

EDUCATION REPORTER

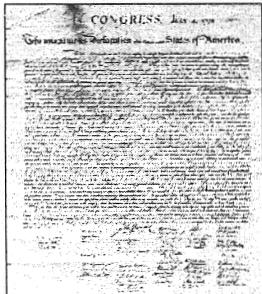
NUMBER 180

THE NEWSPAPER OF EDUCATION RIGHTS

JANUARY 2001

Arizona Students Recite Declaration of Independence

PHOENIX, AZ — Beginning with the fall 2000 semester, Arizona students in the 4th through 6th grades have started each school day by reciting a portion of the Declaration of Independence following the Pledge of Allegiance. The first state in the country to enact such a measure, the Arizona legislature passed SB 1216 last April requiring students to learn and recite the text of this critical founding document. (See text, pg. 4 bottom left.)



Len Munsil, president of the Center for Arizona Policy, whose organization drafted and lobbied for the legislation, stated in a press release: "This is a huge victory for future generations of children in Arizona. Our children need to understand that this nation was founded on the truths that our rights come from God, and that every human life is of equal value."

The center, which bills itself as "a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the family in Arizona" and is affiliated with Focus on the Family, laments that today's students "demonstrate a breathtaking ignorance of our nation's history and purpose." The 1998 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), for example, revealed that only 2% of 4th graders, 2% of 8th graders and 4% of 12th graders scored at the "advanced" level on the civics portion of the test, and that only about 20% in each grade scored at the "proficient" level.

SB 1216 also enforces the Arizona Board of Education's social studies standards, which state that "the study of America's founding principles . . . as detailed in the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and in *The Federalist Papers*, is critical to the preservation and improvement of America's republican form of government."

The law's passage prompted a flurry of criticism from the media. One columnist referred to both the Declaration of Independence and the Pledge of Allegiance as "religio-political philosophy." Another accused the bill's supporters (mostly Republicans) of "doggedly pursuing symbolism over substance." Not everyone agrees, however. *Arizona Republic* columnist Ben Boychuck wrote (4-10-00): "Our schools should teach freedom, and the Declaration's words are a good place to start."

Texas School Board Adopts Resolution Opposing Psychiatric Drugs for Children

AUSTIN, TX — The Texas State Board of Education adopted a resolution on Nov. 3 (see text, pg. 2) expressing serious concern about the tremendous growth in the use of Ritalin and other psychiatric drugs on schoolchildren. The resolution urges local school boards and superintendents to "use proven academic and/or management solutions to resolve behavior, attention and learning difficulties."

Board member Judy Strickland introduced the resolution after a full day of hearings from medical experts who testified that Americans are resorting to psychiatric drugs to control millions of children. In Texas alone, up to one million school-age children (15%) are taking these drugs.

"This resolution is a strong statement of concern about the rising incidence of psychiatric drugs in schools," explains Mrs. Strickland. "It's also a recommendation that local school boards, administrators, teachers, and especially parents educate themselves about this issue."

Speaking for the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), agent Gretchen Fuessner produced surveys showing that "up to 20% of children" admit they casually abuse their prescriptions of stimulant drugs for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Fuessner warned board members that abuse of these stimu-

lants, which are considered controlled substances by the DEA due to their highly addictive properties, is on the rise among middle and high school students.

Leading pediatric neurologist Dr. Fred Baughman told the board that American parents have been deceived into allowing their children to be diagnosed with ADHD, which he describes as "a complete fraud." According to the 1998 National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference report, there is no independent valid test for ADHD and no data to indicate that ADHD is due to a brain malfunction. The report states that stimulant drugs such as methylphenidate (Ritalin) do little to improve academic success or social skills.

The Texas School Board resolution urges all local school boards and district superintendents to educate themselves about the use of psychiatric drugs in their schools; to learn the procedures for prescribing these drugs, and to find out the extent of their use. It further suggests that schools recommend other remedies for resolving students' learning and behavior problems.

