

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 those risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

The SAT Disaster of 1988

We are now in the fifth year of the education reform movement, but the SAT scores of 1988 tell a different story, that of continued academic decline. In some states that decline has been staggering.

42 States Decline

Since 1985, the verbal score has declined 23 points in South Dakota; 21 points in Wyoming and Montana; 18 points in Arizona; 17 points in Washington and West Virginia; 16 points in Kentucky; 15 points in North Dakota; 14 points in Oklahoma; 13 points in Utah and Colorado; 11 points in Minnesota and Delaware; 10 points in Michigan, Kansas and Nebraska; 8 points in Iowa and Ohio; 7 points in Mississippi and New York; 6 points in New Mexico; 5 points in Alaska, Idaho and Virginia; 4 points in Connecticut, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont and Wisconsin; 3 points in Indiana and Oregon; 2 points in Arkansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts and Texas; 1 point in Alabama, Nevada, and New Jersey.

California showed no improvement. In 1978 its verbal score was 427; in 1988 it was 424.

7 States Improve

Only seven states showed an improvement in verbal scores: Florida, 1 point; Rhode Island, 2 points; Louisiana and North Carolina, 3 points; Georgia, 5 points; Hawaii, 7 points; South Carolina, 9 points. South Carolina, with a verbal score of 400, is still at the bottom; North Carolina, with 401, is second from the bottom; Georgia, with 404, is third; and Hawaii, with 408, is fourth.

It is being said that the drop in verbal scores in some states is due to more graduates taking the SAT. Yet, in those few states that showed an improvement, the percentage of graduates taking the test also increased.

It is obvious that the lower scores represent a real decline in literacy skills.

More Students Coached

It should also be noted that more and more students are using outside coaching courses to prepare for the SAT. In a study conducted by the College Board, which administers the SAT, it was found that 11 percent of the students used test-preparation

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courses offered by commercial enterprises, spending an average of 21 hours on such activities. Fifteen percent attended a test-preparation program given in their schools.

Fifty-one percent of those who took the commercial courses said they helped "a lot" on the verbal portion of the test, while 30 percent said such courses helped at least some.

Math Scores Decline

As for math scores, from 1985 to 1988, 30 states declined, 4 showed no improvement, 16 improved. In those four years, Montana declined 18 points, South Dakota 16, Kentucky and Washington 14, North Dakota 13, Arizona and Wyoming 12, West Virginia 11, Colorado 10, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma 9. Top gainers were: South Carolina plus 14, Louisiana plus 10, Alabama plus 7, Georgia plus 6.

The Decline of the Best

The education media has said little about the 1988 SAT scores, no doubt hoping that the public won't notice the continued downward trend. While many educators discount the importance of these tests, they remain the only indicators the public has to measure academic improvement or decline on a national scale. The SATs are taken by students intending to go to college, and thus represent the academic performance of our best students. These are the students who should have been doing better than their parents. In 1963, the average verbal score was 478, the average math score, 502. In 1988, the average verbal score was 50 points lower -- 428, the math score 16 points lower -- 476.

Minorities Gain

In 1988, blacks gained 7 points on the math portion of the SAT, scoring 384, and 2 points on the verbal test, scoring 353. Mexican-Americans scored a

4-point improvement in math and a 3-point improvement in the verbal test.

On his last day in Office, William J. Bennett, Secretary of Education, expressed sharp disappointment at the test results. "I said in April that the 'absolute level at which improvements are taking place is unacceptably low.' Today it's a bit lower, and still not acceptable."

Test officials said the results also indicated that students who take a "core curriculum" of English, math, science and social studies do better on standardized tests than those who do not.

SAT 1988 Stats and Scores

	Verbal	Math
National Average	428	476
Men	435	498
Women	422	455
Whites	445	490
Blacks	353	384
Mexican-Americans	374	420

In 1983, 1,134,364 students took the SAT, a 5 percent increase over the 1,080,426 who took the test in 1987. Minority students made up nearly half the increase. Minorities now represent 23 percent of all test-takers, compared with 11 percent in 1973.

The ACTs

As for the average composite score for the American College Testing program (ACT), the 1988 average was 18.8, on a scale of 1 to 35, a feeble increase of 0.1 point from the 1987 score.

The ACT consists of four tests measuring abilities in English, math,

social studies and natural sciences. Average scores on math (18.5) and natural sciences (21.4) were the same as last year. The average on English was up 0.1 point to 18.5, while the average for social studies fell 0.1 to 17.4.

