



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 23, NO. 4, SECTION 1

BOX 618, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002

NOVEMBER, 1989

The Anti-Parent Policies of the NEA

The 1989 resolutions passed by the National Education Association (NEA) provide new proof of the radical policies of this largest and most powerful teachers' union. They were approved in July in Washington, D.C. by the nearly 9,000 delegates who attended the NEA's annual convention.

The NEA is adamantly opposed to the concept that parents should have the right to choose the public school to which they send their children. The NEA opposes all "such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans."

Of course, the NEA opposes all federal and state legislation to provide tuition tax credits or vouchers usable in private schools. The NEA calls such choice options "deleterious" and "detrimental" and even wants federal legislation to prohibit such plans.

The NEA is so vindictive about private schools that it even opposes the renting or selling of closed public school buildings to any private schools. The NEA is frank about its reason: it wants to keep out of the community any institution "in direct competition with public schools."

The NEA obviously hates and feels threatened by homeschoolers, stating in a resolution that "homeschooling programs cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience." The NEA wants homeschooling to be permitted only by "persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency" and who use "a curriculum approved by the state department of education."

The NEA wants to get children into the public schools at an earlier and earlier age. The NEA wants the Federal Government to fund and mandate early childhood programs in the public schools (that means 3-and-4-year-olds) which would "culminate in mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance."

The NEA wants the public schools to provide every pupil with health, social and psychological services on a "direct and confidential" basis (which means without parental consent). This should include, according to the NEA resolutions, "comprehensive, school-based, community-funded student health care clinics" which provide diagnosis, treatment, birth-control methods, and instruction in their use. The NEA wants the schools to "assume an advocacy role" for students in working for these objectives. The NEA wants before and after school programs in order to keep the children in school for a very long day.

The NEA says that "guidance and counseling services should be integrated into the entire education system, beginning at the prekindergarten level." This counseling, according to NEA resolutions, specifically should include homosexual counseling.

The NEA wants the public schools to teach sex courses to every child, including birth control, "diversity of sexual orientation," and incest. Emphasizing that this should be done with or without parental consent at every age, the NEA asserts that "it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality."

The NEA resolutions favor loading up the public school curriculum with all sorts of psychological courses to replace academic ones. Specifically, the NEA wants public school students to be given courses on stress, suicide, conflict, environmental issues, and nuclear war.

The NEA is a big supporter of mandating global education, now called "multicultural/global education." The NEA is candid in explaining that the purpose of this global ed is to impose on students the particular ideology of America's "interdependency" with other nations and the scarcity of the world's natural resources.

The NEA resolutions demand that school personnel never be dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, or retired because of "sex or sexual orientation." The NEA also urges "affirmative action plans and procedures that will encourage active recruitment and employment of women, minorities, and men in underrepresented education categories."

The NEA vigorously opposes the testing of school personnel for drugs, alcohol or AIDS. The NEA demands that school personnel with AIDS "shall not be fired, nonrenewed, suspended, transferred, or subjected to any other adverse employment action."

The NEA wants socialized medicine. The NEA calls for "a national health care insurance plan supported and funded by the U.S. Congress."

The NEA endorses the "use of nonsexist language by all schools." That means teachers and students must use such clumsy perversions of the English language as he/she and chairperson.

If you do not share these NEA views, then you had better look into what is being taught in your local school because the union that runs the public schools is teaching its values to your children.

Minnesota Privacy-Invasive Questionnaire

A questionnaire administered this year to thousands of Minnesota public school students aroused opposition from parents who found it objectionable because it was privacy-invasive and assumed that illegal drug use and promiscuity are normal teenage behavior. An even more serious objection is that it encouraged children to inform on their parents. The 149-question survey was given to nearly all 6th, 9th and 12th grade Minnesota pupils.

Here are the questions that induced children to inform on their parents' illegal or socially unacceptable behavior. "Has drinking by any family member repeatedly caused family, health, job or legal problems? If yes, who? (Mark all that apply.) Parent who lives with me, Parent who doesn't live with me, Brother or sister, Other relative, Other person who lives with me."

Another question read, "Has drug use by any family member repeatedly caused family, health, job or legal problems? If yes, who? (Mark all that apply.) Parent who lives with me, Parent who doesn't live with me, Brother or sister, Other relative, Other person who lives with me."

