

'Rap' Helps Louisiana Coalition Defeat Sex Ed

A humorous poem by Pro-Family Coalition leaders Sandra McDade and Kay Reiboldt helped pro-family forces defeat three sex education bills in Louisiana's legislative session. "The Jackson Rap" poked fun at Rep. Alphonse Jackson (D-Shreveport) and his sex education agenda.

Rep. Jackson's legislation would have allowed schools to lower the grade level at which sex education may start from 7th grade to kindergarten (but not mandating that it be taught); test and survey students about their sexual practices and beliefs; and allow schools to enroll any pregnant or parenting teenager in sex education, regardless of age or grade level.

Deciding to take the offensive, the coalition of more than 20 pro-family organizations announced a major news conference on April 24, during the second week of the session. Sandra McDade, who represented the coalition, was warned that there was "no way" the coalition could stop the steamroller for increased sex education. "But," said Mrs. McDade, "we rose to the challenge."

"The Jackson Rap," ridiculing the legislation was distributed at the news conference where Mrs. McDade predicted that the coalition would defeat the entire package. A typical verse from the ditty read:

Now, Mr. Jackson would have you believe
Sex clinics are what you need,
But Mr. Jackson, if you will,

Don't give our daughters the birth control pill!
Copies of the "Rap" were delivered to each state legislator along with a loaf of fresh home-baked bread. Legislators were seen in the Capitol halls laughing at the verses and reading them to each other.

During May, member groups of the coalition deluged their representatives with letters and calls. Mrs. McDade said that the coalition produced so many calls that legislators were "begging" her to "call them off."

Rep. Roy Brun (R-Shreveport) and Rep. Woody Jenkins (D-Baton Rouge) provided leadership against the Jackson bills. The coalition included homeschoolers, right-to-life groups, and adoption home proprietors. Supporting the bills were the P.T.A., the League of Women Voters, and medical professionals.

None of Rep. Jackson's bills made it through the House. The Senate's version of the bill to permit sex education beginning in kindergarten was amended in committee to read the 4th grade. Then Rep. Jackson, realizing that the measure had little support in the House, pulled it from the calendar. The Senate bill to allow testing and surveys about sexual practices was defeated 54-27 in the House on June 24, leaving intact Louisiana's version of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, which forbids such testing. The legislation to allow schools to enroll any pregnant or parenting teens in sex education lost 51-35. When it was



Coalition News Conference: Sandra McDade (center)

brought up on reconsideration, it lost by 62-31.

Opponents of the Jackson bills argued that pregnant and parenting students cannot afford time away from academic subjects. In addition, coalition groups maintained that these bills would exacerbate the problem instead of helping. Some groups went so far as to say that the bill's supporters would profit financially from the escalating problems which these bills would produce. They noted that the testing/survey bill was needed by schools as a prerequisite to receive school-based clinic grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Observers feel that one reason the bills failed was due to the House Education Committee members' surprise at learning that the state president of the League of Women Voters operates the largest abortion clinic in northwest Louisiana. During one hearing, Rep. Brun asked the League's vice president, "Isn't it true that [the state president] is the director of the Hope Abortion Clinic, the largest clinic in northwest Louisiana?" She declined to answer.

Michigan Health Guide Pushes 'New Age'

The Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education prescribes New Age techniques for use on public school pupils returning to school this fall.

Grade 7 pupils will be taught the "Calming response" and the "Mini-Vacation," two New Age guided imagery techniques. These techniques make the pupils believe they are somewhere other than the classroom. This is a sort of self-hypnosis in which the pupils are taught how to "disengage" from reality and live in a fantasy world. They are often taught they can get advice in this other place from some person or spirit or animal.

According to Jack Canfield, who says he has observed "the application of guided imagery to the classroom" for ten years, this is "a very powerful psychological tool." In his book, *The Inner Classroom: Teaching With Guided Imagery*, Canfield wrote that guided imagery is a tool to "facilitate psychological growth and integration" and to "evoke inner wisdom."

The Michigan Model for Comprehensive Health Education will also teach kindergarten the practice of "centering," which New Age writers have called "one of the most important processes of all the New Age educational tools." Centering is a progressive tensing and relaxing of each part of the body, starting with the feet and ending with the face muscles. These exercises are supposed to provide a "space" for listening to a voice within one's body.

