

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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October/November 2001

Tightened Procedures, Partial Enrolments and Other Things

On Thursday 27 September the *TEACH Bulletin* editor drove down to Wellington and spent a bit less than one hour with officials from the MoE and a little over an hour with Rob Williamson of the ERO.

At the MoE I met with Rosalie Phillips and Dave Burgon. It is planned that Mr Burgon will become the MoE's Home Education (HE) specialist or main liaison officer between the MoE and HEs. I had previously emailed through a number of questions, to some of which only tentative answers could be given.

Can under 16-year-olds attend night classes at local high schools or community education schemes? HEs had often been told they could not by the schools. The MoE couldn't see a problem, saying that payment of fees appeared to be the only difficulty. They wanted to look into this further, so this is only a tentative

answer.

Can under 16-year-olds enrol at Polytechs or Universities? This seemed more straight-forward. There appears to be no reason why they can't, for these institutions do not necessarily require any paper qualifications from a high school but can allow a student to attend classes under a Provisional Enrolment scheme. If the student had been home educated, for example, and had a "transcript" from his or her parents describing the student's level of learning plus a portfolio of the kind of work the student is capable of, this would most likely

be received in lieu of a formal high school qualification. Of course the tertiary student allowance only becomes available to 16-year-olds and above.

The main issue normally is whether the student is capable of doing work at that level. There may be other social or developmental considerations regarding the enrolment of an exempted HEer under 16 in a tertiary institution, but the enrolment officers of the institutions always have a certain amount of discretion to enrol younger people, even quite a bit younger, like at age 11, under exceptional circumstances.

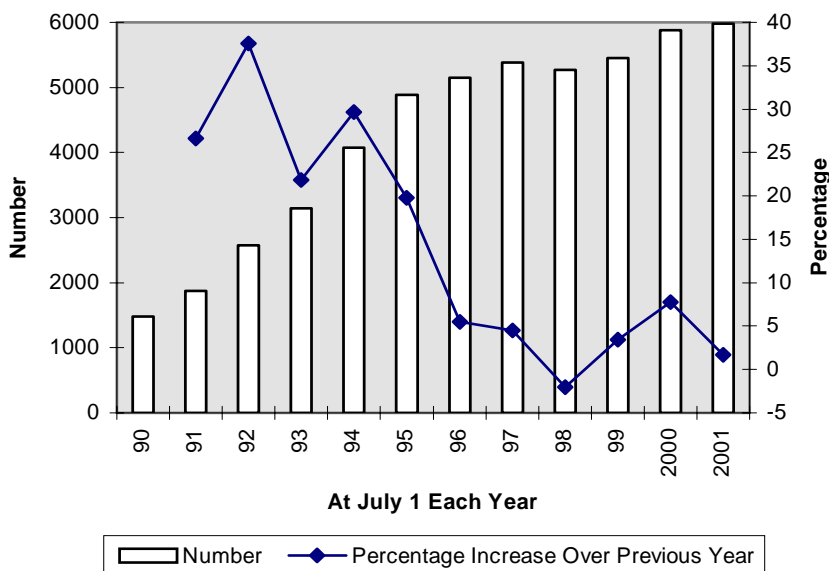
The MoE still operates the policy that, as long as a home educated student has received and still

Home Educators on the Rise

The latest figures of the numbers of Home Educators (HEs), to be officially released by the MoE

shortly, show only a 1.7% increase over the total number last year.

Figure 1: Home Educated Students in NZ



As at 1 July 2001 the MoE Data Management showed there were 5976 HEs in New Zealand, whereas last year at that time there were 5877. It is great to see an increase, but it is very small. However, it is better than the decrease in numbers from 1997 (5384) to 1998 (5274) and the percentage growth of 1.7% from 2000 to 2001 is better than the over all percentage growth of 1.2% between 1997 and 1999 (5451).

