



# TEACHER'S PET

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS OF TENNESSEE  
November, 2004 Volume 11, Number 2 [www.teacherspet.org](http://www.teacherspet.org)

*“Teachers  
By  
Calling...”*

*Professionals  
By  
Choice!”*

*“Your  
Professional  
Alternative”*

The final moment of assuming adulthood may be when we inherit the legacy, become the keeper of the traditions, the curator of our family's past and future memories; when the holidays are at our houses.

Ellen Goodman

## Thoughts From Our State President

By the time this newsletter is published, our country will already have selected its leader for the next four years. The news media has inundated the citizens of this country with reports/debate analysis and editorials on what skills are necessary for our chief executive. My students are totally absorbed with this election. I decided to ask them what skills a person would need to be a good president. They tackled this assignment with relish! Here are their conclusions.

The President of the United States should always help people, keep them safe (soldiers too) and treat others the way he would want to be treated. He should always follow the rules, do his homework and clean up his office. He must be able to read, know his sounds and numbers, and be good with math. He should always be kind to others, have neat writing and most importantly, take his wife out to dinner!

Although some of these comments brought a few giggles, I was reminded of the skills we classroom teachers must exemplify each and every day. These apply to us as well. The President of the United States has an awesome responsibility, as do we!

Be thankful for the opportunity to teach our precious children.

Happy Thanksgiving,  
Cathy A. Kolb  
PET President

## Dell Discount to PET Members

We are pleased to announce a new benefit for PET members. PET members can now receive a 2% to 12% discount on Dell computers.

Computer units priced below \$800 receive a base 2% discount, Units priced \$800 to \$1,600 can receive a 4% base discount, and units priced above \$1,600 can receive a 6% base discount. If the customer's system includes a 3 or 4 year onsite warranty, the base discount is doubled.

To take advantage of the Dell program you have two options:

- (1) Visit [www.dell.com/edubuy](http://www.dell.com/edubuy) and enter PET's ID number. Once you have entered the discount store, you choose what you want and the discount is automatically calculated.
- (2) Call 866.257.4711 and give PET's ID number. The representative will help you with your order and ensure that you receive your discount.

**PET's Dell ID number is KS 29323625.**

If you haven't visited our web site in a while, try it. You might find just what you need.

<http://www.teacherspet.org>



## Executive Director's Report

I'm sure that some of you are wondering why we did not publish the responses of the candidates to an education questionnaire this year. Frankly, this year's political climate was so contentious and so many people had strong hard feelings that I decided not to add fuel to any fires that are already out there. This publication will be at the printer on November 2 and that is by design. Our plans are to return to the questionnaire for candidates at the 2006 elections.

It was not many years ago that those on opposite sides of the political spectrum could argue their points fiercely and then go to eat together and have a mutually enjoyable time of fellowship. They did not dislike and slander the opponent just because they disagreed on ideas on the role and process of government. We no longer live in those times, and we have lost a part of our greatness because of it.

I used to enjoy the spirited debates with my friends on issues and still lost no respect or friendship for them. I would tell my Dad that it was sad that church people couldn't disagree and still have the close friendships that politicians did even after a hot debate. I think the church has moved ahead and politics has lost its way.

Professional Educators of Tennessee's neutral political stand seems to be right to me more than ever. We can still strive for and want the best for all teachers and students in Tennessee. Since we did not work against a legislator, we do not find their door closed.

May this find our members whose candidates did not win to be a part of the loyal opposition. Hopes are also that those whose candidates did win will be gracious in victory.

Our next issue will contain our member questionnaire. If you have questions to be included, please submit them by November 24.