For years, parents have strongly objected to this type of psychological manipulation in the public school classroom. It is one of the reasons why Congress passed the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment in 1978 and why the Department of Education issued strong regulations in 1984.

(Curriculum excerpts on page 3)

Privacy-Invading Survey Stirs School Storm in Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The North Carolina Chapel Hill-Carrboro school district found itself embroiled in controversy when administrators refused to release to parents a survey given to their children in mid-May. Parents, who were asked questions about material in the survey by their children, wanted to see what their children "were actually exposed to," so they would be "better able to discuss it."

After *The Chapel Hill Newspaper* hired a lawyer who wrote an opinion stating that the survey is a matter of public record, the schools released it to the parents. The newspaper printed the entire survey, which contains more than 200 questions about feelings, health, sex, friends, and family.

The original plan was to give it to all 2nd through 8th grade students, but a storm of controversy caused it to be cancelled before it was given in the middle school. This survey was designed by Dr. Janice Kupersmidt, assistant professor at the University of North Carolina (UNC), and was given in May to about 500 children in the Carrboro and Estes Hill elementary schools in Chapel Hill. The survey was administered by a team of UNC researchers in the absence of the regular classroom teachers.

The survey asked students to respond to "negative" questions, such as "I am sure that terrible things will happen to me" and "I want to kill myself." Another section asked 47 questions about the child's relationship with friends they were to identify by name, including

whether he/she hits the other, says mean things, is dependable, or shares secrets.

In another section, students were given a list of all their classmates and required to check the three "you like the most," the three "you like least," those who do "weird or strange things," and "all the kids you hang out with in school."

In the next section, on how their parents reacted to 22 questions on report cards. This was followed by another 22 questions on the parents' behavior toward the child when he is especially good or especially bad.

The survey listed 36 events and each pupil was told to check the "things that happened to me in the past year," including "I became pregnant or got someone pregnant," "A member of my family attempted suicide," and "A parent was arrested and went to jail." Fourteen questions probed into the child's health, including "Have your breasts started to develop yet?" and "Do you have body hair yet?"

Twelve questions inquired into private family matters such as "Who lives in your house?" and "How much do you think your parents like their work?" Other questions sought pupil's opinions, such as "What would you like to change about your house?" and "What would you like to change about your neighborhood?"

Students were told they did not have to answer the survey, but they were also told that "we hope you'll try and answer all the questions you can." Parents noted that most nine- or



ten-year-olds would do what the teacher indicated she wanted, even if they were uncomfortable with the exercise.

Students were told that their answers would all be put on computer with ID numbers instead of their names and that, "after the information is in the computer, all these sheets of paper will be destroyed." Parents, noting that answers to these questions would pinpoint children's identity, felt that these statements amounted to a coercive attempt to persuade students to answer the survey by giving them a false sense of anonymity.

According to a local report, "The system intended to use the survey's results to help develop profiles of each grade and to evaluate how the system could better teach and help students who might have emotional or behavioral problems."

Parents were notified in advance that the survey would be given, but were not told that the questions would be of such a personal nature. The survey was then administered to all children unless their parents sent written notice to the school requesting otherwise.

The district has created a committee of administrators, teachers and parents to study why the project was cancelled and to recommend ways to "avoid some of the difficulties we have had this time." ■

EDUCATION
BRIEFS

41 states are developing an AIDS curriculum or curriculum guide according to the "Profile of State HIV/AIDS Education Survey Results, 1988-89." Topics covered are: sexually transmitted diseases (40 states); safer sex (35 states); condom use (39 states); dangers of sharing needles (38 states); and abstinence from sex as best preventive measure (43). Free single copies are available from Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 N. Capitol St. NW, Suite 379, Washington, DC 20001.

The American Federation of Teachers reports that the average teacher's salary for the 1988-89 school year was \$29,629. Alaska has the highest average salary (\$41,832) and South Dakota the lowest (\$20,525). The average school year is 180 days, whereas most Americans work 240 days a year. Union officials acknowledged that salaries have outpaced inflation in the last three years.

The National Education Association (NEA) went on record at its annual convention against the growing parental choice movement. Then NEA President Mary Futrell warned that the resolution's strong language "would set us back." Choice, or "open enrollment," plans are seen by the NEA as in opposition to "free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student."

The National Research Council recommended against requiring seat belts in buses in a report commissioned by Congress. Instead, the Council recommends extending bus seat bottom cushions from 20 to 24 inches to provide extra protection during crashes. Some observers were surprised that a federal study would recommend that minor children on public buses not be required to wear seat belts while in many states adults in privately owned cars are required to wear them.

