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Has High School and College Cheating Become the New Normal?

Cheating at many levels of the American education system took place in 2012. Students at an elite New York City public high school cheated in order to gain acceptance to elite colleges. Students at Harvard and the University of North Carolina cheated in classes: the former by engaging in prohibited collaboration; the latter in a scenario arranged for them by educators. In several states, educators changed students' answers on achievement tests so their school would rank higher. Aspiring teachers in three states paid to have another person take tests that enabled them to get teaching jobs.

High School Cheating

In a survey taken in March 2012 by the school newspaper, 80% of students at Stuyvesant High School, an elite public high school in Manhattan, said they had cheated. The high school has graduated four Nobel laureates. Admission is competitive and based on scores on a city-wide exam. Once attending class, surrounded by others who have similar intellect and potential to theirs, some students panic and resort to cheating. Often they rationalize their actions. A senior at Stuyvesant told the *New York Times*, "It's like, 'I'll keep my integrity and fail this test' — no. No one wants to fail a test." Somewhere along the way, this student failed to learn that integrity is a precious commodity.

Methods used to cheat at Stuyvesant ranged from old-fashioned to high-tech: students wrote formulas on their person, or on the inside of a water bottle, they worked in collaboration on take-home exams, and they used smartphones to text questions and answers, or to photograph and send tests to students taking the same test later in the day. Cheating on the New York State Regent's exam resulted in eleven Stuyvesant students receiving ten-day suspensions, while about five times that number received lesser suspensions. Many students retook the exam.

A Stuyvesant graduate who is now at an elite college said of fellow Stuyvesant students to whom she gave her homework to copy, "I respect them and think they have integrity." Of the students she "helped" she says, "They're proud of their achievements in college, and sometimes the only way you could've gotten there is to kind of botch your ethics for a couple of things." (*New York Times*, 09-25-12)

Cheating at Harvard University

As many as 125 students are being investigated by Harvard University for allegedly sharing answers on a final exam taken in the spring semester of 2012. In Government 1310, "Introduction to Congress," a class of 279 students was allowed

to access the textbook and the internet, but they were expressly told not to discuss the take-home exam with others. An investigation was launched when the professor brought the exam to the attention of the Harvard Administrative Board. He said he "detected similar strings of words in multiple questions on multiple exams, including the same unusual responses, the same misunderstandings of course materials, and an identical typo," according to the Harvard newspaper *The Crimson* (09-12-12).

In *The Crimson*, students attempted to blame the professor for their having resorted to cheating. One student complained both that an exam question was unclear for having used a term not previously defined in class, and that the pro-

fessor cancelled office hours the morning the exam was due.

A commentary on the cheating at Harvard appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor* and was titled "Harvard cheating scandal? It could be bad teaching." The author, an NYU professor, stated, "Nothing justifies [the students'] alleged cheating," but he goes on to justify their cheating by indicating it was possibly the poor quality of the course that provoked it. (09-13-12)

Some of the alleged cheaters are members of the men's basketball team that in 2012 participated in the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1946. There are also football and baseball players accused, along with non-athletes.

CNN reported that an internal Harvard e-mail obtained by *The Crimson* suggested that student athletes accused of cheating take a year off in order to retain NCAA eligibility to play their sport in the event the university finds them guilty of cheating, and as punishment forces the athlete to

take a year off from school. As CNN reported, Harvard seemed to be trying "to figure out a way to follow the letter of the law but make sure there was minimal damage to its athletic program." Both the co-captains of the Harvard men's basketball team are involved in the cheating scandal, and both have withdrawn from school for next year, apparently following the suggestion by the university to protect their eligibility.

In an opinion piece, CNN negatively contrasted the Harvard University reaction to the 1950 West Point response to cheating by football players there. In the latter case, 90 cadets caught cheating were expelled, including football players. The expulsions resulted in the previously winning Army football team losing all but two games in 1951. West Point chose "damage to their athletic program" over condoning cheating (09-09-12).

