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Who Really Benefits from 'Gender Gap'?

In 1992, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) released its report "How Schools Shortchange Girls." The "findings" — that teachers were focusing their attention on boys and neglecting girls, that schools were discouraging girls from taking important math and science courses, which would hinder their ability to compete in the future — were widely publicized. The report triggered a spate of programs, books and articles to remedy the "problem."

In late 1998, the U.S. Department of Education released a report on high school transcripts that refutes the AAUW findings. This new report shows that:

■ In both 1990 and 1994 (the latest figures), female high school graduates had higher enrollments than boys in first- and second-year algebra and geometry.

■ Among 1994 graduates, there were no differences between the sexes in enrollment in pre-calculus, trigonometry, statistics, and advanced placement calculus.

■ Female graduates in both 1990 and 1994 had higher enrollments than boys in biology and chemistry.

■ Figures show that 43% of female graduates in 1994 were taking a rigorous college-preparatory program, compared with 35% of boys.

Abstinence Rally Rocks Chicago

"Today, I challenge you to remain abstinent until you say 'I do.'" — Mike Singletary, featured speaker

CHICAGO, IL — Project Reality hosted a youth rally, REALITY CHECK CHICAGO '98, at the University of Illinois' Chicago Pavilion on November 17th. Nearly 9,000 area teens from 67 schools and youth groups attended what Project Reality Director Kathleen Sullivan called "our most ambitious event ever."

Los Angeles entertainer and nationally-recognized abstinence advocate Lakita Garth produced the stage show and acted as host. Miss Garth travels to Illinois several times each year under the sponsorship of Project Reality to share her upbeat, no-compromise, abstinence-until-marriage message with area students. A runner-up in the Miss Black America Pageant in 1995, Garth quickly captures and holds the attention of her audiences.

The rally's featured speaker was former Chicago Bears star linebacker Mike Singletary, who was recently inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame, and named "1998 Father of the Year" by the National Fatherhood Initiative. Singletary shared his personal story of regret for not having had the benefit of the abstinence message in his youth.

"When I was a teenager growing up in a Houston ghetto in a divorced home, I made some decisions that were not great decisions," he told the crowd. "I was one

of the fortunate ones, but if I'd had the opportunity to hear role models like the ones you'll hear today, showing me that, yes, I can do this! — it would have been a tremendous blessing in my life."

NBA star A. C. Green, well known for his outspoken stand in favor of abstinence, also took part in the rally. Pat Socia, author of *Weaving Character into Sex Education*, and video producer Mike Long (*Everyone Is NOT Doing It!*) accompanied Chicago Bears players Greg Huntington, Glyn Milburn, Chad Overhauser, Carl Reeves, and Mark Thomas in championing the abstinence message.

At the close of the event, Chicago Public Schools' CEO Paul Vallas gave an interview to the *Chicago Tribune* in which he revealed that "a new family health curriculum will be introduced systemwide in January to teach abstinence as the num-

ber one choice — not one of several equally legitimate options." He further stated: "When I look at our health care curriculum now, abstinence gets a passing glance. We have pregnancy rates of 40% in some of our schools. Our health care curriculum has to be oriented toward preaching that abstinence is the first, best way."

Events such as REALITY CHECK '98 CHICAGO serve as reinforcement for the abstinence-until-marriage instructional programs provided by Project Reality to more than 37,000 Illinois students annually. The rally was funded in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services, which also partially funds the in-school programs. Kathleen Sullivan notes: "Our work is the very best use of your tax dollars."

Additional funding for the rally was provided by donors and corporate sponsors including Bears Care, Glenview State Bank, Hollister Inc., Life Enrichment Foundation, Loyola Medical Center, M&M/Mars Co., MKO/FuGen (A.C. Green's clothing line), United Center, and Walgreen Drug Stores.