Educators this spring attended "Education Global Citizens — Illuminating the Issues," the annual conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 500 sessions focused on six major themes: Global Understanding, what educators need to know about the world in an "increasingly interdependent environment"; Societal Responsibility, what teachers, students and citizens should know and be; Supervision: Human Resources and Staff Development, how to develop and adapt "successful strategies to expand their and others' potentials in humane school settings"; Organization Development, whether the purpose of schooling has changed to reflect changing needs of society, staff and students; Politics of Education Reform, what helped shape the studies put forward in the 1980s and what their educational, political and social implications are; and Curriculum for Today and Tomorrow, what schools should teach and how they should teach it.

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FOCUS: Gender-Free Lit for Children

by Micah Morrison

Of all the excesses lately committed along American education's road to the palace of wisdom, perhaps none is stranger than the tale of "X"; few tales, certainly, seem more emblematic of radical feminism's efforts in the educational system. The X series ("Stories for Free Children") is about a child that is not a boy and not a girl. More precisely, the child's gender is hidden, ignored, evaded, and finally becomes immaterial. Written by novelist Lois Gould, the X series, according to a 1980 issue of *Ms.* magazine, has been put to wide use. It has been used in classrooms "from kindergarten through postgraduate levels . . . included in anthologies, in teachers' guides, in birth announcements" and even adapted as a musical comedy. The stories have appeared in hardcover and paperback, in psychiatric journals, and an animated television version was commissioned. X has remained popular during the 1980s: *CONTENTIONS* most recently encountered the child in a reprint from *Ms.* assigned to third-graders in the Dobbs Ferry area of New York.

The *Ms.* reprint informs us that after X is born — part of a "Secret Scientific Xperiment, known as Project Baby X" — its parents, the Joneses, immediately encounter life's first lesson: prejudice. As it turns out, virtually all of the great unwashed want "a boy or a girl, and not a Baby X." In this Xperiment in social engineering, however, the Joneses can turn to a team of scientists and an enormous *Official Instruction Manual* for help in bringing up baby. The *Manual* serves as a text of wisdom, replacing certain well-known phallogocentric Deities. Prejudice is first encountered in the form of cousins who don't visit and neighbors who pull down the shades when the family passes by. But the *Manual* "had warned the new

parents that this would happen, so they didn't fret about it."

Indeed, the *Manual* and the scientists provide all the answers for the hapless Joneses and Baby X. Should the Joneses buy boy's toys or girl's toys, boy's clothes or girl's clothes? The *Manual* advises them to "Buy plenty of everything!" Should the parents chastise X for rough play or for crying? Parents must never "make Baby X feel embarrassed or ashamed." Embarrassment and shame, it seems, are not gender-free emotions.

Coping with retrograde reality grows more difficult when X goes to school. The Joneses must prepare carefully for this. X wears overalls so its sex will not be apparent; it goes to the bathroom in the principal's office; it plays "house" and baseball; and its haircut is either "a girl's short haircut or a boy's long haircut." The brave new worlder must deal with its peers. "What would the children think" of X? "Would they make Xist jokes?"

Poor X. Its first day in school is a nightmare. The Joneses turn to their *Manual*. "What did you expect," it chastens. "Other children have to obey silly boy-girl rules, because their parents taught them to. Lucky X — you don't have any rules at all! All you have to do is be yourself."

X, we learn, "liked being itself." After a good cry with Dad, X goes back to school, where it wins a relay race, a spelling bee, and almost wins a baking contest. ("Remember, nobody's perfect.") The other kids notice that X seems to succeed almost effortlessly; X is non-competitive. "X doesn't care about winning," says one of the other kids. "X thinks it's fun playing boys' stuff and girls' stuff."

Well, by now the adult reader — if not the third-graders immersed in these Xploits — gets the picture. Male and female roles are a kind of tyranny, particularly male roles. They lead

straight into prejudice and sexism. A world with no gender roles and no rules is an infinitely better place, a place where children can flourish in a non-competitive environment.

Need it be added that X not only triumphs over adversity, but reshapes its little classroom society? The other kids like what they see, and begin to follow X. The parents of the other kids try to make them go back to the Old Ways — dresses for the girls, football for the boys, rules, competition — but it is too late. The other kids "stayed mixed-up and happy and free, and refused to go back to the way they'd been before X."