(See *Cheating*, page 4)

Minnesotans Protest State Social Studies Standards

Minnesota citizens submitted enough hearing requests to force an administrative law judge to hear their concerns over the failings of the Minnesota Department of Education's proposed social studies core standards. Critics offered testimony in December regarding poor content, lack of rigor, and the standards' alleged violations of several laws.

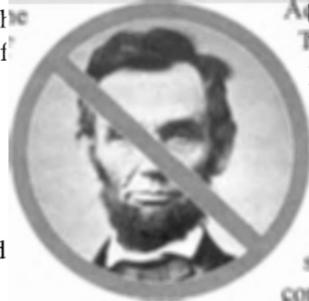
Those presenting testimony against the proposed standards included two college professors, two state legislators, a former Advanced Placement biology teacher, a woman raised in communist Poland, businesspeople, and several other concerned citizens. Some citizens objected that the social studies standards make no mention of Christopher Columbus, Sacagawea, Thomas Paine, William Penn, Abraham Lincoln, or Theodore Roosevelt. Neither do the standards mention liberty, patriotism, or religious freedom.

A general villainization of America was summarized in the following Education Liberty Watch testimony:

Securing inherent rights of life, liberty, and property has made America the freest, most prosperous, and most generous nation in the history of the world. Yet the concept of American exceptionalism is completely absent from these standards. Instead, there is an incredibly out of balance emphasis on the concept of America as an oppressive culture with an almost obsessive focus on racism, slavery and the wrongs done to the indigenous peoples. (12-20-2012)

Among those persons critics say the World History curriculum fails to mention are Leonardo da Vinci, Martin Luther, Adolf Hitler, Mao, Margaret Thatcher, and Osama bin Laden. According to Education Liberty Watch testimony, the standards demonstrate a "failure to properly contrast the deprivation, failure, and death associated with communism/ command economies with the benefits of capitalism and free markets. The phrase 'free market' has been removed" from the standards.

Critics of the standards also cited several violations of law, including the decreased rigor from the 2004 standards that is a violation of Minnesota statutes that demand increased rigor.



Living High in Palm Beach County

An audit of Palm Beach County, Florida Schools (PBCS) released in December 2012 showed 85% of schools had some type of financial irregularity in 2011. The district auditor stated that this is actually an improvement from past performance in the district. In 2012 the school board approved GPS navigation systems for buses and raises for teachers. Also, an independent education group found several million dollars spent by the district on unexplained extras. The district faced a \$52 million dollar deficit in 2012, according to the *Palm Beach Post*. (11-16-2011)

The audit found that besides \$100,000 in unapproved overtime, there are widespread problems with "purchasing cards" that schools use to buy supplies.

Other issues range from carelessness to criminality.

A grand jury indicted a PBCS high school band instructor in 2012 for unwarranted use of \$60,000.

Large amounts of money were found to be unaccountably missing from certain schools. \$12,000 is missing at an elementary school and the case has been sent to the State Attorney's office for review. \$33,000 is missing from the child-care program at another elementary school for the years 2008-10. The program was investigated by school police and further action is pending.

(See *Living High*, page 4)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

Spanking in public schools has been outlawed in 31 states. Nineteen states allow it but it is often banned at the county level and there is sometimes a “no-paddle list” for parents to indicate that their child should not be spanked at school. U.S. Department of Education statistics show that in 1976 there were 1.5 million students “paddled” at school. In 2006, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 223,000 children spanked at school. (*Washington Post*, 01-02-13)

In a speech given at the Illinois Labor History Society, Chicago Teachers Union Pres. Karen Lewis joked about mob killings of “wealthy” people. Video posted at EAGNews.com shows that Lewis, referring to the 1920s, said, “The labor leaders of that time, though, were ready to kill. They were. They were just — off with their heads. They were seriously talking about that.” Some audience members then laughed and applauded. Lewis continued, “But the key is they think nothing of killing us. They think nothing of putting our people in harm’s way. They think nothing of lethal working conditions.” Lewis then used schools without air conditioning as an example of lethal working conditions.

