

Sex Ed Stirs Controversy in Virginia

The state of Virginia has discovered that state-mandated sexuality education is a sure prescription for controversy and for hostility between school personnel and parents. The Fairfax School Board will vote this month on adoption of a family life curriculum for kindergarten through 12th grade which has been under heated discussion by a 45-member family life education advisory committee, the Community Involvement Team, since September 1988.

The board will consider the majority report, which calls for explicit sex education in the early elementary grades. The "learning goals" include teaching 1st graders explicit terminology for body parts and body functions, teaching 7th graders about sexual intercourse and contraceptives, and teaching 9th graders about abortion and autoerotic asphyxia.

Pro-family leaders object to much of the subject matter in the course, as well as the time spent on it and the age level at which explicit details are presented. For example, teaching kindergartners to worry about sexual abuse from family members is highly controversial. Teaching children about autoerotic asphyxia is believed by many to promote experimentation that can lead to death through imitation.

A minority report was presented to the Fairfax School Board along with the majority report on April 24. The minority report calls for four changes in the curriculum adopted by the majority: (1) omitting the teaching of 5th graders that masturbation is normal and neither right nor wrong, (2) removing the references to homosexuality and the teaching of 8th graders to evaluate their sexual identity in order to

determine whether they are heterosexual or homosexual, (3) omitting the teaching about contraceptives in the 7th grade (while not objecting to it in the 10th grade), and (4) rejecting the proposal to integrate the family life curriculum into the general school program.

State-Mandated Sex Ed

The Virginia controversy started in 1988 when the Virginia General Assembly overrode the objections of pro-family forces and mandated each of the state's school districts to teach family life education from kindergarten through

study the matter and come up with a curriculum to fulfill the state mandate. However, of the 45 members of this family life education advisory committee appointed by the Fairfax School Board, 25 were selected by school administrators and were primarily administrators, teachers, and staff of the public health department.

Each school district had the option of using the state-written curriculum or writing its own. The Fairfax committee decided to write its own and came up with 400 "learning objectives" for family life education instead of the 120 in the state-written curriculum. There is at least one lesson for each objective. No one has provided any estimate of how much classroom time this will require.

After the committee completed its decisions about the 400 learning objectives, the consolidation of all the material was turned over to the school staff. According to one committee member who signed the minority report, Holly Dougherty of Alexandria, the school personnel from the first draft the committee, which had labored over the task from August 1988 to April 1989, was too exhausted to argue any more.

Mrs. Dougherty says that the final result was heavily influenced by Planned Parenthood, the Virginia Education Association, and gay rights groups. Mrs. Dougherty believes the Virginia experience with family life education has national implications because of reports she read in the Planned Parenthood Federation Association's *Insider Newsletter* dated May 1988.

It stated: "Two states — Virginia and Iowa — passed comprehensive K-12 sexuality education mandates during their 1988 legislative session. The Virginia Legislature appropriated \$5.5 million for teacher training and resource materials to help school districts establish family life education curricula. Both states participated in the 1988 Sexuality Education Project developed by PPFA Public Affairs Division."

Another article in the *Insider* stated: "Ohio, Iowa, Connecticut, Illinois and Texas have been selected as 'targets' for the 1988 Sexuality (See Virginia, page 4)



Mrs. Holly Dougherty

the 10th or 12th grade.

In the 1989 legislative session, pro-family forces proposed several amendments, but all were defeated except the provision that a school does not have to teach human sexuality prior to the 7th grade (although it is permitted to). An amendment that would have required the schools to teach sexual abstinence as the expected norm did not get out of committee.

Pro-family leader Helen Blackwell of Arlington attributed the passage of the statute and the defeat of the amendments to the political power of Governor Gerald Baliles and the Virginia branch of the National Education Association. "Many Democratic legislators are captives of the VEA," she said.

The statute required each school board to appoint a Community Involvement Team to

Home Education Week Celebrated

Homeschoolers across Missouri celebrated Home Education Week at a May 2 rally in the Capitol rotunda in Jefferson City. Missouri Governor John Ashcroft joined the governors of Maine and Texas in proclaiming a Home Education Week this year.

Signed by Ashcroft and Secretary of State Roy Blunt, the Proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the people of Missouri are committed to excellence in education; and

WHEREAS, Missourians recognize the importance of family participation and educational freedom in pursuit of that excellence; and

WHEREAS, home education is a means used by many families to prepare Missouri's young people to face the challenges of the 21st century;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN ASHCROFT, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI, do hereby proclaim May 1-7, 1989 as

HOME EDUCATION WEEK in Missouri.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Missouri, in the City of Jefferson, this 5th day of January, 1989.

