

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 1

January 1997

Reviews Are Back

Education Review Office Minister Brian Donnelly has announced that reviews of home schoolers will resume.

In an exclusive interview with Mr Donnelly on Monday 13 January 1997, Craig Smith, Editor of *TEACH Bulletin*, learned that the re-introduction of home schooling reviews was a NZ First party policy that survived the Coalition talks forming our present Government.

Although the many details of the re-introduction were yet to be worked out, Mr Donnelly said that they will be aiming to establish a more efficient review system for home schoolers than existed before. The ERO would ensure that a whole family was reviewed at once, rather than just the one child whose exemption anniversary had come up. And the old policy ("it was daft") of not commenting or giving advice, not adhered to much anyway, would hopefully be replaced with one where home schoolers could freely ask -- and receive -- advice and assistance from the visiting Review Officers.

Mr Donnelly said the Reviews would be done annually, "as they were back in 1990." (Well, I'm pretty sure that will be adjusted. -- Ed.) But then Mr Donnelly indicated that families who establish a good reputation with the MOE and the ERO may require a far less extensive Review in subsequent

years...perhaps a simple phone call will suffice.

In a letter to Craig Smith dated 27 July 1994, from the then Minister of Education Lockwood Smith explaining why the Reviews were stopped, Dr Smith wrote, "*The situation is that I simply could not justify the expense of ERO reviewers travelling thousands of kilometres to review the education of individual students, whose parents have made the choice to withdraw their children from the mainstream education system.*"

"In the time that ERO has been reviewing homeschooling, (from 1989 until 1994 -- Ed.) there have only been two occasions when it has recommended the revoking of an exemption certificate."

When asked what exactly was to be reviewed, Mr Donnelly said that the Review Officers would be looking at the child and the environment, to ensure their right to an education is being protected, and that they are in a safe and secure environment. In fact, he said he couldn't see how a review could take place in any other locality than in the home, as that was the equivalent to the classrooms the Education Review Officers review in schools. They would want to see the child's learning "environment and conditions". Mr Donnelly used to be a Review Officer and said that he thought the home schoolers he

reviewed were getting as good an education or better than their peers in the schools.

He couldn't say whether the annual written reports we've been asked to do would continue or not, nor whether there would be a standard set of criteria or check-list to guide ERO Officers in their reviews. He did point out that because the Education Act is quite loose in terms of what kind of education is to be provided, the reviews were to make parents accountable. They need to be providing the basics. When asked what "the basics" included, Mr Donnelly replied that Number One was the 3Rs, and that the teaching be regular, not *ad hoc*, but systematic. The Number Two basic was security for the child...presumably security in the on-going provision of education.

INTERESTED IN A CAREER IN COMPUTERS?

17-19 years old?

Christian, homeschooling businessman seeks an apprentice to learn all aspects of his computer software development company. Previous computer programming experience is not required, however a keen willingness to learn is absolutely necessary. The ability to communicate clearly, together with a neat appearance is also essential.

If you are interested in this position, please write to Rivendell Computing, 3029 Valley Road, Raetihi.

TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of TEACH Publications, and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists, and other items of general interest to home educators. TEACH Bulletin is available for a donation of \$16 per year for 11 issues (none in December), or by becoming a member of TEACH for a minimum donation of \$30. For a list of benefits of joining TEACH and the other services provided, write to:

The Editor
Craig S. Smith
4 Tawa St.
Palmerston North 5301
New Zealand
Fax: (06) 357-4399

Annual Reports Opened a Can of Worms

Michael Drake, Principal of Carey College of Auckland, has written a very probing letter to the MOE challenging the legality of several issues surrounding the MOE's request that home schoolers write an annual self-assessment report on each child being taught at home under an exemption certificate. A point of law that my sources tell me seems well established in NZ, is that whereas private citizens are free to do whatever they like unless the law forbids it, the Public Servant, such as the MOE official asking us to write reviews, can ONLY DO what the law expressly allows them to do.

Mr Drake makes several points. Among them:

1 -- There seems not to be any legal requirement for parents to write reports.

2 -- Once the exemption certificate is given, the Act assumes the MOE is satisfied unless it receives contrary information. Asking for evidence that will "satisfy" the MOE on an annual basis seems to be an illegal misdirection of parents.

3 -- It appears the reports cannot be made a condition of payment or not of the supervisory allowance.

4 -- The criteria listed in the demand for a report are not directly related to the criteria given in the Act, but involve an interpretation based on a non-mandatory philosophy of education.

As of publication date, Mr Drake had not received a reply from the MOE.

