

Not *That* Kind of Diversity

It is generally understood that college professors and administrators touting the educational benefits of “diversity” within a given student population are referring to ensuring a certain proportion of “underrepresented” racial minorities, particularly blacks. A recent study by two Princeton sociologists quantified the racial bias that elite universities demonstrate in their admissions policies, and also uncovered a bias against students who participate in “Red state” extracurricular activities.

Researchers Thomas Espenshade and Alexandria Radford drew on the National Study of College Experience to analyze admissions data from eight elite colleges and universities, both public and private. The data represent 245,000 applicants from three separate academic years. Confidentiality agreements prohibit the researchers from naming the highly competitive schools, but the schools’ statistical profiles fit squarely within the top 50 schools as ranked by *U.S. News and World Report*.

At 576 pages, the Espenshade/Radford study is extensive, but Russell Nieli, lecturer in the Politics Department at Princeton University, extracted three salient findings in an essay posted at the *Minding the Campus* website. First, blacks have an extraordinary advantage over other applicants, other background factors being equal. “To have the same chances of gaining admission as a black student with an SAT score of 1100, an Hispanic student otherwise equally matched in background characteristics would have to have a 1230, a white student a 1410, and an Asian student a 1550,” noted Nieli.

Second, economic and educational disadvantages improve the odds of admission for non-whites, but don’t help lower-class whites who would be the first in their families to attend college. Nieli observed that “lower-class Asian applicants are seven times as likely to be accepted to the competitive private institutions as similarly qualified whites, lower-class Hispanic applicants eight times as likely, and lower-class blacks ten times as likely.”

The diversity that lower-class whites bring to campus is apparently not valued by elite institutions. Espenshade and Radford suggest that class-based affirmative action exists for every group except whites because schools want to reserve their limited scholarship funds for students who will improve their racial minor-

(See *Diversity*, page 4)

Can ‘Parent Trigger’ Spark Real Reform?

There is a new education union in California, but it isn’t for teachers. The Los Angeles Parents Union is comprised of self-described “progressives” who have lost patience with the status quo and embraced an education idea long advocated by conservatives: parental choice. The group is behind a new “Parent Trigger” measure that was signed into law by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in January.

Simply stated, if 51% or more of parents whose children attend a failing school sign a petition calling for reform, the school must either convert to a charter school, shut down, or submit to one of three other reform plans. The Parent Trigger passed by just one vote in both the California Senate and Assembly, succeeding largely because it was part of legislation meant to make California more competitive in the federal Race to the Top (RTT) grant competition. The Golden State did not win any RTT funds, but the law stands and will provide a testing ground for parent-led reform.

Lydia Grant, a 45-year-old mother of three in the Los Angeles suburb of

Sunland-Tujunga, is among the first to try to use the new law. She decided to use the Parent Trigger after spending ten years trying to persuade school district officials to improve Mt. Gleason Middle School, which has been on a federal list of failing schools for a dozen years. Grant believes the law is the “last, best hope” for parents frustrated by an “indifferent” bureaucracy that has tolerated not only academic failure at the school, but also permitted an “unsafe” environment for the kids that she says is “spilling over into the community.” Her petition drive began in August and is ongoing.

Predictably, the state’s education unions lobbied hard against the measure, going so far as to characterize its provisions as “mob rule,” which angered the general public. The unions did win concessions, including arbitrarily limiting the number of schools that may participate

to 75. There are other restrictions as well. Only parents with kids in schools deemed failures (or with kids slated to attend those schools in the future) by the California School Code are eligible to pull the parent “trigger.” That means the state defines which schools are failing instead of the parents whose children attend them.

There are still more flaws in the law, according to the Heartland Institute, a free market-oriented think tank in Chicago.