The ACT is taken mostly by students in the Midwest and South, where many public colleges and universities require it for admission. The SAT is used most often by schools in the Northeast and on the West Coast, and by many private schools across the country. (Educ. Wk. 9/28/88; 10/12/88)

DATABANK

Average S.A.T. Scores by State, 1978 and 1983-1988

State	1978		1983		1984		1985		1986		1987		1988		% of Graduates Taking S.A.T.*
	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	
Alabama	436	469	466	506	467	503	481	513	478	514	478	515	480	520	9
Alaska	466	465	437	468	443	471	446	477	445	479	446	479	441	475	43
Arizona	482	529	465	505	489	509	473	512	466	509	463	505	455	500	22
Arkansas	483	514	482	518	482	521	481	517	482	519	480	521	479	516	7
California	427	466	421	474	421	476	424	480	423	481	424	482	424	464	44
Colorado	473	516	469	520	468	514	473	521	466	514	466	514	460	511	29
Connecticut	438	469	433	465	436	468	440	475	440	474	439	473	436	472	81
Delaware	436	477	433	467	433	469	444	474	442	475	440	470	433	466	62
Florida	428	461	423	464	423	467	421	463	426	469	423	470	422	468	49
Georgia	394	424	390	428	392	430	399	438	402	440	400	440	404	444	63
Hawaii	396	468	393	471	395	474	401	476	403	477	404	477	408	480	52
Idaho	466	521	479	513	480	512	472	510	475	512	473	502	467	501	16
Illinois	463	511	462	517	463	518	468	522	466	519	463	521	464	520	18
Indiana	413	457	410	454	410	454	415	460	415	459	415	459	412	458	56
Iowa	516	569	520	573	519	570	521	576	519	576	515	574	513	577	5
Kansas	503	550	498	540	502	549	504	550	498	544	498	547	494	541	10
Kentucky	473	510	475	513	479	518	491	529	483	519	479	519	475	515	10
Louisiana	464	501	469	502	472	508	473	503	474	507	473	509	476	513	10
Maine	429	467	427	464	429	463	432	466	434	466	433	466	430	466	59
Maryland	431	466	427	466	429	468	435	475	436	475	437	477	433	475	60
Massachusetts	430	465	427	463	429	467	434	472	436	473	435	474	432	474	73
Michigan	459	511	458	511	461	515	467	517	462	514	459	513	457	513	13
Minnesota	497	550	482	538	481	539	481	537	482	540	472	531	470	531	17
Mississippi	476	505	474	507	480	512	489	528	485	516	487	521	482	519	4
Missouri	465	506	466	510	469	512	475	518	478	519	474	518	471	519	14
Montana	493	549	480	535	490	544	492	547	485	541	479	530	471	529	20
Nebraska	484	538	494	546	493	548	497	549	493	549	488	545	487	545	10
Nevada	457	494	441	480	442	489	441	480	445	485	439	484	440	486	24
New Hampshire	446	486	444	481	448	483	450	489	450	485	450	488	446	487	68
New Jersey	419	451	418	455	418	458	425	464	424	465	425	467	424	469	69
New Mexico	485	524	484	519	487	527	484	521	489	527	484	525	478	524	12
New York	431	471	422	466	424	470	427	473	427	471	425	469	420	469	72
North Carolina	390	424	394	431	395	432	396	435	399	436	400	438	401	440	58
North Dakota	510	552	505	580	500	554	513	568	508	558	509	558	498	555	5
Ohio	459	504	458	504	460	508	460	504	460	503	455	499	452	499	23
Oklahoma	483	527	489	521	484	525	497	531	487	521	486	520	483	522	9
Oregon	437	469	432	469	435	472	444	484	444	486	444	484	441	482	50
Pennsylvania	427	467	425	461	425	462	428	465	429	465	428	463	424	462	63
Rhode Island	425	463	422	459	424	461	429	466	432	466	433	465	431	469	64
South Carolina	378	409	383	415	384	419	391	424	395	431	397	435	400	438	57
South Dakota	519	564	517	560	520	566	534	575	531	567	513	563	511	559	6
Tennessee	477	514	483	519	486	523	489	521	486	521	487	524	485	524	13
Texas	425	460	412	453	413	453	419	459	419	458	416	459	417	462	45
Utah	516	564	508	545	503	542	511	543	506	541	503	540	498	536	6
Vermont	434	473	434	472	437	470	441	478	442	474	440	474	437	472	64
Virginia	428	462	427	463	428	466	435	473	435	473	434	473	430	472	63
Washington	484	525	463	510	463	505	465	508	461	502	455	496	448	494	37
West Virginia	465	506	466	512	466	510	468	507	462	502	458	496	451	496	14
Wisconsin	479	540	473	533	475	532	477	534	478	536	475	534	473	534	14
Wyoming	496	542	492	530	489	545	495	539	484	534	483	533	474	527	12

V - Verbal M - Math

* Based on number of high-school graduates in 1988 as projected by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and number of students in the Class of 1988 who took the S.A.T.

