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Courts Uphold Expulsion of Counseling Students Who Won't 'Affirm' Homosexuality

Two recent court rulings upheld the dismissal of Christian students from counseling programs because of their moral objections to homosexuality. Students Julea Ward in Michigan and Jennifer Keeton in Georgia were both expelled from master's in counseling programs after expressing their unwillingness to affirm homosexual behavior when counseling clients.

Julea Ward was admitted to Eastern Michigan University's (EMU) graduate level counseling program in 2006, with the goal of becoming a high school counselor. EMU's program is similar to many master's in counseling programs in that it includes both classes and a practicum component of counseling clients. Ward

earned excellent grades despite her professors "disagreeable" reactions to her Christian viewpoints, including her conviction that homosexuality is morally wrong.

The dispute that led to the lawsuit arose in 2009, shortly after she began the practicum component of the program and discovered that she had been assigned a client who sought counsel regarding a homosexual relationship in prior sessions. Recognizing that she had a potential conscience issue and that she could not affirm the client's relationship without violating her Christian convictions, Ward asked her supervisor how to handle the matter. The supervisor advised Ward to reassign the client to another student, an

action that set off disciplinary hearings.

EMU officials informed Ward she could remain in the program only if she submitted to a "remediation" program she characterized as designed to help her "see the error of her ways" and change her "belief system" as it related to counseling homosexual clients. At a subsequent review hearing, EMU faculty asked Ward numerous inappropriate questions and denigrated her



Plaintiff Julea Ward

Christian beliefs, ultimately dismissing her from the program.

"This is about behaviors that are appropriate or not appropriate within counseling," Irene Ametrano, pro-

fessor of counseling at EMU, told USA Today. Furthermore, she asserted, the university's policies were consistent with the ethics code of the American Counseling Association (ACA), and the school could not keep its accreditation if it ignored the code.

Federal Judge George Steeh agreed, rejecting the argument that the school infringing upon Ward's religious freedom and free speech rights. He ruled that the university had a legitimate "curricular goal of teaching students to counsel without imposing their personal values on their clients." He also affirmed the university's right to govern students according to the standards of the ACA Code of Ethics, noting that students will be governed by that association as practicing counselors. (The ACA is committed to affirming homosexual behaviors as normal and natural, even to clients who express a desire to change their sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual; counseling.org/pressroom/newsreleases, 5-22-06).

Even if EMU has, as Judge Steeh claims, a "rational basis" for incorporating the ACA Code of Ethics into its counseling program, the Code leaves some room for interpretation. While the Code states that counselors may not discriminate based on "gender, gender identity, [or] sexual orientation," in a manner "that has a negative impact on those persons," it does not expressly forbid referring these clients to other counselors. Notably, the Code does explicitly condone referring persons who "wish to explore their end-of-life options" if the counselor has "personal, moral, [or] competence" issues and does not wish to work with the client (Section A.9.b). Apparently, the ACA considers conflicting moral principles regarding end-of-life issues as acceptable, while conflicting moral principles about gender and sexual behavior are intolerable.

Ward's attorney, David French of the Alliance Defense Fund, said the court upheld "an extremely broad and vague university speech code" to a degree "that's never been done in federal court" in order to reach its decision. He said the ruling was part of a "disturbing trend" of courts' "excessive deference to university administrators" that permitted politi-

(See *Expulsion of Students*, page 4)

Ultra-Expensive School Opens in Debt-Ridden L.A.

At \$578 million, the recently opened Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools complex (RFK) in Los Angeles is the most expensive school ever built in U.S. history. By comparison, the city's Staples sports and entertainment center cost \$375 million.

The six small schools set on 24 acres will serve about 3,700

K-12 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District with architectural flourishes and posh amenities, if not academic excellence. "They made it like a museum," said Maria Vilar, mother of a fifth-grader.

Indeed, liberal sentiment for Kennedy and the demands of historical conserva-

tionists to preserve or restore certain features of the site where the presidential candidate was assassinated explain why the

profligate costs are more in line with constructing a museum than a school. Museum-worthy flourishes include a library that resembles the Ambassador Hotel ballroom where Kennedy made his final speech, and a 580-seat auditorium that boasts a starry ceiling and entrance modeled after the Cocoanut Grove nightclub.