Mike Singletary & Kathleen Sullivan

Grass Roots Reject School-to-Work in New Jersey

MONTVALE, NJ — The impact of the grassroots movement to expose the School-to-Work (STW) agenda in the Garden State has become increasingly widespread. Citizens' groups have sponsored monthly seminars to educate the public about the proposed new state STW regulations at sites as diverse as an historic county courthouse, a corporate auditorium, a church basement, and a school cafeteria in Westfield, NJ, where 200 people attended.

The new regs require that all high school juniors and seniors spend one day every week working in a job, community service, or school-based enterprise, beginning with the 2000-2001 school year. By the 11th grade, students would be required to choose one of 14 career majors. Kindergartners would be encouraged to think about careers, and 5th graders would be asked to develop career plans.

At the Westfield seminar, New Jersey Eagle Forum president Carolee Adams relayed information on STW gleaned

from her attendance at the Governor's Summit on Education in Palisades, NY,

A LOCAL
NEWSPAPER
HEADLINE
SHOUTED,
"SCHOOL-TO-
WORK MAN-
DATES FOUR-
DAY WEEK,
WORRIES
PARENTS."

and at the Capitol Hill Forum on Goals 2000 in Washington, DC. Joyce Powell, Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey Education Association, which opposes STW, also spoke at the meeting. The next morning, a local newspaper headline shouted: "School-to-Work Mandates Four-Day Week; Worries Parents at Forum."

The grassroots seminars have prompted a wave of negative publicity about STW. Since last spring, North New

Jersey's leading newspaper, *The Record*, has published a series of articles on STW, including an editorial last May entitled "Going Too Far With Relevance. . . . The state wants work training for all students." *The Record's* editorial board condemned the state's mandate, and recommended that schools meet the more important challenge of teaching students to read and do arithmetic.

Following the publication of that article, the New Jersey State School Board Association announced it would hold a series of public hearings, the first of which took place last October. At that hearing, the proposed graduation requirements and assessments were discussed. At a third hearing, only three testimonies were presented in favor of the regulation changes, with more than 35 opposed. Much of the opposition came from school board members, teachers, and school administrators. Additional hearings are scheduled for early 1999. They will focus on career majors, mandated in the new regs by no

later than 10th grade, and the entire STW program.

Susan LeGlise, superintendent of Holmdel High in Monmouth County, a school that boasts of high SAT scores and below average per-pupil costs, protested the new regulations by wearing an oversized "one size fits all" dress to one of the hearings to demonstrate her opinion of the program. Holmdel was one of two school districts that had resolutions pending to ban STW, and has subsequently adopted an anti-STW resolution. Holmdel school board members are seeking support for their position against STW from their peers throughout the state via email, personal contact, and articles published in the New Jersey School Board Association publication, *The Leader*.

Coincidentally, the newspaper *Education Week* reported on the publication of a 204-page report by a New Jersey research firm asserting that School-to-Work programs will likely fade away by 2001,

(See STW page 2)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

The Fox Family Channel plans to debut two new cable networks in 1999 — the **Boyz Channel** and the **Girlz Channel**. CEO Rich Cronin said it's "legitimate and positive" to celebrate the differences between boys and girls, and to recognize their different programming preferences. Critics fear the separate channels will reinforce gender stereotypes. They claim the boys' channel will feature "karate, lasers and insults, while the girls' channel will be filled with sweet fare about babysitting and best friends."

Poor grammar and misspelled words forced the recall of 2,000 full-color booklets describing the mayor's youth programs in Houston, TX. The *Houston Chronicle* reported that the 14-page booklet contained at least one error on nearly every page, including the cover, which had a punctuation error in the mayor's title and misspelled the word "millennium." The booklets cost in excess of \$5,000 to print.

Vice President Gore announced in November that up to 47,000 schools and libraries would receive \$2 billion under the E-rate program for Internet hookup by the end of January. Created under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the E-rate program places an added tax on long-distance telephone bills, and has been dubbed "the Gore phone tax." The Clinton Administration plans to ultimately connect 30 million school children to the Internet through this initiative.

