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Colorado State Board of Education

RESOLUTION

Promoting The Use Of Academic Solutions To Resolve Problems With Behavior, Attention, And Learning

Whereas, the Colorado State Board of Education is constitutionally charged with the general supervision of K-12 public education; and,

Whereas, the Colorado State Board of Education dedicates itself to increasing academic achievement levels for all students; and,

Whereas, the responsibility of school personnel is to ensure student achievement; and,

Whereas, only medical personnel can recommend the use of prescription medications; and,

Whereas, the Colorado State Board of Education recognizes that there is much concern regarding the issue of appropriate and thorough diagnosis and medication and their impact on student achievement; and,

Whereas, there are documented incidences of highly negative consequences in which psychiatric prescription drugs have been utilized for what are essentially problems of discipline which may be related to lack of academic success;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Colorado State Board of Education encourage school personnel to use proven academic and/or classroom management solutions to resolve behavior, attention, and learning difficulties; and,

Be It Further Resolved, that the Colorado State Board of Education encourage greater communication and education among parents, educators, and medical professionals about the effects of psychotropic drugs on student achievement and our ability to provide a safe and civil learning environment.

November 11, 1999

On this date, the Colorado State Board of Education passed this resolution by a six-to-one vote.

An Internet Opinion Poll conducted on the *Rocky Mountain News* "InsideDenver.com" web site posed this question a week following the Colorado Board of Education's adoption of the above resolution:

"Was the state board of education right to attack the use of Ritalin?"

- ◆ 890 respondents (96%) said YES.
- ◆ 41 (4%) said NO.

Colorado School Board Passes Resolution Warning About Ritalin

DENVER, CO — The Colorado State School Board passed a resolution on November 11 warning of the possible negative effects of psychotropic (mind-altering) prescription drugs on schoolchildren. The vote was 6-1. Board member Patti Johnson drafted the resolution after a number of parents contacted her complaining that they had been "pressured" by educators to put their children on Ritalin.

"I have been actively involved in education since my now-college-age son was in elementary school," she explains. "I'm aware that schools receive additional funding for each child who is labeled 'learning disabled,' so I was particularly sensitive to these complaints."

Mrs. Johnson introduced her resolution at the October board meeting following presentations by experts on the possible connection of Ritalin and other prescription drugs to students' violent behaviors. The original text was pared from four pages to one prior to its adoption by the board last month (see *Resolution* this page).

Colorado Eagle Forum leader Jayne Schindler is among many who applaud the board's decision. "We are proud that the Colorado Board of Education is the first in the nation to take this monumental step toward correcting the obvious problems with the diagnoses and potential misdiagnoses of learning disabilities

in schoolchildren, and the subsequent treatment of these disabilities with psychotropic drugs," she says.

Eagle Forum was instrumental in focusing attention on these problems by providing research documentation to state school board members and legislators. "This should be the beginning of a national movement by state school boards and legislatures to stem the tide of mind-altering drugs that are arbitrarily prescribed for children," Mrs. Schindler says. She reports that the states of Florida and Texas have already shown an interest in copying the resolution.

Presentations to the Board

Dr. Fred Baughman Jr., M.D., a pediatric neurologist for 35 years, Dr. Ann Tracy, who holds a Ph.D. in psychology and health sciences and is the director of the International Coalition for Drug Awareness, and Bruce Wiseman, national president of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights, a psychiatric watchdog organization, made presentations in support of Patti Johnson's resolution at the October school board meeting. Dr. Baughman stated that "there is no scientific evidence that either Attention Defi-

cit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are scientifically valid disorders or diseases." He told the board that he has been informed by leading health authorities, including the National Institute of Mental Health, that no studies proving the validity of these maladies exist.

Dr. Tracy, who has extensively researched the effects of mind-altering drugs on the brain, noted that there were "approximately 15,000 deaths in 1998 from illegal drug use and over 200,000 reported deaths from the use of legal drugs."

Mr. Wiseman pointed out the instances over the last several years where the perpetrators of school shootings had been diagnosed with depression and were taking some type of antidepressant medication, including Eric Harris, who was on Luvox prior to the rampage at Columbine High School.

