

By Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt

# Background Paper on President Reagan and the U.S. Department of Education

Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt, author, "*the deliberate dumbing down of america...A Chronological Paper Trail*", 1999, 700+ pages, and "*Back to Basics Reform Or...OBE...Skinnerian International Curriculum*"... \*necessary for United States' participation in a socialist one-world government scheduled for the early years of the twenty-first century", 1985, 47 pages, and "*Soviets in the Classroom: America's Latest Education Fad*", 1988 (details information regarding the Reagan-Gorbachev, U.S.,-Soviet Education Agreements signed in 1985).

Please go to <http://www.deliberatedumbingdown.com> for more info. Both above-cited books cover in detail what the author experienced in the the U.S. Department of Education from 1980-1982. "Back to Basics Reform...Or..." in **e-book** form is available to the reader — **no charge** — by simply clicking on "Free Gift from the Author" on the website's homepage.

June 15, 2004

Although Ronald Reagan had made abolishing the unconstitutional U.S. Dept. of Education one of his most important campaign promises while running for President in 1979-1980, once elected he made a very strange choice for his Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell from Utah, who had not only been a former state superintendent of schools and United States Commissioner of Education under President Ford, but who also had lobbied hard for the creation of the U.S. Department of Education, the very Department President Reagan would require him to abolish. Fox in hen house if ever there was one.

This writer, after having spent one year as a Senior Policy Advisor in the U.S. Department of Education where I had access to the most confidential and controversial education and work force training documents, grants, contracts, etc. (some going all over the world through UNESCO, etc.), decided to leak a very important technology grant to Human Events. The purpose of this grant made to the Association for Educational Computing and Technology (AECT which was a spin-off of the National Education Association) was to control computer curriculum (in all subjects) in all the schools of the nation. The project, entitled Project BEST Basic Education Skills through Technology, contained one page marked "Confidential" which stated in regard to state implementation of the Project: "What we (the feds) can control and manipulate" and then went on to list what the AECT could control and manipulate as follows: State participation/selection process, role of advisors, content of program, training of state leaders, resource people utilized, basic skills content areas emphasized, perception of need to use technology. Not only did the Project intend to influence local education, it's promotional flyer stated "In addition, the State Team approach and the communications network with professional associations and other groups established by the project will serve as a model for the states in implementing similar efforts in other areas of education, or in such program areas as health, human services, housing, transportation, etc." **Note: The word "basic" has to be taken with a grain of salt since this project covered many areas which had nothing to do with basic skills, ie. lifelong learning, health education, life process skills plan, etc.**

Since I knew I would get fired for leaking this grant I, in advance, removed from my office to my apartment all the controversial files to which I had access. When the phone rang that I would not be allowed back in my office I felt secure in that I had a gold mine which would serve a very important documentation purpose in the future.

While making plans to return home to Maine I worked for a short time in the White House and tried my best to inform the powers that be regarding what was going on in the Department of Education. Fortunately, I had a friend in the White House who was able to deliver to President Reagan a letter I wrote him dated July 7, 1982 (enclosure #1) regarding the Marxist goings-on which I felt would be of great concern to him, considering his fine statements regarding the need for parental values, etc. Not receiving a response from the President, a journalist friend of mine, John Lofton, called to find out if the President had received my letter and was informed by Reagan's secretary that he had received my letter and that it was on his desk and that he had scribbled all over the margins and requested it be forwarded to Edwin Meese, Counsellor to the President.

I then wrote a letter dated October 20, 1982 to Ed Meese (enclosure #2) regarding the whereabouts of my letter.

When no response was received to either letter I called Ed Meese's office and asked for an appointment. Although I was unable to meet with Meese, Ken Cribb, his top assistant met with me. I paid my own way to Washington for this meeting which turned out to be a total waste of my airfare. Ken Cribb patted me on the shoulder and said "Aren't you pleased to know the President received your letter?" to which I responded "Yes, but that's not the point. I want a response signed by President Reagan on his letterhead indicating he had received my letter." I wanted proof, that I could use with the public, of Reagan's knowledge of what was going on in the U.S. Department of Education, the most important ministry of education in the world, implementing with American taxpayers' money the global brainwash necessary for world government.

