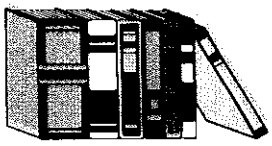
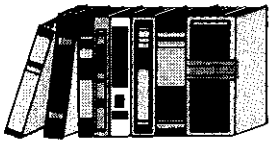
The Blumenfeld Education Letter





"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."

Education Goals Panel Produces Tax-Funded "Toolkit" To Manipulate Public Acceptance of Phony Reforms

One of the aspects of Outcome-Based Education that the public has no inkling of is the amount of tax money that is winding up in the hands of educational entrepreneurs in the business of promoting and implementing OBE. It has become an incredibly lucrative boondoggle because of the billions of dollars that federal and state governments must spend to implement OBE.

The federal money channels were originally established by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which provided funding for a host of educational activities, including the creation of ten Regional Educational Laboratories where educational "research and development" is conducted by an elite cadre of humanist doctors of education and their assistants. They get their money through contracts with the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). They are all connected by an Internet-based computer network to facilitate their collaboration, dissemination, and constituent support activities.

Inasmuch as their "research" has done nothing to improve education, we wonder what the millions of tax dollars spent by these labs since 1965 have done for the American people. Since test scores and reading skills have declined measurably since 1965, is it not possible that what is being done in these labs is actually harming American school children?

One project we do have information on concerns William Spady and OBE. It is a letter sent to then Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell by G. Leland Burningham, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Utah, dated July 27, 1984. The letter reads:

Dear Ted:

I am forwarding this letter to accompany the proposal which you recommended Bill Spady and I prepare in connection with Outcome-Based Education.

This proposal centers around the detailed process by which we will work together to implement Outcome-Based Education using research verified programs. This will make it possible to put outcome-based education in place, not only in Utah but in all the schools of the nation. For those who desire, we will stand ready for regional and national dissemination of the Outcome-Based Education program.

We are beginning to see positive, preliminary results from some of the isolated schools in Utah which have implemented Outcome-Based Education.

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These positive indicators are really exciting!

We sincerely urge your support for funding the proposal as presented.

Warmest regards, Lee.

Spady got his federal grant in the amount of $152,530. Incidentally, all of this insider manipulation of the grant process is clearly illegal. But the insiders can get away with it because there is no one to blow the whistle and it is almost impossible to get Congress to investigate. In other words, the federal educational bureaucracy is well protected by its self-serving members. Besides, the Congress has passed so many new education laws mandating the creation of so many additional layers of bureaucracy that it would be impossible to even sort out where conflicts of interest intrude themselves in the many mandated processes. It's easy enough for Pentagon whistle blowers to find out the real price of a toilet seat. But how do you find out the real price of "educational research"?

Community Action Toolkit

A major production of the Northwest Education Lab in Portland, Oregon is something called the National Education Goals Community Action Toolkit, which instructs education reformers and change agents on how to manipulate the public in order to get the reforms accepted. They call it "A Do-It-Yourself Kit for Education Renewal." It was produced as a Guide to Goals and Standards by the National Education Goals Panel which is made up of 8 state governors, 2 members of the federal executive branch, 4 members of Congress, and 4 state legislators.

The Panel is chaired by Republican Governor John R. McKernan, Jr., of Maine, and the other governors are Evan Bayh, Indiana (D), Arne H. Carlson, Minnesota (R), Jim Edgar, Illinois (R), John Engler, Michigan (R), Michael Leavitt, Utah (R), E. Benjamin Nelson, Nebraska (D), Roy Romer, Colorado (D). Note that five of the eight governors are Republicans. Instead of Republicans questioning the wisdom or legitimacy of federalizing public education, they have become accomplices, which is why so many conservative citizens no longer trust Republican members of the ruling elite.

Blame Everybody

The introduction sets the tone of the Toolkit. First, the blame for public education's failures are placed on everybody. It states:

> "We" means all of us. Educators, students, parents, policymakers, employers, and other community leaders have allowed our education system to stagnate.

