

Michigan Senate Blasts 'Michigan Model'

WHERE WE GO TO GET VITAL NECESSITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN:



'Progressive' Teaching is Rejected in England

LONDON, ENGLAND — After nearly 30 years, England has abandoned the "progressive" teaching approach and returned to traditional methods. On September 9, Education Secretary John Patten accepted proposals from the National Curriculum Council (NCC) to introduce greater rigor into the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing, and speaking.

Patten accepted the report calling for the law to be changed to ensure that children are taught:

- To write correct English by learning the rules of grammar.
- To speak grammatically correct Standard English in both the classroom and the playground.
- To learn to read by a method that includes a significant element of phonics, which involves sounding out words instead of trying to remember their shapes.
- To spell by methods that include learning lists of words by heart.
- To appreciate the great works of English literature by being introduced to the standard literary canon.

The NCC gave a strong official endorsement of phonics as an essential ingredient in the teaching of reading. The NCC stated that children must be taught the links between sounds and written forms. The NCC criticized the current regulations which make only a passing reference to phonics. The NCC rejected the Cox Committee approach that children would "draw meaning from the printed page" just by enjoying themselves.

Over the past five years, each of these proposals has been intensely resisted by the progressive educationists, and the education union's reaction to the latest report is one of great protest. Nigel de Gruchy of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said that the teaching of English is now "a political football being booted up and down the right wing of the Conservative Party."

This controversy shows the sharp differences in the two theories of education. One theory is based on *personal development* of the child, while the other is based on the

acquisition of knowledge. The results of the first theory, with its disdain for spelling and grammar and its emphasis on experiential learning and insistence on contemporary, "relevant" texts, have, Patten argues, led many children up an educational blind alley.

Patten's task now is to put into practice the NCC's vision of schoolchildren who write legibly, spell correctly, understand grammar, and have a deep respect for the rich heritage of English literature.

Patten said he realized the proposals would probably be controversial and could annoy teachers who like things the way they are. But, he said, English lies at the heart of the national curriculum and the case for changing the method was overwhelming.

The NCC takes the position that every child should be taught to speak Standard English — the "grammatically correct language used in formal communication throughout the world" — clearly, accurately, and confidently.

The NCC rejected the argument of the Cox Committee (headed by Brian Cox, Professor of English at Manchester University) which urged toleration of non-Standard English such as "we was," "he ain't done it," and "she come here yesterday." Professor Cox argued that such expressions are "rarely more than a social irritant to some people."

The NCC also stated that learning to spell was another essential skill. The NCC rejected the Cox Committee opinion that too much attention is paid to the "secretarial" points of writing, claiming that a child could be a poor speller but write interesting stories, or be a good speller but write boring stories.

Saying that it is essential that pupils understand and appreciate their country's literary heritage, Patten announced that 14-year-olds would be tested next year on their knowledge of a Shakespearian play chosen from *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

The new NCC policy will go into effect in 1994 for pupils aged 5 to 14, and in 1995 for those aged 14-16. ■

Report Calls Attacks on Parents 'Education Tyranny' and Calls For Investigation of Violation of Laws

LANSING, MI — The nationally famous curriculum called *Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education* has been totally discredited by a report issued this month by the Select Committee set up by the Michigan State Senate to study it. The 53-page report, entitled "It's Not Kid-Friendly," presents 30 Findings about the content of the curriculum and the way it was imposed on the schools and makes 30 Recommendations.

In response to grassroots protests from all over Michigan, the Senate Select Committee to Study the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education held 12 hearings attended by several thousand people. Hundreds of witnesses testified, including teachers, health educators, and parents who objected to the curriculum that was being forced on their children by the Michigan public school establishment.

The *Michigan Model*, consisting of 9 volumes, 2,500 pages, covering 863 "student learning objectives" for children aged 5 to 13, was first introduced into Michigan classrooms in 1984. Several million dollars from federal, state and local sources were funneled into the task of training the teachers, imposing the curriculum on every Michigan public school student, and circumventing parental opposition.

Much of the *Michigan Model* concerns traditional health topics such as brushing teeth and avoiding accidents, but 347 of its 863 "learning objectives" deal with emotional and mental health. Those objectives are what caused the controversy. When parents were stonewalled by the school establishment, according to the Senate report, "parental frustration was at a boiling point" and "public confidence in public education was being threatened in a massive way."