Valid options include tutoring, vision testing, allergy testing, dietary changes,

medical examinations, standard disciplinary procedures, and use of the phonics method for teaching reading. As psychologist John Breeding, Ph.D., testified at the hearing: "We are resorting to psychiatric drugs to control millions of our children, which is in no way a solution to declining literacy, high dropout rates, or problems with school discipline. It's as if we are scapegoating the brains of our children to divert attention from the need

to courageously handle the challenges of education in today's world."

Proponents of traditional education interpret Dr. Breeding's statement to mean that children must be taught basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic in order to remain challenged and engaged in the classroom.

In November 1999, the Colorado State School Board became the first in the nation to pass a resolution warning about the dangers of Ritalin (see *Education Reporter*, December 1999). That resolution was adopted after the board heard expert medical testimony about the dangers of psychiatric drugs on schoolchildren.



Judy Strickland



Dr. John Breeding

STW Student Working as Jailer Hits Inmate

MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OK — Newspapers in this Oklahoma community reported last October that an 18-year-old high school student hired to work as a jailer under the state's School-to-Work (STW) program allegedly struck a 39-year-old female inmate with his fist. The untrained young man was apparently unable to handle the volatile situations that arise in such settings. Perhaps in anticipation of litigation, local District Attorney John David Luton admitted: "Having anybody who works without training does subject the county to lawsuits."

The issue of employer liability has dogged the STW system. Student workers placed in harm's way have lost limbs (see *Education Reporter*, February 2000) and created a host of potential legal problems for the businesses that employ them. The Oklahoma Department of Career Technology (formerly Vo-Tech), which wrote the state's STW plan (see *Profile of STW in Oklahoma*, page 3), has produced "How-To" books for STW work

sites explaining how to "protect students from injury and employers and schools from lawsuits and compensation claims." These books also show prospective STW "partners" how to "keep liability fears and insurance costs from becoming a barrier to employment involvement." Critics wonder how many employers of students actually read the books. They contend that, if employers do read them, they'll no longer want to participate in STW.

Linda Murphy, former Deputy Commissioner for the Oklahoma Department of Labor, who also served on the state's short-lived STW Council in 1996, says the new "reform" is actually a step backward for many students, especially in situations where they are working in dangerous and dreary surroundings such as jails. "The idea of putting your child into a jail setting is certainly not desirable to most parents," she asserts. "All adults involved in this decision, including the school officials and parents — not only the sheriff — should be questioned in the case. How

did so many adults approve this ludicrous idea?"

As Mrs. Murphy points out, common sense makes one ask if this is the beginning of a new era where more adults will be making irrational decisions to place students in dangerous work situations, thus putting everyone involved at risk. "Fully developed STW systems have high school, middle school and even elementary school students giving up class time for work time," she contends.

"Maybe the thought of a teenage jailer — a high school student in an STW program — resorting to physical violence while trying to do his job instead of spending his school day improving his academics, will wake up those adults who jump on the 'STW for all students' bandwagon" she continues.

"Maybe students will think about their future prospects with a job training background rather than an education that would enable them to develop their full potential."

EDUCATION BRIEFS

U.S. 8th graders continue to lag behind their foreign counterparts in science and math. They showed virtually no improvement on the 1999 version of the 1995 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), dubbed the TIMSS-R (for repeat). The National Research Coordinator for the earlier study, William Schmidt, said the latest report found "no substantive change" in American students' scores over the past four years. These students were 4th graders when they placed well below their counterparts in Japan, Singapore, The Netherlands, and other countries on the TIMSS. Outgoing chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Rep. Bill Goodling, called the results "a disturbing trend." Education Secretary Richard Riley, however, defended U.S. education reform efforts and called on the lame duck Congress to pass President Clinton's education budget.

Parents' rights bill passes both houses in New Jersey. Introduced last May, the bill requires schools to obtain "informed" written parental consent before administering certain academic or non-academic surveys, assessments, analyses, evaluations, or comprehensive guidance and counseling values clarification programs to students. It mandates that schools provide copies of the documents for parental viewing at convenient times and locations, and spells out the requirements for when these conditions apply. (See *Education Reporter*, June 2000.) Approved last summer by the General Assembly, the Senate passed the bill in December without adding the amendments recommended by Governor Christine Whitman's office, which would have gutted the bill. It now awaits the Governor's signature.