Speaking against the resolution was Dr. William Dodson, assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Colorado. Dr. Dodson described those opposed to Ritalin as "fear mongering" and "mean spirited." He stated that Ritalin is not addictive and that any side effects are short-lived. He said the criteria used in the diagnoses of ADD and ADHD consist of "a list of questions and a family history," and admitted that even nurse

(See *Resolution*, page 4)



Patti Johnson

Nosy Questionnaires Relocate to 'JIACs'

'Juvenile Intake Centers' are response to 'Zero Tolerance'

JOHNSON COUNTY, KS — The concept of "Zero Tolerance" has taken on a new dimension in Kansas and at least two other states with the development of "Juvenile Intake Assessment Centers" (JIAC). These centers administer "problem oriented screening instruments" (nosy questionnaires) that contain nearly 140 questions about a child's personal life, including health, feelings, habits, family relationships, and sexual behavior. (See sidebar, page 2.) Kansas parents are being instructed to take their children to JIACs for even minor infractions committed at school. In Johnson County alone, the plan is to double the number of "assessments" to 6,000 in the year 2000.

While these centers are commonly perceived as primarily for children who get into trouble with the law, some parents claim this is far from the case. "The JIACs were established with the goal of getting police officers back onto the

streets quickly following a juvenile arrest," says parent Shelley Gathright, who researched the issue for more than a year.

"Rather than processing young offenders at the police station, officers take them directly to a JIAC. What is actually happening, however, is that parents and children are being sent to these centers for minor misbehavior in school, such as talking back, a schoolyard shove in self defense, or fidgeting too much in class.

"Many parents comply because they believe they must," she explains. "They have no idea that their children will be separated from them and grilled for personal information, or that the 29 pages of information gleaned will end up in a government database with a personal electronic folder for each child."

Mrs. Gathright notes that, based on a

child's "profile," parents can be coerced into taking "parenting classes" or sending their children to "mental health centers" or both, all at the parents' expense. "I become alarmed," she admits, "when so-called 'Intake Centers' separate parents from children for the purpose of questioning the children, then 'demand,' nicely of course, that parents do as they recommend or be taken to court."



Shelley Gathright

The JIACs were approved by the Kansas Supreme Court in 1995. Responsibility for their operation was transferred to the Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority on July 1, 1997. Children are typically referred to the centers in one of two ways: (1) through an arrest or (2) through a report or referral from a school in response to an actual or

(See *JIACs*, page 2)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

California students forced to sing New Age song. The Pacific Justice Institute has filed a complaint against the Pajaro Valley School District on behalf of parents of a kindergarten student who was forced to sit on the ground during a forestry field trip and sing: "Where I sit is holy. Holy is the ground. Forest, mountains, river — listen to the sound. Great spirits circle all around me . . . Ancient mother, I hear you calling . . . Ancient mother, I hear your laughter. Ancient mother, I taste your tears." The parents say the song is based on the Wiccan religion, and that they were denied a public hearing on the incident by the school board.

Vice President Al Gore wants to make dropping out of high school illegal. He called this proposal "the heart of my education agenda as president." Forbidding students to drop out before age 18 would essentially double the amount of time most of them must attend high school. Gore also supports mandatory preschool and has vowed to "change the whole way that we approach learning in America."

A report issued last fall shows most students cannot write. Results of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) writing tests given in 1998 showed that 22% of 12th graders and 16% of 4th and 8th graders scored below "basic," failing even "partial mastery of the knowledge and skills" expected for their grade levels. Only 1% of American students scored in the "advanced" range. Achievement levels were set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

Pro-evolution forces are well-funded. Professor Jonathan Wells, a molecular biologist at the University of California-Berkeley, looked into the amount of public money doled out for research based on Darwin's theory of evolution. He found that the amounts spent by NASA, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Energy exceed \$10 billion. His research was prompted by the charge that "Creationist forces are better financed than the evolutionists."

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JIACs *(Continued from page 1)*

perceived threat or "suspected" misdemeanor or felony, including incidents as petty as taking another child's french fries or having a "spat" with another child. Referrals to JIACs have been automatic for behavior-related suspensions and for many reports involving a School Resource (law enforcement) Officer (SRO).

This shift from the school district to the juvenile justice system for disciplinary measures is of particular concern to many parents. "Zero tolerance" now means that nearly any offense merits the involvement of the JIACs when most minor incidents could easily be resolved at the school district level," observes Mrs. Gathright.

