# Scandals in the Classroom

by Phyllis Schlafly July 29, 2011

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A national scandal hit the news when Georgia Governor Nathan Deal released a 413-page report describing how hundreds of Atlanta public school teachers and principals had been cheating during the past ten years on standardized tests in order to falsely report that their schools were doing a good job and the kids were improving. A total of 178 teachers and principals (38 were principals), 82 of whom have already confessed, had fraudulently raised test scores so their schools would meet test targets set by the district and thereby qualify for federal funds.

The truth came out after a 10-month inquiry by 60 investigators conducting 2,100 interviews. The investigation showed that principals and teachers in 56 schools had been cheating since 2001 by various methods, such as erasing wrong answers on tests and inserting correct answers.

The high scores of Atlanta schoolchildren had enabled Superintendent Beverly L. Hall to collect $600,000 in performance bonuses over 10 years to supplement her $400,000 annual salary. Two national organizations honored her with the title of Superintendent of the Year.

According to the report, Dr. Hall and her top staff "created a culture of fear, intimidation and retaliation," concealed by "a conspiracy of silence and deniability," that allowed "cheating — at all levels — to go unchecked for years." Those who dared to report concerns about cheating "were held in contempt and punished," sometimes by termination.

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Dr. Hall's message was: Get the scores up by any means necessary, so teachers and principals were afraid of falling under her rhetorical lash and being sanctioned for failing to achieve "required results." Her own words were: "No exceptions and no excuses."

Somehow, the Atlanta scandal didn't make it onto the agenda of the annual convention of the National Education Association (NEA), held in Chicago over the Fourth of July weekend. The representatives of the 3.2 million NEA members were too busy passing their usual long list of anti-parent, pro-homosexual, pro-feminist, and leftwing resolutions.

The NEA adopted Standing Rule Amendment 1 to order all future NEA materials to replace references to K-12 with Pre-K-12. That's a clear message that the NEA sees its future in lining up more union members by expanding the role of public schools to get three- and four-year-old children.

Resolution B-1 repeats the demand the NEA has made for several years for "early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight," in addition to "compulsory attendance" in Kindergarten. This resolution also insists that Pre-K programs have "diversity-based curricula" and "bias-free screening devices."

It must have been difficult for the Resolutions Committee to add any new pro-homosexual resolutions to the twenty passed last year, but they did. The NEA voted to "publish Articles to celebrate the contributions of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender) teachers and GLBT friends of education."

Feminist resolutions passed by the NEA include endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, family planning clinics in public schools, hiring on the basis of "comparable worth" instead of "market value," and the use of so-called non-sexist language.

The NEA adopted Resolution B-16 to urge Hispanics to be involved in "lobbying efforts for federal programs." Among those political goals, of course, is support of "passage of the Dream Act that provides a pathway for undocumented college students to obtain a Green Card and eventual citizenship," endorsed in New Business Item 11.

Among the other political resolutions adopted by the NEA Convention were endorsements of single-payer (government) health care, reparations for descendants of slaves, statehood for the District of Columbia, compliance with unratified United Nations treaties, opposition to English as our official language, opposition to a moment of silence in schools, and strict regulation of guns. NEA Resolution H-1 urges members "to become politically involved" in the NEA's political action committees, and we all know that means electing Democratic candidates.

The NEA did pass a few resolutions about education, but none about doing a better job of teaching children to read. The NEA supports public school courses in multiculturalism, global education, environmental education, bilingual education, AIDS education, and self-esteem, but opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, parental-option plans, and homeschooling.

The most exciting event during the NEA Convention was the presentation of the Friend of Education Award to the "Wisconsin 14," the state legislators who fled their state rather than vote for legislation that would slightly modify collective bargaining rights for state employees. The legislators hid out in Illinois for three weeks.

Going on record as the first union to endorse Barack Obama for a second term, NEA Delegates voted overwhelmingly to support him in the 2012 presidential election, a year earlier than the NEA usually makes its endorsements. No surprise there.