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Ridgewood Parents Score Final Victory on Surveys

New Jersey parents who oppose nosy questionnaires in schools can breathe a sigh of relief since the state supreme court in March rejected an appeal of the constitutionality of a law restricting school surveys.

The plaintiff school board president was an advocate of a controversial November 1999 student survey in Ridgewood, NJ that was administered without written parental consent and questioned students in grades 7-12 about sex, drugs, abuse and violence. A bill to require advance parental consent to such surveys was conditionally vetoed by Gov. Whitman three years ago, but a similar law was later signed by acting Gov. DiFrancesco. Three plaintiffs challenged the law on the ground that it had only minor differences from the one previously vetoed.

A state appeals court ruled against the plaintiffs last December, holding that a bill passed by simple majorities of both houses and signed by the governor is valid regardless of whether a bill with the same or similar language has been previously vetoed in the same legislative session. (See *Education Reporter*, Jan. 2004.) The New Jersey supreme court declined to hear an appeal by the plaintiffs, thus ending the dispute.

Western Civ Bill Introduced in House

Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO) in March introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives to urge schools across the nation to teach the benefits of Western civilization, not just the negative effects overemphasized in the name of multiculturalism. The bill has 13 co-sponsors.



Rep. Tom Tancredo

Tancredo, a former social-studies teacher, asserts that schools are giving students an unbalanced view, especially about the effects of European colonization on North America. "America is the only nation on earth founded on ideas," he says. "And if we fail to transmit those ideas to our children and immigrants, the ideas will be lost and so will our nation." He believes his non-binding measure targets "anti-Western diatribes and propaganda" and promotes balance.

State legislatures and local school boards are encouraged to adopt similar resolutions. A sample board resolution can be found at www.eagleforum.org.

(See Tancredo's resolution, page 2)

Parents Demand Better Books in Schools

Parents of children in public schools around the nation are becoming more vocal in protesting educators' choices of reading matter that is age-inappropriate, contains graphic descriptions of sex or violence, uses deliberate misspellings, demeans America, or pushes an agenda contrary to the parents' religious or moral views. In some cases, they are getting results.

A gay-themed book for first-graders about two princes who fall in love and "marry" angered a Wilmington, NC couple, who successfully challenged the presence of *King & King* on their daughter's school library shelves this spring. "My child is not old enough to understand something like that, especially when it is not in our beliefs," Michael Hartsell said. (*Washington Times*, 3-22-04)

The Hartsells and another couple submitted written complaints about the book to the school, which triggered a review by a committee of parents, educators and community members. The committee voted 8-3 to make the book available only to adults. (news.yahoo.com, 3-27-04)

Following objections by parents at a school board meeting, the board and principal of Colusa High School in California last year pulled five sexually graphic books assigned to 9th graders, apologized for including the books, and promised to establish a book review committee. At least four of the removed books were named in the American Library Association's "Best Books for Young Adults" lists in



1998 and 2000.

"It is completely outrageous and inexcusable that the American Library Association would recommend these profane books," charged Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, which assisted the parents. The five removed books were *Way Past Cool*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *Imani All Mine*, *Tenderness*, and *Bad*.

An Arlington Heights, IL mother who was "simply livid" over three books assigned to her 4th-grade son waged an ultimately successful battle to have him excused from the remainder of the relevant classes last year. The books, which were read aloud in class by the teacher, contain passages about the violent deaths of animals that are too disgusting to be quoted in the *Education Reporter*.

"The teacher's private response, 'But they're reality,' is a weak argument," contended the mother, Linda B. Baker. "The operating room, Saddam Hussein torturing people, the meat-packing industry and late-term abortions are all realities. But are they to be studied in graphic detail in school at this age?"

"Reading should be fun, enlightening, encouraging, inspiring, humorous and a host of other adjectives. It shouldn't be a time filled with dark, dreadful, anxiety-producing images that cause revulsion and invite kids to accept the violence without question," she added. The objectionable books are *Woodsong*, *The Westing Game*, and *Souder*.

