

Date: December 12, 2001

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RE: SERVING THEIR POLITICAL INTERESTS. TO HELL WITH THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

Relevant to the nationwide debate on education is the fact that high levels of aggression in children and poor school performance go together. "Currently the prognosis for aggressive children is poor. Services provided by mental health, education, and juvenile justice agencies often have little impact on the downward trajectory of aggressive children" (Timothy A. Cavell, 'Working With Parents of Aggressive Children', page 19). I found an effective intervention with exceptionally aggressive ninth graders to be telling these students, still in their formative years, the serious consequences of their current behavioral course ('a life of crime and a life in jail') but was told that saying such things is "taboo in public education". By the time it is not taboo, it is too late. The consequences affect suburbanites as well as urban communities.

Current policies are worse than ineffective. I have found that the vast majority of ninth grade mathematics students in an urban school (Chelsea High School) cannot do simple addition and subtraction that they are supposed to have learnt in grade school. I was told to observe the class of another teacher held out to me as a model and found him telling the students he will give them "one hundred percent credit" if, in solving a simple equation, they just show him the steps, even if their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are wrong and regardless of their answers. This is fraud upon the public.

I have found that the main reason the students do not know simple addition and subtraction or the steps in solving a simple equation is their REFUSAL to learn, which is part of their aggressive behavior (above).

If some children ( not schools ) are failing because they REFUSE to learn, transferring them to other schools will not make much difference, nor will tutoring, nor state takeover of schools, etc. Bringing back corporal punishment will.

As a scientist and scholar, the undersigned is as far above the superintendent of the school district as she may be above a grade school drop-out (see web page above). But, for his pains, he has been fired. The school's staff was also inciting violence against him. This case is a model of how the nation's schools function as breeding grounds for crime. The ever-present day-to-day terrorism of street crime, it should be noted, has a more negative impact on the quality of life than some other kinds of terrorism. Many of the current programs, running into many billions at the Federal and state levels, are unwittingly funding terrorism.

By refusing the guaranteed increases in special education funds, the U. S. House-Senate conferees may have slowed making a bad situation worse but they have not done anything to make it better.

Even for students who are not refusing to learn, their mathematics textbooks, for example, could be made ten times lighter and ten times more useful. Increasing Title I funds, for example, has an effect like making their textbooks heavier.

ADDED ON DECEMBER 15, 2001: In reaction to the above, the U. S. House of Representatives "rallied" to the education bill & passed it, emphasizing the importance of providing adequate funds (the earlier resolve not to make special education "another Federal entitlement program" was due to the paragraph about street crime above). Well, they could double the number of teachers, halving class sizes and still not exhaust this avenue of making things better by providing adequate funds ( though there are ten times more effective and fifty times more economical alternatives which I will tell them if they ask).

ADDED ON DECEMBER 17, 2001: The Massachusetts House chairman, in response to a "revolt" amongst members and plans to remove him due to the above, says the critics have not said WHAT it is they want to cut. Well,

i) cut out the Federal and state departments of education as well as schools of education, most of the teachers and staff from local schools and all Federal and state financial support (local funds will be more than they will be able to use);

ii) borrow wholesale from the armed forces programmed instruction in various subjects including books, equipment and the automatic testing that occurs during programmed learning.

ADDED ON DECEMBER 19, 2001: A subheading regarding the just passed education bill in the New York Times says "Will the Bush plan help the schools or, on balance, hinder them?" The answer is, hinder them. This bill should not become law. It should be junked and the U.S. Congress should start again ( see above ).

ADDED ON JANUARY 8, 2002: Normally Mr. Bush would have signed the education bill after Congress returned about ten days from now. But his political advisers have told him that, by the time Congress returns, it may not be possible to sign it, because of what is said above. So he has become hyperactive enough to earn him a megadose of Ritalin as a columnist said yesterday and is rushing to sign it this morning. He is doing what he thinks will serve their political interests; to hell with the national interest.

Satish Chandra