

# EDUCATION REPORTER

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## Congress Bans Federal Testing

WASHINGTON, DC — The FY 1999 omnibus spending bill approved by Congress on Oct. 20 contains a permanent ban on federal tests unless there is "specific and explicit congressional authority." Rep. Bill Goodling (R-PA), House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman, stated on Oct. 15: "We have again prevailed on national testing. A prohibition on pilot testing, field testing, administration or distribution of any national test will be included in the omnibus bill."

The spending bill also contains the following provisions: (1) Limited development and modification of test items by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) will be allowed in FY 1999 (as in FY 1998); (2) NAGB is required to determine and report to Congress and the White House on the purpose(s) of the proposed tests; (3) NAGB is required to determine and report on the meaning of "voluntary" in the context of national tests, with regard to the student, the school, the school district, or the state; (4) NAGB is required to report on its response to the recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) study which stated that the achievement levels (basic, proficient, advanced) that were intended for use in the national tests are fundamentally flawed; (5) NAS is required to conduct a study of feasibility, validity and reliability of imbedding test items from NAEP or other tests in state and district assessments for the purpose of providing a common measure of individual student performance.

Despite Secretary of Education Richard Riley's efforts to achieve a compromise with Rep. Goodling at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to keep the door open on federal testing, Goodling remained adamant that the spending bill firmly prohibit the tests.

## Appeals Court Restricts Distribution of Mandatory Student Activity Fees

CHICAGO, IL — The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled in August in *Southworth v. Grebe* that the University of Wisconsin-Madison may not use portions of students' mandatory activity fees to fund political organizations (See *Education Reporter*, Sept. 1998). The court ruled that these organizations do "engage in ideological and political advocacy, activities and speech, and cannot be constitutionally funded with objecting students' fees."

This decision upheld a 1996 district court ruling in favor of five University of Wisconsin-Madison students who sued the university for violating their First Amendment rights. The students objected to the fact that portions of their activity fees were being distributed to private organizations whose views they do not support. The fees were mandatory; students who refuse to pay the fees do not receive their grades or graduate.

Most U.S. state universities and colleges, including the University of Wisconsin, charge students an annual activity fee, part of which is used to fund campus student groups. These groups typically advocate leftwing, or even radical, positions on social and moral issues. In many colleges, the student government decides which organizations will receive funds, and the amounts can be sizeable. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison for example, a committee of the Associated Students of Madison (ASM) distributed about \$974,200 in student fees to private organizations during the 1995-96 school year.

Groups in receipt of this largesse (as cited in the court ruling) included the

Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG); the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Campus Center; the UW Greens; the Campus Women's Center; the Madison AIDS Support Network; the International Socialist Organization; the Militant Student Union; and Students of NOW.

WISPIRG received \$49,500, and was found to have distributed \$2,500 directly to its parent organization, USPIRG, for use in lobbying Congress and developing voter guides. The UW Greens and the Progressive Student Network (another group receiving student fees) lobbied the Wisconsin state legislature and distributed literature for Ralph Nader's presidential campaign on the Green Party ticket.

The Campus Women's Center received \$34,200 in 1995-96, and used the funds to advocate its feminist political views. An article in its bimonthly newsletter urged readers to contact the center to learn how they could work against legislation the organization opposed.

A group called the Ten Percent Society also received funding, using its Internet site to advocate legislation legalizing same-sex marriages. Members of Amnesty International worked actively for the abolition of the death penalty.

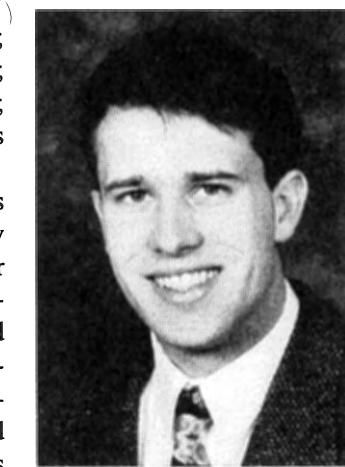
The Appeals Court noted that the five student plaintiffs did not try to curb the free speech of any of these groups, but were "merely asking that they not be forced to financially subsidize speech with which they disagree." Citing several previous cases, the court recognized that the organizations receiving money from student fees added at best "an incidental

benefit to education," and that this benefit "did not usually justify the burden on the dissenting students' constitutional rights."

