

# EDUCATION REPORTER

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## NEA: A Progressive, Social Justice Organization

The National Education Association (NEA) teachers union promotes a leftist agenda. Evidence of this is on display each year at their Representational Assembly (RA), or annual convention. Leadership of the NEA is devoted to progressive causes. Delegates who attend the RA are chosen by teachers in local school districts but each year, those delegates propose and approve radically leftist Resolutions and New Business Items.

NEA leadership and delegates frequently refer to themselves as “social justice warriors.”

While it may be difficult for parents to think of teachers at their own neighborhood schools as social justice warriors who are opposed to their own traditional family values, the largest teachers union is a bona fide social justice organization that encourages and embraces the most radically progressive notions and movements.

The priorities of the NEA and its schoolteacher delegates are made clear by examining the people and organizations they choose to honor.

### NEA Loves SPLC

At last year’s National Education Association RA, the nation’s largest teachers union awarded its highest civil rights honor to the Southern Poverty Law Center’s co-founder, Morris Dees.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) was founded by Dees in Alabama in 1971. It was originally a civil rights law firm, but over time its scope expanded from race relations to include sexual orientation, immigrant status, and more. The SPLC condemns people and organizations by labeling them as members of “hate groups.” Some believe the SPLC is a social justice bully. The SPLC shows intolerance to diversity of opinion and tries to limit the free speech of those with whom they disagree.

Dees wasn’t present to receive the

President’s Award at the NEA Human and Civil Rights dinner gala in Washington, D.C. so Maureen Costello accepted it in his place. Costello is head of the SPLC’s Teaching Tolerance project, which is used by teachers in many school districts. (Go to [Tolerance.org](http://Tolerance.org) to examine this curriculum and other materials that are out of step with traditional family values.)

The fact that the NEA regards an organization that labels American institutions as hate groups is disturbing because such labels are dangerous when misapplied.

At the SPLC website, a map shows organizations in each state that the SPLC has deemed to be hateful. Indeed, the SPLC’s creation of a “hate map” could itself be considered hateful and intolerant. The group has been accused of failing to rely on facts or research to create its hate list.

Among those the SPLC has deemed hateful are the American Family Association, the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Center for Security Policy, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, WorldNetDaily (WND), and the Family Research Council. A section of the SPLC website is called “Hatewatch.” It says, “Hatewatch monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right.”

Floyd Lee Corkins II, a leftwing pro-gay activist, attacked the Washington, D.C. offices of the Family Research Council (FRC) on August 15, 2012. Corkins was arrested after shooting the building superintendent, who heroically managed to subdue him.

Corkins told police he targeted the FRC after finding them listed as an anti-gay hate group at the SPLC website. The 29-year-old man went to the Christian

conservative group’s headquarters with the intent to “kill as many employees as possible.” He also brought Chick-fil-A sandwiches he intended to smear on victims’ faces, apparently because that company’s founder believed in marriage between one man and one woman. Corkins pleaded guilty to committing an act of terrorism and was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

The man who shot and wounded Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA) and others at a Republican congressional baseball practice on June 14 was a follower of the SPLC Facebook page. The full extent of the assailant’s involvement with the SPLC before the attempted mass assassination may never be known because he was killed in a gun battle with police at the scene. The

SPLC had repeatedly targeted Scalise and in 2014 tried to force his resignation over a speech he allegedly made in 2002 to a group affiliated with David Duke. (Scalise actually spoke to a different group that happened to be meeting at the same hotel.)

One large database of charities made the decision this June to remove the hate group designation, as determined by the SPLC, from their online listings. This was partially due to a coalition letter sent to GuideStar and signed by more than forty conservative individuals and organizations that the SPLC has targeted at their Hatewatch site.

The letter said, in part:

The SPLC has no bona fides to make such determinations. It is not a governmental organization using a rigorous criteria to create its lists, and it is not a scientifically oriented organization... The ‘hate group’ list is nothing more than a political weapon targeting people it deems to be its political enemies. The list is ad hoc, partisan, and agenda-driven. (*Washington Post*, 6-26-17)

It should be noted that there are no leftist organizations listed as hate groups by the SPLC.

### African-American Progressive Honored

The theme for the July 3, 2016 NEA ceremony and banquet was Two Legacies, One Dream: Our Journey Continues. It was meant to be a celebration of the 1966 merger of NEA with the American Teachers Association (ATA), which was at the time a Black teachers union.