A \$4.9 million public inspiration park features \$54,000 talking benches that play a three-hour audio of the site's history and a wall of quotes from Ted Kennedy, Maya Angelou and Cesar Chavez. Murals

and other art cost \$1.3 million. Deluxe amenities include a state-of-the-art swimming pool and two gyms.

The inauguration of the RFK schools comes at a time when the nation's second-largest school district faces a \$640 million deficit and laid off nearly 3,000 teachers in the past two years. The RFK complex is only the latest "Taj Mahal" of the Los Angeles Unified School District's 131-school building spree; it follows the opening of two other L.A. schools that are among the nation's costliest. The Edward R. Roybal Learning Center debuted in 2008 at a cost of \$377 million; the \$232 million Visual and Performing Arts High school opened in 2009.

"New buildings are nice, but when they're run by the same people who've

(See *Expensive School*, page 4)



Texas Rejects Islamic Bias in Textbooks

The Texas State Board of Education again attracted national attention last month when it adopted a resolution that warns publishers against printing textbooks infused with anti-Christian, pro-Islamic bias — or risk being snubbed by the largest textbook buyer in the nation. The resolution was approved 7-6 by the social conservatives on the board, who cautioned against a creeping Middle Eastern influence on American textbook publishers.

The resolution declares that "pro-Islamic/anti-Christian half-truths, selective disinformation, and false editorial stereotypes still roil some social studies textbooks nationwide." Pages of footnotes document specific offenses including "patterns of pejoratives toward Christians and superlatives toward Muslims, calling Crusaders aggressors, 'violent attackers,' or 'invaders' while euphemizing Muslim conquest of Christian lands as 'migrations' by 'empire builders.'"

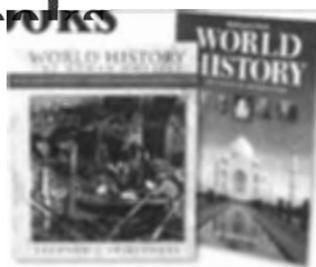
Other complaints cited in the resolution include disproportionate coverage of Islamic beliefs, practices and holy writings,

with generally twice as many text lines devoted to Islam than to Christianity and other world religions. Additionally, one book claims Islam "brought untold wealth to thousands and a better life to millions," while "because of [European Christian] religious zeal . . . many people died and many civilizations were destroyed." The same book contrasted "the Muslim concern for cleanliness" with Swedes in Russia who were "the filthiest of God's creatures." The resolution also expressed concern about "sanitized definitions of 'jihad'" that omit the religious intolerance and violence toward non-Muslims espoused by Muslim terrorists worldwide.

Critics said the Texas resolution was politically motivated and noted that the textbooks referred to are no longer used in Texas, as they were replaced in 2003. Board member Don McLeroy explained that board rules prohibit resolutions on textbooks currently in use. Though the written resolution could not reference current textbooks, pre-vote discussion about current textbooks was permitted.

Parents and at least one board member provided examples from history books their children are currently using to illustrate continuing bias.

Opponents testifying before the vote protested that none of the 15 board members had asked independent scholars to review claims of bias, particularly with regard to mentions of the Crusades. Board member Cynthia Dunbar responded by providing a long list of credentialed professors and historians who affirm that the Crusades were an attempt to stop the rapid and violent spread of Islam. Additionally, a 2008 American Textbook Council report concluded that U.S. textbooks generally present a view of Islam "that misrepresents its foundations and challenges to international security." (*Education Week*, 9-24-10; foxnews.com, 9-23-10)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

Recently declassified FBI records reveal Howard Zinn was an active member of the Communist Party, attended Brooklyn meetings five nights a week, and taught “basic Marxism” classes to his comrades. His most damaging legacy, however, is *A People's History*, a Marxist revision of U.S. history shot through with multicultural, feminist and class war propaganda. First published in 1980, the book is required reading in many high schools and universities and has sold almost two million copies.