The court further stated that the First Amendment "does not guarantee that the government will

subsidize speech," and that the students' right to "freedom of belief" outweighs that of "any governmental interest."

The *Southworth* case was the second major victory for students who object to their college activity fees being used to finance leftwing and radical causes. The first was *Smith v. Regents of the University of California*, decided by the California Supreme Court in 1993. The court ruled in *Smith* that the University of California at Berkeley's use of mandatory student activity fees to subsidize private organizations engaged in political or ideological activities violated the First Amendment. Students in other state universities who would like to mount similar challenges to their schools' mandatory fees policies are invited to contact the Alliance Defense Fund at 7819 E. Greenway Road, Suite 8, Scottsdale, AZ 85260, telephone 1/800-835-5233.



Scott Southworth

## Five-Year-Old Federal Law Discourages Volunteers

DENVER, CO — In 1993, Congress passed H.R. 1237, the National Child Protection Act, which mandates that any citizen wishing to perform volunteer work for an organization involving children be fingerprinted, undergo a criminal background check, and agree to have his or her personal history put into a national data bank.

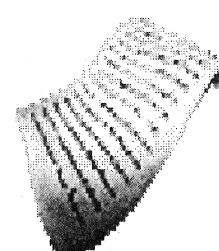
The chief sponsor of H.R. 1237 was then Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO). First Lady Hillary Clinton and the Children's Defense Fund were the bill's principal backers. H.R. 1237 was put on a "fast track" and quickly passed both Houses of Congress. The states received timetables for compliance from the Department of Justice, with the prospect of cutbacks in federal funding as a consequence of failure to meet the deadlines.

Colorado Eagle Forum President Jayne Schindler, a longtime volunteer teacher of ceramics for her local 4-H Club, was shocked at the new requirements. "For 15 years, the 4-H leaders have been begging me to teach ceramics," Mrs. Schindler says. "Volunteers are hard to get and even harder to keep. Now, we are told we are not trustworthy without a background check by the FBI."

Mrs. Schindler was informed that in order to comply with new federal regulations, she would have to attend an "orientation and respect for diversity" training class. Because she gave the ceramics lessons in her own garage, her husband was also required to attend, even though he would not be taking part in the classes. The Schindlers had to fill out forms with personal information that included dates

of birth, social security and driver's license numbers, the names of organizations to which they belonged, the names and addresses of three personal references, and signed releases to allow all this information to be put into the national data bank.

During the class, the Schindlers were trained to turn in parents or caregivers for "suspected child abuse," and advised that they would face misdemeanor charges if they failed to do so. They were informed as to who is required to report child abuse (Colo-



Many volunteers are now required to give extensive personal information.

rado state law specifically names school officials and employees), and given a list of do's and don'ts for responding to children who disclose that they may have been abused.

After taking the class, Mrs. Schindler was outraged at the manner in which her privacy had been invaded and the extent of the paperwork required to teach ceramics to 4-H Club members in her own garage. She decided to find out what was happening with other non-profit organizations. Among her discoveries:

◆ Boy Scouts of America members must all be taught the three "R's" of youth protection: *Recognize* situations that place a child at risk of being molested, learn how child molesters operate, and know that anyone can be a molester; *Resist* —

(See Volunteer, page 2)

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

**Alfred Kinsey, so-called "father of the sexual revolution," based his "scientific research" for his 1948 book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* on the diaries of a serial child abuser.** Kinsey recruited pedophile Rex King because he had extensively documented abusing at least 800 children, both males and females. The content of King's diaries was disclosed for the first time in August on British TV in a documentary called "Secret History."

**According to Rep. Bill Goodling (R-PA), chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, class size doesn't count.** "If you don't have a quality teacher in the classroom, it doesn't matter if the class size is two or 32," Goodling said.

**A New York Times/CBS News Poll of American teenagers taken last spring shows a majority support traditional values.** A full 94% believe in God, while most said they shun alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. On sexual issues, 53% of girls and 41% of boys believe premarital sex is "always wrong," while fewer than one in four said they had ever had sex. On the subject of parents, 51% of the teens said they got along with their parents "very well," and 46% said "fairly well." The telephone poll was taken of 1,048 teenagers.

