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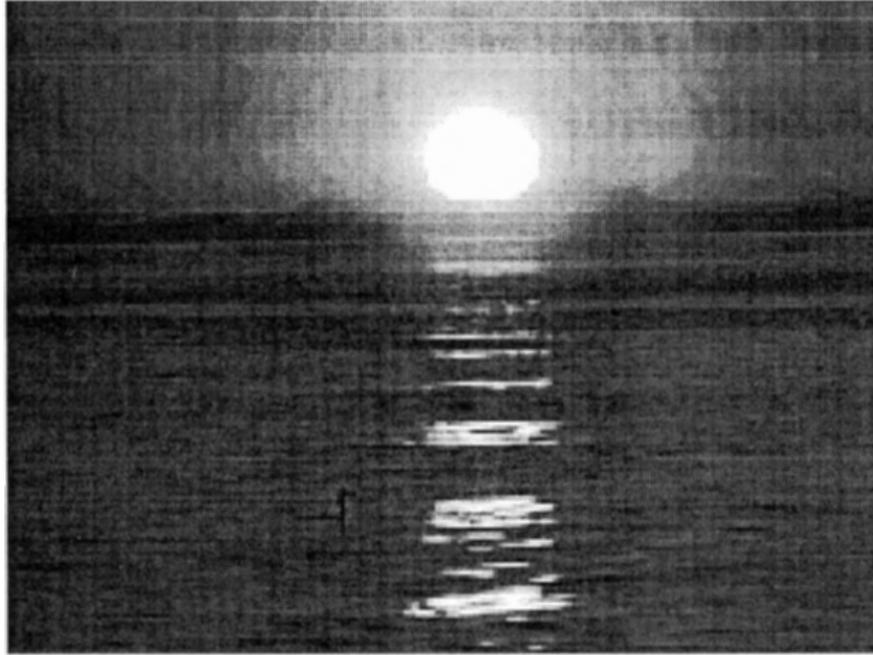
## Single-Sex Classes Making Comeback

In approximately 15 public schools across the country, teachers and administrators are bucking the tide of political correctness and feminist outrage by segregating students according to sex. A few of these schools have held single-sex classes for a year or more, and students are showing gains in achievement and improved behavior.

At the low-performing Thurgood Marshall Elementary School in Seattle, Washington, principal Benjamin Wright incited a firestorm of protest from state education officials and feminists last year by separating boys and girls. He reported to *Education Week* (5-15-02) that after children began attending sex-segregated classes, "discipline referrals to his office dropped from 30 a day to one or two," and the number of boys meeting state standards skyrocketed from 10% in 2001 to 73% in 2002. "I'm fixing a problem," Wright asserted in response to his critics.

Some single-sex classes operate in single gender schools, such as the new WALIPP Preparatory Academy in Houston (for middle-school boys) and the Young Women's Leadership Charter School in Chicago (for girls in grades 6-12). Other schools, including the Ellenville Middle School in Ellenville, New York, segregate students for core-subject classes but allow mixed-sex classes for electives. At the Southern Leadership Academy in Louisville, Kentucky, boys and girls see each other only for band and chorus.

Teachers, students and administrators view single-sex schooling as generally enthusiastic about the results. Teachers report that students pay more attention to their work and are less disruptive and rowdy. At WALIPP Acad-  
(See *Classes*, page 4)



## Sun Sets on Bilingual Ed Appeals Court upholds Proposition 227

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — The Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on Oct. 7 upheld the constitutionality of California's Proposition 227, which ended the state's failed system of bilingual education in 1998 and replaced it with English immersion. The Appeals Court decision upheld a prior U.S. District Court ruling that Proposition 227 does not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution.

"Nowhere does the text of Proposition 227 explicitly mention racial minorities generally, or any racial minority in particular," the Ninth Circuit merely provides. "Rather, the initiative merely provides that 'children in California public schools' shall be taught in English. Furthermore, the record is devoid of any evidence that Proposition 227 was crafted from racial animus."

