



## House Committee Passes Jobs-School Package for Government to Manage Who Gets Which Jobs

*National computer database would track every schoolchild.*

### Conference on Character Education Held in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS, MO – The 1995 National Character Education Conference was held in St. Louis on June 29-31. The national conference of teachers and education experts was sponsored by the Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis, and the Network for Education Development.

Sanford McDonnell, former chairman of McDonnell-Douglas and president of the Character Education Partnership, developed the program called PREP (Personal Responsibility Education Process) out of concern that children were not learning good values in schools. Working with the Cooperating School Districts in St. Louis (CSD), he made PREP the program in which character education would be infused in the schools. CSD then received one of 30 federal grants authorized under "Corporations and Partnerships."

According to CSD PREP coordinator Linda McKay, Corporations and Partnerships grants were made available to schools who had plans to get communities involved in their schools. "The grants were awarded for many different programs, including teens-at-risk centers. Our grant just happened to be for character education." McKay said that character education has become very popular, convincing CSD to hold the national conference in order to inform others about how communities can come together to develop character in children.

McDonnell gave the opening address at the conference, stressing the need for morals and values to be instilled in children at an early age. "Our children are growing up without the values that united us as a nation," he said. He gave a list of goals for setting up character education in America's schools: (1) Teachers must be role models. (2) Parents and teachers should get together and decide what values they want the children to learn in each individual district. (3) Teachers teach values through curriculum. (4) Teachers employ moral discipline. (5) Students come up with rules for character too. (6) Teachers should employ cooperative learning. (7) Schools should enforce the character chosen. (8) Parents should be recruited to help implement character education.

Dr. Rushworth Kidder of the Institute

for Global Ethics then stressed the important role of morals in the daily lives of all people. He explained that, with the vast technological advances of the 20th century, one individual can make a huge impact with one unethical act, such as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. He also stated that children must discover in schools what truth is and who decides truth.

The Brentwood School District held its own breakout session to present its implementation. See *Character*, page 4

### Parents Frown on 'Storylords'

KENOSHA, WI – "If you're a good word detective, you'll be a good reader" is the message in *Storylords*, a reading program that has been on public television and used to teach most 3rd graders in the Kenosha public schools for the last five years. Being "a good word detective" means guessing at words by looking at the illustrations, by predicting what will happen next, and by skipping over words the child can't read.

*Storylords* is intended to help students become better readers, but parents complain that it uses a Whole Language approach and contains New Age religion concepts.

*Storylords* contains 12 video segments that are 12-20 minutes long. The story revolves around two "storylords" – one "good" named Lexor, and the other "evil" named Thorzuul. Lexor is an aging wizard-like character who chooses young Norbert, the leading character, to become an "apprentice" storylord. Lexor tells Norbert that Thorzuul is doing evil to the people in the imaginary land of "Mojuste," and that they need Norbert's help.

In each episode, Norbert helps someone in Mojuste solve a riddle in order to break an evil "spell" which Thorzuul has cast on them. The riddles are solved by Norbert recalling a reading strategy he had learned in school that day from his teacher, Mrs. Framish.

Mrs. Framish tells her students, "Before you read anything new, think about what you know. It will help you understand better." She shows them a book with no words, but only pictures. They

WASHINGTON, DC – The current momentum for education reform is being manipulated by education bureaucrats to put America into the harness of National Economic Planning, according to some parents. They believe that the strategic plan is to use the school system to prepare children, individually and collectively, only for jobs that are designated and determined by the planners.

One bill, sponsored by two senior Republicans, Steve Gunderson (R-WI) and Bill Goodling (R-PA), is called "A Proposal for the Establishment of the Department of Education and Employment." Their bill would simply consolidate the Department of Education with the Department of Labor and put Robert Reich in charge.

are told to "look for clues" in the picture-clues to reveal what the pictures are "thinking or saying." She says you can figure out a lot about the story by looking at the pictures. She says that, prior to reading a book, students should: (1) Read the title. (2) Examine the illustrations. (3) Ask: "What do I already know about this topic?" (4) Use what the child already knows to "predict" what the story might be about.

