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Entitlement Promise in SOTU Speech

In his annual State of the Union address, President Barack Obama announced a new federal program called “America’s College Promise.” It is a guarantee to provide students with a tuition-free two-year college education at community or “junior” colleges across the nation. The White House estimates it could cost \$60 billion over ten years. The main means of paying for the new entitlement seems to be tax increases.

Nine million students could be expected to receive a free ride if this plan were to get through Congress. Individual states would be required to provide about one-quarter of the funds for student tuition.

Handouts Result in High Prices & Low Standards

Heritage Foundation Fellow in Education Lindsey Burke says the America’s College Promise “proposal will serve as little more than a federal handout to the community college system.” She points out that community colleges could readily raise tuition once it is covered by taxpayers. Federal loans and grants to students are already proven to be one reason that the price of a college education has risen so dramatically. America’s College Promise will likely result in higher prices at community colleges.

Burke suggests, “Allow markets in higher education to work by limiting federal subsidies instead of increasing them, and costs will fall for students attending colleges of all types.” (Daily-Signal.com, 1-9-15)

Sam Houston State University professor of education Dr. D. Patrick Saxon is worried that the “massive amounts of federal dollars at stake” will cause lowered expectations of students. He says:

Language buried in the ‘Building High Quality Community Colleges’ section of the WhiteHouse.gov briefing specifies that high graduation rates are a requirement for a particular type of eligible program. And if the government wants high graduation rates, we might expect that there will be college administrators with palms wide open asking ‘How high?’

Saxon continues, “The pressure to graduate students would be placed squarely at odds with instructors’ commitments to maintain course quality, academic rigor, and teaching standards.” (HechingerReport.org, 1-22-15)

Is Community College the Answer?

Students who graduate from community colleges earn higher wages than those with just a high school diploma, but one goal of two-year col-

leges should be to increase the number of those who go on to complete a four-year degree.

The Cato Institute reports that: “According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, only 20% of community college students transfer to four-year schools, and only 72% of those will have finished or remained enrolled four years later. So, from what we can tell, we are looking at completion for just around 34% of community college students.”

Who is Harmed?

Education Week indicates that funding for America’s College Promise program will come from “raising the top capital gains tax, hiking the amount of inherited money subject to taxes, and placing new fees on financial institutions.” (1-20-15) Taxpayers weren’t asked if they wanted to pay for other people’s children to attend college, but income redistribution would support this program.

Another part of the administration’s funding plan was to punish those parents who have been responsible and anticipated college expenses by contributing to 529 Education Plans for their children. Plan withdrawals are currently tax-free when used for education expenses, but the Obama administration proposed to tax withdrawals from 529 accounts. That money would have been used to pay tuition for students whose parents didn’t plan ahead. Outrage over this strategy seems to have put a halt to the plan this time, but this is just the sort of punishment for self-sufficiency that progressives believe is “fair.”

Truly low-income parents are not able to set aside for college, but they often have college expenses paid. As Lindsey Burke states, “And all of this spending [on America’s College Promise] is unlikely to help low-income students, who already have access to Pell Grants, which likely cover the bulk of their tuition obligations at community colleges.” (Watchdog.org, 1-20-15)

In his speech, Obama said the new federal program aims to “lower the cost of community college — to zero.” There is no clarification of qualifications students need beyond a “C” GPA. No details about accountability, management of the program, or means to measure outcomes were offered in the speech or by White House press releases. Those who ask for such details and a way to ensure this program doesn’t result in skyrocketing community college tuition will surely be accused of wanting to deny a college education to students.

Tennessee’s Program is Funded

The federal America’s College Promise plan is loosely based on the “Tennessee Promise Scholarship Program” (See *Entitlement Promise*, page 4)

Common Core Math Invasion

The November 12, 2014 edition of *Education Week*, “American Education’s Newspaper of Record,” features a 26-page section that attempts to explain and justify Common Core math. The supplement is titled, “Making Sense of the Math: The Common Core in Practice.” Almost every other page features an advertisement for a Common Core-based product that would supposedly make the new math more readily understood by students and teachers. There are more than a dozen ads, many are full-page, and most are touting Common Core-related products. The ads sport statements such as, “Raising the Bar and Making it Reachable” and “The Future of Math Education is Here.”