Though the RTT competition was central to the political conditions that enabled passage of the California Parent Trigger, it was also a source of weakness. That is because the law is tied to RTT mandates, which include some relatively toothless reform strategies. Those strategies require replacing some staff and other bureaucratic changes, but those types of restructuring have proven too modest to effect real and

(See *Reform*, page 4)



Lydia Grant

UNC Researchers Ask Students to Imagine Incest

Undergraduate students have long served as a readily accessible pool of human guinea pigs for professors who want to publish papers and psychology students who need to fulfill graduation requirements. At most schools, students enrolled in introductory psychology courses are offered extra credit or are compelled to participate in a certain number of experiments to fulfill course requirements.

Though most of these experiences are harmless enough, clinical psychologist Deborah Tyler was alarmed by the treatment of UNC-Chapel Hill students in a recent study conducted there. Tyler has a particular interest in how religious views are affecting higher education.

An article in the *Behaviour Research and Therapy* journal caught her eye because it purported to test the hypothesis that highly religious Protestants have greater obsessive-compulsive tendencies than do agnostics and atheists. “I was unprepared for the prejudice against Judaeo-Christian faith and the psychological mistreatment of undergraduates committed by this research,” she wrote in an article for The Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

The study, conducted by department chairman Jonathan Abramowitz and graduate student Noah Berman, was designed to test a mental process called thought-action fusion (TAF). TAF refers to “faulty beliefs about the relationship between mental events and behaviors.” These researchers associate TAF with obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD); their research premise was that if Christianity correlates with TAF and TAF correlates with OCD, then devout Christians are more likely to have OCD. To investigate this theory, Abramowitz and Berman first tested 253 undergrads for “religiosity.” Of those students, 43 were selected for a sample group of highly religious Protestants and 30 were selected for an agnostic/atheist sample group.

These two sample groups were asked to write down the name of a close and beloved relative. A computer screen then displayed one of two sentences intended to activate TAF beliefs. One sentence read, “I hope to have sex with [blank];” the alternative sentence read, “I hope [blank] is in a car accident today.” Participants were then required to write down the sentence, filling in the name of the relative they had listed earlier, and to close their eyes and think about the event oc-

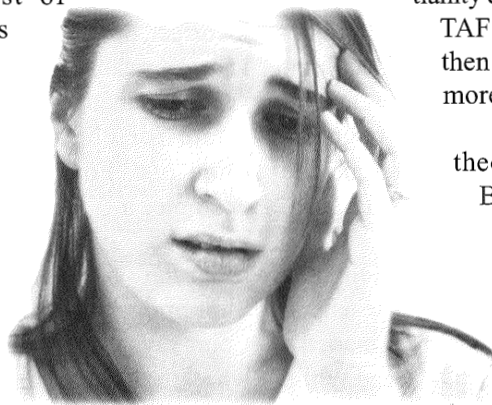
curing. Student were then asked to rate their level of anxiety and “the perceived moral wrongness of thinking and writing down the thought.”

Afterwards, the subjects were given a chance to “do anything you wish to reduce or cancel the effects of writing or thinking about the sentence” they had just written. Some students crossed out the sentence or tore up the paper; one participant took a picture of her loved one from her purse and cradled it next to her heart.

The researchers considered use of these “neutralizing behaviors” to be a significant indicator of “maladaptive” TAF in Christians, presumably because those actions indicated a level of remorse for thinking abhorrent thoughts about their relatives. Abramowitz and Berman revealed their anti-Christian bias in stating they were looking for TAF in people who are committed to “religious institutions [that] impose explicit moral standards for thinking and behaving” which would “foster the development of rigid and maladaptive beliefs about thoughts and their influence.”

The researchers cited several biblical passages to demonstrate the hypothetical relationship between Christian morality and maladaptive TAF, including the 10th commandment against coveting. They also quoted Jesus’ words from the Sermon on the Mount: “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28).

