

Assessed for Bias

Tolerance and bias are the new core curriculum, not knowledge-based academics

By Michael J. Chapman • September 26, 2002

On Monday, September 16, Mahtomedi, Minnesota High School gave high school freshmen boys and girls an "assessment for bias." Students were asked, are you biased toward straight people?

Tolerance and bias are the new core curriculum, not knowledge-based academics.

Academics is becoming incidental to education. The core curriculum of the new education system is diversity, bias, environmentalism, political activism, reconstructing history, promoting the United Nations, group actions, anger management, sex education, working together, challenging students' values, community service, and training for a job. Knowledge-based education is at a functional literacy level, measured by the Basic Skills Tests and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs). The MCAs are also the assessment system for the values and attitudes required by the new federal curriculum.

Bias as core curriculum is so institutionalized that, in the Mahtomedi Freshman Seminar, no parents were informed. No permission was requested. No eyebrows were to be raised.

As one student reported that night, "Dad, you'll never guess what I had to watch." She explained how she had been subjected to two videos about homosexuality.

Her description: "They were gross! I don't want to have to see stuff like that again."

This young woman's response would undoubtedly be labelled intolerant and biased.

The Mahtomedi High School freshmen assignment was to watch these videos. They were then assigned to complete an assessment to determine if they "harbored hidden biases toward straight people, or against gay people." The assessment is posted at Tolerance.Org website, at tolerance.org. Take a look through that site, and consider what our 9th graders are being subjected to in the name of "education."

The assessment does not accommodate a separation between one's moral beliefs and how one might treat ANY person. It makes no distinction between "preference" and "bias," though the test claims to measure bias.

Little explanation is given to the demographic (optional) questions. "Do you have a PREFERENCE for gay people?" it opens. What is the 14 year old to take from that question? Are we talking sexuality or friendship? Who's to say?

One parent took the test twice, giving the same answers each time. Once he described himself as "straight, and very conservative." His results were, "SHOW A STRONG AUTOMATIC PREFERENCE FOR STRAIGHT PEOPLE."

The next time, he skipped the demographic questions but gave identical responses. This time, his results were: "LITTLE OR NO AUTOMATIC PREFERENCE." Is a teen to interpret that to mean that he or she is bisexual? Not biased? It doesn't say.

Foisting homosexual propaganda and personal sexual assessments on unsuspecting 14 year-olds without the knowledge or consent of parents is, unfortunately, what diversity and tolerance mean in the double-speak of today's education.

Letter Threatens Mahtomedi Students for Objection

Was the assignment a requirement? According to the teacher, the assignment was for all in the class, and if any had a problem, they were to come forward to her personally. Some students decided not to complete a follow-up writing assignment. According to the students, extra credit was given to those who would participate. In either case, the assignment can't be described as voluntary.

Was the teacher ever informed that parental notification might be necessary for such material? No, no one ever discussed the matter of parental notification or permission with the teacher. Nor were students allowed to express their disgust for the assignment. A follow-up letter from the teacher to her class stated:

"Some of you expressed the feeling that this is not an appropriate topic to study in school, and I feel the need to reiterate the purpose of this unit."

"One of the goals for Freshman Seminar is to discuss tolerance. Gay and lesbian people are often the targets of intolerant behavior...which we witnessed in the Matthew Sheppard video."

"I am also aware that some of you may have chosen to address your distaste simply because you did not want to write this essay. I know who you are, and I want you to know that this will not be accepted."

The letter went on to describe her disappointment in them, describing them as "immature."

The distinctions between "hate" and "bias" (a negative opinion) are entirely blurred on the "tolerance" website. It's hard to imagine

a young person being capable of distinguishing the difference on the basis of their material.

Yet the teacher stated in her letter to students, "this unit is not designed to change your opinion of what is right and wrong." In this entire assignment, "bias" is deliberately and emotionally linked to the torture and murder of Matthew Sheppard.

The teacher stated that she was simply "following the school's curriculum." Curriculum? How much are we willing to allow our children's innocence and values to be violated in the name of "curriculum?"