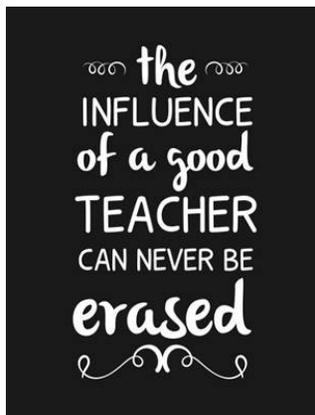
The winner of the 2016 NEA Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Award was Dr. Lawrence “Larry” Hamm, organizer of the People’s Organization for Progress in New Jersey. In his acceptance speech at the gala, Dr. Hamm said, “I’m sure Dr. King would be proud that NEA is embracing a social justice agenda.”

Among the stated aims and purposes of the People’s Organization for Progress is, “To strive for a more just and equitable distribution of wealth in our society.”

### NEA’s Radical LGBTQ Agenda

The NEA website says of their 2016 honorees, “When it comes to fighting for the human and civil rights of children

(See NEA, page 4)



## Homeschooling on Wheels

Many parents consider homeschooling their children but decide against it for reasons of logistics or convenience.

One family not only homeschools their three children but does so on the road in a 188-square foot, 27-foot long travel trailer.

It all started in 2013, when Sam and Jess Curren took their three children on an 18-day trip in their minivan from Utah to a Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C. The Currens decided to homeschool during a home swap instead of enrolling their children in traditional school. They greatly enjoyed their trip east, and then visited various monuments and American landmarks in the D.C. area. The family believes their children learned more than they ever could have from reading about these places.

When it was time to return to Utah, the family took the long way home. They purchased an Airstream travel trailer and spent six months exploring. On their trip back to Utah, between November of 2013 and April of 2014, the Currens also re-examined their priorities. Dad loved eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner with his family. Mom got more comfortable with the homeschool curriculum she’d chosen. The three children enjoyed meeting new friends at a different Sunday school each week. They traveled through the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Once they arrived back in Utah, they sold their home and on June 20, 2014, they became full-time travelers. Since it’s not exactly homeschooling, the Cur-

rens call the way they educate their children “roadschooling.”

They say, “The easy part about roadschooling is that our surroundings are always changing. Each week we have a new city—new science centers, new hikes, new museums, new beaches, new playgrounds, new National Parks.”

They have traveled more than 40,000 miles, visiting more than 350 different places along the way.

Sam Curren is self-employed as a computer programmer. He does “software and system architecture design, working from a laptop...” His job gives

him the flexibility to work remotely from any location. But that flexibility comes with trade-offs; he doesn’t have employee benefits or a guaranteed salary. He says, “I work a reasonable portion of each day to earn money, and we trade having things for spending time together.”

Jess Curren sometimes wishes the children could participate in homeschool groups like other families do. Their old-

est child is twelve and they don’t know how much longer they’ll be on the road. But Jess says, “I figure we just take it one step at a time, we pay attention to what our kids need, and we go from there. For now though, I’m just going to enjoy it.”

The Curren family will continue to homeschool while spending September through December of 2017 in Hawaii; Sam will teach a college class, as well as do his regular job.

Their post-Hawaii plans include spending time in Idaho and California. Then from August through November of 2018, they will road-school while exploring the east coast, including New England.

The Curren family writes about their travels, their homeschool curriculum, life in their Airstream trailer, and more at [CurrentlyWandering.com](http://CurrentlyWandering.com).

Sam Curren says, “The thing that keeps us going is the strength as a family that comes from our adventuring together.”



## EDUCATION BRIEFS

Students wishing to “memorialize” the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president wore shirts with his name or “Make America Great Again” on them for school photo day, but somehow the images were edited out before yearbook publication. The president of the Wall, NJ School Board indicated that “the only reason a student’s image would be altered is if it was in violation of the dress code,” which does not prohibit “political messages.” The board found the censorship of free speech rights “disturbing.” The teacher who serves as yearbook advisor and who is paid almost \$89,000 a year, has been suspended “pending further disciplinary action.” (*USA Today*, 6-12-17)