Whatever happened to John Dewey and his progressive colleagues who spent decades changing the public school curriculum, rewriting textbooks, getting rid of intensive phonics and replacing it with a dumbing-down reading-instruction method called look-say? What input did students, parents, employers and "other community leaders" have in destroying the high standards of traditional education and putting socialization in their place? If any group of people ought to be blamed for the deterioration of American public education it should be those professors at the graduate schools of education who carefully planned and carried out their progressive reforms. Indeed, it was Prof. Charles Judd of the University of Chicago who in 1915 urged his fellow educators to undertake "the positive and aggressive task of . . . a detailed reorganization of the materials of instruction in schools of all grades." The details of that sweeping reform can be found in the yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education which have been published since 1901.

Thus, what we have in public education today is what the professors of education have given us. All of this was done without the consent of parents, students, or anyone else. The educators took it upon themselves to reform the system but refuse to be blamed for the results. That is why "we" are all to blame. It diverts the public's wrath from the true culprits.

A Nation of Learners

According to the Toolkit, we must now go from being "A Nation at Risk to [being] a Nation of Learners." By transcending the physical and legal limits imposed by mere school enrollment, the educators can now expand the scope of their activities to include all of life, from the womb to the tomb. (Students go to school, but "learners" include everybody!) The educators, who have done such a great job of ruining the schools, now feel quite confident that they can take charge of running our lives. As a "nation of learners," we will all be under the tutelage of our anointed psycho-educators. That, apparently, is the solution to the failure of public education as summed up in the National Education Goals.

The Goals were the result of an "Education Summit" held in Charlottesville, Virginia, in September 1989 attended by then-President Bush and the 50 state governors. The Toolkit states (p. 6):

> At the Summit, they laid the groundwork for the National Education Goals—clear, concise and ambitious targets stating the education results we seek to achieve. The Goals span a lifetime of learning. . . .
>
> The President and governors believed that the Goals offered a context for grass-roots reform resulting from effective public engagement. To hold us all accountable, the President and governors established an independent, intergovernmental, bipartisan body—the National Education Goals Panel—to monitor and report on national and state progress.
>
> The Panel is a unique bipartisan body of federal and state lawmakers, a unifying force that works to build consensus and engage each and every citizen in grass-roots efforts to improve teaching and learning. . . .
>
> In March 1994, Congress elevated the Goals from symbolic statements to statute by passing the landmark Goals 2000: Educate America Act with support from both Democrats and Republicans and nearly every major education and business group in the United States. . . .
>
> The Goals 2000: Educate America Act is considered to be the most sweeping federal education legislation in decades. It builds on research and lessons learned from years of trying to improve schooling and it reflects a broad consensus on how U.S. education must change if we are to reach the National Education Goals.

Note the emphasis on "consensus" and "grass-roots" efforts and reform. That's what they need in order to implement this revolution from the top: the illusion that the people are for it, when in fact the American people had nothing to do with conjuring up the much vaunted Goals. Which are, in brief:

1. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school reading to learn.
2. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
3. By the year 2000, American students will have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and will be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning and productive employment.
4. By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in math and science.
5. By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and ready to compete in a global economy.
6. By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence.
7. Teachers will have access to more training and professional development.
8. Parents and families will form partnerships with their schools.

The Unreachable Goals

Inasmuch as the year 2000 is only six years away, how realistic are these pie-in-the-sky goals? Total adult literacy by the

year 2000? Schools free of drugs and violence by the year 2000? Top achievement in math and science by the year 2000? Who are they kidding? President Nixon launched a "Right-to-Read" program in the 1970s to eradicate illiteracy in America in ten years. It was a total failure. Since 1965, Title One of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was supposed to ensure that all children would learn to read in American schools. Almost thirty years and 75-billion dollars later, the illiteracy rate among students is worse then ever. Why? Because, despite parental protests, the educators have insisted on using teaching methods that produce reading disability. Will that change under Goals 2000? No. Dyslexia-producing whole language is now an integral part of the reform movement.

Also, note the reference to the global economy. That's to prepare Americans for GATT and the World Trade Organization which will create the basis for the New World Order and global citizenship.

Does any of this sound like anything grass-roots America is clamoring for? And that is why the Toolkit was created: to give the change agents detailed instructions on how to get the "people" to enthusiastically accept the shackles and chains their educational and political leaders have prepared for them. The Toolkit states (p. 8):

> Reaching a consensus among national political leaders on the need to achieve the National Education Goals is an unparalleled accomplishment in the revitalization of U.S. education. But it is only a necessary first step. To achieve the Goals, citizens must be engaged and have access to knowledge with which they can make good decisions and manage change. . . .
>
> There are several essential steps in the "Goals Process." First, each community must adopt goals that reflect high expectations for all and cover the entire breadth of focus from prenatal care to lifelong learning.
>
> Next, a community must build a strong local accountability system that tracks progress over time and incorporates specific performance benchmarks to mark progress along the way.