According to a new study by the University of California, Los Angeles, charter schools have problems measuring students' academic performance and improvement. Researchers found that charter schools rarely provide clear outlines of their goals and how performance will be measured, and that they rely heavily on private resources. The study focused on 17 charter schools in 10 districts over a two-year period. More than 1,100 charter schools are operating in 26 states.

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STW (Continued from page 1)

along with the federal dollars that fund them. The report, entitled "Expanding Options for Students: Report to Congress on the National Evaluation of School-to-Work Implementation," by Mathematica Policy Research Inc., states that STW initiatives are not receiving the necessary funding commitments for state and local partnerships, nor are they at the core of state efforts to boost academic standards. For these reasons, "the overall vision of the system may slip into the shadows of the many other competing demands on schools and teachers."

The researchers based their findings primarily on an evaluation of STW programs in eight states that have received federal grants from the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994: Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon and Wisconsin. Funding for the federal act expires in 2001.

In 1994, New Jersey received a federal grant of \$37 million, and currently has 43 STW programs operating throughout the state. The proposed new regs will make STW mandatory for all students, whether they want to participate or not.

At least some of the blame for the proposal is being laid at the door of Governor Christine Todd Whitman. New Jersey *Star-Ledger* columnist Paul Mulshine accused Whitman's administration of "implementing a long list of big-spending, big-government programs that violate both the principle of individual responsibility and the principle of local control." He denounced the STW proposal as "her administration's latest travesty."

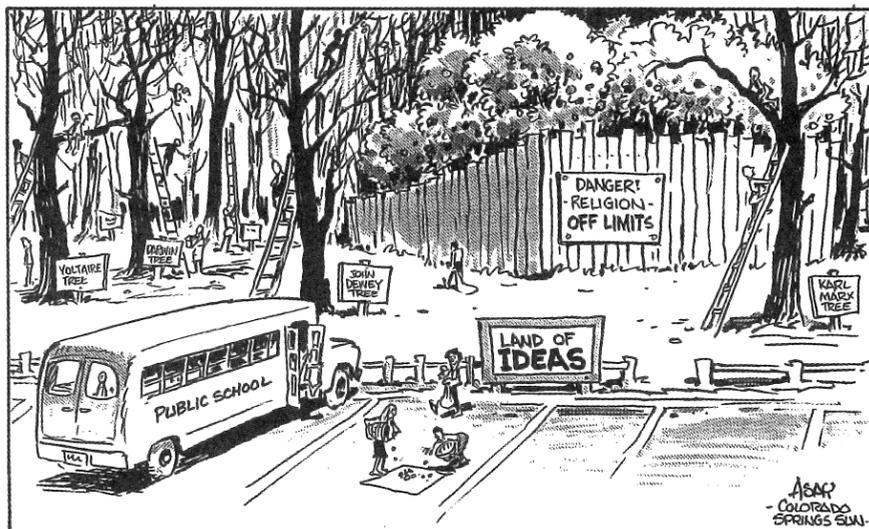
The New Jersey State Assembly has

also entered the fray. Assembly Resolution AR146, introduced by Assemblyman Scott Garrett of Sussex County, the site of the first grassroots seminar, introduced an STW Resolution in November which now has 15 cosponsors. Although the resolution does not have the force of law, it has provoked discussion among the legislators, and a press conference is scheduled for this month.

Garrett even opposes a voluntary STW program that offers grants because such a financial incentive would encourage schools to participate. "Poor schools would be forced to volunteer," he predicts. "If the state is saying 'we'll come up with guidelines and regulations,' that's not voluntary, because the heavy hand of government is hanging over the schools."

At an STW panel discussion sponsored by the Public Education Institute (PEI), housed at Rutgers University, panel members included a high school principal who confirmed the logistical nightmare STW would create, and noted the unacceptable mandate it imposes on parents. The Executive Director of PEI ended the conference by referring to education philosopher Mortimer Adler, commenting: "Vocational education is education for slaves."

The diverse opposition to School-to-Work (also known as School-to-Career and School-to-Career and College Initiatives) in New Jersey continues to grow. The Newark *Star-Ledger*, New Jersey's leading newspaper, put the blame squarely on Governor Whitman with the headline: "A Governor With Principle Would Reject School-to-Work."