SOURCE: The College Board

State Boards Propose Radical Curriculum Reform

A study group of the National Association of State Boards of Education has called for scrapping the mainstay of the American education system: graduation requirements based on the so-called Carnegie units, or the "hour time" students spend in various subject areas.

Dorothy Beardmore, vice president of the Michigan Board of Education and chairman of the study group, said the panel was "trying to move away from the position that says you have to have, for example, four years of English, with no mention at all of what you were supposed to have learned after spending four years in something called 'English.'"

At the heart of its proposed revision would be a core curriculum made up of six broad areas -- language arts, math and science, citizenship, fine arts, health, and foreign languages -- which would be taught, the report says, in ways "that lead to an understanding of these subjects, rather than acquiring superficial knowledge in many broad areas."

The report, "Rethinking Curriculum: A Call for Fundamental Reform," also recommends changes in instructional practices to develop students' higher-order thinking skills; an overhaul of textbook-adoption systems to encourage books that "support, rather than subvert, our educational objectives." (Educ. Wk. 11/2/88)

Comment:

In olden times alchemists spent years trying to turn base metals into gold. Today, educators want to use "higher-order thinking skills" to turn ignorance into "understanding." If the teachers of English have lost interest in teaching their students the structure and uses of the English language, then there is something wrong with the teachers not the subject. But a reform

plan that advocates getting rid of the subject instead of the teachers has as its objective something other than education.

New Exchange Set for U.S., Soviet Students

Up to 1,500 American high-school students will live and study in the Soviet Union each year, and an equal number of Soviet students will come to the U.S., under a new exchange program launched Sept. 14.

President Reagan and Communist leader Gorbachev agreed to the program at their meeting in Moscow last spring.

The program will be run by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Council of Teachers of Russian, and Sister Cities International with a \$175,000 grant from the U.S. Information Agency.

Twenty-five high schools from each country will form partnerships with schools in the other country. Schools will send up to 15 students ages 15 to 18 to attend classes and live with host families for a month. An additional 25 schools will participate in 1989-90, and 50 more the next year.

Only those schools that offer at least two years of Russian language instruction will be accepted. Proficiency in Russian will be a prerequisite for students.

Further information can be obtained from U.S.-U.S.S.R. Partnerships, Room 530, 1619 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Wash. D.C. 20036; (202) 328-7309. (Educ. Wk. 9/28/88)

Comment:

Why we are involved in student exchanges with our enemies has yet to be convincingly explained. Students who study Russian will either go into the State Dept., CIA, U.S. Information

Agency, or become teachers. If the Soviets can recruit 2 percent of those students to work for the KGB in the sensitive government positions they will hold in their later careers, they will have achieved their goal. Hopefully these students will use their Russian to read Solzhenitsyn in the original rather than Lenin.

Computers to Link U.S. and Soviet Schools

A new exchange program between schools in the U.S. and the Soviet Union will link students, teachers, and administrators by computer and video-telephone lines.

A joint venture of the New York-based Copen Foundation and the New York State Education Dept., the three-year program will bring together a dozen American schools with counterparts in the USSR.

Peter Copen, the foundation's president and architect of the project, recently signed the agreement with Evgeny Velikow, vice president of the Academy of Sciences and chief science advisor to Gorbachev.

Soviet officials are especially interested in studying the effects of telecommunications on intercultural understanding, teaching methods, and learning outcomes. They have assigned five scientists to monitor the project.

Mr. Copen made his initial contacts with Soviet officials to launch the project earlier this year. The Copen Foundation is providing the hardware to equip each of the 24 schools.

The project's creators also expect the computers and telephones will facilitate the complex interactions needed to achieve the project's goal of enabling students to develop projects that have "measurable products and results" -- for example, jointly published newspapers or studies of world ecology. (Educ. Wk. 12/7/88)

Arkansas Business Leaders Offer Reform Plan

The Arkansas Business Council, which includes such noted business leaders as Sam Walton of Wal-Mart Stores, Don Tyson of Tyson Foods, and Charles Murphy of Murphy Oil Co., has proposed a reform plan to get a better educated work force.

