.

*Demonstrate
'mastery' of
mediocrity;
never aspire
to excellence.*

OBE is based on the unrealistic notion that every child in a group can learn to the designated level and must demonstrate mastery of a specific outcome before the group can move on. The faster learners are not allowed to progress, but are given busy work called "horizontal enrichment" or told to do "peer tutoring" to help the slower learners, who are recycled through the material until the pre-determined behavior is exhibited.

Cooperative learning researcher Robert Slavin said in "Mastery Learning Reconsidered" (funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1987): "If some students take much longer than others to learn a particular objective, then . . . either corrective instruction must be given outside of regular class time, or students who achieve mastery early on will have to waste considerable amounts of time waiting for their classmates to catch up." If OBE were applied to basketball, the basket would have to be lowered so all could score equally.

In order to master all outcomes, children with a particular talent are required to forfeit time in their area of strength. Because no child moves ahead until all demonstrate mastery, the inevitable happens: the faster learners, quickly learnable to pace in order to avoid extra work, and they just give the answers to the slower learners so the group can move forward. Incentive and

motivation are reduced. The outcome is boredom and resentment. The result is that all students demonstrate "mastery" of mediocrity, and none can aspire to excellence. Every child loses under this system.

5. Vague, Subjective Outcomes

In an OBE system, academic and factual subject matter is replaced by vague and subjective learning outcomes. According to OBE guru Bill Spady, "the traditional subject-based curriculum disappears" from OBE. New OBE report cards substitute check marks for grades, focusing on general skills, attitudes, and behaviors instead of individual subjects.

A look at the outcomes that have so far been made public show that they are heavily layered with such "Politically Correct" notions as training for world citizenship and government (instead of patriotism), population control, radical environmentalism, and government "solutions" for every problem.

Washington State's Performance-Based Education Act of 1993 calls for a new performance-based assessment system to "replace the current state standardized achievement tests." The goals are extremely vague. For instance: Under Goal 1, students are to "communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings." No indication is given of what is meant by "responsibly." Under Goal 2, students know and apply the core concepts and principles, among other things, of "healthful living." What constitutes healthful living is not disclosed.

Goal 4 instructs students to "function as caring and responsible individuals and contributing members of families, work groups, and communities." "Responsible" and "caring" are undefined. The outcomes also include "honest and ethical behavior," which suggests a moral code of some sort, though presumably not a Judeo-Christian ethic. Another outcome is "citizenship," which is redefined from its traditional sense to include "a multicultural and world view."

6. Values and Attitudes Outcomes

A high percentage of OBE "outcomes" concern values, attitudes, opinions and relationships rather than objective information. A large number of OBE's goals are affective (concerned with emotions and feelings) rather than academic (concerned with knowledge and skills). OBE requires students to meet vague psychological objectives relating to self-esteem, ethical judgment, and adaptability to change. Moving from one level to the next, and even graduation, is dependent on meeting behavior-change requirements and government-mandated attitudes.

OBE thus involves a major change in the school's avowed mission. Henceforth, its mission is to conform student beliefs, attitudes and behavior to prescribed school-mandated social norms, rather than to provide an academic education. Parents are concerned about what methods will be used to change behaviors that are deemed incorrect.

"Self-esteem" is a major attitudinal outcome demanded by OBE. Many of the techniques used to change a child's self-esteem

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or his adaptability to change are psychotherapeutic. This amounts to practicing psychology without a license as well as engaging in unprofessional group therapy. Arizona recently made an attempt to protect its school personnel by providing them with civil and criminal immunity.

Parents who are trying to rear their children with strong religious values are concerned that willingness to go along with the crowd is taught by OBE as a positive rather than a negative attitude. Since "tolerance" is a major attitudinal outcome demanded by OBE, parents are concerned that this includes "tolerance" for extra-marital lifestyles of all kinds. The non-directive, "decision-making" classroom technique leads children to believe they are mature enough to make decisions about sex and drugs that parents believe are unhealthy and may even be illegal.

