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Math & Science Ed Called National Security 'Crisis'

WASHINGTON, DC — A report released Feb. 15, 2001 by the U.S. Commission on National Security calls the deficiencies in American math and science education “threats to national security,” which must be addressed immediately to protect the nation from “distinctly new dangers.” The 14-member Commission, also known as the Hart-Rudman Commission, says Americans “are living off the economic and security benefits of the last three generations’ investment in science and education. . . . Our systems of basic scientific research and education are in serious crisis, while other countries are redoubling their efforts. . . .”

“In this Commission’s view,” the report continues, “the inadequacies of our systems of research and education pose a greater threat to U.S. national security over the next quarter century than any potential conventional war that we might imagine.” The authors state that America’s ability to continue to lead the world in technological development will depend on “the depth and breadth of its scientific and technical communities.”

The report points out that 34% of public school math teachers and nearly 40% of science teachers lack an academic major or minor in these fields, and that a serious shortage of qualified K-12 teachers exists in science and math. It states that the education system must produce “significantly more scientists and engineers, including four times the current number of computer scientists, to meet anticipated demand.” The authors lament that the U.S. is already searching abroad for technical experts to fill many U.S. jobs and

that this situation is likely to increase, posing greater risks for national security.

The broad effect of the lack of qualified math and science teachers, notes the Commission, is evident in the test scores for U.S. students. Though rising, these scores are not keeping pace with those of students in many other countries. The lag is especially significant among U.S. high school students.

The Commission’s report laments that America’s education woes in the mathematics and science disciplines are “becoming cumulative” and will require “a multi-faceted set of solutions.” The Commission recommends that the federal research and development budget be doubled by 2010, and that Congress pass a “National Security Science and Technology Education Act” to provide:

- Educational incentives to encourage students to pursue careers in science and technology, and particularly as K-12 teachers in these fields;
- “Substantial” incentives to bring talented scientists, mathematicians and engineers into government service, both civilian and military;
- A National Security Teaching Program to encourage graduates and experienced professionals in science, math, and engineering to teach in U.S. public schools for three to five years;
- Expansion of the Eisenhower Program run by the Department of Education in order to meet the professional development needs of science and math teachers.

The Commission believes “core secondary school curricula should be heavier in science and mathematics,” and require higher levels of proficiency.

Evolution Standards Evolving in Kansas

TOPEKA, KS — By a vote of 7-4 on Valentine’s Day, the newly-elected Kansas Board of Education approved new state science standards that require the teaching of evolution in public schools. These replace the 1999 standards, which allowed students to make factual scientific criticisms of evolution.

After the 1999 standards were approved, pro-evolution forces and the media created a national uproar, falsely claiming that the teaching of evolution would be prohibited in Kansas classrooms and that “faith” in the form of creationism would be taught instead. The reality was that the 1999 standards allowed local schools to be open-minded in how they taught evolution and didn’t mention creation. (See *Education Reporter*, Oct. 1999.)

Kansas voters reacted to the misleading reporting by electing pro-evolution candidates to the State School Board last November, despite the fact that an ABC exit poll showed that only 14% want evolution taught exclusively and 66% want both evolution and creation taught.

Former Kansas school board member Linda Holloway says the 1999 standards actually had *more* emphasis on evolution than the previous standards they replaced, and that the 2001 standards present “a radical change” in the teaching of evolution. “The new board had no mandate to vote such an extreme policy into effect,” she stated. “The people of Kansas need to know that they are getting the dogma of Darwinian evolution with these new standards. They need to know that evolution dogma is being protected by censorship, and that censoring evidence or new discoveries about evolution standards will limit students to learning rote information and prevent them from applying

critical thinking skills.”

The 1999 standards mandated that “no evidence or analysis of evidence that contradicts a current science theory should be censored.” This requirement was removed from the 2001 standards. The new standards encourage teachers to evade tough questions from students about the validity of evolution theories. Instead of addressing students’ questions, the standards suggest that teachers “should explain why the question is outside the domain of natural science.”

The 2001 standards remove a geology experiment and replace it with “Toilet Paper Earth History.” Students are instructed to “Plot the major events (last ice age, beginning of Paleozoic Era, etc.) of earth history on a roll of toilet paper. Each sheet of toilet paper = 100 million years.”