She points out that, under Kansas law, school authorities have access to information gathered at the JIACs while par-

ents do not. "If they questioned these kids at school, FERPA restrictions would apply. Since it is happening off school property and under the jurisdiction of the justice system, FERPA does not apply, which conveniently allows the state to get around court decisions favoring parents' rights, such as the one in Texas last May." (She referred to *Lisa T. et al. v. San Antonio Independent School District et al.*, the Texas Justice Foundation's victory for the right of parents to exempt their children from nosy school questionnaires and psychological surveys, as reported in *Education Reporter*, June 1999. — Ed.)

"The bottom line," Gathright insists, "is that kids are being profiled, labeled, and tracked, and that these centers are the 'leading edge' of government means to circumvent school and family privacy laws." 🍌

Excerpts from 'Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers'

(Questions require yes or no answer)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 7. Do your parents or guardians argue a lot? | 98. Is it important to you now to get, or keep, a satisfactory job? |
| 9. Have you recently either lost or gained more than 10 pounds? | 102. Do you have trouble sleeping? |
| 10. Have you ever had sex with someone who shot up drugs? | 104. Does your alcohol or drug use ever make you do something you would not normally do — like breaking rules, missing curfew, breaking the law or having sex with someone? |
| 20. Do you threaten to hurt people? | 127. Does one of your parents or guardians have a steady job? |
| 27. Do your parents or guardians refuse to talk with you when they are mad? | 134. Do you have an idea about the type of job or career that you want to have? |
| 31. Have you accidentally hurt yourself or someone else while high on alcohol or drugs? | 138. Do you scream a lot? |
| 35. Have the whites of your eyes ever turned yellow? | 139. Have you ever had sexual intercourse without using a condom? |
| 40. Do your parents or guardians and you do lots of things together? | In addition to the above, the "Kansas Juvenile Intake and Assessment System Questionnaire (JIAQ) Child/Youth Registration Version A97" seeks 21 pages of detailed information about both parents (or the adults the child resides with), family demographics and finances, the child's prior law enforcement or court records, school information, substance abuse information, mental health treatment history, and physical health and medications. |
| 42. Do you feel nervous most of the time? | Shelley Gathright has asked her local school board both publicly and in writing to disclose information about the JIACs to parents, even if simply by handing them a Juvenile Intake Center brochure. The school board has refused. She and others wonder why the JIACs are cloaked in secrecy. "As parents," she asks, "do we really want the state gathering all this information about our families without our knowledge?" |
| 50. Do you feel people are against you? | |
| 55. Do you get into fights a lot? | |
| 65. Have you ever threatened anyone with a weapon? | |
| 71. Do you have a constant desire for alcohol or drugs? | |
| 76. Do you hear things no one else around you hears? | |
| 80. Do you and your parents or guardians have frequent arguments which involve yelling and screaming? | |
| 87. Have you ever stopped working at a job because you just didn't care? | |
| 88. Do your parents or guardians like talking with you and being with you? | |
| 95. Does alcohol or drug use cause your moods to change quickly like from happy to sad or vice versa? | |
| 96. Do you feel sad most of the time? | |

Student Gets 'A,' Jail Time, for Essay

A 7th-grader at Ponder High School in Denton County, Texas was jailed for five days for a "scary story" he wrote as an assignment. Christopher Beamon's English class was given a generic beginning and asked to finish a Halloween story about "Things That Go Bump in the Night."

Despite grammar and spelling errors, Christopher received an "A," plus extra credit for reading the essay aloud in class.

The story talked of shooting and killing the teacher and several classmates, and was later brought to the attention of the principal. School district officials notified the Denton County juvenile authorities, who charged Christopher with writing a threatening "terrorist" note.

His mother is reportedly contemplating a lawsuit against the school district. 🍌

Review of the Month

Video



Exposing School-to-Work and What It Means to You, Pennsylvania State Rep. Sam Rohrer (R), Speech at Alvernia College, May 4, 1999, Szajna Productions, \$21.95

Rep. Rohrer covers a lot of ground on this complex issue in about 90 minutes. He describes the variety of federal and state laws and initiatives that support the School-to-Work system, including Goals 2000, Outcome-Based Education, and the Workforce Investment Act, often using the change agents' own words and explaining them in terms the layman can understand.