U.S. Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) [General Education Provisions, Part F, Section 10611]

Federal law requires school districts that receive federal funds to have policies allowing parents to inspect surveys created by a third party before the surveys are administered to students.

Federal law requires school districts that receive federal funds to have policies that allow parents to inspect instructional material used as part of the students' educational curriculum.

Federal law requires school districts that receive federal funds to provide notice to parents at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, of their policies for parental inspection of surveys and curriculum.

The school district must offer an opportunity for parents to opt their child out of a survey containing items relating to sex behavior or attitudes.

The school district must offer an opportunity for parents to opt out of a survey containing items relating to religious beliefs of a student.

The question is, do these federal requirements apply to all surveys and curriculum of schools that accept federal money, or do these requirements only apply to surveys and curriculum that are specifically funded by federal money?

Minnesota's Profile of Learning, however, was implemented with federal grant money to fulfill the federal requirements of Goals 2000.

Goal 3 of Goals 2000 states:

"all students will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this Nation and about the world community."

Minnesota complies with Goal 3 by the Graduation Standard called, "Diverse Perspectives." Parents in many states and school districts have protested the diversity requirements as promoting homosexuality. (See "Forcing Diversity in the Classroom,")

Isn't this a use of federal Goals 2000 money?

To receive any federal Title I money (for disadvantaged students) states had to comply with Goals 2000 restructuring of 1994 (one mandate being diversity).

Isn't this a use of federal money?

Minnesota's "Content Framework for People and Cultures Standards" begins with a quote from the Goals 2000 mandate.(p. 1-5). It states:

"By tracing the alignment of Minnesota's content standards through the national standards for each area, educators and curriculum specialists, parents and the general public will be able to see how the content and process expectations of Minnesota's standards reflect national expectations." (p. 22)

Every state's students are also assessed on these "national standards" by the national test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which "verifies" all state assessments.

Diversity is most definitely a federal mandate, and it is required at the risk of losing federal money. Why wouldn't the Protection of Pupil Rights apply to these invasive surveys and curriculum?

Some states have passed their own Protection of Pupil Rights Act. New Jersey recently accomplished just that.

In the meantime, file a parental consent form at your child's school (see the Sample Parental Informed Consent Notice on this page). Or download a sample form found at www.edwatch.org. Modify it as needed. HURRY! Things aren't getting much better!

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and www.edaction.org

Sample Parental Informed Consent Notice

September 26, 2002

(Please re-type inserting the appropriate names and addresses.)

DATE

Mr./Ms. _____, Superintendent of Schools

Address

City, State Zip

Dear _____:

In accordance with State statutes, 120B.20 relating to Parental Curriculum Review, this letter serves to require prior written notification from the school concerning any intent to provide physical, mental health, or social services/counseling to my child. Similarly, the school must obtain my written consent prior to providing any of said services.

Except for emergency medical care involving sudden, traumatic physical injury or illness, and then only when I cannot be immediately located, I am hereby exempting my child from participation in any health care or social service programs/activities, whether provided directly by the school or through a connected resource/family/youth center. The requirement for my written consent extends to any non-emergency physical or mental examination/ procedure and also to any effort to place pressure (such as referral by a school counselor to another agency) on my child for the purpose of circumventing my prerogatives of determining the manner and means of satisfying my child's health care needs. Activities by school staff or through school programs that encourage my child to bypass me will be met with legal action. Concerns by school staff relating to my child's immunizations, vision, hearing, eating habits, etc., are to be brought to me for my attention and assessment. School staff members are not to take it upon themselves to obtain a diagnosis or to provide treatment. Assessment and testing are to center on academic, knowledge-based factors.

I am also exempting my child from any assessments which are being administered to students for the purpose of evaluating teachers, schools and school districts on their implementation of the Profile of Learning curriculum, in particular, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs).