The 2001 standards also eliminate a key scientific concept called “falsification.” As recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1993 *Daubert* decision, an idea is in the realm of science if it has the potential of being “falsified” by an experiment. For example, the idea that sunsets are beautiful is not scientific unless some procedure is contemplated to determine whether or not sunsets really are beautiful. On the other hand, a theory that the sun rises in the east is falsifiable because it could be disproved by the sun rising once in the west.

The 1999 Kansas standards stated: “Learn about falsification. Example: What would we accept as proof that the theory that all cars are black is wrong? Answer: One car of any color but black and only one time. . . . No matter how much evidence seems to support a theory, it only takes one proof that it is false to show it to be false.” The 2001 standards (See *Evolution*, page 2)



Linda Holloway

New Tests Stumping Students

MESA, AZ — Last year, 84% of Arizona 10th graders failed a new state math test; 88% failed in 1999, the pilot year. A new state writing exam garnered only marginally better results, but 61% did pass the new reading exam. Arizona education officials now say they will put off making the exams a requirement for graduation until at least 2004.

According to the *New York Times* (12-22-00), one-third of the 23 states that have introduced new standardized tests during the past few years are scaling back the level of difficulty or postponing requirements that students pass the tests in order to graduate. Alaska’s requirement that sophomores pass a new math test has been advanced to 2006. California is cutting its new math test from

3½ hours to 2½ hours and eliminating questions on advanced algebraic concepts such as quadratic equations. Officials in Maryland have delayed until 2007 a requirement calling for students to pass five new exams by 2005.

Critics blame the difficulty of new state standards — what students should be required to know — for the widespread failure, particularly on math tests. Arizona mathematics teacher David M. Smith told the *New York Times* that the state committee (composed of teachers appointed by state education officials) responsible for drafting the new standards had not been informed by the



Many students are failing new state tests.

tests. Arizona mathematics teacher David M. Smith told the *New York Times* that the state committee (composed of teachers appointed by state education officials) responsible for drafting the new standards had not been informed by the

Board of Education that all the concepts they included, no matter how difficult, would be fair game for test questions. “We protested the difficulty of the standards at every step, but were told that they couldn’t be changed,” he said.

Others complained that the 10th-grade math exam contained questions about concepts that wouldn’t be taught until 12th grade and that no state funds were allotted for test preparation.

In New York, thousands of students may not graduate this spring because of a new Regents math exam that becomes a graduation requirement in 2001. Students who entered high school in the fall of 1996 are the first to be held to the new state standards and required to pass the tougher

Regents exams.

The *New York Times* reported (11-8-00) that just over half of high school seniors in New York City have passed the new math test. New York education officials said that, statewide, “preliminary numbers show only 49% of students who entered high school in fall 1996 reaching the standard” — a passing score of 55 or more.

New York’s Regents exams in math and English may be taken at any time during the high school years. A score of 55 is currently a passing grade, but it will be raised to 65 on the English exam for those graduating in 2004. By 2008, students will be required to score 65 or more on five state exams in order to graduate.

EDUCATION BRIEFS

A federal judge issued an order allowing students who have not received hepatitis B vaccines to return to school. The Jan. 26 order was the result of a lawsuit filed by Liberty Counsel on behalf of the parents of a 2nd grader and a 7th grader in the New York City public schools. The Board of Education evicted the 2nd grader from school on Nov. 30 because she was not vaccinated, then notified Child Protective Services accusing the mother of "educational neglect." The 7th grader was escorted from class for refusing the vaccination and was not permitted to return, despite the fact that her parents had filed a religious exemption. The state of New York allows exemptions from vaccinations on religious grounds, but it took the lawsuit to get the schools to recognize this.

Students at 35 public elementary schools in Pennsylvania have their fingerprints scanned before receiving their school lunches. The students' prints are entered into a database and a corresponding number is issued for each print. As a student files through the checkout line at lunch, he places his index finger on a scanner which matches his print to his student number. The price of the lunch is deducted from the family's account. The Libertarian Party issued a press release calling the program "another frightening example of how law enforcement-style technology is being used to monitor children in public schools." It posed the question: "Should children in grammar school be treated like criminals for the convenience of public school bureaucrats, or has schoolyard surveillance finally gone too far?"