Abstinence educator Wilma Willard wins Indiana's "Health Educator of the Year" award. Willard is co-founder of P.A.T.H. (Positive Approach to Teen Health), a nonprofit organization that promotes abstinence-until-marriage in schools and communities. She has written over 200 pages of curricula and trained more than 50 abstinence presenters.

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

Web site: <http://www.eagleforum.org>
E-mail: education@eagleforum.org

Texas State Board of Education Resolution

Whereas, The mission of the public education system of this state is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation; and

Whereas, The State Board of Education envisions in its long-range plan for public education a system of public education that is based on the fundamental principles that all students can learn, and all educators can develop the knowledge and expertise to implement programs that ensure all students can learn; and

Whereas, the Texas State Board of Education dedicates itself to improving the academic achievement of all students; and

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

Whereas, only medical personnel can recommend the use of prescribed medication; and

Whereas, a Consensus Development Panel conducted in November 1998 by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to resolve controversies surrounding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) reported that: "there is no valid independent test for ADHD . . . further research is necessary to firmly establish ADHD as a brain disorder . . . additional efforts to validate the disorder are needed"; and

Whereas, the NIH Consensus Development Panel reported that stimulant drugs such as methylphenidate (Ritalin) result in "little improvement in academic or social skills," 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; and

Whereas, up to one million school-age children in Texas are taking psychiatric drugs, and

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

Whereas, in its long-range plan for public education, the State Board of Education challenges students, parents and families, educators, and community leaders to participate actively in making their

schools safe learning environments; and

Whereas, this plan further states that ensuring safety for Texas public education will take nothing short of a coordinated effort by the state and each community to keep violence, prevent the abuse of prescription and illicit drugs, and disruptive behavior out of schools; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the State Board of Education does hereby urge all local school district boards of trustees and superintendents to become aware of and concerned about the use of psychotropic drugs in their schools, and to determine the extent to which such drugs are in use in their schools, and the current processes by which such drugs are being prescribed for the students; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Board of Education encourage local boards and superintendents to require local school personnel to use proven academic and/or management solutions to resolve behavior, attention, and learning difficulties. The State Board of Education suggests that programs such as tutoring, vision testing, phonics, nutritional guidance, medical examinations, allergy testing, standard disciplinary procedures, and other remedies known to be effective and harmless, be recommended to parents as their options; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Board of Education urge local school personnel to respect the exclusive authority of physicians to make psychiatric diagnoses of behavioral problems, recommend psychiatric screening for specific behavioral problems, and suggest the use of psychiatric medication for a student; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Board of Education recommend that each local school district implement a special policy with regard to storing and distribution of psychoactive drugs; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Board of Education urges local school boards to adopt and implement a policy that requires prescription medications dispensed on school property be administered by a medical practitioner licensed by the state to dispense medication; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Board of Education encourages 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.

More Briefs

Victims of strip-search in North Carolina receive favorable settlement. U.S. District Court Judge Carl Horn filed a consent order in the case of seven 8th-grade boys who were strip-searched for drugs at the Marie G. Davis Middle School in Charlotte in 1999. Although no drugs were found in the students' classroom or personal belongings, 11 boys were taken to a bathroom and strip-

searched by an assistant principal and a school security officer. The consent order requires the Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education to pay a total of \$35,000 (\$5,000 for each boy involved in the lawsuit) plus court costs and attorneys' fees, in exchange for dismissal of the suit. School district authorities earlier agreed to recognize the constitutional rights of students and prohibit future strip searches of minors on school campuses.

Book of the Month



Icons of Evolution, Jonathan Wells, Regnery Publishing, 2000, 248 pps., \$27.95

The premise of biologist Dr. Jonathan Wells' shocking new book can be summarized in one sentence: "Students and the public are being systematically misinformed about the evidence for evolution."

The "icons of evolution" to which the title refers are the common examples given by most biologists to "prove" Darwin's theory. Wells exposes the fakery and fraud behind these "icons" in an absorbing, understandable and informative way.