'See You at the Pole' Is School Prayer Event

On the morning of Sept. 16, 1998, more than three million young people in 50 states formed concentric circles around their school flagpoles to begin the new school year with prayer. Dubbed "See You at the Pole," the annual event involves students praying for their country's leaders, their teachers, and their classmates. According to an article in the Sept. 28 issue of *Time* magazine, "See You" now serves as the school-year kickoff for a rapidly swelling population of weekly campus Bible study and prayer clubs."

The event began modestly in the spring of 1990 in Burleson, Texas, when, as stated in the *Time* article: "Several pub-

lic school students told their youth minister that they felt 'burdened' by God to pray at their school flagpoles." Texas Southern Baptist youth evangelism coordinator Chuck Flowers took the initiative statewide that fall, and 48,000 students showed up for the school yard prayer service instead of the predicted 5,000.

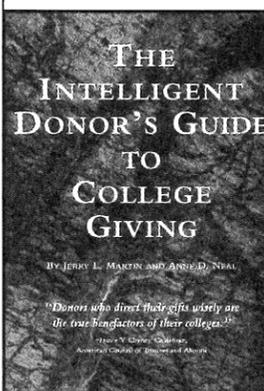
"See You at the Pole" has been described as "overtly evangelistic," but it is completely legal. In 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of a 1984 law that permits student prayer on school grounds providing it is not led by adults or conducted during school hours.

Book of the Month



The Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving, Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal, 1998, 75 pps., no charge.

As public awareness and concern grow about the trends in higher education toward



bizarre and academically worthless programs and courses, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) has released

The Intelligent Donor's Guide. It promises to help philanthropists give more wisely, regardless of the amount of the gift.

The *Guide* is a primer for people who want their gifts to be used to advance academic excellence rather than the latest "politically correct" program or activity. It outlines a 15-step program to help donors identify their goals for their gifts, direct the gifts by selecting the best programs to support, and follow through to make sure the funds are used in the manner specified. The authors say that most donors give "the easy way" by contributing to annual funds or capital campaigns, or by giving to building funds and projects. They note that targeting funds in this way merely frees up general funds which often pay for programs that undermine the donor's educational values.

The *Guide* cautions donors to beware of "fungibility," or the moving of funds from one project or activity to another. They advise donors to state their instructions for their gifts in writing in no uncertain terms, noting that even restricted gifts are often made on "little more than a smile and a handshake." They say colleges give donors romantic descriptions of what their gifts will achieve, only to have them find out later that something quite different was done with their money. For example, suppose a donor gives to a college because of its outstanding political science department. If the donor simply earmarks the gift for that department, the dean could subtract the amount of the gift from the department's total allocation. To circumvent that possibility, say the authors, donors should enlist the faculty of the preferred department to be their watchdog, or fund a new course or lecture series, in addition to putting their wishes in writing.

Contact ACTA, 1625 K St. N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 467-6787, 1-888-ALUMNI-8, fax (202) 467-6784, e-mail: naf@naf.org, web site: <http://www.naf.org>

FOCUS: Traditional Education vs. Direct Instruction

What's the difference between these teaching methods?

by Tracy J. Hayes

Traditional education is sometimes described as "direct instruction," because the teacher stands in front of the classroom "directly instructing" the students in the subject matter at hand. The terms "Direct Instruction" (which refers to a teaching method) and "teacher-directed instruction" (used in traditional education) are examples of how words in our language can be perceived as one in the same, when in fact they are very different from one another. Deceptive semantics has created much confusion among many educators as well as parents.

The major difference between traditional education and Direct Instruction (DI), therefore, is the *method* in which the content is taught.

Traditional education focuses on content-rich curriculum that introduces, teaches and reviews a particular subject. The content moves from simple to complex, spiraling back to refresh the students' memories of previously-learned material, while progressing in that subject. Some textbook publishers make recommendations about what content is to be taught, but in most traditional education classrooms, the teacher decides how

the "what" is to be taught.