An NYU study has shown that city educators spend less than an hour a day accessing the New York City Department of Education’s \$80 million student-data system. The NYC schools Chief Academic Officer justified the cost stating, “\$80 million over four years was a ‘tiny amount of money’ in the scope of the [NYC] DOE’s \$24 billion annual budget, and ‘an investment that was well worth it.’” He said that gym and kindergarten teachers would never need to access the system, and added that some teachers may fear the technology. The Achievement Reporting and Innovation System replaced other electronic and paper systems and gives teachers and administrators access to student records. (*Wall Street Journal*, 10-21-12)

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Sikh Religion and Culture to be Taught in California Schools

California students will study the religion, history, and culture of Sikh immigrants, according to new history and social studies standards adopted by the state. A 2009 bill to begin this curriculum was put on hold for budgetary reasons; buying revised textbooks costs money. Although the state is experiencing a budget crisis worse today than in 2009, Senate Bill 1540 passed in 2012, and was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown after Sikh advocacy groups and others pressed for action.



Sikh Symbol

Legislators revived the bill partially because of an August 2012 shooting at a Temple (gurdwara) in Wisconsin. A gunman with alleged ties to a white supremacist movement killed six Sikhs inside their Wisconsin gurdwara in Oak Creek, a Milwaukee suburb. There is no explanation as to motive because the shooter committed suicide.

“The fact that people are mindful of the tragic consequence of not understanding one another’s cultures and respecting them was very much in people’s mind,” said California State Sen. Loni Hancock. She continued, “You can see, when our students learn what different cultural garb is and why it matters to people,” they become more accepting of those differences. (Sikh News Network, 11-28-12)

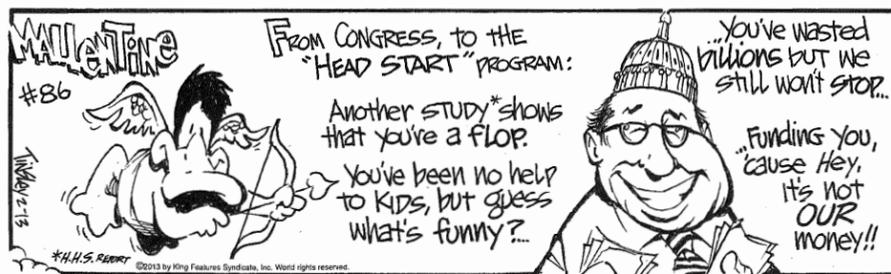
Proponents of the new standards believe that, if students learn about the beliefs, as well as the costumes of Sikh people, there will be greater differentiation between them and Muslims.

The curriculum states, “The three basic principles of Sikhism are honest living, sharing with the needy, and praying to the same and one God.”

Sikhs wear turbans and beards and are sometimes confused with Muslims, but they are not Muslim. “You are literally wearing your religion on your head. You’re wearing it out of commitment to your faith and so you can be easily identified as a Sikh,” explained Manbeena Kaur, education director for the Sikh Coalition, an advocacy group formed after the 9/11 attacks that brought Muslims, and by default Sikhs because of similar attire, under greater scrutiny. (*Christian Science Monitor*, 08-06-12)

In 2011 the National Geographic Channel, CNN, and the *Financial Times* each portrayed Sikhs in ways that could lead to confusion. The National Geographic Channel mistakenly pictured Sikhs in an episode titled “Inside Al Qaeda.” When Osama bin Laden was killed, pictures appearing in online editions of CNN and the British *Financial Times* (See *Sikh Religion*, page 4)

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Stealing Free Lunch in Chicago

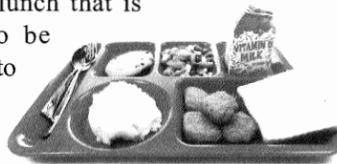
The Inspector General (IG) for the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has found widespread fraud in the district school lunch program. Not only are children with the means to pay getting free meals, but increased federal and state funding goes to the Chicago district for having more “lunch assisted” students.