All biologists give the same set of examples to "prove" evolution, Wells writes, because "all of them learned biology from the same few textbooks using the same examples which, in one way or another, misrepresent the truth." This common version of our origins, he notes, "assumes the exact opposite of what scientists now believe was the environment on the early earth."

Wells explains that "in Darwin's lifetime the evidence in favor of his theory was much too meager to support sweeping claims about human nature. Nonetheless, his view was soon enshrined in drawings that showed a knuckle-walking ape evolving through a series of intermediate forms into an upright being." Wells argues that Darwin's theory was simply "a restatement of materialistic philosophy," because it predated any fossil evidence of "ancestor-descendant relationships."

Why is the narrow interpretation of evidence promoted by "dogmatic Darwinists" allowed to remain enshrined in American life? Wells contends that it is because "Darwinists dominate the biological sciences, and use their position of dominance to censor dissenting viewpoints." Critics are labeled "unscientific," their articles are rejected by mainstream journals, and they are denied funding by government agencies who send grant proposals to the dogmatists for "peer review." "Evidence against the Darwinian view simply disappears," writes Wells, "like witnesses against the Mob."

The author warns that American taxpayers are footing the bill for most Darwinian research done in the U.S. through the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, NASA, and the public education system. He advises concerned citizens to "call for Congressional hearings on the way federal money is distributed by these government agencies and systems."

Call Regnery at 202/216-0601, fax 202/216-0612.

FOCUS:



STW — Sweeping Down the Plain in Oklahoma



By Linda Murphy

When Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating vetoed the state mandate for School-to-Work (STW) in May 1995, supporters of traditional education considered it a victory. However, he later approved a state STW plan and appointed a STW Council by executive order in an attempt to oversee and alter the plan according to the Council's direction.

I served on the STW Council in 1996 while also serving as Deputy Commissioner of Labor. Previously, I served as the Governor's education advisor from January through December 1995. In 1994, I ran as the Republican candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction on a platform that focused on academics and rejected OBE. I received 49.5% of the vote.

After the election, Governor Keating appointed me to his Cabinet as Secretary of Education. This infuriated the Democrat leadership, who perceived that their tight control over the education establishment and its allies was threatened. They refused to confirm my cabinet appointment, and waged a battle in the media against the STW Councilmembers who were advocating change. They appealed to the Democrat Attorney General, who stopped the Council and declared that the Governor's executive order was an unauthorized use of power. The end result is that Oklahoma's STW plan remains in place and is moving forward.

Oklahoma's STW Plan

The Oklahoma plan was written by Vo-Tech, the Department of Vocational-Technical Education, now called the Department of Career Technology, and will mean statewide reform of K-12 education for *all* students. The system is supported by research produced by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) at the University of California-Berkeley, which sponsors "Statewide Professional Development" conferences for school leaders across the nation.

The NCRVE promotes the adoption of polytechnical education, which it defines as the integration of education and vocational training modeled after the Soviet system, which is based on Marxist-Leninist-theory. The NCRVE research paper "Polytechnical Education: A Step," outlines its philosophy and goals.

After reporting these facts in my report "A Review and Analysis of the Oklahoma School-to-Work Plan," from the Oklahoma Department of Labor, NCRVE contacted me to object to my quotes, claiming their research was valid. The only "democratic form of education," according to NCRVE, is achieved by giving academic preparation and job training equal time or "purity of esteem" in the curriculum for all students. This philosophy gives education reform a political world view and changes the goals and mission of public education.

In June 2000, Oklahomans were surveyed by the Oklahoma State Regents of

Higher Education in an effort to determine their desires and beliefs about education. Overall, 92% of parents with 5th-12th graders responded that they are planning for their children to attend college. In direct conflict with this goal, the Oklahoma STW plan states that only 20% of students will "need" a college degree, but 65% will "need" technology training.