An elementary school talent show in Manhattan featured children singing, playing piano, and a drum recital, but ended on a sour note when PTA President Mr. Frankie Quinones appeared in a long wig, a partly sheer short black dress, and high heels. After he was introduced to the schoolchildren and their parents by Superintendent Alexandra Estrella at Public School 96, Quinones danced “seductively.” Many parents were outraged by the “sensual” and inappropriate performance. One parent told the *Daily News* that parents were “horrified” by what “looked like a nightclub performance.” It is unclear who approved the performance. The New York City Department of Education released a statement calling it “not appropriate for children.” (*ChristianNews.net*, 6-8-17)

Pioneer Institute’s Jamie Gass says, “June 5th marks the 70th anniversary of Gen. Marshall’s 1947 Harvard University post-graduation address, where he announced the Marshall Plan’s \$13 billion offer (\$130 billion in 2016 dollars) to help rebuild World War II-torn Europe.” Gass says American history courses should teach high school students about the Marshall Plan and the extraordinary measures the U.S. took to rebuild foreign nations. The hate-America message often taught in schools unfairly deprives students of knowledge about the heart and soul of the nation. (*The Federalist*, 6-5-17)

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## Abstinence Works All the Time

*Final in a series about making healthy choices*

The Collier Community Abstinence Program (CCAP) is an authentic abstinence program. It is positive, productive, preventative, and successful.

The interactive, consumable workbooks encourage parental involvement and offer students true stories of real people who have benefited from choosing abstinence and from making other healthy lifestyle decisions. Workbooks, Teacher’s Guides, and online or in-person teacher training are available without charge to public and private schoolteachers, as well as to homeschoolers. CCAP is available nationwide.

The workbooks teach abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age students. They explain the specific benefits of monogamous marriage. They help students understand that they have the power to control their personal behavior and that the decisions they make as young people have lifelong implications for future success and contentment.

A student who avoids destructive behaviors like illegal drugs, underage alcohol consumption, and sex before marriage is more likely to be successful in high school and to complete his or her education. Students who are abstinent can focus on studies without the negative emotional, physical, psychological, and social fallout that comes from making poor choices.

There is a cascading effect caused by the use of drugs and alcohol, which results in other poor choices like engaging in violence or having sex before marriage. All are markers for upheaval in young lives. Making the choice to drink or take illicit drugs is often a precursor to teens having sex.

### Showing Results

Since Florida’s Collier County public schools began using the CCAP program and workbooks in their classrooms, births to unwed mothers ages 15-19 declined by 52%. These results represent the years 2006 to 2015.

In 2015, Collier County ranked third lowest (out of 67 Florida counties) in the number of bacterial STD infections for those 15-19 years of age, an amazing improvement from its 27th place rank in 2004. Collier County has improved from 29th place to 4th place in chlamydial infections since 2004.

There were zero reported cases of Gonorrhea among females aged 15 to 19 in Collier County in 2014. Data from the Florida Department of Health continue to show Collier has some of the lowest teen STD rates among Florida counties.

The CCAP curriculum excites teachers, who report that students were unaware of abstinence before starting the curriculum; that students didn’t know condoms do not prevent all STDs; that abstinence helps diminish relationship drama and promotes student learning; that the workbook material is engaging; and that it works for a variety of age groups.

Teachers report that before CCAP training, students thought it was “okay” to have sex before marriage. They also say many students had never taken time to think about the consequences of having sex or the benefits of waiting for marriage.

### Positive Messages

The CCAP program and workbooks offer positive messages. Subject matter is presented in a sensitive enough manner for 7th-graders to handle. Much like good literature, the material is written in a way that will also have an impact on much older students. Different age groups understand and apply the material from their various levels of maturity.

There are stories about real people who made poor decisions but recovered and are now leading fulfilled lives. Students learn about the difficulties of overcoming the mistakes people make while they are young.

Students are introduced to role models who chose to avoid destructive behaviors. They are introduced to couples who chose abstinence for solid reasons.

The positive messages students learn include:

- Sex is not bad, but it is private.
- Sex should be saved, protected, and preserved for enjoyment within a marital relationship.
- Media messages about sex are unrealistic and are often used to sell things.
- Underage drinking, use of illegal drugs, and violent behavior are not cool. All those behaviors are destructive and end up damaging young people.
- Sexually transmitted diseases often have permanent health consequences and do harm to future relationships.

(See *Abstinence*, page 4)

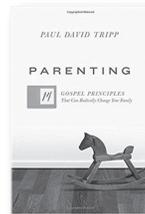
## MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



## Book of the Month



**Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family**, Paul David Tripp, Crossway, 2016, \$22.99



Gospel-centered pastor, speaker, author, and parent Paul Tripp is a former college professor who also founded a Christian school and toured with a Christian band.