(See *UNC Researchers*, page 4)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

University of Illinois trustees took the unusual step of denying emeritus professor status to long-time University of Illinois/Chicago faculty member William Ayers. The vote was unanimous after an impassioned speech by board chair Christopher Kennedy, who said he could not confer the title because Ayers's book *Prairie Fire* is "dedicated in part to the man who murdered my father." Robert Kennedy was assassinated in 1968 by Sirhan Sirhan. Ayers is the co-founder of Weather Underground, a radical leftist group that bombed federal buildings in the early 1970s. (*Chicago Tribune*, 9-24-10)

The Maine Human Rights Commission ruled that schools must permit transgender students to use the restroom of their choosing. The Commission said that an Orono middle school discriminated against a 6th-grade boy when they assigned him a separate restroom because that did not sufficiently accommodate his desire to live as a girl. (onenewsnow.com, 10-4-10)

University System of Georgia schools may no longer enroll illegal aliens if they have denied admittance to academically qualified citizens in the last two years. The state Board of Regents voted on several new policies in response to complaints that undocumented students were taking spots from academically qualified Georgians. Schools must now verify that students applying for in-state tuition are in the country legally. (Associated Press, 10-14-10)

Parents of the 55,000 students attending 18 Santa Ana Unified District schools in California need not concern themselves with feeding their children breakfast or lunch. Around 85% of these students already qualify for free or subsidized meals, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture will pick up the tab for every child for the third consecutive school year. Dozens of schools in Santa Ana and other districts also provide free meals to anyone under 18 over the summer break, no paperwork required. (*Orange County Register*, 9-3-10 & 6-27-10)

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

Sex Survey Upsets Kids and Parents

Washington, D.C. parent "Susan" (not her real name) could tell something was wrong when she picked up her 12-year-old son from Hardy Middle School. When queried, the boy explained that he and his classmates had taken a "sex test" in health education class that day.

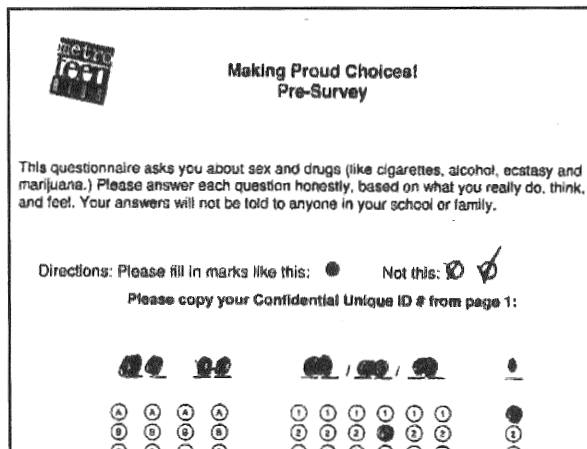
The 7th-grader was bewildered by some of the questions, which included whether he was male, female, or transgender and if he was "straight or heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian, not sure/questioning, or other." Other questions asked if kids could name all four body fluids that can transmit HIV, if they knew the difference between oral, vaginal and anal sex, and if they knew where to get a condom and how to correctly put it on themselves or a partner. The survey also asked for students' sexual history and details about drug and alcohol use.

The questionnaire was developed

and administered by Metro TeenAIDS, a group contracted by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) to educate children about HIV/AIDS. The non-profit received about \$95,000 from DCPS and more than \$750,000 in federal funding in recent years, according to FedSpending.org.

Metro TeenAIDS calls its program *Making Proud Choices!* and utilizes 17-24 year olds recruited by City Year (part of the AmeriCorps network) to teach a program designed to help D.C. middle school students "avoid HIV transmission, unplanned pregnancy, alcohol, and illegal drugs." One of these young City Year facilitators was on hand to explain anal and oral sex to the class when the aforementioned 12-year-old boy said he didn't know what those terms meant. Those explanations raised even more questions for some students, and one child reportedly hyperventilated.

(See Sex Survey, page 4)



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Hip-Hop History Slams Founders

More than a dozen Oklahoma City teachers have complained or expressed concern about a newly adopted educational aid for U.S. history curriculum. Known as Flocabulary, the program uses hip-hop songs to help students in grades 3-12 memorize vocabulary words and the basic principles of math, science, English, and history.