Tom Duncan from the Governor's office spoke to an estimated crowd of 500 in which he expressed his appreciation for the "double sacrifice" made by homeschooling parents. He voiced his support of the families' commitment to homeschooling for excellence and pleasure that the homeschooling laws are working so well in Missouri. Homeschooling parents were encouraged and uplifted by Mr. Duncan's endorsement of home education.

While at the capitol, the homeschoolers gave cherry pies to their legislators and flowers to their secretaries and watched a session in the House. "Many of our representatives," said Candy Summers who visited her legislators with her children, were unaware that they had homeschoolers in their district. We wanted them to know we are homeschooling for excellence, that we are serious, and we are committed to what we are doing."

During a tour of the capitol building, homeschooling mother Mary Gingerich noted that public school field trips were going on at the same time. She remarked, "You could really tell by the attitude and actions of the children which were public schooled or homeschooled. Public education kids were competing for attention and trying to impress one another—homeschooled children don't have to be as concerned with peer pressure. Because they won't be with their peers tomorrow, what the peers think today doesn't matter so much."

The state organization, Families for Home Education (FHE), sent press releases across the state announcing Home Education Week and ran television and radio spots to provide information for residents of Missouri on home education. State co-director Donna Fortney said she and her husband drafted a proclamation for FHE on behalf of homeschoolers in Missouri and submitted it to the Governor. Mrs. Fortney said other states are working to have a Home Education Week and they hope eventually for a national week, too.

Working through seven regional directors who work with support group leaders in their area, a variety of activities were held throughout May in conjunction with the celebration of Home Education Week by FHE. One goal for the festivities, according to Mrs. Gingerich, a regional co-director, was to "increase public awareness that homeschooling is not a weird thing, but that it is a good thing getting better."

Various groups held craft sales displaying wares made by homeschool families and distributing information on home education. Homeschool youth presented the play, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, directed by a homeschooled teen. A homeschool band performed for an area leaders' meeting. Another group held a boat race featuring homemade boats; prizes were awarded in various categories such as turtle race and frog jump with "home-caught critters." In many areas, homeschooling families put a sign in their yard advertising their "Home School Open House."

Mrs. Fortney said that as a result of the publicity there were many inquiries for information. "A lot of frustrated parents feel like they've finally found the answer, through homeschooling, to their problem with the education system or the special needs assistance they were receiving through the schools," said Mrs. Fortney.

State's Books Offend Teachers

State-developed materials designed for parents to read to their 8- to 10-year-old children have been received by a school district in Illinois. The booklet, *Growing Up* is Book Three of the *Families InTouch* series.

One teacher in that district, said, "We were supposed to distribute it to our elementary students. Particularly objectionable to the teachers were the detailed frontal sketches of a nude adult man and woman, accompanied by cross sections of the interior structure of their reproductive organs. The text accompanying the pictures is too explicit to reproduce in this publication.

Also noted was an example given for the parent listed under "Making opportunities to talk about sex." It reads:

"Parent: Sex should never be forced on a person. It's something two people should do only if they love each other, and only if they decide they both want to show their love that way. (Here's a chance to add your particular family values: 'I believe it's something people should do only after they are married' or 'I believe it's something people should do only



after they are old enough to understand how to use birth control and how to protect themselves from diseases that can be carried through sex.")

The title page of *Growing Up* states the book's purpose: "For Better Parenting and Prevention of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse, Premature Sexual Activity and AIDS." The four books in the *Families InTouch* Series, funded by the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, are available from: Families InTouch Series, Prevention Resource Center, 901 S. Second, Springfield, IL 62703. ■

EDUCATION BRIEFS

People for the American Way (PAW) has released a booklet to help citizens combat school censorship challenges. According to one news report, the PAW report "finds school censors are well organized, committed to achieving their goals and prepared for long battles." The booklet defines the tactics of major censorship organizations and provides rebuttals for their buzz words. The author Donna Hulsizer said, "The censors are intent on making public school books and materials reflect only their views." To order, send \$5.95 to PAW, 2000 M St. N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Only half of teachers polled feel parents and the community support their teaching efforts, according to a recent Alan Guttacher Institute report. Teachers polled cited pressure from parents, community groups, and school officials when teaching about condom use, abortion, "safer sex" practices, and homosexuality. Planned Parenthood spokesmen often cite the work of the Institute to support their sex education proposals. The study is summarized in "Risk and Responsibility: Teaching Sex Education in America's Schools Today," Alan Guttacher Institute, 111 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10003.

