

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

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

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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."

Is Your Child Attending a Zoo? or How to Evaluate Your Local Public School

Every September over 40 million American children return to their public schools to be "educated." Among them are about 4 million first graders entering public school for the first time. Many of them have had a preview of things to come in kindergarten or preschool. But the first grade is where "learning" becomes formalized, structured, and serious. That is where the child will be introduced to the basics of whatever it is the educators intend to teach.

Back in the early 1930s, when this writer attended primary school, it was easy to know what was meant by the basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Reading, for the most part, was taught from an alphabetic-phonetic point of view; writing meant cursive writing, not some form of ball-and-stick printing; and arithmetic meant learning the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts by drill. Rote was considered okay in those days because, as everyone knew, arithmetic is a counting system which requires memorization for optimum usage and speed.

Today, even the educators have a hard time defining what they mean by basics. They no longer teach mere reading. They teach language arts, literacy, communication, body language, whole language, invented spelling, critical thinking, and HOTS -- higher order thinking skills. In writing they teach manuscript, or print script, or a form of calligraphy, or slant print. Eventually they get around to cursive in the third grade when the teacher and pupils are too busy discussing nuclear war, overpopulation, South Africa, and sex to devote much time to cursive.

As for arithmetic, the subject no longer exists. It is now all called Math, and includes not only a vague semblance of what used to be called arithmetic, but also math concepts, set theory, numeracy, and how to use a calculator.

The Cognitive Skills

All of that is subsumed under the heading of "cognitive skills," a term devised by cognitive psychologists who

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