But there is serious concern that Common Core math is not better than previous methods, is not rigorous, and is in fact confusing students, parents, and even teachers who are supposed to be leading students. The *Education Week* insert seems meant to overcome, or at least diminish, those concerns.

Fallout from Common Core (CC) math isn’t only happening in states that adopted the standards. Virginia did not adopt Common Core when 45 other states rushed to get Race to the Top grants offered by the Obama administration.

\$100,000 Raise For Every Principal?

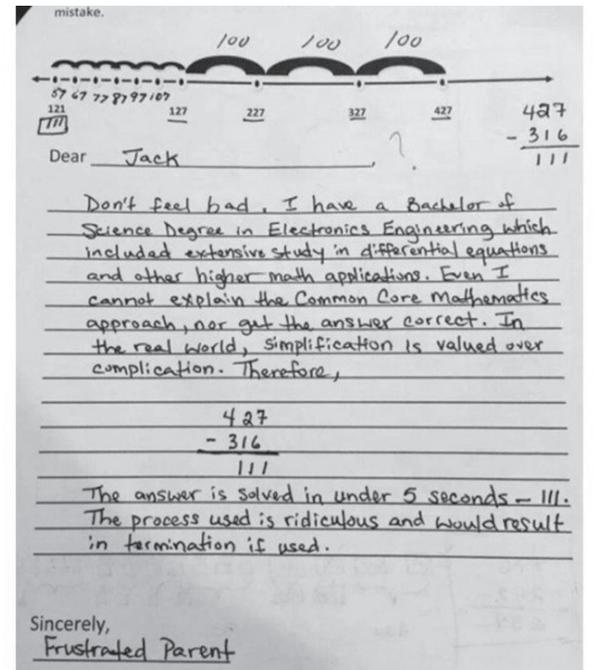
In June of 2014, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute released a report called “Lacking Leaders.” In it, Fordham suggests giving every principal of every public school in the nation a raise of \$100,000.

The first question that comes to mind is: Are they serious? Does it make sense for a principal in New York City to get the same additional \$100,000 as one in a rural area where perhaps earning \$100,000 to begin with would make the principal the highest paid individual in the county?

Principals are important as leaders of schools; both teachers and students thrive when they have the leadership of a good principal. Research done by Stanford University’s Hoover Institute indicates “that highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount.” (Education Next, Winter 2013)

The Fordham report suggests that too many principals are unqualified and that paying school principals closer to what a business executive earns would attract better candidates. Fordham says principals should be “executives with expertise in instruction, operations, and finance.”

Yet, Common Core math is being used in Virginia classrooms. This is partially due to changes in textbooks and materials and because Virginia is choosing to



follow the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recommendations.

What’s Wrong With CC Math?

The Staunton, Virginia *News Leader* newspaper exposes the fact that although the Virginia Board of Education rejected Common Core in 2010, math teaching in Virginia schools aligns 95% with Common Core. (12-27-14)

(See *Math Invasion*, page 4)

Hobbling Principals

Principals’ authority and autonomy are hobbled by union regulations, by federal mandates, and by copious amounts of paperwork they must compile. Many principals say they need more administrative help to fulfill the obligations of the job and state a preference for more help over more money. (The Atlantic, 6-24-14)

Principals are judged by the test scores achieved by students in today’s data-driven school atmosphere. If students don’t perform, the school might face sanctions from the federal government or possible takeover by the state.

Fordham notes that if a teacher chooses to become an assistant principal, on the track to becoming a principal, he or she faces a cut in pay because of no longer being “eligible for supplemental pay [teachers receive] through special duties they can assume or national board certifications.” The report quotes an assistant principal who says, “If you are a lead teacher in our district, you can make significantly more than assistant principals, while shouldering less accountability and working fewer days, so there is no incentive to leave the classroom.”

