

# Outcome-based education is child abuse, says leader of referendum

by Jed Brown

*Jed Brown is an educator and the leader of the Referendum Measure 47 campaign in Washington State, which seeks to place on the state ballot a referendum to repeal the recent state law imposing "outcome-based education." The following is an excerpted transcript of a speech he delivered to a meeting of the Schiller Institute in Seattle on June 29.*

"Education Reform"—actually I don't like to call it educational reform, because when we say reform we think of it in a positive way. I have three reasons [for my involvement in the referendum fight], and it was rather strange sitting in the audience here and listening to what Mr. LaRouche has said. I have a deep and abiding love and concern for all of the children in the state of Washington. What's happening now in Washington State is what I've termed institutional child abuse, which goes exactly along with what LaRouche was saying about "spiritual child molestation."

The way I illustrate it, is to say that if you, as parents, were to neglect the physical needs of your children to the extent that the educational system is neglecting their educational needs, those children would be taken away from you and you'd be put in jail and prosecuted for child abuse. Now the institution is doing this, and I can't be silent about that any longer.

The second reason for my involvement is that I am an educator. I gave up on the public schools some time ago as far as teaching goes, but I grew up in a family of educators. Both my parents retired after 35 years as educators. We see our profession being totally decimated and destroyed. For that reason, I need to step out and speak about these issues.

The third reason is something we were talking about tonight: Our constitutional form of government is being placed in serious jeopardy, in this state, as well as across the country.

Education reform or restructuring, outcome-based education, is a very dangerous type of thing. What is it? It is basically a system, a change in the system, to get the children of this country ready for what George Bush called "the new world order."

The people who, by and large, are orchestrating it are from global multinational corporations, and the international banking cartel. What they are doing is trying to shift our education system from what we know and what we went

through—a solid, basic, academic type of education—to one that revolves around attitudes and values. The problem is that these are not attitudes and values that we know, nor what we collectively, as a society, really want.

Education has always dealt with attitudes and values. What we have done as educators is we have propped up and supported those attitudes and values that I call "American values." You can call them Judeo-Christian values—the values of our culture that were normally taught in homes across the land. Those are not the values that are being taught in the schools today.

## A brainwashing program

To do this, they are using what is known as "outcome-based education." OBE is extremely effective in changing attitudes, because it is a behavior modification technique, thought up by a man by the name of William Spady. He's the current guru in outcome-based education. OBE is based on the work of notable psychologists, like Benjamin Bloom. Bloom, as anyone who has been around education will know, came up with what is known as the "cognitive" domain and the "affective" domain. The "cognitive" domain is thinking, what education has generally been, and the "affective" domain is emotions, attitudes, and values.

So we have a lot of psychologists and people who are expert in using mind-control techniques and behavioral modification moving into the schools, or setting up programs within the schools to readjust children's values from the ideas of nationalism to ideas that will be necessary to function within this "global society."

We're seeing the curriculum change from math, science, English, and reading, to things like sex education, multiculturalism, and globalism. Then we wonder why our children can't read.

There's a simple old idea in education called "time on task." It states that what you spend your time on, that's what you are going to end up learning. So if I spend my time as a teacher, teaching reading in the classroom, my children are going to end up being readers. If I spend it on sex education, well, how are they going to end up? They're going to end up needing condoms.

We're talking about a technique that these brainwashers use called "crisis management." So we have had a crisis

created in education, basically through the Washington Education Association (WEA) and the National Education Association (NEA), which have been engineering a lot of crises, along with certain legislators and politicians who've changed laws to allow our system of education to decline. Now it has declined long enough, and now we have to manage the crisis, we have to come back and fix it, with the solution they wanted in the first place.

The nuts and bolts of this started with the George Bush administration. The crisis was set forth by Ronald Reagan with his study entitled "Nation at Risk," and George Bush came along with the solution, setting up an Education Summit. Guess who co-chaired that Education Summit? None other than Lamar Alexander, who was governor of Tennessee, I believe, and went on to become Bush's U. S. secretary of education. The other co-chairman was Bill Clinton, and we all know who Bill Clinton is. So Bill Clinton and Lamar Alexander helped George Bush out by running this Education Summit, where they came up with these "educational goals," or "goals for education."