Study Finds Public Schools Improve When Facing Competition

Public schools respond constructively to competition induced by school choice, according to a new study by Harvard economist Carolyn Hoxby. Thus, students who remain in public schools benefit from school choice programs. This conclusion is in stark contrast to the principal anti-choice argument: that vouchers will weaken public schools.

The study examined relatively large, established school choice programs. The largest achievement gains were in those public schools that faced the most competition. For example, students in Milwaukee public schools where at least two-thirds of students were eligible for vouchers scored 8.1, 13.8 and 8.0 national percentile rank points higher in math, science and language, respectively.

Hoxby estimates that public schools

currently operate at only about 50% to 65% of their achievement potential, mostly due to rigid rules on hiring practices, pay scales and unsuccessful educational methods. Parents who move their child and money to another school create pressure on public schools to become more productive, thereby benefiting the students who stay in those schools.

Moreover, U.S. private schools cost on average only 60% of what public schools do. School choice programs actually result in more resources for public schools because private schools cost so much less. (signonsandiego.com, 3-18-04)



Carolyn Hoxby

New York state officials so far are refusing to remove from the elementary school system a book entitled *This Is My House*, which portrays typical Americans as homeless people living in cars, while showing smiling families living in a neat, carpeted tent in Mongolia, in a sturdy log cabin in Russia and in a mud-brick building in Mali. Below the caption of the title illustration is the alternative spelling "This Iz My Hows."



State Sen. Martin J. Golden (R-Brooklyn), responding to a parental complaint, wrote to the state education commissioner in January, urging him to remove the book from the list of "suitable texts" for pupils studying English as a second language. "Not only this book, but other books in the system should be pulled because we're shoving multiculturalism down our children's throats," the senator told the *Washington Times*. (3-1-04) The commissioner replied in a letter that he saw "no reason to overrule the judgment of educators."

Library Rules Irk Parents Too

Schools are not the only source of books parents consider unsuitable for their children. In Alaska, public librarians are unhappy about a bill to force them to tell parents what books their children check out. Parents already have the right to see their children's school library records. State Sen. Lyda Green (R-Wasilla) is sponsoring a bill to give parents that right at all public libraries in Alaska.

Sen. Green introduced S.B. 269 after hearing from a constituent who received a call from a library saying that a book requested by her son was available. When the mother inquired what book it was, "the library informed her that because of privacy laws, they would not reveal any information to the mother on the books that her 8-year-old was checking out," Sen. Green said. The mayor of Wasilla, AK also reported that when she tried to ascertain which books her son checked out so she could return them before the due date, the library refused to tell her. (adn.com, 2-24-04)

Maybe Wisconsin could use a similar law. A Shorewood, WI father of five who received a notice of a \$25 library fine was unable to find out by phone what materials his 12-year-old son had checked out. When he went to the library in person, he learned that the boy had checked out three R-rated videos. Because of the library's lack of internet filters and its self-check-out system, the father felt compelled to destroy his children's library cards. (jsonline.com, 3-26-04)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Drug testing would be increased in schools under President Bush's budget proposals sent to Congress in February, which would increase funding from \$2 million to \$23 million. "Random drug testing gives students a strong answer to the social pressure to try drugs," Bush said. The president cited an annual Department of Health and Human Services survey released last year as showing that progress against drugs has been made under his watch. The survey found an 11% drop in illegal drug use by high school students in the previous two years, slightly surpassing Bush's goal of a 10% reduction. (Associated Press, 2-29-04)

Requiring struggling students to attend summer school and possibly repeat a grade yields lasting academic improvements, particularly for younger students, according to a study of a Chicago schools program by professors at Brigham Young and Harvard Universities published in the latest issue of the *Review of Economics and Statistics*. On the other hand, increased training workshops for teachers did not translate into higher student achievement, the same authors reported in the February issue of the *Journal of Human Resources*. Sixteen states now provide funding for summer school, and some of the nation's largest school districts have recently cracked down on the practice of "social promotion" (advancement based solely on age).