Committee Chairman Sen. Gil DiNello summed up the underlying problem in his Preface to the report: "From the 12 hearings we held around the state, it became clear that the social engineers, the social reconstructionists that exist at the higher levels of the education profession, stepped in to make the local school the surrogate parent. Their attitude was that the school was the venue where children should be equipped to deal with life's situations, including such intimate areas as sexuality and social decision-making. Teachers were put in the unenviable role of having to cross these boundaries that were previously dominated by the family. It's a role in which many teachers are not comfortable. This showed through at the hearings where all the teachers who testified appeared to do so not because of conviction, but because of pressure. Teachers are unwitting pawns in an effort by the state's social reconstructionists to fulfill a social agenda."

Here are a few of the Committee's 30 Findings.

• Finding #8 states that, "Because of mixed messages about pre-marital sex, *Michigan Model* lessons result in increased adolescent sexual promiscuity." The Committee recommends that "Abstinence from pre-marital sexual activity should be the basis of sex education in our public schools."

• Finding #12 states, "Michigan Departments of Education and Public Health organized campaigns to discredit concerned parents," and Finding #17 added, "Many in the educational community treat parents with arrogance and mistrust." Calling this "a shameful spectacle" and "educational tyranny," the Committee recommends that the Michigan Attorney General and the U.S. Justice Department investigate to determine if parental civil rights were violated.

• Finding #13 asserts that the Michigan Department of Education "appears to have obtained federal Drug Free Schools funds under false pretenses." The Committee recommends that the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Education investigate to determine whether laws were broken.

The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act may actually be a national scandal ready to burst. For several years, parents in many states have protested the way that federal funds have so lavishly flowed out of the U.S. Department of Education without compliance with the law's requirements. The General Accounting Office reported last year that the Drug Free Schools Act had by that time cost the taxpayers \$1.1 billion with "impact unknown." The GAO evaluated 21 drug education courses and found that none of them teaches, as the law requires, that illegal drugs are "wrong and harmful." (See *Education Reporter*, March 1991.)

• Finding #20 states that efforts to curb teen pregnancies and teen abortions have actually been "hindered by *Michigan Model* lessons." The Committee recommends that teen fathers should be charged with statutory rape, should have their Social Security number put on the baby's birth certificate, and should be required to support their children.

• Finding #21 discovered that the state approved sex education video list "violated community standards." The Committee recommends that parents have full access to videotapes used in class.

• Finding #26 states that "Boundaries between church and state were violated with New Age teachings." The Committee recommends that public schools be held accountable so that they "do not endorse the religious teachings or practices of any religion."

The members of the Select Committee are Sen. Gil DiNello (D-Clinton); Sen. Doug Carl, (R-Utica), Sen. Bob Geake (R-Northville), and Sen. Jim Berryman (D-Adrian). (See page 3 for extensive excerpts from the Findings and Recommendations.) ■

EDUCATION BRIEFS

A Gallup Poll conducted in July of this year found that 7 out of 10 American adults strongly support tuition vouchers. They favor a government supported voucher system where parents can send their children to public, private, or parochial schools of their choice. This reflects a significant shift in opinion from 1991, when only 50% of the respondents said they were in favor of choice in education. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander attributes the change in opinion to President Bush's "consistent leadership" on the parental-choice issue.

The RAND Corporation's teen sex survey is scheduled to be administered again with a \$49,000 grant from the American Foundation for AIDS Research. Funding was previously provided by the UCLA/RAND Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program. The teen sex survey had been postponed because of the controversy it stirred among parents, students and teachers. (See *Education Reporter*, August, 1992) The survey will assess the effects of the condom distribution program for grades 9-12 at Santa Monica High School in Santa Monica, CA and is alleged to be necessary in order to justify the passing out of condoms. The Rand Corporation claims it is going to re-evaluate the parental consent forms so that parents are aware of the survey and of the choices they have regarding participation. Ironically, there is still no parental consent required for the passing out of condoms to students.

The American Federation of Teachers passed a resolution endorsing Gov. Bill Clinton for President. Albert Shanker, the union's president, said that the effect of the economic recession on their profession was just one of many reasons to back Clinton in his race for the White House. Among other things, Shanker attacked President Bush for his support of private school vouchers. The nation's largest teachers union, the National Education Association, had already endorsed Clinton.