In a last-ditch effort by the reactionary camp, Xperts are called in to examine X. It passes with flying colors. The parents are "angry and bewildered. . . . Didn't X have an *identity* problem? Wasn't X mixed up at all? Wasn't X any kind of misfit?"

The answer, of course, is that in the world of Lois Gould X is not a perfectly normal child, but a superior one. The rest of the world is made up of gender-enslaved, phallus-ruled misfits as yet unenlightened. With large parts of the American educational establishment firmly in the camp of the illuminati, however, we are supposed to hope that a whole army of little Xs will be massed in the classrooms, eagerly awaiting a sex-free 21st century.

Mrs. Gould does not suggest whether or not surgical procedures will be indicated for all the grown-up Xpersons, who might otherwise, even so, encounter certain complications of identity. At that point, presumably — in keeping with the best theories of progressive enlightenment — each it can make that critical decision for itself. Then even the Garden of Eden would have nothing on Dobbs Ferry.

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Resources Help Teachers Eradicate Stereotypes



The Women's Educational Equity Act Publishing Center released its 1989 catalog this summer. The catalog promises to continue in its tradition of "over a decade of providing gender-fair resources for the classroom, the workplace, the home, the community."

Funded through the Department of Education, the Women's Education Equity Act (WEEA) has existed since 1977 to "help promote the concept of sex equity in education." Grants continue to be awarded yearly through the department "for innovative programs, which in the original language of the legislation, 'promote educational options for women and girls.'"

The catalog states, "Core to this concept is the understanding that equity means equal treatment and opportunity for all students — regardless of sex. Both females and males need to be freed to make their own choices — in

academic and career pursuits, social and emotional experiences, and leisure activities. However, to create this freedom we must eliminate stereotypes, biases, and expectations based on gender. To help all students reach their fullest potential, sex equity must be an integral part of planning and instruction."

New publications available from WEEA include *Just What the Doctor Should Have Ordered: A Prescription for Sex-Fair School Health Services and Circles of Women: Professionalization Training for American Indian Women*.

WEEA's "Bestsellers" include *Women in American History*, *Checklists for Counteracting Race and Sex Bias in Educational Materials*, *Maximizing Young Children's Potential: A Non-Sexist Manual for Early Childhood Trainers*, and *Choices/Changes: An Investigation of Alternative Occupational Role Models*. *Checklists* is an "easy-to-use handbook" for parents and educators to help them "evaluate bilingual and multi-cultural curriculum materials for the presence of race and sex bias." *Choices/Changes* contains 29 mini-biographies that "explain why women and men from all walks of life choose to pursue nontraditional careers" and promises to "help your students reassess their perceptions about which occupations are 'right' for which sex."

WEEA offers curricula and curricula resources in areas including early childhood, language arts/social studies, math/science, and physical education. Under K-12 Guidance Curriculum, WEEA lists *Project CHOICE: Creat-*

ing Her Options in Career Exploration, a 14-week career development program designed to help "talented adolescent women" identify "their personal and cultural barriers (especially those arising from sex-role stereotyping and socialization)."

The catalog is available from WEEA Publishing Center, Educational Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Suite 200, Newton, MA 02160, 800/225-3088 (617/969-7100 in Massachusetts). ■

Letter to the Editor

Your article, "Sex Ed Stirs Controversy in Virginia" is very interesting. However, it might have been improved if it had mentioned the almost exact parallel of the growth of venereal diseases and teen age pregnancies as compared to the amount of sex education in the schools.

For a number of years, I was a member of The Driver Safety Advisory Committee for the State of Illinois. In Illinois, driver education in public schools is mandatory.

I know of no exception to the practice of these students, upon completing the education on this subject and the automatic issuance of a license to drive, they immediately try out their new skills and drive a vehicle.

The analogy to sex education becomes obvious if you look at the statistics.

Milan G. Weber
Deerfield, Illinois ■

Book of the Month

Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, Volume 1: Overview and Recommendations, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Service, Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, DHHS Pub. No. (ADM)89-1621. Washington, D.C.: Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1989.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has released the final report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, which was convened to investigate "what could be done to prevent youth suicide." The task force takes the position that "the Federal government should play an active role in monitoring the implementation of these recommendations."