U.S. per-pupil spending has tripled in 40 years (adjusted for inflation) and the pupil-teacher ratio is 40% lower, yet reading scores are essentially unchanged, writes columnist George F. Will while upbraiding liberal critics of the No Child Left Behind Act whose alternative seems to be "Let's leave lots of children behind." (washingtonpost.com, 3-11-04)

D.C. teachers union leader is sentenced to 9-year prison term. Barbara A. Bullock, the former president of the Washington Teachers Union, admitted to embezzling \$4.6 million from union coffers from 1995 to 2002. She spent much of the stolen money on designer clothing and furs and blamed her extravagances on bipolar disorder. (Education Week, 2-11-04)

(More Briefs on page 4)

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Academic Bill of Rights Passes Georgia Senate

Colorado Colleges Commit to Protect Political Diversity

An "Academic Bill of Rights" resolution swept through the Georgia Senate on March 24 with a 41-5 vote. The resolution calls for colleges to end discrimination in hiring based on political or religious beliefs and to promote intellectual diversity and academic freedom on campus.

The state senate education committee had unanimously supported the bill after hearings on the problem of partisan indoctrination in the classroom. The bill is a project of Students for Academic Freedom, founded by David Horowitz. A similar bill was introduced by Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA) in the U.S. House of Representatives last October and now has 35 co-sponsors. (See *Education Reporter*, Dec. 2003.)

After a bill based on the Academic Bill of Rights was passed by the Colorado house education committee, several state university presidents stepped forward and agreed to ensure that their policies protect political diversity. As a result, the sponsor, Rep. Shawn Mitchell (R-Broomfield), decided to shelve the bill for the time being. "I'm hoping schools will take steps to make it unnecessary to reintroduce the bill," Mitchell said. (collegian.com, 3-22-04)

Meanwhile, reports of campus political intolerance to conservative viewpoints continue to mount. At Duke University, where Democratic deans and humanities professors outnumber Republican ones 18 to 1, the philosophy department chairman recently told the student newspaper *The Chronicle*: "We try to hire the best, smartest people available. If, as John Stuart Mill said, stupid people are generally conservative, then there are lots of conservatives we will never hire. Mill's analysis may go some way towards explaining the power of the Republican Party in our society and the scarcity of Repub-

licans in academia." Whole stacks of a conservative magazine at Duke University are tossed into the trash soon after they hit the shelves, according to a conservative student leader there. (heraldsun.com, 2-22-04)

A St. Lawrence University sociology professor maintains a personal blog linked

to his departmental homepage, wherein he excoriates "Fascist, Racist College Republicans" in crude, unprintable language. (*Wall Street Journal*, 3-12-04) Campus women's centers tend to be devoted to pro-abortion and anti-Bush politics and to have no pro-life employees, according to an informal survey by author Mike S. Adams. (townhall.com, 3-8-04)

A Georgia Tech student has filed a grievance against a professor of public policy who rebuked her for her in-class opinion supporting President Bush's health-care policies. (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3-25-04)

A University of North Carolina student who, in answer to a question in English class, mildly indicated his discomfort with advances from gay men, then found himself the target of an e-mail from his lecturer to all 33 students, accusing him of "completely unacceptable," "violent" "hate speech." After intervention by administrators, the lecturer apologized. Another English professor there distributed a two-page anti-war e-mail and encouraged students to attend an anti-war protest, promising they wouldn't be marked "absent." (heraldsun.com, 2-22-04)

The well-documented evidence of the Democratic tilt in many university faculties received another boost when a student survey at the University of New Mexico concluded that 83% of registered voting professors there are Democrats, versus 11% Republicans. (thenewmexicochannel.com, 3-11-04)

(See *Rights*, page 4)



Rep. Jack Kingston

College Prez to State Educators: Raise Your Standards

The African-American president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County recently exhorted the Maryland Board of Education to raise public schools' academic standards.