Twenty-seven percent of public school students aged 12 to 17 say their schools have gangs, and that drugs are used, stored or sold on school grounds. The study was conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, based at Columbia University. (*Education Week*, 8-25-10)

Speaking at the Sustainability Education Summit, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan declared that preparing American children to “be good environmental citizens is some of the most important work any of us can do.” Duncan said federally subsidized programs will begin as early as kindergarten to teach children about climate change and continue through high school to prepare them to “contribute to the workforce through green jobs.” (*cnsnews.com*, 9-23-10)

Conservative delegates to the 2010 NEA conference fear the largest teacher's union has grown more entrenched in its pro-abortion stance. An amendment that would have required the union to take a “no position” stance on abortion failed with 70% of delegates opposed, up from 60% opposed at the 2009 assembly. (*Teachers Saving Children*, August 2010 newsletter)

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Citizens Successfully Pressure Feds to Release Abstinence Study

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) finally released the full results of a taxpayer-funded study on parent and teenage attitudes about sex and abstinence after citizen requests overwhelmed the HHS website on August 20th. The full report was released 18 months after its completion in February 2009, but only after CitizenLink and other pro-family organizations alerted their constituents that the Obama administration was stonewalling its release.

In prior months, HHS repeatedly refused Freedom of Information Act requests from researcher and University of Northern Colorado assistant professor Lisa Rue, citing exemption (b) (5), which permits withholding information relevant to government decisions yet to be finalized. Rue was surprised by the refusals since the executive level report was presented at two public conferences in 2009 and posted online. She began to ask whether the detailed findings were being “suppressed” in an effort to “repress American values in an effort to exert control over sex education” policy and

practice in the U.S.

Last year the Obama administration eliminated all federal abstinence education funding in favor of “comprehensive sex education” that emphasizes contraception and “safe sex” considerations for gay-identified youth. An amendment to the health care bill restored \$50 million to abstinence funding, but also added an additional \$75 million funding stream for “comprehensive” sex ed.

Valerie Huber, executive director of the National Abstinence Education Foundation, questioned the motives of the Obama administration in withholding a report that demonstrates public opposition to his sex education policies. That is because the nationally representative sample of 1,000 adolescents and their parents clearly shows that parents and teens generally oppose pre-marital sex. In fact, a full 70% of parents agreed it was against their values for their children to have intercourse before marriage and that only married persons should engage in sex.

(See *Abstinence Study*, page 4)



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Pricey Tuition Doesn't Ensure Well-Rounded Education

Parents and students may want to think twice before taking on a second mortgage to finance Junior's tuition at Yale or other pricey universities commonly ranked in the top ten by *U.S. News and World Report* or the *Princeton Review*. According to an evaluation by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), less prestigious schools often offer a better grounding in core subjects deemed essential to a well-rounded education.

ACTA evaluated more than 700 four-year colleges and universities based upon their core curricular requirements in literature, composition (writing), math, economics, U.S. government or history, and an intermediate foreign language. The choice of those seven core subjects, according to the group's website, is intended to ensure students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to be informed, productive citizens.

Anne Neal, president of ACTA, is quick to say that the Council's grading system doesn't tell the whole story about any given school. It does, however, provide information that other studies focused

largely on prestige and reputation don't. The *What Will They Learn?* report is a needed assessment tool because colleges often claim to provide a strong general education while allowing students to take niche classes to satisfy core curriculum components. For example, at California State University, Monterey Bay, students can count *The History of Rock and Roll* as their U.S. History required course. Emory University allows students to choose among 600 courses to fulfill their History, Society and Culture requirement, including one called Gynecology in the Ancient World. A class about television satisfies a Humanities, Literature and Arts requirement at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. These courses may be fun and even excellent, but they are problematic if they crowd out general knowledge and skills students need; there-

(See *Pricey Tuition*, page 4)



Book of the Month



Sexual Sabotage: How One Mad Scientist Unleashed a Plague of Corruption and Contagion on America, Judith Reisman, Ph.D., WND Books 2010, 406 pages, \$25.95.



Since 1948, Alfred Kinsey has been hailed as a scientific pioneer whose research liberated Americans from a repressed libido. Author Judith Reisman is determined to correct that myth, and to expose Kinsey as a deviant sex addict who perpetrated what she calls “the most colossal academic fraud of all time.”

Much of the book's value lies in Reisman's explanation of how a nation that once embraced a Judeo-Christian sex ethic became obsessed with promiscuity and perversion. She is especially concerned to correct Kinsey's assault on the character of the World War II generation. His claim that 95% of American men had committed a sexual offense under 1940s laws was constantly repeated in the media, gradually persuading Americans that most everyone they knew — including their parents — were hypocritical adulterers. This, says Reisman, is why Baby Boomers rejected the values of their “Greatest Generation” parents and launched the sexual revolution.