**An elementary school principal in Hillsdale, NY, had a baby out of wedlock while she and the father awaited their divorce decrees.** An anonymous flier mailed out to homes in the mostly rural area posed the moral question: "Parents of teenage girls, what will you do if your daughter comes home pregnant and says, 'If the principal can get pregnant without getting married, why can't I?'" The flier created a public stir, but a *New York Times* article summed up the overall reaction to the principal's behavior: "If President Clinton is still in office after admitting to sexual relations in the White House with an intern, why should a principal weathering a protracted divorce lose her job for having a baby with a man she intended to marry?"

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## Volunteers

(Continued from page 1)

most molesters will withdraw if a child resists; and, *Report* any attempts or actual molestations. In addition, the Boy Scouts have published a *Child's Bill of Rights* that, according to Mrs. Schindler, "could have come right out of the 'U.N. Rights of the Child' materials."

◆ Churches must also comply with the law, as they have volunteers who work with youth in their Sunday School programs. An attorney told one church administrator: "Have two certified and trained teachers in every class at all times if you want to afford liability insurance."

Parents wishing to volunteer in their children's schools also face the prospect of undergoing child abuse clearance and criminal records checks. In Bucktown, PA, the Owen J. Roberts School District has adopted a policy that requires parent volunteers to undergo background checks, and to pay \$20 for the privilege, according to school district officials. In Colorado, the fees for volunteer background checks vary from \$20 to \$50.

Jayne Schindler's research shows that the end result of the National Child Protection Act is already evident in some states as people refuse to put up with the hassle of the new regulations. "Volunteers are in

shorter supply than ever," she says, "which will only lead to more after-school programs with tax-funded staff, more FBI agents to perform background checks, more social workers to handle child abuse reports,



and of course, two teachers for every classroom. Mothers will only be incubators for the state's children as Hillary's village is put into motion." ♦

## Chicago Students Required to 'Volunteer'

**CHICAGO, IL** — The Chicago school district is the latest and largest in the nation to require its students to perform community service as a requirement for graduation. While compulsory "volunteerism" has been alive and well for at least five years in America's public schools (See *Education Reporter*, Nov. 1993 and June 1995), Hoover Institution scholar Thomas Sowell fears that the Chicago school district could set a strong precedent.

In a Sept. 20 syndicated column, Sowell states that: "If the parents stand for this in Chicago, you can expect it to spread all across the country." He points out that there is less reason in the nation's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city to put up with the dictates of education bureaucrats than in many other cities — the school system there is under the control of the mayor, an elected official who is accountable to the voters.

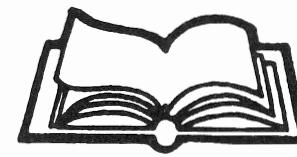
Sowell questions the wisdom of taking students out of the classroom for com-

pulsory community service in Chicago, where "most of the children cannot read at the national average." He asserts that the community service requirement has nothing to do with community or service, but with "using children for ideological agendas and using those agendas to insinuate the welfare-state view of the world on impressionable young minds." He notes that intruding into family privacy precedes intruding into the family itself. "Most parents have no idea how much personal family information is being collected from schoolchildren and fed into computer networks."

Sowell suggests that it is not the business of the public schools to "manipulate and indoctrinate" children. "Parents who want to debate the merits or demerits of various programs using their children as guinea pigs in the schools miss the point entirely," he says. "The real question is: 'Whose children are these?'" ♦



## Book of the Month



**1998 Directory of Abstinence Resources**, National Abstinence Clearinghouse, 1998, \$20, 70 pps.

The mission of the National Abstinence Clearinghouse (NAC) is "to promote the appreciation for and practice of sexual abstinence until marriage through the distribution of age-appropriate materials."

Its *1998 Directory of Abstinence Resources* lists only materials that support this premise. Among the materials listed are books, brochures, abstinence education curricula, videos, and promotional items.

The book also lists abstinence education providers, including the Just WAIT Project and the Medical Institute for Sexual Health (MISH). Parents wishing to instruct their children will find "parental components" such as Project Reality's "Helping Them Face Reality: An Aid for Parents of Teens," and Focus on the Family's "A Generation At Risk: A parent's guide to understanding popular youth culture."