The Council proposed mandatory full-day kindergarten attendance, expanded drop-out prevention, counseling services, health clinics, and drug-abuse prevention programs in all districts. It has called for performance-based pay, alternative routes to teacher certification, decentralization of school management, and school consolidation.

Council members indicated that they would be willing to support higher taxes to help pay for the reforms, but only after strategies for implementing them are in place. (Educ. Wk. 9/28/88)

Comment:

The businessmen mean well, but they haven't dealt with the key problem of our public schools: the Dewey philosophy of education that shapes and affects everything that goes on in the public school -- from the way reading is taught to the configuration of the classroom. Until the Ross Perots of this world learn that simple lesson, American public education will continue to be a millstone around the neck of the American economy.

Youth Suicides Up in Missouri

Suicides by persons aged 15 to 24 in Missouri are up 16%, according to that state's Health Department. In 1986 there were 112 suicides in this age group, in 1987 the number was up to 130. (USA Today, 11/10/88)

Criminal Student, Protected by Counselor, Kills Teenage Girl

In the wake of the stabbing death of a teenage girl, youth-services officials in Ohio are considering requiring that schools be notified of a student's criminal background.

In September, a 16-year-old high-school student from Northfield was charged with the murder of 13-year-old Lori Ewald. Officials at Nordonia High School said they were shocked to learn from news reports that the student had a past record of kidnapping, rape, and assault. They had not, they said, been informed of his record through official channels.

As in many other states, Ohio's current policy allows youth counselors to decide whether schools should be made aware of a student's criminal record, according to Carol Rapp of the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

In this case, the boy had a good school record, Ms. Rapp said. As a result, the counselor chose not to notify school officials of his criminal record, for fear the boy would be "stigmatized," she explained. (Educ. Wk. 10/19/88)

COMMENT:

Kidnapping, rape and assault should have landed the student in jail, not the high school.

Suicide-Prevention Programs May Actually Encourage Suicide

According to Dr. David Shaffer, a national expert on trends in youth suicide, school suicide-prevention programs may be doing more harm than good.

Dr. Shaffer, professor of child psychiatry at Columbia University, said that many of the prevention programs that have proliferated over the past three years "might actually facilitate suicide and suicidal behavior."

He made his remarks before some 250 mental-health and education professionals at the American Medical Association's first meeting on the mental-health concerns of adolescents at Oak Park, IL.

In his speech, Dr. Shaffer noted the scarcity of research studies gauging the effectiveness of school suicide-prevention programs, and speculation that there may be a link between these "psychologically naive" programs and a 1985 jump in the teenage-suicide rate -- which had stayed stable for the five previous years.

He noted also that many stable students find these programs a waste of time; more than 80 percent of the 2,000 students he surveyed who had taken part in one of the programs knew most of its main points before attending it.

But a more important drawback, he said, is the potential effect of such programs on teenagers who have thought about or attempted suicide. By "normalizing suicidal behavior," he maintained, these programs are unintentionally "legitimizing it in some way." (Educ. Wk. 10/19/88)

Rockefeller Foundation Funds Global Education in Arkansas

The Rockefeller Foundation has awarded a grant of \$450,000 for global education in Arkansas. Under the project, announced in October by Gov. Bill Clinton, the Arkansas International Center of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock will train interdisciplinary teams of teachers from eight districts, who will create model "global education" curricula.

The center has trained more than 1,000 teachers since 1984, when the state mandated that schools provide global education.

"The goal is to develop models for an approach to global education that would be available to every schoolchild in Arkansas," said Susan Wilkes, the center's executive director.

Comment:

The purpose of global education is to prepare American youth for the New World Order. Detailed evidence of this was presented to the public in The Cunningham Report issued in January 1986 by the U.S. Region VIII Education Office at Denver. The report was developed by Gregg L. Cunningham at the direction of Thomas G. Tancredo, the U.S. Dept. of Education Regional Representative. The report caused quite a controversy, but its facts have never been refuted.

The globalists consider Americans to be too "ethnocentric" or patriotic. They want Americans to view themselves as living in a "world community," able to "view the world from another's perspective." In such a world, there is no room for such concepts as "the evil empire."

"Black and white answers probably never really existed but the time is long past when even the myth can endure. Competent world citizens must act in the large zone of grays where absolutes are absent. The grays are made up of difficult and conflicting values where one right challenges another. Tolerance for ambiguity is essential at all ages and positions in life." (Global Education: State of the Art by Lynda Carl Falkenstein, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 300 S.W. Sixth Ave., Portland, OR 97204)

Obviously, the Soviet-American student exchanges will enable young Americans to see their own country through Soviet eyes. It should help get rid of those horrible blacks and whites.