At the federal level, task force chairman Shervert Frazier recommends that DHHS agencies "integrate information about youth suicide" into their programs that "deal with problems of youth and adolescence (such as teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and interpersonal violence)." He recommends that DHHS agencies be required to submit annual progress reports addressing "programs which might appropriately address youth suicide."

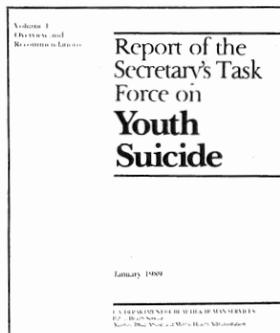
Frazier urges that the report be distributed through organizations that "participated in the formulation of the task force recommendations." These organizations, which Frazier hopes will "integrate these recommendations into their ongoing programs," include the American Association of Suicidology, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, the National Education Association, and the National Parent Teachers Association.

"There is little sound evidence to suggest that any given approach works better than any other, if at all, in preventing or reducing suicide."

The task force's findings include:

"Businesses should provide and encourage employees to use employee assistance programs when a family member is at risk for suicide. **Foundation and corporations** should increase their support for programs to prevent youth suicide. The **media and entertainment industry** should cooperate in efforts to investigate whether television and other media affect suicidal behavior of young people. **Youth services** should include primary prevention programs directed toward disadvantaged, socially isolated, and other underserved youth. **Religious** counselors should be aware of the indicators for suicidal risk and resources from which young people can get help. **Legal** means should be investigated for ways to limit access to means of suicide and ways to alleviate liability concerns of mental health professionals who treat suicide youth."

To give direction in these areas, the task force produced six Recommendations, each supported by sub-recommendations, discussion and an action plan. The Recommendations are: Data Development; Research into Risk Factors for Youth Suicide; Evaluation of Interventions to Prevent Youth Suicide; Public Information and Education; and Broader Approaches to Preventing Youth Suicide.



Preventing Suicide through School Courses

Although the report states that "little is known about the effectiveness of the many suicide prevention and intervention programs that have been initiated since the 1970s," it asserts that "the suicide problem is too urgent to wait for the results of research evaluations; a wide range of efforts to prevent suicide must continue while evaluations components are completed."

The report describes approaches for suicide education in the schools: "One type of school program does not deal directly with suicide, but is designed to help youth develop skills to cope with stressful life events and feel better about themselves. . . . Another type of school program attempts to improve the ability of the student body to recognize suicidal behavior and take steps to prevent it. . . . Students may be encouraged to discuss suicidal thoughts, talk about feelings for friends lost to suicide, and discuss how friends might intervene when a troubled youngster is identified."

"School-based programs," states the report, "have generated controversy. Some parents fear that open discussion could introduce the idea of suicide to teenagers who had never thought of it before. . . . There is very little sound evidence to suggest that any given approach works better than any other, if at all, in preventing or reducing suicide."

The report states that others "believe that numerous beneficial effects are possible. For example, open discussion of suicide might facilitate disclosure of some student's preoccupations with suicide, which might in turn lead to interventions to reduce the risk of suicide."

Suicide and Gay Rights

Under Recommendation 6: Broader Approaches to Preventing Youth Suicide, the report states that integrating gay youth "into the mainstream may ameliorate the risk of suicide. Examples of such organizations include: scouting and 4-H clubs, youth counseling or support services, youth hotline services, school 'big brother' programs for new students, and other social groups that can assist youngsters in meeting other young people and in developing relational skills." The action plan for implementation of this sub-recommendation includes: "End discrimination against youths on the basis of such characteristics as disability, sexual orientation, and financial status" and "Enlist adult group leaders who reflect the population of youth served."

Suicide and Gun Control

"It is argued," states the report, "that because firearms account for such a high proportion of suicides, and because guns are easily available, limiting the availability of guns might curtail suicide rates. There is evidence that curtailing access to handguns may indeed reduce the overall frequency of firearm suicides. Some investigators suggest that if access to guns were restricted, the impulse to commit suicide might pass, and some suicides would be prevented. Alternatively, if guns were unavailable and potential suicides had to switch to other means, they might choose a less lethal method."

The report recommends, "when confronted with a suicidal young person, it would be

Excerpts from The Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, Grade 7, Module 2, Lesson 2, Activity Two, pages 219-220.