Subsequent to Reagan's receiving my letter Edward Curran, the Director of the National Institute of Education, a fine career educa-

tor who had left his position as Head Master of the Cathedral School for Girls in Washington, D.C. to work for the Reagan Administration, wrote a letter to President Reagan recommending that his office, the NIE, be abolished. Curran understood what I and others had come to understand...that the NIE was a Marxist factory, churning out educational materials (curriculum, teacher training, the Skinnerian/Pavlovian dog training mastery learning/direct instruction method, assessment, international curriculum, school choice proposals, etc.) NIE also supported laboratories and centers where such activities were carried out across the nation and were connected to international entities. For example: one activity was titled "Pacific Circle Consortium" which, of course, was connected with the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory in Portland, Oregon. Unfortunately, Curran's letter arrived while Reagan was in Europe. One of the President's handlers forwarded the letter to Secretary of Education T.H. Bell, who promptly fired Curran. When the President returned to the White House he allowed the firing to stand, rather than firing the socialist Secretary of Education T. H. Bell and replacing him with Edward Curran, the fine career educator who does not believe that education is "science." Curran, in an interview with "Education Week" dated December 9, 1982, stated "NIE is based on the premise that education is a science whose progress depends on systematic "research and development." As a professional educator, I know that this premise is false." This statement is of enormous significance in light of the present Bush Administration's "Leave No Child Behind" legislation which calls for "scientific, research-based" education models.

Had Reagan acted in the best interests of our nation, he would have fired Bell, appointed Curran as Secretary of Education, and allowed Curran to dismantle the most important, academically/morally destructive office in the Department, the National Institute of Education. I can make that statement emphatically since my boss, a political appointee, the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, who was becoming suspicious regarding my activities in his office, detailed me to NIE to work uptown (great restaurants!) with a nice fellow from the General Accounting Office who was doing a Waste, Fraud and Abuse audit of NIE's grants and contracts. This transfer enabled me to have access to computer printouts of hundreds of NIE grants and contracts related to just about every subject one could imagine dealing with so-called education, including international education, plans for school choice, tuition tax credits, vouchers, etc. One day I ran across a grant to the Lansing, Michigan School District which dealt with curriculum designed to change the values of elementary school children which included pre and post testing!! I asked this nice fellow if he would consider this particular grant "abusive" in a non-fiscal sense of the word? He looked at it and said "absolutely". He saw what I saw. I then asked him if I could have an extended period on this project so I could take a closer look at the computer printouts. He said "absolutely, you take as long as you wish."

I stayed late at night, after the career educators and political appointees, had gone home, in order to delve into files I couldn't access while they were in the office and to make copies of documents. Since it was impossible to copy the computer printouts due to their being on a huge rollers, I had to painstakingly copy them using shorthand. All was quiet in the office with the exception of the entrance of the very sweet Guatemalan cleaning woman who, upon her first visit, terrified me. I froze at the copying ma-

chine, my mouth became dry, my heart pounding, believing I had been discovered red-handed.

One night, while looking for a typewriter ribbon, I noticed in the corner of a storage room a box entitled "The Goodlad Study". I just about had a heart attack since I had been following this world famous international change agent's subversive activities for many years, especially when I served as a local school board member prior to going into the Department of Education. Much of the values destroying curricula and school organizational restructuring could be laid at his feet. This particular box held a gold mine of information regarding the efforts of the tax-exempt foundations and the federal government to implement the United Nations agenda, to restructure American schools for global government. I couldn't believe what had landed in my lap! Four books, all published by McGraw Hill, were commissioned for this Study. They were: John Goodlad's "**A Place Called School**"; Don Davies' "**Communities and their Schools**" which laid out the socialist/communitarian agenda to be implemented in America through the schools, pointing to communist countries as models; Jerome Hausman's "**Arts and the Schools**" which dealt with how to use the arts to change students' perceptions and values; and the worst one of all, James Becker's "**Schooling for a Global Age**" which contained the Foreword by John Goodlad from which parents love to quote:

**"Parents and the general public must be reached also. Otherwise, children and youth enrolled in globally oriented programs may find themselves in conflict with values assumed in the home. And then the educational institution frequently comes under scrutiny and must pull back."**

As an aside: when I returned home I called McGraw Hill to order the books and was told they were not yet published but that they would put me No. 1 on their list which they did. Later, when I checked back with them, they said: "Don't worry, Mrs. Iserbyt, we'll get them to you as soon as they are received; you are No. 1, even ahead of each of the 50 Chief State School Officers." That sure told me something about how important these books were and exactly who would be carrying out the radical agendas promoted in each one of them.

There are many other interesting and amusing stories I could relate regarding my two years in the Department of Education. However, since the primary reason for this epistle to all of you is to provide you with the content of the two letters I wrote to Reagan and Meese, I'll cut this short and get on with copying those letters for you. I have included the above to enable the reader to get a sense of what I saw and the environment in which I worked for a short time prior to being fired. I was so thoroughly disgusted by what I found out that I felt it was my duty to inform the President, hoping he would fulfill his promise to abolish the Department and if not the Department, at least the National Institute of Education from which most of the rot emanated.