Top of the Class Video is a home-based, self paced programme in English and Maths. It is designed to give children 100% understanding of basic concepts. It is based on the new English National Curriculum, covers all the main topics of difficulty and is used by students worldwide. The programme, which is comprised of videos, workbooks, tests, certificates etc is a resource designed to be used in the home to consolidate and enhance work done in the classroom by the teacher or home-schooling parent.

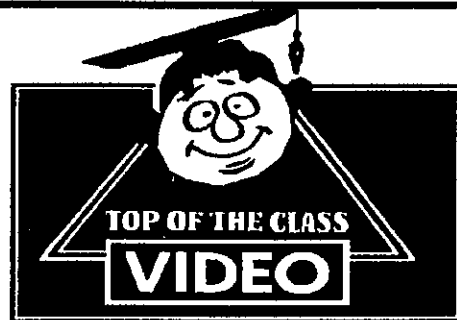
The comprehensive programme caters for children 5-16 years of age, for adults seeking improved literacy and numeracy skills, and for learners of English as a second language. It is equally suitable for remedial, consolidation and extension purposes. Its greatest attribute is its fun approach to learning, with a high emphasis on right brain learning strategies.

Almost two years ago *Top of the Class Video* commenced operation in New Zealand. There are now 100's of families using the programme throughout the country.

This programme puts a lot of fun into Maths and English. Facts formulae and basic rules are reinforced through rhythm, rhyme and music. The impact of video learning is very high.

"We know that when children are entertained and having fun, they learn best," says Lynette Trumper, ex primary and intermediate teacher for more than 20 years. Lynette is now distributor for *Top of the Class Video* in the Rotorua, Taupo, and Waikato areas. She has a team of Educational Consultants with teaching background who are able to assist families get their children started on the programme.

For further information contact Lynette on 07 3455735 or Free phone 0800 163 519 to receive a free assessment.



TOP OF THE CLASS VIDEO

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for FREE IN-HOME ASSESSMENT

Second Annual TEACH National Home Educators' Leadership Conference

Friday 28 February and Saturday 1 March 1997, Island Bay, Wellington

This is a live-in conference for home schoolers wanting to:

- *begin a local support group
- *improve the one they already belong to
- *network with others nation-wide
- *learn about and possibly co-ordinate political lobbying objectives

The operating philosophy behind the conference is to encourage and strengthen individual and local support group independence and responsibility. It is acknowledged that we come from a vast variety of backgrounds and traditions and have an equally varied range of educational, social and political objectives. We may not agree at points with each other, but we can only gain from discussing issues of common concern.

The venue is Island Bay Presbyterian Church, 88 The Parade, Island Bay, Wellington. We will sleep on the premises to give ourselves maximum talk time! The buildings have rooms for sleeping on the floor, a meeting room, gym, kitchen, showers, etc. The programme is fairly intensive and no provision is made for children. Dependent infants are, of course, welcome.

The programme will be a mix of speakers addressing issues with questions afterwards and open discussions. Topics will include:

- *Starting up a support group
- *Newsletter, starting-out-packs
- *Resource libraries
- *Applying for grants
- *Becoming incorporated
- *Public Relations: dealing with the media, being pro-active, being re-active
- *Phone trees and networking
- *Avoiding burnout: delegating workloads, appointing committees
- *And much more!

Friday evening includes check-in, a light tea, introductions, housekeeping, our first session from 7-10pm & supper. Informal discussions into the night!

Saturday is taken up with morning and afternoon sessions, tea/coffee breaks, lunch, official closing "banquet" & supper. More informal discussions!

Sunday: early breakfast and departure.

The Cost is only \$29.50 per Member live-in, \$35 per non-Member, (including all meals) or \$21 for Member non-live-ins, \$27 per non-Member, (all meals except breakfast), plus a spread or baking or packet of biscuits to help with meals, teas, suppers. (Infants are free.)

Transportation for our northern friends

HOME EDUCATION NZ

Supplying the Accelerated Christian Education
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- * Homeschoolers wanting to use some A.C.E. subjects.
- * Homeschoolers wanting to use the full A.C.E. programme.
- * Supplementary material for school pupils
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The unique characteristics of the
A.C.E. curriculum are:

- * Students work at their own achievement level
 - * Meets the individual needs of the child
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- For over 20 years the A.C.E. curriculum has been successfully used by thousands of students in NZ.

