

EDUCATION REPORTER

Number 101

The Newspaper of Education Rights

June 1994

Victory in Alabama! OBE Put on Hold

MONTGOMERY, AL - "2 and 0" is the current win/loss record for parents in Alabama now that Gov. Jim Folsom's education reform plans have been put on hold for a second time. Conservative organizations banding together - into what Gov. Folsom referred to as "the most unusual coalition" - were responsible for killing the legislation.

But Gov. Folsom vowed the program is only resting, not dead, since he plans to bring it up again in July after the primary election. "Win or lose, and I don't plan to

lose," he said at a news conference. "We will be back addressing the plan."

Gov. Folsom had called a 10-day special session on April 26 in an attempt to revive his education reform plan, which had been killed in the regular session just the day before.

The Senate, as it had in the regular session, approved Folsom's plan again, but the special session ended without the House taking a vote on the key bill in the proposal - the measure that would set up OBE goals.

It was those very goals that resulted in the plan's failure. "They were so wedded to their Performance-Based system that nobody could work with them," said Eunie Smith, president of Alabama Eagle Forum. "Alabamians have rejected Outcome/Performance-Based Education."

Rep. Mark Gaines (R-Homewood) was among legislators who negotiated with the Folsom administration to get a bill that both Republicans and the Eagle Forum would accept.

"It didn't work because the Governor

was really not willing to compromise. . . We would get close, then we would take two steps back," Rep. Gaines said.

"You have 67 goals in this bill. I view them as limiting in nature. Teachers will only teach to these goals and no further. Students won't have any incentives to learn beyond those goals," he added.

Gov. Folsom called the failure "a shame and a great disgrace," and said the opposition was based on politics. He blamed Eagle Forum for the plan's failure as well

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Federal Report Orders Doubling the Time Spent on Academics *Longer School Year and School Day Proposed*

WASHINGTON, DC - A federal task force has recommended that American schools double the amount of time they spend on core academic courses such as English, math, science, and history in order to help students compete with others around the world.

The National Education Commission on Time and Learning found after a two-year study that, although the average American school day lasts about six hours, high school students spend only about three hours in academic classes - half as much time as their counterparts in Japan, France, and Germany. More of the American student's time is spent on electives such as driver's education.

The commission noted that a typical German high school student spends about 3,528 hours studying subjects such as math, science and history, but a typical American high school student spends only about 1,460 hours in academic studies.

"The additional emphasis they [Japan and Germany] put on the basic subjects - particularly math and science - has allowed them successes not achieved by America's schools at this point," said Donald Weber, a school superintendent who has spent time evaluating Japanese and German school systems.

The commission also recommends a longer school day as well as a longer school year - one that would be extended through July, which means no more summer vacation or, at least, not three months. The commission says in its report that the six-hour school day and 180-day school year is something that should be banished "to museums as an exhibit of our education past."

An experiment with year-round schooling in Illinois was abandoned in 1980 because too many parents pulled their kids out of the system and it got too expensive.

the school year, provided teachers are paid for the extra work. Deborah Lawson, a teacher in a Chicago school, agrees. "As an educator, I feel that, if more time helps improve students' performance, I'm all for it," she said. "But at the same time, I'm against it if it's going to turn us into a baby-sitting service."

An experiment with year-round schooling in Valley View District in Illinois was abandoned in 1980 because too many parents pulled their kids out of the system and it got too expensive. For many, summer vacation is nearly a sacred tradition. Even a demand by a school district in Illinois for students to read one book over summer vacation had students and parents outraged.

Nonetheless, some schools have already started to gradually extend both the school day as well as school year. Some have added an extra hour to each day and others are adding a few extra days to their school calendars. □



Student-Initiated Religious Speeches Get Green Light on Graduation Day

JACKSONVILLE, FL - A federal district court has ruled that student-initiated religious speeches at graduation ceremonies are not unconstitutional. In May, 1993, the Duval County School Board decided to allow students to vote on whether or not to give a graduating senior the opportunity to give an uncensored speech on the topic of his choosing at the opening or closing of the graduation ceremony. Upon student approval of the proposal, the elected student would be allowed two minutes to send a message to his graduating peers, be it secular or religious.