The Ninth Circuit confirmed the lower court's opinion that Proposition 227 does not harbor "any hidden agenda of racial or national origin discrimination against any group . . . The debate is a neutral one, about which system will provide LEP [limited English proficient] children with the best education to enable them to function as American citizens and enjoy the opportunities and privileges of life in the United States."



Sharon Browne

Pacific Legal Foundation  
Attorney Sharon L. Browne

successfully defended Proposition 227. Following the Ninth Circuit's ruling, she stated: "We are overjoyed that the court has recognized Proposition 227 as the lawful, nondiscriminatory solution to a broken down system that provided nothing more  
(See *Bilingual*, page 2)

## No Muzzle for Miss America

OAKBROOK TERRACE, IL — At a press conference on Oct. 9, Miss America 2003, Erika Harold, announced that beauty pageant officials will allow her to speak out on abstinence as part of her "violence prevention" platform during her reign. Miss Harold successfully stood on a platform of abstinence-until-marriage during her state and local pageant competitions over the past four years, carrying her message to thousands of teens across Illinois. She says she is "happy" that she'll be permitted to do so on a national level as Miss America.

The crown had barely settled on Miss Harold's lovely head before pageant officials attempted to muzzle her on the topic of sexual abstinence. At a press conference in Washington, DC just two weeks after winning the title, Miss Harold told reporters that she had been ordered not to speak publicly on the subject. "Quite frankly, there are pressures from some sides to not promote abstinence," she told the *Washington Times* (10-9-02), adding that "I will not be bullied."

She referenced an email from a Chicago student that she said reinforced her determination to continue promoting abstinence despite the Miss America organization's objections. "You changed my life because of what you said," the girl wrote. "And I really hope that as Miss America you continue to share that because it changed my life and I think it can change lots of others."

At her Oct. 9 press conference, Miss Harold observed that pageant officials hadn't realized the extent of her abstinence advocacy in the past. She noted that it would be "a disservice" to the thousands of young people who have heard her mes-  
(See *Miss America*, page 2)

## S-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g Public School Curriculum to Include Yoga

ASPEN, CO — Aspen Elementary School students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grades have a new subject added to their curriculum this year: "Yoga Ed." On Sept. 9, the school board approved yoga lessons, supposedly to help students "relax" and adjust to the new school year. A controversy arose when some parents objected to the lessons on the ground that yoga is based on Hinduism and other eastern religions and therefore violates the so-called separation between church and state.

The objecting parents, including First Baptist Church of Aspen Pastor Steve Woodrow, insist that yoga is more than stretching and exercise, and that it cannot be separated from its religious roots. At a public meeting before the lessons won final approval, Woodrow pointed out a number of religious terms in the curriculum, including "mantra," "mandala"

(a Buddhist spiritual term), and "meditation." The parents also objected to the use of non-teacher instructors who may view yoga lessons as "spiritual."

In addressing parents' concerns, Aspen School Superintendent Tom Farrell vowed that any and all religious references would be removed from the program, but Woodrow noted that this promise merely reinforced his contention that the program does indeed have religious content.

According to the *Aspen Times* (8-28-02), the yoga program was introduced to teachers last spring by its sponsor, the Aspen Center for New Medicine. Aspen School Principal Barb Pitchford stated that she and "a majority of the school staff liked the idea of alternatively calming and invigorating exercises for their charges."



The Aspen Center's website states that its mission is to focus "on the relation of mind and body and the ways in which emotional, mental, social and spiritual factors can affect the whole of human health." The in-school yoga program was created after an "expert yogi" visited the Center in February.

While the Center for New Medicine, the School District, and the American Yoga Association all insist that yoga is not religious and that it actually predates the Hindu religion "by many centuries," yoga has long been associated with ancient Hindu practices, and its ties to spirituality and meditation are difficult to dispute.

