

the MEL GABLERS'
Educational Research Analysts
Newsletter

Inside:
Environmental
"Science" Reform

Providers of Textbook Info • PO Box 7518 • Longview, TX 75607-7518 • 903/753-5993 • fax 903/753-7788 • e-mail Info@TextbookReviews.org • May 2002

Just say no to anti-intellectualism

TEXAS' ELECTED SBOE ENFORCES GENERAL TEXTBOOK CONTENT STANDARDS

Texas' elected State Board of Education (SBOE) has again confirmed the education establishment's dread of democracy, by nixing *viewpoint discrimination* and *special-interest advocacy*. Last November, all ten SBOE Republicans rejected a politically-correct high school Environmental "Science" textbook, that the Board's five Democrats liked. But the real question here was, Can the SBOE, under Texas law, enforce **general textbook content standards**? Despite misrepresentations of the law and a media outcry, the SBOE correctly voted *yes*.

General textbook content standards differ from rules for individual courses. They tell what all textbooks must do, and *prohibit* things they must NOT include — such as no blatantly offensive language or illustrations, no sensational violence, no group stereotyping, and no presenting theories as facts. Also, if submitted textbooks miss one individual course requirement, they go onto Texas' "nonconforming" list. But if they violate a single general textbook content standard, the SBOE can reject them — the fate that publishers most fear.

The rejected high school text, *Environmental Science: Creating a Sustainable Future* (Jones & Bartlett, 2001) censored pro-free enterprise counterarguments to environmental extremism.

Actually, three high school Environmental "Science" books were under fire in Texas last November. One was withdrawn. Another was revised. Only the third was rejected, whose publisher balked at sufficient changes. The rejected text censored pro-free enterprise counterarguments against environmentalist extremism on "overpopulation," dwindling natural resources ("unsustainability"), and anti-private property rights. That violated a Texas rule requiring discussion of scientific strengths *and weaknesses* of scientific theories in this particular course.

Yet that would only have put this book on the "non-conforming" list. So why did Texas' elected SBOE reject it instead? Because it breached a **general textbook content standard**, which says: "Theories shall be clearly distinguished from fact and presented in an objective educational manner." Such reassertion of SBOE power to enforce general textbook content standards is especially timely now. Last year it was texts in *one elective* Environmental "Science" course. This year Texas evaluates books for *all required K-12* Social Studies subjects.

Pro-free enterprise perspectives on population, conservation, and private property destroy the pantheistic, socialistic, anti-developmental superstructure of Environmental "Science" textbooks.

Enforcement of Texas' general textbook content standards means real textbook reform, because *rather than tell both sides* of an issue, liberals will *drop the subject* (or minimize its coverage). The more they believe their own propaganda on a topic, the truer this is. Requiring equal emphasis on benefits of free enterprise is the death knell of radical environmentalism. Rather than having to compete with pro-capitalist perspectives in Environmental "Science" textbooks, the left will grudgingly drop its pantheistic, socialistic, anti-developmental agenda there.

Already Texas' elected SBOE is on bureaucrats' hit list, for questioning Goals 2000 "reforms." Already it is under siege by state legislators, for fighting their bids to drain the Permanent School Fund for general revenue. (The Board controls this Fund, which pays for textbooks.) Now comes flak for enforcing general textbook content standards. These are pretexts for replacing Texas' elected SBOE with an *appointed* Board — *a Board more trusting of the education establishment, a Board more pliable by politicians, a Board less responsive to citizens.*

"... only be strong and of a good courage." — Joshua 1:18