Let them drop out, says Jackson Toby in an article for the spring issue of *The Public Interest*. Unlike most who want to target at-risk students to help them stay in school through graduation, Jackson believes that, for many students, it would be better for all parties for them to be allowed to leave. Toby points to drop-outs such as George Gershwin who entered the workforce and met with success. Toby argues that catering to at-risk students degrades "the curriculum by emphasizing entertainment." Instead, schools should make their curriculum more demanding. "The Gershwin approach," writes Toby, "is more democratic; it dares to insist that all high schools should be excellent."

The Denver-Rocky Mountain News notes that Secy of Education Lauro Cavazos has backed away from former Secy of Education William Bennett's pledge to penalize colleges that abuse the department's student loan program. Instead of excluding schools with default rates over 20%, as proposed by Bennett, Cavazos plans to talk to the institutions about the problem. This decision was made after lobbying from Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D-CA). Noting that this is one of his "first substantive decisions," the reporter asked, "If that is where Cavazos plans to get his marching orders, why did the White House bother to appoint him?"

More colleges are joining the ranks of schools requiring courses designed to combat prejudice. Next year 88% of University of Wisconsin freshmen will have to fulfill a new ethnic studies credit requirement. Beginning in 1991 at the University of California, students will be required to take a comparative course on American ethnic groups in order to graduate.

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School Library Magazine in Tacoma Deemed "Inappropriate"

The Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) in Tacoma, Washington brought a complaint to the school curriculum/instructional materials committee for the Clover Park School District in February. The complainants requested the removal of the *YM* magazine from elementary school libraries. *YM*, along with *Teen* and *Seventeen*, have been questioned for their age-appropriateness because of their frequent emphases on sex-related topics.

The school curriculum committee voted against a motion "to have the elementary libraries not renew the subscription to *YM* for the 1989-90 school year." In reaching its decision, the committee considered the magazine's content, format, interest and reading levels, intended audience, and other materials which might be available on this subject, according to a letter from the committee to the PTSA president.

"The rationale in the committee," the letter continued, "can be summarized as follows: the magazine was ordered according to the guidelines listed in the instructional materials policy; library materials are supplemental and, therefore, voluntary; supplemental materials must

take into account the various interests and ability levels of all students at a particular school; students can use this magazine for information on other than sex: fashions, make-up use, hairstyles, etc.; no other magazine addresses these areas of interest for this age; many of the articles are well written and give good advice; students who use this magazine for information about sex may not wish to speak during class discussions."

The committee told the PTSA in April that it will consider other materials to substitute for *YM* next year.

Parents called attention to the fact that the *YM* publicity department states that the magazine is designed for 15-20 year olds. One of the two articles addressing make-up use in the May issue of *YM*, entitled "The Gypsy in Me," reads "You're sexy, sultry, and positively smoldering in passionate plum make-up warmed by the colors of Mother Earth" and uses tarot cards as artwork.

Another article in the same issue of *YM* is entitled, "Test Your Sex Savvy." It begins: "Sex is terrific when it's at the right time, with the right person — for you. Some people have to be in love to enjoy sex, others need only care about

the other person. Still others find lovemaking dynamite as a purely physical act."

On May 10 parents were informed that the committee will not renew its subscription to *YM*, and that old copies may be removed from the shelf at the librarian's discretion. The Director of Instructional Materials for the district said that she does not want this debate to become a censorship issue.

One elementary school principal said, according to parents, that the issue surrounding the removal of *YM* is no longer age-appropriateness of the material but censorship. When parents suggested restricting the availability of these magazines to children whose parents want them to have access to these magazines, he replied that all the children need the magazines.

The same principal told parents that *Hot Rod* is being removed from his elementary school library because it has alcohol advertisements and promotes sexual activity. Deborah Frazier, mother and educator with a kindergarten through 8th grade specialization, said, "We really feel like there's a double standard here. If he can see that for *Hot Rod*, why can't he see this about *YM*?"

Learning How To Teach Origins

Dr. Charles B. Thaxton, scientist and author of *The Mystery of Life's Origins*, gave an illustrated lecture to Alabama biology teachers in Montgomery in April. His address showed how teachers can constitutionally teach several theories of life's origins in compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Edwards v. Aguillard* (1987).

