

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

Pennsylvania Dept. of Health Mandates Genitalia Exam of Sixth-Grade Girls in Public Schools

The Pennsylvania Department of Health now mandates that a comprehensive medical examination, including genitalia probes, be performed on all new female students in a school district and those in the 6th and 11th grades. Such intimate physical exams recently caused considerable outcry when they were given on March 19, 1996 to 59 sixth-grade girls at a middle school in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, without parental knowledge or consent. The result is that several angry parents complained to the police and the ACLU. According to the *Pocono Record* of March 22, 1996:

Police Thursday investigated parents' complaints about physicals given to some J.T. Lambert Intermediate School sixth-grade girls. Some parents told school officials that their daughters were given an internal gynecological exam Tuesday. School officials, as well as the East Stroudsburg pediatrician who performed the exams, say there was only an external examination of genitalia—with some touching—which is within parameters set by the State Department of Health.

State police from Swiftwater came to the same conclusion. Some parents who acknowledge that their daughters were given an external genital exam said even that went too far in school. Several parents

called the *Pocono Record* Thursday saying their daughters were traumatized.

Katie and Paul Tucker of Bushkill said their 11-year-old daughter was touched internally. "She said most of the girls were crying. She tried to be brave. . . She didn't go to school today because she was afraid," Mrs. Tucker said.

Mr. Tucker said, "I know her regular doctor would not have . . . done (that). She knows enough about her private parts. When she says no, she means no. Why not just rape her and deny it?"

Parents who called the paper told a similar story: Girls were asked to wait while partially clothed; some asked not to have their genitals examined, but were told they had to; some started to cry, and at least one was denied a call home.

Dr. Ramlah Vahanvaty, who performed the exams, said no one was forced. At least one school nurse was present. "What it involved is an external examination of the labia to see if there were any warts or vaginal lesions. You can't see these if you don't retract the (labia)," Vahanvaty said. . . .

Elaine Schneider of Bushkill said her daughter came home and said, "I'm never going to go through that again."

"Had I known, I would have taken her to a family doctor," Schneider said.

Vahanvaty said there was a lot of apprehension among some girls, but that she explained each part of the exam. When asked if some of the girls were crying, she said, "I don't remember." . . . Later she said, "Even a parent doesn't have the right to say what's appropriate for a physician to do when they're

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doing an exam. Parents were sent letters home saying they could be there. Few chose to show."

A meeting was held at the school on Monday, March 25, during which parents voiced their complaints and asked school officials to suspend the nurses who presided at the exams and asked that Dr. Vahanvaty no longer be used by the district. *The Pocono Record* of March 26, 1996 reported:

Vahanvaty, who did not attend the meeting, said in a telephone interview late Monday night that every physical was conducted "within strict professional standards. There was absolutely no internal exam." . . . The state Department of Health lists an examination of genitals as part of its guidelines for the physicals, mandated for all sixth graders who have not seen their own doctor.

A Department of Health spokesman said last week that each doctor has discretion over the extent of the exam. The two school nurses also did not attend Monday's meeting, one on the advice of her attorney, according to a school official.

More than 50 parents attended Monday's meeting at J.T. Lambert, and many angrily voiced their opinion that school nurses and Vahanvaty were callous and that the genitals of sixth-grade girls should never have been examined. . . .

Several sixth-grade girls told the crowd Monday that they asked not to have their genitals examined, but were told the exam had to be done. Some also said they were denied a call home. Susie Tucker, 11, broke down before Monday's crowd while describing the fear many girls felt while waiting half-dressed for the exam. Addie Bianco, a mother of a sixth-grade girl who was not examined, told school officials that the exams had "raped the girls of their dignity."

District solicitor Thomas Dirvonas said that the district will investigate the situation further. The remaining physicals, supposed to be given today, have been put on hold. . . . School officials also pledged to set guidelines to avoid a similar situation in the future.

And so we have it as reported in the *Pocono Record* that the Pennsylvania "state Department of Health lists an examination of genitals as part of its guidelines for all sixth graders who have not seen their own

doctor." Local physicians came to the support of fellow physician Vahanvaty with a letter to the school board. The *Pocono Record* of March 28 reported:

Eight area doctors sent a letter supporting Dr. Ramlah Vahanvaty to the East Stroudsburg School Board Wednesday. . . . In their letter, the doctors said they considered a genital exam a "very important" part of the physical.