(See *Raise for Principal*, page 4)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

After initially announcing that the Muslim “call to prayer” would be sounded from the belfry of the famed Duke University Chapel tower, the university reversed its decision. Duke has historic links to the Methodist church, but has long been a secular campus. Officials indicated they rethought their decision due to a fear of violence, implying that there’s danger posed by Christians or Jews. The compromise is that the signal to Muslims will instead be heard from the quadrangle below the chapel. (*The American Spectator*, 1-21-15)

A Kirksville, Missouri physician and his wife received a note from a substitute teacher complaining about the contents of their daughter’s lunch. The teacher wrote, “Please see that [Alia] packs a proper lunch tomorrow” and requested a parent sign the note. The child’s father declined to sign and instead posted the note on Facebook, writing, “At least get your facts straight before intruding.” He is an obesity specialist who explained that although the lunch included a few marshmallows and a bit of chocolate, his daughter also ate ham and low-fat string cheese and further, it wasn’t the school’s business. School authorities claimed “the best of intentions.” (NBC, 1-23-15)

The parents of an 8-year-old autistic boy who was arrested, jailed, and put in a straightjacket chair are suing Sumner County, Tennessee for the treatment of their son. Although there was a crisis management plan in place specifying how outbursts should be handled, when the child hit his teacher at the alternative school he attended, the school did not follow it. Such plans are developed by school authorities with input from parents. The parents say their son, who is now on probation and attending a different school, is deeply disturbed since the event; they are suing for \$500,000. (WCRZ.com, 1-15-15)

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NYC Middle Schoolers Get Dinner at School

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has delivered to voters his promised expansion of after-school programs. At least 75,000 of the approximately 225,000 middle school students in the city are attending structured programs after the school day ends. This is an additional 31,000 students over last year and further expansion is coming.

One mother who works until eight most evenings as a hairdresser transferred her 11-year-old son to a different school because she knew it would offer an after-school program. Other students interviewed had a parent at home; a seventh grader said, “My mom is at home, but she doesn’t speak a lot of English.” Another said that if she wasn’t at the program, “I would be stuck at home trying to do my homework getting yelled at by my mom to do the dishes and take care of my [2-year-old] sister.”

But supporters of the expanded program say it is needed to help students who would be home alone, on the streets, or in city parks.

Programs are run by community organizations; program directors must have a college degree but no educational expertise or experience with children is required. There are 110 community organizations participating in the after-school program.

Officials are working to develop a process to evaluate the “quality and

impact” of the programs offered. Some hope an academic focus would mean a continuation of the school day. Others feel that offering children art, music, and sports is a better option. Most sites currently offer a mixed focus.

All the programs give students time to complete their homework. One participating school, Fort Greene Preparatory Academy in Brooklyn, reports homework completion rates have doubled and behavior problems have decreased.

Dinner is served to students at many programs.

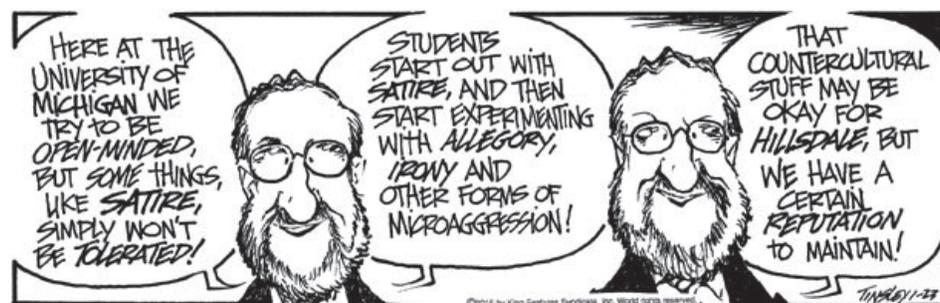
Mayor de Blasio is funding the program with a two-year state budget allocation, while he continues to press for a tax increase on wealthy citizens as a permanent funding source.

According to the *New York Post*, an additional 2,500 spots will open up in March at venues other than public schools. Another 5,000 spots will be available at public schools next fall, which would result in over 105,000 middle-schoolers attending after-school care. (1-16-15)

At P.S. 109, administrators did not present the program to parents and students as optional. “[They] were told the school day for sixth graders would run until 4:50 p.m. Five months into the program, all but three sixth graders attend regularly.” (HechingerReport.org, 11-25-14 and 1-27-15)



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



702% Increase in Non-teaching Staff

A Fordham Institute report, “The Hidden Half: School Employees Who Don’t Teach,” exposes the huge increase in non-teaching employees at schools. It states:

The number of non-teaching staff in the United States (those employed by school systems but not serving as classroom teachers) has grown by 130% since 1970. Non-teachers — more than three million strong — now comprise half of the public school workforce.

According to Fordham, a 2012 report by the Friedman Foundation found that since “1950, U.S. public schools increased their non-teaching positions by 702% (versus 96% for students and 252% for teachers).”