Results of the initial investigation were recently released and revealed that some of the parents defrauding the system are CPS employees.

In a review of 1,000 cases of children enrolled in the program, “an astonishing 707 recipients — nearly 71 percent — had their benefits decreased” because of violations by parents. The IG’s report further stated: “This overwhelmingly suggests that the fraud problem pervades the entire application process.”

Fifty-five employees of CPS, including principals and assistant principals, are among those cited in the fraud. Most school employees involved in the initial investigation “have resigned, been disciplined or fired,” according to CBS News in Chicago.

In order to qualify for the free lunch that is meant to be provided to poor children, parents



fill out a form stating their income. In one case, a married couple’s “combined CPS salaries of \$230,000 weren’t listed on the application of their children.”

CBS in Chicago and the Better Government Association [BGA] first disclosed that “CPS employees were gaming the \$175 million program meant for poor children” in a 2010 report. “This is a scam, a scandal and a rip-off of staggering proportions. I have rarely seen any systemic rip-off of this magnitude,” said a BGA representative.

It is expected that federal prosecutors will conduct a wider investigation, with the cooperation of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture which funds the free lunch program. It is taxpayers who are being cheated in this scandal. (CBS News, 01-07-2013)

Book of the Month



The Politically Incorrect Guide to Real American Heroes, Brion McClanahan, Ph.D., Regnery Publishing, 2012, 272 pp., \$19.95



The Politically Incorrect Guide to Real American Heroes presents an assortment of Americans from various time periods in a variety of professions. These people are inspiring and their stories instill pride in America and even offer the occasional taste of adventure.

Among the quintessential American characteristics that have led to national success are: dedication, bravery, individual responsibility, self-discipline, and self-reliance. Brion McClanahan believes that today the very characteristics that previously made men and women heroic are now viewed negatively, or seen as simply quaint. Furthermore, some heroes we should herald have been forgotten.

George Washington, who faced and overcame “the greatest military in the world at that time,” is now remembered on a holiday shared with all presidents.

Schoolchildren may know the name Robert E. Lee, but most fail to understand the personal crisis he faced in turning away from the nation he loved so dearly to lead the South into battle. Knowledge of the character of the man would help students to understand the complexities of the Civil War, instead of accepting the misconception that it was a simplistic wrong vs. right undertaking.

Juliette Gordon Low is a feminist hero for founding the Girl Scouts, but from her own words it is apparent that today’s morals would appall her. She said, “Many a boy has been strengthened in his character and his whole life made happier by the brave refusal of a girl to do wrong; while the opposite weakness has been the cause of endless misery and wretchedness.”

Instead of demonizing 19th-century businessmen for use as “propaganda for modern class warfare,” the author suggests Americans should learn about the character traits that made John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie successful, and the ways that both were dedicated to bettering the world.

S.B. Fuller, the wealthiest Black American in the 1960s, lost everything because he spoke freely against trying to legislate equality for his race. He believed that achieving economic equality was the best way to reach racial equality.

In the section on “Frauds,” McClanahan exposes people currently held up as heroes who are not heroic. For example, John Dewey’s goal to modernize education through “modification of traditional ideals of culture, traditional subjects of study, and traditional methods of teaching and discipline” is responsible for many of the problems in American schools today.

This book is suitable for children until the author addresses the serial philandering of the Kennedy clan.

FOCUS: Education's Cheating Epidemic

by Victor Dorff

Originally appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on July 17, 2012

Cheating was, is and probably always will be a fact of life. Recently, technology has provided new ways to cheat, but advanced electronics can't be blamed for our increasing willingness to tolerate it. Once upon a time, being an honorable person included the notion that your word was your bond, and integrity was a crucial element in establishing a good reputation. At least, that was part of the narrative that made up our social compact. My teaching experience tells me, however, that lying and cheating are seen by a lot of kids today as a crucial part of any path to success. The only shame is in getting caught.