"In our own practices we perform many school physicals daily. Sixth-graders are going through pubertal development and most of them are reluctant to show that area to doctors," the letter said. However, "Often we find some (girls) with physical deformities which may get worse with sports activities, and others with contagious conditions that require immediate medical treatment." Also, "Without any specific policy, all school physicals should be complete and comprehensive based upon the examining doctor's own practice." . . .

They ended the letter saying, "We truly believe in the medical and moral standard of Dr. Vahanvaty who returned to provide a much-needed pediatric service to the community where she grew up." . . .

Officials at one other area school district say they include an examination of genitalia for sixth graders. J.C. Mills Intermediate School in the Pleasant Valley School District included a visual exam of genitalia on sixth-graders this year, Principal Sandra Fellin said. She added that, according to the school nurse, it's a practice that has continued for many years.

This whole unsavory incident provides us with one more reason why parents ought not to put their children in public schools, and another reason why the government ought to be kicked out of the education business. Parents have no rights when it comes to government schools, and Dr. Vahanvaty resented parental interference with her examinations. She said, "Even a parent doesn't have the right to say what's appropriate for a physician to do when they're doing an exam." Is that the reason why none of the girls were permitted to phone their parents in order to get out of the exam?

Apparently, Dr. Vahanvaty is a member of the new breed of "public servant" who

believe that they are now the public's masters. The aunt of one of the students has sent a letter to the ACLU, which has agreed to take the case. The letter reads:

On Tuesday, March 19, 1996, all of the 6th grade girls at J. T. Lambert in East Stroudsburg, PA were forced to take a physical exam, which included an examination of their genitalia. The students in each homeroom class, were given numbers and called sequentially down to the nurse's office for the exam. There were 6 to 10 girls at any given time, waiting in the nurse's office for the exam. They were required to strip down to their underwear and socks and wait to be called to see the doctor. The girls were subsequently, individually called into the doctor's office, where they were required to remove their underwear, lay on the table and spread their legs for the exam. Many of the youngsters protested that they had already submitted proof of physical exams taken by their private physicians. They were told that the school had lost these doctor notes and consequently the students had to take this exam. Many other students protested that they and their parents were unaware of the physical exam requirement and that they were both frightened and unwilling to undergo this exam without first contacting their parents. Some students complained this exam was not just external, but also internal. These students were denied the right to call their parents and told that they were required to submit to this exam.

It is true that the school district rules require that students be given "a comprehensive examination upon entering the school district as well as in the 6th and 11th grades", but the nature of the term "comprehensive" was not made clear to the parents. School officials allege that they sent home notices about the physical exam requirements as well as parental permission slips to take the exam in school. The school officials, showed a copy of this notice, which was allegedly sent and pointed to a paragraph which stated, ". . . Failure to return this notice signed by the parent will be considered to be proof of the parents permission for their child to receive this exam in school and not to opt to have it given by the child's (private) physician.["] The school was unable to present any proof that parents ever received such notices.

My niece, Nicole Bailey, (for whom I am legally responsible) was enrolled in school at J.T. Lambert J.H.S. in the beginning of February, 1996. She was being transferred from I.S. 124 in New York City. Her admission to the school was delayed by a week because she didn't have proof of her immunization. I want to go on record to state that I did not receive the

mentioned parental form, nor any information about the scope of such an exam, or the rationale for it. . . . Finally, the only communication I received was a notice informing me of the exam that had already taken place, without my permission, informing me that I could come to the school to voice my concerns.

Comment:

This is probably the worst case of public educators violating the privacy rights of students and parents that we have seen to date. What do we learn from this egregious violation of student and parental rights? We learn that the totalitarians among the education establishment are becoming bolder and bolder in their assertion that they own the children. To subject 11-year-old girls to a humiliating examination of their private parts is in fact to inform them that they are being prepared to become slaves in the Human Resources Development System and that, like the slaves of old, their most private bodily parts are to be examined and touched and molested by the government that owns them.

None of the girls, as far as we know, had any genitalia problems that warranted this gross violation of their privacy. When people in a state of freedom have problems with their private parts they go to private doctors for such intimate exams, diagnoses and treatments. It is unheard of in this country for perfectly healthy individuals to be forcibly herded into a nurse's room, told to strip and lie down on a table for an examination of their genitalia. The whole idea is so offensive, that it must have taken a perverted mind to even think it up.

The Nazis Did It

During World War II, when the Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps the first thing their captors forced them to do was strip. The purpose of the stripping was to deprive these captives of any notion of privacy or personal dignity.

The stripping meant that they were now the property of their captives who could do anything they wanted to them. The educators in East Stroudsburg who forced these girls to strip and submit to a genital examination may not be Nazis, but they may be national socialists of which the word Nazi is simply an abbreviation.