In the 2010-2011 school year, there were more than a million people employed at public schools in the category of “all other staff who serve in a support capacity and are not included in the categories of central office administrative support, library support, or school administrative support.” Some of these people are bus drivers and cafeteria workers. Others are employed at schools due to “myriad federal legislation,” including Title IX and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

Other school employees support services such as the health and dental care offered at some schools.

The salaries and benefit of non-teaching employees currently “absorb one-quarter of current [total] education expenditures.”

(EdExcellence.net, 8-12-14)

Book of the Month



Savvy Cyber Kids at Home: The Family Gets a Computer, Ben Halpert, Savvy Cyber Kids, Inc., 2014, \$15.99

Computers are wonderful and dangerous. The Savvy Cyber Kids non-profit organization’s aim is to make computer use safe for children by making them aware, at an early age, that they must be careful online. In this first book of three, using bright and fun illustrations by Taylor Southerland, author Ben Halpert introduces Tony and Emma, who get a computer delivered to their home.

The Family Gets a Computer presents the concept of a “screen name” and tells children that they should never share their real names or any other personal information on the internet. This is done in a non-frightening way. Mom says: “Okay kids. The computer is ready. Use your Savvy Cyber Kid name and think twice. Not all people online are nice.”

Book two in the series is *The Defeat of the Cyber Bully*. Tony and Emma are online when another person is not being “nice.” They ask that the person stop, but the meanness continues. They consult their mother who tells them whenever this happens they must tell their parents, grandparents, or a teacher.

The lesson about cyber bullying continues with an explanation that it’s the same thing that can happen on a playground. Mom says, “When you see someone else being bullied, you need to step up and tell the same people you trust.”

The third book is *Adventures Beyond the Screen*, which introduces youngsters to limiting computer use. When the allotted time for Tony and Emma to be on the computer ends, they don’t want to stop. But mom suggests they make a list of activities they can do indoors and outside that don’t involve a computer.

Computers will remain a part of youngsters’ lives. Teaching them positive ways to use them, to be cautious online, and that there are other important activities that don’t involve technology can’t start too young. Parents should work in a proactive way if they want children to love books, to play outdoors, to have real-life interaction with others, and all the things that being a kid was before screens invaded childhood.

These books are targeted at children aged 3-7. Each one ends with: “Let’s play the Savvy Cyber Kids way. Always safe and protected online every day.”

The newly released paperback books are 8 x 10 inches and have coloring activity pages in the back. The first book is available in English, French, Spanish, and German.



FOCUS: Our Higher Education System Fails Leftist Students

by Michael C. Munger

Originally published on August 6, 2014 by the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy and reprinted with permission. (Editor's note: This article is based on the Milton Friedman Day talk given by the author on July 31, 2014 in Wilmington, North Carolina.)

Too often, American college students face a one-question test, one based not on facts, but on ideology. The test: "Are you a liberal, or a conservative?"

The correct answer is, "I'm a liberal, and proud of it." That concerns me.

However, the nature of my concern may surprise you. I'm not worried much about the students who get it wrong; for the most part, they actually get a pretty good education.

I'm worried about those who get it right. The young people that our educational system is failing are *the students on the left*. They aren't being challenged, and don't learn to think.

Students on the left should sue for breach of contract. We promise to educate them, and then merely pat them on the head for having memorized the "correct" answer!

I was Chair of Political Science at Duke for ten years. At a meeting of department heads, we heard from the chair of one of our Departments of Indignation Studies.

(We have several departments named "Something-or-Other Studies." In most cases, they were constituted for the purpose of focusing indignation about the plight of a group that has suffered real and imagined slights and now needs an

academic department to be indignant in.)

At the meeting, the chair of one of those departments said, "I find that I don't really need to spend much time with the liberal students, because they already have it right. I spend most of my time arguing with the conservative students. That's how I spend my time in class."

This woman was teaching conservative students how to think about arguments and evidence; how to make your arguments in a persuasive way. She was *educating* them.

Her liberal students? They were given that one-question test. They were just certified as already "knowing what they need to know."

It may have come as a shock to the parents of these liberal students that they had learned everything they needed to know . . . *in high school!* Having memorized a kind of secular leftist catechism, they were free to wander around the quads of Duke and enjoy themselves.

Once we realize that the problem with our educational system is that we're short-changing students on the left, denying them an education just because they happen to agree with the professor, then we have a path forward.