Rep. Rohrer presents actual documentation and occasionally uses overheads to make his points. He explains how Total Quality Management (TQM) — the process of improving employee performance — is being transferred to students through the use of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) competencies. The audience breaks into shocked laughter as he reads an example from the SCANS describing a process by which farmers must spread manure on a field, a process Rep. Rohrer (who grew up on a farm) says is typical of Third World countries but obsolete in America.

He further stuns his audience by reading excerpts of an article from the *New York Times*. Everyone assumes the article is current until he reads the last few sentences. Then he drops his bombshell — it was written by Adlai Stevenson in 1958 describing the economic system of the Soviet Union.

Contact Rep. Rohrer's District Office, 100 Love Road, Reading, PA 19607, (610) 775-5130.

Let My Children Go, Jeremiah Films, 1999, \$24.95

This 45-minute documentary exposes the decline in America's public schools and urges Christian parents to remove their children from public education, which the video warns "exposes them to physical and moral danger on a daily basis."

The Exodus 2000 Project, a national organization founded in 1997 by Army Reserve chaplain and Gulf War veteran E. Ray Moore Jr., developed the video. The organization takes its name from the biblical account of the children of Israel as they left Egypt for the Promised Land.

Exodus 2000 urges Christian churches to take an active role in education by offering Christian children an alternative to, as Moore calls it, "the terminal problems of the government school system," which has "usurped the vitally important role of education from the family and the church."

Call (800) 828-2290, email: orders@jeremiahfilms.com, or visit the web site www.exodus2000.com

FOCUS: Psychobabble and 'Edufads' Invade the Church

By Audrey McKeever

Most people are unaware that contemporary writers and publishers of "Christian" education materials are embracing the same controversial forms of learning promoted by humanist John Dewey and contemporary education reform gurus. The same radical educational theories and liberal teaching methods that have contributed to the academic and moral dumbing down of children in our nation's public schools are now being used on unsuspecting youth in the church.

Thom Schultz, founder and president of Group Publishing, Inc., one of the fastest-growing publishers of curricula for Christian youth, writes about his objective to help "launch a new revolution" in the church. While operating under the false assumption that churches can benefit from the "best" liberal thinkers in education, he promotes controversial secular models in a misguided attempt to help churches reinvent their approach to learning. Schultz has identified himself as a pioneer for Christian education reform by using nontraditional activities and espousing the terminology of liberal reformers including "Life-long Learning," "change agents," and "active learning."

Teachers as Facilitators

Since ideas have consequences, it should come as no surprise that other major "Christian" publishers and curricula developers are echoing Schultz. Youth Specialties (Zondervan), for example, builds upon the philosophy of questioning authority that became popular during the '60's and '70's. The following instructions to youth leaders provide an example: "Discourage the group from thinking of you as the 'authority' on the subject . . . Remember, with teenagers, your opinions will carry more weight the less an authority figure you appear to be . . . Keep your mouth shut except when you are encouraging others to talk. You are a facilitator."

In the traditional Christian classroom, the teacher was the authority figure who had the right answers and was expected to transmit biblical truths to the next generation. Today, however, Sunday school teachers and youth leaders are encouraged to become facilitators directing group discussion. One major publisher advances the false premise that "the model of learning as transmission of information from teacher to student is bankrupt."

Contemporary publishers are rejecting authoritative lecture-style teaching and buying into Outcome-Based Education (OBE) advocate Ted Sizer's statement that, "Good learning arrives out of dialogue." This humanist philosophy is pervasive in church youth curricula and is evident in such statements as, "There is no better way to encourage learning than through discussion." Reputable polls show that young people are biblically ignorant, exposing the faulty argument espoused by one Christian publisher that "discussion helps truth rise to the surface."

Instructions to youth leaders say that such discussion will help teens "think carefully about issues" and "compare their beliefs and values with others." Why should Christian teens compare their beliefs and values with others? Through this faulty process, a teen may come to the erroneous conclusion that his belief system is only one of many equally authoritative views. The hidden message is that there are no absolutes.

Feelings vs. Facts

Advocates of secular psychobabble have argued that, in order for good discussion to take place, a climate of trust and acceptance must be cultivated within a group. In an ill-considered attempt to make Christian youth feel comfortable exploring and sharing their thoughts and attitudes, many contemporary publishers justify using open-ended questions. One publisher instructs youth leaders to "phrase questions asked within a group to evoke opinions, not answers."