The ACLU brought suit against the Duval County School Board on the grounds that the student's speech could be religious in nature, contending that it violates the First Amendment.

Three students sought help from Liberty Counsel, an Orlando based law firm specializing in First Amendment Rights, in order to defend their freedom of speech. Matthew Staver, a lawyer for Liberty Counsel, represented the students who requested that the courts allow them to be

a party in the lawsuit along with the school board.

Commenting on the victory for First Amendment rights, Staver said, "The right to free speech guarantees that government may not discriminately permit only those ideas with which it agrees while disallowing more controversial ones." This case is the first in which students have become additional parties to defend their rights along with the school board.

"As students do not shed their constitutional right to free speech at the schoolhouse, neither do they shed their rights when they approach the graduation podium," Staver noted. "The school allows many types of messages during graduation. As for students, the policy allows them to address the class on any topic free of censorship. The ACLU requested the court to ban all religious messages. To allow secular messages while censoring religious ones does not show neutrality, but hostility toward religion."

The decision is expected to have an effect on graduation ceremonies all over the country. □

EDUCATION BRIEFS

The movement to restore prayer to the public schools appears to be gaining new ground among urban blacks. Many city residents say that allowing students to recite prayers each day would help restore a moral foundation to the public schools, something they say is badly needed in an era when school violence has become commonplace.

For the first time in the 67-year history of the Illinois State Science Fair, a school has been barred from winning team honors because, as fair officials said, the students are "just too good." Avery Coonley School, a highly selective private school in Downers Grove, has now won the Illinois State Science Fair four years in a row – but no more, now that fair officials decided "to give other schools an opportunity to win." Brendan Chrisman, a 7th grader at Avery Coonley, said that, "We strive to do the best, and we have. It's not fair that we will be barred next year. If any school tries hard enough, they can win this award."

A school board in Lake County, FL passed a policy requiring local schools to teach that "American culture" is superior to all others. Pat Hart, school board chairman who wrote the policy, said it will ensure that America's culture and heritage will be instilled in Lake County children. "It is the neglecting and forgetting of these things that have led us to our present state," Mrs. Hart said. Florida state law requires districts to teach an appreciation of other cultures. The president of the Lake County Education Association, Gail Burry, says the teachers' group plans to file a lawsuit.

A teacher at Oakton High School in Virginia, Kelly Mastrandano, said she meant no harm when she showed 9th grade students an unapproved film about a young lesbian couple. She showed "The Coming Out of Heidi Leiter" to four classes during a unit on sexuality. The 30-minute film is the true story of a lesbian couple from Manassas who want to attend their high school prom together.

Education Reporter (ISSN 0887-0608) is published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund with editorial offices at 7800 Bonhomme Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105, (314) 721-1213. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the persons quoted and should not be attributed to Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund. Annual subscription \$25. Back issues available @ \$2. Second Class postage paid at Alton Illinois.

'Free the Horses' Rides Through Classrooms

Concerned Parents Left in the Dust

An adventure program filled with friendly characters and cheerful music has concerned a growing number of parents. They claim that *Free the Horses: A Self-Esteem Adventure* is New Age dogma.

A video-based discussion program, *Free the Horses* was created to teach self esteem to children in grades 1-4. It is rife with messages such as "the power is in your mind" and "you have everything you need inside," and it is typical of the New Age curricula now bombarding the schools.

The video begins with a teacher putting a group of children in charge of a "One World Assembly" where they are to share about the country they are from. The group contains a Caucasian, Spanish, African-American, Asian, and handicapped child. Kelly, the main character

in the story, is not certain she can handle such a large task. It is when she falls asleep later, that her dream adventure begins.