Freeman A. Hrabowski told the state educators that U.S. schools aren't expecting enough, especially in algebra. Foreign students on his campus are better prepared, work harder and are "much more focused" than U.S. students, he said. (baltimoresun.com, 3-31-04)

"Stop saying the tests are biased," admonished the Ph.D. mathematician, who has been writing SAT test questions for years. "It's racist to say blacks and Hispanics can't do well on these tests."

"If you went in for an operation," he asked, "would you want a surgeon who hadn't passed the test?"



Freeman Hrabowski

REP. TANCREDO'S RESOLUTION:

108th CONGRESS

2d Session

H. CON. RES. 377

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of Western civilization.

Whereas the mission of United States public schools includes the preparation of students for citizenship through the teaching of civil government and the history and civil government of the United States, including the importance of the Constitution;

Whereas the history of the United States, its form of government, and its Constitution can be fully understood only in light of their roots in the heritage of Western civilization;

Whereas the values, contributions, and accomplishments of Western civilization to the national heritage of the United States and the world include the concepts of individual liberty, the rule of law, democratic institutions, universal human rights, the development of science and technology, and the importance of religious tolerance; *Whereas* contemporary educational trends often de-emphasize the teaching of Western civilization and its contributions in favor of a multicultural approach that instead emphasizes the differences among the people of the United States, rather than their common heritage;

Whereas if young people are not taught to understand and appreciate the values and culture shared by the people of the United States, the United States will continue to become increasingly vulnerable to social division, mutual distrust, and animosity;

Whereas if immigrants to the United States do not gain an understanding of the national political and civic institutions of the United States as derived from Western civilization, they will be unable to participate fully and equally in the process of self-government;

Whereas the advent of swifter modes of communication, transportation, and mass migration of people across international borders could result in the balkanization of the United States unless all citizens recognize that a common set of values and purpose bind all the people of the United States together; and

Whereas the commonality of values and purpose among the people of the United States can be strengthened by widespread appreciation for Western civilization and its values, contributions, and accomplishments: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes that teaching young people to have an appreciation of Western civilization is central to the development and maintenance of a vibrant, united, and enduring United States polity, culture, and society; and

(2) encourages local school boards and State departments of education to ensure that these concepts and ideals are effectively taught, and that all young people who graduate from high schools do so with an understanding and appreciation of the values, contributions, and accomplishments of Western civilization.

FOCUS: Full-Day Kindergarten Brings More Problems Than Benefits



By Patricia Hokenson

Full-day kindergarten could be the poster child for the old saying "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

For 40-plus years, the professional educational establishment has been busily changing all levels of the public school curriculum. Whole language and sight reading programs replaced phonics-based instruction for teaching children to read. In math, instead of memorization, practice and drill, students and teachers were handed such entertaining programs as "New Math," "New-New Math," "Fuzzy Math" and "Rain Forest Math." Professional educators have also extolled and promoted open concept teaching and block scheduling.

Throughout all of these educational experiments, we have been solemnly assured that these megabuck programs were proven, winning formulas for producing well-educated students. They weren't and aren't, although the textbook publishers have laughed all the way to the bank.

Now, yet again, a "new" idea has been discovered in the hallowed halls of our Indiana Department of Education: full-day kindergarten. Stuffing active, little bodies into a structured, five-day-a-week school routine is just the ticket. (The official kindergarten age is yet to be determined so that it will be consistent with that of other states.)

Boys are especially affected by an early structured school environment because they develop slower than girls. This

type of situation can frustrate and depress them, producing rebellious, even bullying behavior, not to mention a dislike for learning.