Looking at these figures when broken down by age shows a decrease of 63 children (12.6%) being home educated at age 6, the first year of compulsory school

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holds a valid exemption certificate when they turn 16, even though by law the exemption certificate is automatically cancelled on the 16th birthday, the MoE will continue to pay out the homeschooling allowance until the 1st of January following the student's 19th birthday, so long as the student continues to be home educated. This was confirmed while I was there by Marilyn Thompson of the MoE's resource division which makes the payments. The question as to whether these over-16-year-old home educated students can collect the homeschooling allowance while enrolled for only one or two papers with the NZ Correspondence School or a polytech or at university requires a bit more investigation.

I asked Ms Phillips to whom the MoE refers HEs when they ask about local or national HE groups. She said the MoE refers them to the various NZ HE websites of which the MoE is aware.

Persistent rumours indicated the MoE was tightening up on granting exemptions. Ms Phillips replied that the MoE was certainly

tightening up on their own procedures, not at all to deter HEs, but to ensure they are doing their own jobs properly. Was there any thought of re-wording the exemption application, making it more user friendly? The reply was that this had been done about a year ago. It was further commented that if a prospective home educating parent was overly intimidated by a few questions on an application form, does that not cast a shadow of doubt over the parent's ability to take on the entire academic educational responsibility for the child?

Then I asked about partial enrolments wherein a home educated student attends a local school for specialised instruction such as music or chemistry. Such an arrangement is certainly possible, but it is done on a case-by-case basis through negotiation between the HE on the one hand and the school's principal and/or board of trustees on the other. Each school will, of course, react to such an idea differently. Some simply will not consider it. Others are quite welcoming. Because of the devolution of responsibilities occasioned by the passage of the

Tomorrow's Schools package of legislation back in 1989/90, the MoE has no power to make an across-the-board ruling in regard to such arrangements. There is one constant in these situations: once an exempted student is actually enrolled in a registered school, the exemption is automatically cancelled.

The issue of timetables came up. Ms Phillips said that they like to see HEs provide a timetable, for it is very useful as a back up, a reference to which the HE can look to keep themselves on track. It can be a weekly

one, monthly or by the term. Ms Phillips said it certainly had to be flexible so that one could take the teachable moment or focus on important current events that come up. The timetable is then there to help get back on track.

I asked about HEs having access to the new NCEA. They said it would be exactly the same as with access to School Certificate: each student would need to find a school to which they could link, and that school would assess the work on an on-going basis and administer the exams involved. Of course, no school is obliged to link with a home educated individual and can charge fees if it wants. The NZQA is apparently in favour of schools linking with HEs in this way.

With Rob Williamson at the ERO I asked about minimum lead times for requesting reviews. He said the normal was a month to six weeks. He said they will, on the odd occasion, say when there is a last-minute cancellation by a home educator, ring other home educators in the area to see if it is OK with them to have a review at this late hour. Of course, there is never any obligation for HEs to accept the time, date or place suggested by the ERO.

Mr Williamson confirmed that should a HE family's programme change from what they originally wrote in their exemption application, they can explain the changes orally at a future review. He then said that he would be surprised and concerned if HEs did not change from what they originally wrote. He was constantly impressed at the variety and differences in approach among HEs and kindly gave me a copy of the latest ERO report on home schooling.

Mr Williamson said the ERO is not reactive but will follow up a concern passed to them by the MoE. He advises people who ring him to complain about HEs to put the complaint in writing and send it to the MoE.

TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of the Home Education Foundation, 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. Information herein is not to be construed as legal advice. Opinions expressed in TEACH Bulletin are those of the writer and should not be assumed to reflect those of the Home Education Foundation Trustees or Board of Reference Members.

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Hello, I am a single mother of three, two boys aged 11 & 9 and one girl nearly 5. I have been on my own nearly 5 years and divorced for three years. I started homeschooling this year and would love to talk to any other single parents who also homeschool. Feel free to e-mail me at:

sjfield@infogen.net.nz

Report on ERO Reviews

The ERO recently released a report covering its Reviews of home educated students during the 12 month period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. The full text can be viewed at: www.ero.govt.nz, "What's New".

