

What They Learn in School Jerome Stern

In the schools now, they want them to know all about marijuana, crack, heroin, and amphetamines, Because then they won't be interested in marijuana, crack, heroin, and amphetamines,

But they don't want to tell them anything about sex because if the schools tell them about sex, then they will be interested in sex,

But if the schools don't tell them anything about sex, Then they will have high morals, and no one will get pregnant, and everything will be all right,

And they do want them to know a lot about computers so they will outcompete the Japanese,

But they don't want them to know anything about real science because then they will lose their faith and become secular humanists,

And they do want them to know all about this great land of ours so they will be patriotic,

But they don't want them to learn about the tragedy and pain in its real history because then they will be critical about this great land of ours and we will be passively taken over by a foreign power,

And they want them to learn how to think for themselves so they can get good jobs and be successful,

But they don't want them to have books that confront them with real ideas because that will confuse their values,

And they'd like them to be good parents, But they can't teach them about families because that takes them back to how you get to be a family, And they want to warn them about how not to get AIDS, But that would mean telling them how not to get AIDS,

And they'd like them to know the Constitution, But they don't like some of those amendments except when they are invoked by the people they agree with,

And they'd like them to vote, But they don't want them to discuss current events because it might be controversial and upset them and make them want to take drugs, which they already have told them all about,

And they want to teach them the importance of morality, But they also want them to learn that Winning is not everything - it is the Only Thing,

And they want them to be well-read, But they don't want them to read Chaucer or Shakespeare or Aristophanes or Mark Twain or Ernest Hemingway or John Steinbeck, because that will corrupt them,

And they don't want them to know anything about art because that will make them weird, But they do want them to learn about music so they can march in the band,

And they mainly want to teach them not to question, not to challenge, not to imagine, but to be obedient and behave well so that they can hold them forever as children to their bosom as the second millennium lurches towards its panicky close.