The report from the Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development demonstrated the correlation between the incidence and severity of stress and behavioral problems in children spending long hours in daycare. The same conclusions were reached in a study from the Institute of Child Development of the University of Minnesota. The use of tranquilizers such as Ritalin to force boys and increasingly girls, too, to endure this end-

lessly structured environment is a terrible national scandal.

Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget's research indicated that children's mental processes develop according to sequential levels of growth. All the megadoses of vitamins and ISTEP test cramming in the world will not hurry these growth rates for young children. Piaget has long since gone to his reward, but babies and children are still puttering along at the same rates of growth.

Full-day kindergarten is not a new idea. Today's children do not have less ability to learn than children of any other

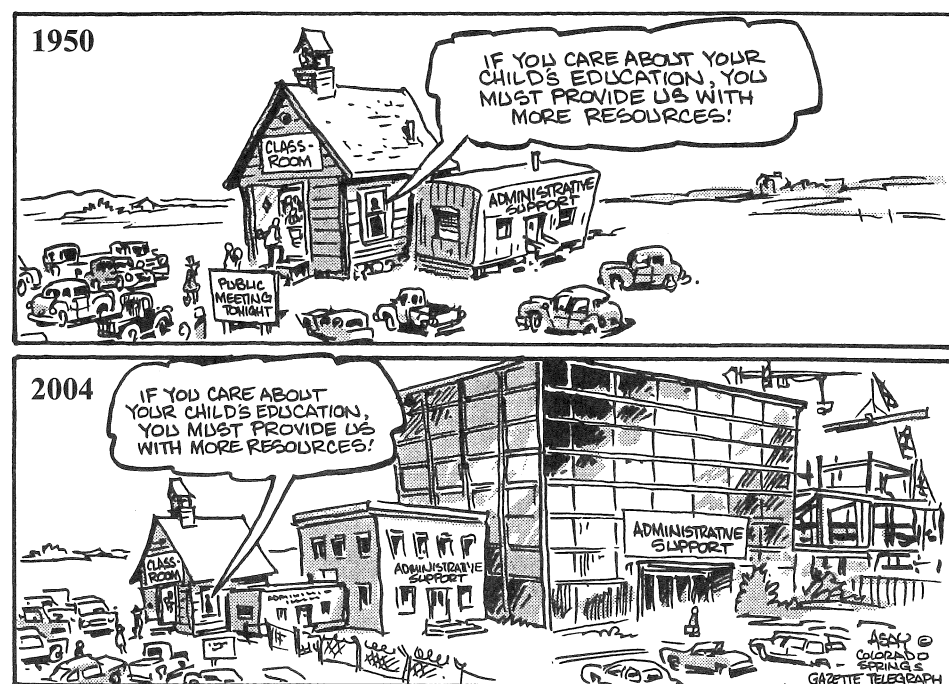
period of history. What has radically changed and been restructured is the content of the curriculum. Children can learn to read by the end of the first semester of the first grade, when taught by using a phonics-based reading program. Reading, and later writing and math, are the cornerstones of all the later academic subjects taught in school.

The assumed cost of full-day kindergarten would be staggering. It is another pie-in-the-sky educational experiment. Children five years old and younger don't need to be stuffed into a structured school situation five days a week. They need to be running and playing at home with their parents and families.

Instead of raising and squeezing taxes, our tax laws should be changed to support families so that the mother is not forced out into the labor market and children into day care and full-day kindergarten. All the fantastic ISTEP (standardized test) scores in the world cannot justify preventing mothers from raising their own children.

Do we really want government to be our children's babysitter and hear lines like this: "Hi! I'm from the Department of Education, and I'm here to teach your children. Trust me!"

Patricia Hokenson, a Muncie, IN resident, has bachelor's and master's degrees, with a reading endorsement, in elementary education. This article first appeared in the Muncie Star-Press and is reprinted with permission.