Thaxton showed slides of the Old Man on the Mountain in New Hampshire and of the four Presidents carved on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota to illustrate how we customarily use our own experience to recognize the difference between natural causes and intelligent design.

Thaxton explained the new development during the 1960s that revolutionized biology: the discovery of DNA called the Golden Molecule, which is the essential component of every form of life we know and the basis of heredity. DNA is a genetic alphabet of four letters capable of billions of different combinations. These different sequences tell your cells how to make proteins.

Our experience tells us, Thaxton maintains, that DNA molecules display intelligent design like a language, in the same way that we know from experience that the sand ripples on a beach had a natural cause, but the words "John loves Mary" written in the sand had an intelligent cause. Thaxton's thesis is that, in explaining origins of life, the real alternative to natural cause is intelligent design.

Thaxton explained that teaching origins is much like driving mountain roads: you may be so anxious to avoid a head-on collision when going round a curve that you slide off the precipice on the right. Likewise, both evolutionists and creationists frequently slide into metaphysics when they assert propositions that cannot be confirmed by human experience.

According to Thaxton, that is exactly what Carl Sagan did when he asserted on the PBS series *Cosmos* that "the Cosmos is all there ever was, all there is, or all there will be." That proposition is not scientific because it cannot be confirmed by experience. Unfortunately, Thaxton said, most public school textbooks teach the premise that the cosmos is all there is, and all the

Bibliography on Origins Recommended by Dr. Thaxton

Evolution: A Theory in Crisis by Michael Denton (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1985).

Adam and Evolution by Michael Pitman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987 [1984]).

Darwin Retried by Norman Macbeth (Ipswich, MA: Gambit, 1971).

The New Biology by Robert Augros and George Stanciu (Boston: Shambhala, 1987).

The Nature and Origin of the Biological World by E. J. Ambrose (New York: Halstead, 1982).

Trial and Error by Edward J. Larson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Origins by Robert Shapiro (New York: Summit, 1986).

references cited in school textbooks do the same.

Thaxton agrees that public school textbooks should not teach supernatural cause, but says they should present natural cause and intelligent cause as alternatives. He offered a list of references that textbook evaluators can suggest be included in high school bibliographies.

Thaxton asserted that 35% of today's biologists do not accept the theory of macro-evolution, and virtually no scientist today believes in the theory of pre-biotic soup, even though this notion still appears in many textbooks.

Charles Darwin, who popularized the theory of evolution, knew nothing about DNA. The essence of Darwinism is the continuity of evolution; but modern discoveries in biology teach discontinuity, and molecular biology supports arguments for intelligent design.

Dr. Thaxton is the director of research and a member of the faculty at the Julian Center, Julian, California. He has his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Ohio State University. *Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins*, a secondary school textbook by Dr. Thaxton, will be published later this year.

Secy Cavazos Promotes Choice

U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro F. Cavazos announced his support of choice in education in a May 19 address. He asserts that by providing parents with the opportunity to select which schools their children attend, inferior schools would be forced to upgrade or close.

Cavazos' plan "to provide momentum in the national effort on choice in education" includes the following:

(1) convene four Regional Strategy Meetings to develop innovations to promote choice in the respective states;

(2) create a special task force in his office to promote, encourage and evaluate choice programs;

(3) charge Jack Klenk, Special Advisor on Choice Programs, to develop further choice initiatives;

(4) direct the Office of Educational Research and Improvement to identify choice as a major priority of grants to be awarded this year under the Secretary's Fund for Innovation in Education; and

(5) conduct a 3-year study, at the request of the state, of Minnesota's open-enrollment choice program.

Cavazos believes that the public needs valid information at its disposal for making choices in education and that it is his office's responsibility to provide it. To fulfill this responsibility, Cavazos is releasing four publications, available free from the Consumer Information Center in Pueblo, Colorado, written to provide information regarding choice in education:

Choosing a School For Your Child on how to select a school;

Educating Our Children: Parents and Schools Together on parental involvement;

Improving School and Empowering Parents: The White House Workshop on Choice in Education; and

Parental Choice in Six Nations which provide background information on the issue.

Removing Pumsey Did Not Stop Debate

The April 1989 *Education Reporter* carried an article on the removal of the *Pumsey* program in an Oklahoma City suburb. The school board, in a 3-2 vote, withdrew the "self-esteem" program because of "New Age" techniques used in the material. Following are two letters to the editor which appeared in a local paper after the vote.