Those administering the questionnaire defended it by saying that the survey is anonymous and that no one will know how any particular child answers the questions. However, the questionnaire started out by asking the child's sex, grade, age, race, height and weight, which, taken together, would enable a teacher to identify any child in her class. Parents were told that participation in the survey was voluntary, but prior parental consent was not asked, as federal law (specifically, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment) requires for federally-funded materials which ask privacy-invasive questions.

Those involved in this survey asserted that it was made necessary by the provisions of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, which requires the schools to describe the extent of drug and alcohol use in the school in order to receive funding for drug education, and also to track what the school is doing in order to continue to receive the funding. The law, however, says nothing about using a privacy-invasive questionnaire, and the survey asked many questions that have nothing to do with drugs.

District Community Education Director Sharon Paulsen acknowledged to the *Winona Post* that the survey went well beyond questions related to chemical abuse, but she said that the district "could make good use of this additional information in developing and monitoring family life and other curricula."

Some of the privacy-invasive questions inquired about the child's religion. For example, question 20 asked, "How often do you attend religious services?" The multiple-choice answers were "Never, Once or twice a month, Rarely, About once a week or more."

A follow-up question 21 asked, "How important is religion in your life?" The child could answer "Not important, A little important, Pretty important, [or] Very important."

Then there were the depressing questions, the mere pondering of which would be traumatic for some children.

Question 33 gave the child the statement, "I feel I do not have much to be proud of," and asks him to respond with "Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Mostly Agree, [or] Agree." The child was told to say whether he agrees or disagrees with: "Sometimes I think that I am no good; I feel that my life is not very useful; Have you felt so discouraged or hopeless that you wondered if anything was worthwhile?" One of the multiple-choice responses was, "Extremely so, to the point that I have just about given up."

After that series of downers, then the poor child was asked, "Have you ever tried to kill yourself?" Another question was, "During the last 12 months, how often have you run away from home?" The answers were: "Never, Once or twice, 3 to 5 times, 6 to 10 times, More than 10 times."

Then came the many questions which conveyed the notion that the majority of teenagers are using illegal drugs and are sexually promiscuous. "If you use marijuana, how old were you when you started? If you use any other drug, how old were you when you started? How often do you get drunk?"

Finally came the Peeping Tom sex questions. "Have you ever had sexual intercourse (gone all the way)? If you have sexual intercourse, how often do you and/or your partner use any birth control method? Have you been pregnant?"

Survey Stirs Up Storm in Chapel Hill

Another impertinent, obnoxious, privacy-invasive questionnaire, devised by so-called education "experts" in a state university and administered to a captive audience in the public school classroom by personnel who apparently think they can experiment on children like guinea pigs, was given in May to some 500 pupils in the Carrboro and Estes Hill elementary schools in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The survey contains more than 200 questions about feelings, health, sex, friends, and family.

Public school pupils were asked to respond to such downers as "I am sure that terrible things will happen to me," "I want to kill myself," "I am sad all the time," "Nothing is fun at all," "I feel like crying everyday," "I hate myself," "I look ugly," "I do not have any friends," and "Nobody really loves me."

Another section asked the children to reveal "Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend now?" and "Do you have a best friend now?" and to write in his or her names. Then the child was asked 47 questions about the child's relationship with the named friends, including whether he/she hits the other, says mean things, is dependable, or shares secrets.

In another section, the pupils were given a list of all their classmates and required to check the three "you like the most" and the three "you like least." Then the child was told to check those who do "weird or strange things" and those who "think they are better than other kids." The student had to identify "all the kids you hang out with in school."

In the next section, the child had to answer 22 questions on how his parents react to good or bad grades on his report card. 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." These statements included, "I became pregnant or got someone pregnant," "A member of my family attempted suicide," "My

parents divorced," "One of my parents remarried," 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?", "Do you have body hair yet?", "Have you begun to menstruate?", and "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?"

A dozen questions inquired into private family matters that are none of the school's business such as "Who lives in your house?" and "How much do you think your parents like their work?". Other questions probed into the pupil's opinions such as "What would you like to change about your house?" and "What would you like to change about your neighborhood?"

The pupils 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." So, what would you do if you were an unsuspecting, obedient nine or ten-year-old? Of course, you'd do what the teacher indicated she wanted you to do.