The way to think of this comes from John Stuart Mill, who argued that we should regard our overall approach to education as collision with error. He wrote:

[The] peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as

well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

So, the absence, in many departments, of dissenting voices is harmful. Not so much harmful to those who would agree with the dissenting voice, but those who are denied the chance to collide with error.

It's as if we asked students to play chess, but only taught them one-move openings. They think that pawn to king four is a better move than pawn to king's rook four, but that's simply a matter of faith.

Conservative students, by contrast, actually learn to play chess. They study the whole game, not just the first move. They learn countermoves, they consider the advantages of different approaches. They search out empirical arguments, and they read articles and white papers.

Mill summarizes the difference brilliantly:

He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. . . . if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion.

What happens when a leftist student confronts arguments he or she disagrees with? After all, they sometimes hear views that contradict their own. The problem is that they have always been rewarded for facile rejoinders, the equivalent of one-move chess games.

There is a ceremony that goes with this, something one of my colleagues calls "The Women's Studies Nod." When someone makes a ridiculously extreme, empirically unfounded but ideologically correct argument, everyone else must nod vigorously.

Not just a, "Yes, that's correct," nod, but "Yes, you are correct, you are one of us, we are one spirit and one great collective shared mind" nod.

What if someone withholds the Nod?

Since the children of the left have never actually had to play a full chess game of argument, they need a response. Their responses are two: "You are an idiot; no one important believes that," or "You are evil; no good person could possibly believe that."

At this point, leftist faculty teach the left students several different moves. Let's consider a few.

Suppose I claim that rent control is a primary reason why there is such a shortage of affordable housing in New York and San Francisco. Here are the responses I have gotten from students:

1. Micro-aggression!
2. Check your privilege! (If they had a mic, they'd drop it, because this is supposed to be so devastating.)
3. You must take money from the Koch Foundation.
4. Economists don't understand the real world.
5. Prices don't measure values. Values are about people. You don't care about people.

Not one of those responses actually responds to, or even tries to understand, the argument that rent controls harm the populations that politicians claim they want to help.

The point is that if you cared about poor people, actually cared about consequences for poor people, you would oppose rent controls. But that's not how the logic of the left works. Instead of caring about the poor, they want to be *seen* as caring about the poor.

Our colleagues on the left could choose to educate their liberal students, but since education requires "collision with error," that is no longer possible. That's because the faculty on the left were themselves educated by neglect, never confronting counterarguments, in a now self-perpetuating cycle of ignorance and ideological bigotry.

We honor and remember Milton Friedman here today. What might Professor Friedman have thought of the problem that I raise? He would probably have said that the answer is competition and empowering consumers to make their own best choices.

(See *Higher Education*, page 4)

Are You Raising Digital Natives or Digital Naïves: Five Tips to Protect Your Child from Digital Dangers

by Ben Halpert

This article appeared in the Michigan Chronicle on October 21, 2014 and is reprinted with permission of the author.

A couple gathers their closest friends and family around the table. The couple is excited, nervous, anxious, and full of joy, all at the same time.

"We're expecting!" they yell.

Cheers and tears of joy typically follow this pronouncement with congratulatory hugs being shared among guests. What was once a traditional moment to be shared and remembered by all present is a fading tradition for many of today's young couples.

Most of today's announcements are shared in 140 characters or less, with a short video, or image. Just as technology plays a role in our daily lives, technology is being integrated in all aspects of our lives.

From the moment of confirmed conception, you know the picture of the proud soon-to-be mom sharing her "+" (positive pregnancy test) via social media, we socialize our yet-to-be born children online. Next are the growing baby-bump and nursery preparation images.

Until one day, we see what we have been waiting for. The social media post from the delivery room. Sometimes we see a clean, cuddly baby and sometimes we see a crying, still attached, straight-from-the-womb newborn.

Every "first" the new bundle of joy has will be documented forever in social media archives with words, sounds, and both still and moving pictures – the first new family photo, first snuggle with the big sister, first bottle, first diaper change, first car ride, first nap on your shoulder, first trip to grandma and grandpa's, first giggle, and first swipe on a smart phone or tablet. I know you have seen it; the image of an infant or toddler "playing" on the device *du jour*.