According to the *Washington Post*, yoga is "a multi-hundred-million-dollar business in America," claiming some 15 million adherents. The *Post* chronicled charges (8-27-02) by former yoga

teacher Thom Birch that the practice "has become cutthroat and mafia-like." Birch asserted that many yoga practitioners "are the biggest thieves, bullies and sex addicts — all of it under this veil of spirituality."

High-profile instructors including Bikram Choudhury, the self-proclaimed "Guru of the Stars," have trademarked yoga poses and spiritual terms in order to collect fees for their use. Choudhury reportedly compares himself to Jesus and Buddha and claims he can cure diseases.

None of this is reassuring to the parents of Aspen Elementary School students who are allegedly being cured of their "rowdiness" with weekly yoga classes. Although an attorney for the Aspen Schools expressed confidence that the lessons don't violate the Constitution, Steve Woodrow and fellow parents expect the dispute will end up in court. 

# EDUCATION BRIEFS

The NEA gives 95% of its money to Democrats, states a new report produced by the Education Intelligence Agency (EIA), a private contract research firm. The teachers union asks a dollar a month for politics from its members, claiming the money is spent on candidates and issues that help teachers. But the NEA's last survey of its members showed that about 30% are registered Republicans and another 25% are Independents. The EIA report was compiled from Federal Election Commission documents, the Center for Responsive Politics, all 50 secretaries of state or state election boards, and the teachers unions themselves.

A New Jersey 4<sup>th</sup> grader was given Ritalin by mistake. Harrison Township parent Sharie Gaul was outraged to learn that the nurse at her daughter's school accidentally gave the child a dose of Ritalin intended for another student with the same first name. The girl visited the nurse complaining of a loose tooth. Her parents filed a report with local police after discovering that the school had waited 50 minutes before contacting them about the incident. The child was taken to a local hospital, where doctors discovered that she has a heart murmur. Side effects of Ritalin include irregular heartbeat, palpitations, and increased heartbeat.

More than 600,000 college freshmen need remedial courses this fall. Courses in reading, writing and math cost U.S. taxpayers approximately \$1 billion and contain material that should have been mastered in high school. By next year nine states will have drastically cut back or eliminated remedial classes in four-year public colleges.

California's state list of recommended books for students excludes American heroes and founders. While many great literary works appear on the 2,700-title list, books about Washington, Jefferson, Paine, and John Paul Jones are missing, as is the Bible, stories about America's war heroes, inventors, and the taming of the American west. Christopher Columbus is represented in only one book as an exploiter of native Americans.

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## New Jersey Education Association Censors Abstinence Message

TRENTON, NJ — The New Jersey Education Association's (NJEA) annual three-day conference beginning Nov. 7 in Atlantic City won't include three abstinence-education workshops. The New Jersey *Star-Ledger* reported (10-16-02) that the union canceled the workshops after discovering that an educator and two medical doctors who favor abstinence-only sex education for youth would be conducting the sessions.

One of the scheduled presenters, New Jersey Coalition for Abstinence Education Director Bernadette Vissani, charged the union with censorship, stating: "We are considered experts in the field of abstinence education, and I think we have something to say." She explained that, while she and the other presenters personally favor abstinence-only sex education for students, they were planning to discuss the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and present tips for remaining abstinent.

Scheduled to speak along with Vissani were Joanna Mohn, an internist and member of the New Jersey Physicians Resource Council, and retired physician James Thompson, a member of the New Jersey Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy.

Replacement workshops will be given by members of the Network for Family Life Education at Rutgers University, which trains teachers in "comprehensive" sex education.

## Miss America (Continued from page 1)

sage "to be silent on the issue." The internet journal *Illinois Leader* reported Oct. 18 that Erika plans to continue promoting her platform. "I will resign from Miss America rather than be forced to be a hypocrite," she said.

