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WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is sweeping the country in the name of school "restructuring," but it has parents even more agitated than they are about explicit sex education. OBE would bring about a complete change in the way children are taught, graded, and graduated, kindergarten through 12th grade. Here are ten reasons why.

1. OBE is packaged *in* a deceptive language that appears to be mis chievously chosen to mislead parents. When OBE advocates talk about "new basics," for example, they are not talking about reading, writing and arithmetic, but about OBE attitudes and outcomes.

2. OBE advocates are not able to produce any replicable research or pilot studies to show that it works. It's being forced on entire state school systems without any evidence that it has been tried and found effective anywhere.

3. OBE offers no method of accountability to students, parents, teachers, or taxpayers. Outcome-Based Education tosses the traditional Carnegie units out the window and replaces them with vague and subjec tive "learning outcomes" that cannot be measured objectively by any standardized tests.

OBE will make it virtually impossible to conduct tests that allow comparisons with students in other schools, other states, or prior years. Under OBE, grades have no relation to academic achievement and knowledge.

4. OBE is a dumbed-down egalitarian scheme that stifles individual potential for excellence and achievement by holding the entire class to the level of learning attainable by every child. OBE is based on the unrealistic notion that every child in a group can and must learn to the designated level before the group can move on.

The faster learners are not allowed to progress, but are given busy work called "horizontal enrichment" or told to do "peer tutoring" to help the slower learners, who are recycled through the material until they manifest the pre-determined behavior. The result is that all students demonstrate "mastery" of mediocrity, and none can aspire to excellence.

5. In an OBE system, academic and factual subject matter is replaced by vague and subjective learning outcomes. The outcomes that have so far been made public show that they are heavily layered with such "Politically Correct" notions s world citizenship, population control, and radical environmentalism.

6. A high percentage of OBE outcomes concern values, attitudes, opinions and relationships rather than objective information. OBE requires students to meet vague psychological objectives relating to self-esteem, ethical judgment, and adaptability to change.

OBE raises the fundamental question of who should decide what values, attitudes, and beliefs a child should be taught. Should it be the parents or the U.S. Department of Education, which funded OBE? Should the public schools be allowed to teach values that may be controversial and sometimes even contradictory to values taught to children by their parents?

7. OBE sets up a computer file on each child to track the child's efforts to master the learning outcomes. These "electronic portfolios" take the place of traditional assessments and test results and become the basis for the school's efforts to remediate whatever attitudes and behaviors the school deems unacceptable. Parents are concerned about who will have access to these files and what will become of the data compiled on each student.

8. OBE is a method for perpetuating the failure of the public

schools to teach first graders how to read. QBE is wholly committed to the "whole language," word-guessing method rather than the phonics method.

This ensures that children will learn only to memorize a few words that are massively repeated. Teachers are cautioned not to correct spelling and syntax errors because that could be damaging to the student's self esteem and creativity.

9. QBE, of course, involves high costs for administration and the retraining of teachers in an entirely new system. And, of course, this will be reflected in higher school taxes.

10. OBE involves more state control at the expense of local control. Although OBE salespersons claim otherwise, the new system tightens the grip of state education officials and federal education laboratories because they write the required outcomes, develop the curriculum, train the teachers, and judge the performance of the students (all of whom must conform to National Goals).

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the famous Russian author and former political prisoner in Soviet Gulags, said in a speech in the mid-1970s: "Coexistence on this tightly knit earth should be viewed as an existence not only without wars ... but also without (government] telling us how to live, what to say, what to think, what to know, and what not to know."

Unfortunately, that's what Outcome-Based Education is -- a process for government telling our children how to live, what to say, what to think, what to know, and what not to know. OBE is converting the three R's to the three D's: Deliberately Dumbed Down.