And it doesn't stop there. We see images of toddlers being potty trained holding an iPhone and images of toddlers or young children having a "play-date," yet each child is holding his or her own tablet and not interacting with the other child. Or the family is at the restaurant

sitting around the table, each one staring at the screens of their favorite device, while all but ignoring the physical presence of their most cherished family members just an arm's-length away.

Clearly, as a society we are raising Digital Natives. But we are also raising Digital Naïves.



When we hand our youngest children smart phones and tablets to keep them entertained, we are missing something. We are missing the opportunity to in-grain cyber ethics into their developing minds, the minds of the next generation. It is hard to read, watch or listen to news media today without hearing of a tragic or unfortunate event related to technology.

What happens if you teach your child about security, privacy, empathy, bully response, screen-time balance, and other aspects of cyber ethics starting at three years old? Perhaps we will raise a generation that knows how to deal with over-sharing on social media, cyber bul-

(See *Digital Dangers*, page 4)

Entitlement Promise *(Continued from page 1)*

gram.” One big difference is that Tennessee has a plan in place to pay for their program. The aim of the Tennessee Promise is to increase the percentage of state residents with a two-year degree from 30% percent to 55% by 2025. It is funded by a \$360 million endowment from state lottery reserves. Federal money is also used because 56% of the state’s community college students receive Pell Grants, averaging \$3,300, leaving only about a \$500 difference for the state to make up for those students. (Watchdog.org, 1-20-15)

The Common Core Connection

Lindsey Burke says that the administration’s College Promise proposal “is likely to produce a six-year high school system by removing responsibility from high schools to prepare students to graduate by 12th grade, knowing a ‘grade 13’ and a ‘grade 14’ — paid for by taxpayers — await students.” She continues, “In fact, the president said as much: ‘I want to spread that idea all across America, so that two years of college becomes as free and universal in America as high school is today.’”

The administration’s amped up funneling of students into community colleges may be an attempt to cover up the failure of Common Core to educate K-12 students. Jane Robbins and Emmett McGroarty, from the American Principles Project, say America’s College Promise may be an early attempt to mask Com-

mon Core deficiencies because the problems will be less apparent at two-year colleges.

Jason Zimba, who drafted the Common Core math standards, admitted in 2010 that the standards were not designed to help students succeed in “the colleges their parents aspire to” and instead would prepare them only for “non-selective colleges.”

To Robbins and McGroarty, it makes sense that the administration would offer free admission to community colleges. They say, “The next round of the deception game seems to be discouraging students from attending four-year universities, where their academic shortcomings would be more glaring.” They believe that community colleges may hide Common Core’s failures. They believe Common Core is inadequate, “especially [for] students from families of modest means who couldn’t pay for 12 years of tutoring to supplement Common Core.” (DailyCaller.com, 1-22-15)

Lindsey Burke concludes:

The president’s proposal is another step toward the White House’s goal of a ‘cradle-to-career’ education system, starting with free preschool and now free community college. But the proposal most certainly won’t be ‘free’ for taxpayers, and will continue to further drive-up the cost of higher education.

Math Invasion *(Continued from page 1)*

Reporting from a Virginia elementary school, the *News Leader* gives the following report of students who, instead of using long division to figure out how many times 7 goes into 184, use “guessing” as a way to find the answer. The newspaper reports this, about a young student working on the math problem:

Damoni just guessed that the solution to the math problem was 12. So she then multiplied 7 by 12 and found that gave her 84, not close at all to 184. She subtracted the 84 from 184 and then took 7 into 100. She did this until the remaining ‘balance’ was two and then added the numbers she guessed together to get the rounded-down answer of 26.

In Virginia, this is called “student-centered math.” Although the state did not adopt Common Core, “for all intents and purposes, ‘student-centered math’ follows Common Core standards” and it is “the way students must understand problems to score well on [Virginia’s] Standards of Learning tests.”

The *News Leader* reports that according to Dori Walk, executive director of instruction for Staunton Schools “every seven years, the department of education reviews standards in each subject and makes changes based on what is considered the best practice. . . . Virginia’s standards and the Common Core standards stem from reports by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics about best practices for teaching the subject.” So, the NCTM is a main reason Virginia students are being taught Common Core math, through the back door.