The anti-drug program DARE is adopting a new approach in response to the body of research that shows it is ineffective. The University of Akron in Ohio is developing a new curriculum that will shift DARE's focus from 5th graders to 7th graders. Emphasis will be placed on changing the "social norms" among students in an effort to persuade them that they do not need drugs to fit in. Students will do more role-playing focused on decision-making. The new program will be piloted in six cities involving about 50,000 students in the fall of 2001.

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

High School Accepts Opt-Out Form

SACRAMENTO, CA — The parent of a high school student in the Elk Grove Unified School District has successfully opted her son out of a class promoting the gay lifestyle by submitting a Student Exemption Form. The form was designed in January by the California Student Exemption Project, a coalition of five pro-family organizations including the Pacific

The form was created specifically to enable parents to withdraw their children from "diversity" teaching mandated in California for all grades by new state laws effective Jan. 1st. (See *Education Reporter*, Feb. 2001.) Although the Elk Grove principal initially resisted the parent's request, the student was eventually placed in an alternative class.

"The issue wasn't the teacher's sexual orientation but what he was teaching his students in the classroom," explains Pacific Justice Foundation (PJI) Director Brad Dacus. "The administration may have realized that the school district might not prevail in the event of litigation."

Last month, PJI unveiled a more generic exemption form (at left) which can be used by parents in all 50 states for a variety of issues. "This form is much broader," Dacus describes. "In addition to sexuality instruction, it includes witchcraft, R- and NC-17 rated films, guided imagery, meditation, and other activities parents find objectionable. We can

even customize it to accommodate individual situations, because, unfortunately, we can't predict potentially harmful courses or activities that may be in the pipeline."

Notice of Parental Request for Excuse of Pupil

To: School Board and Superintendent of _____ School District, and Principal and Staff of _____ School.

I, _____ (name of parent or guardian), do hereby request, pursuant to my rights under State, Federal (e.g., 20 USC §1232h), Constitutional, and case law, that my minor child(ren) _____

be excused from any and all instruction, field trips, presentations, performances, written material (including magazines), supervised discussions, questioning, journaling, films or assignments addressing: AIDS or HIV education, abortion, contraceptive options, sexuality (including transsexual or transvestite issues), sexual orientation, sexual lifestyles, sadism, masochism, death education, meditation, yoga, guided imagery, without my prior notice, opportunity to review the above, and my written consent.

Also, my child will not be allowed to view "R" rated, "NC-17" rated or pornographic films, nor participate in spells, chants, or pledges (other than to the United States flag) absent the same above conditions. This request is made as a result of our family's sincerely held religious beliefs as well as our child's particular emotional, religious, and developmental needs and experiences.

Thank you for abiding by this request.

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

cc: Pacific Justice Institute
P.O. Box 4366
Citrus Heights, CA 95611

Justice Institute (PJI), the Campaign for California Families, Life Legal Defense Foundation, the Pro-Family Law Center, and the U.S. Justice Foundation (a private group).

1st Grader Runs Afowl of 'Zero Tolerance'

JONESBORO, AR — When eight-year-old Christopher Kissinger pointed a chicken strip at another student in the cafeteria of the South Elementary School while saying "pow, pow, pow," a nearby teacher thought the "threat" was meant for her. Christopher was serving a detention for talking when the incident occurred, and he received an added punishment of three-days' suspension from school.

Principal Dan Sullivan told the *Jonesboro Sun* (2-1-01) that punishment for threats "depends on the tone, the demeanor, and in some manner you judge the intent. It's not the object in the hand, it's the thought in the mind. . . ." He added that zero tolerance

policies are in place because "people want them."

Christopher's mother, Kelli Kissinger, called the chicken finger incident "harmless" and expressed outrage at the punishment.

Many parents fear that their children's minds are being invaded and their thoughts judged impulsively by teachers and school officials in the name of school safety. A variety of violence prevention techniques, including checklists of characteristics and assessments for "profiling" potentially violent students, have been introduced in U.S. schools, most of which are believed to violate students' civil rights.

Jonesboro was the site of a 1998 schoolyard shooting.