An Oct. 10 letter of congratulations to Miss Harold, signed by 38 U.S. Representatives, stated that "as Members of Congress who have presided over the successful implementation of federal abstinence-until-marriage education programs,

we know how important it is to speak publicly and honestly about the emotional and physical risks and dangers facing our nation's youth and the promises and opportunities that come with abstinence-until-marriage." The letter urged the new Miss America "to stand strong in your commitment and your willingness to stand up for your beliefs and promote the healthy message of abstinence until marriage."

## Bilingual Ed (Continued from page 1)

than a disservice to California's English learning students."

The initiative was approved by California voters in June 1998 by a margin of 61% to 39%. According to the *Washington Times* (National Weekly Edition, 10/14-20/02) a poll taken in Los Angeles prior to the election found that Proposition 227 was supported by 84% of Latino voters as well as 80% of non-Hispanic white voters.

Its passage essentially dismantled California's 30-year-old practice of teaching LEP students in their native language and replaced it with a system of "sheltered English immersion," which means students are provided with a temporary

transition period not to exceed one year before being placed in English-only classrooms. Students are allowed waivers from English immersion when there is a need and parental consent.

After Proposition 227 became law, LEP 2<sup>nd</sup> graders' test scores in spelling, language, reading, and math rose dramatically on statewide tests. (See *Education Reporter*, April 2002.)

The challenge to Proposition 227's constitutionality was brought by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy Group (META), the ACLU, and other bilingual education supporters.



## Book of the Month



**The Right Questions: Truth, Meaning & Public Debate**, Phillip E. Johnson, InterVarsity Press, 2002, 191 pps., \$16 hardcover

In his new book, Phillip Johnson sagely observes that "[t]rying to get to the answer before one has understood all the right questions is a prime source of error in human affairs." He wrote the book to help Christians and other truth-seekers "open up the ideologically closed classroom" when it comes to evolution vs. intelligent design.

Johnson writes that, although one might expect a healthy debate in intellectual circles over whether the appearance of design in biology is real or illusory, such debate does not occur. Nor does discussion of how the evidence of biology may bear on the proposition that humans are created equal to each other and superior to all other forms of life. This is because society's intellectual elite "has actually suppressed honest public debate on most issues."

Johnson states that, until recently, "educators assumed that controversy over biological evolution was a thing of the past, but now the subject is coming to life on both Christian and secular campuses." He notes that every campus is home to "scores of faculty and students who are suffocated by the prevailing dogmas of scientific materialism or political correctness but who almost never get a chance to hear anything else." The intellectual culture of our time enforces a distinction between belief and knowledge, and between faith and reason, he says, which makes it virtually impossible to ask the right questions.

Some of the author's "right questions" include:

- ◆ Why is it always wrong to mix science and religion?
- ◆ How can a college education prepare students to understand the ultimate purpose or meaning for which life should be lived and to choose rightly from among the available possibilities?
- ◆ How can democratic liberalism remain viable when severed from its Christian roots?

*The Right Questions* is a thought-provoking book that mixes Johnson's scholarship with a personal glimpse into his life. Grappling with a medical problem in July 2001 inspired him to conceive of "the right questions." Readers can't help but become better equipped to lead the way in opening up the search for truth and meaning through the kind of public education that "teaches the controversy."

Contact InterVarsity Press, Krista Carnet, 800/843-4587, ext. 4013, or visit [www.therightquestions.com](http://www.therightquestions.com)

# FOCUS: Can Science Justify Preschool?

By Verne Bacharach, Ph.D.

About 20 states have initiated or are in the process of initiating free pre-K programs for children in low-income families. These programs are enormously expensive. In my home state of North Carolina, the Smart Start program will cost over \$300 million a year when fully implemented. The state of Alabama is trying to start a program called Kidstuff, essentially a replication of Smart Start, and it too is projected to cost about \$300 million when fully funded. These are government estimates, so we know that the actual cost will be considerably higher.

What is the scientific justification for these programs and is there any reason to support them? The primary rationale is educational. People talk about "school readiness." The argument is that children who go through these programs will be better prepared for school. The theory is that they will be intellectually more advanced and their behavioral development will be improved. In reality, these programs are simply free babysitting.