So the goal is government control over the life of the citizen learner, beginning at the prenatal stage. Supposing the mother wants to abort? Will the government object? As for tracking every individual's "progress" over time, the computers are already on line at the National Center for Education Statistics. The moment you let that government bureaucrat inside your home or bring your child to the public school, you and your children will be tracked for the rest of your lives. And who will have access to all of that personal information about you and your children? Ask the government.

The Higher-Standards Fraud

What about the new higher standards? What are they all about? The Toolkit explains (p. 11):

> [T]he only way to bring about true change in the country's 16,000 autonomous school districts is to empower those closest to the action.
>
> However, in attempting to meet the Goals, each community must first address the same central question: What will success look like? Clear and ambitious standards of educational performance are vital for answering this question effectively. Their development and use are thus an essential precondition for educational improvement and achieving the National Education Goals. . . .
>
> We must shape a system of teaching and learning based on the philosophy that all students can learn at higher levels. . . .
>
> For far too long we've been running the business of education without a societal agreement on the product. . . . Consensus standards would clearly define what citizens in each community consider essential for all students to learn.
>
> But don't we already have standards in education? In many instances we do, but they almost always measure the wrong things. . . . [T]hey consist largely of "input" measures like course credits and time spent on subjects and weak measures of system "output" like high school diplomas awarded and

scores on national standardized tests that assumed certain content had been covered.

Sounds a lot like the usual pitch for Outcome-Based Education. Let's get rid of the Carnegie units based on seat time and standardized tests and replace them with performances and demonstrations of competencies. But who is going to develop the new standards? Who will decide what the learners must know? The Toolkit gives us an example of standards set by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). It states (p. 17):

> According to the NCTM, "In grades K-4, the mathematics curriculum should include two- and three-dimensional geometry so that students can develop spatial sense." . . . "[S]patial understandings are necessary for interpreting, understanding, and appreciating our inherently geometric world. . . . Children who develop a strong sense of spatial relationships and who master the concepts and language of geometry are better prepared to learn number and measurement ideas as well as other advanced mathematical topics." . . .
>
> There is no rote memorization, no cut-and-dry drill. (p. 19)

In other words, children will learn geometry before they learn about "number ideas." No memorizing of the arithmetic facts is included in this new math. But our ten-symbol, Arabic-Hindu, place-value system requires memorization of the arithmetic facts if the child is to become proficient in using that system. And so, the standards recommended by the NCTM will deny children the important mental exercise that rote memorization provides and will deny them a full understanding of our abstract counting system. No parent with any common sense would want his or her child to be taught mathematics in this absurd way.

The new "standards" are merely a means of providing the educators with a plausible rationale for doing away with every last vestige of traditional education. The Toolkit states (p. 20):

> Standards are key to building coherence in a system requiring radical and fundamental change. . . .
>
> With standards in place, student assessment can measure what is truly important to succeed. Teaching to the test won't be a bad idea, because the tests would measure what we really believe is important for students to learn. . . .
>
> Once adopted, standards can dramatically change the way teachers are prepared. Colleges of teacher education can revamp their curricula so prospective teachers receive training based not on some generic set of techniques, but upon challenging and relevant material they will actually use in the classroom. . . .
>
> Textbooks, software, and other materials would be designed and purchased . . . because they reflect high aspirations and challenging content. Clearly articulated standards can influence the design and the market forces shaping everything from television programs and interactive multimedia platforms to the proliferation of novels and nonfiction works for parents and children.

That's where the promoters of OBE will make big bucks: designing, publishing, and selling all of the materials needed to implement Goals 2000. The millions of dollars that federal and state governments will be investing in the reform program will provide teachers and school systems with the money needed to buy the new materials and services, all at the expense of the taxpayer.

Politically Correct Standards

On March 31, 1994, Goals 2000 was signed into law by Bill Clinton. The Act creates the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) which will oversee the new "voluntary" education standards. NESIC will review and certify the recommended standards. What standard will NESIC use to judge the new educational standards? Supposedly they will have to be "world-class, developed from a consensus-based process."