Tripp’s objective is to teach sound biblical lessons that can be applied to daily living. In *Parenting*, Tripp offers 14 bible-based principles for parents.

Tripp eschews what he calls “ownership parenting,” which is “motivated by what parents want for their children and from their children.” He likens parents to “ambassadors.” Operating from an “intermediary position,” parents should constantly ask themselves: “What is the will and plan of the one who sent me?”

Chapter One is titled “Calling.” Its summary is, “Nothing is more important in your life than being one of God’s tools to form a human soul.”

In Chapter Two, “Grace,” Tripp says, “God never calls you to a task without giving you what you need to do it. He never sends you without going with you.” What more encouraging words are there for parents than that they are capable and never alone?

Another chapter of *Parenting* teaches about “Inability,” giving parents the knowledge that “recognizing what you are unable to do is essential to good parenting.”

The author cautions parents that if they lose sight of their own “Identity” in Christ, they will look for their identity in their children, which never works out well.

Chapter Ten is about “Character.” In it Tripp lays out the scenario of a mother frantically preparing for the arrival of dinner guests. Her children, ages 7, 9, and 11, play together nearby. Some might say it’s satisfactory that they’re not bothering their mother. Tripp explains that children their ages are not only old enough to help but that it is reasonable to expect them to recognize that their mother needs them.

What should the mother do? She should react with “patience, kindness, and grace.” Training young hearts isn’t about barking orders. The children’s failure to recognize her need offers valuable insight into their character development. Parents should first closely examine their own character and then help lead their children.

Other chapters are titled: Law, Process, Lost, Authority, Foolishness, False Gods, Control, and Rest.

The final chapter of the book is “Mercy.” It says, “No parent gives mercy better than one who is convinced that he desperately needs it himself.”

# FOCUS: Shouts and Protests on Campus Are Signs of a More Pernicious Problem

by Geoffrey Vaughan

First published on June 23, 2017, by *The James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal*, which was recently renamed in honor of the former North Carolina governor. It was originally called *The Pope Center for Higher Education Policy*. Reprinted with permission.

Vice President Mike Pence spoke to the graduating class of Notre Dame, drawing attention to the loss of free speech on American campuses. He denounced the “noxious wave that seems to be rushing over much of academia.”

The problem is that this wave is coming from within academia, not “rushing over” it as if from outside. Its source is a particular way of thinking about higher education and only secondarily about free speech.

To even the casual observer, each week brings a new incident of campus outrage to our attention. That the Vice President of the United States should feel the need to intervene suggests two things—that the issue is prominent enough to call for his intervention and that there is a political constituency for protecting free speech at American universities and colleges.

At the state level there are several attempts currently underway to address this issue. Bills have been proposed in several states to protect the speech rights of students and faculty.

Last year, legislators diverted \$445,882 of funding away from the University of Tennessee’s Office for Diversity and Inclusion. This led to the resignation of the Diversity Chief last year, who immediately moved to a similar post at the University of Washington. And an Iowa state legislator, Bobby Kaufmann, has proposed a bill to punish state universities that used public funds for “healing spaces” related to the election. He refers to the legislation as the “suck it up, buttercup” bill. Both of these preceded the recent physical violence on campuses.

At the federal level, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is an opportunity to do something positive. The National Association of Scholars and the Goldwater Institute are both recommending significant guarantees of free speech rights on any campus that receives federal money, which is all but a handful. In a way, these are well-planned conversions of President Trump’s reaction to the riots in Berkeley earlier this year. He tweeted: “If U.C. Berkeley does not allow free speech and practices violence on innocent people with a different point of view – NO FEDERAL FUNDS?”

As well-intentioned as some of the legislation may be, it assumes that starving the PC warriors of funds will reduce their influence. One would think that the half-million dollars now denied to Tennessee’s Office for Diversity and Inclusion should have a real result, for instance. However, while initial reports suggested the office would close, its website lists eight current employees.

Diversity offices may be the only parts of higher education to thrive with zeroed-out budgets.

The real power of political correctness that legislators and even the vice president would like to combat does not reside in particular offices or paid positions. The power resides in faculty and administrators who almost universally support it and increasingly see their jobs as developing support for it among students.