The psychological damage done to these girls by the government of Pennsylvania cannot be undone. They shall have to live with the traumatic consequences for the rest of their lives. By now one would hope that the parents of these girls and of the other children in that school would realize that the educators cannot be trusted and that they will continue to deceive the public.

Tip of the Iceberg

The cavalier manner in which the school authorities say that parents were supposedly "informed" of the planned exam and the fact that the school cannot provide any evidence that such prior notification was indeed given, is an example of the contempt that school authorities now have for parents. It's as if they were telling them, "We own your kids and we don't need your approval for anything we want to do with them." That attitude was apparent in the Nalepa case (*BEL* Jan. 95) where a second-grade boy was shown a film on suicide resulting in the child hanging himself. It was also apparent in the Chelmsford, Massachusetts, case where an entire high school was forced to attend a pornographic sex education program which traumatized many students. In neither case were parents informed of what the educators had planned to inflict on their children. And we suspect that a lot of this sort of thing is going on all over the country, and that what we find out about is only the tip of the iceberg.

It is obvious that this trend toward to-

talitarian enslavement will continue until such time as the American people put a stop to it. They can do so tomorrow by simply withdrawing their children from the government's national socialist schools and educating them at home or in private schools they can trust.

What is also disturbing is how this mandated comprehensive physical exam was decided upon by the Penn. Dept. of Health. Who authorized it? Was the state legislature informed? Was the Governor informed? Who gave the Dept. of Health this extraordinary power to force every schoolgirl to undergo a genital exam? What about the boys? Are their genitals also examined? And is this information about a child's genitals then deposited in a computer somewhere in Harrisburg or Washington D.C. where we know the monster national data-gathering computer exists? Is it that bureaucrats—supposedly public servants—now feel so confident of their power to impose their will on the public that they no longer have to ask anyone's permission or authority to do so? What we are seeing in America is the gradual transformation of public servants into the public's masters. And if the American people don't rise up and put a stop to this development, they will be fully enslaved in a few short decades if not sooner.

Study Affirms Superiority of Phonics to Look-Say

A study at the University of Houston, which was presented in Sacramento, Calif., at a legislative hearing on teaching methods, is expected by many reading researchers to become a turning point in the long-running debate between advocates of phonics and those who favor whole language.

The Houston study, conducted among

374 first- and second-graders in a suburban Houston school district, comes down solidly on the side of phonics instruction. Reading gains for students taught the phonics way averaged twice those gained by students taught by the whole language approach. It found that students exposed to intensive phonics drills performed at the 42nd percentile on a nationally administered standardized test, while those in whole-language classes were at the 23rd percentile. Another group of students who were taught phonics, but mostly using only the words appearing in their reading, ranked just slightly better, at the 27th percentile.

"What we're doing here . . . is getting these economically disadvantaged, low achievers almost up to the national average with just good classroom instruction," said Barbara Foorman, the University of Houston educational psychologist who directed the study. "Whereas the percentiles that the whole-language kids end up with are indicative of a reading disability."

Widely accepted research has found that beginning readers need sound and letter skills to become fluent enough with words to understand and analyze the meaning of what they are reading. But a large part of the debate has been over how such skills are acquired.

Foorman, using sophisticated mathematical models, found that old-fashioned word and flashcard drills can develop those critical skills and, furthermore, that those skills help readers improve.

But Kenneth Goodman, a University of Arizona professor who is a prominent force among whole-language advocates, said Foorman's results are not surprising given the way they were measured. He said drills and phonics exercises do enable students to perform better on standardized tests but do not necessarily add to what is reading's bottom line — understanding and compre-

hension.

"If you are going to reduce everything to a single measure it's always going to favor the group whose instruction is closest to that measure," he said.

Jack Pikulski, a University of Delaware professor who is president-elect of the International Reading Association, said in an interview that phonics and word skills are essential for getting most kids started with reading, especially those whose parents have not read to them and taught them the alphabet before they start kindergarten. But, he said, that's not enough.