From that, we had the development under Lamar Alexander, by a fellow named Chester Finn of "America 2000," which was George Bush's plan for setting up a federal education system. Only one problem: It's unconstitutional and illegal for the federal government to step into a states' rights issue and dictate curriculum in the schools.

So how do you get around that? Bush went to the National Business Roundtable, which is a group of all the very powerful business people, and he said, "help me out," or at least that is what I assume he said, because the National Business Roundtable put together a group called the New American Schools Development Corporation. They separated the country into 11 Design Team Areas. . . .

What happened was two things. One was Senate Bill 5953, which set up the Commission on Student Learning. The CSL is an appointed group with members chosen by the governor and the State School Board. It is the responsibility of the CSL to come up with all the new "outcomes" that all of our children will have to demonstrate to complete their schooling. The CSL is also responsible for the new assessment packages, so we can test how well they have met these "outcomes."

If we don't like the "outcomes" they come up with, we will have no recourse, because these are non-elected people. We can't go to them and say we demand that the outcomes be changed.

Now, House Bill 1209, which is the one we want to repeal with Referendum 47, sets the goals that the outcomes are designed to achieve. The goals, when we first began looking at them, were worded exactly as the governors had laid them out [at the Education Summit], which were very similar to what we saw in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and, in fact, in 26 other states that had the Bush program already implemented. OBE is up and running in the state legislatures of 37 states now, and in the rest it is already law.

FIGURE 1

### The paradigm shift in education, as described by its advocates

Traditional	Future
Individual subjects	Projects, integrated learning
Spelling, grammar, language, reading, composition	Whole language, the writing process (draft, edit, publish)
Textbooks	Newspapers, magazines, trade books, data bases, video discs
Math algorithms	Exploration in Mathland, manipulatives, Logo, games, simulation
Pencil and paper	Word processing, desktop publishing
Single-grade class	Multi-grade class
Kids leave room for help	Special help comes to kids
Report cards	Parent, teacher, student conferences
Teacher-selected learning	Student, teacher, parent-selected learning
Memorizing	Thinking
Quiet at desk	Talking, moving as needed
Curriculum-centered	Child-centered
Abstract	Concrete, connecting to previous knowledge
Work and learn alone	Cooperative learning
Hands off	Hands on
Teacher's rules	Class rules
Bored and/or anxious students	Excited and motivated students
Teacher as all-knowing	Teacher as guide

Source: Dr. Alice Walker, Old Dominion University, in a presentation explaining Virginia's proposed education reform to teachers in the school system.

Those goals were very vague and very attitudinal. The citizens of the state didn't like them. Many people showed up in the state capitol of Olympia over the legislative session and yelled and screamed. We filled the hearing rooms and every hearing they had with negative input. Finally, they did change the goals somewhat. They tightened up the language a bit. They did manage, at least for a time, to say that there will be a priority on academics, as opposed to the "values" part of it.

Well, there's one problem with that: When the leadership of the Legislature couldn't get the goals they exactly wanted, they went back and amended the basic education goals. That means that they can come back next year, when the heat dies down, and put the goals they originally wanted back in.

It is out of the goals that you are going to have the "outcomes" that the Commission on Student Learning is supposed to develop. So if the goals are academic, then the outcomes will be academic. If the goals are attitudinal and

value-laden, then all the outcomes will be attitudinal and value-laden, and the system becomes attitudinal and value-laden. . . .

### **New Age spies in the classroom**

The other thing that we will have is a mentoring program. Now, we have had a mentoring program for teachers in the state for a few years. We start out with beginning teachers coming out of school, and it is a good idea to put them in with a more experienced teacher. That's the way they sold this. The experienced teacher can be the mentor. Now, with OBE, beginning teachers *and* experienced teachers can have mentors. The language they've got in this bill is that experienced teachers who are "having difficulties" both inside and outside the classroom will now have a mentor.