Another publisher goes so far as to say that since there are no wrong answers to "I think" or "I feel" questions, "everyone's feelings are valid." This philosophy emphasizes subjective thoughts and attitudes, turning Bible studies into therapy sessions where no objective biblical knowledge is acquired.

Memorization of Scripture is increasingly considered an outdated and ineffective learning regimen in the church, just as it is in the public schools. The president of Group Publishing views memorization as "one of those hand-me-down goals that few ever stop to analyze," a practice that "has been done for so long that no one dares to question its validity."

A review of contemporary curricula reveals that memorization and knowledge of Scripture is often in competition with building relationships within a group. An atmosphere of "accept rather than confront" tolerance for all points of view is subtly promoted. In fact, Youth Specialties informs youth leaders that teens "need to know they can share what they are thinking, no matter how unpopular or 'wild' their ideas might be." Therefore, "Affirm even those comments that seem like heresy to you."

Undermining Parental Authority

The destructive philosophy that children are autonomous decisionmakers apart from their parents is also being accepted in the church. For example, one popular curriculum developer states that students "should be questioning their belief in God independent of their parents' faith." The child is to become his own authority through self-examination in order to determine his values and beliefs. Values clarification, long the prevailing dogma in the public schools, is a frequently-used strategy to accomplish this ill-conceived goal.



Audrey McKeever

According to humanist Sidney Simon in *Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students*, the intent is to give a young person the opportunity "to make his own choice about whose advice or values to follow." Simon writes: "young people brought up by moralizing adults are not prepared to make their own responsible choices . . ."

Likewise, the values clarification strategies used by contemporary Christian publishers have the grave potential of undermining all authority in general and parental authority in particular. Youth are subtly conditioned to believe that they have the right to make their own decisions independent of their parents.

Death Education

Having students write their own obituaries is one of the many controversial death education activities developed by humanist educators and used in the public schools. Many parents are unaware that this activity has also found its way into the church. One exercise takes teens to a graveyard where, during a period of intense silence, they are told to dwell on one solemn thought: "When you're dead . . . What do you want on your tombstone?" If unable to visit a cemetery, youth leaders are instructed to "bring the cemetery to your students" by cutting out "cardboard tombstones, one for each student, personalized with their own names." Additional questions to be discussed during this exercise include: "Would you have any regrets if you died on the spot right now?" and "Are you getting the most out of your one shot at life?"

The controversial public school "Lifeboat" game has also surfaced in a similar church activity. In both the secular and Christian versions, young people are to role-play that a ship has been damaged

beyond repair and is sinking. Having been assigned an identity, the teens must decide as a group who will live and who will die. The so-called "Christian" version of this psychological game includes the enticement that "those on the lifeboat will get ice cream sundaes and those who are left on the sinking ship will not."

In another exercise, Christian teens pretend that they are considering suicide, and are even instructed to say, "I wish I were dead." In order to make them feel comfortable about using the word "suicide," youth leaders are instructed to have them say the word together aloud.

In light of the recent brutal murders and suicides at Columbine High School, why are these destructive, offensive death and suicide activities being used in the public schools? Why are they being used in the church?

Summary

The foregoing are examples of the psychobabble and "edufads" that have invaded the church. Parents, youth leaders, and all involved in the spiritual training of youth, beware! "Christian" publishers and curriculum developers are adopting the same ideas that have proven ineffective in our public schools. It is urgent that Christians critically re-evaluate what is going on under the guise of Christian education.

Do you know what is being taught in your child's Sunday school class and church youth group? If not, find out!

Audrey McKeever is co-author with Cathy Mickels of *Spiritual Junk Food: The Dumbing Down of Christian Youth*, Winepress Publishing, 1/800-917-BOOK.

Do you know what is being taught in your child's Sunday school class or church youth group?

For Chicago Schoolchildren, 'It's Elementary'

Promoting the homosexual agenda to children as young as first grade through use of the controversial video "It's Elementary" has been a goal of homosexual activists since the film was released in 1996. A flap erupted last summer when more than 100 public television stations agreed to air the program. "It's Elementary" is also making its way into many of the nation's school districts as a teacher training tool, "unifying" (as the *Washington Times* 9-3-99 put it) "what some say is a growing move to incorporate homosexual issues into school curriculums."