Public schools in Louisiana have abandoned the teaching of correct spelling and are, instead, teaching pupils to "invent" their own spelling. "I wet to stor tudey" (I went to the store today) would receive no red marks from teachers in New Orleans, who are now encouraging children to spell any way they want. This new technique of "invented" spelling is replacing what the schools call "the old-fashioned rigors of rote memorization, penmanship drills and the spelling bee." The new style spelling is part of the "whole language" movement, according to the *Times Picayune* of Oct. 19.

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College Costs: Paying More, Getting Less

WASHINGTON, DC — The House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families has issued a report investigating the rising costs of college education. The report, entitled "College Education: Paying More and Getting Less," asks why college tuition has soared at a rate double or triple that of inflation year after year. The answer, according to the Select Committee, is found in the ever expanding effort by college and university administrations "to emulate the research-dominated model of higher education."

The model that most schools look to is that of the Ivy League schools, with the hope that prestige will come with increased research. "This goal of achieving prestige through research has been fueled by the belief that, by imitating what these colleges and universities perceived to be the most prestigious institutions in the world, their own prestige would be enhanced," the report states.

As colleges begin to equate prestige with quality, evidence suggests that quality, rather than being enhanced, actually suffers. Those adversely affected are the undergraduate students. The report finds that professors spend, on the average, about 6 to 8 hours a week actually teaching. "It is increasingly becoming the norm for undergraduates to be taught by 'TAs' — Teaching Assistants — not professors, in extraordinarily large classes," the report says. "In other words, parents are paying ever-increasing tuition to have students teach students."



Though the emphasis is shifting from teaching to research, the report finds that "a surprisingly large number of faculty have yet to publish an article, book, or other measurable output of research work." In fact, the report continues, "more than half of all professors devote fewer than five hours a week to research, while upward of a third admit to none at all." The question arises, then, what exactly are college professors doing with their time?

They are not, the report finds, advising the students. This responsibility, as well as others traditionally associated with professors, has been placed on an ever expanding bureaucracy, resulting in what is now being called "administrative bloat." In fact, the report continues, "this speedy growth in non-faculty personnel and other administrative expenditures has become a significant factor in the overall exploding cost growth of higher education."

The report concludes, "The higher education system in this country is at a crossroad: continue down the research path to the detriment of those who most support the entire system, the undergraduates, or face the reality that the system can no longer afford to keep research in its pre-eminent position and relegate teaching to the status of an unwanted orphan." ■



Coed Volleyball Fails to Score

WAUCONDA, IL — A former member of the girls' volleyball team at Wauconda Junior High School was benched by school officials due to a growth spurt which made him bigger and stronger. Jim Noffsinger, 13, played for the girls' team last year, but school officials decided that his growth spurt made him too powerful to play with the girls this fall.

School officials claim that Wauconda must provide equal opportunities for boys and girls to play sports. They say if Jim is allowed to play on the girls' team, other boys would have to be permitted too. Then it would be a "girl's" team in name only because girls could lose their places on the team to boys.

"The feeling is, this year he is physically stronger and the advantage he would possess over the girls in the conference would be unfair," said Christine Golden, Wauconda Junior High School principal. "It's a girls' sport," said Wendy Burbank, District 118 school board secretary. "He's stronger and his skill levels have risen considerably. I feel there are other sports for him to play."

Jim and his teammates are fighting the decision and are distributing a petition to put Jim back on the team. "If the girls on the team don't mind him playing, I don't see what the big deal is," said teammate Susan Wanshek.

Another teammate, 13-year-old Alicia Pecora said, "He grew up with us. He should be allowed to play on the team because it is sexual discrimination if he is not on the team." Jim's mother, Lucy Noffsinger, said she is proud of her son and his former teammates: "This is the kids' fight. They wanted to make a statement, and I think they've done a good job."

The school board can overrule the school administrators' decision to ban Jim from the team and, according to Board President Cynthia Petraitis, they may consider the petition to reinstate Jim. But school administrators say they have good reason to keep Jim off the court because, according to Stanley Eisenhammer, attorney for District 118, a 1979 ruling by a judge in Illinois prohibited a high school boy from playing on the girls' volleyball team, claiming that boys would dominate the sport.