**No. 1. Letter dated July 7, 1982 from Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt, 2324 19th Street, Washington, D.C. 20009 to President Ronald Reagan, The White House, Washington, D.C. 20600:**

Dear President Reagan:

I understand that the White House has received many letters and petitions requesting that the Department of Education (DOE) be abolished, that Secretary Terrel Bel be asked to resign and replaced by a Secretary more in

tune with your philosophy, and that grants and contracts relative to the Secretary's Technology Initiative be cancelled or broken. Friends of mine across the country inform me that they have either received no reply to their letters or that they are receiving replies from the Department of Education which do not even address their concerns.

Leading conservative organizations and media (national and state) are concerned that the Reagan agenda for education is hardly distinguishable from that of President Carter and the NEA. Your promise to abolish the NEA/Carter Department of Education did not include a promise to replace it with a foundation for education. Your publicly stated concerns over the issues of manipulation of school children and declining test scores were not couched in terms that would allow for the present continuation of federal support for the development, evaluation, and dissemination of behavior modification/values clarification/social change curriculum and/or basic skills computer-based courseware (curriculum).

Why is it that scarce tax dollars continue to flow to education associations that publicly oppose and sneer at everything you stand for? The most recent example of this is the DOE's award of a contract to the Association for Educational Communications (AECT) to carry out Project BEST — Basic Education Skills through Technology. Are you aware that the advisory board of Project BEST includes education associations which have for years opposed any position or policy to the right of President Carter or Senator Kennedy. In fact, one of the prime beneficiaries of Project BEST (which will be strengthened by its significant role in the Project), and a member of the Advisory Board, is the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) which in a joint statement with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), dated April 7, 1982, came out against many of your education proposals. The concluding paragraph of the joint statement released to the press follows:

"Briefly stated....CCSSO and NASBE Joint Legislative Conference speaker Haynes Johnson, a well-respected *Washington Post* commentator, mentioned that it appears that there is absolute consensus that we are headed down the wrong economic path...the one major dissenter, however, is the President, and he remains firm in his convictions. Johnson also predicted that President Reagan would be a one-term President."

As one of your long-time supporters (founder of the Maine Conservative Union in 1973 which is affiliated with the American Conservative Union), and as a former (recently resigned) political appointee in the Department of Education (served as Senior Policy Advisor to the Asst. Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement, which is the office handling the Secretary's Technology Initiative), I am infuriated that precious tax dollars are going to an organization (AECT) which includes on its Project BEST Advisory Board associations which have played a significant role in the decline of student test scores, which have been deeply involved in the contro-

versy over humanistic education programs, and whose memberships include a good number of educators who supported the creation of the Department of Education and worked to elect President Carter in 1976 and 1980. It is unlikely President Carter would have rewarded conservative organizations that opposed his election with million dollar contracts.

What ever happened to the Reagan Revolution? Reagan appointees, who stood on principle and backed your philosophy to the hilt, have been asked to resign or have voluntarily resigned in disgust over the present policies of the Department of Education. How can your revolution take place without principled Reaganaut soldiers? The educationist philosophy of the past thirty years, now cleverly couched in terms such as the "New Federalism", Partnerships with the Private Sector", etc., proceeds apace, and a strengthening of the very establishment you pledged to reduce, which has little or nothing to do with what actually goes on in our children's classrooms, continues without a hitch or a peep from the White House.

Cosmetic changes in the Department, i.e., the replacement of Carter liberals by Reagan conservatives on Advisory Boards, and the removal of a few controversial programs from the National Diffusion Network (NDN), etc., temporary changes which will disappear should there be a change in administrations, are of little or no significance. The abolition of the NDN, the federal government's transmission belt for federally-funded (developed) and evaluated programs, many of which deal with social change, and the abolition of the National Institute of Education (NIE), the left-wing education think tank (I know since I carefully went through many of its project files while on a 2-month detail to NIE), were essential steps for your administration to take. Why was this not done? Not only is the NDN securely in place, its federal control over curriculum (federal bureaucrats evaluate programs before they can go into the NDN), has been strengthened by moving it into the Regional Offices where it is in an even better position to compete with the private sector in the business of selling its federally-supported products. Why is it that the highly-principled and respected NIE Director, Edward Curran, was forced to resign due to his courageous letter to you recommending that NIE be abolished, when you, Mr. President, promised the voters you would abolish the whole Department of Education, in which case NIE would have disappeared?

I am sure that if you could see how NIE wastes taxpayers' money on silly and controversial social change projects that support the growth of the very educational establishment you pledged to cut back (most of which includes organizations which lobbied against your proposed education cuts), you would be very upset over the decision, taken while you were in Europe, to request Mr. Curran's resignation. You would undoubtedly initiate an investigation of exactly what Secretary Bell is up to in "his" Department of Education, as opposed to what he leads the public to believe as a result of his speeches, etc. Plans for education in the eighties to which I have access,

could not possibly please the Ronald Reagan I have come to admire, support, and believe in over the years.