According to the *Times*, Chicago school officials announced at the start of the school year that all 589 of the district's principals would view the film and receive a copy for their schools, adding that it would not be shown to students. A week later they backtracked, saying that principals would "be told about the film during the training sessions" and could "request a copy for their schools." A city official who helped bring the film into the district was to conduct the training sessions.

"It's Elementary" is also being used in the San Francisco Unified School District.

Critics contend that homosexual issues should not be discussed in school, especially with young children. Colorado Board of Education member Patti Johnson, who opposes the use of the film in her state, told the *Washington Times*: "I don't think you have to go into big, deep explanations [about homosexuality], especially when kids are little."

What's in 'It's Elementary'?

- ◆ *Asha's Mums*, a book about a little girl with two lesbian mothers, is read to first and second-graders.
- ◆ Third-graders debate homosexual marriage.
- ◆ Teachers discuss their homosexuality with students.
- ◆ Homosexuals visit middle- and high-school classrooms to speak to students.
- ◆ Elementary-school students attend a pro-homosexual assembly.
- ◆ Several lines in the script show anti-Christian bias.

Resolution *(Continued from page 1)*

practitioners are considered qualified to prescribe Ritalin and other drugs to schoolchildren in Colorado.

While the school board has no mandate other than providing direction for school policy, the resolution was enthusiastically supported by all but one board member. Board chairman Clair Orr, who voted for the resolution, noted: "We as adults have an obligation to our kids to set the standards." He added that he hopes the board's actions "shine a light on this issue of drugging kids."

Legislature Hears Testimony

On November 8, the Colorado State Legislature convened hearings on the issue of prescription drug use and its possible correlation to school violence. The committee heard testimony from the same professionals who addressed the school board, plus a number of other medical professionals, researchers, representatives of support organizations for people with disabilities, and individuals relating personal stories about the effects of prescription drugs.

Peter R. Breggin, M.D., International Director of the Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology which represents the opinions of about 1,000 doctors worldwide, flew from London to testify at the hearing. He stated that Ritalin and other mind-altering drugs have addictive qualities, and that their effects include suicide and episodes of mania.

Several individuals testified to the reality of ADD and ADHD and in support of Ritalin. Speaking on behalf of herself and Children and Adults With ADD (CHADD), one woman claimed that Ritalin is not a drug, but prescription medicine. She admitted that CHADD gets 10% of its funding from the pharmaceutical companies.

Serious Medicine

In 1995, CHADD tried to persuade the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to classify Ritalin as a Schedule III drug, which would have made it easier to obtain. Ritalin contains methylphenidate, which, according to the DEA, "is structurally and pharmacologically similar to amphetamines." It was classified as a Schedule II drug in 1971 because it "was so prone to abuse." Other Schedule II drugs include morphine, PCP, methadone, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

The DEA refused CHADD's request, charging that "Most of the ADHD literature prepared for public consumption and available to parents does not address the abuse liability or actual abuse of methylphenidate . . . There is an abundance of scientific literature which indicates that methylphenidate shares the same abuse potential as other Schedule II stimulants."

A significant body of research exists on the possible negative effects of antidepressant drugs such as Prozac, Luvox, Zoloft, and Paxil on both children and adults which include mania, seizures, and cardiovascular problems. According to Dr. Breggin, "The phenomenon of drug-induced manic reactions caused by antidepressants is so widely recognized that it is discussed several times in the *Diag-*

nostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association and many times in *The Physicians' Desk Reference*."

ADD & Diet

Those who testified before the Colorado Legislature against the indiscriminate use of Ritalin and other psychotropic drugs concede that "there are, without question, cases where medical therapy is a necessity and a benefit." Retired emergency medical services professional Jim Schindler, who described many prescription drug-related cases, particularly involving seizures, that he has personally witnessed, nonetheless added: "I see no reason or desire on anyone's part to deny those who depend on such methods of treatment access to that treatment, nor to deny such treatment in the future to those who are properly diagnosed."

Therein lies the rub. Many nutrition experts say emotional wellbeing is tied to the 40+ nutrients that humans need for good health, and that conditions such as hyperactivity and depression are often better controlled through diet than drugs.