Evolution (Continued from page 1)

replace the falsification test with the following: "Share interpretations that differ from currently held explanations on topics such as global warming and dietary claims. Evaluate the validity of results and accuracy of stated conclusions."

Repeated problems with the theory of evolution have required advocates to redefine it to merely mean "change." One biology textbook defines evolution as "the totality of all changes that have occurred in organisms from the beginnings of life on earth to the present day." Another textbook uses fancier language: "any geno-

typic and resulting phenotypic change in organisms from generation to generation." Both definitions are incapable of the falsification test.

Linda Holloway believes the new Kansas science standards may ultimately have a negative effect on education funding. "Two-thirds of Kansas school districts have declining enrollments," she observes. "The state board passed a policy that will likely drive even more families from the public schools and then provoke criticism of the legislature for not adequately funding the schools."

Book of the Month



Ready or Not, What Happens When We Treat Children as Small Adults, Kay S. Hymowitz, Encounter Books, 2000, 224 pp., \$16.95

Author Kay Hymowitz's important book explores the tragic, too-much-too-soon world of the 21st century, noting that, without a foundation firmly



grounded in morality and objective truth, today's children are ironically the least likely to ever truly grow up.

Hymowitz traces the origins of how America became what she calls an "anticultural" society — one which believes that its children should develop independently of the prevailing culture and even in opposition to it. In defining anticulturalism, she explains that, while once parents were expected to civilize their children by teaching them morality and insisting that they restrain their antisocial impulses, it is now widely accepted that children are "innately moral" and that adults are the problem.

The author states that anticulturalism "is the dominant ideology among child development experts, and it has filtered into the courts, the schools, parenting magazines, Hollywood, and into our kitchens and family rooms." She warns that the era of anticulturalism, "is producing a new kind of American personality, one that should give us great pause."

She writes that anticultural education — "touting labels like discovery learning, constructivism, lifelong learning, and child-centered curriculum" — has fostered the notion that children "are making meaning for themselves." Despite "back to basics" counter movements, which have exposed the failure of anticultural education and won the support of many parents and politicians, the new ideas have triumphed and "expanded into ever new and more extreme forms."

Embedded as it is in our society, Hymowitz believes that anticulturalism can be overcome if America reverts to its rich cultural tradition. "Our republican ideals remind us of the need to find a balance between our children's desires and the communal good," she states. "They allow us to recall that a sheltered childhood, protected not just from R-rated images but from the forces of the market, gives space for the individual spirit to breathe and thrive."

Encounter Books, 116 New Montgomery St., San Francisco, CA 94105, 415/538-1460, read@encounterbooks.com.

FOCUS: Tom Hanks, You're No Robinson Crusoe

By Diane Ravitch

This week's No. 1 movie is "Cast Away," starring Tom Hanks as a modern-day Robinson Crusoe. The critics are raving about Mr. Hanks's performance; many call him our everyman, a stand-in for the rest of us as he faces the exigencies of life on a desert island. He plays a FedEx efficiency expert, Chuck Noland, who survives a plane crash in the South Pacific and washes up on an uninhabited island. For four years, he makes do with tools he

forges from items salvaged from FedEx boxes that also drift ashore. An ice skate becomes his knife, a volleyball serves as his mute companion and a piece of netting from a fancy dress supplies material for trapping fish.

The only thing that makes this movie plausible is that so few viewers have ever read the Daniel Defoe novel, 'Robinson Crusoe.'

But if Chuck Noland is handy, he is certainly no Robinson Crusoe. The only thing that makes the movie plausible is that so few viewers have ever read the Daniel Defoe novel and therefore lack grounds for comparison. *Robinson Crusoe*, once read by every American youngster, is no longer part of the school curriculum because of its hero's racial insensitivity and politically unacceptable behavior. Crusoe was engaged in the slave trade when his ship sank in 1659; Noland was only delivering packages. Although the attitudes expressed in *Robinson Crusoe* are historically accurate, American youngsters are no longer allowed to read such tales.

The differences between the two fictionalized stories are stark. When Crusoe survives the shipwreck and finds himself safe on land, he thanks God for saving him. Mr. Hanks's character offers no prayers, but shouts "Anyone? Anyone?" Crusoe continues to thank God for having spared his life, while Noland expresses little more than loneliness.