The *Directory* includes published research and education comparisons such as MISH's "Abstinence and Safer Sex Sexuality: A Comparison," and Focus on the Family's "SIECUS: You Won't Believe What They Want to Teach Your Kids." A list of nationally-known abstinence speakers, along with capsule biographies, rounds out the directory's comprehensive offerings.

While the *Directory* is not an exhaustive listing of abstinence materials, it can be an excellent reference for educators, parents, and church youth group leaders, containing both Christian and public school resources.

The NAC was founded to counteract "a national agenda organized to infiltrate churches and youth programs with value-free sex education." NAC president Leslee J. Unruh discovered that SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.), the nation's leading provider and promoter of "safe-sex" education, is behind this agenda, and that the "safe sex" message — when it comes to premarital sex, there is no right or wrong, only individual choice — is being cleverly disguised by merely changing the "safe sex" label to "abstinence-based" or "abstinence plus" education.

Contact: National Abstinence Clearinghouse, 801 E. 41<sup>st</sup> St., Sioux Falls, SD, 57105-6027, phone 888/577-2966, fax 605/335-0629. Email: [info@abstinence.net](mailto:info@abstinence.net); web site [www.abstinence.net](http://www.abstinence.net). Discounts available for quantity purchases.

# FOCUS:

## Using the Delphi Technique to Achieve Consensus

*How it is leading us away from representative government to an illusion of citizen participation*

By Lynn Stuter

The Delphi Technique and consensus building are both founded in the same principle — the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, with synthesis becoming the new thesis. The goal is a continual evolution to “oneness of mind” (consensus means solidarity of belief) —the collective mind, the wholistic society, the wholistic earth, etc. In thesis and antithesis, opinions or views are presented on a subject to establish views and opposing views. In synthesis, opposites are brought together to form the new thesis. All participants in the process are then to accept ownership of the new thesis and support it, changing their views to align with the new thesis. Through a continual process of evolution, “oneness of mind” will supposedly occur.

In group settings, the Delphi Technique is an unethical method of achieving consensus on controversial topics. It requires well-trained professionals, known as “facilitators” or “change agents,” who deliberately escalate tension among group members, pitting one faction against another to make a preordained viewpoint appear “sensible,” while making opposing views appear ridiculous.

In her book *Educating for the New World Order*, author and educator Beverly Eakman makes numerous references to the need of those in power to preserve the illusion that there is “community participation in decision-making processes, while in fact lay citizens are being squeezed out.”

The setting or type of group is immaterial for the success of the technique. The point is that, when people are in groups that tend to share a particular knowledge base, they display certain identifiable characteristics, known as group dynamics, which allows the facilitator to apply the basic strategy.

The facilitators or change agents encourage each person in a group to express concerns about the programs, projects, or policies in question. They listen attentively, elicit input from group members, form “task forces,” urge participants to make lists, and in going through these motions, learn about each member of a group. They are trained to identify the “leaders,” the “loud mouths,” the “weak or non-committal members,” and those who are apt to change sides frequently during an argument.

Suddenly, the amiable facilitators become professional agitators and “devil’s advocates.” Using the “divide and conquer” principle, they manipulate one opinion against another, making those who are out of step appear “ridiculous, unknowledgeable, inarticulate, or dogmatic.” They attempt to anger certain participants, thereby accelerating tensions. The facilitators are well trained in psychological manipulation. They are able to predict the reactions of each member in a group. Individuals in opposition to the desired policy or program will be shut out.

The Delphi Technique works. It is very effective with parents, teachers, school children, and community groups. The “targets” rarely, if ever, realize that they are being manipulated. If they do suspect what is happening, they do not know how to end the process. The facilitator seeks to polarize the group in order to become an accepted member of the group and of the process. The desired idea is then placed on the table and individual opinions are sought during discussion. Soon, associates from the divided group begin to adopt the idea as if it were their own, and they pressure the entire group to accept their proposition.

### How the Delphi Technique Works

Consistent use of this technique to control public participation in our political system is causing alarm among people who cherish the form of government established by our Founding Fathers. Efforts in education and other areas have brought the emerging picture into focus.