Most states offer additional rationales, including that the programs teach better parenting skills. But I can tell you that these programs do **not** improve the parenting skills of parents who need it most. There is also a health component, but evidence indicates that children in pre-K programs are actually **less** healthy than children raised at home. All pre-K programs have plans for creating public awareness, but if you read the promotional brochures, you'll notice that they are little more than political indoctrination.

## Scientific Evidence?

Is there any scientific evidence to suggest that pre-K care programs affect the school readiness of children?

The only research method that can definitively determine if there is a relationship between pre-K care and the intellectual and behavioral development of children is the randomized trial longitudinal method. This method has two important components. The first is that children be divided into two groups prior to the pre-K care experience: one group that is exposed to pre-kindergarten care (the pre-K group), and one that is not (the control group). This is an important step because all research subjects must be theoretically the same in intellectual functioning and behavioral development, etc. The second component is to assess the children over a period of time (longitudinal). This is important because an effect of pre-K care at one point in time might disappear later on.

Only five studies during the past 30 years have used this research methodology. Four of the studies have been published in scientific publications, one has only been presented in a private publication. Data from these studies will be used by states to justify tax-funded pre-K center care programs.

The Abecedarian Project is the single most important pre-K care study ever

conducted. The University of North Carolina did the study and it is the only one ever published in scientific literature suggesting that pre-K care can improve the intellectual functioning of children.

There were about 100 children involved, primarily from low income, African-American families. This study is a very long longitudinal study, begun in the early 1980s, and researchers are continuing to follow those individuals in adulthood. It is unquestionably the most extensive study ever done in this area and is the principal study on which the others are based.

According to the authors, at three years of age the children in the pre-K group had significantly higher levels of intellectual functioning than the children in the control group. They also found that the children in the pre-K group had significantly more behavioral problems than the children in the control group. At 21 years of age, the adults who had been in the pre-K group still had higher IQs compared to the adults who had been in the control group. But there are some serious problems with this study.

All the children had their IQs measured before they were sorted into the two study groups. The average IQ difference between the children placed in the pre-K group compared to those in the control group was six points. At age 21, the IQ difference was still six points. During the first few years of the study, the pre-K children's IQs began increasing relative to the children in the control group, but by the time they were about six years old, the differences had begun to decrease.

We find in many cases that the intellectual functioning of children will increase *for a time* when they are exposed to pre-K care, but by the time they enter first grade, that difference dissipates. The other problem is that, contrary to expectations, the children in the pre-K group were more likely to need special education than the children in the control group.

Although the Abecedarian study is ballyhooed as showing unequivocally that pre-K care programs have a positive effect on children's intellectual development, it probably doesn't really show that.

## Project Care & IHDP

There are two other studies that used exactly the same procedures as the Abecedarian Project, called Project Care and the Infant Health and Development Project (IHDP). Project Care was done by the same researchers at the same location as the Abecedarian Project, using children from the same population in the Chapel Hill area of North Carolina. Both Project Care and the IHDP failed to find any effect on the intellectual development of the children, and researchers didn't measure the behavioral differences.

Perhaps the most sophisticated of these studies was the IHDP, which was done using low-birth weight, pre-term children. These children tend to be more at risk for poor cognitive development than normal birth weight children. The

authors of this study sorted the children into two groups — again a pre-K group and a control group — and followed them over a fairly long period of time.

In the early 1990s, they reported data on these children at three years of age in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. The published report claimed that the children in the pre-K group had significantly higher IQs than the children in the control group. A colleague and I managed to obtain the raw data this report was based on. After re-analyzing the data, we began writing a paper to show that the authors' conclusions were probably premature, that there was very little evidence that the effects they were reporting had anything to do with pre-K care.