The Kinsey reports on male and female sexuality aimed to normalize behaviors previously considered aberrant and immoral, including homosexuality, bestiality, and pedophilia. Kinsey further claimed that sexual license did not increase illegitimacy, venereal disease, abortions or sex crimes, and did not harm marriages. A small cadre of Kinsey disciples spread his gospel to the media, universities, health professionals, and eventually the entire K-12 school system. Early on, sympathetic lawyers and judges collaborated with Kinsey to gut laws protecting women and children, making them fair game for sexual predators.

The fallout of Kinsey's lies is devastating, and Reisman lays out the tragic consequences for children and families. She also details the rise of what she calls the “sex industrial complex,” an interdependent network of multimillion-dollar pornographers, pharmaceutical companies and sexologists (therapists, educators and researchers that promote Kinsey's ideals).

It is the scientific veneer of Kinsey's work that is the key to its acceptance; therefore Reisman goes into some depth about his “research” subjects and methodology in order to prove his data is fraudulent. Many of these details are highly disturbing, particularly regarding Kinsey's infant and child subjects, but they are integral to the author's assertions that Kinsey was a vile man whose research should be thoroughly discredited.

FOCUS: Shaky New Standards for College Readiness

By Sandra Stotsky

A mesmerizing phrase regularly rolls off the tongues of education experts these days. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan used it in a recent speech to the National Conference of State Legislators, saying that Common Core's new standards will try to make certain that high school graduates are truly "college- and career-ready." Sounds impressive, but he never said what the phrase means.

Duncan's silence on specifics is not surprising. In the final version of the standards released on June 2, Common Core itself (an initiative of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers) made no effort to explain what precisely college and career readiness mean in math or English language arts. Nor did it provide evidence to support the standards or to demonstrate that they were internationally benchmarked. It cagily noted that it "consulted," was "informed by," or made "careful use of" research studies, evidence, and international data.

As the National Council of Teachers of English noted in a review of a July 2009 draft version of these CCRS, "the document presently contains a claim that these standards are evidence-based, but we note that none of the evidence has been drawn from peer-reviewed research journals or similar sources. Rather, the evidence offered at present consists of surveys conducted by the testing companies that stand most immediately to gain from the testing of these standards. This seems to represent a conflict of interest in the development of the standards." Nevertheless, over 35 state boards of education—all presumably guardians of the public interest—have voted to adopt all its standards word for word, some before they ever saw the final version.

This is not the first time the public has been enticed into purchasing a pig in a poke (think School-to-Work or small high schools). And it won't be the last; friends of "21st century skills" hawkers are now working full-speed to get them to the head of the line at the public trough. But given the staggering educational implications and costs of requiring all high schools to ensure that every student they graduate is college-ready (a U.S. Department of Education proposal for the next

authorization of No Child Left Behind), one might have expected a few state board members to ask for answers about the nature of this pig. Few, if any countries expect all 18-year-olds to meet the same set of academic standards—high or low—as if there were no differences in young adolescents' interests, skills, and abilities or in the requirements of varied occupational training programs or types of postsecondary institutions.

So, what do these "college and career readiness standards" (CCRS) appear to designate? Those in English language arts (ELA) are clearly identifiable. While a few grade-level standards designate specific content, the CCRS consist wholly of content-empty and culture-free generic skills (e.g., "Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.>").

Why are the CCRS so bereft of substantive content in ELA? In large part because they reflect a faulty diagnosis of why many American students are unprepared to read authentic college-level texts. The misdiagnosis comes from American College Testing's interpretation of its 2006 survey, which Common Core used to justify its CCRS in ELA. ACT surveyed thousands of post-secondary instructors across all subjects to find out what they saw as the chief problems in their freshman students. Unsurprisingly, the chief complaint was that high school graduates cannot understand the college texts they are assigned to read. Without an explanation for its reasoning, ACT leaped to two conclusions: (1) college students are not expected to read enough complex texts in high school; and (2) they are not given enough instruction in strategies for reading complex texts in high school.