Students tell me that math is the easiest course in which to cheat because they can program calculators before a test and cheat undetected. An English teacher told me she no longer counts her vocabulary quizzes in her students' grades because she hasn't found a way to stop them from copying the answers. And our school's not-uncommon policy is basically to forgive a first offense and to enter it into the permanent record only if the student is caught again.

Compounding the problem is the fact that many students aren't fully aware of what constitutes cheating. While teaching at a university a few years ago, I was surprised when a student I had accused of plagiarizing by cutting and pasting text from a website denied having cheated. He indignantly argued that he would never cut and paste — he had retyped the entire thing.

A few weeks ago, a student took my final exam in the morning and gave the answers to someone who was taking it that afternoon. The second student didn't notice that the question on his test was slightly different, and the answer was now wrong. When confronted, he professed not to understand that he had cheated. He thought that getting a test answer from another student in advance was no different than studying with a partner. A few days later, when his mother came in to find out why her son had failed, she too said she couldn't understand the difference.

In a survey of students last month, I asked what they thought of the idea of requiring next semester's students to sign a pledge that said, simply, "I will not lie, cheat or steal." Most thought it was a great idea, but they didn't think the pledge would change anything.

As for the proposed penalties, they thought that giving an F on an assignment was OK, giving an F on the report card was acceptable but harsh and that putting the names of the cheaters on a public "wall of shame" would be going too far.

That implies that students put a value on their public reputation, so a wall of shame might be an effective threat. But the idea didn't fly any better with my colleagues than it did with my students. One compared it to cutting off the hands of a thief as a deterrent to crime. Another went so far as to say that it would be the same as taking the offending students outside and having the class throw things at them. Instead of focusing on the penalty for cheating, she said, we should be addressing the pressures that make students feel they need to cheat to succeed.

She has a point. It's easy to see how



students these days end up feeling that cheating is an accepted part of success. They hear every day about people borrowing money they had no way of paying back, and banks falsifying forms to enable the borrowing, and Wall Street brokers knowingly selling worthless housing securities based on those loans. And no one was punished for that, except for those who happened to be holding the bag when someone noticed it was empty.

Today's vice-president of the United States was caught having plagiarized his stump speech in the 1980s. At the time, many thought that would be the end of

his political career, but in today's world, it's just one of those things.

Students, parents, teachers and administrators complain that there is too much cheating going on in our schools, but they tend to point at each other when asked who should be responsible for fixing the problem. That's not how change will happen — but something has to change.

Cheating needs to be addressed as part of a cultural problem. It is up to us to make it unacceptable not only in schools but also throughout society. Every time we accept it as unavoidable or tolerable, we help ensure that the culture of cheating is passed on to the next generation.

Victor Dorff, a former attorney and journalist, teaches math at Palisades Charter High School in California.

When Students Cheat Liberals Retreat

by Mike Adams

Originally published at Townhall.com on September 14, 2012

The best argument against liberalism is that it doesn't work. That should be obvious to any teacher who has to deal with student cheating. Even some sociology teachers are beginning to learn this although they are not aware that they are learning it. Like rats in a Skinner box, their behavior is being modified by reality even when they lack the intellectual capacity to recognize it. It warms my heart to see old liberals changing their ways, even if mindlessly. So I have written a column about it, which I am hoping will someday be reprinted by the *New York Times*.

Liberals are reticent to address the issue of student cheating because it reminds them of the fallen nature of man. Utopia requires cooperation and evidence that people tend to cheat undermines the view that they are inclined to cooperate. So liberals would prefer to ignore evidence of cheating in order to preserve a vision of what "society" ought to be and could be if only they were given the means (read: more of our money) to re-engineer it.