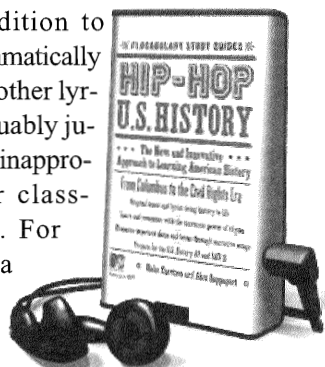
The U.S. history component has raised eyebrows among some teachers, however. The chapter covering America's founding fathers is titled "Old Dead White Men," and focuses on the perceived faults of the nation's early leaders. The rap describes James Monroe's presidency as a period in which: "White men getting richer than Enron./ They stepping on Indians, women and blacks./ Era of good feeling doesn't come with the facts."

The song goes on to assess President Andrew Jackson's dealings with Indians this way: "Andrew Jackson, thinks he's a tough guy./ Killing more Indians than there are stars in the sky./ Evil wars of Florida killing the Seminoles./ Saying hello, putting Creek in the hell holes./ Like Adolf Hitler he had the final solution./ 'No, Indians, I don't want you to live here anymore.'"

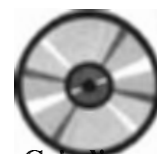
In addition to being grammatically incorrect, other lyrics are arguably juvenile and inappropriate for classroom use. For example, a song about the Supreme Court says, "... the dudes in the robes, what they wear under there nobody knows." Another rap likens Aaron Burr's duel with Alexander Hamilton to Dick Cheney's hunting accident.

Tierney Cook, media relations manager for Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS), said the program is planned for use in alternative education programs, such as juvenile detention centers and hospitals. The *Oklahoma Watchdog* asked Kathleen Kennedy, executive director for communications for OKCPS, why officials chose a trendy, hip-hop program rather than using conventional teaching methods. "You can't use conventional methods to teach children these days," answered Kennedy.

(See Curriculum, page 4)



DVD of the Month



Agenda: Grinding America Down, a documentary by Curtis Bowers, Black Hat Films 2010, 95 minutes, \$18.



When Curtis Bowers snuck into a meeting of committed Communists at the University of California, Berkeley in 1992, he left thinking that their elaborate plans to destroy America from within weren't very realistic.

Fifteen years later, newly appointed Idaho state legislator Bowers recalled that experience and realized how drastically American culture had changed since then. He was astonished at how closely those changes aligned with the goals laid out in that 1992 meeting.

Those goals included infiltrating the media, education, and even churches with Communist propaganda. Attendees also described how they would use the then-inconsequential environmental movement to burden businesses with red tape and regulations.

Bowers started a firestorm in his district when he wrote to the editor of his local newspaper about his observations. The story was featured in the news, people protested at the capitol, and the newspaper printed more than 40 responses to his letter. Those strong reactions led Bowers to spend the next two years reading hundreds of books, articles and speeches about Communist plans.

Agenda is the culmination of that research. Viewers learn that 1.5 billion people live in openly Communist countries today. Communists are still quite active in the United States, too, though most have dropped that unpopular label.

The documentary explains the origins of Communism, and its relationship to Socialism. It also names the many modern "progressive" groups spawned by the Communist Party USA. The film notes that 20% of Congressional members are part of the ideologically sympathetic Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Bowers decided to call the film *Agenda* because he wanted to differentiate his research findings from conspiracy theories. The difference, he says, is that the people and organizations he highlights have outlined their plans in readily accessible books, speeches and articles, and have executed most of their plans right out in the open. For example, Summit Ministries founder David Noebel invites viewers to read Marxist William Z. Foster's book, *Toward Soviet America*. If they do, they will find that public schools have implemented nearly every item Foster wanted.

The film won the Grand Prize at the San Antonio Christian Film Festival. You can view a trailer of the film at www.agendadocumentary.com.

FOCUS: Do American History Teachers Value Feelings Over Knowledge?

By Robert Holland and Don Soifer

Nearly half of American history teachers believe it is less important that their students understand the common history, ideas, rights and responsibilities that tie the country together as Americans than that they learn to celebrate the unique identities and experiences of its different ethnic, religious and immigrant groups.