The statistics on faculty political leanings are staggering. The organization Heterodox Academy has been highlighting the movement of faculty towards the far left. As Nicholas Kristof reported in the *New York Times*, 18% of all social scientists describe themselves

as Marxists, making them a larger group than Republicans on American campuses. At this point there might be more Marxists on American campuses than in Venezuela or Cuba.

The political imbalance of American campuses is easy to see, but the significance goes beyond mere partisanship. The underlying problem is that a significant portion of the American left thinks the mission of education is to reform American culture, not to teach a particular body of knowledge. Angelo Codevilla has a very good article in the *Claremont Review of Books* on this topic. As he explains, this mission to change society is the source of political correctness and is the reason much of higher education has turned into indoctrination.

Higher education used to be understood as mastering a body of knowledge. It still is in the healthier parts of the university. But in those where political correctness is most deeply rooted, the idea that some things are more important to know than others is anathema. This is why courses on zombie movies are offered alongside Shakespeare as equally worthy of study. Try making an argument in your nearest English department that one is inherently better than the other and see where you get.

While some legislative interventions may rein-in the wildest of politically correct nonsense, and might even prevent violence, they will have little effect on the political culture of most campuses because political correctness is only incidentally about breaking the law. William Deresiewicz, a liberal scholar, has published a brave and forceful denunciation of political correctness for the *American Scholar*. He observes that “so much of political correctness is not about justice or creating a safe environment; it is about power.”

Political correctness is about power because it is not about knowledge or argument. The direction of cause and effect must be made clear. When you

abandon the distinction between, say, an important work of literature and a trivial one; when you can scoff at Matthew Arnold’s notion of “the best that has been thought and said,” as most academics do, there is no way to judge between better and worse. When you cannot judge, you can say nothing. As the 20th century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein put it, “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent.”

Students are shouting down and disrupting lectures because they cannot speak of the merits or demerits of disfavored arguments. They have been taught it is impossible to do so. But neither are they happy with silence. Their only alternative is shouting and impos-

ing silence on others.

A politically correct education is not about learning anything. It is about changing the students. In his new book, *Out of the Ashes*, Anthony Esolen describes the experience of sending a child to any of America’s colleges and universities: “You sink yourself in debt to discover that your sons and daughters have been severed from their faith, their morals, and their reason. Whorehouses and mental wards would be much cheaper. They might well be healthier, too.”

It is an indication of just how far things have gone that on many campuses Esolen’s attitude towards sex workers and the mentally ill would be considered the outrageous part of his comment, not the process he describes.

Legislative efforts to protect free speech are important and ought to be encouraged, but legislation can go only so far. Alexis de Tocqueville, the great observer of American democracy, argued that tyranny in democratic societies takes on a very distinct character. It does not attack the body, but rather the soul. It says to its victim, writes Tocqueville: “You shall remain among men, but you

shall lose your rights of humanity. When you approach those like you, they shall flee you as being impure; and those who believe in your innocence, even they shall abandon you, for one would flee them in their turn.”

Two cases of this have just occurred. Anthony Esolen, for writing comments like the one above, felt forced out of Providence College after several decades of distinguished teaching. More recently, Paul Griffiths resigned from Duke Divinity School due to the way he was treated after he criticized a diversity workshop. Free speech protections would mean little to them. They were not fired. They resigned because they were ostracized.

Physical violence on campuses, from Middlebury to Berkeley, has raised the stakes for those who are not politically correct. It has certainly brought campus problems to the attention of more people. But our campuses could return to peace and quiet without any good being achieved. We need to return to the idea that higher education is about mastering bodies of knowledge, not assuming a posture.

When Mike Pence spoke at Notre Dame a number of students stood up and walked out of their graduation ceremony in protest. I suppose they were exercising their free speech without violating anyone else’s rights, but their actions betray an irrationalism, a refusal to engage in argumentation no different than the shouters and rioters.

Free speech is important, but without a culture willing to engage in what others say, it merely provides a podium in an empty room. So two cheers for legislation that protects our freedom to address it, but hold that third cheer for a while. We need to address the very idea of what education is before this problem can be solved.

*Geoffrey M. Vaughan is an associate professor of political science at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts. He has written on Thomas Hobbes and on the topic of political education. He is currently writing a book about becoming an American citizen. Vaughan has a D.Phil. from Oxford University.*



## Education Vocabulary Update

New words and terms are frequently added to the education lexicon. Particularly prevalent are words that have political or social implications. The advent and popularity of social media has sped up the process of new terms making headlines.