This means that if I am a 17- to 20-year experienced teacher having difficulties (and no one has defined that term), they will put a mentor in my classroom with me. The problem with that is, that if we look at school districts like Bremerton, which have had OBE for the last four or five years, we see that there is coercion going on, and actual extortion. About half the staff hates OBE, and they've been told they *will not* say anything negative about it.

What we suspect will happen with this mentor program is that, because the whole system must shift to an OBE model, as a teacher, if you don't go along with it, you will be given a mentor, and be remediated, just like a child will be remediated if they don't demonstrate the desired outcome, until you change, until you accept outcome-based education. That means that the 17- to 20-year experienced teacher, who may be a very effective teacher with children, and who may be a good, solid, basic skills teacher, or teaches the subject matter very, very well, but who doesn't believe in outcome-based education, may have a 21- to 22-year-old OBE-oriented teacher following him around, being his mentor. I don't know how the union allowed this, except that the union signed on to the Governor's Council report. They basically have sold their teachers down the river.

This bill also tells the state superintendent to look at the laws and make recommendations on changes in the laws governing the non-continuance of contracts. If I do not comply with OBE, they remediate me with a mentor, and if I still don't comply—and I believe the terminology in the bill is "made sufficient progress"—they just won't renew my contract. . . .

### **Teaching patriotism is illegal**

All the way along, we heard that this bill, the education reform, was locally grown, but when we looked around at the other states, we found that their programs looked exactly like this one. Then we heard that we are going to deregulate the school system, so that people can have more local control. Sounds good. A lot of people bought into that. Well that was a lie. It was just a bold-faced lie by the Legislature.

There is a directive by the Legislature to the Commission on Student Learning, this non-elected board, to look at 216 laws for the state of Washington governing education, and see if they should be repealed.

So they weren't just deregulating, they wanted to take away a lot of the laws. We finally did get Sen. Dwight Pelz to admit that. He's the chair of the Senate Education Committee. We called Senator Gaspard's office (Senator Gaspard is the Senate majority leader) and said, "What about this?" He said don't worry about it, these are just the laws we have to repeal so that we can make outcome-based education work in the state.

We thought 216 laws was an awful lot of laws—the list is eight pages. You'll notice they didn't list the laws by title or anything, so we don't know what they are, they are just

## **Even American college students can barely read**

National attention has long been focused, and rightly so, on the problem of children from disadvantaged backgrounds who leave school unable to read even a simple English sentence. Less widely recognized, however, is the crisis among middle class, college-bound students.

Daniel J. Singal, a university professor writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* (November 1991), describes the abysmal reading skills of freshmen at some of the nation's best colleges. He estimates that today's college-bound high school senior scores 50-60 points lower on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and 25 points lower on the math section, than in 1970 (SAT scores run from 200 to 800). According to other sources, average verbal scores had already dropped 39 points between 1956 and 1974.

Singal writes:

"Those who tend to dismiss those sixty lost SAT points as insignificant haven't seen a college term paper lately. It's not that freshmen in 1991 are unable to read or write. Most of them possess what the National Assessment of Educational Progress calls 'satisfactory' skills in this area. But is that enough for college? Do they have sufficient command of the English language to comprehend a college-level text, think through a complex issue, or express a reasonably sophisticated argument on paper? Those of us who were teaching in the early 1970s can attest that the overwhelming majority of freshmen at the more selective colleges arrived with such 'advanced' skills. Now only a handful come so equipped."

numbers. So we went back and got a common school manual, which is all the laws that deal with education, and we started the laborious task in looking these laws up, one by one.

What we found was some very staggering, staggering things. There is a law on the books, folks, that requires all of our students in this state to be taught the U.S. and Washington State Constitutions. I kind of like it. There is a law that requires the teaching of morality and patriotism in the schools. Let me read it: "It shall be the duty of all teachers to endeavor to impress on the minds of their pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, temperance, humanity, patriotism. To teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood. To instruct them in the principles of free government, and to train them up to the true comprehension of the rights, duty and dignity of American Citizenship."

