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This issue...

Universal mental health screening spreads to Indiana

Gender-specific education helps both boys and girls

Math curriculum options that work!

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Crazy Kids?

Indiana's children have serious mental health problems!!! According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE):

"21% of all children aged 9-17 meet the criteria for a mental health diagnosis and 11% of that population has a significant functional impairment." 1

Translation: More than one in five Hoosier children are mentally ill, and 11% of those kids are really sick!

The well-worn phrases - *Research shows...*, *Current studies indicate...*, and *Leading experts agree...* - often serve as the rationale for new, top-down, government programs that take over responsibility for yet another aspect of a child's life. Indiana is no exception. Citing the above statistics from the 1999 Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health,² "experts" at the IDOE decided to take over the mental health and well being of all children in the state. Details of this draconian plan are found in the IDOE document, "*Children's Social, Emotional & Behavioral Health Plan*," better known as "The Plan."¹

Effective July 1, 2006, the Indiana Legislature amended the school code to consolidate all mental health services, interventions, and treatments for youth "from birth (0) through 22 years of age" under the State Board of Education. Instructed to partner with child services, mental health providers, and corrections officials, the IDOE has assumed the planning, implementation, and coordination of mental health assessments and interventions for Indiana's children and families.³

Comprehensive mental health care is not a new idea. Dr. David Hornbeck, former Chair-

man of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teachers, Superintendent of Philadelphia Schools, and a national leading school reform "expert" in Pennsylvania, put the issue into focus in 1999:

"At the state level, we should promulgate legislation that would create a new affirmative duty for government to assure the health and non-academic well being of each child until the age of eighteen...beginning with the mother's pregnancy ... appropriate prenatal care and extended to...early childhood...school age...before and after school, on weekends and in the summer." 4 (Emphasis added)

These radical ideas became part of the federal New Freedom Commission Report's 2004 recommendations⁵ that call for the establishment of statewide systems to screen the mental health of every American, **starting at birth**. While Indiana is in the spotlight now, CEO reported on the mandatory mental health screening for all Illinois children in November 2004.⁶ **It is**

likely that every state has been lured by "free" federal funding to develop its own universal mental, emotional, and behavioral health plan.

Pennsylvania is not far behind Indiana. The PA Legislature is again considering *Ounce of Prevention* bills that would establish a state-controlled grant program for community groups to provide intensive home visits to "at-risk" families.⁷ The PA Department of Education has also published **infant and toddler "standards"** against which all children will be assessed.⁷ **When these are added to the equally detailed Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Early Learning Standards, a framework for measuring the development of every child from birth through age 6 and then on through high school is revealed**



Some “Red Flags”

Parental Consent: Although Indiana’s Plan currently requires parental notification and consent for a child to be evaluated, assessed, screened or treated, critics suggest that this is a typical ruse to sidestep objections. Indeed, such promises provide little comfort to parents who have witnessed “mission creep” as “voluntary” historically becomes “mandatory” over time.

Costs: The #1 mandate in the implementation portion of The Plan is to *establish a budget* to insure that *all* Indiana children have access to taxpayer-funded, universal mental health care and services. This budget must contain:

- More \$ to develop a “needs assessment” – a “study” designed to show that Indiana really does “need” these programs
- More \$ to guarantee that all children and families have access to all social, emotional and behavioral health services
- More \$ to create a comprehensive system to track student data and share it with various agencies, schools, and providers
- More \$ to develop outcomes and indicators to measure each child’s progress
- More \$ to provide worker training and certification
- More \$ to establish “criteria” benchmarks for service delivery systems
- More \$ to design a new system of collaboration among various providers
- More \$ to launch a PR campaign to insure public acceptance of The Plan

A few questions

Question: How does someone evaluate a newborn’s mental health?

Answer: It can’t be done. Parents and families are put under the microscope instead.

Q: How can the government possibly meet the mental health (social, emotional, and behavioral) needs of every child and every family?

A: It can’t without the development of a comprehensive data collection and sharing system with a centralized government portfolio on each child and family.

Q: Who will pay for this e-x-p-a-n-d-e-d government intrusion?

A: The taxpayers.

Q: Doesn’t the Indiana Department of Education have enough on its hands educating its youth without assuming the oversight of their mental health?

A: One would think. Could there be another objective at work here, such as an expansion of the “village” raising all children to meet state specs?

That is **THE PLAN**, folks!

Eyes are now on Indiana. Illinois was first, and Pennsylvania is moving forward decidedly. The “village people” are coming to your state. ?

- 1 *Children’s Social, Emotional & Behavioral Health Plan. Public Forum Presentation. 16 Nov 2005. http://www.doe.state.in.us/exceptional/pdf/Presentation_Public%20Forum_111605.pdf.*
- 2 *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General - 1999. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/pdfs/front.pdf>.*
- 3 *SBA 324, IC20-19-5-1: (06) ES0324.1.5*
- 4 *Hornbeck, David and Salamon, Lester. Human Capital and America’s Future. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). p. 380.*
- 5 *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America. <http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/InformYourself/AboutPublicPolicy/NewFreedomCommission/Default1169.htm>*
- 6 *Education Advocate. Nov-Dec 2004. www.ceopa.org/documents/Nov-Dec2004.pdf.*
- 7 *PA House Bill 200; PA Senate Bill 732*
- 8 *[http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/lib/early_childhood/Infant Toddler](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/lib/early_childhood/InfantToddler)*

Gender Update

“Paradoxically, by educating them [boys and girls] separately, we are able to do much to reverse the gender gaps that typically leave girls behind in math and boys behind in literacy.”¹

Tom Carroll, Brighter Choice Charter School

Single-sex education is an old idea that is that is being used today to improve the academic success of both boys and girls. Two recent developments in education bolster its implementation:

- The federal government has approved use of federal funds for single-sex education.
- New research has expanded the debate to include the gender of the teacher.