For further information contact:

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Ph 07 843 0440 Fax 843 8585

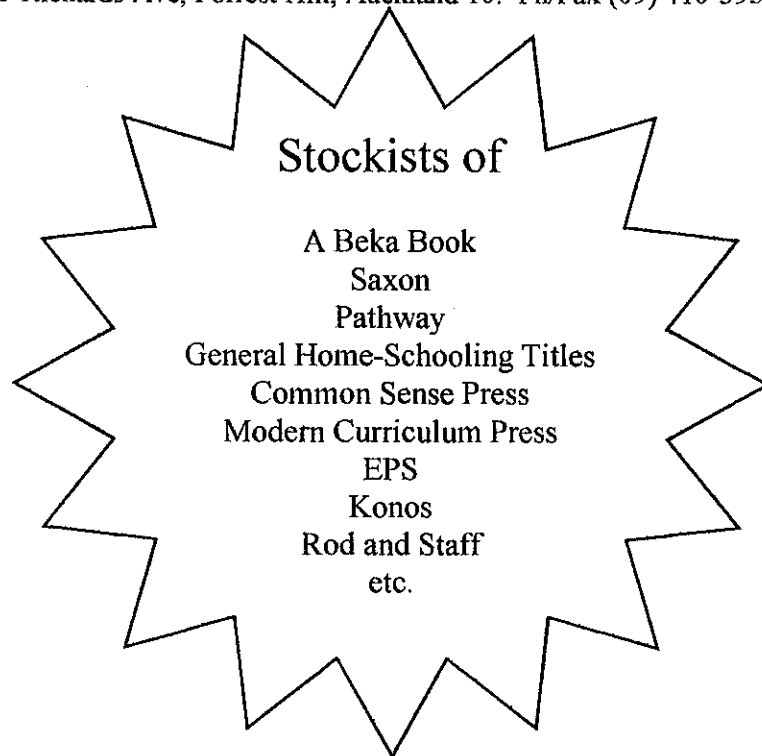
is available in an air-conditioned coach leaving Auckland early Friday morning and uplifting passengers in Hamilton and elsewhere by arrangement. The round-trip fare, INCLUDING THE CONFERENCE FEE is only \$99.50 M, \$115 nM!! (Compare this with a normal fare of about \$90 ONE WAY!) In addition, a similar coach leaves Palmerston North 4pm Friday, the round-trip, INCLUDING THE CONFERENCE FEE, being only \$75.00 M, \$87 nM!! Arrive at Conference refreshed, and then talk the issues over on the way home (coach departs Wellington 8am Sunday). Places on these coaches are limited and available on a first-paid, first-served basis. Full payment is required no later than 14 February. If there are insufficient numbers, a refund of the amount above the standard conference fee (\$29.50 or \$35) will be made.

Shuttle service to/from ferries, trains & airport provided.

What to bring: Spread, baking or packet of biscuits. Notebook, addressbook & pens. Sleeping Bag & pillow. Bedroll mattress or camp stretcher if wanted. Towels. Toiletries. Ideas, expertise and addresses you would like to share with others.

Christian Education Services

55 Richards Ave, Forrest Hill, Auckland 10. Ph/Fax (09) 410-3933



Send \$4.00 for a catalogue — refundable on first order.

Please send a catalogue to the following address.

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Address: _____

I enclose \$4.00

TEACH Registration Form

Please prioritise the conference topics below according to your personal interest level: 1 = high interest. 2 = medium interest. 3 = low interest. 0 = no interest at all.

- Dealing with growth issues: geography, common interest groups, conflicting personalities.
- Starting up a support group.
- Becoming incorporated.
- Applying for grants.
- Public relations & the media.
- Becoming politically active.
- Resource libraries.
- Phone trees & newsletters.
- Avoiding burnout: delegating work & appointing committees.
- Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Make cheques payable to TEACH, and post to:
C & B Smith, 4 Tawa St., Palmerston North 5301.

Tick the appropriate option below:

- I wish to attend as a live-in conferee (\$29.50 Members, \$35 non-Members).....\$ _____
- I wish to attend, but not to live in (\$21 Members, \$27 non-Members).....\$ _____
- I wish to attend & catch Auckland coach near _____ (\$99.50 M, \$115 nM*).....\$ _____
- I wish to attend & catch the Palmerston North coach (\$75.00 M, \$87 nM*).....\$ _____

*Full payment for any of these options must be received no later than 14 February.

Enclosed: Total owing or Deposit of \$ _____

These details will go onto the TEACH database and may be used for legitimate TEACH purposes. This database will not, under any circumstances nor at any time, be sold, given away or shown to any other person or organisation. Ever.

Truancy Officer Says School Should Be Voluntary

(From NZ Herald 23 Nov 1996) Going to school should be voluntary, according to a Northland truancy officer. He believes it is time people were more open-minded about education and wants parents to be given greater choice on how to educate their children.

