



Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on October 27, 2011

Anti-bullying Amendments to Education Act Undercut Academics (Again)

So, now that debate in Congress is proceeding about an extreme makeover to NCLB, what issue is taking front and center stage? Not “waivers,” or even academics, but [two anti-bullying amendments](#) aimed at making it a federal crime for children to “bully” (definition open to interpretation) gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students. If passed, the further hyper-sexualizing of children will be codified and enshrined, while normal sexual development will be impeded through ever-more aggressive sex propaganda like New York City’s highly contentious new HealthSmart curriculum, utilizing, as always, K-12 health classes as the vehicle of choice for its campaign of [graphic proselytizing](#).



The fate of the entire NCLB legislation now appears to turn on the adoption of the two so-called anti-bullying amendments: one called for by Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.), the Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA), which specifically protects students having non-traditional sexual preferences, and another offered by Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-Penn.), the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA), which would have applied an even broader brush to bullying to include [overweight kids](#) and shorter/smaller pupils, in addition to gay, lesbian, transgendered items. Sen. Casey has withdrawn the SSIA amendment for fear of jeopardizing the entire bill.

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But the SNDA camp, thanks to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgendered (LGBT) Education Network, is not backing down. They are using the overhaul of NCLB as an entrée to promote, and essentially mandate, their agenda of across-the-board acceptance of exhibitionism and what can be politely termed “gender gymnastics” in an era when sexually transmitted diseases are so rampant that the Centers for Disease Control just issued a call to get [boys HPV-vaccinated](#), as well as girls, in an effort to prevent rising anal, head and neck cancers among young males.

As it is, pupils can barely concentrate on their studies for all the showy schoolwear and the emphasis on non-cognitive, psycho-social issues. The description of the HealthSmart syllabus, for example, states upfront that it targets “the psychosocial determinants” of sexual, and other, behaviors. The curriculum pushes the envelope, once again, by detailing a variety of “mutual sex acts.” The publisher, ETR Associates, has the backing of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is mandating the program in New York City, and has benefited from several federal grants for other programs. Among its product lines is a new set of condom kits with instructional videos, which no doubt will provide further titillation, as if young people needed more.



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How can we be surprised that [75 percent](#) of graduating high-schoolers are expected to need remedial classes this fall? Or that SAT reading scores for the high-school class of 2011 are the lowest on record?

The fact is that NCLB never was taken particularly seriously. As originally drafted under the George W. Bush administration, it was a sop to Massachusetts Sen. Teddy Kennedy (now deceased). Michael Yglesias correctly surmised in his online column that most people never really thought the United States would achieve 100-percent proficiency in much of anything academically, “but that was fine because everyone expected a reauthorization process to happen sometime in 2007 or 2008 or maybe 2009 or even 2010 or maybe 2011.... One thing that the reauthorization was envisioned as doing was providing some relief from that target date [of 2014].”

Meanwhile, though, a pretense could be made that tests were going to be academically rigorous and frequent. What kids got was “assessments,” [as opposed to rigorous academic tests](#). But many educators did not understand the difference, any more than most parents did. The result was what came to be called “teaching to the test.” In the case of Atlanta, Georgia, the issue erupted into scandal when it surfaced in late June and early July that teachers were [altering students’ answers](#). More than 150 teachers and administrators from 44 public schools across Atlanta were caught changing responses on standardized tests that were used to rank individual performance and schools. Eighty-two of the teachers confessed once the state noticed an alarming number of erasure marks on answer sheets, but the kicker was that *this had been going on for a decade*, about the time NCLB was launched, and teachers who refused to participate were either pressured to resign or given the worst classes. Former superintendent, Beverly Hall, was accused of encouraging, aiding, and abetting the corruption, and in fact, received hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses tied to improved test scores, as well as being named National Superintendent of Year in 2009.

But the joke was on educators. They needn’t have bothered to change answers, because too many of the questions are non-academic in the first place. NCLB needs an overhaul, all right, but not the kind being debated in Congress. Assessments and curricula associated with NCLB are subtly skewed toward “preferred” psychological and political attitudes. Non-endorsed opinions can affect a school’s comparative ranking (thus the perceived need for those anti-bullying amendments), but they would not indicate proficiency in anything more serious than political correctness — or, as Josef Stalin would have put it, “political reliability.”

Beverly K. Eakman began her career as a teacher in 1968. She left to become a science writer for a NASA contractor, then editor-in-chief of NASA’s newspaper in Houston. She later served as a speechwriter and research-writer for the director of Voice of America and two other federal agencies, including the U.S. Dept. of Justice. She has since penned six books, scores of feature articles, and op-eds covering education policy, mental-health, data-trafficking, science, privacy and political strategy. Her e-mail, a detailed bio, speaking appearances and links to her books all can be found on her website: <http://www.BeverlyEakman.com>.



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