1. Refer students to the "TIME OUT" quadrant of the handout.

2. Say:

There are times in our lives when the daily grind gets to us. We might like to go home, crawl into bed, pull up the covers and forget it . . . but this isn't a practical solution to your third period class, an argument with a friend, or a missed bus! So, what can you do? How can you get away from upset and move toward the calm center of the feelings continuum? [Refer to the chart from previous class.]

When we are over-involved or tense or confronting a problem, our bodies sometimes need a time out to get back to Calm. We need to relax, to disengage for a few minutes, to be able to carry on and feel better. There are two ways to do this which enable us to take an "in-place" break from what we are doing and come back refreshed:

- a. The Calming Response
- b. The Mini-vacation

3. Teach the calming response:

CALMING RESPONSE

Place your feet flat on the floor.
Sit straight in your chairs.
Relax your hands.
Shrug your shoulders up and down and then Relax them.

CALM Breathe in slowly and say "CALM" to yourself.

DOWN Breathe out slowly and say "DOWN" to yourself.

Do this sequence three times, slowly to avoid hyperventilation.

Good. How do you feel? Just those three short inhales and exhales can make a big difference in how in control you feel. People feel better when they are in control of themselves.

4. Teach the Mini-Vacation technique:

MINI-VACATION

* Let's do the calming response again. Repeat "CALM DOWN" 3 times.

* Now, close your eyes and think about your favorite place in the world -- the place where you really feel good. It may be your own private place or at the beach or the mountains where you go on vacation or your grandmother's house or a place where you listen to music or a place that you've seen a picture of and imagine would be wonderful.

* Think about really being there. Visualize it. What does it look like? (Pause) What colors are around you? (Pause) What smells? (Pause) What sounds do you hear? (Pause) With your eyes closed, continue to imagine the details of your favorite place. (Allow 3-5 minutes of silence.)

* Now, return to the classroom. You've just taken a mini-vacation. How do you feel?

5. Conclude this activity by pointing out that both the calming response and the mini-vacation are ways of becoming relaxed and refreshed in a short time. They are stress reduction techniques that utilize mind and body working together to help one feel calmer and more in control.

prudent for a health professional to determine whether the family has a firearm, and if so, have the family remove the firearm, at least temporarily, from the environment of the person who is contemplating or threatening suicide."

National Conferences

Included in this volume of the report are summaries of three national conferences on youth suicide held in 1986. At the National Conference on Strategies for the Prevention of Youth Suicide, then Secretary Otis R. Bowen, called the family "the single best social program we have" and urged strengthening the family structure.

The National Conference on Risk Factors for Youth Suicide determined that "factors most clearly linked to youth suicide" were the following: schizophrenia; parental loss and family disruption; familial characteristics; chemical imbalance; and other, including "homosexuality, being a friend or family member of a suicide victim, rapid socio-economic change, a history of previous suicidal behavior, impulsiveness, and aggressiveness, media emphasis on suicide, and ready access to lethal weapons, such as guns."

The summary of the National Conference on Prevention and Intervention in Youth Suicide states, "public education should not focus solely on suicidal behavior, but should address related problems such as substance abuse, interpersonal violence, and unwanted teenage pregnancies."

This volume of the report closes with an inventory of DHHS activities in suicide prevention, a list of members of the Task Force and its working groups, and a list of 50 papers commissioned by the task force. *Volume 1: Overview and Recommendations* is followed by *Volume 2: Prevention Factors for Youth Suicide*; *Volume 3: Prevention and Interventions in Youth Suicide*; and *Volume 4: Strategies for the Prevention of Youth Suicide*. ■

Cardinal Blasts AIDS Course

Cardinal Bernard F. Law urged parents not to let their children participate in an AIDS education program for grades 7 to 12 in the Boston public schools, saying in a letter to all parishes that it "could place our children in danger, both moral and physical." The letter was read at Masses this spring before the AIDS program began in Boston public schools.

He told parents to write to principals asking that their children be exempted from the program, which he labeled "valueless" and "amoral." Cardinal Law said the curriculum "admits of a permissiveness in sexual behavior which is not acceptable to a great many citizens of the community" and "increases the children's risk of getting AIDS." His letter to all parishioners continued as follows:

"As regards the sexual transmission of the disease, it is well known that only abstinence provides a sure means of avoiding HIV infection. This fact is acknowledged in the curriculum but is given only minimum attention. The reasons why students should not engage in sexual acts are inadequately presented.