In the not-too-distant past, the city of Spokane, in Washington state, hired a consultant to the tune of \$47,000 to facilitate the direction of city government. This development brought a hue and cry from the local population. The ensuing course of action holds an eerie similarity to what is happening in education reform. A newspaper editorial described how groups of disenfranchised citizens were brought together to “discuss” what they felt needed to be changed at the local government level. A compilation of the outcomes of those “discussions” influenced the writing of the city/county charter.

That sounds innocuous. But what actually happened in Spokane is happening in communities and school districts all across the country. Let’s review the process that occurs in these meetings.

First, a facilitator is hired. While his job is supposedly neutral and non-judgmental, the opposite is actually true. The facilitator is there to direct the meeting to a preset conclusion.

The facilitator begins by working the crowd to establish a good-guy-bad-guy scenario. Anyone disagreeing with the facilitator must be made to appear as the bad guy, with the facilitator appearing as the good guy. To accomplish this, the facilitator seeks out those who disagree and makes them look foolish, inept, or aggressive, which sends a clear message to the rest of the audience that, if they don’t want the same treatment, they must keep quiet. When the opposition has been identified and alienated, the facilitator becomes the good guy — a friend — and the agenda and direction of the meeting are established without the audience ever realizing what has happened.

Next, the attendees are broken up into smaller groups of seven or eight people. Each group has its own facilitator. The group facilitators steer participants to discuss preset issues, employing the same tactics as the lead facilitator.

Participants are encouraged to put their ideas and disagreements on paper, with the results to be compiled later. Who does the compiling? If you ask participants, you typically hear: “Those running the meeting compiled the results.” Oh-h! The next question is: “How do you know that what you wrote on your sheet of paper was incorporated into the final outcome?”

### “THE DELPHI

TECHNIQUE

FACILITATES

CITIZENS

SELECTED AT

LARGE TO

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OWNERSHIP

OF PRESET

OUTCOMES.”

The typical answer is: “Well, I’ve wondered about that, because what I wrote doesn’t seem to be reflected. I guess my views were in the minority.”

That is the crux of the situation. If 50 people write down their ideas individually, to be compiled later into a final outcome, no one knows what anyone else has written. That the final outcome of such a meeting reflects anyone’s input at all is highly questionable, and the same holds true when the facilitator records the group’s comments on paper. But participants in these types of meetings usually don’t question the process.

Why hold such meetings at all if the outcomes are already established? The answer is because it is imperative for the acceptance of the School-to-Work agenda, or the environmental agenda, or whatever the agenda, that ordinary people assume ownership of the preset outcomes. If people believe an idea is theirs, they’ll support it. If they believe an idea is being forced on them, they’ll resist.

The Delphi Technique is being used very effectively to change our government from a representative form in which elected individuals represent the people, to a “participatory democracy” in which citizens selected at large are facilitated into ownership of preset outcomes. These citizens believe that their input is important to the result, whereas the reality is that the outcome was already established by people not apparent to the participants.

### How to Diffuse the Delphi Technique

Three steps can diffuse the Delphi Technique as facilitators attempt to steer a meeting in a specific direction.

(1) Always be charming, courteous, and pleasant. Smile. Moderate your voice so as not to come across as belligerent or aggressive.

(2) Stay focused. If possible, jot down your thoughts or questions. When facilitators are asked questions they don’t want to answer, they often digress from the issue that was raised and try instead to put the questioner on the defensive. Do not fall for this tactic. Courteously bring the facilitator back to your original question. If he rephrases it so that it becomes an

accusatory statement (a popular tactic), simply say, “That is not what I asked. What I asked was . . .” and repeat your question.

(3) Be persistent. If putting you on the defensive doesn’t work, facilitators often resort to long monologues that drag on for several minutes. During that time, the group usually forgets the question that was asked, which is the intent. Let the facilitator finish. Then with polite persistence state: “But you didn’t answer my question. My question was . . .” and repeat your question.