The ERO noted the following reasons for educating at home:

- * the wish for a lifestyle that includes educating their children within the family unit;
- * the wish to be totally responsible for educating their children;
- * a dissatisfaction with regular schools or the New Zealand Curriculum;
- * the wish to provide a Christian-based education; and
- * the wish to provide individualised learning for children with special abilities or special needs.

The report said, "The number of exempted students whose programme is to be reviewed each year is agreed and stated as an annual output target in the Education Review Office Departmental Forecast Report. The selection of those to be reviewed is determined annually within policy guidelines approved by the Chief Review Officer."

Each of the 619 reports on exempted students during the 1999/2000 year were classified into three categories as shown by the following table:

Overall Conclusion	Number	%'age
Taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school.	560	90
Not taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school.	45	7
Students for whom no conclusion could be made.	14	2
Total:	619	99

In regard to the 560 students who *were* taught at least as regularly and well, a view that registered schools would not adequately

meet their child's needs was expressed by the parents of 189 of these students (34 percent). Usually this was prompted by some past experience, such as failure to make adequate progress at school or, in 22 cases (four percent), being bullied at school. In some cases the reason given was that the child had special abilities or had special needs. A number of parents expressed an opinion that their children benefited from the sustained one-to-one teaching-learning situation that could not usually take place in a school.

The desire to provide a Christian-based education of the type that would not be offered in a registered school was important for the families of 123 students (22 percent). Twenty-three (four percent) of these students were being homeschooled mainly for medical reasons.

Still following this group of 560, the learning programmes for 367 of them (66 percent) had been developed by their parents or caregivers. Some were entirely parent or caregiver devised. Others drew on elements of other programmes and teaching and learning resources but essentially had been tailored to the particular child's perceived requirements.

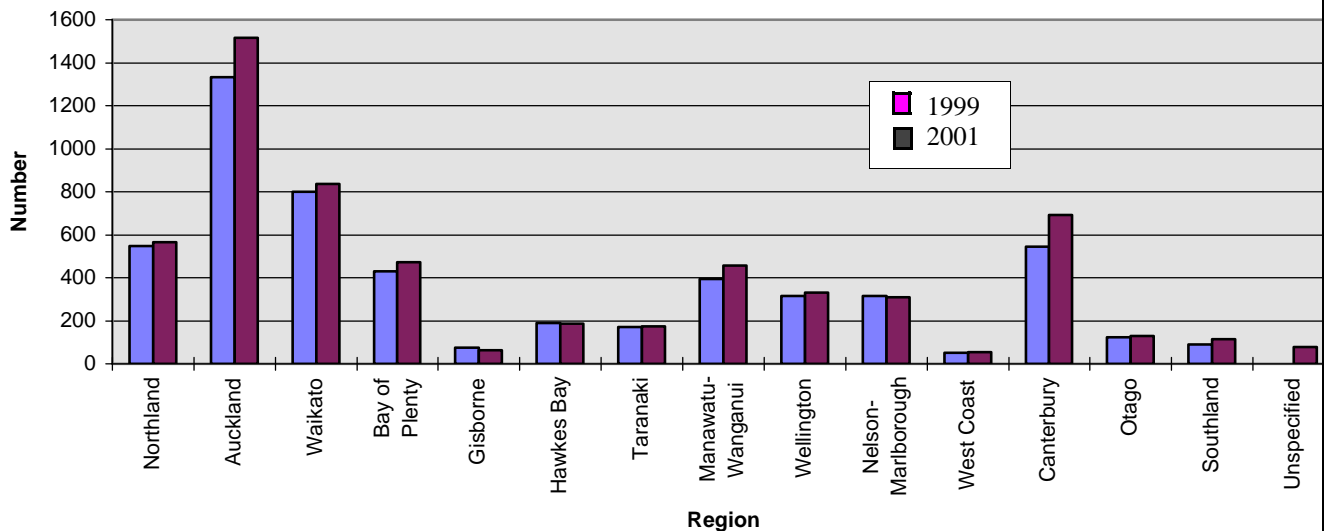
Where the programmes were based, at least in part, on a commercially developed programme the most common of these were from:

- * A.C.E. School of Tomorrow, (156 students, 28 percent);

- * The Correspondence School (TCS), (22 students, 4 percent);

(Continued on page 4: **ERO**)

Number of Home Educated Students by Region at 1 July 1999 & 2001



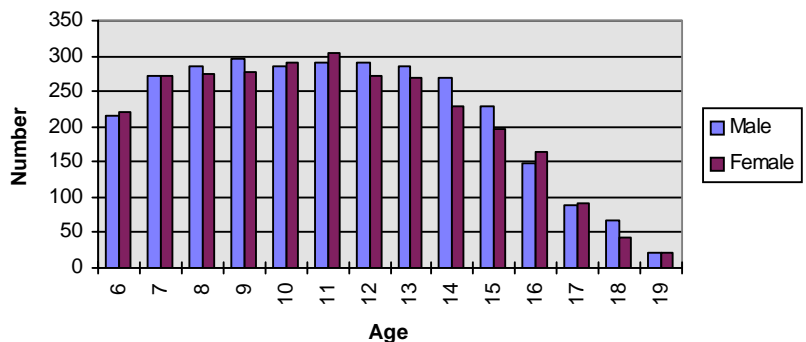
(Continued from page 1: **Numbers**)

age, between 2000 and 2001. Yet the total number involved in home education in the post-compulsory years, 16 to 19, increased from 2000 to 2001 by 47 individuals (595 to 642) or 7.9%. The number of 19 year olds increased from 19 to 42, or 121%.

Why are the overall numbers of HE individuals flattening out? We just don't know. HE is a dynamic movement with many starting up and many dropping out in any one year. The editor recently saw MoE Data Management figures of the numbers of HEs at 25 September 2001: they showed a total of 5686 children from 3820 families. That is less than earlier this year on 1 July and less than on 1 July last year as well. However, it is interesting to note that the number of families involved, 3820, is quite a bit more than the 3309 said to be involved at 1 July last year; that's an increase of 15.4% in the number of families actually home educating at least one of their children.

In the Regional graph one sees the marked increase in the numbers of home educated students in Auckland and Canterbury. The editor would say it is partly due to the vigorous support group activity and efforts these areas have made in recruiting new families through information evenings in private homes and full-day workshops.

Number of Home Educated Students by Age & Gender at 1 July 2001



(Continued from page 3: **ERO**)

- * the Advanced Training Institute (ATI), (18 students, 3 percent); and
- * Education Trusts, (10 students, 2 percent).

“There were four situations where parents had joined together to form a homeschool group. This group might meet at the home of one of the parents and be directed by a trained teacher who would develop programmes tailored to the students’ particular needs and work with them individually.

“Some children had an involvement at their local school (such as being in a sports team) or with teachers from it (such as receiving coaching).”

“It was common for more formal studies, perhaps in English or mathematics, to take place in the morning and other activities such as practical work, physical education, educational visits or

self-directed pursuits to occur in the afternoon.”

“Most homeschool families focus on providing a range of social contacts for their children. Some widen these social contacts by involving their children in local school or community activities; for others the main social contact is within their families and/or church groups. Social contact was a matter of concern for six children (one percent) for whom ERO recommended increased opportunities to socialise with their peers.”

“Learning programmes were generally good, well managed and suited to the student’s ability.... Students’ programmes were nearly always flexible enough to allow them to follow avenues of interest.... Many parents saw particular benefits resulting from their decision to homeschool their children.”

The Politics of Home Educators and Sport

TEACH Bulletin asked the following questions of the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure on 24 September this year and received the following answers 10 October:

1. My information is that the Auckland Secondary School Heads Association (ASSHA) will neither let home educated students play as individual members in a conventional school team, nor will they let them join in the competitions as a team composed of home educated students, even should this team be part of a legally constituted organisation with coaches, administrators, etc. It seems to me that we are talking about a simple few games of basketball, and that if ASSHA was simply willing to allow the home educators to play, then they could play. I understand that ASSHA has certain rules that are interpreted as disallowing home educated individuals from playing, but of course all such rules can be changed should the organisation have a will to do so. Is there any way the Hillary Commission could encourage the ASSHA to change its rules?