The administrators say the best solution is for Wauconda to start a boy's volleyball team. But, according to Eisenhammer, the school district is experiencing trying economic times and does not have the money to start additional sports teams. Eisenhammer pointed out that even if Wauconda set aside money to start a boys' volleyball team, "there are no other teams to play." ■

Book of the Month



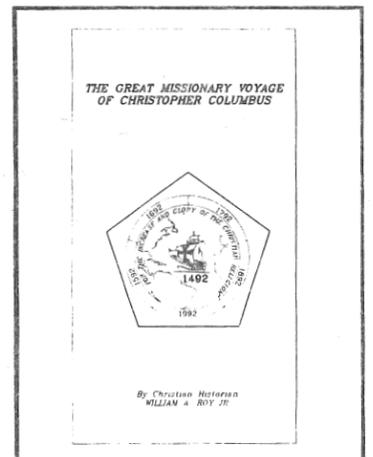
The Great Missionary Voyage of Christopher Columbus by William A. Roy, Jr., 1991, 70 pp., \$6.95, (800)777-7706.

In this year of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America, many people are asking tough questions about Christopher Columbus: Was he a cruel and callous explorer seeking only greed and fame, or was he a Christian missionary with a heart for God?

The "politically correct" crowd has worked overtime to discredit Columbus and his discovery of America and to convince Americans that this 500th anniversary is not a time to celebrate, but rather a time to apologize to the descendants of the native peoples for having invaded their land and spoiled their "paradise."

To counter this current "Columbus bashing," William A. Roy Jr. offers a refreshingly different view. In *The Great Missionary Voyage of Christopher Columbus*, he exposes serious errors in the traditional Columbus story and provides a true, historically documented account based on new evidence. Roy answers modern questions by examining Columbus' own writings.

Roy proves through original source documentation that Columbus was not just a "discoverer" or "explorer," but a zealous missionary for Jesus Christ. Historical facts show that Columbus was not on any type of "commercial venture," but was on a mission to locate The Khan of China and answer his plea to learn about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Roy includes documented evidence from Columbus's own logs and writings to show his missionary zeal and his belief that he was doing the work of the Lord.



The Log of Christopher Columbus — Thatcher's 1903 Edition edited by William A. Roy, Jr. (142 pp, \$14.95 hardcover, \$7.95 Softcover) is Columbus' personal log of his first voyage to the New World and is one of the first English translations from the Spanish. From Columbus' own words, it is easy to understand his real motive for the voyage.

Columbus' desire to spread the Gospel all over the earth, to gain new lands for Christianity, and to acquire enough gold to finance a crusade to retake the Holy Land for Christian rulers, are all evident from Columbus' own log. ■

FOCUS: IT'S NOT KID-FRIENDLY

The Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education

Excerpts from the Preliminary Report of the Senate Select Committee to Study The Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, October 1992

1. FINDING — STATE-SPONSORED CURRICULUM RESULTS IN LOWERED PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS AND QUESTIONABLE BEHAVIOR CHANGE IN RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR AMONG STUDENTS

The Michigan Model is a case study on why government is not writing curriculum for public schools. Listening to hundreds of parents testify at our hearings, it became obvious that the desires of the curriculum writers in the Departments of Education, Public Health and Mental Health rode roughshod over the wants and wishes of families. The ability of local communities to make decisions for themselves took a beating with the onslaught of the Michigan Model.

Those with a vested philosophical or economic interest in the Michigan Model will argue vehemently that adoption of the Model is strictly a local decision. But that is a deliberate distortion, if not a downright lie, about the facts. Purveyors of the Model operate with the same tenacity as an enthusiast for a pyramid sales scheme. They don't let loose of their prospects. They dangle money and whatever else it takes to make a sale.

Communities around the state were forced into accepting the state of Michigan's view on how and what their children should be taught about some of the most important and most intimate questions they will ever face. Parents resented having their children forced into a cookie cutter that would try to press their child's attitudes into a pattern of which they were suspicious.

Recommendation — Curriculum should be decided in the community without state or regional interference
2. FINDING — MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TOO FAR REMOVED FROM FAMILIES TO MAKE EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICY

When parents around the state started to look for answers about the Michigan Model, how it came into being, what is taught and how it is taught, they found themselves frustrated. Answers were few and were shallow, if they were there at all.

Recommendation — Eliminate the State Board of Education
3. FINDING — THE STATE OF MICHIGAN HAS FALLEN SHORT IN SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND FAMILY VALUES

Recommendation — Governor appoints commission on the child, family and schools

4. FINDING — PARENTS ARE BEING DENIED CHOICE ABOUT MICHIGAN DENIED AND NON-DIRECTIVE AFFECTIVE ED CLASSES

We listened to hundreds of parents tell about their efforts to have their children excused from non sex ed Michigan Model classes. All they wanted was to have their schools provide some acceptable alternative for their child. They just felt that non-directive affective education was not right for their child.