She and the other characters in the video discover the secrets of self-esteem in a medieval land. They are on a mission to free the horses (which represent their talents and dreams) that have been imprisoned by an evil wizard. All the characters face different problems along the way.

Kelly is overwhelmed by what is expected of her. Bright Knight feels like a failure. Ted Bear is from a dysfunctional family. Rabbit is picked on by a bully. The message is for children to learn how to handle problems positively and how to make good decisions.

Kelly is helped to face her difficult challenge of freeing the horses by her guide, Jerome the Gnome. He tells her:

"When the horses run free through the kingdom of Arthur, they help the people remember what's important in life. The people see these horses thundering across the open fields, and they remember to let their spirits fly, too. Now the pounding of those hooves stirs all the power and potential and excitement inside them, and the people remember that they should never settle for anything less than their brightest dreams."

In her adventure, Kelly learns about the "power of her own choice" in the Land of Think, Feel and Do. She discovers she must find the Golden Spiral of Success: Belonging, Learning and Contributing.

Armed with her spiral, Kelly and her companions search for the keys (Courage, Responsibility, Cooperation and Self-Esteem) to the mountain gate where the magic horses are imprisoned.

The story ends with a successful mission as Kelly and her new friends unlock the door to the mountain cave and free the magic horses.

Each lesson is designed to last 30-45 minutes. The program includes two videocassettes, a teacher's guide, a storybook/songbook, activity sheets, stickers, posters and an audiocassette with songs from the video.

Parents don't approve of a curriculum that sends the message that "all power lies within your mind."

Free the Horses also contains a hand puppet named Yes-Yes, which the teacher uses to help students interact with the program's characters and have them solve the problems presented in the video. Many parents have noted the striking resemblance between Yes-Yes and Pumsy, the hand puppet used in the controversial self-esteem program *Pumsy*.

Another similarity to *Pumsy* is that *Free the Horses* discusses the choices children have to make such as to think clear, bright thoughts or dark, stormy thoughts. The *Pumsy* program uses this same concept in discussing the "Clear Mind," the "Sparkler Mind," and the "Mud Mind."

Though most parents agree that some of the concepts taught in *Free the Horses* – such as perseverance and determination – are beneficial, many still consider it a waste of valuable class time. This complaint is not unique to *Free the Horses*, but to all classroom self-esteem courses.

Parents claim that such programs produce a "false sense of self-esteem" – students loving and feeling good about themselves just for the sake of loving and feeling good about themselves. The result has been high school graduates who have only elementary reading and math skills, yet rate themselves as excelling in both areas. Students graduate with plenty of

self-esteem, but not much else. Parents say that worthwhile self-esteem must be earned by achievement.

Other parents complain that self-esteem courses such as *Free the Horses* teach narcissism and should be more properly labeled a "selfishness course." They say children today are being overdosed in feel-good messages like those found in the *Free the Horses* songbook: "I know I was born to be someone special, and I love me" or "I'm good, you're good, everything is sure good."

Still other parents see *Free the Horses* as a violation of their religion. They don't approve of a curriculum that sends the message that "all power lies within your mind" and that "within your own power you can control your thoughts and feelings." This is called feel-good narcissism by many parents, who feel that it conflicts with what they are teaching their children about God at home.

Free the Horses was written by Michael Popkin, Ph.D. and Susan Greathead, M. Ed. and is published by Active Parenting Publishers in Atlanta, GA. Though many parents would like to see *Free the Horses* ride off into the sunset, Active Parenting claims that, in a recent survey, 82% of the respondents said their students displayed a more positive attitude toward school work after introducing *Free the Horses*, and 70% said the students displayed an increased ability to resist peer pressure. Active Parenting is also marketing the program for Sunday School Classes, after school programs, and summer camps. □

Medical Student Takes Bold Stand Against the A.M.A For Abstinence

ST. LOUIS, MO – Medical student Craig Carmichael attempted what many would have considered "the impossible" when he asked the medical student section of the American Medical Association to support abstinence-based sex education. No one was more surprised than he, when his resolution passed with a landslide vote of about 100 to 1.

