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HOW PARENTS CAN EVALUATE TEXTBOOKS

President Reagan's talk about education doesn't score points with the "Me" or the "Self" generation who care only about their own fulfillment. But it does show he is sensitive to the concerns of those who care about their children and the future of our nation.

Although schools are locally controlled, and teachers are usually your friendly neighbors, most textbooks, reading materials, and teaching guides have a national scope, and their blatant biases have caused widespread alarm. Here is a checklist of textbook biases which parents can look for in evaluating their children's textbooks.

Does the textbook help the student to develop a positive attitude, self-confidence and maturity, and a willingness to work hard to achieve success in life? Or, does it promote a negative attitude, emotional isolation, fear of the future, an obsessive preoccupation with tragedy and death, or despair in coping with life?

Does it describe America as an unjust society, unfair to economic or racial groups or to women, rather than telling the truth that America has given more freedom and opportunity to more people than any nation in the history of the world; and that is why our problem is that millions of people want to immigrate here, whereas Communist countries have to build barbed-wire fences to keep people from fleeing?

Does the textbook debunk the American private enterprise system and lead the child to believe that socialism is fairer and better? Does it propagandize for leftwing domestic spending programs, while attacking defense spending and economy in government?

Does it downgrade patriotism and lead the child to believe that other nations have better systems, or that some type of world government or UN-control would be superior to ours? Does it propagandize for leftwing liberal personalities (such as Presidents Kennedy or Johnson), while belittling conservative leaders (such as President Reagan) or downgrading American heroes (such as Patrick Henry and John Paul Jones)?

Does it teach the child, directly or indirectly, that we must not be judgmental about moral questions, and that ethical questions depend on the situation? Or does it promote time-tested moral values such as the golden rule, honesty is the best policy, respect for other people and their property, and cleanliness in mind and body?

Does it attack religion and religious values, directly or indirectly, by teaching that God did NOT create the world, or that pre-marital sex is "responsible" just so long as you don't have a baby, or that there is no eternal standard of right and wrong?

In describing the family, does it lead the child to believe that "alternate life-styles" (immoral living arrangements) should be accepted and respected on a par with a real family? Does it tend to erase the child's sense of gender identity and propagandize for a sex-neuterized society which refuses to respect the eternal difference between men and women and their different career choices?

Those who defend the right of teachers and textbooks to impose their values on the children under their care often hide behind such shibboleths as "academic freedom," "separation of church and state," or "professionalism" as opposed to parental interference. Those are just slogans to dodge the issue that many textbooks are deliberately designed to change children's values and attitudes and to indoctrinate them with political propaganda, rather than to teach knowledge or basic skills.

The values and attitudes taught in the elementary years, overtly and subliminally, clearly mold the adult. Here is how Khrushchev's autobiography, "Khrushchev Remembers," describes how the school weaned one child away from his parents and their values, and set him on the road to become the most powerful and ruthless Communist in the world.

"My school teacher was a woman named Lydia Shchevchenko. She was a revolutionary. She was also an atheist. She instilled in me my first political consciousness and began to counteract the effects of my strict religious upbringing. My mother was very religious. I remember being taught to kneel and pray. When we were taught to read, we read the scriptures. But Lydia Shchevchenko set me on a path which took me away from all that."

Parents can see before their eyes that many schools have driven a wedge between the child and his parents, and alienated him from "the faith of our fathers." Parents know that federal spending on education is not only NOT the solution; it is part of the problem. And they thank President Reagan for addressing the problem WITHOUT calling for more taxes or federal spending.