In another episode, Mrs. Framish explains that, if you don't understand what you're reading, stop and look for "clues" that will help. She also gives steps on how to be a good reader. She says: (1) Try to "guess" what the story is about by looking at the pictures on the cover, reading the title, and thinking about them. (2) Think before you read. (3) Think while you read. (4) Stop and try to "predict" what will happen next. She says that looking at the pictures helps with this.

She also teaches them how to "figure out words you don't know." She says, when you don't know a word, "skip over it. Read ahead. Look for clues to help you figure out the mystery word." Mrs. Framish adds that, "If you're a good word detective, you'll be a good reader."

Norbert follows this advice in one of the episodes when he tries to help his little sister Mandy read the word "envelope." He does not tell her to sound out the word, but tells her to "look at the next sentence for clues."

The reading method taught in *See Storylords*, page 4

This bill would convert public schools into "Workforce Preparation" centers "to meet the challenges of a competitive global economy in the 21st century." Schoolchildren would be trained, rather than educated, and schools would become "efficient delivery systems" to serve the global economy.

A variation of this same goal, called the "Consolidated and Reformed Education, Employment, and Rehabilitation Systems Act" (H.R. 1617), known by its acronym CAREERS, was introduced on May 11 and speedily passed out of committee on June 22. Sponsored by Rep. Howard McKeon (R-CA), it is actually modeled on a bill introduced earlier this year by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) called the "Workforce Development Act" (S. 180).

H.R. 1617 was designed to deceive conservatives by repealing last year's "Schools-to-Work" Act and some other cumbersome and redundant jobs and education programs. However, H.R. 1617's 233 pages contain much more dangerous replacements.

Three key provisions in the Republican CAREERS bill parallel the key provisions of Kennedy's "Workforce" bill.

The first key provision is that both bills give government the responsibility for job placement and development through a "Workforce Development Plan." Kennedy's "Workforce" bill would implement this through federal, state and local boards. McKeon's CAREERS bill specifies that each Governor shall submit "a strategic state workforce development and literacy plan to provide policy guidance with respect to workforce development progress" that meets the requirements of the U.S. Secretaries of Education and Labor.

The second key provision of both "Workforce" and CAREERS is a labor market information system (LMIS). "Workforce" calls for a "comprehensive, integrated labor market [information] system to assure that workforce development programs are related to the demand for particular skills in a local labor market." CAREERS would amend the 1933 Wagner Act to enumerate the information that will be collected, managed and shared between the private and public sectors.

CAREERS sets up a "comprehensive and coordinated labor market information system" that will "project employment opportunities and trends" based on "profiles of employers" and the "education and

See *CAREERS*, page 3



## EDUCATION BRIEFS

The Supreme Court reversed a district court ruling that declared a school policy allowing student prayer at graduation ceremonies was unconstitutional. The district court decision in *Joint School District No. 241 v. Harris* affects nine states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. Mat Staver, President and General Counsel of Liberty Counsel, commented, "Today's decision is a victory for student speech. The *Harris* decision was the only federal appeals case that ruled that schools could not allow students to vote on having graduation prayer. This decision means that there are no longer any federal appellate court rulings censoring student graduation prayer."

Teachers in Southern Wells, IN voted 48 to 6 to leave the Indiana State Teachers Association and form an independent union to handle their contract negotiations. Larry Sell, a teacher and supporter of ISTA, believes the cost of the ISTA dues, which varied around \$450 each year, played a large part in the election. But Paul Schriver, a teacher who supports the independent union, disagrees. The independent union does pledge dues at about half that of ISTA, but Mr. Schriver claims that the dues were not a factor. He claimed some of the teachers had political differences with the ISTA, while others had personal differences.

The Great Books Foundation, the literary institution founded in 1947 by leading intellectuals at the University of Chicago, says it plans for the first time to include contemporary works in its Great Books series. This breaks with its tradition of not publishing any author who hasn't been dead at least 50 years. Lonnie Plecha, editorial director of Great Books, says this is an attempt to make the flagging Great Books series more accessible to a larger number of potential customers. Eva Bix, president of the Philadelphia Great Books Council, claims that, "once you start bending and getting contemporary works, everybody has a favorite, and before you know it you're doing *Valley of the Dolls*."

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## New Elementary School Report Cards Spark Parents' Revolt

CRANSTON, RI – A concerned parent group in Cranston, RI won a partial victory when school district officials decided to keep traditional A-B-C style report cards.