The pupils were told that their answers would all be put on computer with ID numbers instead of their names. "After the information is in the computer, all these sheets of paper will be destroyed." That sounds like a dishonest attempt to mislead children into believing that no one would have access to their answers.

This survey was designed by Dr. Janice Kupersmidt, an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina. It was administered by a team of researchers from the University after excluding regular teachers from the classroom.

When a controversy erupted about the survey, the schools at first refused to release a copy. 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 and the newspaper printed it in full.

Privacy Rights Should Be Respected

One of the largest school districts in the nation adopted a "Rights of Privacy Policy" in July 1989 which should be a model for all 15,500 school districts across the country. It was unanimously passed by the Montgomery County Board of Education, which has jurisdiction over 100,000 Maryland pupils in suburban Washington, D.C.

The crux of the new policy is: "Student privacy interests shall be respected. Therefore, to preserve legitimate expectations of privacy in the student's personal and home life, no student shall be required to reveal, as part of the instructional program, matters relating to his/her personal life, those of his/her family, or his/her status within the family."

Do you wonder why any school would want to question pupils about personal or family matters that are none of the school's business? Unfortunately, such interrogations have become commonplace in public schools, and the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents filed repeated complaints about the privacy-invading and negative questionnaires.

One typical questionnaire to which Montgomery County parents had objected included such questions as, "How do other people see you? What sort of person are you? Are you shy? Why are you always timid? Why don't you like to go to church? Why are you an outcast? A loner? What do your parents think of you?"

Another offensive survey also required pupils to complete such sentences as: "Most parents are _____. I get embarrassed when _____. If I were an animal I would want to be _____." The children were also told to "write a letter describing the most embarrassing situation happening to them at school."

The new Montgomery County policy includes specific guidelines to assist the school in observing the new policy, such as, "Classroom discussion should ordinarily be 'external' in focus."

Why in the world would such an admonition be needed? Because classroom curricula, over the last 15 years, have shifted from the external to the internal, from the objective to the subjective, away from teaching subject content and skills, and toward probing students' feelings, values and attitudes. That's why today's public school pupils learn so much about sex and emotions, but can't read, spell, add or subtract, or find the United States on a map of the world.

So, the guidelines state that classroom instruction must "never require students to reveal family occurrences or personal habits, relationships, preferences, traits, decisions, or problems. Nor will students be called upon to make comparisons with themselves or their families."

The new Montgomery County policy tells teachers to review "all instructional materials and activities for obvious invasions of privacy and for more subtle, potential sources of embarrassment or psychological harm." The teacher is instructed to manifest "psychological sensitivity" and warned that "the greater the degree of personal and/or affective involvement called for by the instructional objectives, the greater the need for respecting the individual's privacy."

If teachers adhere to these guidelines, there should ordinarily be no need for students to be offered alternative activities. Nevertheless, "if, for any reason, a student's parent requests that his/her child not participate in a particular activity, the teacher should provide an alternative and equally attractive activity in a manner which does not call attention to the student's religion, values, or physical condition."

Since the teacher is an authority figure and the child is a minor and a captive audience, the guidelines caution that extra care must be exercised. "The relationship between teachers and students is such that even asking a student to fill out a questionnaire voluntarily may be seen as coercive."

Therefore, the teachers are instructed that "prying into past experiences, feelings, viewpoints, or home life which might create anxiety must be avoided. It is not a question of merely respecting the student and his/her family; teachers are prohibited from invading the privacy of students and their families."

The guidelines conclude with this specific instruction: "The use of survival games or other decision-making exercises in which participants are presented with hypothetical crises and asked to decide which members of a group should survive and which should perish are prohibited."

School administrators are generally unfriendly to any recognition of pupil and parental rights, and the Montgomery County School Board adopted the new policy over the objections of the superintendent. In the continuing battle for parental rights in public school education, the victory of the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents is highly significant.

The Battle for Pupil Privacy Rights

The National Education Association has fought parental rights every step of the way, and national organizations such as the National School Boards Association have tried to pretend that the controversy over classroom assaults on pupils' values and privacy doesn't exist.