These parents were made, in most instances, to walk a bureaucratic maze that would confound and stupefy the most experienced special interest lobbyist. The handful of school districts that allowed parents

to opt their children out, provided meager if any alternative. Many children were sent to sit in the principal's office, with miscreants who had broken school rules. Many were put out in the hall and held up to open ridicule by the teacher and fellow students.

The stridency of local school district administrators towards parents who have concerns about the Michigan Model or any other curriculum needs to be dealt with. At best, many administrators have exercised extreme arrogance in their dealings with parents about the Michigan Model.

There needs to be a strong statement that parents are the number one decision-makers for their children. It's a foundational principle that schools need to respect.

Recommendation — Parents should be required to choose Michigan Model and non-directive affective education

We recommend that balance be restored to the parent/school relationship by making all health education classes, covering all phases of mental and physical health, a choice offered to parents. Parents should have to request them for their children.

Legislation should be passed which would require a parental "opt-in" for such course offerings.

5. FINDING — MANY PARENTS DO NOT RECEIVE PROPER NOTIFICATION THEIR CHILDREN ARE TAKING SEX EDUCATION

When children are going to be taught about one of the most intimate and sensitive areas of life, parents NEED to know the who, what, when, where, how and why. And they need to know it in a timely manner. They also need to know they have a right to examine the curriculum to be used, along with supporting audio-visual materials.

Recommendation — Statutory guarantees for family life/non-directive affective education notification

We recommend legislation to clearly define in statute a notification process that is step-by-step specific. The process, as outlined, should guarantee that parents will be informed in a timely, complete and straightforward manner that their children will be taught reproductive health. It should also clearly state the rights of the parents to opt their children out of this instruction. Penalties for school officials who violate this process should be included in the legislation.

6. FINDING — PARENTS ARE WITHOUT REPRESENTATION AT LOCAL SCHOOL LEVEL

We observed through the testimony of many school board members and school administrators that the local school board is no longer the parent's/taxpayer's liaison to public education on the local level. Many well-intentioned citizens serve on these boards. But, in too many instances, they only know what school administrators let them know. In reality, the local school board has come to represent the school administration and not parents and families.

Recommendation — Create office of legislative ombudsman for education

7. FINDING — INTEGRITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN MICHIGAN HAS BEEN COMPROMISED

Because the Model is funded with federal Drug Free Schools monies, for the most part, the federal government requires that a high percentage of the curriculum should be drug education. This has led state education

officials to really stretch on how they interpret drug education. How far do you go? Are they being dishonest?

Each time these charges are made and go unanswered, confidence in public education goes down one more step.

Recommendation — Create the position of Inspector General for Education within the Governor's office

8. FINDING — BECAUSE OF MIXED MESSAGES ABOUT PRE-MARITAL SEX, MICHIGAN MODEL LESSENS RESULT IN INCREASED ADOLESCENT SEXUAL PROMISCUITY

Michigan Model teachers tell their students out of one side of their mouth that they should abstain from pre-marital sexual intercourse, and out of the other they tell students how to be safe if they decide to have sex. It's a mixed message that rings loud and clear through the ears of teenagers whose hormones are moving at breakneck speed. With no clear direction from school and many times little from home, the result has been staggering.

Children are wandering in and out of sexual relationships, viewing sexuality as something portrayed on television or on MTV in tight blue jeans. They are told all the plumbing and mechanics of sex, without being given a full view of human sexuality. We were dismayed to learn that our children were being taught in the Michigan Model that sex is our sexual organs and what we do or don't do with them.

That has been the official state policy for the past decade. It's not working. Teen pregnancies are still epidemic. The social and economic costs of this educational philosophy and method of teaching are bankrupting the state both morally and financially. Through this policy the state has endorsed by default teenage single-motherhood and abortion.

Contrary to what a parade of health educators who testified at our hearings stated or said, we feel that teens are looking for ways to say no to pressures to have sex. Abstinence for non-marital relationships has been the standard for our society and for Western civilization. The sexual development theories of Alfred Kinsey, notwithstanding, is no reason to change that standard now.