The Pennsylvania State Department of Education listed 545 outcomes (later condensed to 55) that students would have to meet before graduation. A look at some of these outcomes makes clear that they cannot possibly measure students' performance objectively. "All students develop interpersonal communication, decision making, coping, and evaluation skills and apply them to personal, family, and community living." "All students understand and appreciate their worth as unique and capable individuals, and exhibit self-esteem." "All students relate in writing, speech or other media, the history and nature of various forms of prejudice to current problems facing communities and nations, including the United States." "All students make environmentally sound decisions in their personal and civic lives."

The public school establishment is highly secretive about the OBE tests, but tests that have come to light include many questions of attitude and opinion for which there are no right or wrong answers. What is the correct answer, for example, to questions about whether the student "understands others" or "applies good consumer behavior"? Nevertheless, the student is required to conform to the government-mandated outcomes, whatever they are.

OBE's behavior modification techniques are evident from the first-grade "Comprehensive Health Learner Outcomes" published by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. They include (page 60): "The student will identify different types of family structures, so that no single type is seen as the only possible one. . . . The student will describe ways family members resolve problems and conflicts."

OBE raises the fundamental question of *who* should decide what values, attitudes, and beliefs a child should be taught. Should it be the parents or the U.S. Department of Education, which funded OBE? Should the public schools be allowed to teach values that may be controversial and sometimes even contradictory to values taught to children by their parents? Behavior modification is fundamental to achieving OBE-type results. OBE uses a "stimulus-response-stimulus" pattern, a rewards-and-punishment process based on Ivan Pavlov's and B.F. Skinner's programmed learning/behavior modification techniques. Under OBE, students are recycled through the process until they meet the mandated outcomes.

Educators see computer-assisted instruction (CAI) as a powerful programmed-learning tool to change children's values.

Here are some samples of their thinking. "The computer is ideally suited to the role of facilitator in values education. It inherently possesses the Rogerian qualities of genuineness and congruence. . . . Values clarification and values analysis are aptly suited to being used as a basis for software development." ("Can Computers Teach Values?," *Educational Leadership*, April 1982.) "The computer will work on the principle that students' attitudes can be changed effectively by using the Socratic method of asking an appropriate series of leading questions logically designed to right the balance between appropriate attitudes and those deemed less acceptable." (Donald Bushnell, "The Role of the Computer in Future Instructional Systems," *AV Communication Review*, 1963.)

7. Computer Tracking

OBE sets up a computer file on each child to track the child's efforts to master the learning outcomes. These "electronic portfolios" will take the place of traditional assessments and test results and will become the basis for the school's efforts to remediate whatever attitudes and behaviors the school deems unacceptable. The portfolios will include all school, psychological and medical records, and are to be available to prospective employers after graduation.

The computer portfolio on each child plays an essential role in the tracking of individual students. The computer records how the child responds to behavior modification, what is his threshold of resistance to remediation, and whether he develops positive attitudes toward the mandated outcomes.

A computer file stays with every child forever.

Parents are concerned about *who* will have access to these files and what will become of the data compiled on each student. Professional journals describe the goals like this: "The computer's vast storage capacity permits access to a much broader base of data than just one classroom. In fact, the responses of the entire population of a school system could easily be compiled, stored and shared." (*Educational Leadership*, April 1982.) Student privacy is tossed out the window. Will the child be able to get a job if he has not demonstrated the OBE values and "politically correct" attitudes? Some have suggested that state law should forbid employers to hire anyone who does not have a certificate showing mastery of the government-mandated outcomes.

8. Failure To Teach Reading

OBE perpetuates the failure of the public school system to teach first graders how to read. OBE is wholly committed to the "whole language," word-guessing method rather than the phonics method. This

ensures that children will learn only to memorize a few words that are massively repeated. Teachers are cautioned not to correct spelling and syntax errors because that could be damaging to the student's self esteem and creativity.