Be thankful,  
Walter Jewell

## Poor Schools Make Rich Targets

A detailed report by Alec MacGillis in the Baltimore Sun finds, "for companies selling education software, the poorer a place is, the better." As a result of demands to improve test scores in low-performing schools, the nation's poorest schools have become lucrative targets for a growing education software industry. This development has potentially negative implications for the very low-income students that the law aims to help. Part of the problem is due to the sales and marketing pitches of companies that claim to have research-proven programs that will guarantee results. Despite the dubious claims of programs marketed as "evidence-based," the reporter finds too many school officials are succumbing and buying educational software that often cost more than \$100,000 per school or district-wide management programs. What some software vendors are claiming as a solution to quickly turn around failing schools may be one of No Child Left Behind Act's biggest defects, the writer finds. An obvious problem: there is a paucity of solid research and evaluation information available to help guide the decisions to buy expensive educational software. The reporter finds that the companies marketing these products dismiss concerns about the value of their products, saying their "test-prep" programs can help these schools to improve annual test scores. Several companies promote a product with a statement, such as, "it is backed by solid evidence of effectiveness for reading and math learning." Another concern has to do with gifts and perks offered to educational officials who have influence over the purchases of software programs and services.

Baltimore Sun  
"PEN Weekly NewsBlast" [newsblast@lyris.publiceducation.org](mailto:newsblast@lyris.publiceducation.org)

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## Introducing a New PET Attorney

We are pleased to announce a new full-time attorney at PET. Marilyn Holt comes to us directly from our lead attorney, Larry Crain's, office. If you call about a legal question, Marilyn will usually be the first person you are referred to.

Ms. Holt is uniquely qualified for this position as a certified Tennessee teacher and an attorney. She has worked in several law offices and taught middle school and high school students for three years. Her plans are to continue her studies and complete a Doctorate of Education to accompany her Doctorate of Jurisprudence which she completed in June of this year.

We hope that you meet her soon as a member, but that you do not need her professional services.

## Can Teachers Transfer To Another School System While Under A Contract With An Existing Employer?

Lately, our Legal Department has received inquiries from various PET members regarding their ability to transfer to another school system during the middle of the school year, thus breaching their current employment contract. What can teachers do to transfer from one school system to another school system while under a contract?

The applicable Tennessee law regarding this issue is found at T.C.A. § 49-5-411 and addresses the issue of teacher resignation and/or breach of contract. This statute states as follows:

(a) The conditions under which it is permissible to break a contract with a local board of education are as follows:

The *incapacity* on the part of the teacher to perform the contract as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the local board of education;

Teacher is *drafted* into the military service;

The *release*, by written mutual consent, by the local board of education of the teacher from the contract which the teacher has entered into with such local board of education.

(b) The teacher shall give the director of schools written notice of resignation at least **thirty (30) days** in advance of the effective date of the resignation. A teacher who breaks a contract with a school system without a **justifiable reason** will be subject to the following penalty:

Local board of education may request a **suspension of the teacher's license**.

If the commissioner in fact finds that the contract was broken, the commissioner shall suspend the teacher's license for no less than thirty (30) and no more than three hundred sixty-five (365) days. This suspension of a license shall occur only after the commissioner has provided the teacher an opportunity for defense, in person or by counsel, against the charges during a full and complete hearing within thirty (30) days following the filing of such complaint.

If you ever find yourself in this situation, needing to transfer to another school system in the middle of the school year, it is best to notify PET's Legal Department to assure you are taking proper precautions to prevent any dilemmas that may be encountered with your current local school board. Although it has been the practice for most superintendents to allow teachers to transfer while not filing a complaint for a breach of contract, they certainly have that option available to them should they so desire.

For more information on steps to take and proper procedures to follow, please contact the Legal Department at Professional Educators of Tennessee.

Dr. Marilyn Holt

## NCLB

You have heard many things said, probably some correct and some not. If you have a question and want the facts you can go to the source. Some parts are easy to understand and then there is the rest of it. The full text of Public Law 107-110, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>

You will probably find the index is the most useful part, because no one will want to read the whole thing.