The informed consent requirement therefore encompasses, but is not necessarily limited to, the following typical school services:

1. Nursing health assessments and/or school-based physical examinations.
2. Personality testing and school-based counseling related to physical or mental health.
3. Behavioral or physical screening and/or diagnostic instruments (i.e., emotional factors such as anger or peer relationships, so-called psycho-sexual indicators relating to sexual activity or orientation, chronic physical conditions such as anemia, diabetes, tuberculosis). This restriction applies to all "EPSDT" (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment) services, which typically are provided via state funds.
4. Non-emergency first-aid services.
5. Lectures, presentations or school assemblies relating to sex and substance abuse.
6. Anger management, "self-esteem," and conflict resolution courses; group & family counseling
7. The Minnesota Student Survey
8. Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

I appreciate the difficulty of the school's position in today's political and social climate, in which parents are presumed to be incapable of exercising good judgment in the areas of health, discipline, and the emotional well-being of their children. It is regrettable that a notice of this nature is necessary. I thank you in advance, therefore, for your cooperation in this matter. For our mutual protection in these difficult times, a copy of this letter is on file with my attorney.

Sincerely,

Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

cc:

_____, County or State Board of Education

_____, Principal, _____ Elementary/Middle/High School

_____, Esq. (your private attorney or group attorney)

Parent and Student Legal Rights

Part F — General Education Provisions Act • SEC. 1061 and SEC. 1062

SEC. 1061. STUDENT PRIVACY, PARENTAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION, AND ADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS TO MINORS.

Section 445(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232h(b)) is amended —

(1) by striking paragraphs (1) through (7) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

(1) political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;

(2) mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;

(3) sex behavior or attitudes;

(4) illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;

(5) critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;

(6) legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;

(7) religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or

(8) income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program),;

(2) by redesignating subsections (c) through (e) as subsections (d) through (f), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

(C) DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL POLICIES CONCERNING STUDENT PRIVACY, PARENTAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION, AND ADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS TO MINORS-

(1) DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF LOCAL POLICIES- Except as provided in subsections (a) and (b), a local educational agency that receives funds under any applicable program shall develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding the following:

(A)(i) The right of a parent of a student to inspect, upon the request of the parent, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student; and

(ii) any applicable procedures for granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to such survey within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

(B) Arrangements to protect student privacy that are provided by the agency in the event of the administration or distribution of a survey to a student containing one or more of the following items (including the right of a parent of a student to inspect, upon the request of the parent, any survey containing one or more of such items):

(i) Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.

(ii) Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.

(iii) Sex behavior or attitudes.

(iv) Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.

(v) Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships.

(vi) Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers.

(vii) Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.

(viii) Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

(C)(i) The right of a parent of a student to inspect, upon the request of the parent, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student; and

(ii) any applicable procedures for granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to instructional material within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

(D) The administration of physical examinations or screenings that the school or agency may administer to a student.

(E) The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose), including arrangements to protect student privacy that are provided by the agency in the event of such collection, disclosure, or use.

(F)(i) The right of a parent of a student to inspect, upon the request of the parent,

any instrument used in the collection of personal information under subparagraph (E) before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student; and

(ii) any applicable procedures for granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to such instrument within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

(2) PARENTAL NOTIFICATION-

(A) NOTIFICATION OF POLICIES- The policies developed by a local educational agency under paragraph (1) shall provide for reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of such policies directly to the parents of students enrolled in schools served by that agency. At a minimum, the agency shall —

(i) provide such notice at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in such policies; and

(ii) offer an opportunity for the parent (and for purposes of an activity described in subparagraph (C)(i), in the case of a student of an appropriate age, the student) to opt the student out of participation in an activity described in subparagraph (C).

(B) NOTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC EVENTS- The local educational agency shall directly notify the parent of a student, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when activities described in subparagraph (C) are scheduled, or expected to be scheduled.

(C) ACTIVITIES REQUIRING NOTIFICATION- The following activities require notification under this paragraph:

(i) Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose).

(ii) The administration of any survey containing one or more items described in clauses (i) through (viii) of paragraph (1)(B).