To the Editor:

Let's set the record straight on the Pumsey program, which was eliminated from Putnam City Schools by that school board.

The Pumsey program was designed to teach elementary-age students positive self-esteem skills. It teaches children how to cope with everyday situations they may face at home or at school. It teaches children that they have a choice in how they feel and that by controlling these feelings they can have either a bad day or a good day. The opinion that it teaches humanism, is just that, one person's personal opinion.

The fact that there are a great number of children in the district who do not have strong parental guidance was brought to the board's attention. Even those who do are tempted sometimes to go against what they know is right because of peer pressure. These are the children the Pumsey program is trying to reach.

Were the three elected school board members who voted against this program truly concerned about these children or with one mother and a handful of followers?

Take off your rose-colored glasses, men. Step outside your circle of business associates and see the real world. Go to the schools and talk to the principals and teachers, and then make a decision.

I urge parents who are concerned about the elimination of this program to call their elected school board members. Let them hear your opinion. Ask them to review this program again, and this time let the other side be heard.

Gloria Frasher, City

These letters to the editor are reprinted by permission of the authors.

To the Editor:

The Putnam City school board deserves a standing ovation for its position on banning the New Age, anti-Christian "Pumsey the dragon" program. Although the vote was 3-2 for removing the curriculum, I find it interesting and commendable that all the male members voted for stopping the occultist garbage. Thank you, men, for keeping informed enough to understand the harm to our children from teaching the psychological methodology of Eastern mysticism and for being willing to stand up for what is best for our young people.

Elementary school children as well as older students are being indoctrinated into the occult world of visualization and guided imagery. This teaching of how to arrive at an altered state of consciousness comes from ancient shamanism, otherwise known as witchcraft or sorcery, and also includes hypnosis, yoga, transcendental meditation, and other forms of body and mind relaxation.

I trust and pray that the board's next action will be to remove an almost identical "DUSO the dolphin" program (Developing Understanding of Self and Others). This program was recently eliminated from New Mexico public schools by the state legislature.

The Oklahoma Education Association and the Putnam City Association have condemned the board for its action "because it squelches educators' curriculum decision." The union's leadership will always be in opposition to anything — good or harmful — if it decreases their power. What will it take to wake up teachers? What will it take for moral, competent teachers to stand up and resign from a union which does not represent their moral viewpoints?

Ralph G. Griffin, City

Book of the Month



Blackboard Blackmail, by Suzanne Clark (Memphis, TN: Footstool Publications, 1988) 213 pp.

On May 27, 1982, a Bristol, Tennessee housewife was met at her door by a sheriff bearing a court summons for \$100,000 by the powerful National Education Association (NEA).

Her crime? She wrote a letter to the editor of her local newspaper which was critical of NEA. In it she responded to a letter in her local paper by NEA Executive Director Terry Herndon and Virginia Education Association President Walt Mika which criticized the Reagan Administration's education policies.

Suzanne Clark, a young Christian mother of two and a former college instructor, had recently read Clare Chambers' *Change Agents in the Schools*, which described the NEA's humanist, anti-Christian, leftist agenda. Mrs. Clark's letter to the editor used this material and other factual information about NEA.

A few weeks after her letter was published, she received a letter from NEA's legal counsel announcing his intention to sue unless she recanted her assertions. The NEA counsel enclosed a sample retraction for her to sign.

After two weeks of carefully checking and documenting all the statements in her letter, Mrs. Clark was convinced that all she had written was true. She felt she could not in good

conscience deny her own words.

Instead, she contacted a number of conservative groups and obtained legal counsel through Concerned Women for America. After her attorneys threatened a countersuit, the NEA asked for an out-of-court settlement. Following prayerful consideration, the Clarks decided to accept this solution, since they considered it the legal equivalent of a jury verdict of not guilty to the charge of libel.

After her ordeal, Suzanne Clark devoted her time and effort to putting her experience into book form. The result is *Blackboard Blackmail*.

In addition to being a suspenseful, dramatic narration of her David and Goliath battle against the NEA, the book contains valuable information about the NEA, its history, organization, goals and philosophy. For example, it quotes NEA General Counsel Robert Chanin as explaining the real motive behind NEA's attack on Mrs. Clark: "... to draw a line beyond which our detractors may not go without being the subject of NEA action."

A telling point is also made by NEA Executive Director Terry Herndon when he noted that NEA's objection to Mrs. Clark's letter was that it appeared in a mainstream, general-circulation newspaper. The NEA apparently wants to keep Christian opinion confined to small publications, out of the reach of the general public.