"It was one of those moments you wish you could live over and over again," said Mr. Carmichael, a second-year medical student at Washington University School of Medicine, "- when you have fought a battle for a cause that you have believed in, and you win against the odds." His resolution supporting abstinence-based sex education has now become AMA medical student policy and physician members will vote in June on whether to approve it as AMA policy at large.

Mr. Carmichael's recent concern over sex education occurred when his small town of Pekin, IL, purchased an aggressive sex education curriculum that begins in kindergarten with boys and girls in the same classroom naming the "private" parts of the body in order to become comfortable talking

about sex.

"It was not an approach with which I agreed," Mr. Carmichael said. But, as editor of a student column in the state medical journal, he knew the danger of talking about abstinence and old-fashioned values in the current political arena. "I might end up doing my residency in Siberia," he said.

After spending time in the medical library, Mr. Carmichael found statistics on abstinence-based programs that supported his viewpoint. He learned that curricula such as *Sex Respect*, *Facing Reality*, *Teen S.T.A.R.*, and others had reduced the pregnancy rate for students.

Data showed that students participating in *Sex Respect* in 26 public schools had a 5% pregnancy rate two years after participation in the program, compared to a 9%

rate among a control group of students not enrolled in the program. In St. Louis, *Sex Respect* was used in an elementary school in which pregnancies fell from 10 a year to none, and middle school pregnancies dropped from 40 a year to 10.

Follow-up on a program created at Emory University See Student, page 4



Craig Carmichael

FOCUS: Decision-Making and Self-Actualization: Failed Experiments Now Used in OBE

by William Coulson, Ph.D.

It may be useful to focus on an Outcome-Based Education goal expressed in a community in Ohio: I believe it adequately illustrates problems that will be generated for America when similar goals are adopted within a national OBE framework: "Goal 3: To enable learners to make informed judgments and decisions; act in accordance with democratic processes and principles; and courteously consider differing views."

There are three parts to this goal. As to the second, "dealing with democratic processes and principles," we can refer to Hafstadter and to Lawrence Cremin's work as well as to C. A. Bowers' informative and frightening history, *The Progressive Educator and the Depression: The Radical Years*. OBE represents the political re-radicalization of American schooling following the all-too-brief flirtation with academics that came after Sputnik.

As to the first and third parts of Goal 3 – to teach young people to make their own decisions and to teach them courteously to consider "differing views" – it can be pointed out that both elements have been found packaged in American drug education programs for a number of years, the so-called affective programs. Research shows that, for the most part, they don't work. The behavioral changes that do turn up in the research tend to be in the wrong direction.

What's necessary to teach about drugs and alcohol is that the prohibition against use by children is absolute. But if Goal 3 is applied to drug education, it won't sound anything like a prohibition. Instead it will (1) teach the students that drugs and alcohol are their choice and (2) get them to listen respectfully to claims they ought to disdain – I mean the claims of the drug users among their classmates. "Be careful of the friends you pick, for you are liable to become like them." That this is an old saying does not disqualify it as a good saying. Well brought-up children ought to avoid sharing intimacies with poorly brought-up children. Instead, in the classroom discussion sessions that I have referred to elsewhere as *faux* in psychotherapy (and that remains a key element in OBE), all children alike are obliged to "share" and "listen."