CEO began to examine the gender issue four years ago with the 2002 newsletter article about the “New Underclass” – boys.² This article noted the increasing gender gap in education. More girls were excelling academically, taking on extracurricular leadership roles, and attending college and graduate school. More boys were enrolled in special education, taking Ritalin, tuning out, and dropping out. Girls were not necessarily doing better. Boys simply were doing worse. For many males, the gender gap was starting early and lasting a lifetime.

In 2005, an entire issue was devoted to the growing gender problem.³ Since 2002, the emerging science of gender differences had made huge strides. Brain-imaging

technology allowed researchers to see distinctions between the male and female brain.

“Today we know that innate differences between girls and boys are profound. Not all girls are alike and not all boys are alike. But girls and boys do differ from one another in systematic ways that should be understood and made use of, not covered up or ignored...Boys and girls behave differently because their brains are wired differently.”⁴

Armed with the knowledge that boys and girls hear, see, and respond to emotions differently, parents and educators can make appropriate decisions on how to raise and educate children.

CEO has twice hosted Dr. Leonard Sax, physician, psychologist, author of Why Gender Matters, and international gender authority. Dr. Sax has addressed more than 1,000 Pittsburgh-area educators, parents, and community members. His message is clear: **Boys and girls can learn the same curricular materials, but they should be taught in gender-appropriate ways.** Ideally, boys and girls should be taught separately in grades K-12, either in single-sex classes or schools. In reality, however, even children in traditional co-educational classes can benefit when their teachers understand these important gender differences. The goal is to lessen or eradicate gender stereotyping and gender learning gaps. More than 250 schools across the country are trying single-sex education, most with successful results.



What's new...

In October the U.S. Department of Education codified wording in the No Child Left Behind education law with new rules that allow school districts to create **voluntary** single-sex programs, classes, and schools. These districts must also offer co-educational programs, classes, and schools of “substantially equal” quality for students of the excluded sex.¹

Controversy is intensifying as the ACLU and women's rights organizations threaten to sue the federal government and individual schools to stop implementation of single-sex education. These groups contend that separating the sexes is a step backwards in equity. Research indicates exactly the opposite. By using one-size-fits-all classroom techniques and strategies:

- educators deny that real, innate, measurable gender differences exist.

- stereotypes are reinforced, such as *girls can't do math* and *boys can't enjoy reading*.
- specific academic needs of both boys and girls are not met.

The gender debate expanded beyond students to include teachers when a recent study indicated that, in general, boys learn better from men and girls learn better from women.⁵ Using the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) of 24,599 students and two of each student's teachers, Dr. Thomas S. Dee found that test scores improved in certain subjects when students and teachers shared the same gender. He also found that “the opinions of teachers about their students – and of students about their teachers – is shaped in part by gender characteristics.” For example, many female teachers viewed boys as more disruptive, and many boys were less positive about subjects taught by women. Likewise, many girls who were taught by men did not look forward to classes and were afraid to ask questions.

A significant conclusion must be drawn from this report: **Teachers need to understand gender differences.** Schools of education must include courses on gender differences and gender-specific teaching techniques. Experienced teachers must be given the opportunity to learn about this cutting-edge research through professional development programs. Then the gender of the teacher could become a less significant factor in student learning. **This is particularly important for boys because 80% of teachers in America are women.**

Gender is a significant education issue today. The gender gap cuts both ways, hurting boys and girls. By understanding the medical/scientific research and applying findings to the classroom, educators may help both boys and girls meet their academic potential and erase or reduce the gender gap. ?

- 1 Schemo, Diana Jean. “Federal Rules Back Single-Sex Public Education.” *The New York Times*. 25 Oct 2006. www.nytimes.com.
- 2 *The New Underclass*. July/August 2002. www.ceopa.org.
- 3 *Boys fade; girls shine – Another Education Emergency*. March/April 2005. www.ceopa.org.
- 4 Sax, Leonard. *Why Gender Matters*. (New York: Doubleday, 2005). P. 28.
- 5 Dee, Thomas S. “The Why Chromosome.” *Education Next*. Fall 2006. pp. 68-75. www.educationnext.org.

Thank you for your support in 2006.
Your dollars enable CEO to address important education issues, help parents and their children, and positively impact classroom education in public and private schools.

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a year-end contribution.

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“Miracle Math”¹

International test results show that students in Singapore lead the world in learning math, and American students rank among the lowest of the industrialized nations. *Singapore Math* works!

A 2005 study funded by the U.S. Department of Education² identified the strengths of *Singapore Math*. Basically, this program lays out “a balanced set of mathematical priorities centered on problem solving.”

More specifically, Singapore Math:

- Focuses on computational skills as well as deep understanding of conceptual and strategic thinking processes
- Covers fewer topics in-depth that are carefully sequenced grade-by-grade
- Challenges students with multi-step problems that demonstrate how abstract math concepts are used to solve problems from different perspectives
- Expects students to master concepts so they are not taught again in the next grade
- Provides a fully developed alternative framework for slower math students
- Includes mental math techniques to encourage understanding
- Expects all teachers to pass stringent math exams and continue professional development in the subject

Saxon Math is an American program that also uses incremental learning instruction. Both of these programs can be important options for math educators who believe that American children deserve a curriculum that enables them to learn mathematics, solve complex problems, and compete in the growing global market.

¹ Garelick, Barry. “Miracle Math.” *Education Next*, Fall 2006. www.educationnext.org.

² Ginsburg, Alan, et. al. *What the United States Can Learn From Singapore’s World-Class Mathematics System*. 2005.