Channel One 2004 — Exploiting Children and Perverting Education

By Pat Ellis

Just when we thought it couldn't get any worse — it did. If you haven't heard of Channel One, it is a New York headquartered firm that broadcasts "news" along with commercial advertising to many of this nation's middle and high schools. Schools that agree to Channel One's Faustian bargain receive the use of a satellite dish, a TV in each classroom and two VCRs per school. The satellite dish will only receive the Channel One signal.

We understand that the purpose of advertising is to manipulate our wants and desires. What we don't understand is why so many educators don't have a problem with exploiting a captive audience of children in this way. An article in the *American Academy of Pediatrics Journal* stated that Channel One promotes poor lifestyle choices. Taxpayer-funded school time should not be the venue for hawking any products to students.

This year, the Bloomfield, Indiana Board of Education pulled the plug on

Channel One. Superintendent Hasler stated, "They had a program on that said a high school education was worthless. That was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back for me." He went on to say the school also had complaints about Channel One advertising rap groups. This is standard fare for Channel One. They have even promoted groups that "specialize" in "gangsta" rap and explicit lyrics.

On February 5 of this year, the top story was gay marriage. Channel One showed two men talking about how they have been committed to each other for 15 years. Then the children see an actual gay wedding. Next, the camera pans over a newspaper page showing male couples and their wedding announcements. The Cingular question of the day for students was "Do you approve of gays getting married?"

At Channelone.com children can enter a message board where gay issues are discussed. One thread on the board (which we copied to our site at www.obligation.org/c04a.html) has chil-

dren talking about homosexual sex. It is much too graphic to include in this article. Children are encouraged to go to Channelone.com every day before the end of the Channel One broadcast.

On February 25 the top story again was gay marriage. Video clips from six gay marriages were shown to students — men marrying men and women marrying women. Channel One selected a scene of two men walking hand-in-hand in a parade. One man held a sign, "I have the wedding bell blues." Children heard Cheryl Jacques of the Human Rights Campaign state how shameful President Bush was in proposing a discriminatory amendment to the Constitution.

Channel One has a gay agenda. They are working to normalize the gay lifestyle to students as young as 6th graders. Most parents have no idea that schools are acting as partners with Channel One in this effort.

On February 27, Channel One ran an ad for the movie *Starsky and Hutch*. It was rated PG-13 for drug content, sexual situations, partial nudity, language and some violence. This movie features

one of the most notorious drug users in popular culture — Snoop Dogg. In this movie he plays the role of a pimp. During the in-school commercial he joked about "grass." Channel One has a long history of advertising movies that many parents would not encourage their children to see.

What to do? Ask your children if Channel One is in their school. You might be surprised. Next, visit the Eagle Forum website, click on Quick Topics then select Channel One, and read the many informative articles on this subject. Eagle Forum also provides links to Obligation, Inc. and other organizations opposed to Channel One. Print information to give to other parents. As a group of concerned parents, let your school board know you do not send your children to school to be manipulated by Hollywood and Madison Avenue. Parents across the country are taking action to fight this exploitation — you can too!

Pat Ellis is education director of Obligation, Inc., a Birmingham, AL organization dedicated to reminding businesses, governments and individuals of their responsibility to children.



Pat Ellis

More 'Zero Tolerance' Inanities

Read on for the latest *Education Reporter* roundup of disciplinary action under school "zero-tolerance" policies against drugs and weapons:

- ✓ A Louisiana 10th-grade girl was expelled from high school for possessing Advil, a common over-the-counter pain reliever. Following an appeal to the school board committee, the committee and the full board voted unanimously to uphold the administrative decision. School officials apparently believed that state law requires a one-year expulsion, although there is some question about this. (shreveporttimes.com, 12-5-04)
- ✓ An Alabama 3rd grader suspended for bringing a one-inch-long G.I. Joe toy gun to school was reinstated after school officials decided the toy did not violate the zero-tolerance policy against weapons. (tuscaloosaneews.com, 2-26-04) An 8-year-old was suspended from a Washington state public school for taking two similar toy guns to school. (al.com, 2-26-04)
- ✓ Six police cars arrived to handcuff and arrest an 18-year-old son of a physician and the PTA president who mistakenly brought his unloaded shotgun, in the gun rack of his truck, onto school property. A longtime hunter, he had recently bought the gun and used it at the shoot-