Advocates of radical “social-justice” multiculturalism in many university schools of education — the places where most K-12 teachers are trained — continue to oppose assimilation with a common culture while instead seeking to radically transform an “oppressive” America.

A new survey of public high-school social-studies teachers done for the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) indicates that they have gained a strong foothold in high schools.

Another sign of the indoctrination of this radical strain of multiculturalism was the finding that 37% of the history teachers believed it was “absolutely essential” that they teach their students “to be activists who challenge the status quo of our political system and seek to remedy injustices.”

Not surprisingly, only a little more than one-third of the teachers deemed it “absolutely essential” for their students to “know facts” (such as the location of the 50 states) or dates (such as the attack on Pearl Harbor). After all, why let facts get in the way of advocacy?

While only about six in ten teachers thought it imperative for their students to (1) understand such concepts as federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances, and (2) know about the American Founding, the Civil War, and the Cold War, a whopping 76% deemed it critical for students “to be tolerant of people and groups who are different from themselves.”

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Given that feelings trump facts in so many classrooms, is it any wonder that there has been such a precipitous decline in Americans’ knowledge of their own country’s history?

While ideological indoctrination is a major concern, perhaps an even bigger one is the lack of academic preparation of prospective K-12 history teachers. Numerous studies have found that tiny minorities of history teachers have majored in the subject, and many have taken little more than a few survey courses.

A basic problem is that history commonly is fitted under the umbrella of social studies, a mishmash of everything from

global studies to sociology. State certification requirements equate “social studies education” with knowledge of history, when in fact a would-be teacher may not even have studied any history, or have very little formal preparation in the subject.

Nearly a third of history teachers responded to the AEI survey that textbooks are “becoming less and less important in the classroom.” When teachers are guided

by little background studying history themselves, and only fuzzy state standards to guide curriculum, a parent should wonder what precisely their children are learning in American history class.

This is especially a problem in schools where state content standards for American history are regarded as weak or vague, providing little guidance about what facts, concepts and historical figures students at different grade levels are expected to know.

A survey of federal applications by school districts seeking dollars to expand their teaching of American history exposes many stark shortcomings in this regard. Such is the case in Illinois, where state

officials responded to a looming shortage in qualified teachers of American history by lowering the passing score on the state certification exam. The change raised the passing rate from 56 percent of candidates to over 80 percent. Lincoln’s home state also has among the nation’s weakest American history standards.

The Sacramento, CA school district explained that its students get only 12 instructional minutes per day in American history. So it is little wonder that only a third of their 11th graders score at a proficient level on the state history test.

Meanwhile, the radical National Association for Multicultural Education, which exerts a strong influence on teacher training, receives a large chunk of its operating funding from taxpayer-funded contracts with schools and school districts in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

With Americans’ knowledge about our country’s compelling origins and ideals in steady decline, and with classroom study of U.S. history increasingly replaced by facilitated conversations about feelings and social justice, it should be a matter of urgency for policy-makers to improve both the quality and quantity of history teachers’ academic preparation.

Robert Holland and Don Soifer are education analysts with the Lexington Institute in Arlington, Virginia. This article is reprinted with permission of the authors and American Thinker, where it first appeared on 10-8-10 at AmericanThinker.com.

Why American High School Teachers Don’t Assign Research Papers

By Peter Wood

The National Association of Scholars is pleased to present a long-suppressed research report on how American high school teachers avoid assigning research papers.

College faculty members are more and more confronted with the hard problem of trying to teach a higher education curriculum to students who don’t know the basics. Large numbers of students are admitted to colleges — even very good colleges — unable to write at even a mediocre level. Fewer still have any sense of how to write a research paper, a skill that could once be taken for granted among students admitted to college. As a result, colleges and universities across the country have quietly swapped out their old freshmen English classes, which focused on reading some important literature, and substituted what amounts to basic training in writing expository essays and research papers. Even that doesn’t solve the problem. By the time they have reached the college classroom, a great many students seem to have developed invincible habits of lazy writing. They prefer “self-expression” and diaries to factual, evidence-based analyses. And they plagiarize. Relentlessly.

