

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

Volume I, Number 4

EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

December 1986

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce those risks.

"Without vision, the people perish."

The Academic Disaster Worsens

It would seem incredible that three years after the publication of A Nation at Risk by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the educators of America would find it impossible to improve the academic performance of American students, despite the great amount of attention focussed on the idea of "excellence," the increases in teacher salaries, and the passage of expensive education reform bills in virtually every state of the Union.

Indeed, when the 1986 SAT scores were published in September, former Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell called them, "The worst news we've had in education in a long time" (Education Week, 10/8/86). Bell and his colleagues are now so alarmed that they are calling for "a Marshall Plan for education" to halt the growth in illiteracy in America (Boston Globe, 11/11/86). This was the gist of a report recently issued by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Again, the educators are telling us that money will solve the problem of illiteracy. But this was one of the arguments used to get Congress to pass the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which gave us Title One compensatory education with its remedial reading programs.

Since 1965 approximately 45-billion federal dollars have been pumped into such reading programs. And what have been the results? In 1963 the SAT verbal mean score had reached a high of 478. In 1977 it was down to 429. In 1973, when the SAT verbal score had declined to 445, the New York Times reported that educators were "puzzled" by the drop. Apparently none of them had bothered to read Rudolf Flesch's 1955 book, Why Johnny Can't Read, despite the fact that it had been on the best-seller list for months and was one of the most talked about books in the history of education.

Flesch explained quite clearly why Johnny couldn't read. He wrote:

"The teaching of reading -- all over the United States, in all the schools, in all the textbooks -- is totally wrong and flies in the face of all logic and common sense."

He then explained how in the early 1930's the professors of education had changed the way children were taught to read in American schools. They threw out the time-tested alphabetic-phonics method, which is the proper way to teach children to read an alphabetic writing system, and put in a new whole-

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