To help determine student achievement in traditional education, weekly quizzes and end-of-chapter tests are administered. One hundred percent mastery is not expected. The teacher knows that with time and review, both knowledge retention and test scores will improve. The object of traditional education is to offer students a broad foundation of information, based on facts and figures, that

will be retained for future application on high stakes assessments, education and career objectives, and lifelong wisdom. Direct Instruction is based on behavioral psychology and the work of American professor B.F. Skinner. DI focuses on content-rich curriculum that introduces a subject via a stimulus expecting a particular response from the student. It requires the teacher to use operant conditioning (reinforcing the desired response by a stimulus) and behavior modification techniques. In a DI classroom, the teacher must follow a prescribed set of lesson plans, sometimes in script form, and use certain cues such as clapping, with the intent to incite a certain reaction, such as unison chanting by the students. Many DI programs use rewards and tokens to generate predetermined responses.



Many DI programs are designed for the computer, with built-in bells and whistles to control the pace and learning outcomes. With OBE already in many schools, Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) is also promoting affective/subjective goals. The DI method expects students to achieve mastery in each area of instruction before moving on to the next level (mastery learning). Teachers teach to the tests, and students are told what to expect.

Since students know in advance what material they will be tested on, much important content is skipped over.

Testing is frequent and skills are drilled to perfection, so scores are usually high in the early years of Direct Instruction. Typical classrooms, however, consist of students with varying abilities, so the amount of content is decreased to accommodate the slowest learner. In some schools, cooperative learning is used to appease the high achievers. Since review of previously learned material is not encouraged, overall retention of information is less. SAT scores are low, and the ultimate application of knowledge is not achieved, and in some cases, stifled.

Tracy Hayes is an education researcher in Massachusetts.

IN DI CLASSROOMS, THE AMOUNT OF CONTENT IS DECREASED TO ACCOMMODATE THE SLOWEST LEARNER.

Commissioner of Education Clouds Issues at Conference

by Joan F. Langenberg

MARYLAND HEIGHTS, MO — The real purpose of Missouri Education Commissioner Bob Bartman's annual conference in October was to unveil the state's new high stakes assessments and Certificates of Initial Mastery (CIM). Pattonville High School hosted the conference, and Bartman performed a masterful job of discussing aspects of his new educational system (for all Missouri's children) without specifically describing them. For example, he cleverly addressed the issue of a state certificate but never mentioned the CIM.

The announced purpose of the conference was to sell a "need" for Missouri's new assessments, which will be in place in a year or two. Although the assessments are not yet completed, the conference was intended to convey to parents, teachers, and administrators the need for consequences (the code word for punishments) that students should face if they do not perform at acceptable levels. Bartman said that when the assessments are in place and students have taken them, rewards and consequences should be administered accordingly. Marc Tucker of the NCEE said the same thing in describing his "vision" for education — the national School-to-Work system that Missouri is about to adopt. Tucker's system requires both the assessments and skills certificates/CIM that Bartman presented at his conference.

What are the consequences of passing

or failing the high stakes assessments? The new assessments have been redefined, and will measure beliefs, attitudes, and values. Until students pass them, they cannot proceed to the next grade level, play sports, go to college, or get a job. Students who fail will be held back until they pass. Therefore, these assessments will determine in large part our children's future.

WHY DID MR. BARTMAN LET MISSOURI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM HIT ROCK BOTTOM IN THE FIRST PLACE?"

STEVEN BOODY, PARENT

Bartman's goals for Missouri's students include implementing higher academic standards and assessments, and creating an atmosphere that promotes greater responsibility and accountability. He suggested ways to increase academic performance and accountability, such as an expanded school year, tutorials before and after school, Saturday classes, and creating new teaching strategies. He mentioned the possibility that teachers will oversee the same group of students for a period of years to increase academic performance.

