

The ABC's of School for Parents

by Gary L. Bauer

"This school exists to serve you and your family. We know that parents have the God-given responsibility to raise their children. As teachers and administrators we're not called to raise your children, but to serve you as you do your job."

Few parents were greeted as warmly at the beginning of the new school year as the parents who listened to this welcome from an Annapolis, Md. Christian school principal. More frequent are stories of parents rebuffed by school policies that range from intimidating to downright hostile.

Public schools and parents do not have to be at odds, as demonstrated by the many teachers and principals who sincerely respect parents and understand a proper parent-school relationship. But our national education policy is creating a system that is increasingly antagonistic towards parents. Liberal education philosophy too often assumes family dysfunction is the common denominator in a classroom and that school provides the antidote. As a result, schools are told to provide social services directly to students, school personnel are assigned more responsibility in children's lives and parents are treated as outsiders. But school can never replace family, nor should it try.

While broken homes are numerous, they should not be treated as the norm. I disagree with those who would have us believe that most parents don't have their children's best interests in mind. I know they are wrong because I've heard from thousands of loving parents — perhaps even you — who care about nothing in the world more than their children's spiritual and physical well-being.

Education is a primary concern because it plays such a critical part in your children's lives. That's why so many of you have contacted our office with grave concerns about what you see in your schools. You've told us that your kids are struggling with reading because of the poor methods used in schools and that they no longer memorize multiplication tables. Many of you have been shocked by graphic sex education that undermines what you've taught at home. You've relayed stories about your children's beliefs

being attacked in an institution that is supposed to be, at minimum, neutral toward religion.

After hearing about your struggles, we created the *Moms and Dads School Survival Guide* to help you provide the best educational experience for your children. The *Survival Guide* makes education jargon understandable and explains current education trends like Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Goals 2000 in layman's terms. It gives the facts about parental rights and religious freedoms in the public school.

The *Survival Guide* introduces a variety of educational alternatives available to your family, including classical education and parent-

based education. With its extensive reference section, the *Survival Guide* will point you in the right direction for the educational resources you need, from newsletters to World Wide Web sites. You'll find the *Moms and Dads School Survival Guide* to be a great resource whether you help with homework or homeschool.

Let's not forget in training up our children that the source of our Judeo-Christian moral ethics is God's law. For too long we've tried to make bricks without straw in "character education." Family Research Council now offers you new training material: the Ten Commandments proclaimed boldly and attractively on book covers for your young students.

If I had the opportunity to address all of you at a back-to-school night, my message would be the same as that Christian school principal in Maryland. At Family Research Council, we're rooting for parents. You can look to us to help equip you for the journey.

BULLETIN • On Thursday, Sept. 19, the House of Representatives voted 285-137 to override President Clinton's veto of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban. While prospects for an override remain dim in the Senate, the House vote clearly reflects powerful public sentiment for the ban and rejection of the White House campaign to depict these eighth- and ninth-month abortions as medically necessary.

ON THE HORIZON

- New federal fiscal year begins Oct. 1, with renewal of most anti-abortion riders to annual appropriations bills likely. Sen. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio) successfully offered an amendment to limit abortion funding under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. By a vote of 53-45, the Senate has now agreed with the House to continue to restrict abortion funding at taxpayer expense. This restriction was in effect from 1984 to 1993 and in 1996. Prior to the enactment of this policy, FEHBP paid for approximately 17,000 abortions per year for virtually any reason.

- Supreme Court begins fall term Oct. 6. In addition to Schenck case, the court will probably accept an assisted suicide case. The Ninth Circuit in *Glucksberg v. Washington* struck down a Washington statute prohibiting doctors from prescribing lethal "medication" using reasoning identical to the Supreme Court abortion cases. *Quill v. Vacco* from the Second Circuit determined that New York's anti-assisted suicide law violated the Equal Protection Clause, equating one "allowing nature to take its course" and one intentionally causing death. FRC is preparing an *amicus* brief in these cases.

- President Clinton's signature on major welfare overhaul moves issue to states, but look for new attempt to assert federal role next year, especially if Democrats make expected electoral gains. Clinton decision to sign GOP bill, ending national welfare entitlement based on income, led to resignations of key Democratic welfare theorists from key administration posts. Harvard researcher Mary Jo Bane and Peter Edelman, husband of Children's Defense Fund president Marian Wright Edelman, resigned Health and Human Services posts in early September. Resignations suggest liberal backlash likely.