I do not mean to suggest that naughty children must be shunned or that having been badly reared is their fault. I do mean to acknowledge the research which reveals that the direction of influence in classroom discussion sessions is from the experienced children to the inexperienced. This means that when the school blesses peer interaction by arraying children in circle-based sharing sessions, the influence runs from the drug users and sexually experienced of the class to the

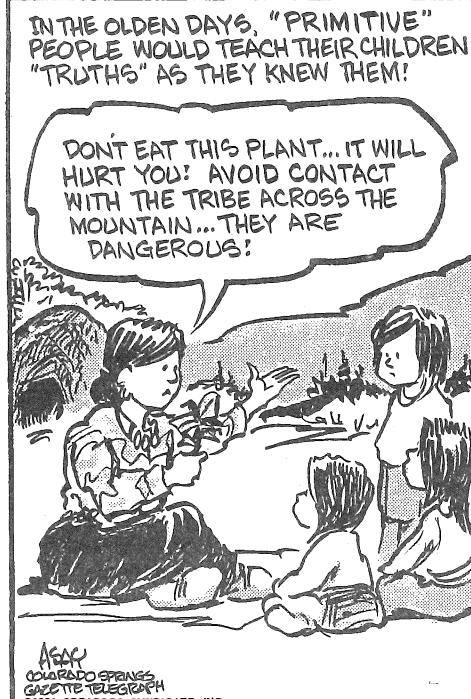
students who have been abstinent till then. Bad influences that would otherwise be avoided are no longer avoided.

A predictable outcome is that students emerge from these discussions less afraid to try drugs than before. What was unthinkable has now been thought, and spoken – not just within the peer group but in the presence of a classroom teacher who has been trained to respond nonjudgmentally. It's the presence of the nonjudgmental adult that makes the exercise so dangerous. To turn the chairs into a circle and invite the children to share while the teacher murmurs facilitisms is very poor social policy.

Consider decision making. The school doesn't teach students a method for deciding whether to attend school. It tells them they have no choice: "It's the law. You must attend. It's good for you. We are certain of this. There is nothing to discuss." They deserve no less to be ex-

empted from decision making about drugs, for there is no decision to make, none whatsoever: it's already been decided. It is no more proper for children to be induced to make decisions about drugs in drug education classes than to make decisions about the proper side of the road in driver's education.

The chaos that could be expected from teaching that the proper side of the road is a matter of choice can be expected in other subject matter areas where choice is emphasized. In the case of drug education, the essential task is to persuade children to recognize that they must never take drugs. The techniques of persuasion are well known, and that, not decision making, ought to be applied. In matters of importance we teach obedience – if we love children. For they compare what we insist upon – school attendance, stopping at the red light, wearing protective equipment in football – with what we seem to allow.



Making a comparison between what we command or condemn on the one hand and what we allow them to choose on the other, they draw the false conclusion that what we allow must not be important – or we wouldn't allow it; we would tell them the truth; we would be insistent, not permissive. In recent years we seem to have specialized in allowing them to choose whether or not to partake of sex and drugs.

In other words, decision making is for adults. Loving parents and good schools always try to improve children's vision because they want children to distinguish right from wrong. But decision making comes later, once the age of majority is reached.

This argument applies beyond drug and sex education to many fields of subject matter. Children deserve to be told what is the case. They deserve a factual education. Classroom time is wasted teaching them to make decisions they shouldn't even begin to entertain.

Next, consider the idea expressed in the Ohio Goal 3, that children should "courteously consider differing views." That ought to apply only when all views are equally feasible, i.e., when the right answer isn't yet known. To teach children to listen to answers we know are wrong (as if these answers might be right) does nothing for their maturity or their morale. It makes them feel insecure. It also confuses unqualified opinion with established fact. For example, Outcome 5 under Goal 3 calls for students to "advocate a choice (using evidence-based decision making) and act accordingly." But this advocacy-cum-action is nothing other than the doublestep mandated in the *faux* therapeutic method called values clarification. To mix the elements of values clarification into academic instruction sows confusion throughout the school.