(iii) Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is —

(I) required as a condition of attendance;

(II) administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and

(III) not necessary to protect the imme-

diate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

(3) EXISTING POLICIES- A local educational agency need not develop and adopt new policies if the State educational agency or local educational agency has in place, on the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, policies covering the requirements of paragraph (1). The agency shall provide reasonable notice of such existing policies to parents and guardians of students, in accordance with paragraph (2).

(4) EXCEPTIONS-

(A) EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS OR SERVICES- Paragraph (1)(E) does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions, such as the following:

(i) College or other postsecondary education recruitment, or military recruitment.

(ii) Book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products.

(iii) Curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary schools and secondary schools.

(iv) Tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about students (or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments) and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments.

(v) The sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities.

(vi) Student recognition programs.

(B) STATE LAW EXCEPTION- The provisions of this subsection —

(i) shall not be construed to preempt applicable provisions of State law that require parental notification; and

(ii) do not apply to any physical examination or screening that is permitted or required by an applicable State law, including physical examinations or screenings that are permitted without parental notification.

(5) GENERAL PROVISIONS-

(A) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION-

(i) This section does not supersede section 444.

(ii) Paragraph (1)(D) does not apply to a survey administered to a student in ac-

cordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

(B) STUDENT RIGHTS- The rights provided to parents under this section transfer to the student when the student turns 18 years old, or is an emancipated minor (under an applicable State law) at any age.

(C) INFORMATION ACTIVITIES- The Secretary shall annually inform each State educational agency and each local educational agency of the educational agency's obligations under this section and section 444.

(D) FUNDING- A State educational agency or local educational agency may use funds provided under part A of title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to enhance parental involvement in areas affecting the in-school privacy of students.

(6) DEFINITIONS- As used in this subsection:

(A) INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL- The term instructional material' means instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of its format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (such as materials accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

(B) INVASIVE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION- The term invasive physical examination' means any medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts, or any act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.

(C) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY- The term local educational agency' means an elementary school, secondary school, school district, or local board of education that is the recipient of funds under an applicable program, but does not include a postsecondary institution.

(D) PARENT- The term parent' includes a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child).

(E) PERSONAL INFORMATION- The term personal information' means individually identifiable information including —

(i) a student or parent's first and last name;

(ii) a home or other physical address (including street name and the name of the city or town);

(iii) a telephone number; or

(iv) a Social Security identification number.

(F) STUDENT- The term student' means any elementary school or secondary school student.

(G) SURVEY- The term survey' includes an evaluation.'

SEC. 1062. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

The General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.) is amended as follows:

(1) SECTION 431- Section 422 (the second place it appears) (20 U.S.C. 1231a), relating to collection and dissemination of information, is redesignated as section 431.

(2) SECTION 441- Section 3501(c) of the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (102 Stat. 357) is amended by striking through such Act' and inserting through Act of 1965', effective as of the date of enactment of that law.

(3) SECTION 444- Section 444 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) is amended —

(A) in subsection (a)(1), by moving subparagraph (B) four ems to the left;

(B) in subsection (b)(1)(J), by moving subparagraph (J)(i) and clause (ii) of subparagraph (J) each two ems to the left;

(C) in the undesignated text following subsection (b)(1)(J)(ii), by striking clause (E)' and inserting subparagraph (E)'; and

(D) in subsection (b), by moving paragraph (7)(A) and subparagraph (B) of paragraph (7) each two ems to the left.

(4) SECTION 447- Section 447(b) (20 U.S.C. 1232j(b)) is amended by striking et seq.'

(5) SECTION 475- Section 475(b)(2) (20 U.S.C. 1235d) is amended by striking section 4703(3)' and inserting section 473(3)'.

(6) SECTION 477- Section 477 (20 U.S.C. 1235f) is amended by striking section 4702' and inserting 472'.

For more information contact:

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Visit our websites at: www.edwatch.org
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February 15, 2002

What can parents do?

September 26, 2002

Parents should make use of the new law to review any test that their child has taken.

"The Commissioner must make available to parents..."

