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PARENTS: Questions To Ask Regarding Mental Evaluations On Your Children By Their Local School

Posted by Ann Marie Banfield | Sep 3, 2017 | Oh My BLOG! | 0 |



I opposed Competency Based Education (CBE) in New Hampshire because it is a model used to change attitudes, beliefs, and values in children. The old Outcome Based Education (OBE) model used in the 90's failed students back then. OBE never focused on improving literacy, it was a model that shifted focus away from academics. These failed fads tend to die out after a few years when parents figure out it does nothing to improve literacy.

Social and Emotional learning (SEL) is the new fad that attempts to

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change your child's values, values, and beliefs. Does your child have the appropriate social or emotional competencies"? This is exactly what many warned would happen if CBE was mandated, and it's exactly what we are seeing in New Hampshire schools today.

CBE is a shift from liberal arts to workforce training, but CBE goes way beyond a child's ability to cooperate with other children. New Hampshire schools are beginning to [administer mental health assessments](#) on students. These mental health assessments are given by teachers who are often times uncomfortable subjectively assessing children and collecting this sensitive data.

School administrators have determined that they do not need to notify parents or ask for written consent. This may be a violation of federal and state law and should be reviewed by an attorney. For instance, schools receiving federal funding would fall under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment [PPRA](#). Privacy rights activists have made the case that administering these assessments without parental consent would violate the PPRA.

The state assessment guidelines/ statutes are so vague that it leaves it wide open for the opportunity for SEL testing. The only word that could trip up this kind of assessing is that the testing must be [objectively](#) scored.

Some of the questions parents should be asking their local school board members are included in a letter from a parent below:

As a parent, I am very concerned about the nationwide push towards what is called Social and Emotional Learning(SEL). Social and Emotional Learning is defined as: the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The recently passed Every Student Succeeds Act(ESSA) allows for the use of non-academic measures in their accountability ratings. This opens the door for establishing SEL standards and assessments. The tech industry, testing corporations and data collection companies are chomping at the bit to cash in. For example, the ACT has announced its new ACT Tessera which is designed to measure SEL skills.

Who decides what the necessary skills and attitudes are to manage



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emotions? *Who sets the parameters for what a positive relationship looks like? Will the government decide the appropriate amount of empathy one should have? Will our children be graded on SEL? How can one objectively measure and report on social and emotional skills as required by state law with regards to assessments? Our schools are not qualified or licensed to conduct psychological studies on our children nor do they operate under the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct".*

Sadly, New Hampshire is already attempting to measure SEL through what is referred to as Work Study Practices (WSP). On the NH education website, WSP is defined as "behavioral qualities or habits of mind that students need to be successful in college, career, and life". Performance Assessment of Competency Based Education or (PACE) will measure WSP or SEL through what is called Performance Tasks.

Every parent should be alarmed by SEL. Our schools are places of learning not mental health facilities. We should not allow our schools to perform psychological evaluations or SEL assessments on our children under the guise of improving educational outcomes.

Here are some questions that I will be sending my school board and administration.

Does our district have SEL standards and if so, where can we view them?

Are students presently being assessed in any way on SEL?

If so, how? (online assessments or are they somehow imbedded in classwork?)

Are parents given the opportunity to review SEL assessments, which are essentially psychological evaluations?

Will parental consent be required as when a child psychologist questions a minor?

Who is collecting this data and how is it protected?

If schools will be acting as mental health facilities, will they need to operate under the Health Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws?

If testing shows deficiencies when matched against the standards, what does the remediation process look like? In other words: If a student does not show the "state approved" level of empathy or if a student is not resilient enough or is not complying with the "state approved" attitudes, how does the school alter that behavior?

According to the 2015 Nation's Report Card or National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) the at or above proficiency scores for 12 graders were 37% for reading, 25% for math, and 22% for science. It seems that educational outcomes could be better improved by spending more time teaching reading, math, science and other important core subjects to prepare our children for college and career rather than investing time, money and resources on Social and Emotional Learning.

Angela Pont

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/193-C/193-C-3.htm>

Ann Marie Banfield currently volunteers as the Education Liaison for Cornerstone Action in New Hampshire. She has been researching education reform for over a decade and actively supports parental rights, literacy and academic excellence in k-12 schools. You can contact her at: abanfield@nhcornerstone.org

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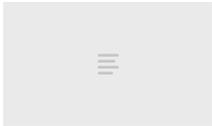
Ann Marie Banfield

Ann Marie Banfield began volunteering as Cornerstone's Education Liaison in 2009. As an education researcher and activist she took her decade long research on education to Concord to lobby on behalf of parental rights and literacy. Working with experts in education from across the country, she offers valuable insight into

problems and successes in education. She holds a B.A. in Business Management from Franklin University in Columbus Ohio. Ann Marie and her husband have three children and reside in Bedford, NH

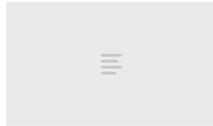


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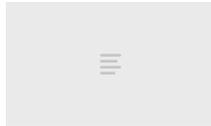
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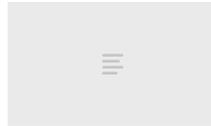
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