ASSHA rules are in place that prevent home schooled young people from participating in ASSHA run events. As most sports have passed over responsibility for organising their secondary school-aged sport to ASSHA, these events then are run in accordance with ASSHA rules. These rules are supported by the Auckland secondary school Principals who fund ASSHA to coordinate and run secondary school sport and are also supported by the NZ Secondary School Sports Council.

I have had some discussion with the latter body and the Ministry of Education, but there seems to be no movement to change any of these rules. I have a letter drafted to ASSHA and it will be cc'd to the NZSSSC asking that the

matter, at the very least, is put on the table for discussion with a view to adopting some flexibility to allow for the inclusion of home-schooled sports people.

2. We were also told that, due to financial considerations, the Hillary Commission and North Harbour Sport were working on a scheme to see that ALL secondary-aged sport competitions would be played solely through secondary schools, thereby eliminating club-based sports for this age group. Is this true? If it is, surely it then becomes important that home educated students be allowed to compete in these school competitions, for otherwise they are effectively barred from competing at all. Is it true that the Hillary Commission is considering such a move and why are they doing so?

There is no scheme by the Hillary Commission or Sport North Harbour to see all secondary-aged sport run in schools. We do have a Sportfit programme which sees some funding go to schools to support a sports coordinator position. Schools tend to be where most of the sport for secondary school-aged young people takes place, but we are keenly aware, as you are, that schools have limited resource and cannot / do not cater for all young people who may want to play. Other settings, such as clubs, need to be robust enough to offer and run quality sports programmes for secondary school-aged young people, particularly those whose needs cannot be met through provision at school. Unfortunately, many sports have chosen to let schools (via organisations such as ASSHA) provide these opportunities rather than work through their clubs, and this again is something we are working to change.

I share your concern — young people are being denied an opportunity to play sport for reasons that don't really make sense. While there are some things the Hillary Commission can do, the matter rests with ASSHA in this case, and it is here you could

be looking to influence to bring about some change. As you state, rules can be changed if organisations have a will to change them. (My impression is that this doesn't seem to be a problem in other parts of the country, although I don't know this for a fact -- perhaps you could find out and let me know so we can get an idea of the scope of the issue).

*Regards
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(Home Educators in other parts of New Zealand are invited to contact Nicky Sherriff to inform her of the situation in relation to home educators participating in secondary sports in your part of the country. — Ed.)

Noise is Negative

An Austrian Ministry of Health study has found that exposure to everyday background noise levels typical of most urban environments can raise youngsters' blood pressure, heart rate and levels of stress hormones. The study also found constant exposure to low-intensity noise could give children problems with motivation.

Peter Lercher, of the University of Innsbruck, and Gary Evans, of Cornell University in New York, looked at 115 9- and 10-year-olds from Austria's Inn Valley region. "We are not really looking at loud kinds of noise. They are typical levels found throughout neighbourhoods in Europe," Mr Evans said.

Auckland psychologist Henk van Bilsen agreed with the findings. "Even if you have got used to constant exposure to noise and don't think it's stressful, the body thinks kind of differently about that," he said. An essential factor in the effect of noise on health was the amount of control an

individual had over it. "If we have the control, it makes it less damaging," said Mr van Bilsen.

Who is in charge of controlling the noise in a typical school classroom? Classroom noise is a major contributor to educational failure in New Zealand, according to the Oticon Foundation, a charitable trust which has sponsored research into the extent of classroom noise in the nation's primary schools.

"We know for a fact that in some cases, classroom noise is so bad it drowns out the teacher's voice. Improvements in classroom acoustics are necessary," said audiologist Karen Pullar, secretary to the trustees. The classroom acoustics research study found that most children are "hard of hearing" in a normal classroom environment. "We also know that those most at risk of educational failure include up to 20% of a class at any one time," she said.

International research has shown that children with mild hearing loss, the kind that most people would not detect, are at 12 times higher risk of educational failure than their normal hearing peers.