FOCUS: Choice is the Cornerstone

by Lauro F. Cavazos,
U.S. Secretary of Education

Excerpted from an Address to the Education Press Association, National Press Club, on May 19, 1989.

One can quantitate the trade and budget deficits. It is done daily in Washington to the nearest million. I can quantitate the education deficit: 27 million adults are illiterate; 28 percent of our students drop out of high school; the national high school graduation rate is only



Secretary Lauro Cavazos

71.5 percent; SAT and ACT scores have declined or remained static for the last three years; and U.S. students score low in math and science when compared to their peers in other industrialized nations. By any measure one wishes to apply, we are failing or not making progress.

We have paid a high price for that exclusivity in lowered parental interest and a boring sameness among our schools. Again and again, scholars studying American education have bemoaned a widespread lack of parental concern and involvement in the education of their children and noted a remarkable national uniformity in the methods and organization of our schools.

But this is changing. Lately, we have begun to see glimmerings of a new level of diversity in American education, a diversity based on providing parents and students with an array of choices in both the form and substance of educational offerings. Whenever choice appears, commitment and involvement in education have been revitalized, and that revitalization sets the scene for a leap forward in achievement. I consider choice the cornerstone to restructuring elementary and secondary education in this country.

Because of choice, we have seen remarkable changes in East Harlem. Test scores have risen and admission of students from East Harlem to the selective high schools in the city has climbed dramatically. It is axiomatic that good schools take care of and educate all students to their fullest potential. The blueprint is clear — all we need to do is to follow it to bring about positive change.

Minnesota has been putting the nation's most ambitious state-wide choice program into effect since 1985. This program offers open enrollment across district lines, post-secondary options, and area learning centers. The successes here have inspired Iowa and Arkansas to enact open enrollment legislation, and it is reported that 21 states are considering choice programs.

It is expected that choice will promote school reform. Initially we tried to improve education by imposing regulations from the top down while leaving the basic structure of our schools

untouched. Obviously, this has not worked.

In the current movement of reform, schools must be responsive to parents, students and teachers. To accomplish this, schools need the freedom to change and innovate. Schools should remain accountable, of course, but accountable to parents, teachers and students as well as to central administrators. In short, we must infuse our schools with the ingredients that are essential to any enterprise — entrepreneurship and accountability. Choice offers this opportunity.

The failings of our school system today affect all children, but none more severely than America's minority and disadvantaged young people. You are well aware of the tragic situation in some of our inner-city and rural schools where it is common for half or more of the minority students to drop out . . . and for those who do graduate to go out into the world unprepared for college and the workplace.

It's not enough to deplore the situation or to blame it on a supposed lack of money. We already spend more on our students than any major industrialized country in the world. No, as I emphasized earlier, I believe that we can no longer patch, adjust, tinker and complain. It is time to act. The solution is restructuring and the catalyst is choice.

No child, no matter his or her circumstances, should be compelled to attend a failing school, or one that does not meet their academic needs. Choice offers parents, students and teachers the opportunity to select the better school if the neighborhood school is faulty or if it cannot satisfy educational requirements. Through choice, we can exercise the same kind of judgment in selecting schools that we take for granted in making other decisions.

"The solution is restructuring and the catalyst is choice."

Those who have benefited from choice are pleased with it. Yet, relatively few students have access to choice despite the benefits. This must be changed.

There are many reasons to be in concert with the innovations that choice can bring. This approach recognizes that there is no "one best way" for everyone. Children have different needs and learning modes. Teachers have different approaches. Parents have different philosophies. Choice allows schools to draw strength from diversity by developing different programs. It allows each school to excel.

And, choice does something more: it empowers parents by bringing them into the decision-making process. It encourages teachers and principals to become entrepreneurs and structure their curriculum and standards; students are encouraged to become learners with options that direct and capture their potential.

My point is basic . . . there are choices at the postsecondary level of education in this country and they have helped to produce the highest caliber educational system. I am convinced that the same approach can promote progress and success for our elementary and secondary schools.

Board Rejects Policy To Restrict Parental Visits

The Colby (Wisconsin) School Board rejected a controversial policy on parental visits to classrooms which had been advocated by the district's superintendent, Lloyd Rueb.

That policy initially would have "limited any person to one visit per classroom per semester, without special permission." The policy was then "gutted" by the removal of the once-per-semester rule after the Board was told by parent Connie Mullins that an attorney representing the parents was considering a suit if the proposed policy was adopted as written.