Some words increasingly being used in the realm of education and parenting include intersectionality, close reading, virtue signaling, and humble bragging.

### Intersectionality

The Merriam Webster dictionary recently added “intersectionality.”

Intersectionality means “the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination

combine, overlap, or intersect.” Merriam Webster says, “Though originally applied only to the ways that sexism and racism combine and overlap, intersectionality has come to include other forms of discrimination as well, such as those based on class, sexuality, and ability.”

National origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, and perceived sexual identity are also included in the definition of intersectionality used in education and by organizations like the National Education Association teachers union.

This word has actually been in use in academia for decades but it has only more recently been in wider use.

(See *Vocabulary*, page 4)

## NEA (Continued from page 1)

living in poverty, immigrants, LGBTQ students, and others who are sometimes unable to fend for themselves, the 13 winners of NEA's 2016 Human and Civil Rights Awards are unmatched in their pursuit of social justice for all."

But in an age of intersectionality, focus on LGBTQ individuals seems to rank higher and be more intentional than that of other groups in progressives' list of oppressed people.

At the dinner, a gay student received the most enthusiastic standing ovation of the evening after his speech about being 15 years old and "coming out" as gay during a school assembly. Michael Chavarria, then a rising senior at Oroville High School in California, "was honored for establishing a lecture series and resource program that educates young students about LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, or Queer] issues." Chavarria received the SuAnne Big Crow Memorial Award.

According to the NEA website, Michael received the award for his work "educating the school community about gay rights." The website blurb continues:

With just a PowerPoint presentation, an incredible sense of bravery, and a lot of wit, Michael Chavarria was able to 'take action against prejudice.' He included slides on the gender neutral pronouns 'hir,' 'hirs,' and 'ze' of which even many adults are unaware.

The NEA also says Chavarria was active in making the school district comply with Seth's Law, or California's AB 9, which requires public schools to include "perceived sexual orientation" and "per-

ceived gender" in anti-bullying policies.

**Double Intersectionality**

Another 2016 NEA award winner had two points of oppression, or "intersectionality," because the individual is both transgender and native Hawaiian.

According to the NEA, "Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, also known as Hina, began her transition from male to female when she entered college, and she found pride, dignity, and refuge in her Hawaiian culture, embracing the word Māhū—

those who embody both the male and female spirit."

The NEA website says, "Hina knew that although her family and respective community embraced her transition, there were many young adults still afraid of being shunned as a result of the westernized Christian view of marriage that has created much tension and division in our communities."

Hina is the former cultural director at the Halau Lokahi Public Charter School who also taught Hawaiian language, hula dance, and history, as well as providing "guidance on appropriate curriculum and protocols that preserved the Native Hawaiian culture." (NEA.org)

The Halau Lokahi Public Charter School was a "Hawaiian culture-focused campus" offering on-site and online classes. Its charter was revoked and the school was closed in 2015 because it was \$500,000 in debt and it was being investigated by the state attorney general for "suspected theft and money laundering." (HawaiiNewsNow.com, 1-31-15)

More information about those to whom the union gave awards can be found at NEA.org.



## Abstinence (Continued from page 2)

**Now We Get It**

Surveys taken before and after completing the workbooks have provided startling conclusions. In one large study, before receiving abstinence training, only 52% of students agreed that "Abstinence is the only 100% effective protection from the possible physical, emotional, mental, and social consequences of sex before marriage." After using the workbooks, 85% of students agreed with that statement.

Similar results were obtained with regard to the following statement: "Abstinence from sexual activity until marriage will help me accomplish goals in life." When students were first asked whether they agreed with this statement, only 55% agreed. After training, 79% agreed that abstinence is their best choice.

CCAP offers teachers optional pre- and post-class surveys for students.

A major benefit of the CCAP program is that students are guided by their own teachers who remain available to answer students' questions. The curriculum encourages students to turn to their parents for guidance; all workbooks have a dedicated parental participation section at the end of each chapter.

**A Valuable Investment**

The CCAP workbooks—provided free—produce amazing results. In contrast, uninformed students make poor choices that result in high costs to themselves and to society. There are economic consequences for school districts, communities, and citizens that accompany the failure to teach students to make healthy choices. Mistakes in judgment due to a lack of proper education about abstinence mean extra work and outlay of money for parents, teachers, counselors, psychologists, school resource (police) officers, administrators, social services, and the court system.