Grassroots citizens, who worked day and night to get you elected, ask me "What is going on?" Since I am loyal to you, all I can say is "I guess the President isn't allowed to know what is really going on. If he were, he would certainly take steps to reverse the present course in the Department of Education."

I would like to meet with you to discuss the concerns of your constituency. I feel that nothing less than a personal, private meeting with you will allow you to know what is really going on. I look forward to a reply from the White House to this letter and to my request for a private meeting. I trust, since I have recently resigned from the Department, that your staff will not refer my letter to the Department for a reply. Thank you so much for everything you are trying to do for our great nation.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt

Enclosures:

- (1) *Human Events* article entitled "Bell's Education Department Betrays Reagan Policies", May 22, 1982
- (2) Heritage Foundation "Education Update", April 1982, entitled "Reagan Revolution Stalled in Education Department".
- (3) *The Washington Post* article entitled "Conservatives Zap Idea of Pac-Man as Teacher", May 18, 1982.
- (4) *Human Events* "Capital Briefs", June 26, 1982, item on resignations of Charlotte Iserbyt (writer of this letter) and Dan Cathcart.
- (5) "Project BEST" Dissemination Design Considerations, taken from Project BEST documents. "Project Design Features (What we can control or manipulate?)"
- (6) Page from Georgia Basic Life Process Skills Plan, funded by Department of Education
- (7) Georgia Department of Education — Narrative Response — Project BEST. This document proves connection with Enclosure No. 6.

**No. 2. Letter dated October 20, 1982 from Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt, 4 Union St., Camden, Maine 04843 to Edwin Meese, Counsellor to the President, The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500**

Dear Mr. Meese:

First of all, let me express to you and your wife my deepest sympathy over the tragic death of your fine son. My thoughts and prayers have been with both of you for some time. Your sorrow over the loss will never totally heal. Time, however, will lessen the sharpness of the pain.

This letter is to inquire regarding the whereabouts of a letter I wrote to the President on July 7, 1982 (enclosed). The White House mailroom has informed me that President Reagan did see my letter and that he made some notes in the margins and sent it on to you last

August. I would very much appreciate knowing what action, if any, the White House intends to take in regard to my concerns.

I realize that all of you are overburdened in the White House. Government has grown so enormous that it is truly unmanageable. I saw that in the Department of Education. With problems related to defense, foreign policy, and the economy, all of which require immediate action, facing those of you in key positions, there is probably little time left to deal with problems related to education. The world won't blow up if education is put on the back burner. However, leaving education on the back burner, as has been the case for years, has resulted in fewer and fewer qualified persons available for positions in government, persons who understand that history does truly repeat itself, that he who dances must pay the fiddler (deficit spending), etc. The young people educated in the public schools of America are the future congressmen, Cabinet officials, university presidents and teachers, military generals, corporation presidents, creators of culture, etc. You know this as well as anyone, but I fear too many of our leaders, understandably preoccupied with issues that require immediate attention, tend to forget that those very issues might not require immediate attention — might not even arise — if we had better educated Americans in key positions in Washington, D.C. and across the nation.

I have been most impressed with your ability to get things done and to keep a cool head under difficult circumstances, including media fire. Keep up your good work.

Please let me hear from you.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt

Enclosure:

Copy of letter to President Reagan

© 2004 Charlotte T. Iserbyt, All Rights Reserved

---

**Charlotte Iserbyt** is the consummate whistleblower! Iserbyt served as Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, during the first Reagan Administration, where she first blew the whistle on a major technology initiative which would control curriculum in America's classrooms. Iserbyt is a former school board director in Camden, Maine and was co-founder and research analyst of Guardians of Education for Maine (GEM) from 1978 to 2000. She has also served in the American Red Cross on Guam and Japan during the Korean War, and in the United States Foreign Service in Belgium and in the Republic of South Africa.

Iserbyt is a speaker and writer, best known for her 1985 booklet *Back to Basics Reform or OBE: Skinnerian International Curriculum* and her 1989 pamphlet *Soviets in the Classroom: America's Latest Education Fad* which covered the details of the U.S.-Soviet and Carnegie-Soviet Education Agreements which remain in effect to this day. She is a freelance writer and has had articles published in *Human Events*, *The Washington Times*, *The Bangor Daily News*, and included in the record of Congressional hearings.

Website:

[www.deliberatedumbingdown.com](http://www.deliberatedumbingdown.com)

E-Mail: [dumbdown@blazenetme.net](mailto:dumbdown@blazenetme.net)

---

To order Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt's *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America...A Chronological Paper Trail* (700 pages pb, \$47.00 including S/H), go to [www.deliberatedumbingdown.com](http://www.deliberatedumbingdown.com) Or call: **1 (207) 442-0543**

6.15.04