In her book *Let's Eat Right To Keep Fit*, Adelle Davis describes the extreme negative effects that can result from deficiencies in vital nutrients. She writes that the first symptom of biotin (B vitamin) deficiency, for example, is depression. In Chapter 9, she provides details of an experiment in which lack of biotin in adult volunteers caused "mental depression" to become "so intense that it was described as 'panic,' and some volunteers experienced suicidal tendencies. All symptoms disappeared in three to five days after biotin was added to the diet."

Conclusion

Patti Johnson's original four-page version of the Colorado School Board Resolution offers the following observations:

- * It is misleading to advise parents that their child needs a mind-altering drug to correct a "chemical imbalance," "neurobiological" or "genetic condition" when science has been unable to establish the existence of such maladies.

- * Medical research shows that psychiatric symptoms are often a sign of an undetected medical condition, nutritional deficiency, or allergy.

- * The money expended [on behalf of students with ADHD, as reported by the National Institutes of Health] would be better spent on workable academic programs which actually raise the child's level of academic competence and thus his self-esteem.

Michigan Tobacco-Funds Program Sparks Controversy

LANSING, MI — A new scholarship program funded by tobacco settlement money is sending shock waves throughout the state of Michigan. The "Merit Scholarship Awards" are college scholarships of up to \$3000 that will be given to students who receive a qualifying score on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test.

The scholarship program adds yet another controversial dimension to the 10-year-old MEAP because it designates the test as the only means by which students can qualify for the awards. Parents, teachers, and some legislators fear that the test will necessarily influence curriculum development decisions by virtually every public, private, religious, and homeschool in the state.

"The beliefs and values this test propagates are those of its authors," asserts State Representative Robert M. Gosselin (R). "These are left-wing, liberal, 'politically correct' lifetime government employees, insulated from and hostile to the private sector and the basic tenets of traditional American civilization."

Rep. Gosselin protested the passage of the scholarship bill on the floor of the Michigan House, warning that it would reverse a 1995 policy decision barring the state from requiring public schools to adopt a particular curriculum. "It is bad public policy for the state to insert itself into public schools' curriculum development decisionmaking," he said. "By offering parents a \$3000 bribe which can be attained only if their children take a

government sponsored, politically-controlled test, the state is now imposing the curriculum necessary to pass the test on private, religious, and homeschooled as well."

Gosselin offered an amendment that would grant the scholarship to students who do not take the MEAP but who do well on a nationally-recognized college admissions test. Though a number of Republican legislators initially supported the amendment, only three resisted the arm twisting from Republican Governor John Engler's office and voted for it in the end. Gosselin later called the amendment's defeat by just three votes "a tragedy." He was the only Republican to vote no on the final passage of the bill.

Though Gosselin and his allies were able to remove the social studies portion of the MEAP, which "deals with the politics of race and gender, campaign finance reform, opposition to capital punishment," and "other political topics popular on the left," from the scholarship test, they concede that it was a hollow victory. "The reading and math portions are really just as bad as the social studies," one conservative Republican staffer told *Education Reporter*.

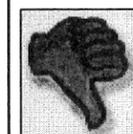
Rep. Gosselin says the content of the MEAP tests "provide ample justification for relying on tests developed in the private sector to assess the academic achievement of Michigan's students."



Rep. Gosselin



WANTED: Examples of Outrageous Classroom Assignments



Send us your stories of ridiculous or outrageous classroom assignments given to children in grades K-12, such as the one you read about on page 2. We'll print at least one per month. Here's another example for December:

"During the first few days of first grade, my granddaughter brought home a paper entitled, 'The Terrible Thing that happened at our house.'" Since the ma-

majority of 1st graders can't read or write, the assignment had to be read to them. They were instructed to draw a picture of the "terrible thing" and then tell the story to a 3rd or 4th grader, who would write the story down for them under their picture. The 1st grader was to sign the paper (most of the children knew how to sign their names) and turn it in.

"The invasion of privacy implications, the nosiness, and the possibility of a child

conjuring up an imaginary story that could be used against a family is serious. Never mind that it has nothing to do with learning to read or write.

"It is a tragedy that schools spend more time on social management than teaching." — *Patricia Benz*

Send your examples to "Outrageous Assignments," *Education Reporter*, 7800 Bonhomme, St. Louis, MO 63105, or email to education@eagleforum.org