While we were writing our paper, the authors of the study published an article reporting data gathered on the children at five years of age. Suddenly, the difference in intellectual development between the pre-K group and the control group was very small, but the authors insisted it was still statistically significant. When researchers start relying heavily on statistical significance, your ears should perk up, because it probably means there is no practical significance at all. In fact, the difference in IQs between these two groups at that point was meaningless in a practical sense.

Peculiarly, at the bottom of one of the pages of the article was a footnote indicating that the researchers had placed other research data pertaining to the study into an archive at the University of Michigan. We wrote the university and got the data. Incredibly, the archived data indicated that there was **no** statistically significant difference in the IQs between the two groups of children! These researchers had published the data that showed there was a statistically significant difference between the groups and archived the data that showed there was no significant difference. We included the archived data in our article and had it published.

The authors of the IHDP study wrote another report based on the children at eight years of age, concluding that "although it is hypothesized that the effects of early intervention (pre-K care) is most evident in the prevention of school failure, no differences were found in the children who repeated a grade or needed special education."

**There is no evidence that pre-K center care programs improve school readiness or increase academic achievement.**

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Thus, two attempts to replicate the Abecedarian study — one by the same people who conducted it — failed to do so, although in science it is very important that such effects can be replicated. Although the IHDP was a state-of-the-art project involving 900 children, you won't hear much about it. The first article on IHDP published in the *JAMA* received a lot of mainstream press, but when the second report appeared stating that pre-K care has no effect on children, we heard nothing about it.

## The Perry Preschool Project

There is another study that you will hear a lot about: the Perry Preschool Project. According to the researchers, not only did this pre-K program increase the intellectual functioning of the children, the increase was dramatic. In addition, they claimed it dramatically decreased the number of individuals who later had trouble with the law. In contrast, the Abecedarian Project found no effect at all on criminal behavior.

Based on the Perry findings, researchers have done cost-benefit analyses purporting to show that pre-K programs reduce crime and its cost to society. Of course, these analyses are often outrageous. Nevertheless, states buy into them, and the justification for the Kidstuff program in Alabama is based almost entirely on the findings of the Perry Preschool Project. If you read the documents promoting Kidstuff, they are filled with the results of this project.

Yet the Perry Preschool Project findings have never been reported in any scientific journal or any scientific outlet of any kind. The only reason we know about it is because the researchers started their own publication company, published their own technical reports and their own books. Then they commercialized their project, selling it to states and school districts. Their book, in my opinion, is nothing but an infomercial for their commercial operation. The fact that the study has never been published in any scientific outlet tells me that it is not science.

Taken together, what do all these studies tell us? The first thing is that pre-K care programs have no effect on the intellectual development of children. There is no convincing evidence that you can raise children's IQs by having them attend these programs. There is no evidence that pre-K programs improve school readiness or that they lead to increased academic achievement. At best, pre-K care programs don't appear to have any effect on children's behavioral development, although there is *some* evidence that these programs may increase the risk of behavior problems.

## The Bottom Line

Why the rush by politicians, scientists, government bureaucrats, and others to promote these programs? Why not give parents vouchers for free babysitting?

One answer is that politicians are looking for votes. Some of them may

(See *Preschool*, page 4)



Dr. Bacharach

## Why Silence Miss America?

Many of Miss America's supporters are questioning why pageant officials immediately tried to silence her on the subject of teen chastity, especially since recent polls and studies show that young people want the message and that teen birth rates and abortion numbers are declining. These trends, they say, should indicate the wisdom of promoting the positive, healthy message of chastity in this age of AIDS and rampant sexually transmitted diseases.



Erika Harold

Some contend that Erika Harold's abstinence message simply doesn't jibe with our sex-saturated culture. Alabama state school board candidate and pro-family activist Betty Peters reported that on Oct. 3, MTV sponsored a one-hour program emphasizing the inadvisability of America's schools teaching abstinence-only sex education.