Mrs. Connie Mullins

Mr. Rueb stated that the policy was written because the district has no visitation policy. However, according to Mrs. Mullins, her husband was told by Board President Larry Meyer that the policy was drawn up "because of her attempts to ask questions about what was being taught in the schools."

The April 27 meeting of the Colby School Board was attended by more than 60 parents and teachers for whom, according to a local report, "it was a perfect night." Commenting on the meeting, parent Connie Mullins said, "The parents have stood strong to reserve their rights and those of the teachers for the education of our children. The teachers are putting their job on the line every time they attend the public school board meetings, but they have been there for the parents and fellow teachers who are being threatened as I was."

Efforts to See Curricula

Mrs. Mullins said the controversy began when she read a November 30 article in the local newspaper. It announced a meeting that had been held between school administrators and the local Lions Club for the school to consider implementing the *Quest* program. Mrs. Mullins researched the program and became concerned about its possible effects on the students. She requested a spot on the agenda of the board's regular January meeting to discuss her concerns about *Quest*.

She was asked if Superintendent Rueb wanted her to speak at the meeting. When she said she didn't think so, she was denied a place on the agenda. Mrs. Mullins recalls telling the board, "I'm going to be on or I'll go to the paper," at which point she was assigned 10 minutes on the agenda. The day before the meeting she was told she would be allotted only 5 minutes.

At the meeting, a board member asked where she got the idea that the school was considering the *Quest* program. She then read the newspaper ad announcing the meeting with the Lions Club, to which they had no response.

In April, Mrs. Mullins was told that the school had returned the *Quest* materials.

Programs used in the schools which raised concerns are Children at Risk and a guidance unit taught by the school guidance counselor, Jerry Hein, in once-a-week instruction in elementary classrooms. Other parents expressed "reservations" about the course contents and the fact that they "had no prior knowledge that

they were part of the curriculum."

Parent Nancy Kruger asserted that, "The parents were never told that [Mr. Hein] would be coming into classes" beginning last fall. "We should have been told ahead of time that that was part of the curriculum." Parent Diane McNeely said, "When we asked [what was in the curriculum], as is our perfect right to do, we were not given straight answers."

When these questions were raised about Hein's sessions with the classes in his unit covering topics from death to drug abuse, Ray and Connie Mullins made requests for curriculum information from Mr. Hein and other school officials. Mrs. Mullins maintains that Mr. Hein refused to show her the materials because "it was against the law" and instead told her "why he thinks developmental guidance counseling is necessary."

Mrs. Mullins called counseling consultant Pam Wilson of the Wisconsin state Department of Public Instruction who told her there was no such law. Then Mrs. Mullins was told by school counselor Jim Warren that the school policy provides that she may see all materials except lesson plans which are for "professional use only."

Mrs. Mullins responded, "That's ridiculous. If they can't show me lesson plans for what they're going to teach our children, what are they hiding?" She noted that other teachers are willing to share their lesson plans, and that she never asked to see the lessons plans. She just wanted to know what materials the school was teaching the children.

Mrs. Mullins asked why the schools did not get prior consent from the parents before placing students in this type of program, if the school was concerned about public opinion. Mr. and Mrs. Mullins understood the school's answer to be that school counselors know the needs of children better than the parents.

Threatened Legal Action

Rev. Ken Chadborn relayed a message this spring to Mrs. Mullins that a school administrator, who wished not to be named, "wants you to back off" and that the school was considering "getting a court order for you to be banned from the school." When asked why he might have been chosen to relay the message, Rev. Chadborn replied, "Probably because we have Connie as a member of the Abbotsford Church, and we have a School Board member and a member of the PTA in the church. . . . Probably somebody thought they could cool things off."

Mrs. Mullins believes Superintendent Rueb was behind the efforts to keep her out of school. She said that Board Member Donna Wigstedt told her that Rueb asked Wigstedt for the phone number of Mrs. Mullins' pastor. Wigstedt also said that the board discussed a possible court order at its January 30 meeting. Mr. Rueb said he "didn't know anything about a threat of legal action" against Mrs. Mullins.

Action at the April Board Meeting

At the April meeting, the visitation policy was sent back to the policy committee by a unanimous vote. Bryce Luchterhand, representing the Unity Parent Teacher Organization which advertised the board meeting in the local paper, said that in addition to the once-per-semester rule, two of the remaining four rules in the policy should also be removed. These rules would bar visits during exams and allow visits only on a date "acceptable to the teacher." Mr. Luchterhand maintained that normally the latter would be no problem. But, he asked, what happens to parents who do not get along with

the teacher; what recourse do they have?