NCTM Promotes Common Core Math

Promising to do all they can to support Common Core, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) website states:

The widespread adoption of the Common Core Standards for Mathematics presents an unprecedented opportunity for systemic improvement in mathematics education in the United States. [Common Core] offers a foundation for the development of more rigorous, focused, and coherent mathematics curricula, instruction, and assessments that promote conceptual understanding and reasoning as well as skill fluency. (NCTM.org)

In August of 2013, the NCTM called for increased funding for professional development for teachers and other school personnel involved in CC math; funding for research and implementation of CC assessments; and “accommodations in teacher evaluation systems.” The NCTM says, “Most important, all stakeholders must acknowledge that systemic improvement takes a number of years, and a long-term commitment to supporting the Common Core Standards is necessary, even if initial assessment results do not show substantial improvements in student achievement.”

In other words, taxpayers should spend lots more money to implement Common Core math and no one, including math teachers, should be held accountable when students don’t do well when this new, “new math” proves to be yet another failed experiment.

Raise for Principal *(Continued from page 1)*

The Price Tag

In response to what it would cost the nation and taxpayers to give their suggested \$100,000 raise to every principal, the Fordham Institute inadvertently shines a spotlight on two problems holding back the American education system.

Fordham states:

Too costly, you say? Think of it this way: the United States employs roughly 100,000 principals. If we gave each of them a \$100,000 raise, the total price tag would amount to \$10 billion. . . . But that’s less than 2% of the K–12 public school budget — and \$5 billion less than the

total new cost estimated to fund President Obama’s pre-K plan. (Ed-ExcellenceMedia.net, 6-24-14)

The first problem with this statement is that American taxpayers should not be asked to hand over \$10 billion for a dubious \$100,000 per principal experiment.

The second problem is the faulty reasoning that illogically suggests \$100,000 more per principal would be a good deal because it would cost less than the illogical billions that President Obama has committed to getting young children out of their homes, away from their families, and into institutions, under the auspices of failed programs like Head Start.

Higher Education *(Continued from page 3)*

The problem is that education is a difficult arena for this argument, because students don’t know what they don’t know, and so it’s hard for them to know what they should want to know.

Nonetheless, our best hope lies in competition. A consumer-driven revolution in education will change, and in some ways has already changed, the dominance of the left in the academy.

Education is a consumer-driven business, in spite of what college faculty think. No other industry blames failure on its customers. Not even General Motors claimed that car-buyers were too stupid to appreciate their genius.

That is what many traditional colleges have been doing: Our students fail, we don’t. Students, however, are coming to see through that. Many of them, perhaps especially those on the left, recognize that they are being patronized rather than educated.

They want more. They want to hear the best arguments from the other side. It’s more interesting to play against the first team. A young person’s mind, once

stretched by a new idea, never shrinks back to its original dimension.

Lots of people on the left actually care about education. We have friends we don’t recognize. The issue is not ideology, but commitment to education.

I shudder when I see people on our side who want to solve the problem of political correctness simply by reversing the polarity. Conservatives who don’t understand liberal arguments are just as brain dead as the worst graduates being produced by our most craven Departments of Indignation Studies.

Education requires collision with error. If our side makes arguments respectfully, intellectually, insisting on balance first in our own classrooms, then we can change education in this country.

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Digital Dangers *(Continued from page 3)*

lying, online enticement of minors, and online trolls. Perhaps we will have fewer instances of bully-suicides, missing children, and revenge porn.

But how?

- First, model appropriate behavior. Yes, that means putting the phone down while at a meal with family and friends and other social situations. But it also means being thoughtful of the pictures you take and post. What do you think those images are telling your children?
- Second, talk to your children. Find out what their favorite game or app is. Ask if they interact with other players, and if so, how? Ask questions that help your child learn. For example, instead of telling your child, “Don’t communicate with strangers in an app,” ask them, “Why do you think it is not a good idea to share information with someone you met through an app or game?”
- Third, start reading books geared to young children at about age three (or whenever they stop EATING books) that teach cyber safety and awareness. When they get older, around five or six, they will understand more of the nuances

behind the core concepts.

- Fourth, talk to your family and friends and have them help raise their children to be savvy cyber kids, just as you are striving to do. Why? Even if you do everything in your power to educate and protect your child, what happens when they go to a friend’s or family member’s house who isn’t raising their children to be cyber aware?
- Fifth, remember there is no silver bullet to raising your kids in a world full of technology. What it takes is your time and dedication as a parent to use the resources available to you.

So, put down your phone, look your child in the eye, tell them you love them and give them a big kiss. No technology can do that.

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