Can you and I submit a good intensive, systematic phonics program for certification by NESIC? How about a good rote-memorization arithmetic program? Not likely. The Toolkit states (p. 22):

> At the core of the national standards-setting initiative are the real experts—master teachers of history, civics, geography, science, English and language arts, foreign languages, and the arts. Their partners are researchers and scholars. A process of feedback and revision follows the initial development and includes public comment and input. This is the process used by the nation's math teachers when they became the first group to release standards in 1989.

Recently, the new National Standards for United States History, drawn up by a panel of history "experts," was released. According to *Newsweek* of 11/7/94:

> It may be new history, but it stirs up old, untidy culture wars. Critics contend the curriculum is laden with political correctness. The university professors and schoolteachers who compiled the work argue that it's just heavy with correct history. . . . The woman who appointed this panel of history experts during the Bush administration is clear on where she stands. "This book is just the sad and the bad," complains Lynne Cheney, former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities. . . .
>
> The NEH under the Reagan and Bush administrations set to work to draft "world-class standards" in key subjects for kindergartners through 12th graders. . . . Guidebooks in geography, art and now U.S. history are awaiting certification . . . .

In other words, the new standards are being set by the politically correct university elite in complete disregard for what the American people want. Another important component of OBE, enacted into law on May 4, 1994, is the School-to-Work Opportunities Act which will turn American public schools into glorified vocational schools in which students will be trained to fill the needs of a particular industry. Goals 2000 creates a National Skill Standards Board that will "identify broad occupational clusters and create a system of voluntary standards, assessments and certification of the skills needed in each."

Also, every potential graduate will be expected to demonstrate certain performance competencies before being awarded the needed certificate for job eligibility. The competencies were described in a June 1991 report of the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), "What Work Requires of Schools," issued by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Manipulating the Public

How can the government get the "people" to accept all of this? The Toolkit is quite explicit. It says (p. 37):

> Any plan that attempts to implement top-down solutions from Washington, D.C., or the state capital will fail.
>
> [T]here must be a clear and shared vision to guide and help build broad-based support. Communities will resist selecting one solution over another until they know where they are headed and why. . . . Coalitions should include parents, teachers, community organizations, local businesses and labor unions, school administrators and school boards, religious leaders, and others. . . . Identify barriers. . . . Create and mount strategies to overcome barriers . . . .

The Toolkit also contains a Community Organizing Guide but warns that in creating a Community Action Plan, "every community's plan must be tailored to meet local needs." The first step is to identify a leadership team assembled from a diverse cross-section of the community. The next step is to develop a strategy, to find out who will help and who will oppose the Goals. "It will be important to be aware of the opposition. Keep an eye out for your opponents, respect their opinions, and try to explain yours. Understand the process of inclusion." So if you hear of a conservative taking part at an

OBE conference, you'll know that it's part of the strategy of inclusion. Who are the likely candidates for the leadership team? The Toolkit lists them:

[T]he curriculum development director for the school district, school guidance counselors and other pupil service personnel, members of the PTA, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the local teachers union, and members of the social action committee of a local church or synagogue. . . . Inclusiveness is not just a goal, but a process requirement.

The next step is to have a community goals meeting controlled by a facilitator.

The facilitator will need to encourage audience participation. He or she will need to ensure that no single person monopolizes the discussion and that shy people are encouraged to speak. The facilitator will bring the discussions to a close and guide the audience to decisions about actions that need to be taken. . . . It is also important to keep a record of everyone who attends any meeting you hold.

It is obvious that nothing must be left to chance or spontaneity at these meetings. They must be scripted, staged, and controlled. The final result of the meeting will be a formal adoption of "a list of community education goals." There will be no debate over whether or not the goals are valid to begin with.

The facilitator will ask each citizen for a pledge to work toward the established goals and ask for volunteers to lead task forces or goal groups.

Handling the Opposition

The Toolkit then provides case studies of successful meetings. It also gives advice on how to handle the opposition.

[T]here may be people or organizations in the community who will oppose the reforms you are attempting to institute. . . . Before your organization takes any action, you will need to anticipate the potential reaction of opponents. List your opponents and what your success might mean to them. Refer to the Troubleshooting section for suggestions on how to deal with opposition.