Some parents question Bartman's track record. Small businessman and parent Steve Boody notes: "Mr. Bartman needs to look at his own accountability

to Missouri's education system, considering that he was in charge during its decline over the past 10 years. Now he is offering all the answers. But why did he let the system hit bottom in the first place?"

At education reform conferences, the problems facing education are often well-stated, the right questions are asked, and the platitudes are endless. According to Bartman, for example, the average teacher turnover in Missouri's schools is 30%, in addition to the fact that teachers often teach subjects that they are not qualified to teach. But then he asked the same tired, rhetorical question typical of reformers: "What incentives and encouragement can public policy provide to increase our students' test scores?"

What Missouri parents are asking for — a better education for their children — is not really the bottom line for Mr. Bartman. In his conference remarks, he posed the following questions three times: "When does performance count?" and "Who should performance count for?" He answered both questions by stating that performance counts when the business and labor force are satisfied. Evidently, parents and students are no longer the clients of Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE); the state and the economic system are the clients.

Bartman opined that the new goals of the marketplace require problem solving, knowledge, and skills. This sounds innocent, but the reality is that he and his colleagues at DESE are restructuring the

education component of the School-to-Work system according to the needs and dictates of business and labor. Workforce demands are now the criteria for our education policies, which have little or nothing to do with high academic standards. For example, a C+ is now considered a high grade in Mr. Bartman's new education system.

In truth, the "rigorous" new performance standards and assessments being developed for Missouri's schools include "politically correct" attitudes and values that will fit into the global marketplace. The CIM, which Bartman discussed but failed to mention by name, will eventually replace the diploma, or be required in addition to the diploma. It will soon be required of all public high school graduates, and will supposedly prove academic knowledge and skills to future employers.

At the end of his speech, Bartman invited conference attendees to divide into small groups to share their thoughts about his proposals. Numerous small group meetings followed for the purpose of obtaining consensus or agreement on the

(See Commissioner, page 4)

THE CIM WILL EVENTUALLY BE REQUIRED OF ALL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, REPLACING THE DIPLOMA.

K-12 'SALT' Survey Riles Parents, Teachers, and School Administrators in Rhode Island

PROVIDENCE, RI — Students from grades 4-12 in Rhode Island's public schools are again taking the SALT survey (School Accountability for Learning and Teaching), a lengthy questionnaire that probes them for personal information on nearly every aspect of their lives. The questionnaires contain about 200 questions and statements; some are true/false, a few are multiple choice, but most require students to choose from among several one-word responses.

The SALT survey was introduced last spring by the Rhode Island Department of Education and immediately created controversy. Teachers and parents objected to the personal, intrusive and potentially damaging nature of many of the questions (See *Sample Questions* in sidebar).

As reported in the *Providence Journal*, one teacher wrote to the Education Department to complain that the survey was "wordy, repetitious, needlessly time-consuming and often ambiguously written in 'educationese.'" She voiced her concern about "the department's underlying political agenda of school reform," which she said reflects "the political and education beliefs of politicians, education professors, education department officials, parents, but few teachers."

At least one school district refused to administer the survey last year until the state threatened to withhold funding. According to the *Providence Journal*, the Narragansett School District Committee insisted on parental permission for students to take the survey, and spent \$1,500 to mail it to parents. The result was that only 10% of the students were allowed to participate.

School Accountability for Learning and Teaching Survey (SALT)

Sample Questions

True/False Questions:

11. Students in this school are mean to each other.
39. Students here get upset when other students do better than they do in class work.
40. In our school, students are given the chance to help make decisions.
54. Students in this school feel students are too mean to them.

Yes/No/Sometimes Questions:

75. I feel OK about how much other kids like doing things with me.
78. I wish I had more to be proud of.
79. I think that it is a waste of time studying for a class when the class is hard.
83. I give up when my school work is hard to do.

Multiple Choice Questions:

96. During this school year, how often did you bring something to school to protect yourself?
97. During this school year, has anyone at school threatened to beat you up or hurt you if you didn't give them your money or something else that belonged to you?
121. With whom have you lived most of the past year?
188. During the past month, how many cigarettes (if any) did you smoke?
189. During the past month, how many times (if any) did you use chewing tobacco or snuff?

