

the MEL GABLERS'

Educational Research Analysts Newsletter

Inside:
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for Bad Editing

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EXTENDING MEL GABLER'S LEGACY

... and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (Hebrews 11:4)

"Pay attention, now," Mel Gabler would tell us, his understudies. "You will have to do this when I'm gone." So we gave heed, until we could predict 99% of the time what he would say or do on anything textbook-related; until we could work on our own for months at various tasks, knowing we did them his way, which had become our way.

We will miss Mel's valued advice, as he was mentally sharp to the end. But we will not miss a beat reviewing textbooks, relating to publishers, helping State Board of Education members, dealing with state education bureaucracies, and advising parents and teachers, for Mel's living legacy is still the **gold standard of public school textbook reform.**

BEST STRATEGY

Texas is the *most conservative big state* that state-approves textbooks. Texas has *national leverage* on publishers. Texas' *all-elected* State Board of Education responds more to citizens. To **impact Texas**, Mel left in place a long institutional past, unusually experienced reviewers, and highly specific goals.

MOST MEMORY

Mel left in place extensive textbook review files, State Board of Education archives, Texas Education Agency records, and lessons from past victories and defeats, dating back to the early 1960s. That *preserved wisdom of close to half a century* is a **priceless asset for Christian conservative activists.**

LEAST TURNOVER

Different people reviewing different textbooks different years tend to draw less precise comparisons and reinvent the wheel. Mel left in place a *very stable review staff*, active each year for decades, to write **consistent, increasingly in-depth reviews** over repeated Texas textbook adoption cycles.

CLEAR EMPHASES

Mel left in place *written standard review criteria*, which are checklists of what textbooks have censored before, and shopping lists telling publishers what to include next time. They are **cumulative** insights by many people from numerous reviews on multiple prior adoptions nationwide.

RIGHT POLICY

Mel left in place the rule that however many $2 + 2 = 5$ -type factual errors we find in textbooks, they are but means to our chief end of critiquing textbooks' *substantive subject-matter content* as **Christian conservatives**, whose thoroughness and knowledgeability our error lists just confirm.

SOLE SPECIALTY

People often ask if other groups in other states do what we do in Texas. Some fine conservatives participate on occasion in textbook adoptions elsewhere. To our knowledge, however, Mel left in place the *only operation anywhere* tied **each year** to a large state textbook approval process.

"For who hath despised the day of small things?" This work has always been too exceptional to exist, except God were in it; too unlikely to succeed, save that Jesus Christ helped it; too fragile to endure, unless the Lord willed it. Yet Mel went to heaven in peace that his legacy would prosper, with the succession nearly complete before he died.

For 22 years as senior textbook analyst I have written almost all of Educational Research Analysts' textbook reviews, and since 1999 all our newsletters, plus many other projects. Norma still takes an interest in state textbook adoption issues as well. **Through God's grace and your prayers, together we will extend Mel's legacy for another generation.**

— Neal Frey, senior textbook analyst

And he [Elisha] took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and ... said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? (II Kings 2:14)