How did we reach this pass? Why

aren’t our high schools doing a better job of preparing college-bound students to write? And in particular, to master the research paper?

The question was raised a decade ago by Will Fitzhugh, one of the great unsung champions of school reform in the United States. If ever there were a person who deserved a MacArthur “genius grant” and was doomed never to get it, Fitzhugh would be the man. A retired history teacher living in Concord, Massachusetts, he has dedicated the last twenty-three years to publishing *The Concord Review*, a quarterly journal dedicated to showcasing the best history papers written by high school students. He dreams of making academic excellence as important to American schools as varsity athletics. And he has been tireless in making his case.

In 2001, at the height of the movement to reform schools by turning everything into a testable outcome, Fitzhugh recognized that “measure everything” mania could be further bad news for the kind of synthetic, discursive thinking that underlies the research paper. Fitzhugh also recognized, however, that mere intuition about the problem wouldn’t make much difference. He turned to the Albert Shanker Institute (named after the late president of the American Federation of Teachers), which funded a survey of whether and

how history and social studies teachers assign research papers.

The research proceeded and in 2002, a report sponsored by *The Concord Review* was written, but the results proved too awkward for the funder. In the end, the Albert Shanker Institute decided to let the paper gather dust rather than issue it and have to explain away why 62% of history and social studies teachers never assign full-length research papers (papers in the range of 10 to 17 pages). Fitzhugh, however, retained the copyright and he has now granted the National Association of Scholars permission to make it public.

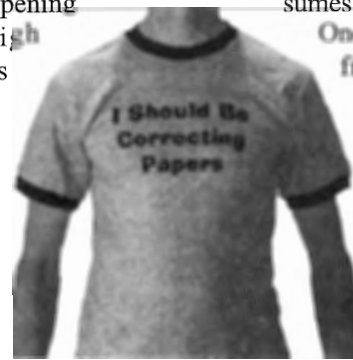
That study is almost a decade old but we think it has more than historical interest. The problems it brings to light are still today’s problems. We suspect things have gotten worse, but like Will Fitzhugh, we don’t want to rely on intuition. We’d like to build on his 2002 study and find out what is really happening in the nation’s high schools when it comes to teaching children how to engage in disciplined historical inquiry and synthesis — and how to present the results in a meaningful, compelling way. Our interest in this is

part of our broader goal of rebuilding the basis for genuine liberal arts education in the United States.

In 2002, 82% of teachers found it difficult to grade research papers, and 58% explained that they didn’t assign long research papers because they took up too much time. In some cases, teachers expressed willingness to assign research papers but genuinely couldn’t carve out the time. Fitzhugh, commenting on this aspect of the report, tells of a meeting he had this August with teachers in Florida who were eager to assign research papers, “but all but one had 180 students in six classes. The one had 210 kids in seven classes. They didn’t have time to breathe, never mind to guide and assess serious term papers, but they wanted to try to help kids do them anyway.”

Teachers are daunted from assigning research papers because grading them consumes so much of their personal time. One explained, “It just takes up my free time after school . . . it messes up my fishing time.”

Peter Wood is the president of the National Association of Scholars. This article first appeared at www.nas.org on 10-14-10, and is reprinted with permission of the author.



Reform (Cont. from page 1)

lasting improvements in persistently failing schools.

The greatest weakness of California's Parent Trigger law however, according to Heartland's analysis, is a provision that allows local school authorities to unilaterally veto the reform plan demanded by parents. All the local education agency (usually a school district) must do to thwart parental will is to state, in writing, the reasons why it "cannot implement the specific . . . option" recommended by the parents during a "regularly scheduled public hearing." School authorities must still act on the parent petition, but can choose their preference among the five reform options. This provision effectively eliminates the threat of school closure or conversion to a charter school. If a school board overrules the petition, parents have no appeal process to enforce their desires.