That law was on a list that is targeted for repeal. We were told that these were just the laws that they needed to repeal so that outcome-based education would work in this state. I have a real problem with that. If OBE needs to repeal laws like that, then I've got to tell you it is a bad program, and we shouldn't be doing it.

Some other interesting things came out. There is a law on the books which gives authority to the local school district board of directors to operate and stock their school libraries. That law was on that list, targeted for repeal. To us that sounds like twenty-first-century book burning. Because if the local school board no longer has the authority to operate and stock the libraries, who does? Will it be the non-elected Commission on Student Learning that decides what goes into those libraries? Many of you probably remember a movie

Singal goes on: "Countless times I have been amazed at how little students have managed to glean from a book I know they have read, to the point where they are often unable to recall the names of prominently mentioned figures. So much escapes them; even those of above-average ability absorb no more than a dusting of detail from a printed text."

Equally distressing, he says, is the rate at which today's students read. A professor at the University of Michigan who used to assign a book a week in the 1960s, now allows two to three weeks for each title, and has been forced to use simpler books. Twelve to fifteen books per semester used to be the rule of thumb at selective colleges; today, it is six to eight books, "and they had better be short texts, written in relatively simple English," according to Singal.

All too often, Singal reports, high school students "are given works that, as the English department at one highly ranked independent school puts it, are 'age-appropriate' and 'reflect concern for social pluralism.' 'Age-appropriate' means giving students assignments 'that reflect their interests as adolescents, that they can read without constant recourse to a dictionary, and from which they can take whatever they are inspired to take.' "

If a graduating senior has read *Catcher in the Rye*, but not Shakespeare or Poe, he or she arrives at college utterly unprepared for higher learning. This is what is happening today.

### **A deep-rooted problem**

Singal recommends that the quality and quantity of assigned reading for students at all grade levels be "dramatically increased." This, while necessary, is easier said than done. The roots of the problem run deep in our cul-

ture. Television, the "one-eyed babysitter," is one important factor, as a generation of children has been rendered intellectually passive and unaccustomed to using their minds to carry out enjoyable and worthwhile activities in their spare time. The pervasive influence of the 1960s counterculture is also to blame.

Allan Bloom documents in *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) that there is a shocking lack of intellectual depth and moral values in American families today. Families which in times past would have gathered around the dinner table to read the Bible, today have nothing important to say to one another. "Our students," he writes, "have lost the practice of and the taste for reading. They have not learned how to read, nor do they have the expectation of delight or improvement from reading. . . . When I first noticed the decline in reading during the late sixties, I began asking my large introductory classes [at the university level], and any other group of younger students to which I spoke, which books really count for them. Most are silent, puzzled by the question. The notion of books as companions is foreign to them."

Bruno Bettelheim and Karen Zelan, in *On Learning to Read* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), trace the reading problem to, among other things, the deteriorating quality of the primers used to teach young children to read. Primers in the 1920s used an average of 645 words; in the 1930s, 333 words; in the 1940s-50s, 350 words; by 1960-63, pre-primers used 54-83 words, and primers 113-173 words. Yet a child of this age has a vocabulary of 4,000 words or more! The stories told in the basal readers, with this stunted vocabulary, are so boring that the child has no interest in learning to read them. He feels that he is being treated like a stupid person.—*Susan Welsh*

called *Fahrenheit 451*, where they burned the books out in the middle of the street. This is a whole lot less messy than piles of ashes in the middle of the street; you just change the laws.

## Opening the door to paganism

Finally, they wanted to repeal three other laws: one dealing with the length of the school day, one that establishes the school year, and the law that establishes those days on which school shall not be taught. They have them listed: Sunday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Fourth of July, Veterans Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day.