CCAP provides excellent Teacher's Guides for each of the program's four workbooks, and teacher training is available. The titles of the workbooks are *Game Plan*, *Quest*, *Aspire*, and *Navigator*. They have each been recapped in previous issues of the *Education Reporter*. Inspiring speakers are available to schools that use the program and workbooks.

For more information or to obtain workbook samples, contact Renate Ferrante at [RenateCCAP@gmail.com](mailto:RenateCCAP@gmail.com) or phone her at 239-272-5092. Inquiries can also be mailed to: CCAP, Post Office Box 9488, Naples, Florida, 34101.

## Vocabulary (Continued from page 3)

Intersectionality isn't without controversy; some believe the term is divisive and negative by its very nature. (MerriamWebster.com) The theory applied is that the more categories of victimhood an individual falls into, the greater discrimination that person will experience.

**Close Reading**

Close reading is a term popularized by Common Core standards. It might sound benign or even positive. It calls to mind being careful and paying attention. Why shouldn't students read in a cautious way, giving attention to every word and its meaning?

Unfortunately, that's not what close reading means. It is instead about disregarding outside information that students may already have learned from their environment in favor of relying solely on the specific language included in certain texts they are assigned to examine.

Joy Pullmann writes about Common Core and close reading in her new book, *The Education Invasion: How Common Core Fights Parents for Control of American Kids*. She says:

Common Core doesn't merely remain open-ended on content. It actually undermines the teaching of specific core knowledge by promoting classroom methods that emphasize academic skills or practices instead, supposedly to help eliminate the environmental advantage that better-off children bring with them.

In order to "level the playing field," information is presented in a curated manner. An attempt is made to eliminate any advantage that students might have gained outside of reading the exact material at hand.

Pullmann says, "If children read only a haphazard list of materials their teachers happen to like, compiled with no thought to building a focused and delineated core of cultural literacy, their knowledge level will be laughable and their reading fluency will be underdeveloped, too."

Problems with this Common Core-promoted reading style include:

- Who is doing the curating and choosing of the informational texts students read?
- Can a good outcome be expected when students rely on limited information?
- Is not a wider scope of indoctrination of students created when outside information students might have learned (particularly at home) is eliminated or disregarded?



In order to understand current education issues like Common Core and various social justice pursuits, parents and others must be able to decipher language codes. It sometimes seems that the language used is purposely and unnecessarily complex in order to fool, confuse, or overwhelm the public. Intersectionality and close reading fall into this category.

**Virtue Signaling**

London journalist and author James Bartholomew lays claim to the first use of "virtue signaling" in a 2015 article he wrote for *The Spectator*, a conservative British magazine.

Virtue signaling is defined as trying to exude or pretend virtue, particularly when attempting to indicate that one choice or position is better than another, or even that one person is better than another.

Bartholomew says whatever is said by users of virtue signaling, it is usually meant to indicate that they "are admirably non-racist, left-wing, or open-minded." (Spectator.co.UK, 10-10-15)

The term's usage and importance extends beyond education or politics into all aspects of modern life. Virtue signaling isn't only ubiquitous in print or in person; it goes hand in hand with posting on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites.

When a parent says their child has never eaten at McDonalds, they might be using that statement to mean their child eats better food than other children.

Bartholomew says, "One of the crucial aspects of virtue signaling is that it does not require actually doing anything virtuous. ... It takes no effort or sacrifice at all." He describes the meteoric rise and prevalence of his verbal creation like this: "For years, people have noticed the phenomenon but did not have a word or phrase to describe it."

**Humble Brag**

The humble brag consists of making "a seemingly modest, self-critical, or casual statement or reference that is meant to draw attention to one's admirable or impressive qualities or achievements." This fake modesty has been around for a while now. Merriam Webster dictionary indicates its first use was in 2002. Humble bragging is used not only to gain personal pats on the back but also to call attention to the superiority of one's offspring.

In the education arena, humble bragging is sometimes associated with college choice or acceptance. A parent might say, "My child is acting very lazy but could just be exhausted after interviewing at every Ivy League college."

**IN THEIR OWN (GOOD) WORDS**

"Our care of the children should be governed not by the desire to 'make them learn things,' but by the endeavor always to keep burning within them the light which is intelligence."

— Maria Montessori (1870-1952)  
Italian physician and educator who developed the Montessori Method of education, which encourages imagination and states that educators should "follow the child."