An inadvertent outcome by Howard Kirschenbaum illustrates what's wrong

with Outcome 5. Kirschenbaum, one of the most energetic popularizers of affective education, makes it clear in his *Advanced Values Clarification* that the aims of his approach are much like those in OBE. Unfortunately, the personal autonomy which he intends to produce is realized in practice against the parents and other authorities who have the child's best interest at heart. In the classroom discussion groups favored by OBE advocates and its prede-

cessor programs such as values clarification, children learn to resist proper and improper authority. Kirschenbaum writes: "In discussing value-rich areas, such as those mentioned at the beginning of this article, the teacher accepts all answers and does not try to impose his or her own views on the students. . . Responses are not judged as better or worse; each student's views are treated with equal respect. . . Choosing freely is considered better than simply yielding to authority or peer pressure. . . If we uphold free choice, then we value autonomy. . ."

It's certainly right to treat students with equal respect. But to treat their views with equal respect, right or wrong? Their views on drugs and sex? That's disabling. The peer group cannot have the best interests of children at heart.

Abraham Maslow was ahead of his time in experimenting with what has come to be called OBE. He wrote that he tried the approach in his Brandeis University course on Utopias in 1967, employing some of the same feelings-oriented classroom techniques that have since become popular in public schools.

They didn't work. Feelings orientation subverted the learning of subject matter. In his *Journals*, he described how he'd tried to relate to the students of the Utopia course as an outcome-based professor. No longer their teacher, he became a "facilitator of learning." He called the role "consultant" and said, "I became a consultant and shut up, so they didn't 'learn' content about Utopias. What they did learn and got enthusiastic about was T-group style intimacy."

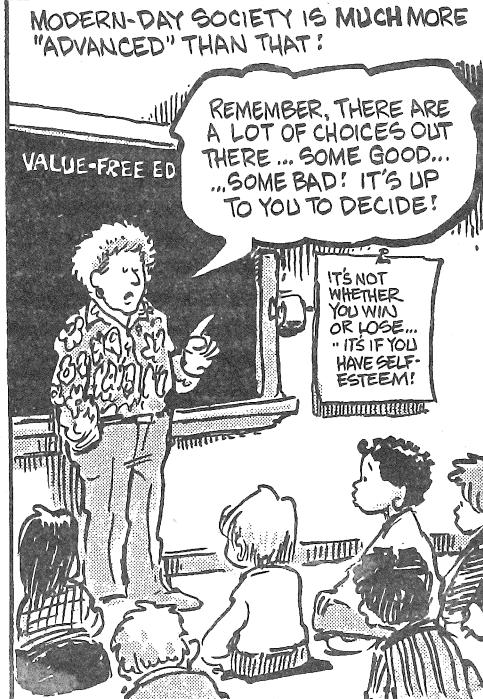
The experience got Maslow to thinking, and he asked himself the question, "Who should teach whom? Youngsters teach the elders, or vice versa? It got me in a conflict about my education theory. I've been in continuous conflict for a long time over this, over Esalen-type, orgiastic, Dionysian-type education."

A year earlier Maslow had written about self-actualization theory. He wrote countless entries criticizing "SA stuff." The publication of the *Journals* in 1979 ought to have made it evident to them that the master himself had given up SA stuff. "SA stuff, I'd rather leave it behind me. Just too sloppy and too easily criticizable. Going thru my notes brought this unease to consciousness. It's been with me for years.

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O BE is nothing new. American schools have had it for a long time under other names.

Modern-day society is much more "advanced" than that!



Alabama

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as the Alabama Farmers Federation, which objects to higher property taxes. He also blamed the Alabama Education Association, because AEA's executive secretary is running against Folsom in the June 7 Democratic primary. "They want to stop progress strictly because they worried about their own political agendas," he claimed.

Rep. Mary Zoghby (D-Mobile), sponsor of the key portion of the Folsom plan, said constant pressure from the coalition frustrated supporters of the proposal.

"The pressure from Eagle Forum, the pressure from AEA in particular, made it impossible for us to get a stable [vote] count. Alfa had agents, who normally sell insurance, in the halls lobbying against it," she said. Mrs. Zoghby also added that supporters of the plan were less organized.

Governor Folsom has also been criticized for playing politics with the reform issue. He has made it a major concern in his campaign for a full term, basing much of his television advertising on school improvement.