## Teacher Working Conditions Student Learning Conditions

Many schools consistently struggle to address critical teacher working conditions. Teachers report feeling isolated in their classrooms, needing more basic materials to do their jobs, feeling inundated with work, lacking input into the design and organization of schools, and facing minimal prospects for career advancement and professional growth. Such conditions are closely

Continued on p.4 sidebar



Continued from p.3 sidebar

related to difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers, but oftentimes overlooked as school reform strategies. This resource-laden website developed by the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (with support from BellSouth) was created as part of a working conditions project in North Carolina. But it's a major "find" for anyone interested in strategies to address persistent problems in schools that block teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The topics include time, leadership, empowerment, professional development and facilities. The resources are organized around five key recommendations based on the Center's extensive research. And you'll find separate resources for teachers, principals, district offices, policymakers and community leaders.

<http://www.teacherworkingconditions.org/index.html>

I bless those endless, eventless years when I examined the underside of leaves, watched my mother stir the vanilla pudding and wondered why my toes got shorter as they got closer to the surface of the bathwater.

Phyllis Theroux

## THE LEADERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

### Professional Educators of Tennessee State Board

President, *Cathy A. Kolb*

Vice-President, *Marcy Conway*

Secretary, *Cheryl Walker*

Treasurer, *William B. Gemmill III*

*Frank Bellamy*

*Bernard Bull*

*Dewey Esquinance*

*Michael G. Miller*

*Charles Mike Ridenour*

### Local Unit Presidents

Blount County **BCPET**  
*Cheryl Chambers*

Bradley County **BCAPE**  
*Daryl Fletcher*

Campbell County **CCOPE**  
*Vickie Huddleston*

Carson-Newman College **CAPE**  
*Brenda Shanks*

Claiborne County **COPE**  
*Gail Leonard*

Cumberland County **C<sup>2</sup>OPE**  
*Bridgett Hepburn-Smith*

Franklin Special **PEFFSD**  
*Cheryl Walker*

Hamilton County **HCPET**  
*Pamela Booth*

Jefferson County **JCPET**  
*Frank Brown, Jr.*

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Lewis County **LCPET**  
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*Cheryl Dood*

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*Kelly Bryant*

McMinn County **MCPET**  
*Janis Koonce*

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*William Gemmill III*

Montgomery County **PET-CMC**  
*Cathy Kolb*

Murfreesboro City **AME**  
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Obion County **PEOC**  
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Putnam County **PCPET**  
*Martha Clark*

Rutherford County **ARE**  
*Rhonda Jones*

Sevier County **SCPET**  
*Michael Miller*

Sullivan County **PESC**  
*Kim Blevins*

Sumner County **SCAPE**  
*Kelly Smith*



## Make plans **NOW** to attend PET's Annual Convention!

Now is the time to start planning to attend PET's annual convention held June 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> of 2005 in Knoxville, TN! It promises to be an exciting and informative convention. If you've attended in the past or even if you never have, you don't want to miss this one!

There is much planning and preparation already going on to make this one of the best ever gatherings of professional teachers. Expert and highly-respected guest speakers from across the country will be speaking on many different issues. Topics will range from current educational issues nationally and in Washington D.C. to legal rights as a teacher and as an association to teaching creation vs. evolution in the textbooks not to mention the gathering of teachers from across the state to share professional ideas. For added pleasure, there will be entertainment, food, and door prizes.

Putting these dates on your calendar now enables you to look forward to this after you've worked so hard in the school year and will leave you refreshed, relaxed, and more inspired to enjoy your summer. Why not bring your family for a vacation planned around the convention? Knoxville is only 30 minutes from the Great Smoky Mountains, Gatlinburg, and Pigeon Forge.

Plan ahead- start now:

- (1) Put the dates on your calendar!!
- (2) Make hotel reservations at the Marriott at a **reduced** rate at only \$70.00 per night + applicable taxes. Our convention will be held here overlooking the Tennessee River. You can stroll down the hill to the new Volunteer Landing dining and recreation destination, the Old City entertainment district, the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and Neyland Stadium. Just call Marriott at (865)637-1234, tell them you are with PET for your reduced rate.
- (3) Call Vanessa at the PET home office 800-471-4867 to register for our event. Doing so as soon as possible helps us prepare for you.