"Students as young as 13 will, instead, be given explicit instruction in the use of condoms. Sexual abstinence cannot be effectively taught if, at the same time, detailed directions on how to use condoms are presented as an alternative. The values which parents want for their children and which alone can protect their children are being undercut.

"A false sense of security is communicated, concerning the use of condoms. . . even a single failure can result in a child's acquiring this fatal disease." ■

Excerpts from Privacy-Invasive Survey

My Feelings and Ideas

2. A I think about bad things happening to me once in a while
B I worry that bad things will happen to me
C I am sure that terrible things will happen to me
3. A I do not think about killing myself
B I think about killing myself but I would not do it
C I want to kill myself
4. A I am sad once in a while
B I am sad many times
C I am sad all the time
5. A Nothing will ever work out for me
B I am not sure if things will work out for me
C Things will work out for me O.K.
7. A I have fun in many things
B I have fun in some things
C Nothing is fun at all
9. A I hate myself
B I do not like myself
C I like myself
11. A I feel like crying everyday
B I feel like crying many days
C I feel like crying once in a while
15. A I look O.K.
B There are some bad things about my looks
C I look ugly
18. A Most days I do not feel like eating
B Many days I do not feel like eating
C I eat pretty well
21. A I never have fun at school
B I have fun at school only once in a while
C I have fun at school many times
25. A Nobody really loves me
B I am not sure if anybody loves me
C I am sure that somebody loves me

About My Friends

1. Do you have a BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND now? Yes No
5. Do you have a BEST FRIEND now? Yes No

[The following questions are to be answered about the student's boyfriend or girlfriend and best friend. Questions 12 through 55 give the choices "A lot," "Sometimes," and "Not much" for evaluation of their relationship with their best friend and boyfriend or girlfriend.]

8. First & last name
9. Grade & School
10. How long have you been friends?
20. I help him/her with homework
22. I hit him/her
23. He/she hits me
24. I tell him/her secrets
25. He/she tells me secrets
26. I say mean things to him/her
27. S/he says mean things to me
31. We talk about our parents
41. I can depend on him/her
45. My mother likes him/her
46. His/her mother likes me

How I Think and Feel

- 0 = NOT TRUE FOR ME
1 = SOMETIMES OR SOMEWHAT TRUE FOR ME
2 = VERY TRUE OR OFTEN TRUE FOR ME
5. I lie.
 8. I use dirty language.

9. I run away from home.
10. I disobey my parents.
13. I cheat.
17. I worry a lot of the time.
19. I am afraid of a lot of things.
23. I brag.
25. I show off or clown around.
27. I like to be alone.
28. I bully other kids.
29. I enjoy being with other people.
32. I can't sit still.
35. I worry when I go to bed at night.
36. Others seem to do things easier than I can.
39. I worry about what other kids think of me.
40. I worry about what my parents will say to me.
43. I have trouble figuring out the answers in school.
46. I like the way I am leading my life.
49. I am happy with myself as a person.
51. I get bullied by other kids.
57. I worry about what other kids will say to me.
60. I worry about what other people think about me.
68. I get questioned by the police about my behavior.
69. I worry about what is going to happen.
72. I would like to change some things about how I look.

Peer Behavior and Activity Nomination

I have given you a list of names of all the kids in your GRADE here at _____ School.

First, write your name at the top of the sheet. Write your first name and your last name at the top of the sheet. When you're done, look up at me so that I'll know we're ready to go on.

Page 1. Everybody likes some people more than they like others. Are there some boys or girls in your grade that you like the most? Put a check mark next to the names of the three people that you like the most.

Page 2. Just like there are some people who you like most, there are probably some people whom you like least. Put a check mark next to the names of the three people that you like least.

Page 3. Now I'm going to read you some descriptions of kids that we know at other schools. Then I'll ask you if these descriptions sound like somebody in your grade.

This person fights a lot. Either they say mean things to other kids or they push them or hit them. Who is most like this in your grade? Check the names of three people who best fit this description.

Page 5. Now, this kid says or does weird or strange things a lot. Check the names of the 3 kids in your grade who best fit this description.

Page 6. Now, this kid says bad things about other kids behind their backs or they act stuck up or snobby and think they are better than other kids. Who is most like this in your grade?

Page 8. This kid is a good leader. They are good to have in charge and part of the group during play or school work. Check the names of the 3 kids who best fit this description.

Page 9. On this page, check the names of ALL the kids you hang out with in school. For example, you talk together, play on the playground together, walk in the halls together, or eat lunch together.