The next section asks students to pick the sentence from each group that best describes their feelings and ideas in the PAST TWO WEEKS:

104. A. I am sad once in a while or not at all.
B. I am sad many times.
C. I am sad all the time.
105. A. Nothing will ever work out for me.
B. I'm not sure if things will work out for me.
C. Things will work out for me OK.
108. A. I like myself.
B. I do not like myself.
C. I hate myself.
109. A. I feel like crying every day.
B. I feel like crying many days.
C. I feel like crying once in a while or not at all.
112. A. I look OK.
B. There are some bad things about my looks.
C. I look ugly.
116. A. I do not feel alone.
B. I feel alone many times.
C. I feel alone all the time.
117. A. I never have fun at school.
B. I have fun at school only once in a while.
C. I have fun at school many times.

The following questions ask students how often their parents or guardians do the following. Answer choices are *Hardly Ever*, *Sometimes*, or *Most of the Time*:

136. Reward you when you do well in school.
137. Help you with your homework.
141. Go to school activities or meetings (PTA, sports events, dances, parent workshops, etc.).
146. Talk to you about stories in the news.
148. Play games with you where you have to think a lot if you want to win.
154. Work with students of different races and cultures in a school activity.

The grades 4-12 SALT survey included the following statements, with which students were asked to *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, *Agree*, or *Strongly Agree*:

92. I like my body just the way it is.
95. I feel good about my height and weight.
99. I wish I looked a lot different.

This survey also asks students whether they have met alone with counselors or social workers, peer mediators or peer counselors, and whether they find such advisors helpful in dealing with personal or family problems, social relationships and other students, and understanding health issues and practices. It queries students about whether they participate in religious organizations or activities, asks them to speculate about how well they and their parents think they'll do in school in the future, and asks about their parents' education.

Commissioner (Continued from Page 3)

issues that had been introduced. The conclusion of these meetings was preconceived; trained group leaders used a manipulative process called the "Delphi Technique" (See *Education Reporter*, Nov. 1998) to convince participants that they actually had a say in what was decided. Questions were asked of the groups: "Are the current 22 Carnegie units sufficient for graduation? What can we do to motivate students? Should a student be promoted to the next grade whether or not he or she has the knowledge or skills?" The conclusions were actually the conclusions Mr. Bartman and his colleagues' wanted. For example, in this writer's group it was decided that 22 Carnegie units were not sufficient for graduation. In fact, Carnegie units as a measuring stick were discredited by the group.

Overall, Bartman did an excellent job at his conference of presenting the "brave new system" with a backdoor approach using redefined words. One of his arguments was that DESE must be able to prove to parents, taxpayers, and business people that kids can meet basic skill stan-

dards for the U.S. workforce. He used this argument to justify Missouri's need for a Skills Certificate, although again those two words were not used. He said we need standards, assessments, certificates, rewards, consequences (punishments), and scholarships that would encourage improved performance. This back door approach does not adequately describe what is planned for the future.

Steve Boody explains: "What parents have asked for in terms of reform is being twisted and redefined to justify the goals of the state. We need to understand the total system that Bartman, et al. are creating, because it's hard to find fault with its innocent-sounding components. For example, how can one be against 'high' standards? But what are those standards and whose are they? The answer is they are the business world's and the labor force's standards, and the product of Mr. Bartman's system will be a 'politically correct' individual, trained for the workforce of the global village."

Joan Langenberg is an education researcher and writer in Missouri.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WHICH QUESTION DO YOU THINK WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR A PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER TO ASK A STUDENT?



Study Shows Special Ed Discrepancy

WASHINGTON, DC — A study by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights shows disproportionate referrals of black and Hispanic students in special education classes in New York City's public schools.

The analysis found that a third of the

city's school districts sent unusually high numbers of children with limited English proficiency into special education. In nine districts, black students were more than twice as likely as white students to be referred to special education programs.