According to Stephanie Bell, executive director of a parent-supported reform plan called Score 100, that was one reason for the failure.

"Throughout the entire process, there has been too much gubernatorial politics and too little concern for the children," Mrs. Bell said.

The Folsom administration has not accepted any substantive input from anyone with a different viewpoint."

The state faces a Sept. 30 court-set deadline to devise a plan to make funding of Alabama's schools adequate and equitable. □

Student

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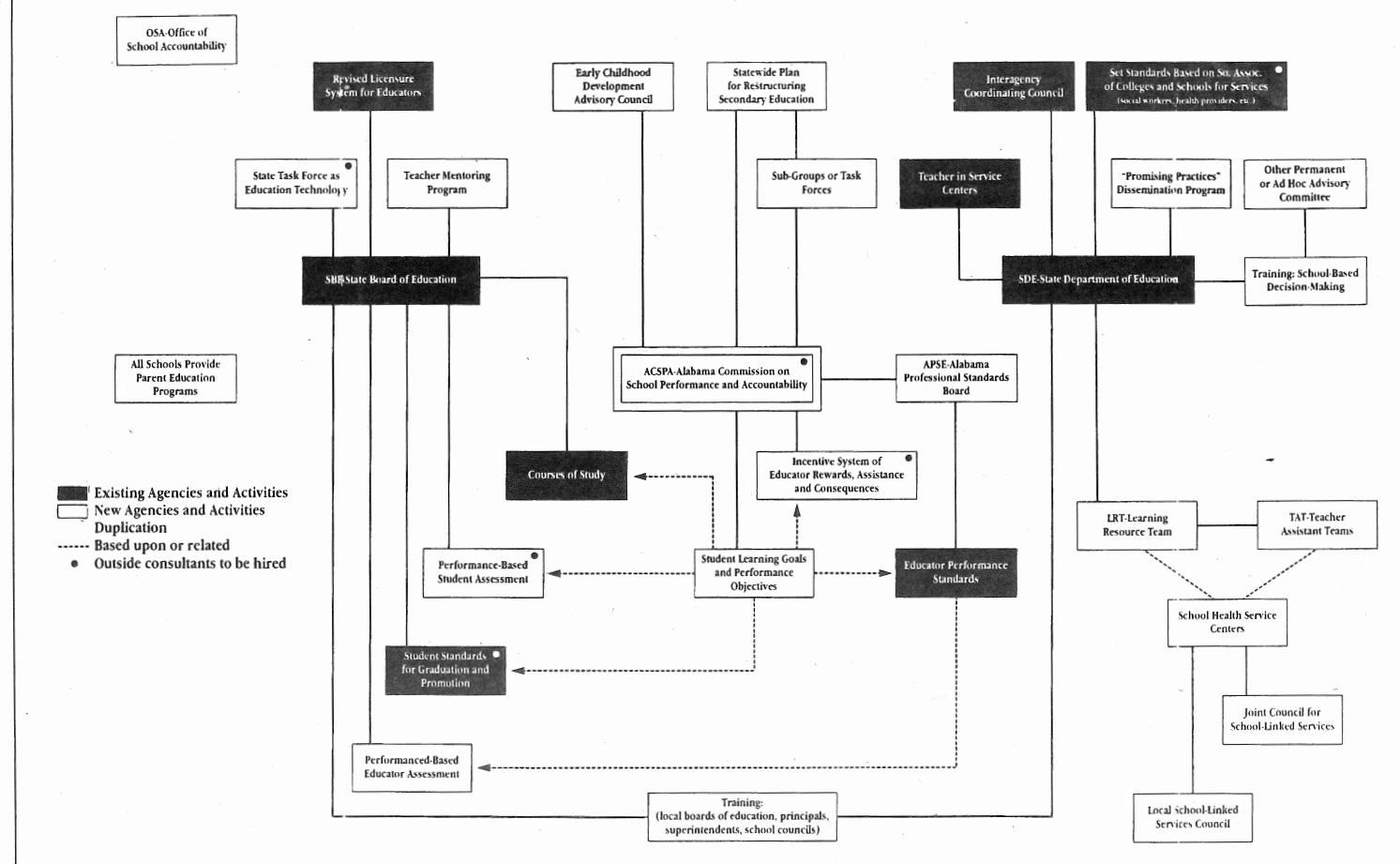
to help low-income 8th graders choose not to have sex showed that these students were only one-fifth as likely to have started having sex as their peers. Mr. Carmichael found it most amazing, that when Emory University surveyed 1,000 sexually active teenagers, asking them what they most wanted information about, 84% put as their number-one choice how to say "no" without hurting the other person's feelings.