During his four-year stay on the island, Mr. Noland understandably frets about getting back to Memphis, but he doesn't seem to face any real dangers on his island. After a few bumpy days he

settles into a routine, and is able to survive without even killing anything (unless one counts innocent fish). Robinson Crusoe, however, lives in constant fear of wild beasts and savage men and never ventures out of his hut without arms. He slaughters goats, turtles and birds for his sustenance, and even murders some cannibals and mutinous sailors.

Chuck is far inferior to Robinson in ingenuity and enterprise. Chuck survives mainly on fish and coconuts, and gets very excited when he succeeds in making fire, an accomplishment that Robinson takes for granted. Robinson, alone for 28 years, teaches himself to grow crops, raise animals, make pots, fashion a canoe and otherwise recreate a modicum of civilization. Chuck endlessly studies a photograph of the girl he left behind, even copying it on the walls of his cave; Robinson reads the Bible, keeps a journal and reflects on the state of his soul.

Emerging from years of isolation, Chuck takes just a few weeks to readjust

to modern civilization. Although he is sad to discover his former love has married in his absence (her grieving period was profound but brief), he seems unchanged by his ordeal. Robinson's return to society follows years of thinking about his sinfulness. He knows his soul and returns a new man. Robinson Crusoe's story is a classic of trial and redemption; Chuck's story has no meaning, except that he needs to look for a new girlfriend.

Chuck Noland is truly a man of our times, lacking any inner life, having little to think about other than a lost love. He has no sense of religion and is utterly incapable of seeking meaning in his experiences or his life. Perhaps Noland really is our everyman, a thoroughly modern man, sensitive to the environment and to relationships. But he is no Robinson Crusoe.

Diane Ravitch is a research professor of education at New York University and a former assistant secretary of education. Reprinted from *The Wall Street Journal* © 2001, Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.



Victory in Northern Vermont Parents battle Goals 2000 reforms

HOLLAND, VT — When classes began last fall in rural Orleans County near the Canadian border, some significant changes had taken place in the curriculum at Holland Elementary School. During the previous (1999-2000) school year, comprehensive education reform had provoked such parental outrage, concern and fear that by the end of the year the principal had resigned and a total of nine staff positions were open.

As one mother complained in her letter to the editor of a local newspaper, the family atmosphere that once characterized Holland Elementary had been replaced by a climate of "secrecy." The mother stated that she felt "powerless" whenever she tried to determine what her child was or was not being taught.

What prompted such a change? Parent David Knowles, whose daughter was in 3rd grade at Holland Elementary last year, summed it up in two words: "Goals 2000."

The curricula included 'new new' math, guided imagery, life skills, cooperative learning, STW & TQM.

Curricula and Programs

Knowles complained that the programs and curricula introduced at Holland included "new new" math and science courses without textbooks, guided imagery, cooperative learning, life skills, School-to-Work, and Total Quality Management. He characterized TQM as "psychoanalytical group therapy" and claimed it was part of what he called "the Annenberg experiment." (See box, page 4, top left.) The curriculum also included "Magic Circle"* — a counseling program that involves students and teachers sitting in circles discussing feelings and private affairs. Knowles dubbed these sessions "confession circles."

According to Knowles, one of the cooperative learning exercises was also performed in a circle every morning. "The kids would form a circle, and one child would begin by saying the word 'zoom,'" he said. "The next child would repeat the word until one of them reversed the sequence by making the sound of screeching brakes. The exercise would then resume going the other way."

Lockdown Initiated

Although Knowles was not alone in his opposition to the curriculum and counseling programs, he was apparently the most vocal and, by his own admission, the most excitable. He met with school officials several times with no results. One morning last April, after walking his

daughter to class, he spoke to a neighbor's 4th-grade son in the hallway. Principal Linda Aiken spotted him and asked him to leave. Knowles ended up threatening both his daughter's teacher and Aiken with a lawsuit over the curriculum.

District officials responded to his threats with a three-day "lockdown" at the school. The principal requested a police presence while students were being dropped off and picked up. Visitors were required to sign in. Rumors began to fly in the community of a potential Columbine-like situation, despite the fact that no charges were filed against Knowles and police conceded that he had "done nothing wrong."