Joyce Laesch, of the Dorchester Parents Association, noted that the student handbook encourages parents to come at any time and said, "I think it's very wrong to set roadblocks in the way of parents visiting at any time." None of the speakers objected to the portion of the policy which requires visitors to register with the office.

Board Defeats Kindergarten Study

The Board also defeated a proposal 4-3 to have the administration study kindergarten for 4-year-olds. Testimony from the audience was strongly negative. Community concerns included space requirements, the cost of adding kindergarten rooms, and the long distances that children from outlying areas would have to be

bused.

The proposal was recommended to the Board by Jim McCoy, a Department of Public Instruction consultant in early childhood education. Mr. McCoy said kindergarten would "even out" the experience of children, since 70 percent of families use daycare for children of that age and daycare experiences are not equal.

Local church daycare provider Rev. Mark Neumann said a school program would have a worse student-teacher ratio than that currently available in the largest daycare facility in town. He also noted that state-subsidized daycare would make him lose business. "I feel that what the school will provide will be cheap daycare. I am afraid," stated Rev. Neumann, "the competition would be going to the cheaper daycare." ■

Fairfax County Family Life Education

The "standards of learning" in the family life curriculum, proposed by the family life education advisory committee for use in the Fairfax County (Virginia) public schools, is summarized below.

KINDERGARTEN:

Discussion of personal hygiene; learning to avoid strangers; distinguishing appropriate and inappropriate touching by others; learning to say "no" and to report harmful or inappropriate contact by others to a parent or guardian.

FIRST GRADE:

Age-appropriate information on babies and breast-feeding; learning correct terminology for body parts and body functions.

THIRD GRADE:

Introducing the concept of sperm and egg, their contribution by male and female, and their union to form a baby; discussion of alcohol and the effect of drinking on mind and body.

FIFTH GRADE:

Discussion of male and female reproductive organs; awareness of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS; physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty; examination of sexual stereotypes and sexual exploitation in popular music, television, advertising.

SEVENTH GRADE:

Identifying problems and risks of teen-age sexual intercourse and discussing the value of postponing pregnancy.

NINTH GRADE:

Identifying the differences between heterosexual and homosexual activity; information on menstruation, toxic shock syndrome, disease prevention and self-examination; discussion of autoerotic asphyxia deaths and their relationship to masturbation and pornography; discussion of contraceptives and abortion, and their moral and legal implications.

10th GRADE:

More advanced information about AIDS and its virology emphasizing sexual abstinence as the only foolproof way to avoid the risks of sexual activity; encouraging sexually active teens to stop.

11th and 12th GRADES:

Discussion of Virginia laws governing sexual activity, sexual abuse, rape and sodomy.

Virginia Sex Ed Controversy

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Education Project. The project is designed to help reach PPFA's goal of having 15 states with kindergarten through 12th grade sexuality education mandates by 1990.

"States were selected according to their ability to: (1) establish a broad-based grassroots coalition committed to achieving a statewide K-12 sexuality education mandate; (2) gain state office and affiliate board of director's approval for staffing and financing the project; (3) plan a collaborative effort between state public affairs and education staff; and (4) provide models for different geographic regions of the country. . . .

"The national office offers targeted states technical assistance; a sexuality education consultant who will help develop strategies; and an information network on national development. Arizona, Georgia, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin were selected as Tier II states, those pursuing a sexuality education initiative, but unable to meet all the necessary requirements mapped out above. They too will

receive technical assistance and will be encouraged to move into targeted status in 1989."

Virginia parents and taxpayers are having a difficult time holding anyone accountable for what they consider an offensive curriculum because, in Virginia, school board members are not elected by the people but appointed by the county board. Accordingly, when pro-family forces staged a demonstration on June 5 in Fairfax County, they did so in the building which houses the County Board.

On June 5, 1,500 persons attended the Virginia Beach School Board meeting to protest the liberal sexuality curriculum proposed by the Community Involvement Team in that district. Observers said that parents were "standing in the halls because both the auditorium and the cafeteria were filled to capacity." After more than 40 parents had spoken, the board scheduled another meeting for June 15.

A summary of the proposed Fairfax County family life curriculum is given on this page. The program was originally planned to start in September, but it is now expected to begin in January. ■