



*Making Schools Work Better for all Children*

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### **The Campaign Against Reform**

It's a safe bet that after the campaign of 2000-01, you thought you'd see it all! Not so!

A more politically-charged, divisive campaign has begun that will be worse for our national health, as this campaign effects children directly. While it doesn't have the same players nor the same partisan tinges, it's beginning this week and between now and the Fall, you're likely to see the rhetoric and action heat up to Code Red levels.

The big guns are out for the unions, the school boards groups and the other dozens of members of the education establishment (A.K.A. "The BLOB), in an effort to boost their own programs and turn the public off to reform. Here's just a glimpse of what has begun:

\* "SCHOOL: The Story of American Public Education," really is a story! A propaganda piece cleverly masked as a documentary for PBS, the piece paints a picture of more than a decade of reform as failed, right-wing, white and without need! The authors even suggest through their talking heads that A Nation at Risk was largely a political stunt and that the US was never really at risk at all (tell that to the nearly ninety percent of black fourth graders who read at less than proficient levels!). It's uncanny but nevertheless a reality that the producers would have produced a show (which indeed, is more fiction than fact) that depicts a world where there is no need for any reform save money and support! We'll have more to say on this in the coming days but you should know the following as you read previews of this amazing spectacle:

It was produced by Sarah Mondale and Sarah Patton. Mondale is the niece of former Vice President Walter Mondale, whose brother used to be a National Education Association VP.

It is being promoted by several education groups, including the National Council of Teacher Accreditation, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

It cost more than \$1 million in federal money alone, not including private contributions from a dozen or more sources.

\* PDK/Gallup Poll - This annual poll is sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa (whose monthly magazines make mince-meat out of any reform NOT endorsed by the status quo). The 33rd annual poll debuts this

Wednesday and each year offers a different reality about Americans' attitudes toward public schools, school choice and charter schools and testing. We're likely to see more of the same, as predicted earlier this month in CER's summer Monthly Letter to Friends. We will offer in-depth analyses in a special alert on Wednesday.

\* In Ohio, the state's school employees union and PTA - opponents of charter schools in Ohio who have come together to sue them out of business - have filed document subpoenas with every one of Ohio's charter schools just five weeks before school asking for more than 28 different sets of documents having to do with everything from employee, administrator, and operating manuals, to Board info, minutes, procedures for special ed, ANY correspondence with anyone in the state concerning ANYTHING, health related, Title I related, financial related documents... Teacher contracts, licenses, evaluations... In other words any piece of paper relating to the operations of the school - period. While charter advocates have received an extension to allow them to file, this move can only be described as harassment of the first order. We wonder what Ohio schools would do if they were suddenly forced to do the same. Maybe someone should try.

\* Congressional negotiations on Capitol Hill over the major education package is moving slowly, mainly because the Blob is seeking all manner of concessions and trying to get the Congress to let up a little bit on the most stringent accountability requirements for schools.



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