Michigan's teenagers have been victimized by our slanted and one-sided sex education teaching. We teach them the physical side of sexual relationships, including how to put a condom on your boyfriend, but we don't teach the emotional side of sexuality. There needs to be both for a student to find and exercise their sexuality.

Recommendation — Abstinence from pre-marital sexual activity should be the basis of sex education in our public schools

We recommend legislation where state law mandates that abstinence from pre-marital sexual activity should be the basis for sex education. Its long range goal should be to enable each individual to progressively develop responsible behavior, positive self-esteem, and respect for others as he/she makes decisions involving the use of his/her sexual freedom.

9. FINDING — MICHIGAN'S EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE IS NOT SENSITIVE TO NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The question came to the surface at every hearing site we were at, from Sault Ste. Marie to Three Rivers. "Have we creat-

ed an educational bureaucracy that is out of control, that is one-sided and slanted in favor of the educational elite that runs it?" The Michigan Department of Education is manned by an extensive layer of mid-level bureaucrats whose only role seems to be self-perpetuation. Questions need to be raised about their role and whether money for their salaries could be used more effectively in the classroom at the local level.

Recommendation — Governor appoint task force to examine educational structure and administration in Michigan

11. FINDING — DISCUSSION OF FAMILY NEEDS ABSENT FROM POLICY DISCUSSIONS

We found many professional health educators viewed the child as a solitary entity. The child needs to be viewed, first and foremost, as a member of a family. And as state government, we need to do everything we can to support families and their needs.

Recommendation — Governor and Legislature should appoint individual family policy advisors

12. FINDING — MICHIGAN DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZE CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT CONCERNED PARENTS

This item is perhaps one of the more troublesome things we learned in our hearings, from letters we received and persons we talked to. Top officials from the Departments of Education and Public Health used taxpayer funds to hold training sessions around the state for local school officials on how to discredit Michigan Model opponents.

We have the dates, times, places, the names of those who participated and what they were told. The strategy of the Michigan Model Steering Committee was simple. Any parent or teacher who got in the way of implementing the Michigan Model at a local school district was to be labeled as a right wing, fundamentalist Christian fanatic. The education establishment painted a picture of that person that would qualify as slander in any court of law. The opposition was to be squashed.

Our committee finds this behavior a shameful spectacle that should be dealt with in a swift and effective manner. Government should never become a force for this kind of educational tyranny.

Recommendation — Michigan Attorney General and U.S. Justice Department should investigate to determine if parental civil rights were violated

We recommend that the Attorney General and the U.S. Justice Department investigate these actions. We also invite those parents who were singled out by name to take this issue to the courts for legal remedy to their damaged reputations. These public officials need to be held accountable for their actions. They violated the people's trust. There should be some restitution for those who were damaged by the state. We also request investigation by the Michigan Attorney General to determine if the Michigan Model Steering Committee and Michigan Model coordinators violated state law with its campaign to discredit parents concerned about the Michigan Model.

13. FINDING — MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION APPEARS TO HAVE OBTAINED FEDERAL DRUG

See Michigan Model, page 4

FREE SCHOOLS FUNDS UNDER FALSE PRETENSES

The question lingers from our hearings about whether the Michigan Department of Education used federal Drug Free Schools funds under false pretenses. Most of the costs for the Michigan Model were paid from these funds. When awarding these monies to the state, the federal government sets down specific requirements on how it is to be used. We are concerned that state education officials misrepresented the Michigan Model as something it is not, a primary substance abuse program.

Is the Michigan Model a real substance abuse prevention curriculum? We feel the answer is in doubt. We point to several misrepresentations by the Michigan Department of Education. The MDE claims more than 125 lessons in grades 5-8 are substance abuse related, while the agency's own researcher, Jean Shope, says there are less than 30. Even a past director of the state's Office of Substance Abuse Services emphasizes that the Michigan Model doesn't pretend to be mainly a substance abuse curriculum.

Recommendation — Inspector General for U.S. Department of Education should investigate to determine if laws were broken

14. FINDING — SERIOUS QUESTIONS EXIST ABOUT THE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE MICHIGAN MODEL

Resembling the tangled web of finances of a Columbian drug lord, the Michigan Model's financial operation invites suspicion. The money comes from many different sources and is spent in a variety of ways, through different layers of administration. It uses federal funds, state funds, local funds and private funds. The money is parceled to Intermediate School Districts, consortiums, Michigan Model coordinators, vendors and others.