But evidence of student cheating has become too widespread to ignore. So the liberals in my department have started circulating articles on the subject coming from reputable sources like the *New York Times* (sarcasm = off). Some of these articles and some of the faculty reactions to them have focused on what they describe as "a culture of cheating." Accordingly, some liberal faculty members have started talking about what needs to be done about it. Others have started acting on it. This should be causing cognitive dissonance for several reasons:

1. **Merit is irrelevant.** Sociology students are frequently fed the liberal line that people do not succeed in America on the basis of their own merits. The old "it isn't what you know, it's who you know" maxim is more than just a cultural adage. It seeps into the college curriculum in sociology classes that focus on Marxian conflict theories. Students are routinely taught that wealth, power, and privilege are the keys to success. This tends to denigrate the importance of knowledge. It should go without saying that people are less inclined to rely on their own achievements if their efforts are thus devalued. The connection of such notions to acceptance of cheating is fairly obvious. If we teach people that they cannot succeed through legitimate efforts we will soon see them pursue success through illegitimate means. As always, liberals fail to understand that ideas have consequences. And bad ideas can have very bad consequences.
2. **Ethnocentrism is unacceptable.** Sociologists like to teach others that it is wrong to judge other cultures by the standards of one's own culture. Such judgments are called "ethnocentric." This concept has slowly crept into mainstream liberal thinking. That is unfortunate because promoting anti-ethnocentrism is problematic for at least two reasons: 1. It tends to undermine the idea that one's actions (including cheating) can be considered objectively wrong. 2. It renders efforts to condemn a "culture of cheating" hypocritical. Remember that we aren't supposed to judge other cultures!
3. **Punishment is ineffective.** Sociologists routinely teach the liberal idea that punishment is ineffective and the corresponding idea that "society" has an obligation to rehabilitate criminals. Then, in their own syllabi, they warn students that cheating will be punished. Claiming to be shocked when their threats are ignored, they send students through the campus penal system, not through rehabilitation. And the liberal campus penal system can be quite punitive and dismissive of due process. No attorneys, no tape recorders, no note taking, no soup . . . oops! I mean, no due process for you!

In a nutshell, sociology, like modern liberalism, teaches that we can't get by on our own merits, we should not judge other cultures, and that punishment does not work. When students cheat, however, the sociologist urges advancement through one's own merits, condemnation of the culture of cheating, and punishment of the transgressor.

It is little wonder that many students are intellectually lost and morally confused. They make the mistake of taking their sociology professors seriously, which means buying into contradictory liberal ideas. So my advice is two-fold: First, don't cheat in college because it is objectively wrong to do so. Second, don't cheat yourself by choosing a major populated by hypocrites who cannot abide by the consequences of their own ideas.

Mike Adams, Ph.D. is a Criminology Professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, a political columnist, the author of several books, and a frequent speaker at college campuses.

Cheating (Continued from page 1)**Cheating at the University of North Carolina**

Football and basketball players have gained academically by dishonest means at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). Phony classes were arranged for athletes and other students in the Department of African-American Studies; classes in which no attendance was required, papers were written by tutors, and plagiarism was allowed. Details of the scandal were exposed in 2012, but allegations go back as far as 1997.

An internal faculty-led investigation of the African-American Studies program released a report in May 2012. The report referred to “impermissible extra benefits,” and stated that “serious course anomalies were identified,” and that in some cases of independent study courses there was “no evidence that the faculty member of record or any other faculty member actually supervised the course and the work, although grade rolls were signed and submitted.” Grades “were submitted to the Office of the Registrar with faculty signatures that appear to be forged.” Professors say they did not teach the classes and the signatures are not theirs.

Another report, conducted by former North Carolina Gov. James Martin and concluded in December 2012, found that 216 classes in the Department of African-American Studies had proven or potential problems, and found 560 suspected unauthorized grade changes. The report said, “Non-athletes were also enrolled in the courses, receiving the same good grades as the athletes,” and stated that it was “an academic scandal, not a sports scandal” (*Raleigh News and Observer*, 12-21-12).