One of the most worrisome quotes from STW materials is this: "Parents may be the most difficult audience to sell on STW. They are sure that a four-year degree is the way to success — the only choice that will guarantee their child a better education, a better job, a better life than they've had . . . Few, if any, students will enroll if their parents are opposed, and those who believe STW is an underhanded effort on the part of educators to steer students away from the elite college-prep route may be very vocal in letting friends, neighbors and coworkers know that this new system does not match their perception of the American Dream." (p.33) *The Career Connection: A Marketing Plan for the Successful Implementation of Oklahoma's School-to-Work System.*

Under the plan, Oklahoma teachers will be required to integrate their academic curriculum with a list of general workplace competencies and job tasks or duty skills being developed by Vo-Tech. Many teachers have found "hands on" or "applied" curriculum less academically challenging. (It requires increased numbers of demonstrations and performances, leaving less time for academics.)

However, a plan exists to quiet the concerns of teachers who object. The STW *Marketing Plan* states: "At some point it may be necessary to let holdouts (educators opposed to STW) know they either need to become positive supporters or look for another line of work." (p.67)

Through STW, a career assessment system is also being implemented which includes career cluster (job category) testing, counseling, career planning, the maintenance of career portfolios, and a permanent career database for each student. By the end of the 8th grade, students are expected to decide on a six-year plan based on the results of the cluster tests. The system outline describes 14 years of public school for all students, including at least two years of guaranteed post-secondary school as called for by Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor.

The entire STW plan revolves around

the career majors established by the evaluation of market data and is designed to eliminate the "misalignments" between the workforce preparation system and the marketplace. Many plan details and "how to" implement them are outlined in a series of manuals produced and sold across the country by Vo-Tech's Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center.

One of the nation's largest STW efforts is taking place in approximately 45 Oklahoma schools and in the schools of many other states under the auspices of the Southern Regional Education Board through the "High Schools that Work" (HSTW) program. HSTW is promoted as a system that demands high academic performance, but in reality, allows students less time for academic study, consolidates and renames academic courses, and transitions schools to curriculum and testing that is based on the very controversial new "standards" produced by education councils. A local HSTW site coordinator told me that these new standards for math are "effective," but that the *Saxon Math* books (which are academically focused) were not "effective," so she had to get rid of them.

The public would not approve these major changes in our schools, but most are gradual and difficult to decipher, even for those who read the detailed plans. Parents are unaware, and teachers are being schooled in the new way of thinking. Unless you take the time to study, then step back and observe the transformation, it is illusive. Those who are well-versed in the underlying philosophies of education reform will see that STW will ultimately parallel OBE. With both, the ultimate goal is de-emphasizing academics and integrating job training into the curriculum for all students.

The German Model

I represented Governor Keating's office at the National Governor's Association (NGA) meeting for Governors' Education Advisors in Chicago in May 1995, where I met Marc Tucker, director of the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE). Tucker's NCEE board members include Hillary Clinton, Ira Magaziner and David Rockefeller Jr.

The NCEE's plans to transform the U.S. education system into a European-style model is one of many programs the NGA staff was promoting in an attempt to gain the support of the governors' advisors. The NGA wanted to maintain its ongoing effort begun under the direction of Bill Clinton when he was Governor of Arkansas. The goal was to get newly elected Governors on board and continue advancing OBE, STW and Goals 2000.

In addition to the NCRVE philosophy of giving academic instruction and job training "parity of esteem" in the public school curriculum, another major influence looms large. The "German Dual System of Vocational Training" is being adapted in many U.S. states under a program called "Workforce Solutions for America's Future," developed by the

German-based company, Carl Dunsberg Society (CDS) International Inc.

CDS sent a letter to Governor Keating (May 12, 1995) boasting that it has "organized programs for representatives of government, education, labor and industry from over 20 different states and communities, as well as several major companies and special interest organizations." It promotes itself as "instrumental in assisting American policymakers and practitioners to gain a new perspective and new ideas from the German dual system of vocational training."

An accompanying CDS brochure produced for the German Information Systems states that "Germany's school-to-work transition system helps transfer nearly 70% of its young population, at around the age of 16, from full-time secondary school to spending most of their time building workplace skills as apprentices." The brochure is sprinkled with testimonials from American education, business and government officials. Perhaps most revealing are these words from Carolyn Warner, a consultant and former Arizona State Superintendent of Schools: "America cannot persist in telling high school graduates that a college degree is the only path to happiness and success. We need to borrow a page from the German system and provide the kind of comprehensive, hardnosed career counseling that exposes our young people to real world choices . . ."