"I want to get kids off to an early start and then make sure they are building their oral language, conceptual and critical thinking and skills that will help them achieve beyond the early years," he said. (*The Virginian Pilot*, 5/5/96)

Comment:

The Houston study, welcome as it is, does not tell us anything we haven't known for years. Both Flesch and Chall in their respective books cited studies proving the superiority of phonics over look-say. But this new study provides those legislators in California who want to replace whole language with intensive phonics with an authoritative recent study that proves the superiority of phonics over whole language. The latter has caused a devastating decline in reading skills among California children. Naturally, whole-language guru Ken Goodman is critical of the study, and Jack Pikulski, president-elect of the notoriously anti-phonics IRA, does the usual song and dance about the importance of phonics but how we mustn't forget how equally important are the development of conceptual and critical thinking skills. In other words, we can't be sure what the children of California will be taught in the coming years. If a compromise is made between whole language and phonics, reading problems will

persist. If the decision is made to teach intensive phonics, how will the teachers be retrained to be able to do this? And what about all of those children in the higher grades who were disabled by whole language? What do we do about them? And what about those professors of reading in the teachers colleges who may put their own spin on reading reform?

Finally admitting that intensive phonics is the way to go is just the beginning of the struggle to repair the damage done by whole language in every school district in the nation. How will all of this fit in with the plan to transform traditional American education into Marc Tucker's Soviet-style school-to-work, human resources development system? These are questions that have yet to be asked let alone answered.

But perhaps the most significant statement made by Barbara Foorman is the one in which she said: "... the percentiles that the whole-language kids end up with are indicative of a reading disability." In other words: the whole-language approach produces reading disability. Can there ever be a more serious indictment of whole language than that?

Learning Is Working and Working is Learning

If you apply a German accent to the above headline you may be reminded of the inscription the Nazis placed over the entrance to the Auschwitz death camp: Arbeit Mach Frei — Work Makes You Free. But "Learning Is Working and Working is Learning" is the title of a keynote address given by Dr. Lee Droegemueller, Kansas Commissioner of Education, at the Council of Chief State School Officers' School-to-Work Conference held in St. Louis in January 1995. The purpose of the conference was to discuss

plans for implementing Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the Reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonprofit organization composed of the heads of the 50 state departments of education, plus five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Dept. of Defense Dependents Schools. The Council has functioned since 1927 and has maintained a Washington office since 1948. The Council seeks its members' consensus on major education issues and forms coalitions with other education organizations, providing leadership in implementing policies that affect the public schools.

Enter Marc Tucker

In 1990, the CCSSO issued a clarion call for school restructuring based on Marc Tucker's famous "America's Choice" report. The CCSSO's policy statement reads:

According to the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce in its report, *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*, deep and revolutionary change is necessary regarding the structure and organization of production, if this country is going to maintain its current standard of living in the world economy. The organization of production in the United States needs to undergo radical changes which will result in demands for highly skilled workers at levels never before required.

Note the call for radical, revolutionary change in the way American companies produce their products, as if this were the business of educators and bureaucrats. Marc Tucker has never worked for a profit-making enterprise in his life. He went from public broadcasting to a federally funded education lab, then to the U.S. Education Department after which he moved to the Carnegie Foundation, and finally to his own nonprofit, government-subsidized National

Center for Education and the Economy.

Apparently, the role of the CCSO is to make sure that every state in the Union adopts the Tucker reform plan.

In 1991, the CCSO made "Connecting School and Employment" its priority effort. Its policy statement of 1991 reads:

We support changes in schools that promote a quality primary and secondary education with early orientation of work that enables all young people to pursue continued education and challenging employment. We envision broad curriculum changes that integrate learning in the classroom and learning through experience in the workplace. We advocate major modifications in how instruction is organized and provided in both academic and vocational education curriculums. We propose the expanded use of proven structures to introduce and develop the skills, knowledge and behavior youth will need in their adult years. These structures include cooperative education, "tech prep," youth apprenticeship, mentoring and service learning. Finally, we advocate a shared responsibility and commitment among schools, employers and employee organization in bringing about these changes.

Dr. Droegemueller made the following remarks in his speech to the CCSO:

If we are to prepare our students for the 21st century, education and business must work together. . . . Business and education must form interdependent relationships that will close the gap between the skills that are taught in schools and the current and future skills needed for a high-performance work force. If we don't change, both business and education may be going out of business. . . .

We must develop a plan of work that will link the vision, organization, operation, and delivery systems called for under three major pieces of federal legislation: School-to-Work Opportunities Act, Goals 2000: Educate America Act, and the Reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act or Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). . . . [T]hese three acts offer the framework, infrastructure, and especially, integrated planning opportunities for creating systems that better prepare all students to participate in the learning, working, and economic rewards of the 21st century. . . .

When I am invited to talk to business groups, I use the following vision statement for Kansas: Every

Kansan is a learner and a worker. . . .