At a school board meeting the following week, parents grilled board members about the administration's handling of the incident. Some felt the administration had blown it out of proportion. Many were angry about the lockdown. Others were upset with Knowles and fearful for their children's safety.

An uproar broke out in the local media. One newspaper reported that the principal and teachers made phone calls to other parents warning them about Knowles after his visit to the school. Some parents, however, took up his cause. "You have brainwashed our kids all week and put fear into them," one parent charged at the school board meeting. "It

sounds like this was a big witch hunt," another declared.

A number of letters to the editor were published. One stated: "David is not alone in his thinking, nor are his opinions 'off the wall' . . . perhaps those who fear David Knowles would do better listening to him."

Principal and Teachers Resign

In May, 40 parents signed a petition requesting that Linda Aiken resign, citing "lack of strong leadership." She subsequently submitted her resignation to the school board. The teachers who also resigned claimed they did so because of "safety issues" and "personal reasons," although at least one reportedly had planned to leave before the turmoil began.

Of Aiken's resignation, Knowles observed: "She was a victim of the state and federal departments of education. She didn't understand the agenda, and I feel badly for her."

At the start of the current school year, the School-to-Work program was made voluntary, the "confession" circles and "life skills" sessions had been dropped, and math textbooks were added.

Knowles and his family have recently moved to upstate New York. He is pleased that some changes have taken place at Holland and says he plans to continue his activism in defense of traditional education.

* *Magic Circle* was introduced in public schools in 1978. Education Reporter initially reported on the program in April 1986. — Ed.



Vermont students took part in "Magic Circles" and psychological counseling sessions.



The Annenberg Challenge

Philanthropist and former U.S. Ambassador Walter Annenberg, whose financial endowments established schools for communications at the University of Pennsylvania in 1958 and the University of Southern California at Los Angeles in 1971, donated \$500 million to public education in 1993. This endowment supports an elementary and secondary school reform project called the Annenberg Challenge, which operates from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

In announcing the gift at a 1993 White House ceremony, President Clinton said: "What is so important about the Annenberg Challenge is its very direct and supportive link to our Goals 2000 Educate America Act . . ."

The Challenge calls itself "the largest private effort to reform public schools in our nation's history." The amount of private and public funds supporting it has grown to \$1 billion, with 18 projects operating in 35 states.

The Challenge focuses on schools in disadvantaged urban areas, but also includes a number of projects in poorer rural areas. Fourteen Vermont schools,

including Holland Elementary in Orleans County, comprise a "cluster" called "the Northeast Kingdom," which is part of the Annenburg Rural Challenge.

The Challenge website uses familiar education reform terms, including "comprehensive school reform," "high standards," "assessments," and "accountability," but offers few specifics about curricula.

In Vermont, gains in second-grade reading test scores were recorded last year, but some parents attributed them to teachers "teaching to the test" and compared the instructional techniques used to those disseminated by psychologist B. F. Skinner.

Parent Jerry Snay, whose children have been in and out of private schools to escape the public school curriculum despite the financial burden, says the Annenberg Challenge "is supposed to involve the community and parents, but no one except the principal and the district superintendent seemed to know about it. These initiatives claim to include parents and the community, but in reality they never do."

Sunup-Sundown Year 'Round

Longer school days? Longer year?

NEW YORK, NY — Recent news reports suggest that calls for longer school days and an extended school year may increase in 2001. The front page of the *New York Times* reported (1-10-01) that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani wants New York City students to attend classes on Saturday and that the state's Governor, George Pataki, favors keeping children in school until after dark. In California, Governor Gray Davis has a plan to extend the school year an additional 30 days.



The specter of a longer school day and year emerged on a national level in 1983 with the release of the report, "A Nation at Risk," which revealed the downward academic slide of American students. With many states implementing tougher education standards during the 1990s, the current consensus is that students and teachers need more class time to teach the new material and raise test scores.

Some experts disagree. John E. Stone, Ed.D., of the Education Consumers Clearing House states that, "By far, the greatest reason for poor schooling outcomes is the inefficient use of available time. The average percentage of the school day that students spend engaged in a useful learning activity — so-called active learning time — is less than two hours out of a six-hour day. We could make far better use of the school day than is now the case."