Mr Clive Fremlin of Dargaville says pupils should not be forced to go to school until they are 16 if they are not happy there. Parents should be able to choose how their children are educated. The Northern Wairoa truancy officer says sending truants back to school is not the answer if they do not want to be there.

"Some of them are very uncomfortable at school, some can't see any value from school," he said last night. "My theory is that there is school and there is education but school doesn't necessarily have the monopoly on education...I'm a fan of schools but schools don't suit all pupils."

As a truancy officer, Mr Fremlin followed up pupils who had not been to school in his area and patrolled the streets. He tried to find out why young people were not at school and tried to help their families. After a year in the job he believed children and their parents should be given options for their education.

"We are now at the point where we need to be a little bit more open-minded about our thoughts on education." Parents should be able to decide what sort of education suits their child

and they should receive the same support as the parents of children who attend school, he says. "The Government says you must go to school till you're 16. Parents don't have a choice."

Making school attendance voluntary would give parents a choice. If some students who had difficulties at school were educated in another environment they could probably perform better, he said.

Mr Fremlin was responding to comments last week by the retiring Dargaville High School principal, Mr Les Sweetman, who suggested that the school leaving age be reduced to 13.

No Compulsory Schooling From Age 13

So says Les Sweetman, retiring Principal of Dargaville High School. (From NZ Herald, 3 December 1996.)

Students who are frequent truants are usually disruptive when they are present. They have no books and are often way behind the rest of the class. It is no wonder many schools do not pursue truants.

A student who has been sexually or physically abused, who has witnessed violence at home, or who is hungry, who has stayed up all night watching pornographic videos or smoking marijuana, will not be ready to learn at school.

Yet these students do arrive at school and disrupt other

students from learning. The increasing number of suspensions and expulsions clearly indicate that schools have little other means to cope with the disruption and bad behaviour of the small but destructively influential group of students.

The point of lowering the leaving age to 13 would be to put the problem back to parents and society.

Schools were originally designed for mass education with set courses, rather like the car production lines of the industrial age, producing a limited number of models. The information age caters to individual choice. Car production lines are smaller, very flexible and many models, colours and optional extras are available.

There are far more alternatives possible that should be given some thought. Why build more and larger schools when the business trend is to smaller and more flexible units? It is predicted that by 2000, 50 per cent of American businesses will be home based. It will therefore be increasingly possible for children to be home schooled. Home schooling could be combined with distance learning and regular schooling. The child's learning could be more tailored to suit its needs.

Trendy Teaching Does Not Work

Britain's Chief Inspector of Schools, Mr Chris Woodhead, is concerned about the big drop in school reading standards in the last 20 years. He said it is due to "A generation of trendy teaching experiments" which don't work. (The Advertiser, 9

May 1996, p. 16.)

He said one in five British children remain illiterate after two years in school, and 80 per cent of 7 year olds are below average reading age. At 11 years, 44 per cent remain as much as four years below average.

UK Education Secretary, Mrs Gillian Shephard, is also concerned. She wants a return to traditional methods of teaching the alphabet first. Mrs Roslyn Phillips of Festival of Light South Australia said, "Australian children, too, have suffered from trendy 'whole word' reading methods. Many S.A. teachers do not know how to teach letter sound blending (traditional phonics). It was abandoned here in the late 1960s."

"The most wanted book in our F.O.L. Resource Centre is Sam Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics," Mrs Phillips said. "Parents using it for ten minutes each day have been able to teach children to read who failed to learn at school. It has brought them great joy!"

(From Focus, May 1996. F.O.L., 8 Twin St., Adelaide, S.A.)

Schools Are There to Socialise the Children

(Sir Neil Waters, former Vice-Chancellor of Massey University and now Chairman of the Board of the NZ Qualifications Authority made the following statement in *LEARN*, the magazine for education and training professionals, November 1996, page 8.)

If you ask what schools are for the obvious answer is to educate kids, but there's an equally important answer. And that is to socialise them, to bring them up to be comfortable in adult society and I think this has always been a feature of the education process, otherwise it wouldn't take so long. You don't need 15 years to educate somebody but you need 15 years to socialise somebody. I think we should use the schools for the socialising role and we should somehow or other try to separate the educational role from that so that as a pupil you were in the class with every other 14-year-old but you might be doing maths with adults and Japanese language with 10-year-olds or whatever. So everybody learnt at an individual pace but you were socialised at a chronological pace.