Peters related that the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) "has begun running public service announcements (PSAs) with this same message," and added that a recent issue of *Time* online (9-29-02) also focused on the abstinence-only sex education debate. One article, "An Rx For Teen Sex," examined several abstinence programs and the growing support for abstinence-only education among members of the medical profession, while a *Time.com* press release promoted MTV's "Fight for Your Rights" pro-comprehensive ("safe sex") sex ed initiative and announced that "*Time* magazine" was "joining forces with MTV" to address the "hot-button issue" of teen sex. "An Rx For Teen Sex" provided links to websites that

promote comprehensive sex ed and condom distribution in schools.

The *Time* article stated that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has supported condom use and comprehensive sex education with its "Programs That Work" (see *Education Reporter*, May 2000), "has been quietly recasting its position on abstinence." According to *Time*, the CDC pulled the Programs That Work from its website this summer, and is "focusing on abstinence-only programs."

### 'Advocates for Youth'

A search of the CDC website by *Education Reporter* failed to locate the "Programs That Work" but did reveal that one of the CDC's "key partners" in a "Global AIDS Program" is a group called Advocates for Youth, which scorns abstinence education on its website and which has joined forces with MTV in its "fight for your right" to comprehensive sex ed program.

"Just say no didn't work for drugs," Advocates states, "and it won't work for sex." A goal of the joint project with MTV is to cut off abstinence education funding by circulating a petition to youth and their parents both online and through other means. This petition, along with the use of PSAs and a voter registration drive called "Rock the Vote," are designed to defeat Congressmen who support abstinence education funding.

Despite the billions of taxpayer dollars that have funded explicit sex education programs through the CDC, SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and others, Advocates for Youth whined in a press release that "Thanks to a half billion dollars in government funds allocated since 1996

to abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, young people are likely to return to class this year to find that 'ignorance-based' curricula are being used in their schools." The press release promotes Advocates' drive to defeat abstinence education funding.

### Failure of 'Safe Sex'

Last year, two physician's groups representing 10,000 doctors nationwide publicly called for the director of the CDC to step down, citing the failure of CDC's "safe sex" campaign to protect the public. The Catholic Medical Association and the Physicians Consortium accused the agency of covering up the deficiencies of condom use and withholding that information from American citizens.

Former Oklahoma Congressman Tom Coburn, a practicing physician and spokesman for the Physicians Consortium, stated that over the past 15 years "we have seen a tremendous increase in sexually transmitted diseases," and that part of the blame lies with the safe sex message disseminated by the CDC and others.

Last month, the National Physicians

Center for Family Resources issued a press release applauding Erika Harold's stand on abstinence education and chastising the Miss America pageant for attempting to silence her. The news release cited the health-risk behaviors associated with early sexual involvement, including the fact that, "every day in the United States, 8,000 adolescents contract a sexually transmitted disease."

Undeterred by the facts and statistics compiled by these physicians groups, the comprehensive sex ed forces — through websites such as that of MTV, Advocates for Youth, the Coalition for Positive Sexuality, and Planned Parenthood's Teenwire, — continue their promotion of "safe sex," along with efforts to cut off funds for abstinence programs.

"It's no wonder Miss America's 'abstinence only' message has garnered such opposition," observes Betty Peters. "But she has successfully interwoven abstinence with violence prevention, because research shows that destructive behaviors such as teen promiscuity and violence are inextricably linked." 

## Classes (Continued from page 1)

emy — the brainchild of a Baptist minister's wife and partly funded by her church's foundation — teacher Clayborne Polk Jr. told the *Dallas Morning News* (9-17-02) that because there are no girls, his students "stay focused, without distractions." He expects them to reach "a higher level of thinking" by the end of the year.

Chicago's Young Women's Leadership Academy, now in its third year, is so successful that it boasts a student body of 325 and a waiting list of 400. The mostly minority students "have a feeling that they can do whatever they want to do," stated



Christina Hoff Sommers

Joan Hall, president of the Academy's board of directors, in an interview with CNN Student News. Hall stated that one of the reasons for the school's success is its "school-wide reading program that gets struggling readers up to grade level."