Don't miss out on this opportunity!! Sign up to attend and invite your colleagues as well. If you have any specific questions, feel free to contact me at [marcy@teacherspet.com](mailto:marcy@teacherspet.com)

## Arizona Says English Immersion Working

A study released earlier this year by the Arizona Department of Education concludes that students in English immersion classes "outperformed bilingual education students in every grade level between second and eighth grade in reading, language and math, based on Stanford 9 scores."

"There is not a single exception," Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne told the *Arizona Republic*. "It tells us that the students in English immersion do substantially better."

Since a 2000 voter-approved law made immersion the state's primary method for teaching limited-English students, the study was very good news for everyone... almost. The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) called the study "irresponsible." James Crawford, NABE's executive director, called immersion "a crap shoot for kids" that "has no track record."

## Who knew?

"We didn't realize how important cupcakes were." – Allen Spelce, spokesman for the Texas Department of Agriculture, after the lifting of a ban on sugary baked goods in the state's elementary school classrooms. The new nutrition policy caused a public outcry, forcing the state to backtrack.

*Houston Chronicle*  
September 1, 2004

## WHAT MAKES A TEACHER WORTH LISTENING TO?

What would make students care more about school? What would make them pay more attention to their teachers? You can find out on "The Way We See It," a video created by youth production teams from around the country.

The program will air on PBS in January (hosted by John Merrow), but it's available now on DVD for the cost of shipping and handling. To request a copy, visit:

<http://www.listenup.org/education/>



## EPA Grants and Fellowships

The Grant Program sponsored by EPA's Office of Environmental Education supports environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to help people make informed decisions that affect environmental quality. EPA awards grants each year based on funding appropriated by Congress. Annual funding for the program ranges between \$2 and \$3 million. More than 75% of the grants awarded by this program receive less than \$15,000. The deadline for applying for a fiscal year 2005 environmental education grant is November 15, 2004.

<http://www.epa.gov/epaho/me/grants.htm>



## Grant Writing Tips

SchoolGrants has compiled an excellent set of grant writing tips for those that need help in developing grant proposals.

<http://www.schoolgrants.org/tips.htm>

## Partnership for America's Future, Inc. Seeking Applicants for \$10,000 National Teacher Award

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, along with the Partnership for America's Future are seeking applicants for the sixth annual "Freida J. Riley Teacher Award".

The \$10,000 award is named for Miss Freida Riley, a science and math teacher from Coalwood, West Virginia, who for most of her career, taught while suffering from Hodgkin's Disease. Her impact upon her students was captured in the 1999 film *October Sky*. *October Sky* was based on the book *The Rocket Boys*, authored by one of Riley's students, Homer Hickam. Riley inspired her students to overcome the limited opportunities of their era and environment to aspire to fulfill their dreams.

The purpose of the award is to identify and reward an American teacher who is teaching with an illness or disability, who has overcome tremendous adversity, or who has made an enormous sacrifice of heroism in order to positively impact students.

This year will see the publication of the first volume of life stories of the inspiring teachers who have won the first five awards. The Awards Ceremony will be held the first week of May in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Astronaut Storey Musgrave will be the keynote speaker.

For more information and an application, contact the Partnership for America's Future at 330-376-8300, or visit [www.pafinc.com/Riley.htm](http://www.pafinc.com/Riley.htm). Deadline for applications is March 4, 2005.

Press Release; Partnership for America's Future, Inc.

## National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Announces Grants

The Mathematics Education Trust of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) is pleased to announce its 2005 program, which includes four grants to help elementary school teachers improve classroom instruction. The Ernest Duncan Grant, John and Stacey Wahl Grant, and Clarence Olander Grant will each award up to \$2,000 to help teachers improve their professional competence as classroom mathematics teachers. The Irene Etkowicz Eizen Grant for Emerging Leaders in Elementary School Mathematics will award up to \$6,000. Application deadline: December 3, 2004.