Tempers had flared when the parents discovered that a pilot report card eliminating traditional grades was being introduced in elementary schools. "We were flabbergasted," says Jean Germani, the mother of three children in the schools. "We've seen 30 years of an A-B-C format."

Mrs. Germani was especially incensed when she found out that the school system had been working on the pilot program for two years without letting parents in on the change until the last minute.

Mrs. Germani and others launched a group called Parents for Quality Education to counter the district's efforts. They met repeatedly during the year to plan strategy for derailing the new report cards.

They put up a picket line in front of the school during the week of parent-teacher conferences. They circulated a petition asking parents and other taxpayers to oppose the new report cards and to request a return to the A-B-C system. Some 1,300 people signed the petition.

The controversial pilot report card contained a 6-point scale with "1" representing "inconsistent progress" and "6" standing for "excelling."

The goal of the pilot report card was to

*See Report Cards, page 4*

## Drugs, Religion & Integration Cases Mark Recent Supreme Court Term

WASHINGTON, DC – As its most recent term came to a close, the Supreme Court handed down several decisions that will affect the way students, teachers, and administrators interact with each other when the school bells start ringing a few weeks from now.

In a case involving a school district in Veronia, Oregon beset by drug-abuse problems among its students, the Court ruled that the district's policy of random drug testing of school athletes did not violate the Fourth Amendment's prohibitions against unreasonable searches. The Court agreed with the school district's contention that the drug testing program was constitutionally reasonable, that students do not have all the rights of adults, and that warrants are not needed for the testing program. The Court concluded that students trying out for athletic teams voluntarily subject themselves to added scrutiny, and that there was "a compelling state interest" overriding their right to privacy.

This does not apply to "suspicionless drug testing" under other circumstances.

The Court decided several cases involving religious expression by students. It overturned a Ninth Circuit Court decision that a student-led graduation prayer at a commencement ceremony in Grangeville, Idaho in 1991 was unconstitutional. Without ruling on its merits, the high court simply ordered the appeals court to dismiss the case, thereby nullifying the lower court's ruling and removing the only legal barrier to voluntary, student-led prayer. The Court upheld an Eighth Circuit ruling

that confirmed the right of members of a junior high school religious club in Ladue, Missouri to meet on campus after school hours as long as non-religious groups are afforded the same privilege.

In a desegregation case, the Court ruled that a federal judge went too far in mandating more spending on Kansas City public schools to make them more attractive to suburban students. The Court also ruled that the poor performance of Kansas City students on standardized tests could not be used to justify continuation of the desegregation plan. The 18-year-old, court-ordered desegregation plan governing the predominantly-black Kansas City

school district has already cost Missouri taxpayers \$1.5 billion.

Finally, the Supreme Court ruled that the University of Virginia violated the rights of Christian students when it refused to subsidize their Christian magazine with student fees, even though Jewish and Moslem groups received funding for their activities. The Court's decision "puts

an end to the double standards used in university funding of student groups and guarantees a free marketplace of ideas on campuses across the country," said Ron Rosenberger, founder of the Christian publication at issue. The high court made it "clear that it is unconstitutional to treat religious students as second-class citizens or religious speech as second-class speech," said Rosenberger. "Publicly-funded colleges and universities will no longer be able to exclude religious groups from benefits that are made available to a wide array of student groups." ■

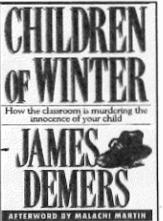
## Book of the Month



### Children of Winter: How the Classroom is Murdering the Innocence of Your Child

by James Demers  
1993, Sarto House, New York, NY,  
1(800)GO-SARTO, 244 pps, \$19.95.

Where is purity?  
Where is innocence?  
Where are today's children headed?  
Those are some of the questions addressed in James Demers' book, *Children of Winter*.



Demers writes a fascinating story from the point of view of a Catholic school teacher in the sixties and seventies. Having 25 years' experience in education, Demers knows very well the modern pressure on parents, educators and children.

*Children of Winter* gives the reader a glimpse of the world into which today's children have been "exiled," Demers claims, by an education system organizing itself into "meaningless political professionalism." Demers lifts "a corner of the shroud to offer a glimpse into a world of violence and despair all but invisible to parents."

According to Demers, our children are "children of winter" because they are living in a moral ice age. He freeze-frames the last 30 years in education to explain how this happened.