Year-round schooling to ease overcrowding has been a reality in some school districts since the 1970s, but the length of the school year has remained constant at about 180 days, with more frequent, shorter breaks replacing the long summer vacation in those schools.

Many charter schools operate on a longer school day and year, but the latest push for additional school time could mean a longer day and year for all public school students, with before- and after-school activities and "enrichment programs" — already available in many

schools — also provided. An *Idea Brief* compiled last May by education experts at the Century Foundation, a public policy research group, suggests that "the ideas of all-day schooling and year-round education can be, and are, combined in schools. . . ."

These "full-service or community schools," the document explains, "are all-day schools that add a wide range of social services available through the school, typically in partnership with community-based organizations. Thus, a full-service school might fill its after-school hours with everything from intensive academic instruction to raise achievement, to dance and musical activities, to health clinics and job training workshops." Of course, no one knows what the price tag will be for all this, only that costs will rise.

Many experts point out that the traditional school year was created to accommodate the needs of a largely rural, agrarian economy, where children were needed to help work the land. "Our traditional school calendar has simply outlived its usefulness," Century Foundation senior fellow Ruy Teixeira told the *New York Times*. "This ideological limit on what schools can do and when they can be open is so clearly a remnant of the past."

Some observers worry that, rather than providing a solution to community problems, all-day, year-round schools, in partnership with community groups and agencies, will help fulfill the plan for a cradle-to-grave education/labor/healthcare system envisioned by Marc Tucker (president of the National Center on Education and the Economy), Ira Magaziner and Hillary Clinton. They fear that, when fully implemented, this system could include everything from mandatory in-home visits to parents with newborns by government agents to universal preschool to School-to-Work and "lifelong" learning, effectively separating children from their parents at an early age and making them wards of "the village."

Sexual Orientation Survey Sparks Outcry

ORLEANS COUNTY, VT — A controversy erupted at the start of the 2000-2001 school year over a questionnaire called "Questions for Exploring Sexual Orientation." The survey asked high school students a variety of provocative questions including "What causes heterosexuality?" and "When did you choose your sexual orientation?"

The questionnaire provoked outrage among parents, who are concerned that a "gay agenda" is being taught in the schools. One parent, Timothy Terhune, ran a full-page ad in the *Chronicle* newspaper on Sept. 6, 2000 which included a reprint of the questionnaire (see below) and a small portion of the Vermont Constitution stating that schools should encourage virtue. Terhune said he has no grudge against the teachers or Lake Region High School — one of several in the area using the questionnaire as part of a health and family life curriculum — but that he "just thinks it's wrong."

Lake Region health and wellness teacher Joan Vincent told the *Chronicle* that the questionnaire was only a small part of the course, and was used to prompt classroom discussions about sexual orientation. She claimed that the survey "asks questions of heterosexuals that are normally asked of homosexuals, in an attempt to make heterosexuals think about how it would feel to be gay."

The course, which reportedly conforms to Vermont's "Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities," also assesses "risk behaviors" including drugs, alcohol, and unprotected sex. A section on STDs and contraception requires students to "learn the skills necessary to critically examine materials, form their own opinions, and make informed decisions."

State Representative Nancy Sheltra agreed that a homosexual agenda has crept into the schools. "We should not be using our taxpayers' money this way," she said.

Questions for Exploring Sexual Orientation

1. Define heterosexuality.
2. How can you tell if someone is heterosexual (straight)?
3. What causes heterosexuality?
4. Is it possible that heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. The media seems to portray straights as preoccupied with (genital) sex. Do you think this is so?
6. Do you think straights flaunt their sexuality? If so, why?
7. In a straight couple, who takes the dominant role and who takes the passive role?
8. 40% of married couples get divorced. Why is it difficult for straights to stay in long-term relationships?
9. Considering the consequences of overpopulation, could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual?
10. 99% of reported rapists are heterosexual. Why are straights so sexually aggressive?
11. The majority of child molesters are heterosexuals. Do you consider it safe to expose children to heterosexual teachers, scout leaders, coaches, etc.?
12. Are you offended when a straight person of the other sex "comes on" to you?
13. When did you choose your sexual orientation?
14. How easy would it be for you if you wanted to change your sexual orientation starting right now?
15. What have been your reactions to answering these questions? What feelings have you experienced? Why?