Behavior-Changing Socialisation = Education

John Dewey, who remained close with Fabian leaders, had his own circle of academic disciples at Columbia University, especially Kilpatrick and Counts, who influenced textbooks and school curricula for decades. Through Dewey's influence, Harold Laski, right before becoming chairman of the British Fabian Society, lectured at Columbia Teacher's College for a semester in 1939 amidst John Dewey's best and brightest disciples.

What did all this mean for American public education? Columbia Teacher's College influenced other graduate schools and colleges of education. Before too long, progressive education -- Dewey's tool for reshaping America -- was a public school

reality all across America.

Dewey knew that to penetrate the existing social order a united front of educators, who embodied the new viewpoint, needed to emerge from graduate schools. These teachers of teachers would then influence future teachers. Among the new views was a national self-criticism that spurned narrow patriotism for a broader globalism. At the same time all traditional values were to be questioned, from parental authority to the validity of established religion.

Rather than equipping the child to handle the demanding academic and moral standards of the old order, with its McGuffey Reader and its implicit moral virtues, Dewey's progressive education considered behavior-shaping as its highest educational priority. "Socialisation" was now defined as a type of learning at least equal to traditional learning. Now the old morals and ethics could be replaced by situational ethics or "values clarification". Reading, writing and arithmetic took a backseat to an array of experimental programs such as "sensitivity training". The virtues of hard work were replaced by new permissive standards that would pass a failing child rather than "harm" him by labeling him a failure. Total equality was the new ideal: It would jealously guard against too much excellence in any child that might show others to be less endowed, thus implying that abilities were unevenly distributed.

(Tal Brooke, *When The World Will Be As One*, p. 103-104.)

Instead of governments supported by -- and limited by -- the people, we now accept people supported by -- and limited by -- the government. Otto Scott

TEACH Bulletin Opinion Poll # 1

What is your view regarding your home schooling accountability to the MOE?

At present the Ministry of Education (MOE) interprets the Education Act to say that they must be "satisfied" that you will be teaching "at least as regularly and well as in a registered school" not only when you first apply for an exemption certificate, but also once each year after that. Home schoolers are presently asked to sign a statutory declaration each year and also write a 1 or 2 page report on the progress of each child being home schooled. The MOE also plans to have the ERO begin to review all home schoolers periodically. The MOE pays out a supervisory allowance to home schoolers because of a policy decision made by the MOE in 1989. There is no statutory obligation for them to pay the allowance. (Many of the statements below are tied to the supervisory allowance because common wisdom tells us that he who pays the piper will eventually call the tune somewhere along the line.)

Please tick the appropriate spaces:

I am happy to submit to whatever accountability procedure the MOE asks of me (tick a, b or c):

- a () as long as I still receive the supervisory allowance.
- b () even if there is no supervisory allowance.
- c () no, I may not be happy to submit to some things the MOE may ask.

I am happy to go along with some kind of accountability procedure:

- a () as long as it is reasonable or not too intrusive.
- b () as long as I still receive the supervisory allowance.
- c () no, I do not think I need to be accountable to the MOE.

I am happy for an ERO officer to review our home education operation:

- a () in my home.
- b () privately in some other venue besides my home.
- c () at a larger venue with several other home schooling families all being reviewed at once.
- d () no, I am not happy about being reviewed by the ERO.

If the supervisory allowance was stopped:

- a () I would continue to home school, without hesitation.
- b () I would have to re-evaluate whether to continue home schooling or not.
- c () I would definitely have to stop home schooling.

My response to writing the 1 to 2 page reports for each of my children being home schooled as requested by the MOE in 1996 is:

- a () that I am quite happy to do it.
- b () that I would be happy to write reports that are not as detailed as what was requested.
- c () that I am not happy about writing reports, but will do it if required.
- d () that I will do all I can not to write a report, perhaps even flatly refuse.

Once the exemption certificate has been approved for one child, that approval should automatically be extended to other children in the same family, provided there are no disabilities involved.

- a () I agree.
- b () I disagree.

Once the exemption certificate has been approved for one child, that approval should automatically be extended to other children in the same family, whether there are any disabilities involved or not.

- a () I agree.
- b () I disagree.

Once the exemption certificate has been approved, there really is no need for any reviews or reports, unless the MOE receives a complaint.

- a () I agree.
- b () I disagree.

The MOE should make the NZ Correspondence School available to home schoolers free of charge.

- a () I agree.
- b () I disagree.

Thanks for filling out this opinion poll. Please post at the earliest convenience to: TEACH, 4 Tawa St., Palmerston North 5301. A summary of the results should appear in next month's TEACH Bulletin.