He explains the "planned time bombs" that cleared the way for the "values-free" education in our schools today. Demers claims these programs uncoupled the child from the family by uncoupling sex from morality.

This is the "winter of our faith," Demers claims, as he explains the consequences of the increasing and deliberate secularization of education. "The systematic starvation of North American childhoods," he writes, "has produced a ravenous society devouring itself. A gnawing hunger and unquenchable thirst has produced a race of adolescent terrorists. I believe it because, when there is a famine of the sacred, violence and despair, like rampaging acids, rush into the void to consume every remnant of the innocence, trust, and joy of youth."

Demers claims that he is a bold traditionalist, and he makes no apology for his opinion that "rejecting our roots is causing the world to go mad."

*Children of Winter* is a powerful book that takes an honest, straightforward look at how our education system has decayed over the last 30 years, and how it's stealing the innocence of children today.

# FOCUS: Award-Winning Children's Book Exposes Flaws in Modern Education

By Herb London

Once upon a time, children's books told tales of heroes and villains. They invariably presented a Manichean world in which good triumphed over evil. Children might be scared, but they were assured that the forces of light could easily be distinguished from the forces of evil. Well, that scenario of yesteryear has been replaced by a very different condition today.

The 1994 Newberry medal for the "best" children's book was awarded to

Lois Lowry for *The Giver*. This is a tale about a hypothetical community in which issues of suicide, euthanasia and mental telepathy are emphasized.

Characters in this novel reside in a controlled community with narrowly defined roles of birth mothers, caretakers, nurturers, laborers and givers. The government determines how many children per family. In the House of the Old, leaders decide when a person is to be released (read: put to death). At Ceremony of Release there is a toast, and a good-bye speech given by the person released.

In the birth of twins only one can survive. Invariably the smaller twin is "released" with a lethal injection. On one occasion in the book a 12-year-old objects to the practice, but he is mollified by the Giver who points out that her daughter asked to be released 10 years earlier and was given a syringe to inject herself.

## Objecting Parents Told To Seek Private School

In one California school system several parents complained about the use of this book in an elementary school. But when they complained about this literature as

insensitive to the value of life, these parents were told that "public education may not be the best choice for them." I am sympathetic to the complainants.

What conceivable benefit for youngsters is a book of this kind? Are 10-year-olds prepared to make judgments about euthanasia?

Now that Ms. Lowry has a prize-winning book, she will be given another contract and her book will be accorded a special place in school libraries. The question that remains, however, is the role of philosophical

relativism in children's literature. What once inspired, now inflames. What was once the axial standard for moral behavior in Horatio Alger - *Toodles, The Little Engine That Could* - has been converted into amorality. After all, contend teachers and librarians, in this complicated world do we have a right to tell children how to conduct themselves?

My reply is you have a right and an obligation to do so. Teachers have an obligation to select books that provide a moral basis for good behavior. Homer is a better guide for the future than Lowry no matter what the rationalizers contend. Virtues must be cultivated. The good must defend itself not merely against the bad, but against the indifferent, the complacent and the relative.

If the myths in our culture are derived from merely the pragmatic, then "anything goes" is the lyric for social discourse. Children cannot be expected to make philosophical judgments without a grounding in what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad.