According to the *Raleigh News and Observer*, “even if the scheme did not start with a goal of keeping athletes eligible to play sports, there is evidence to suggest that it ended up that way. Records from the academic support program for athletes show that staff there knew about the no-show classes and knew they were not intended to be challenging.” (12-29-12)

The investigations led to the resignation of the chairman of the department. The university chancellor will also resign effective at the end of this school year.

Aspiring Teachers Cheat

In Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee, prospective teachers allegedly paid Clarence Mumford, Sr., a former employee of the Memphis City School District, to send someone else to take tests that would allow them to become a teacher, or to receive special certification in a particular subject. Using a fake driver’s license, the stand-in would arrive at the testing center and take the test. It is alleged that this fraud has been going on since 1995. If convicted, Mumford faces 2 to 20 years in prison for each of over 60 counts. Teachers who paid Mumford \$1,500 to \$3,000 to send in a ringer face the same prison sentence, but most only have one count to face.

Additionally disturbing is the fact that the exams in question are easy and anyone unable to pass them has no business leading a classroom.

According to the *New York Times*, the cheating ring was initially detected in 2009 when a test proctor noticed the same Memphis substitute teacher take two tests on the same day; in the morning he used a man’s name and in the afternoon he used a woman’s name (11-27-2012).

Educators Cheat

Tying remuneration to student performance may be too much temptation for some to resist. In order to make scores on standardized tests appear better than the students’ actual learning warranted, widespread cheating by educators in recent years has rocked school districts in Georgia, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, and California. Smaller incidents have been uncovered in other states.

The cheating in Georgia was widespread with dozens of educators being found to have falsified students’ test results. The D.C. investigation resulted in several schools’ test results being invalidated and some schools receiving letters of reprimand.

The California Department of Education reduced the state rank of 23 schools in 2012 because of cheating on standardized tests. Educators committed a range of violations from failure to cover bulletin boards showing test answers to coaching during tests. At one school, a teacher who was also the school’s testing coordinator “corrected student tests and sent students back to their desk to fix incorrect responses.” (*Los Angeles Times*, 10-29-2012)

In New Jersey, investigators found erasure rates at some schools that were six or seven times the averages of other schools. At one school “the rate of improvement for students in the sixth grade over previous scores defied all odds,” according to the N.J. Department of Education report.

The Future of Cheating

Some say the cheating scandals are a natural result of efforts to systematically remove Judeo-Christian values, or any values at all, from our education system and from society as a whole. Moral relativism removes the moral absolutes of right and wrong. When students, teachers, and schools fail to see that success is valuable only when achieved through honesty and

perseverance, they are ripe for cheating.

The editors of the *Christian Science Monitor* stated, “Intellectual honesty remains the bedrock of academia, not to mention an essential in business and citizenship. . . . Institutions like Harvard have long sought to instill the principles of honesty, but that often takes a back seat to a competition for grades and a drive for success.” (09-06-2012)

Indoctrination edited by Charles LaVerdiere (see *Education Reporter* book review, January 2013) includes a letter written by Sarah LaVerdiere, explaining her resignation as a teacher in the public school system. Her letter to parents offers reasons that she can no longer participate in the broken school system. She says, “Instead of producing focused, self-disciplined children, the fruits of this flawed system are children who are overly confident, self-centered, motivated only by rewards, rebellious, and totally unprepared to face adverse consequences for their bad choices as they move into adulthood.” These are attributes and behaviors that lead students, as well as adults, to cheat.

The fact that so many of the cheaters in the 2012 cases are adults is perhaps the most shocking aspect. Perhaps children are still learning and testing the waters. But the adults involved have failed to gain the wisdom that age should have given them, making it difficult for their students to ever gain that wisdom.

Surely there are many students and teachers who prize integrity over getting into and staying in an elite academic program, winning in sports, getting a raise due to improved student performance, or getting a job through cheating. But too many do not. Schools in which integrity is ignored and overrun by ambition and deceit are “educating” students to become morally bankrupt adult citizens who do whatever they deem necessary to get ahead.