There was a great deal of laughing and commotion behind Mr. Carmichael's back when he presented his resolution during the reference committee hearing, as well as a number of people standing in line behind the "con" microphone. He was given very little time to present his arguments, and then had to watch as student after student addressed his resolution, without being given an opportunity to explain his reasoning.

The next day Mr. Carmichael was given one last opportunity to explain himself – just 60 seconds. But it was that brief speech that won him – not only applause – but a landslide vote and an overwhelming victory for abstinence education. □

Alabama Education Reform Bureaucracy

Alabama First Plan



FOCUS

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Meant to write and publish a self-actualization critique but somehow never did."

Why? Because his students had failed to learn the subject matter of the course. And if they hadn't learned, surely one reason had to be that he hadn't permitted himself to teach; instead he'd played psychotherapist. The Rogerian listening and sensitivity techniques he applied to the class failed to produce learning. Maybe the students felt better about themselves after a semester of pseudo-intimacy. But they hadn't learned anything.

OBE is nothing new. American schools have had it for a long time under other names. Like John Dewey's progressive education and the Rogerians' "openness to

feelings," OBE is turning out to encourage "some of the damnedest things." Public schools in San Marcos, Texas, seem to exemplify its failures. They were once top-rated; OBE was introduced and academic achievement began to slide. Recently the district was notified that its comparative scores on statewide tests had gotten bad enough that accreditation might be in jeopardy.

There is precedent for saying the idea behind OBE is dangerous. Consider *Freedom to Learn*. Starting with an article in 1972 and later a textbook, Jerrold Greenberg adapted Rogers' ideas about feelings and therapy to drug prevention and sex education in the lower schools. The Greenberg text was *Student-Centered Health Instruction: A Humanistic Approach*, and an article he published in the

journal *Health Education* in 1978 summarized the viewpoint expressed in the text. It also suggested what would later attract cigarette manufacturers to the concept of affective education.

Greenberg had borrowed his conceptual key from Rogers' chapter on student-centered teaching in *Client-Centered Therapy* as well as from *Freedom to Learn*. He styled students as the school's "clients" and wrote that "health educators must not be concerned with the particular behavior of their clients, but rather with the process used by their clients to arrive at that behavior. For example, if a client (student in a school, adult in a nursing home program, etc.) chooses to smoke cigarettes but has made that decision freely, the health educator has been successful."

The claim that it is more important for children to choose (and having chosen, to feel good about themselves) than to do what is right – better to smoke if that is their choice than to abstain from smoking if they have been taught to abstain – this claim is so contrary to common sense and the protective instincts of parents that it demands cosmic justification.

Enter the New Age movement, the latest general manifestation of the "peculiar American spirituality" of which Fuller wrote; enter, that is, the educational system both promoted and condemned by Carl Rogers after his move to California. Of this system, which is widely referred to as "Rogerianism," Rogers said, "When I write it up, at least I try to make it clear it is tentative; it's only the best I can do at this point. But when it gets into a textbook, it sounds like it came down on tablets from Mt. Sinai: awful, simply awful. And I can't help but feel that nothing but bad can come from that."

William Coulson has two Ph.D.'s in psychology. □