Never become angry under any circumstances. Anger directed at the facilitator will immediately make the facilitator the victim. This defeats the purpose. The goal of facilitators is to make the majority of the group members like them, and to alienate anyone who might pose a threat to the realization of their agenda. People with firm, fixed beliefs, who are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in, are obvious threats. If a participant becomes a victim, the facilitator loses face and favor with the crowd. This is why crowds are broken up into groups of seven or eight, and why objections are written on paper rather than voiced aloud where they can be open to public discussion and debate. It’s called crowd control.

At a meeting, have two or three people who know the Delphi Technique dispersed through the crowd so that, when the facilitator digresses from a question, they can stand up and politely say: “But you didn’t answer that lady/gentleman’s question.” Even if the facilitator suspects certain group members are working together, he will not want to alienate the crowd by making accusations. Occasionally, it takes only one incident of this type for the crowd to figure out what’s going on.

Establish a plan of action before a meeting. Everyone on your team should know his part. Later, analyze what went right, what went wrong and why, and what needs to happen the next time. Never strategize during a meeting.

A popular tactic of facilitators, if a session is meeting with resistance, is to call a recess. During the recess, the facilitator and his spotters (people who observe the crowd during the course of a meeting) watch the crowd to see who congregates where, especially those who have offered resistance. If the resistors congregate in one place, a spotter will gravitate to that group and join in the conversation, reporting what was said to the facilitator. When the meeting resumes, the facilitator will steer clear of the resistors. Do not congregate. Instead gravitate to where the facilitators or spotters are. Stay away from your team members.

This strategy also works in a face-to-face, one-on-one meeting with anyone trained to use the Delphi Technique.

Lynn Stuter is an education researcher in Washington state. Her web site address is [www.icehouse.net/lmstuter](http://www.icehouse.net/lmstuter).

## Compulsory Vaccinations Put American Children at Risk

The French Health Ministry has stopped immunizing French children for the adult disease hepatitis B because of evidence that the vaccine can cause neurological disorders and multiple sclerosis. American infants and children however, continue to be forced to submit to hepatitis B vaccinations.

Across the country, hospitals routinely inject newborn babies with hepatitis B vaccine during their first 24 hours of life (even when their mothers test negative for hepatitis B), and children must present proof of having received three hepatitis B shots before they can enter school. This includes daycare, kindergarten, elementary school, high school, or college. According to the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), there is no convincing medical reason or scientific evidence for this procedure.

Hepatitis B is primarily an adult disease transmitted through body fluids. Those most at risk are the highly promiscuous (heterosexual or homosexual), needle-sharing drug addicts, health care and custodial workers exposed to blood, and babies born to already-infected mothers.

A Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report states that there were only 10,637 cases of hepatitis B in the United States

in 1996, including only 279 cases in children under the age of 14. Hepatitis B is not fatal for most who contract it, is not epidemic except among those high-risk groups, and bears no relation to hepatitis A (the disease sometimes picked up in restaurants when food-handlers don't wash their hands).

For the problem of 279 children who have hepatitis B, millions of U.S. children



are being forced to submit to vaccination consisting of three hepatitis B shots. Many parents are asking where such an

intrusive and expensive rule originates,

and how it can be enforced nationally

since immunizations are a state, not a federal, matter.

An intricate system for promoting these types of health initiatives has been developed that is essentially beyond the spotlight of public scrutiny and without accountability. The CDC endorses a

given vaccine, and the state legislatures delegate the decision-making power to state public health departments. Unaccountable health department bureaucrats make regulations that conform to CDC instructions and have the impact of law, and the drug manufacturers spend millions of dollars to advertise their products.

The CDC has doled out hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to reward state health departments for promoting mass vaccinations, and has the power to withhold money grants if state health officials don't show proof of designated vaccination rates.

The 1993 Comprehensive Childhood Immunization Act, signed by President Clinton, gave the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) \$400 million to award to states to set up state vaccine registries to tag and track children so that they can be compelled to receive vaccinations. States receive either \$50, \$75 or \$100 per child who is fully immunized with all federally recommended vaccines, including hepatitis B.

Most states now require children to be injected with about 33 doses of 9 or 10 different viral and bacterial vaccines in order to enter public school, including three doses of hepatitis B vaccine.

In 1995, HHS Secretary Donna Shalala gave the states the power to ap-

propriate newborn babies' social security numbers in order to set up vaccine tracking registries. The CDC plans to network all the state registries in order to create a de facto centralized electronic database containing every child's, and ultimately every American's, medical records.