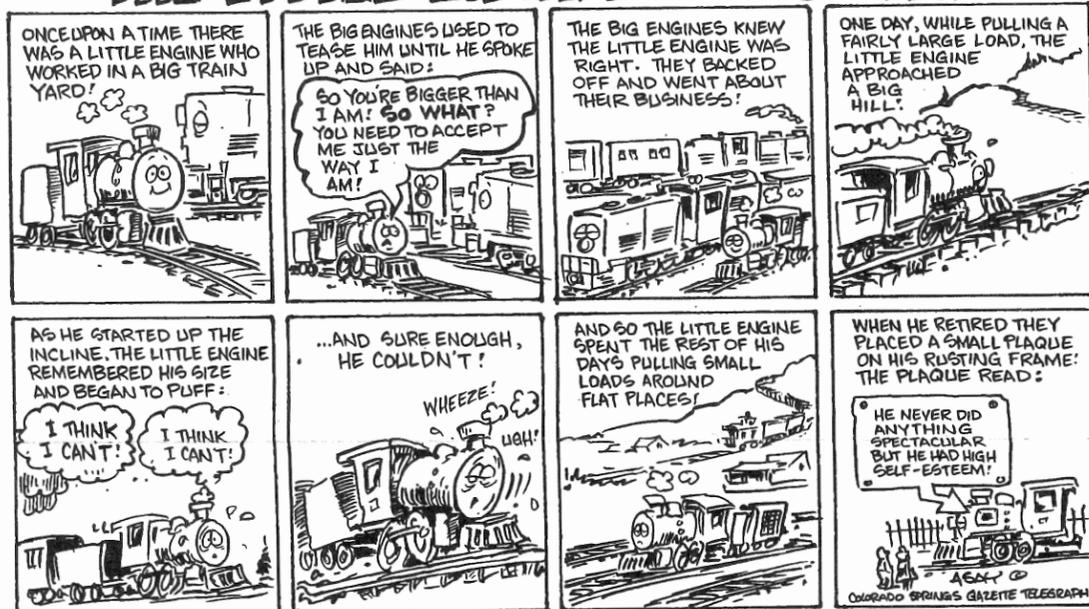
## Knowledge of the Good Critical to Moral Choices

To assume, as contemporary pedagogues do, that students can arrive at sensible judgments from the exchange of opinion about controversial issues is wrong-headed. Critical mindedness does not occur in a vacuum. Students must have a knowledge of morality in order to make moral decisions.

Unfortunately, the democratic idea that the free exchange of opinion will inevitably yield truth is betrayed by a different reality. The free exchange of *intelligent* opinion may lead inexorably to truth, but *only* if the opinions have value.

In our era, we have debased this notion with a belief in all opinions and a reliance on the pedagogical idea that any controversial notion should be the subject of class discussion. Is it any wonder Johnny can't read, Mary can't add, and neither can distinguish from right and wrong? ■

## A REVISED, POLITICALLY CORRECT STORY OF THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULDN'T



## All Are Not 'Cozi' About Pilot Program

MEHLVILLE, MO - Parents at Hagemann Elementary School are voicing concerns over the pilot program called CoZi which is, according to Mehlville School District Superintendent Bob Rogers, a model to create schools that support the family.

"I see the model as being something that does take away parental authority," said concerned parent Barbara Schnitzler. Other parents also believe the CoZi program is a form of Outcome-Based Education, although school officials vehemently deny that.

CoZi stands for Comer and Zigler, the last names of the two Yale professors who created the model. The Comer half of the program makes the child the center of the school community. The Zigler side of the model is called "Schools of the 21st Century." Hagemann Principal Tim Ricker said that this part of the program works to create support systems for the child and the family. This includes daycare and referrals for medical and mental health services. The program is run with help from the Danforth Foundation and Yale University.

Mrs. Schnitzler decided to remove

her two children from Hagemann and place them in a private school next year. But when her children, who she says are 'A' students, took placement tests at the private school, they were able to answer only about 30 percent of the questions.

"I feel my daughter's year has been a total wash," Mrs. Schnitzler said. "I don't think the educational value has been there."

Hagemann School focuses too much

on the psychological and not the academic, Mrs. Schnitzler said. While visiting a math class, Mrs. Schnitzler said the focus was not to get the right answer, but have good "risk-taking skills." Children were rewarded not for getting the right answer, but for making a guess at the answer.

"I thought this was math class, not psychology 101," she said. ■

## CAREERS

*continued from page one*

training of job seekers." The data collection system will record how well the schoolchild did on the "performance assessments" of the state's "goals and objectives" that are part of "Goals 2000," and be so thorough that even the "level of satisfaction of the participants" will be measured and recorded.

The premise of the LMIS is the assumption that government committees know what is best for the individual and for the economy. This is the structure under which the Soviets managed their economy for so many decades, with Five-Year and Ten-Year Plans that always failed.

The third key provision in both Kennedy's "Workforce" bill and McKeon's CAREERS bill is "one-stop career centers" (probably located at public schools). This is where the individual comes in contact with the national economic planning system.

Based on economic projections by the different tiers of boards and the vast collection of data on individuals, the "one-stop career center" will train individuals for designated job slots.

The bottom line of these bills is to give the Federal Government the power over every individual's ability to earn a living.