- ing range. The California college-bound student was kicked out of school and charged with two felony counts of possessing a firearm within 1,000 feet of school property. (sacbee.com, 3-3-04)
 - ✓ Another Alabama student was sent to an alternative school after being caught taking Motrin, another over-the-counter pain reliever. (al.com, 2-26-04)
 - ✓ A Wisconsin student who left an unloaded hunting rifle locked in a car trunk on school grounds was suspended and spent a weekend at a county juvenile center. (jsonline.com, 11-30-03) The federal Gun Free Schools Act, passed in 1994, mandates that schools receiving federal funds expel for at least a year any student who brings a firearm to school, subject to some exceptions.
 - ✓ A 16-year-old Idaho boy who had a rifle locked in his car trunk was arrested and will face charges. A school suspension is likely, according to a district official. (idahostatesman.com, 3-13-04)
- A federal official, asked about a toy-gun case, recommended common sense to schools enforcing zero-tolerance rules. "The punishment has to fit the crime," said William Modzeleski, associate deputy undersecretary of the Education Department's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. "On some zero-tolerance policies, the punishment far outweighs the crime." (Associated Press, 2-26-04)

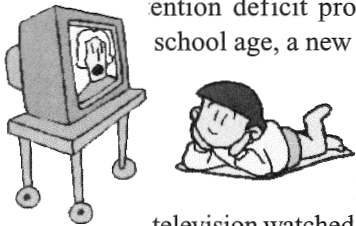
Study Finds TV Harms Tots' Brains

Very young children who watch television face an increased risk of attention deficit problems by school age, a new study has found.

For every hour of television watched daily, two groups of children aged 1 and 3 faced a 10% higher risk of attention problems at age 7. The study, led by Dr. Dimitri Christakis in Seattle, involved 1,345 children and was published in the April issue of *Pediatrics*. It lends support to the American Academy of Pediatrics 1999 recommendation that children under the age of 2 should not watch television.

Content probably isn't the culprit, according to Christakis. Instead, fast-paced visual images typical of TV programming may alter normal brain development. Overstimulation during the first two or three years of development "can create habits of the mind that are ultimately deleterious," he said. (Associated Press, 4-04-04)

The study examined responses by parents in government-sponsored national health surveys. Problems reported by parents included difficulty concentrating, acting restless and impulsive, and being easily confused.



Rights (Continued from page 2)

Two radical Muslim student organizations disrupted renowned scholar Daniel Pipes's February lecture at the University of California at Berkeley, ultimately forcing campus police to eject them from the event. Students for Academic Freedom has filed a complaint calling on the university chancellor to withdraw funding from the offending groups, which allegedly have a history of such tactics. (frontpagemag.com, 2-16-04)

Affirmative-action bake sales sponsored by Republican or conservative student groups have been shut down at a number of universities, including Southern Methodist and Northwestern, for creating a "hostile environment" for minorities. The bake sales satirize affirmative-action policies by charging lower cookie prices to blacks and Hispanics than to whites, among other features. (nationalreview.com, 3-8-04)

Outspoken Cypress Semiconductor chief executive T.J. Rodgers has called on his alma mater, Dartmouth College, to stop wasting money on "diversity" and refocus its resources on fundamentals such as civics, science and history. He is running for a position on the college's board of trustees in an effort to improve the college's priorities. (sfgate.com, 3-16-04)



'Language Police' Censor Texts, Tests

"Bias review committees" employed by state education departments, the federal government and publishing companies have managed to sanitize school textbooks and passages in standardized tests to a ridiculous extent, as documented by Diane Ravitch in her book *The Language Police*. Since publication of her book, numerous additional examples of censorship have surfaced.