With much more justification, ACT might have conjectured that an incoherent literature and reading curriculum, inappropriate teaching methods, poor study habits, and/or perhaps an unwillingness to put in much time reading or studying on a regular basis were contributing to high school graduates' inability to read college texts. But, ACT did not consider these reasonable hypotheses. Nor did it ask what literary or non-literary knowledge base post-secondary instructors also found lacking. Common Core simply ran with ACT's unwarranted conclusions and decided that English teachers at all grade

levels should spend more time teaching students how to read informational texts, regardless of subject matter, than literary texts.

It's not easy to discern what the CCRS are in mathematics in the June document. Mathematics standards for grades 9-12 are grouped in six conceptual categories, not by course or grade level. Those that are unmarked "specify the mathematics that all students should study in order to be college and career ready." Those marked by (+) will enable students to take "advanced courses such as calculus . . ." Since calculus is typically the lowest-level credit-bearing mathematics course at selective colleges, students addressing only the unmarked high school mathematics standards will not be ready for those colleges. Apparently, not only is it unnecessary to take pre-calculus, much of Algebra II isn't necessary, either, according to the Foundation that paid for Common Core's standards.

As Vicki Phillips and Carina Wong, director of education and deputy director of College-Ready Work, respectively, for the Gates Foundation, wrote in the February 2010 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, "In the past, higher standards just meant more math. A decade ago, completing Algebra I became the standard; now, the standard is completing Algebra II. But evidence about college expectations for learning tells a different story: Students need more agility at data analysis and statistics than advanced algebra."

The article expressed relief that teachers and students finally had a "solid set of standards in mathematics and literacy." Although publication of the article was premature, anticipating the final standards by over four months, the Gates Foundation seemed to know it would get what it paid for when the article was written, undoubtedly sometime in 2009. It had, after all, funded the development of Common Core's standards, their promotion, their review and comparison with the best sets of state standards, and their validity, as well as influenced the membership of the standards development, writing, feedback, and validation committees.

Too bad Phillips and Wong seem not to have read one of the strongest studies of what is necessary for college success. As Clifford Adelman commented: "There is a quantitative theme to the curriculum story that illustrates how stu-

dents cross the bridge onto and through the postsecondary landscape successfully. The highest level of mathematics reached in high school continues to be a key marker in pre-collegiate momentum, with the tipping point of momentum toward a bachelor's degree now firmly above Algebra 2."

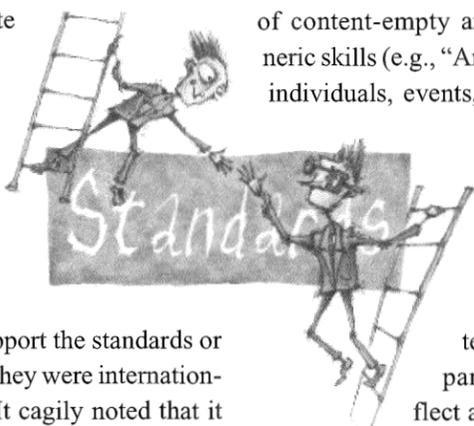
Common tests based on these CCRS (and the grade level standards they spawned) are just beginning to be developed, so it is too early to know what they actually assess, where passing scores will be set and by whom, and what role the Gates Foundation will play to safeguard its investments. Its College-Ready Work Team defines ready as "access to two-year transfer programs or four-year colleges with the knowledge and skills to succeed in freshman-year core courses—in other words, no remedial work."

ACT (one of the three major organizations that developed Common Core's standards) is reinforcing Gates's goal in its report on its 2009 survey. It urges schools to "focus high school instruction on the essential skills needed for college and career readiness" and asks high school mathematics teachers to "avoid focusing on advanced content to the exclusion of the fundamentals that will provide their graduates with the rigorous understanding of mathematics knowledge needed for success in credit-bearing, entry-level college mathematics courses."

It is not too early to ask what will happen when high school sophomores or juniors pass these high stakes tests and are declared to be "college-ready." Will two or four year public colleges be required to place them in credit-bearing freshman courses if these students want to avoid meeting high school graduation requirements? Probably. It is also likely that college instructors will find themselves compelled, for the sake of survival, to adopt texts at the middle and high school level of difficulty in order to ensure that these "college-ready" students can read what is assigned, do the mathematics in them, and pass their college freshman courses.