Conclusion

While the STW plan in Oklahoma and other states moves forward, many parents, teachers, students, business and political leaders remain unaware of the changes that are being made in K-12 education. The public demands education reform, but as evidenced by the Oklahoma Regents survey, most parents want their children to receive academic preparation, not vocational/technical education. Job training and career counseling are important, and as a former member of the State Job Training and Coordinating Council, I am supportive of developing and improving these areas. The STW plan however, requires *all* students to have work-site experience at the cost of precious time in academic study.

Some practices, methods, techniques and principles promoted by the STW plan can be applied in a positive manner, but they should only be utilized under the authority and direction of local officials, school boards and parents after federal control is removed. The STW issue is really about freedom and the opportunity for every student to learn to his or her fullest potential without being manipulated for someone else's financial or political gain.

Linda Murphy's state education appointments were the result of her expertise in the field. She holds several teaching certifications and has extensive experience in special education. She is currently researching and preparing documentation on Oklahoma's School-to-Work models.

Dancing for Digits? Gyrating students are latest math fad

KANSAS CITY, MO — Amid the still-raging math wars, teachers at some elementary schools in the Kansas City area have introduced dance as a method of instruction. Students count rhythms, form lines, and twist their bodies into angles and shapes. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (11-23-00) reported that the new programs are partly based on the concept of multiple capabilities, also called intelligences, that were identified in a Harvard University study in 1983. The findings purportedly showed that some students learn best through movement.

Dance instructor Harlan Brownlee told the *Post* that he "had a high school class memorizing the quadratic formula" by recreating it with their bodies. "They worked as a group to create the symbols," he explained, which made the formula "easier to remember."

Kansas City's Troubled Schools

Some parents and citizens question whether learning will ever improve for students in Kansas City's public schools. Despite the two billion taxpayer dollars that poured into the district over 23 years of court-ordered desegregation, the system lost its state accreditation in 1999. The money was primarily spent on magnet schools and state-of-the-art facilities, while curriculum and teacher quality lagged.

Education Week (4-26-00) reported that, during the accreditation evaluation, the school district "failed every one of 11 indicators" in the "performance" category, which examines student test scores, dropout and attendance rates, and measures of college and vocational preparation. Kansas City School Board Treasurer Helen Ragsdale lamented: "We're not

any better off than we were 23 years ago."

The per-pupil cost of educating a child in the Kansas City school system at the height of the desegregation program was \$10,000. Many parents are now asking, "How good a school does \$10,000 per student buy?"

Parents Battle 'Fuzzy' Math

Last April, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), while failing to go as far as many critics would have liked in emphasizing basic skills, nonetheless admitted the importance of students' getting "the right answer." (See *Education Reporter*, May 2000.) Curriculum changes, however, may be slow in coming, especially in view of the U.S. Department of Education's ringing endorsement in October 1999 of 10 "fuzzy" math programs.

Meanwhile, parents from New York City to Chicago to Plano, Texas continue battling new new or "fuzzy" math. New York City parents complained to the *New York Times* (5-4-00) that their children are being taught "strategies that don't work," forcing them to hire tutors. An editorial on "new new math" in the *Chicago Tribune* (5-15-00) decried the "New-Age-sounding territory in which students are linking past experience to new concepts, sharing ideas, and developing concept readiness through hands-on exploration."

The editorial described one 2nd grade exercise that "has students thinking up a lunch, drawing it on paper and cutting out the foods, all in the name of learning division."

As for the dancing pupils in Kansas City, educators claim two things are happening: "The kids have fun and they learn something about dance and math." 



GLSEN's Gay Lesson Plans for Elementary Schoolchildren

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL — Members of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) discussed plans to teach young children about homosexuality and campaign against the Boy Scouts at its annual national conference held Oct. 6-8, 2000.

According to Peter LaBarbera, Director of the Americans for Truth Project, several conference workshops focused on how to discuss homosexual and transsexual issues with elementary schoolchildren. Another panel explored pro-gay picture books for toddlers. "It is outrageous that GLSEN advocates pro-gay 'lessons' for kids who don't even know what sex is yet," LaBarbera said.