Why would you need to repeal that for outcome-based education? I wondered about that until I got this in the mail from a teacher in Portland, Oregon. Now Oregon has been under OBE for quite some time, at least two years. This brochure is from the Metropolitan Learning Center, a K-12 Portland public school. It's an alternative school, but it is still a publicly funded school in the Portland Public School System.

You will notice up here in the corner of the brochure a Taoist Monad. Taoism is a religion. In their brochure they talk about getting away from the holidays that we normally celebrate. They've gone to four different annual events, instead. One of them is called the Winter Solstice break; a cross-cultural activity celebrated the last day before the winter break. Along with this came the program of a play that was put on at this school by students for students. The name of the play is "The Boogie Woman Meets the Bar Code People." This is not a joke. This is Dec. 19, 1991. We aren't going to celebrate Veterans Day or Christmas any more, but we are going to celebrate "the return of light."

Let me read to you from this program—a program that actually took place in a Portland, Oregon public school last December:

"Each MLC'er [Metropolitan Learning Center denizen] will partake of the sun and moon cake before entering the auditorium where they will seat themselves according to their astrological signs.

"Chanting will begin on entering the auditorium.

"Pat greets us all warmly.

"Ali Kolker, MLC Senior, will welcome all revelers and will invite all base station representatives to the stage to dedicate the space with flowers.

"The Sun God and Moon Goddess will enter with attendants and be seated on stage in preparation for the entertainment."

Then it gives a list of characters, Boogie Woman is played by a guy! Now that may have some significance, I'm really not sure. The bar code children were also assigned animal spirits.

But, interestingly enough, we also have "Acceptable Bar Code Children," and we have two listed here who are called the "Bar Code Reject Children." Then afterwards, "the staff

bestows their blessing on all the students . . . and all go outside to burn those experiences we wish to leave behind us in 1991" on a big fire singing "Bye Bye Blackbird," with "whooping and hugs all the way around."

A gentleman, when he heard of this, gave us a call. He has been a student for many years of occultism and witchcraft, and he gave us a complete rundown on the symbolism in this. All kinds of witchcraft symbols, the whole idea of orgies, Druid symbols, he said, come through loud and clear in this. The point being that the separation of church and state only holds true for either Christians or Orthodox Jews.

Now, for the Seattle area, here is the Draft Puget Sound Head Start Holiday Policy document. What they are going to do is switch away from traditional holidays. It states: "Observations of commercialized, 'traditional' religious holidays will be replaced with seasonal activities or common underlying concepts and values." Puget Sound Head Start is going to switch to this. So looking at the laws and the ones they want to repeal, a lot of this stuff is going on already, whether they repeal the laws or not.

These are the reasons why I went ahead and filed the referendum to repeal Washington State's new education law. One, I don't want this kind of garbage in the schools, and I don't want the children to have to go through stuff like this. The other reason is the total arrogance of our Legislature. We packed the hearing rooms, every hearing they had on this. Ninety-nine percent of the commentary was negative. We said, don't do this, don't do this, don't do this.

Every place OBE has been put into operation, it has failed academically. The Bremerton School District has been doing this now for five full years. They have the lowest test scores in Kitsap County. When asked about the low test scores, the superintendent of schools over there, Dr. Boyd, made a very telling comment: "The test scores are low because the children are poor." This smacks of Social Darwinism. Rich kids can learn, poor kids are stupid. The Legislature couldn't find one program that worked academically. So we said, why are you going to pass this? Basically their attitude was: People be damned, we're going to do this anyway.

The whole thing falls apart because they started off with the wrong basic premise. When you start with the wrong premise you end up in the wrong place. They started out with the basic premise that the consumer of education was business. It is not. The consumer of education is children. What we need to do is not restructure education, or reform education; what we need to do is restore education. We all went through the public school system; I'm the product of the public school system. And the whole matter that the Legislature forgot, and why all this is bad, is that children are the reason for education. Education doesn't exist to give people like me a job, and it doesn't exist so that politicians can get political fodder for elections. It exists for the children. All the referendum we are attempting to put on the ballot does is that it takes this bad bill, and puts it before a vote of the people.