<http://www.nctm.org/about/met/>

## Federal Resources, FREE

More than 30 Federal agencies formed a working group in 1997 to make hundreds of federally supported teaching and learning resources easier to find. The result of that work is the FREE website.

<http://www.ed.gov/free/>



## Let's Not Remain a Secret Society

At this time of year we hear many new members say, "If only I had known about PET – I would have joined long ago." Or, "PET is exactly what I have been looking for, I didn't know you folks existed." Or, "Why don't you tell people that there is an alternative?" The answer is, "We try, but they don't hear us." We set up information tables at in-service days, we speak at local meetings, we have placed ads in newspapers, and we have even put ads on the radio.

Most teachers would rather hear from someone they know than from a person out of the "state office" who wants to sell them a membership. Most teachers are relational, that is they care more about people and relationships than things.

Some professionals at your school have already decided that, for moral or ethical reasons, they will not be members of TEA/NEA. These teachers often find themselves in a legally vulnerable position or feeling as though they have no friends.

*Why don't they know the PET secret?* The answer lies in the next question.

*Who knows about the PET to which we belong?* WE DO!

*How can others learn about us?* WE TELL THEM! As a good friend (and PET member) we should let them know that there is an alternative.

*How did you first find out about PET?* Statistics have shown that a few of our members have found us through an Internet search or TEA literature. The vast majority heard about us from a friend. Wouldn't you like to be a friend to someone at your school who is searching for an alternative? Someone was good to you; pass on the information to someone else.

Because we do not force members to support a controversial social agenda or require them to join three levels of our organization, we are the best value in town. Be a friend and let someone know about the best value in town (with no strings attached).

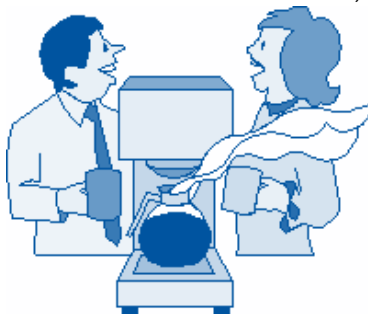


Dennis Farrell

## Schools Moving Up

SchoolsMovingUp, a WestEd initiative, helps schools and districts address the immense challenge of raising student achievement in low-performing schools. In an interactive Web format, SchoolsMovingUp offers practitioners knowledge and expertise they need to make sound decisions and take tangible action in their school reform efforts. It provides high-quality resources, proven services, and powerful tools that education professionals can use in their work with low-performing schools nationwide. Resources include profiles of schools from across the country that have improved student achievement, easily implemented or replicated school and district tips to assist in school improvement efforts, and articles, books, and abstracts offering practical ideas and models for school improvement. Frequent online events bring experts to the Web to share lessons learned, new ideas, and related resources. SchoolsMovingUp also offers practical information about the sweeping reform of the No Child Left Behind Act.

<http://www.schoolsmovingup.net>



## Study Finds School Funding Lacking

A study commissioned in 2003 by the Coalition for Tennessee's Future reveals that a substantial amount of additional dollars are needed to adequately fund Tennessee's public schools.

The study was conducted over a six-month period by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates Inc. The goal of the study was to determine the operating cost – excluding capital costs and the cost of student transportation and food services – of an "adequate" education in Tennessee. For the purposes of the study, an adequate education was defined as one that fulfills a set of state-specific, state-level input requirements and student performance expectations as well as federal requirements and expectations under No Child Left Behind and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Conclusions of the report were based on information from the Tennessee Department of Education and the input of 90 education professionals representing large, medium and small school districts from East, Middle and West Tennessee. The firm used a model that combined the "professional judgment" and "successful school" approaches. The study found a wide range of financial need for Tennessee's schools but found that the state is more than \$1 billion short in its funding of public education in grades K-12.

The complete study is available at on the TSBA Web site.

Stephen Smith  
**TSBA Legislative Alert**  
 October 20, 2004



## SCRUB CLUB

Proper hand washing is the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness. Here is a fun way to learn about washing hands to help fight everything from food borne illnesses to influenza.