Living High (Continued from page 1)

“Other cases involved thousands of missing dollars, spotty tracking of fundraising cash and outstanding deficits in school funds,” reported the *Sun Sentinel*. (12-07-12)

Apparently just as clueless about thrift as individual schools, the Palm Beach County School Board in December 2012 approved a \$500,000 contract to install GPS on district buses. According to the *Palm Beach Post*, the system will “track the buses’ locations, speed, and use of stop arms and flashing lights.” The newspaper also noted that the district already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in 2002 on a different GPS system that was “scrapped” a few years later. (12-12-12)

A PBCS district teacher commented, “There are a hundred better ways to spend \$500,000. The district does not have the finances to be purchasing a luxury.” (*Sun Sentinel*, 12-12-12)

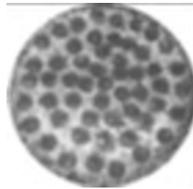
On January 9, 2013, the Palm Beach County School Board approved a union contract that gives raises to teachers. Raises are retroactive to the beginning of the school year. Teachers’ raises range “from \$678 for new hires up to \$4,300 for some of the most experienced teachers. . . . Last year, teachers got a \$500

raise and the year before a \$500 bonus.” (*Palm Beach Post*, 12-20-12)

Lavish and unexplained spending by PBCS was uncovered by the Education Action Group (EAG). EAG used an Open Records request to acquire fiscal year 2010-11 credit card and banking records from the Palm Beach County School district.

The EAG investigation found that PBCS officials spent more than a million dollars on cell phones. They spent \$685,000 on hotels, and \$335,000 on airfare. \$66,000 was inexplicably spent on water park tickets — decidedly odd for a county on the Florida coast. Add to this \$105,000 spent on pizza, \$25,000 spent on movie tickets, and \$94,000 paid to Island Oasis Frozen Cocktail Co., and the party atmosphere of PBCS shines through. District officials have so far refused to give any explanation to EAG.

EAG asked, “How can they throw around money in that fashion when they’re facing a \$50 million budget deficit that threatens teaching jobs and student programs?” (12-12-2012)

**\$105,000****Sikh Religion** (Continued from page 2)

showed a Sikh man reading about the death. CNN’s article showed a photo of bin Laden juxtaposed with that of a Sikh man. These associations could certainly lead to misunderstandings.

According to California guidelines, general and specific information about Sikhs will be taught to students from 4th grade through high school. Classroom study will likely begin before textbooks are ready, using temporary materials because textbook development takes time. Revised textbooks could have been delayed for budgetary reasons if Californians had not approved Proposition 30 in November 2012.

The newly mandated curriculum will likely spill over into other states because “California is such a large textbook market, when California adopts a framework, textbook companies develop new textbooks,” according to Sen. Hancock, quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*. (09-28-12)

Sikhs in California opened the first Punjabi language school in the United States (Sikh News Network, 07-12-11). The Sacramento Public Charter School is lo-

cated adjacent to the Sacramento gurdwara. Like other public charter schools catering to one race, ethnicity or other subgroup, it is officially open to all students. Adam Menke, the only school board member to vote against the establishment of the school, expressed concern “that the Punjabi school would not be able to attract a diverse student body that mirrors other district campuses.” (*Sacramento Bee*, 06-27-11)

With timing that was unfortunate for Sikhs’ public relations, in the same time frame that the new California curriculum was announced, stabbings and arrests occurred during a brawl outside the Yuba City, California Tierra Buena Sikh Temple in November 2012. Friction allegedly arose over an election dispute and involved two competing factions at the temple. The gurdwara president, Rashpal Purewal, told the Sikh News Network, “I am ashamed of both sides that it should not come to this. It is very sad.” There are 4,500 members of the gurdwara. (11-23-12)

There are about 600,000 Sikhs in the United States and 22 million adherents worldwide, according to the *Christian Science Monitor* (08-06-12).