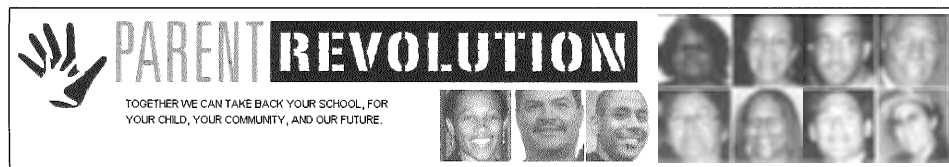
Despite those and other flaws in the California Parent Trigger law, the policy brief produced by the Heartland Institute strikes a hopeful note. The authors think the adoption of the Parent Trigger in California could be "a pivotal moment" for national school reform initiated at local levels, particularly if the law is tweaked to correct loopholes and limitations. They also believe that because this proposal came from the political left, there is an opportunity to build a coalition between progressives and conservatives around parental choice.

At least one other liberal organization is already on board. The California State NAACP voted in October to

revolution to Georgia." He proposed a version of the Parent Trigger law that incorporates many of the improvements suggested by the Heartland Institute report, along with a few tweaks of his own. In general, Delk's proposal would provide that

1. 51% of the parents whose children attend any public school in Georgia can, with a petition, trigger one of three options — charter conversion, closing the school, or use of tuition tax credit scholarships to enable students to attend a private school;
2. 51% of the taxpayers of a county or city can, at a specially-called referendum, vote to trigger one of the three options for all schools in its jurisdiction;
3. the trigger applies to all public schools, not just failing schools;
4. charter school funding equal that of traditional public schools; and
5. parents and taxpayers may elect to close the schools and give parents a tuition tax credit-funded scholarship.

His adaptation does not permit school authorities to overrule parents; it also expands the parties who can "trigger" reform to include every Georgia taxpayer and makes every public school a potential reform target. Whether or not Delk's proposal will gain traction remains to be seen, but he believes the timing is ripe, in light of recent revelations about widespread cheating among teachers and ad-



strongly support parents "in their efforts to use the Parent Trigger to transform their schools through community organizing." While the NAACP and the leaders of the Los Angeles Parents Union (LAPU) use the language of the Left to support parent empowerment, an Atlanta lawyer has proposed a version of the law that is at once more philosophically conservative and politically more expansive in its potential impact.

In an opinion piece in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (9-7-10), attorney Glenn Delk challenged business and political leaders, parents, and taxpayers at large to "join forces to bring the parent

administrators to boost students' standardized test scores. "If the Atlanta cheating scandal has shown us anything, it's that the wrong people control public education and that real accountability in the traditional public school system does not exist," he wrote.

The California Parent Trigger may prove too weak to give parents the ammunition they need to shoot for real school reform. But if the law sparks improved versions in Georgia and other states, it may finally ignite education reform from the bottom up. (*School Reform News*, September and October issues; dailynews.com, 2-14-10)

Curriculum (Cont. from page 2)

She added that, "Some people may not like it, but it is effective."

At least two notable academics like the program very much. Flocabulary's website boasts that radical socialist Cornel West and revisionist historian Howard Zinn (now deceased) praised the American history curriculum as "extraordinary" and "necessary." The

website also states that its supplemental curriculum is "proven to raise scores on state tests" and is already being used in over 10,000 schools nationwide.

OKCPS Superintendent Karl Springer said Flocabulary's rollout to at-risk students has been delayed until the program can be evaluated. "The science behind the concept is wonderful. There may be some things, though, that are inappropriate that we need to be careful about." (newsok.com, 10-1-10; Oklahoma.watchdog.org, 6-8-10)

Diversity (Cont. from page 1)

ity statistics. Nieli goes further in offering an explanation for why poor, equally qualified whites aren't even offered admission without financial aid. He surmises that schools don't want to lower their rating with organizations like *U.S. News and World Report*. Schools that accept students who don't end up enrolling because they can't afford elite schools without financial assistance lose points in ranking calculations.