About My Family

[These questions are to be answered for both

the student's mother and father choosing from these possible responses "Not much," "Sometimes," "Very much."]

1. When you get a GOOD grade, how much do your parents do these things?
 - a. give me a hug or kiss.
 - b. give me a gift or money.
 - c. let me decide more things like when to do homework or when to play.
 - h. they consider it normal & do nothing special.
 - j. they don't care.
3. When you get a BAD grade, how much do your parents do these things?
 - a. yell at me or hit me.
 - b. they give me less money.
 - d. make up more rules for me.
 - h. they help me do better.
 - l. they don't care.

My Future

1. What do you want to be when you grow up?
3. How far would YOU like to go in school?
 - a. Quit school as soon as possible
 - b. Graduate from high school
 - c. Go to vocational or military school after high school
 - d. Go to college
 - e. I don't care
4. How far would your MOTHER like you to go in school?
 - a. Quit school as soon as possible
 - b. Graduate from high school
 - c. Go to vocational or military school after high school
 - d. Go to college
 - e. My mother doesn't care
7. How much do you want a JOB?
 - a. Not at all
 - b. Not much
 - c. Sort of
 - d. Yes, pretty much
 - e. Yes, very much
8. How much do you want to get MARRIED?
 - a. Not at all
 - b. Not much
 - c. Sort of
 - d. Yes, pretty much
 - e. Yes, very much
9. How much do you want to have CHILDREN?
 - a. Not at all
 - b. Not much
 - c. Sort of
 - d. Yes, pretty much
 - e. Yes, very much

About My Health Girls (Grades 4-8)

2. Have you grown taller in the last 6 months? (this is called a growth spurt) (No, A Little, Some, A Lot, Don't Know)
3. Have your breasts started to develop (grow) yet? (No, A Little, Some, A Lot, Don't Know)
4. Do you have body hair yet? (No, A Little, Some, A Lot, Don't Know)
8. Have you begun to menstruate (have your period)?
12. How EASY OR HARD would it be for you to get each of these things? Cigarettes, Pot (Marijuana), Beer or Wine, Hard Liquor, Other Drugs to Get High? (Very Easy, Sorta Easy, So-So, Sorta Hard, Very Hard)
14. How many of your FRIENDS have done these things?

- (None, A Few, Some, Most)
- Smoked cigarettes
 - Smoked pot (marijuana)
 - Drank beer or wine
 - Drank hard liquor
 - Used any other drugs to get high
 - Broke into a car or building
 - Sold drugs
 - Hit a teacher
 - Hit another kid
 - Cut classes or cut school
 - Carried a hidden weapon
 - Ran away from home
 - Stolen something small (less than \$5.00)
 - Stolen something big (more than \$50.00)

My Family

1. Who LIVES in your house?

a. mother	h. uncle
b. stepmother	i. other adults
c. grandmother	j. brother(s)
d. aunt	k. sister(s)
e. father	l. cousins
f. stepfather	m. step/half brothers or sisters
g. grandfather	n. other children
8. What would you like to CHANGE about your HOUSE?

make it safer	make it bigger
have fewer people in the house	stop the fighting
make it quieter	have my mom or dad back home
	make it cleaner
9. Who takes care of you most days AFTER SCHOOL?

mother	babysitter
grandmother	day care center
father	afterschool program
brother or sister	I stay home alone
10. What would you like to CHANGE about your NEIGHBORHOOD?

clean it up	have more places to play
stop the fighting	make it quieter
make bad people move away	more police around
have more friends	fewer drunks
make it prettier	less drugs
12. How much do you think your PARENTS LIKE their WORK? (not at all, not much, somewhat, very much, very very much)

MOTHER	FATHER
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THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO ME IN THE PAST YEAR:

6. A person close to me died.
 10. My parents divorced.
 11. One of my parents remarried.
 13. I became pregnant or got someone pregnant.
 15. One parent lost his or her job.
 18. I had a lot of fights with my parents.
 19. My parents fought a lot with each other.
 20. A member of my family attempted suicide.
 21. A family member had lots of emotional problems.
 22. A parent had trouble with alcohol or drugs.
 23. A parent was arrested or went to jail.
- A. What does your mother do? (example: stays home, nurse, teacher, secretary, doctor, janitor)
- B. What does your father do? (example: stays home, nurse, teacher, secretary, doctor, janitor)