New York is the worst offender, according to Ravitch, who recently learned that the state's guidelines for language sensitivity requires nearly all references to age, ancestry, disability, ethnicity, nationality, physical appearance, race, religion, sex or sexuality to be deleted. These unpublicized guidelines were discovered



Diane Ravitch

by Candace deRussy, a trustee of the State University of New York, who had to use a state freedom-of-information law to obtain a copy of the training materials for the bias and sensitivity reviewers. (Wall Street Journal, 2-13-04)

The most comical example of how similar guidelines mangle literary passages is the following statement in a new textbook on human development brought to Ravitch's attention: "As a folksinger once sang, how many roads must an individual walk down before you can call them an adult." This is a gender-neutral rewrite of Bob Dylan's folk song "Blowin' in the Wind," which contains the line: "How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man?"

Based on the training materials, the following is a partial list of words declared by the New York education department to be taboo, biased or to be avoided:

addict	hostess	teenager
alumnus	illegal alien	senior citizen
American	illegitimate	third world
cancer patient	illiterate	uncivilized
city fathers	man-hours	underprivileged
elderly	manpower	unmarried
fireman	mankind	white, blue or pink collar
gentleman's agreement	manmade	widow
ghetto	masterpiece	widower
grandfather clause	mastery	yes man
handyman	penmanship	

Briefs (Continued from page 2)

Phonics-based reading programs, such as Open Court, have helped Los Angeles students learning English as a second language to score rapid gains, according to district deputy superintendent Merle Price. About 42% of such students scored in the top two levels of the California English Language Development Test this year, compared with about 29% last year. Price also acknowledged that the current system under which most students are taught primarily in English — rather than in bilingual-education programs — seems to be working well. (dailynews.com, 3-18-04)

More than half of all male high school students reported in 2001 that they were virgins, up from 39% in 1990. Delays in first intercourse and better contraceptive practices have contributed about equally to a 35% decline in birth rates among 15- to 17-year-olds in the U.S., according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis of several studies. The teen pregnancy rate has fallen steadily for a decade to below any level previously recorded in the U.S. Experts also credit a more religious and conservative generation of teenagers, changes in welfare policy, crackdowns on fathers for child support, fear of AIDS, and new youth programs emphasizing both abstinence and contraception. (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 3-7-04)

More mothers are deciding to leave the work force when their children enter the teen years in a trend highlighted in the March *Ladies' Home Journal*. There is a growing body of research finding that

children may need their parents more than ever in their teenage years. (abcnews.com, 3-10-04)

Violence plagues schools in recent months. In February a Miami 14-year-old honor-roll student was stabbed to death and a 17-year-old football star was shot to death in the District of Columbia, in each case allegedly by a fellow student. (Education Week, 2-11-04) A 7th grader died January 13 after he was stabbed by another teenager at his middle school in Dallas. (dallasnews.com, 1-14-04) Verbal and physical assaults against teachers in Chicago's public schools increased 25% over last year to 970 reported incidents for the period running from the start of the school year through February. (Chicago Tribune, 3-21-04) A Michigan female physical-education teacher was knocked unconscious against a brick wall by a student who approached her from behind in March. (clickondetroit.com, 3-18-04) Several melees have occurred this year at a Philadelphia school, resulting in a school cop's broken nose, a teacher jumped and punched in the face by two students, a student beaten unconscious, and student-set fires. (phillynews.com, 3-12-04)

Homeschooled student wins Rhodes Scholarship. Lara Anderson, a student at Utah State University who never spent a day in school until she was 18, was chosen last November as one of 100 Rhodes Scholars worldwide. The daughter of a physiology professor at the same university, she also holds two black belts in martial arts. She will study physics at Oxford University in England.