Third, the all-important extracurricular activities that give students an edge over their peers don't apply to Red State kinds of activities like 4-H. As a rule, students who participate in community service, the performing arts and organizations associated with "cultural diversity" are given preference by admissions officers, especially when applicants have

held leadership roles or received honors. However, being an officer or winning an award with Future Farmers of America, 4-H, or high school ROTC lowers the odds of admission by a whopping 60 to 65%, according to Espenshade and Radford. This finding, suggests Nieli, is difficult to explain "other than as a case of ideological and cultural bias."

New York Times op-ed columnist Ross Douthat (7-18-10) pointed out that the under-representation of working-class whites from conservative regions in the nation's top schools has important consequences: "Inevitably, the same under-representation persists in the elite professional ranks these campuses feed into: in law and philanthropy, finance and academia, the media and the arts." (www.mindingthecampus.com, 7-12-10)

UNC Researchers (Cont. from page 1)

Tyler believes this study likely violated several fundamental principles of the ethical guidelines laid out by the American Psychological Association (APA). Since participation as a research subject is mandatory for undergrads majoring in psychology at UNC-Chapel Hill, Tyler considers the participation of any psychology majors "especially ethically suspect." Tyler also questions whether participants were adequately informed and later debriefed on the disturbing and possibly traumatizing thoughts that were part of the research. She wonders whether Christians were debriefed that the research was intended to "find a relationship between biblical teaching and mental illness."

Additionally, Tyler takes issue with the researchers' characterization of their methodology as evoking "harmless unwanted thought[s]," particularly since statistics indicate that several of the 73 participants have likely been victims of incest, and the researchers gave no indication that those students were screened out. Tyler has treated many incest survivors and noted that incest is "one of the most shame-producing and traumatic forms of sexual abuse, with permanent and far-reaching psychological effects."

Abramowitz and Berman noted that they are the first to use *in vivo* procedures, which are designed to cause emotional distress, in this kind of experiment. While they may consider their methodology groundbreaking, the novelty of their approach also means that the long-term effects on the research subjects are unknown.

Tyler also detects anti-Christian bias in the study conclusions. The researchers assumed that the neutralizing behaviors used more by Christians than agnostics and atheists to recover from thinking about incest or harm befalling their loved ones are signs of maladaptive TAF. "Using the same data . . . the case could as easily be made that feeling uncomfortable about incest and . . . wishing harm to a family member is a *positive* indicator of mental health," argued Tyler.

The public needs to know that taxpayer funds are being used for research that risks the psychological well-being of students and attempts to link Christian faith with mental illness, contends Tyler. "Do parents send their children to UNC to participate in this kind of research? Do North Carolinians understand the biases of the psychologists they are supporting [with their tax dollars]?" (popecenter.org, 8-10-10)

Sex Survey (Cont. from page 2)

DCPS officials said that the survey was "an assessment used to determine the students' baseline knowledge and to responsibly ensure that students get all of the information and skills they need to protect themselves." The survey is one of three that students are asked to complete over the course of the academic year to determine "what impact the program is having."

An introductory letter about *Making Proud Choices!* warns parents that some of the questions "may make your child feel uncomfortable" or have "an emotional reaction." The letter also includes a form for parents who want to either opt their children out of the survey or the program in its entirety. Parents, however, were unaware of both the survey and the program because the letter went home on the same day students took the survey, a mistake school officials called "unfortunate."

Adam Tenner, Metro TeenAIDS executive director, said his group wants to work with parents, but he believes that most of the school's 12-year-olds are much more sexually experienced than their parents realize. He cited a 2009 Youth Risk Survey finding that nearly 23% of D.C. middle school students have already had sex, and noted the District has a local STD epidemic that is 16 times higher than the national average. He also said his organization has been giving students the same survey for the past seven years without parental objections.

Hardy Middle School principal Dana Nerenburg put the remainder of the *Making Proud Choices!* program on hold in response to parental outrage and publicity over the matter. (www.thegeorgetowndish.com, 10-11-10 and 10-13-10; www.myfoxdc.com, 10-12-10)