They would let the government decide what jobs are "needed," what jobs young people may be trained for, what performance and "outcome" standards may be enforced on schoolchildren, and what certificate qualifies them to be hired, and then track each individual's performance and behavior in school and through the workforce on a computer data base.

Sec. 23 (a) of CAREERS sums it up: "The nation's labor market information system shall be planned, administered, overseen, and evaluated by a cooperative structure involving the Federal Government and the States." ■

## Character

*continued from page one*

mentation of the PREP program. Brentwood's program is designed to help children develop personal, social and civic goals. It is called "Soaking Up: Respect and Responsibility." (See box on this page.)

In another breakout session, Steve Jenkins, a law-related education consultant, described how students can use peer mediation to resolve conflicts at school. Peer mediation applies the techniques lawyers use for alternative dispute resolution, in which the two parties come together with a mediator and present their side of the conflict.

The mediator helps them to mutually agree on a decision. Jenkins showed a video in which four high school students act out a fight and then a student mediator helps them to solve their problem by compromising their positions with the satisfaction of the other party. The object of the mediation is for the troublemakers to avoid going to the principal's office.

Jenkins suggests that schools employ peer mediation instead of disciplining the troublemakers. Some of the attendees questioned the adequacy of this technique in character development, and Jenkins responded, "Sending students to the principal is not likely to give long term results . . . just like passing a law rarely resolves a conflict." Jenkins later stated, "We need to focus on how to change behaviors from womb to tomb."

Juanita T. Doggett, principal of Sherman Elementary School in a poor urban area of St. Louis, led an informative session on the Star Program (Success Through Accepting Responsibility), developed by the Thomas Jefferson Institute. At the beginning of each week, an assembly is held and the teachers tell the students that each one needs to be a "star," meaning being honest, kind, responsible and courageous, carrying out commitments, making good choices, and respecting yourself. At the start of every day, a student is picked at random in each classroom to be a star for the day, and on a large piece of paper at the front of the room, each child writes something nice about that child. The child then takes this to the principal who gives the child a star to wear signifying that he is the star for the day. Mrs. Doggett explained that when children or teachers walk through the hall and notice improper behavior, they ask the child, "Is that star behavior?" In this way, the program is implemented as a form of discipline in the classroom.

The fundamental premise of the STAR program, stated repeatedly on the walls in the school and in the assemblies, is "Stop, think, act, then review." Mrs. Doggett

said that the children are taught to "work hard, get smart, and succeed. We infuse the efficacy process into everything we do." Efficacy is the belief that everyone can learn anything to the highest level, as opposed to the notion that some people are endowed with more intelligence or talent than others.

Mrs. Doggett showed a tape of children reciting a poem about being timely, working hard, and getting smart. Most of the children wear uniforms voluntarily, consisting of navy slacks and skirts and light blue shirts. A private company provides uniforms for children unable to afford them.

Gordon Mendenhall, biology and human genetics teacher at Lawrence North High School, presented his C.A.R.(2)E. program (Creating A Responsible and Responsible Educational System with Character, Attitude, Respect, and Example.) He talked about how children need to learn to do the right thing and have lifelong guidelines.

Shant into his speech, however, he began to focus on "constructivist" education. He emphasized a paradigm shift in education from "teaching and testing to continuous learning and development." He described the old paradigm as consisting of linear lessons, memorization and textbooks, and the new paradigm of portfolios, demonstrated student performances, and "students as their own products." He made little reference to character, other than a few statements such as "and this is what it means to teach character."

There were several other breakout sessions, which constituted the real content of the discussion. The keynote speakers were very vague and non-controversial, while the debate was concentrated in the sessions.

According to PREP Coordinator Linda McKay, the idea of educating for character is not new, and if the community in which it is implemented does not come to a consensus about what is taught, then the districts start over and develop new goals. "We stay away from Outcome-Based Education and sexual instruction in our specific character education program [PREP]," she said, "because those topics are simply too controversial."

While liking the idea of instilling character in our school children, some conference attendees questioned that it can work without a foundation. A local high school teacher commented, "It's like they have their feet firmly planted in mid-air."