Soviets Admit Their Textbooks Lie

The Soviet Union canceled final history exams for elementary and high school students because the textbooks used in schools, according to the government newspaper Izvestia, were collections of "lies."

"The guilt of those who fooled generation after generation is gigantic," Izvestia said. "They poisoned with lies the minds and souls" of Soviet students.

Especially with the rise of Josef Stalin, the Soviet state has closely controlled the recording of its own history. Soviet textbooks fell into line with the official view of Soviet history.

"Things like the purges and the forced collectivization of the peasantry existed in textbooks only as great triumphs," said Vladimir Matveyev, editor of the Teacher's Newspaper.

The cancellation of the history exam is part of the Soviet leader Gorbachev's attempt to de-Stanlinize the country and fill in the "blank spots" of Soviet history.

Izvestia suggested that if new textbooks were not ready by the beginning of the fall term, collections of ground-breaking articles on Soviet history now being published in the official press might be used in schools. (Denver Post, 6/12/88)

Comment:

Obviously, in the Soviet Union they are now making quite a distinction between good communists and bad communists. The problem for us is that all communists are, by their very nature, bad. Good communists still believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat, the class struggle in which the bourgeoisie will be liquidated, the monopoly of political power by the Communist Party, the inevitable triumph of socialism over capitalism, the use of terror to control the masses and destroy the opposition, the use of the secret police (KGB) to harass dissidents, the gulag system of slave labor.

Now that the communist government has admitted that it has lied to its people, it will have a difficult time regaining whatever trust its citizenry may have had in it.

Teachers Attacked in N.Y. Schools

After a week in which New York City teachers were bludgeoned, slashed, pummeled and blasted, their union leader has called for increased security and tougher sentences for teacher assaults.

"One attack against a teacher is outrageous and to have four in one week is just intolerable," said United Federation of Teachers President Sandra Feldman. "And we're afraid that this is just the tip of the iceberg."

The latest act of violence occurred Thursday afternoon (5/26/88) when a physical education teacher came upon an intruder rifling through students' gym bags outside a Bronx school and was beaten with a baseball bat. Gary Smith, 37, was the fourth teacher assaulted.

Douglas DeMarco was knifed Monday more than a dozen times by a mugger in the bathroom of a South Bronx grammar school.

The other incidents included a Brooklyn teacher who was beaten up by a student, the student's brother and sister Tuesday, and a 71-year-old Brooklyn teacher injured Wednesday by a M-80 firecracker tossed into her class.

The need for increased security has long been evident to DeMarco who said he teaches in "a neighborhood that's known for two things: heroin and crack." DeMarco, speaking from his hospital bed, said his attacker was "some young crazed guy, looking to make a quick score."

The assailant got a few subway tokens and a couple of dollars. DeMarco got kicked in the ribs, abdomen and groin and stabbed in the ear, neck, shoulder, side and back.

There were 1,322 assaults in the city's 1,000 schools in 1985-86 and 969 this year, said Board of Education spokesman Bob Terte. That included 337 teachers assaulted in 1985-86 and 198 so far this year.

In addition, 350 security guards have been added in the last two years,

and the operation budget for school safety increased from \$31.8 million to nearly \$43.2 million. There are currently 2,081 guards in the schools.

But the UFT insists there were about 1,000 physical attacks against teachers both last year and this year. The UFT wants guards in every school and police officers in troubled neighborhoods. The union also is pushing for legislation to make any physical attack on a teacher a felony, no matter how minor. (Idaho Statesman, 5/29/88)

Ritalin Use Now Widespread

As many as 750,000 children nationwide may be receiving medication for hyperactivity or inattentiveness, a new study suggests.

The study, based on data collected in Baltimore County, Maryland, since 1971, estimated that nearly 6 percent of all elementary students nationwide may be undergoing treatment with Ritalin and other stimulant drugs.

"Medication treatment for hyperactive children in the United States has emerged from its minor treatment role in the 1960's to become a dominant child mental-health intervention in the late 1980's," the study says.

It also found that increasing percentages of girls, secondary-school students, students from lower-income families, and students who were inattentive but not behaving inappropriately were being given the controversial drugs.

The study was published in the Oct. 21 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. (Educ. Wk. 11/2/88)

Vital Dates

Second Annual PURE Convention:
Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, IL. Fri-Sat, Apr 28-29, 1989.
Contact: Owen Haney (806) 359-7048.