More than 22,000 reports of hospitalizations and injuries, including 300 deaths, following hepatitis B vaccination have been reported since 1990 to the U.S. government's Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. There have been no controlled studies to evaluate these reports, there is no adequate proof of the vaccine's long-term safety, little is known about its effect on a newborn baby's immune system, and the disclaimers that the drug manufacturers put on the hepatitis B vaccine package are disturbing.

The hepatitis B vaccine may give only a temporary immunity, and it is not clear when booster shots will be required. Some of those who receive the hepatitis B vaccine may thereafter test positive for the disease because many routine blood tests are not sophisticated enough to differentiate between prior vaccination and the disease.

For more information from the National Vaccine Information Center, call 1-800-909-SHOT or visit their web site at [www.909shot.com](http://www.909shot.com).

## Pledging Allegiance to the Planet Part II

GROVE CITY, PA — While schoolchildren in Oak Park, IL are pledging allegiance to the planet (See *Education Reporter*, October 1998), at least one elementary school in Grove City, PA, has taken the concept a step farther. Students are reciting a pledge of allegiance to the world, and signing a written pledge as well.

The oral pledge is as follows: "I pledge allegiance to the world, to cherish every living thing; to care for earth and sea and air, with peace and freedom everywhere."

The written pledge is printed on a certificate-like form that has the United Nations logo at the top. It reads: "Recognizing that people's actions towards nature and each other are the source of growing damage to the environment and resources needed to meet human needs and to ensure survival and development, I pledge to the best of my ability to help make the Earth a

secure and hospitable home for present and future generations." It is followed by a blank signature line.

According to education researcher and author, Pamela Hobbs-Hoffecker, these types of pledges are an outgrowth of "International" or "Global" education, which is usually included in OBE.

In her 1995 book, *Outcome-Based Education, the State's Assault on Our Children's Values*, co-written with fellow researcher Peg Luksik, Hoffecker states: "International education classes often speak of 'America/Global Village' in the same breath. They are not synonymous."

OBE outcomes, she writes, typically call for global education to be integrated into the entire learning process of American children. "In other words, all courses teach global citizenship, and parents can't opt their kids out."

### Worth Pondering . . .



## 'Zero Tolerance' = Zero Common Sense

LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA — The Lowes Island Elementary School in Loudoun County suspended a 9-year-old boy last month for bringing a green plastic "Nerf" gun to school. Officials recommended that he be expelled for one year, citing a Virginia law that bars students from possessing weapons.

The 4<sup>th</sup> grader put the 5 1/2 inch toy gun in his book bag to hide it from his younger sisters. A week later, he noticed the toy in his bag while walking out of school at the end of the day and showed it to his friends. According to parents and other students who were present, he did not use it to threaten anyone. The gun was made to fire hollow foam bullets, but had a broken trigger at the time.

Officials say they were following Virginia state policy that bans bringing weapons to school, including toy guns. Loudoun County School Superintendent Edgar Hatch III told the *Washington Post*: "In the age we live in, we have to understand that bringing weapons to school is very serious. Everyone wants safe schools, and the only way you can do that is through strong policies."

Others view the incident as an example of what Rutherford Institute columnist John W. Whitehead calls "a deepening cultural problem." Whitehead acknowledges that officials should and have taken strong measures to stop violence and rid schools of real weapons and illegal drugs. But he adds that zero tolerance policies often "trash democratic principles and impose harsh penalties on

students accused of minor offenses."

He argues that, as in the courtroom, laws "aren't completely one-size-fits-all." Zero-tolerance policies take away the discretionary ability of teachers and school administrators to discipline children using common sense. "Some states with zero-tolerance policies have authorized local school boards to make exceptions to the rule on a case-by-case basis," says Whitehead. "This exception should be standard practice in all the schools in all the states. According to the Eighth Amendment to our Constitution, the punishment should fit the crime."

Following the toy gun incident, another Virginia school district decided to ban the use of anything resembling real weapons as props in school plays. According to Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation, this eliminates about 60% of all school plays that have traditionally been performed. "Scratch most of Shakespeare. No Agatha Christie. Forget even musicals such as *Guys and Dolls*," he notes.

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