Recommendation — State Auditor General should perform full audit of Michigan Model program

15. FINDING — PARENTS ARE BEING DENIED RIGHTS TO MAKE CHOICES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Many parents around the state were told either explicitly or implicitly that they had no rights in deciding what their children were being taught. In the Detroit area, a parent was threatened with being turned into the Department of Social Services if she took her children out of Michigan Model classes. Our files are filled with letters where school administrators told parents they could opt their child out of sex ed, but nothing else. Usually, the letters were very cutting and with no recognition of the parent's role in the raising of his or her children.

Recommendation — Legislature should pass a parent's bill of rights
16. FINDING — "CALM-BREATHING" COULD BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

Parents who expressed concerns about the breathing techniques used in the Michigan Model for relaxation and stress reduction were subjected to subtle ridicule from the educational establishment, especially those involved in health education. When queried about what is calm breathing and the quieting reflex, the educational establishment would express incredulity that "anybody could think three deep breaths would pose any danger to a student."

But what they failed to address in their response to parental concerns was that many of the breathing exercises, indeed, resemble the mystical elements of Eastern

religions. There is not only a breach of the church and state separation, but there is a lack of acknowledgement that an altered state of consciousness can be induced through breathing. Used by an inexperienced teacher, such exercises can produce hypnotic states in some children.

Recommendation — Warning should be given to parents and research should be done about potential harmful effects
17. FINDING — MANY IN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY TREAT PARENTS WITH ARROGANCE AND MISTRUST

There is a pervasive attitude among many administrators and health educators that they know best what children need. They communicate to parents that they are the professionals and the parents are the unschooled amateurs. This is an attitude which must be squashed.

The potential for damage that this kind of attitude can wreak on the neighborhood school is devastating. This anti-family attitude builds a wall of separation between the school and parents. Local school administrators and their health education personnel should be reaffirming families and parents in the job they have to do. Instead, they perpetuate an attitude that parents should get government issued licenses before they can become parents.

Recommendation — Teacher unions should begin massive public relations effort to bring parent/teacher relationship back into balance

18. FINDING — SCHOOLS ARE TRYING TO BE SURROGATE PARENTS AND ARE DOING A POOR JOB OF IT

We respond as one parent so aptly put it: "Ideology is a cold parent and an unacceptable substitute for love." Schools are not equipped to be parents. They are poor substitutes for the nurturing that occurs in the family unit. It's better to have a parent who nurtures out of love than one who nurtures because of pay.

Recommendation — Make state law more family-friendly

19. FINDING — THE CORE PROBLEM FACING MICHIGAN SCHOOLS IS A MORAL ONE. ALL OTHER PROBLEMS DERIVE FROM IT

Lack of academic achievement in Michigan schools cannot be explained solely by a lack of dollars. Our schools are soul sick. Our schools are trying to educate our children and young adults with only the most superficial and questionable attempts to develop their characters and their moral virtues. That is the core problem facing our schools.

Our students are not learning self-discipline and respect for others through the Michigan Model. As long as this continues, they will continue to exploit each other sexually.

Recommendation — Character education in public schools should be encouraged through state statute

20. FINDING — EFFORT TO CURB TEEN PREGNANCIES AND TEEN ABORTIONS HINDERED BY MICHIGAN MODEL LESSONS

With the Michigan Model, the state of Michigan has taken out the white flag and surrendered to this devastating societal problem. At each hearing site, it became obvious that the state of Michigan is teaching our kids it's okay to get pregnant. Of course, the health educators would deny it. They would retort, they support abstinence, but if children are "going to do it" then they should have all the right information to make the correct decisions. Mixed messages lead to the attitude that anything goes.

It's okay for a young girl to get pregnant.

At many of the schools we visited, there were well stocked nurseries for the teen moms and their babies. We have given an institutional okay to such behavior.

We have done nothing to say to teenagers that it is okay to say no to sex. We have done nothing to give such a position the same status as having sex. We are now paying the price with an underclass of teenage mothers and their children. Most of them will be consigned to a life of poverty and struggle.

Recommendation — Teen fathers should be given statutory rape ticket and their parents should be financially responsible

We recommend legislation to make teenage boys responsible for the children they father. The Social Security number of the teen father should be on his baby's birth certificate. If the mother is underage, the teen father should be cited for a new administrative level of statutory rape. If the teen father financially supports the child, then after a period of time then the charge should be erased. If he doesn't, the teen father's parents should be held financially liable for the child's upbringing.