While most single-sex class experiments are taking place in schools plagued by poor test scores and serious discipline problems, some experts say race and socio-economic status make little difference in the results. Medical doctor and psychologist Dr. Leonard Sax points out that "boys and girls are wired differently" and that single-sex classes allow teachers to tailor their instruction to the different ways children learn.

Single-sex schooling has received a high-profile boost from the Bush administration, and this development has the NEA, the ACLU, feminists in academia, and some women's groups up in arms. A clause in the president's "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 encourages expanded educational choices, and the U.S. Department of Education under Secretary Rod Paige has announced it will interpret Title IX — the gender-equity law — more loosely to encourage single-gender class options for students.

"It's a red flag immediately if you're talking about changing long-standing civil

rights legislation," commented Leslie Annexeinstein, a senior counsel at the National Women's Law Center, in *Education Week*. "We're concerned about how the [U.S. Education] department might be trying to circumvent the law."

The NEA has called single-sex classes "bad educational policy," and an NEA spokesman claimed "there really aren't any studies" that show single-sex classes improve academic achievement.

But according to author and American Enterprise Institute scholar Christina Hoff Sommers, that's because single-sex classes haven't been given a chance. She cited as an example six experimental single-gender schools that

opened in California in September of 1997, part of a joint effort between then-Governor Pete Wilson and a group of concerned parents and teachers to improve educational prospects for disadvantaged children. In 2001, the Ford Foundation released an 83-page report on these schools that was heralded as "the most comprehensive study of single-sex public schooling in the United States to date." It failed to show, said Sommers, whether the schools improved students' grades, test scores or attendance. "Most of the study was devoted to 'critiquing' parents, teachers, and students for their 'gendered perceptions.'" "

The Ford report classified as sexist any teacher who believed there are differences between girls and boys that call for different instructional approaches. The report "made it a point not to evaluate any of the academic benefits of the schools," Sommers asserted.

Many observers believe the single-sex class concept will spread, and teachers and administrators involved in the programs seem satisfied so far. "From what I've seen going around the classrooms, it's much more orderly," said Southern Leadership Academy's Assistant Principal Bill Redmon. "We don't have the boy-girl hormonal thing going on." 

## Preschool (Continued from page 3)

actually believe pre-K care programs work and are trying to help their constituents. Some are probably cynics and want to advance their political careers on the backs of children. Others may be ideologues who believe the state is a better parent than parents. Some may even believe these programs represent an opportunity to politically indoctrinate young children.

As for the scientists, I know they know better. When they promote these programs, they are either trying to further their professional careers — because there's a lot of money involved — or they may have an ideological agenda. In most cases, I think their motivation is power and money.

There is a very important political movement afoot in the United States to fund pre-K center care, to get the federal government to fund these programs and, among some people, to make them mandatory. A lot of well-meaning parents, when told that pre-K care will help their children, vote for the politicians who support it. Then there are the welfare recipients who support the programs because they will gain financially from them.

Pre-K care programs are filled with fund allocations that have nothing to do with helping young children, but they are

important because they buy votes, and votes buy power, and votes buy money. Included in the allocations for Kidstuff in Alabama are the following: \$377,000 for a state board, \$225,000 for an audit team, \$120,000 to create a form, \$200,000 to set up a website, \$2 million for an inspection service, \$175,000 to create a rating system and, for some reason, \$200,000 to prevent teen pregnancy. You know what that means; \$200,000 will buy a lot of condoms. Then they'll spend at least \$900,000 on their public awareness campaign and \$1.2 million for a so-called parent training kit.

Pre-K center care programs **do not** help children. They harm children in a general way because, if the limited state and federal funds available for children's programs are squandered on programs that do not help children, then these funds will not be available for programs that **do** help children.

Pre-K center care programs help politicians, parents looking for free babysitting and unscrupulous educators and psychologists, but **not** children. 

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