Sandra Stotsky



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Reinterpretation of Second Amendment Shocks Parent

Alert parent Tamala Hillhouse of Birmingham, AL was going over American government class homework with her 8th-grade daughter when she read something that caused her to do a double take. The McGraw Hill study guide accompanying the *U.S. Government: Democracy in Action* textbook tells students that "The Second Amendment ensures citizens and the nation the right to security." The guide goes on to explain that "Some people interpret the amendment to mean that they have a right to own firearms."

As Hillhouse found when she took the time to look it up, the actual text of the Second Amendment reads: "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the People to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Presumably, textbook and study guide authors are aware that both the historical context of the amend-

ment and later Supreme Court rulings attest to the expressed constitutional right of American citizens to own firearms.



Hillhouse said she was "shocked... that the explanation was so skewed. The future generations of our country are subtly being taught a revised history." Regular readers of the *Education Reporter* won't be shocked, as they are aware of the leftist bias apparent in many textbooks adopted by public schools and assigned in college classrooms.

However, there is another notable detail in this story.

Hillhouse's daughter attends a private school; parents who assume private school students will be spared curriculum tinted with leftist ideology should take note. Kudos to Hillhouse for reading her daughter's textbooks and study guides and taking an appropriately active role in her child's education.

Expulsion of Students (Cont. from page 1)

cally correct speech codes under the guise of "curricular requirements" assumed to be neutral on their face.

Another ADF lawyer, Jeremy Tedesco, said the Ward ruling could result in more Christian students being expelled from public universities across the country. "It's a very dangerous precedent. The ruling doesn't say that explicitly, but that's what is going to happen."

Less than one month later, federal Judge J. Randall Hall refused to grant an injunction that would have blocked Augusta State University (ASU) from expelling Jennifer Keeton. Keeton had enrolled in the master's program in counseling in 2009 with plans to become a school counselor. The university's adoption of the ACA ethics code as part of their counseling program was again a crucial component of the judge's decision.

Keeton came under fire from professors and some students after stating her politically incorrect beliefs about gender and sexual relations in class discussions and written assignments. Her offenses, according to Judge Hall's ruling, include statements that she "opposes homosexuality, based on the Bible's teachings," that she believes "homosexuality is a 'lifestyle,' not a 'state of being,'" and that she affirms gender as "fixed in each person at the time of creation, and not a social construct or individual choice subject to alteration." The 24-year-old also confided to a fellow student that, if given the opportunity, she would counsel young gays to pursue "conversion" therapy to change their sexual orientation. A statement released by her Alliance Defense Fund attorneys stated that Keeton "never denigrated anyone in communicating her beliefs but merely stated factually what they were in appropriate contexts."

The program administrators at ASU ordered Keeton to comply with all elements of a "remediation" plan or be expelled from the Counselor Education Program. Remediation requirements included attending three "diversity sensitivity" workshops, reading approved materials on counseling GBLT persons, and "increasing exposure to and interaction with gay populations" through such activities as attending the local Gay Pride Parade. She would also have to write monthly "reflection" papers about how these assignments were influencing her beliefs so that faculty could decide "the appropriateness of her continuing in the counseling program."

Keeton initially tried to comply with the requirements, but determined that she could not "honestly complete the remediation plan knowing that I would have to alter my beliefs. I'm not willing to, and I know I can't change my biblical views." Judge Hall insisted that the issue was not one of religious belief, but that Keeton "exhibited an inability to counsel in a professionally ethical manner... in violation of the ACA Code of Ethics, which is part of the ASU counseling program's curriculum."

Alliance Defense Fund senior counsel David French disagrees. "Jennifer Keeton has not been accused of mistreating a client. She's being told, 'You must change your beliefs or we'll deny you a degree.'" French cautioned that insisting students conform to the currently prevailing ideology "is an emerging trend in education, social work and counseling. Schools are trying to ensure that [students] graduate with a particular worldview." (*USA Today*, 7-28-10; *insidehighered.com*, 8-23-10; *Augusta Chronicle*, 7-22-10; *foxnews.com*, 7-28-10)

Expensive School (Cont. from page 1)

given us a 50% dropout rate, they're a big waste of taxpayer money," said Ben Austin, California Board of Education member and executive director of Parent Revolution. "Parents aren't fooled."