Typical opposition: "A group of parents who believe that calculators in the classroom keep students from learning how to do basic math." You can quash that opposition by getting "the president of Hewlett Packard to write the chair of the school board a letter supporting the proposal." Next, identify change agents. The Toolkit explains (part 2, p. 37):

Change agents are people who—through their actions, behavior, attitudes, or opinions—can help achieve the community goals. One change agent could be the superintendent of schools because she or he has the power to institute a district-wide policy to include community members in the standards-development process. . . . Identifying a change agent really translates into analyzing who has the power over the decisions your organization hopes to effect.

Action steps are the things that your organization and your allies will do to create the desired changes in the actions, behavior, attitudes, or opinions of the change agent(s). . . . The Public Agenda Foundation has developed a framework for thinking about how opinions and decisions lead to real action.

Change agents are advised to avoid using loaded words and phrases (part 2, p. 54).

Words and phrases like "outcomes," "outcome-based education," "self-esteem," and "attitudes" may mean different things to certain groups of people. Remember, if you stick to clear, concrete terms that everyone comprehends, not only will you be better understood, you may also avoid serious conflict down the road.

Part Three of the Toolkit provides detailed instruction on how to change the attitudes and behavior of the community so that the National Education Goals will be accepted. The strategy was developed by the Public Agenda Foundation, a supposedly

nonpartisan organization which specializes in public opinion research and citizen education. The Foundation has identified a seven-stage process through which the public moves to resolve complex issues. Stage one: people become aware of an issue. Stage two: people develop a sense of urgency. Stage three: people look for answers. Stage four: resistance, due to misunderstanding, narrow thinking, wishful thinking, conflicting values. Stage five: people begin to weigh choices. "After moving beyond initial resistance to change, people begin to weigh their choices rationally and balance various alternatives related to achieving education goals or adopting a standards-based reform plan." Stage six: intellectual acceptance. Stage seven: full acceptance.

This is how America's public masters intend to manipulate the public so that the latter will happily accept what the elite has planned for them.

A Journalist Speaks Out

A copy of the Toolkit was sent to Robert Holland, a writer on the *Richmond Times Dispatch* who has done more to expose the folly of outcome-based education than any other reporter in America. He E-mailed a letter dated 10/6/94 to our esteemed Education Secretary, Richard Riley. It reads:

Mr. Secretary: I have today obtained a copy of the "Community Action Toolkit" of the National Education Goals Panel, of which you are a member. The panel was set up under Goals 2000. I was informed that this kit was developed with tax money under DOE's Northwest Regional Education Lab in Portland. If that is not true, please say so. If it is, please state how much tax money was spent preparing this kit.

The kit makes this statement: "Only by changing the attitudes and behavior of community members will it be possible to reach the National Education Goals."

With all due respect, sir, that does not sound like the government believes that we citizens have any choice regarding the shape education reform will take. In fact, isn't such a government-directed propaganda campaign unprecedented in America's history?

Some of the topics in this kit: Describe Allies and Opponents. Identify Change Agents. Troubleshooting in the event of opposition. And avoid the term Outcome-Based Education.

Furthermore, sample speeches and letters to the editor are provided in the kit. Evidently, it will not even be necessary to compose one's own endorsement of the national plan. Uncle Sam has done it for you.

Another item of advice: "Choosing a Facilitator." The following statement is made: "An organized discussion about education reform will not happen spontaneously." Is that what your department believes, Mr. Secretary? I have witnessed many spontaneous discussions re reform on this [computer] bulletin board over the past year, and, at least as far as I am aware, none of those exchanges was "facilitated." Do you mean to suggest that this debate cannot go forward without a government facilitator leading the way?

The kit also suggests that "resistance" may be a serious problem. Among the suggested remedies: "Get the president of Hewlett Packard to write the chair of the school board a letter supporting the proposal." Has the president of Hewlett Packard, in fact, agreed to do this? Are business groups like the Business Roundtable helping to finance this attitude-shaping venture?

Finally, sir, what is your authority under the United States Constitution to conduct a campaign aimed at rigging the outcomes of the education debate in every local community in America?

I would really appreciate it if you would answer these questions. Thank you.

That about sums it up, doesn't it. We know that in times of war the government will crank up a propaganda machine to whip up the public into a patriotic frenzy. And if the war is just, the public will respond. But since when is it the prerogative of government to shove half-baked educational ideas down the throats of its citizens who have serious reservations about the whole phony enterprise? If anything was needed to prove to the American people that the entire establishment-driven education reform plan is nothing but a sham, it is this Toolkit!