To order audio cassettes of any of the speeches, contact ACTS at (800) 642-2287. Each of the 56 sessions is available @ \$9. Tapes of the entire conference are \$396. ■

***The fundamental premise of the STAR program, stated repeatedly on the walls in the school and in the assemblies, is "Stop, think, act, then review."***

## Storylords

*continued from page one*

*Storylords* is completely based on Whole Language, which many parents dislike and have found to be inferior to the phonics method.

Some parents are equally offended by the New Age religion content of

*Storylords*. The series is filled with New Age thinking, philosophy, artifacts, and techniques. When Norbert is first introduced to the good storylord Lexor, it is through the powers of a crystal ring on his bicycle padlock. Norbert eventually learns to use the crystal and call on its "powers" when he needs help.

Visualization is also a part of *Storylords*. Norbert can see Lexor in the crystal and communicate with him through the powers of the crystal. Various occult practices are used to take Norbert to the imaginary land of "Mojuste." To travel there, he peddles on a magical bicycle and repeats an incantation while looking at a picture.

Since the only reading is designed to enhance reading is based on Whole Language, many parents claim *Storylords* has no merit for the classroom.

*If your child wants to learn to read or has difficulty reading, you need a program that uses intensive phonics, such as the First Reader system. The complete system is available for \$79.95 (plus \$7.00 shipping and handling). It's fun, it's easy to use and, best of all, it works! For more information on First Reader call 1(800)700-5228.* ■

### Soaking Up Respect & Responsibility

#### Personal

**Accountability:** Accepting the consequences of one's actions, as well as the credit or blame for them.

**Honesty:** Being truthful.

**Integrity:** Adhering to truth, that which is right, fair, and honorable in all situations.

**Perseverance:** Continuing a behavior or pursuing goals in spite of difficulty or obstacles.

**Respect for Self:** Having and demonstrating a positive belief in one's intrinsic worth.

#### Social

**Abstinence:** Refraining from drugs, alcohol, and sex, since for our students, to a great extent, this is defined by law.

**Caring About Others:** Sensing the responsibility for the well-being of others.

**Commitment to Family:** Being sensitive to and supportive of the needs of the family.

**Positive Work Ethic:** Performing to the best of one's ability.

**Respect for Others:** Showing consideration, appreciation, tolerance, and good manners toward others.

**Service:** Using one's resources to aid or benefit others.

#### Civic

**Equality:** Granting all people the same rights.

**Freedom:** Exercising the right to choose one's works and actions without infringing on the rights of others.

**Justice:** Demonstrating fair and impartial treatment.

**Respect for Authority:** Showing consideration and regard for people in positions of responsibility.

**Respect for Property:** Showing consideration and regard for public property and things belonging to others.

## Report Cards

*continued from page two*

show students' gradual growth in the specific skills and competencies that are required by the curriculum. As long as youngsters mastered the competencies by the end of the marking period, they could earn a "5" - for "achieved" - whether they mastered the skills quickly or slowly.

David Dulude, the concerned father of a 5th grade boy and former high school teacher and school board member, asserted, "The report card gave no indication, in any concrete manner, as to how the child was doing. It was a very, very subjective system based on the feel-good mentality that is prevalent in education today."

"In order for a parent to understand how his child is doing," Dulude added, "you see papers coming home each week with grades on them. Then those grades have to be reflected in a mark. Something solid. Here, we see 'substantial progress,' or 'moderate progress,' or 'progressing slowly.' What does that mean?"

Michael Anthony, another parent who has two children in the district, found the pilot report cards "very confusing. It just seemed like they were throwing out the tried-and-true system." ■

"I'm the product of traditional education," Anthony said, "A-B-C's. And you knew if you came home with a D, you didn't have TV, and you hit the books. I think this new report card was designed to address a self-esteem issue. For a child who has a D, it's as if you can't tell them to hit the books, they'll be so depressed. That's language I don't understand."

Last month, on the advice of the report-card committee, district officials recommended that a compromise be made in which the pilot report cards would remain intact in the primary grades, but for grades 3-6 teachers would assign letter grades in the core subjects. Subcategories would be retained, but they would be used only to identify areas where students need further improvement.

Cranston's experiences are not unusual. When the Houston Independent School District piloted narrative report cards in grades K through 3, a negative article in the *Houston Chronicle* was reprinted nationwide. The changes were eventually criticized on CNN and by Rush Limbaugh. As a result, the district welcomed participation by parents and made the new report card voluntary. ■