It's too early to measure the academic performance of RFK students, but if the Roybal Learning Center project is any indication, parents ought not set their hopes too high. The state-of-the-art Roybal Center now ranks in the bottom third of schools with similar demographics. But, as Allysia Finley of the *Wall Street Journal* sardonically noted, "Even though many Roybal kids can't read or do math, at least they have a dance studio with cushioned maple floors and a kitchen with a restaurant-quality pizza oven."

L.A. is not unique in building big, extravagant schools, however, and many of them are also in the nation's lowest-performing school districts: New York City has a \$235 million campus; New Brunswick, NJ opened a \$185 million high school in January. In Newtonville, MA, former Mayor David Cohen decided not

to run for reelection after the completion of a \$197 million high school angered many voters. Dozens of schools across the nation have exceeded \$100 million, in part due to amenities such as atriums, orchestra-pit auditoriums, food courts and cozy bamboo nooks.

The extravagant spending especially infuriates Jed Wallace, president of the California Charter School Association. He said the nonprofit Green Dot built seven charter schools to serve about 4,300 mainly low-income students in the L.A. area for less than \$85 million — one-quarter of what most L.A. schools cost and one-seventh of what the RFK complex cost. These charter schools boast a graduation rate twice as high as that of the Los Angeles Unified District. Traditional public schools "have no accountability or restraints," said Wallace. "They don't have to make tough choices when costs run over," because they can always reach deeper into the pockets of taxpayers. (*Associated Press*, 8-22-10, 9-14-10; *Wall Street Journal*, 9-4-10)

Abstinence Study (Cont. from page 2)

Adolescents generally agreed, though they held more permissive attitudes about their own sexual behavior than their parents did.

The study also found that adolescents are more influenced by parents and peers regarding sex and abstinence than they are by classes or programs. Significantly, 68% of kids identified a family member as their preferred source of information about sexual issues while only 8.7% said a teacher was their preferred information source. Around 17% of kids said they would rather ask friends for information about sex.

The release of the detailed report on August 23rd came just prior to an August 30th federal deadline for governors to ap-

ply for Title V abstinence education funds. Whether the report influenced the decisions of state governors is not known, but 30 governors elected to apply for abstinence funds for FY2011, up from 28 in 2009. The increase occurred despite the requirement that states match \$3 for every \$4 of abstinence funding; in contrast, the "comprehensive" funding grants from HHS require no matching state funds. According to a report from the National Abstinence Education Association, five states that opted for abstinence funding in 2009 did not reapply this year, but eight new states applied for fiscal year 2011 funding. (*onenewsnow.com*, 8-19-10, *citizenlink.com*, 8-24-10, 9-16-10)

Pricey Tuition (Cont. from page 2)

fore ACTA did not give credit for those kind of curricular options.

The results of the survey are jarring. Yale, Cornell and Brown were among 103 schools that received an "F" because they require just one, or none of the core subjects evaluated. Over 60% of the surveyed institutions received a "C" or worse for requiring three or fewer of those subjects, and pricey private institutions tended to score worse than public schools.

Only 16 of the schools got an "A," meaning they require at least six of the seven core subjects. Several are public institutions, such as East Tennessee State, Midwestern State and Kennesaw State University. Private schools Baylor and Thomas Aquinas College in California also made the "A" list, along with the United States Air Force and Military Academies.

The most neglected core subjects, according to the report, are economics and U.S. government and history, required in only 4% and 19% of schools, respectively. This may explain why American college graduates are generally ignorant of the basic principles upon which the economy and government

operate. For example, most don't know the purpose of the First Amendment, and 36% cannot name all three branches of government. "This is especially dangerous in America, where nothing holds us together except our democratic principles," said Harry R. Lewis, former dean of Harvard College. "Our children will not inherit our nationhood genetically." (Harvard, by the way, received a "D" in the ACTA report.)

The good news is that the average annual tuition and fees at the "A" schools came to \$13,200, less than half the average tuition of \$28,200 at the "F" schools (using 2009 figures). "We hope this [report] will be a wake-up call that colleges are asking for lots of money and major sacrifice by families, but in too many places they have really abdicated their responsibility to direct students to what they need to learn for success after graduation," said Neal.

You can compare what students will learn at different schools, along with tuition and graduation rates at *whatwilltheylearn.com*. (*Chicago Tribune*, 8-17-10; *csmonitor.com*, 8-16-10)