I tell businesses: "Unless you're willing to pay for quality education, and unless you're willing to help us reinvent it, you won't be in business long." . . . Business and education must undertake an interdependent growth relationship in which quality, relevance, and a lifetime of learning takes place in the business, in the school, and in the community.

If Dr. Droegemueller's vision is anything, it's fascist from the word go. Big government education is in trouble and it wants to become interdependent with business which will be its salvation. The natives are getting restless, and Dr. Droegemueller knows it. He said:

Recently Kansas' Goals 2000 and school improvement plan received sharp criticism from some education groups and the state legislature. The Speaker of the House called for its abolition. As discussions took place, suggestions were made from agendas of "going back to the past" to changes that would place a burden on individual students, and not on schools, teachers, and local boards of education. One group of superintendents suggested that maybe a name change would be the best answer. As tension built, we took the position that if you can improve the plan, we will change. . . . Our plan may not be perfect . . . [but] to do nothing is to go out of business. . . .

In the past, we could build more schools, train more teachers, or buy computer equipment. Today these needs continue to be important, but the real challenges are how to change human behavior.

Of course, that is what Benjamin Bloom, Marc Tucker and all the other socialists, fascists and humanists in the education establishment have been working on for years. And since the Soviet communists were unable to change human behavior—except by terrorizing the population into abject obedience—over a period of 75 years, what makes American behaviorists think that they can do any better? They won't. But apparently, Commissioner Droegemueller and his fellow Kansan fascist, Nancy Kassebaum, are more than willing to give it the all-American try.

School-to-Work Planned in the Soviet Union in 1984

An article in the *Washington Post* of Sept. 2, 1984, reported how Soviet education was being reformed in a way strongly resembling what is now being done in our own School-to-Work reform program. The article starts with an account of the holiday atmosphere surrounding the first day of the new school year. It reads:

It also marks the launching of the Soviet Union's latest and perhaps most ambitious school reform. Destined to take 12 years to accomplish, it does not begin in earnest until 1986, when the age of enrollment drops from 7 to 6 nationwide, adding an extra year to the 10-grade elementary and secondary school system.

The main goal of the reform, openly debated in the press earlier this year, is to prepare students for work at an earlier age and to direct their training toward practical goals. It will be accompanied by additional emphasis on ideology.

"The young people, who have finished their secondary education, must be well aware of the specifics of the present stage of social development, possess class self-consciousness and be able to uphold our ideal and give a firm rebuff to hostile ideology," said Politburo member Gaidar Aliyev in a speech on school reforms to the Supreme Soviet last April. . . .

According to published reports, teachers this year are expected to omit "secondary" or "complex" materials from certain textbooks which are "now written in so involved and oversophisticated a manner as to puzzle a professor sometimes," said Aliyev. It is also to add a new course on "the ethics and psychology of family life."

A push for more vocational training also begins in the higher grades this year, anticipating a decision next January on lowering the minimum working age, to allow people under 16 to operate certain farm machinery.

"The proposed reform will help gear education and character development at school to the economic activity of the nation and to make vocation-related studies a major component of school life," said Aliyev.

Western analysts have attributed the push for reforms, begun under former president Yuri Andropov, in part to the Soviet Union's labor shortage

and to its need for skilled workers.

In the Soviet communist dictatorship it was easy enough for Secretary of the Communist Party, Andropov, to order school reform by edict. In the U.S. we must go through Congress to get the same kind of socialist-fascist reforms. For example, it was President George Bush who in May 1992 introduced to Congress the National Youth Apprenticeship Act of 1992, one of the components in Marc Tucker's Human Resources Development System as outlined in *America's Choice*. Bush said in his message:

I am proposing this legislation in order to promote a comprehensive approach for helping our youth make the transition from school to the workplace and strive to reach high levels of academic achievement. .

There is widespread agreement that the time has come to strengthen the connection between the academic subjects taught in our schools and the demands of the modern, high-technology workplace.

I believe that the time has come for a national, comprehensive approach to work-based learning. The bill I am proposing would establish a formal process in which business, labor, and education would form partnerships to motivate the Nation's young people to stay in school and become productive citizens. (*Congressional Record*, 5/13/92)

So far, not much is being said by Republicans about education reform. As of this date, H.R. 1617 and S. 143 are still in committee, but there is suspicion that Congress will try to enact these bills sometime this summer when most Americans are on vacation. But woe to those Republicans who vote for Marc Tucker's socialist-fascist plan for America. Republicans were unable to stop the passage of Goals 2000 and the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the previous Democrat dominated Congress. But this time Republicans are in the driver's seat, and they will be held responsible for their actions.