A workshop entitled "Appreciating a Broader Canvas: How Teachers Understand Gay and Lesbian Content Integration in Elementary Social Studies" taught participants how to incorporate pro-gay themes into family studies for grades K-3, and into U.S. immigration history for grades 4-6. The K-3 lesson plan advised teachers to help students "recognize diverse family constellations" by encouraging discussion of family differences and by showing photographs from a book entitled *Celebrating Families*, which includes lesbian mothers and adopted daughters.

Reporter Allyson Smith, writing for WorldNetDaily (10-11-00), noted that this year's conference theme, "Ending the Hate Beginning in School," "highlighted GLSEN's contention that teaching pro-homosexual lessons to young schoolchildren is an appropriate way to combat 'homophobia' and 'hatred' directed at homosexuals." GLSEN also announced plans to pressure schools to lobby school districts to stop allowing the Boy Scouts access to students and facilities.

Smith relates that, in one conference session, the film "That's a Family!" — the second by lesbian activists Debra Chasnoff and Helen Cohen — was shown, featuring children from a wide variety of family structures, including gays and lesbians. The film compares gay groups to interracial families. (Chasnoff and Cohen's first film was "It's Elementary," which featured in-class pro-homo-

sexual discussions in elementary schools. (See *Education Reporter*, May 1999.)

In another workshop, attendees were given a handout that offered ways to promote the gay agenda in geometry classes using "known political symbols" to study shapes. The symbols included "a pink triangle, a yellow star of David, a political flag, and the purple teletubbie character." "While the geometry lesson is the goal," the handout stated, "history and political information surrounding the shape is introduced."

A day-long seminar called "LGBT" (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) showed how educators can "come out" to their students in a series of five steps, from "In (the closet)" to "Out (of the closet)." Another session called "Responding to the Right Wing" stressed the concept of "respect for others," but repeatedly used the terms "radical right," "religious right," and "right wing."

Dozens of high school students were among the 800 people attending the conference. While presenters stressed that pro-homosexual lessons should be "age-appropriate," conference giveaways (presumably available to the teens) included a "Visitor's Companion," which advertised Chicago's homosexual "leather" bars, a sex club and a homosexual bath house.

National Education Association (NEA) President Bob Chase gave the keynote address at the conference, insisting that he was there "out of concern for the children our members teach." Chase said: "It's simply a matter of protecting all children and school employees. It's an education issue . . ."

LaBarbera asserts that, despite GLSEN's rhetoric about "safety," the organization poses a threat to children, especially boys who are uninformed about the serious health risks of the homosexual lifestyle. "GLSEN is manipulating the minds of innocent children," he warns. "Most parents are unaware that homosexual activists are working directly with educators to promote an extreme sexual and gender ethic. It is time for GLSEN's privileged status in America's schools to end."

An ACT

Amending Section 15-203, Arizona Revised Statutes; Relating to the State Board of Education

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

Section 1. Section 15-203, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

15-203. Powers and duties

A. The state board of education shall . . .
25. Require pupils to recite the following passage from the Declaration of Independence for pupils in grades four through six at the commencement of the first class of the day in the schools, except that a pupil shall not be required to participate if the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian objects:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . .

Lower Teen Birth Rate Due to Abstinence Ed

SPRINGFIELD, IL — The Illinois Department of Public Health announced Dec. 14 that teen births in the state have dropped to their lowest level in 40 years, and credited "the environment that's been created over the past 10 years [that] is making it more comfortable today for them to say no to having sex."

One of the leaders in creating that environment and spreading the abstinence-until-marriage message is Illinois-based Project Reality, which has been funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services since 1987. Last year, Project Reality's classroom programs alone reached more than 52,000 middle and high school students in 350 schools across the state. Seven major Project Reality-sponsored youth rallies have entertained and educated over 22,000 students on the benefits of abstaining from sex, drugs and alcohol.

Other abstinence-until-marriage programs have also been growing statewide. Currently, there are 29 abstinence programs funded through the federal Title V block grant program under the Welfare Reform Act of 1996.