- Request to review the test and your child's actual answer sheet. This is how one parent discovered mistakes the testing company had made on the scoring of Basic Skills Math Test.
- Review the tests for academic challenge. Can they use calculators? How advanced is the reading and vocabulary? Is all the reading test taken from newspapers? (It is.) Is 80% of the reading test taken from the Star Tribune? (It is.) What kind of worldview do you see represented? Note the content that is absent, such as, readings about our Constitution, unalienable rights, private property, free markets or national sovereignty, for example.
- Note particularly the question and answers to the 10th grade writing test which critics have called invasive.
- If there is any part of the tests you find objectionable, speak out. You may contact state senator and representative, your school board members, the Department of Children, Families and Learning, your school administration, other parents and letters to the editor.

Nonpublic schools should not participate in the Basic Skills Test.

- The Basic Skills Tests measure "functional literacy," according to state education staff. The "academics" they test are those that should have been taught in 6th grade. Passing scores fluctuate according to levels established by the Department of Children, Families and Learning, so the validity of the passing scores is forever questionable.
- The Basic Skills Tests also assess and record the beliefs and values of every test participant. This information becomes part of the students' permanent electronic record, a record that is available to all levels of government. The Basic Skills Reading Test is taken entirely from newspaper articles, articles that reflect the new national curriculum.
- Is your private school giving the Basic Skills Test and telling the students they are required to take it? Explain your objections to the principal and opt your child out.

Many private schools think that by participating in the Basic Skills Tests, they are demonstrating the superior education private schools provide. In fact, they are allowing state and federal government to monitor and track the beliefs and values of your child.

Opt your public school child out of the MCAs.

- Government intends all students to be assessed, so you and your child may come under enormous pressure to take part. Some parents take the heat. Others are unwilling to endure the difficulties they and their child often face, sometimes from teachers and sometimes from administrators in opting out. This is a decision parents must make for themselves.
- Refusing to participate in MCAs is most effective when several families agree together to opt out.

Include a signed "Parental Informed Consent Notice" in your child's school records that serves notice that you require prior written notification from the school concerning any intent to provide physical, mental health, or social services/counseling to your child. Similarly, the school must obtain your written consent prior to providing any of said services.

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About Maple River Education Coalition

- ◆ Promoting academic excellence
- ◆ Fighting for local/parental control of schools
- ◆ Preserving Liberty

We are concerned about education and the preservation of educational Liberty in our great country. We support a broad liberal arts education that prepares free citizens for a lifetime of opportunities. We are committed to high academic achievement and to local control of school districts by parents and taxpayers. We recognize the state and independent school districts as the proper constitutional bodies governing education in our country. These principles are contradicted by the new education system — known variously as Goals 2000/ School-to-Work/and the Workforce Investment Act.

MREdCo is entirely user-supported. The continuation of our research and distribution work is dependent upon individual contributors. MREdCo is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization. Our supporters come from all backgrounds and political parties, we are non-partisan. We have a membership of 10,000 with a mailing list of over 30,000, and active connections to similar groups nationwide.

At MREdCo, we:

- ◆ Research and write about the new education system.
- ◆ Disseminate information to citizens, lawmakers, teachers, administrators, government agencies, and other groups.
- ◆ Provide accurate and complete information so that positive public policy will result.
- ◆ Encourage citizens to participate in the political and lawmaking processes.
- ◆ Equip citizens to become informed and active voters.
- ◆ Hold regular seminars.

The founding of MREdCo

After Renee Doyle's election to Minnesota's Maple River school board, she discovered local school boards had little say over education, contrary to their traditional purpose. The control was quietly being usurped by state and federal government. She resigned in protest, and formed MREdCo to educate the public about the radical changes currently taking place in our education system.

MREdCo started in 1997 in Minnesota's Maple River region as a group of concerned parents around a kitchen table. Our name was chosen then, though we grew rapidly into a nationally and internationally recognized resource on these issues. Our name proudly represents our grassroots origin. For convenience we use MREdCo—pronounced Mister Ed-Co!

F02.1