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) held a two-day conference in Washington in February 1988 to discuss "censorship" in the public schools and techniques on how to circumvent, stonewall and embarrass parents who object to offensive curricula. A packet was distributed which contained detailed instructions on how school administrators can outmaneuver parents who make complaints, form letters schools can send to parents, and tips on how to line up the support of local liberal groups such as the ACLU and People for the American Way.

The implicit assumption of the "How To Conquer Censorship" conference was that schools have the right to enforce any teaching, activities or materials on the children, and that anybody who objects is by definition engaging in "censorship" and is probably a "religious and political extremist." Such hostility to parents is unfortunately widespread, but a few straws in the wind indicate that some local school personnel are beginning to understand that they have an obligation to be sensitive to pupil privacy and parental rights.

The Lyon County School Board in Nevada adopted a policy in 1988 recognizing that "the rights of pupils shall be protected." The new pupil protection policy states that all instructional materials, including teachers' manuals, films and questionnaires, "shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the children."

The policy goes on to state that "the prior written consent of the parent" must be obtained before students respond to personal questions about such matters as political attitudes, psychological problems that are potentially embarrassing, sex behavior and attitudes, self-incriminating behavior, or critical appraisals of their family members.

The impetus for the Nevada action was the type of controversy which, unfortunately, has become all too common in communities across the country. Parents discovered that two privacy-invading surveys had been inflicted on school-children.

The first, given in January 1987 to qualify for a federal school breakfast program, asked such questions as: "Have you ever wished you could die to escape problems?"; "Do you go to a sitter after school each day?"; "Have you ever thought about killing yourself?"; "Do you usually fix your own dinner without help?"; "Do you have clean clothes to wear each day?"; and "Do you usually shower or bathe daily?"

The other survey was given in May 1988 to qualify for federal drug education funds. It had 50 multiple-choice questions on drug use, including frequency, first use, source, adults in student's home using them, number of adults student knows who use drugs, and personal attitudes about rightness of use. The final questions instructed children to respond affirmatively or negatively to such statements as: "I believe law enforcement and our communities should tolerate (allow) drinking parties for student events such as graduations" and "I would attend a drug and alcohol free graduation party."

Another example is the White Oak Intermediate School in

Silver Spring, Maryland, which distributed to 7th and 8th grade pupils a new regulation advising pupils of their privacy rights and clearly explaining how they can exercise those rights. The regulation even tells pupils to "share this with your parents."

The regulation advises students that they may decline to answer teachers' questions and may opt for alternative assignments when necessary to preserve pupil privacy.

The regulation tells pupils that, "if the teacher gives me a writing assignment or asks me an oral question to which I would be inclined to respond in a personal nature, I have the right to ask for an alternative assignment. . . . Privacy applies to any personal experience or truth involving self or family that may cause hurt, stress, or embarrassment for me."

Continuing, the regulation states that, "where novels are concerned, if I or a family member has a major objection to a book being taught, I understand that I may bring in a note from my parent explaining the reasons for this objection (values oriented) and that I may ask for an alternate book to be studied with equal work load provided."

Public schools could greatly improve their public relations by adopting similar pupil privacy protection policies modeled on the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment passed by Congress in 1978 and for which regulations were adopted in 1984. The federal law, of course, applies only to materials using federal funds. State laws and/or local school board policies are needed to ensure the same privacy rights for pupils when schools use non-federal funds or sources. We hope that the three local pupil privacy policies described above are the beginning of a national trend.

Phyllis Schlafly, who writes and speaks frequently on education, edited the hundreds of testimonies given at the 1984 U.S. Department of Education hearings on the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. *Child Abuse in the Classroom*, the book that resulted (\$4.95), is the best explanation of the changes in public school goals from the 3 R's to group therapy. A 30-minute video under the same title (\$21.95) is available to help local communities become aware of these changes. She is the president of Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund which publishes the *Education Reporter*, a monthly newspaper with current news on these same subjects (\$25/year).

Sworn Statement of Ownership

The Phyllis Schlafly Report is published monthly at Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Publisher: Phyllis Schlafly, Fairmount, Alton, Illinois 62002.
Editor: Same. Owner: Eagle Trust Fund. Known bond-holders, mortgagees, or other security holders, none.

Information on circulation not required as no advertising is carried.

The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by The Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002. Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois. Postmaster: Address Corrections should be sent to the Phyllis Schlafly Report, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Subscription Price: \$15 per year. Extra copies available: 50 cents each; 4 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.