In 1992, the Oklahoma State Department of Education published five volumes of "Learner Outcomes" for Grades One through Twelve. They dictate total subservience to the discredited "word-guessing" method of teaching reading to first graders, and do not allow the use of the proven phonics method. Instead of teaching children to read by learning the sounds and syllables of the English language so that the child can sound out words, the child is taught by endless repetition to memorize a few dozen "sight" words, to guess at new words by looking at the pictures on the page, to "predict" the text instead of reading it, and to skip over words they can't read. The teacher is instructed *not* to have the child focus on reading actual words, but to let the child substitute any words that seem to fit.

Word-guessing, not reading, is the outcome.

The ability to read a simple story that a child has never seen before is *not* on the list of Oklahoma "outcomes." Predicting is *not* reading, nor is asking a friend, nor is guessing at the meaning from the illustrations.

Here are some direct quotations from the official "Oklahoma State Competencies, Grade One," pages 15-22, which confirm that first-graders will reach their "Reading Learner Outcomes" by guessing rather than by reading: "The student attend[s] to the meaning of what is read rather than focusing on figuring out words. . . . Uses context, pictures, syntax, and structural analysis clues to predict meanings of unknown words. Develops a sight vocabulary of high frequency words. . . . Predict[s] unknown words. . . . Uses predictions in order to read pattern books (stories with a repetitive element). . . . Uses fix-it strategies (predicts, uses pictorial cues, asks a friend, skips the word, substitutes another meaningful word). . . . The student will interpret a story from illustrations."

The "Oklahoma State Competencies, Grade Two" reinforce the guessing game rather than teaching the child to read. Here are some additional quotations (pages 7-15): "Use context clues and nonverbal clues to aid comprehension (pictures, typefaces, word placement, illustrations). . . . Predict outcomes. . . . Makes, verifies, and/or revises predictions while reading." Even in the 12th grade, the child is still told that he need not "focus on figuring out words." However, he must nevertheless demonstrate "a positive attitude toward self as a reader." (Grades 9 through 12, page 21.)

The education elitists who are promoting OBE are perfectly content to have the

schools turn out quotas of semi-literate workers who can be trained to perform menial tasks under supervision in order to serve the demands of the global economy. OBE graduates will never be able to aspire to enjoy the great literature in the English language.

The rationale was explained by well-known reading researcher Thomas Sticht, who said in 1987, "Many companies have moved operations to places with cheap, relatively poorly educated labor. What may be crucial, they say, is the dependability of a labor force and how well it can be managed and trained — not its general educational level, although a small cadre of highly educated creative people is essential to innovation and growth. Ending discrimination and changing values are probably more important than reading in moving low-income families into the middle class." (*Washington Post*, Aug. 17, 1987.)

The U.S. Department of Labor is a big player in the OBE movement. OBE will aid in managing and training the work force by tracking all students beginning in the 4th grade and routing them through vocational education tracks as needed. Functional literacy competencies are defined as an ability to read a map and a bus schedule. Sticht is also a member of the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and, as Associate Director for Basic Skills at the National Institute of Education, promoted similar techniques called "competency education" and "mastery teaching." (*Washington Post*, Aug. 17, 1977.)

9. High Costs for OBE

OBE involves high costs for administration and the retraining of teachers in an entirely new system, which will be reflected in higher school taxes. The computer portfolio system is reported to be five times as expensive as traditional assessment tests.

Putting computers into the hands of first-graders to give the facade of moving into modern technology is a gross waste of funds. Computers may actually be a detriment to learning elementary writing and arithmetic skills, but they may be very useful in changing values, as noted above.

10. State, Not Local, Control

OBE involves increasing state control at the expense of local control. Although OBE salespersons claim otherwise, the new system tightens the grip of state education officials and federal education laboratories because they write the required outcomes, develop the curriculum, train the teachers, and judge the performance of the students (all of whom must conform to National Goals).

Even though local school districts may be told to develop their own plan for achieving the designated outcomes, the plans must be approved by the state departments of education. Texas Commissioner of Education Lionel Meno gave his definition of local control (*Texas Lone Star*, June 1991): The state sets the goals, the local districts choose how they will comply.

Teachers will not be able to get around the OBE system, and teach the basics anyway, because the teachers are graded on how their class meets the outcomes. Teachers who do not conform will be phased out, and the schools will be taken over by the state, as is mandated in Kentucky. ■