21. FINDING — STATE-APPROVED SEX EDUCATION VIDEO LIST VIOLATED COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Whereas movies were the medium for audio-visual instruction, today it's videotapes. The Michigan Model has kept in step with this trend. It makes use of videotapes throughout the curriculum. The source for these materials has been the Regional Education Media Center (REMC) operated by the Intermediate School District.

A prime example of where community standards were violated came to the surface in our hearing at Three Rivers. Parents raised questions about a teacher's manual for a filmstrip about puberty. Suggested assignments for the fifth grade students included having them write an essay about their personal experiences with masturbation. The Michigan Model coordinator for that area acknowledged this was part of the curriculum despite protestations of the state's top Michigan Model official to the contrary.

Recommendation — Privatize distribution of educational videos

22. FINDING — LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SEX EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARDS EXCLUDE SUBSTANTIVE PARENTAL INPUT

Local school districts around the state are thumbing their noses at the spirit of the state law creating local sex education curriculum advisory boards. The committee found that local school superintendents use these groups to rubberstamp curriculum decisions already made by district administrators.

Recommendation — Revamp state sex ed law to make parents prime decision-makers about sex ed curriculums

23. FINDING — MICHIGAN MODEL NEVER RECEIVED APPROPRIATE EVALUATION TO DETERMINE ITS EFFICACY IN CLASSROOM

Recommendation — Funds should be provided and direction given to provide for a full, independent evaluation of the Michigan Model and its effect

24. FINDING — ADOLESCENT RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR HAS NOT DECREASED DURING THE PERIOD THE MICHIGAN MODEL HAS BEEN TAUGHT

We point to alcohol abuse among youngsters. We point to the violence that this age group experiences among themselves on a daily basis. We point to the high rate of teen pregnancies and abortions. Sexually trans-

mitted diseases among this age group are epidemic. We kept looking for evidence that the Michigan Model was making a difference, but we could find none.

Recommendation — We recommend that the Legislature and the Executive Office work together to fund and design a study to measure the effect of the Michigan Model from the time it was first introduced in the state's classrooms to the present. The people of Michigan have the right to know whether the millions of their tax dollars spent on the Model have been beneficial or harmful to their children.

25. FINDING — SCHOOL-PARENT COMMUNICATION IS IN A STATE OF SERIOUS DISREPAIR.

In many cases, we observed schools telling parents that their children were taking the Michigan Model was not even an afterthought. Many parents discovered that their children were receiving lessons on mental health, using non-traditional approaches after the fact. Some discovered it through a stray worksheet brought home in a book bag.

Recommendation

The time has come for administrators to make apologies to parents where needed. New ways have to be developed to restore parents to their rightful position in the family-parent-student-school matrix. We feel strongly that parents are the number one decision-makers for their children and public school employees, at whatever level, should be sensitive to this.

26. FINDING — BOUNDARIES BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE WERE VIOLATED WITH NEW AGE TEACHINGS

It was a common refrain in much of the testimony we heard around the state. A large number of parents felt that many of the Michigan Model basics contained New Age teachings. At first blush, it's really hard to see how one can see Eastern mysticism, the occult or the New Age in any of the lessons in the curriculum.

By listening to hundreds of parents and reading their letters, the committee started to see a troubling pattern emerge. The New Age is there. It's in the Michigan Model. It's there under the guise of something else. Relaxation techniques, minivacation, calm-breathing, problem-solving, values clarification, yoga and meditation.

What does this mean? It means that our so-called state-sponsored, state-supported curriculum that purports to be value free, actually promotes religious practices. And it promotes religious practices subscribed to by a minority of people in this state and country.

Recommendation — Public schools should be vigilant and held accountable, so they do not endorse the religious teachings or practices of any religion
27. FINDING — PROCESS FOR AND FORMAT OF MICHIGAN MODEL REVISIONS INVITES SUSPICION

Michigan Model advocates — usually those who teach it, those who administer it and those who have a financial interest in it — brag about how the Michigan Model is a fluid curriculum, it can change as needs and circumstances warrant.

First, those changes are made by a select group of health educators, behind closed doors, without the benefit of any obvious parental input. Because the curriculum is loose-leaf, there's never any guarantee the actual changes reach the local level.

Recommendation — Michigan Model revisions should be made in full public view, with full public participation and distributed in hardbound format