By accessing [www.scrubclub.org](http://www.scrubclub.org), families and educators can visit a fun, interactive site that teaches children the proper way to wash hands. The site has a "Webisode" (featuring the Scrub Club Kids battling villains), interactive games, downloadable activity materials for kids, educational materials for teachers, information for parents, and an official hand washing theme song.

The Scrub Club will help get kids excited to wash their hands and, more importantly, help them to develop good hygiene habits early on so that they stay in the classroom and out of the doctor's office.

[www.nsf.org/consumer/newroom/kit\\_scrub\\_club.asp](http://www.nsf.org/consumer/newroom/kit_scrub_club.asp)

On Thanksgiving you realize you're living in a modern world. Millions of turkeys baste themselves in millions of ovens that clean themselves.

George Carlin

## The Public Schools "Good Old Days" Never Were

How often have you heard, or perhaps said, that today's school difficulties could be corrected if we could return to the halcyon days and ways of the past. It will never happen, because it didn't happen then either.

While yesterday's schools didn't have many of today's problems it doesn't follow that they were better then. Fewer youngsters went to school then, those who did go went for fewer years, and many did not go at all.

In 1900 only 6% of students reached high school. 1950 was the first year that half of the fifth graders of seven years before graduated. Only in the 1970s did schools begin accepting special education students, and then the courts said so. Even today, experts say only about 70% of students graduate from high school. Many of them have minimal skills.

The first general school law was Pennsylvania's Common School Act of 1834. The public was so angered that virtually every legislator who voted for the law was defeated for reelection and replaced by someone who promised to vote for repeal. That didn't happen. Thaddeus Stevens, later famous as a Congressional leader at the end of the Civil War, gave one of the most effective legislative speeches ever and persuaded enough of those pledged to repeal to not do so.

Horace Mann, Massachusetts' education leader in the 1830s and 1840s, is hailed by today's school establishment. It is forgotten that he was impressed by the Prussian school system and that his work resulted in a system as committed to indoctrination as to education. And so it remains.

The late E.G. West, an economist, conducted studies concluding the average citizen in England and the United States had a higher literacy level in the mid-1800s than exists today.

In 1880 Richard Grant White wrote an essay the title of which was "The Public School Failure." In 1893 Joseph Mayer Rice, after visits to schools in 36 cities, said he "found rote learning, mindless teaching, administrative ineptitude, political chicanery, and public apathy." In 1907 future president Woodrow Wilson said, "... with all our teaching we train nobody ... with all our instructing we educate nobody."

The Ladies Home Journal, in an eight-part series in 1912-13 concluded schools were not educating students. Henry Adams is famous for saying a teacher affects eternity and never knows where his influence stops. Few choose to remember that in 1918 he also said, "The chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody concerned with it, teachers and taught."

In 1930, Thomas Briggs, in a lecture at Harvard, said "there has been no respectable achievement even in the subjects offered in the secondary school curricula." Three years later the U.S. Office of Education found that teachers commonly promoted students they thought were failures. Clearly social promotion is not new.

In 1939 Mortimer J. Adler wrote of studies in New Jersey and Pennsylvania that found "a failure to master the ordinary subject matters of instruction." Even "graduate schools struggle to get Ph.D. candidates to write simple, clear English." In 1942, only 6% of college freshmen could name the 13 colonies, less than half knew of two congressional powers granted by the Constitution, or knew of four provisions in the Bill of Rights.

In 1969, Colin Greer concluded that "In virtually every study undertaken since that of Chicago schools made in 1898, more children have failed in school than have succeeded, both in absolute and in relative numbers."

In 1983 *A Nation at Risk*, written by establishment educators, found a rising tide of mediocrity in the schools and said if another nation did to us what we are doing to ourselves we would consider it an act of war. As bad as that was, Congress in 1994's Goals 2000 Act found matters had gotten worse. In 2002, although many would have you now believe otherwise, members of the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed the No Child Left Behind Act to deal with what they also considered desperate days in the schools.

In brief, as education reporter Thomas Toch wrote in 1993, "the golden era of U.S. public education that contemporary critics like to evoke never existed."

David W. Kirkpatrick, Senior Education Fellow, U.S. Freedom Foundation  
[www.freedomfoundation.us](http://www.freedomfoundation.us)



## Smart Kids Left Behind

"Are schools leaving the most gifted children behind if they don't allow them to skip ahead?", asks John Cloud. Americans don't seem to have any problem with teenagers who show genius in sports (LeBron James) or entertainment (Hilary Duff). But we have a deeply ambivalent relationship with intellectually gifted kids. Since it was signed in 2002, the No Child Left Behind law has focused attention on the kids who can't keep up, but research shows that gifted kids are also at risk.

In a 2000 study for "Gifted Child Quarterly," Joseph Renzulli and Sunghee Park found that 5% of the 3,520 gifted students they followed dropped out after eighth grade. Astonishingly, that's almost as high as the 5.2% of nongifted kids who dropped out. Untold numbers of other highly intelligent kids stay in school but tune out.

"When we ask exceptional children about their main obstacle, they almost always say it's their school," says Jan Davidson. "Their school makes them put in seat time, and they can't learn at their own ability level." It's impossible to say how many students who should be accelerated are kept with their age-mates, but more than 22,000 of the 87,000 seventh- and eighth-graders who take the SAT as part of talent-search programs each year score at the level of college-bound seniors. "If they can do that kind of work, the typical curriculum is going to be way below their needs," says Nicholas Colangelo.

*Saving the Smart Kids*, Time Magazine (September 27, 2004)

## The Chaplin's Corner

### "The Three Imperatives of the Christian Life"

In Hebrews 10:19-25, the writer of this marvelous epistle encourages his readers to do three very important and practical things that will enhance their relationship with Christ and other believers. Ponder each of these principles with a view to living them out in your journey with Him.

First, the writer tells us in verse 21 to "draw near with a sincere heart." The object of our affection is quite clear: its Christ and Him alone. Drawing near describes vigorous activity as opposed to passive inactivity. In other words, our growth in Christ is contingent upon our exercising the disciplines of grace (Bible Study, prayer, worship, service, to name a few). This "drawing near" is an inner engagement that arrests our whole being and causes us to grow in Christ.

Second, he instructs us to "hold fast our confession" in verse 23. Literally, it means to "keep on holding to your confession." Our confession describes both what we verbalize as well as how we live our lives. This means what we say we believe should line up with how we behave and interact with people in this world. Said another way, how we think about the things of God should directly affect our conduct in today's world.

The third command in this passage calls us to be encouragers. In verse 24 he says, "let us stimulate one another to good works." The word stimulate can also be translated "consider." When we consider another believer, we are thinking about them, praying for them, loving them unconditionally, and building them up as a brother or sister in Christ. Indeed, today's church needs men and women who will do this and do it well.

These three commands sum up so much of the Christian life. Once applied, they have the ability to transform our lives for God's glory in order that His righteous Kingdom may be expanded. Join me in asking God's Spirit to work these powerful principles out in our hearts, so that we might live for His unmistakable glory.

Dr. Bobby Tucker

## Legal Issues

A consortium of national organizations, under the leadership of the National School Boards Association (NSBA), has issued a resource document to help school leaders address legal issues surrounding students' sexual orientation and gender identity. "Dealing with Legal Matters Surrounding Students' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" provides practical guidance with respect to students, school programs, and curriculum. It is intended to answer questions about students' civil rights which regularly arise in public schools. Using a Q&A format, the publication addresses questions involving student organizations and clubs; dress codes; curriculum and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students; student involvement in school events; and student harassment.

The web-site address below will take you to the report. If you want to save ink or toner while printing, only print pages 3-18 which will leave out two black, one yellow page with no information, the front and back covers.

<http://www.nsba.org/site/docs/34600/34527.pdf>

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