In New Zealand, up to half of all children are affected, with Maori and Pacific Island children twice as likely to fail due to hearing loss. Pullar said that educationalists needed to look at the physical barriers to children's learning alongside the pedagogy of teaching and learning.

"Children's brains are not fully developed for listening until they are in their teenage years. Primary age children find it harder to correctly hear the teacher's voice. They miss key words, phrases and concepts in poor listening conditions and don't really understand the words that are spoken," said Pullar.

(Some of these statements have devastating implications for learning in typical classroom situations. For example, if listening development doesn't mature until teen years, those children with learning styles of a

visual and kinesthetic nature are at great disadvantage.....that is, classroom instruction is not effective for the majority of students. — Ed.)

(From *NZ Herald*, 20/3/01, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=177935&thesection=news&thesubsection=general>) and *The Citizen Today* (Christchurch), 15/8/01, p. 6

Teachers on Strike

About 14,000 of the 15,000 PPTA members are striking, that is, not showing up to teach. These teachers each want \$2,500 more each year for the next three years, a \$7,500 increase in all. A beginning teacher with a BA would go from \$34,000 to \$41,500, a 22% increase. (Not bad.) The top rate after seven years is \$50,300. That would go to \$57,800, a modest 14.9% increase. (Actually, that's still quite a jump.) They aren't trying to catch up with anyone else or with inflation. They just want more to compensate for the increased work load which will be demanded by the introduction of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) qualification next year.

They also want the Government to spend \$110 million over the next three years to recruit 1850 more teachers in order to cut down on their own increasing work loads caused not only by the extra administrative duties of the NCEA but also by an increase in the numbers of secondary students coming up the ranks. In addition, these teachers want fewer contact hours with students: three hours guaranteed non-contact time now increased to four hours in 2002 and five in 2003, so they can do the NCEA preparation, the lesson plans and the marking.

The PPTA says the pay claim would cost the Government an extra \$42 million each year. Not so. Because of pay parity in schools, these increases would

need to be passed on to another 21,000 primary teachers, more than doubling the cost. Mr Mallard says the total cost of the PPTA's claim over three years would be \$250 million, more than Government wants to pay. (Just as an aside, the Air New Zealand bail-out was just over 3 1/2 times as much, at \$885 million. I see in this, oh skeptic that I am, a comparison of Government priorities between preparing the nation's children for the global knowledge economy we hear so much about on the one hand and maintaining the lucrative tourist/entertainment industry on the other.) That means an extra \$1,087 per secondary aged student, there being 230,000 at present, just to keep heads above water.

So what some people would call a mediocre education is getting more expensive. Well, that's the up-front cost. The students themselves and the society and the economy and we tax payers will continue to pay for it for many years to come.

The pay and work conditions claims could well be justified. They just don't appear to promise an improvement in education at the schools. PPTA president Jen McCutcheon says the strike action will continue until a settlement is reached. She also said failure to settle soon would undermine the PPTA's support for the implementation of the new NCEA qualifications system. Really, there appears to be nothing beneficial at all to look forward to no matter what happens, unless the new NCEA approach, once fully implemented, proves to be a lot more educationally effective than the traditional approach.... and the jury is still out on that one.

And in the meantime the children are being used as pawns in this playing-for-money game of power politics. The Minister of Education and many school principals have condemned the timing of the strikes, saying they will interfere with final exam preparations. However some, such as Peter Mathias, Taranaki PPTA

regional chairman, said he did not accept that the PPTA action penalised students rather than the Government. "In some respects, the actions of the Government are penalising the students. The Government is not prepared to give proper recognition to our claim. They are the ones who are forcing us to choose this course of action." (I will not be sending my children to Taranaki for lessons in logic.)

When 500 braved Wellington's icy wet weather on October 11, the day of the general teacher strike, to march on Parliament, none of their traditional political allies, Labour Government ministers, materialised to address them. "I'm gutted," said Craig Frensen of Newlands College. "I feel that we have come here for nothing." (Mmmmm....just like the children who went to Newlands College that day.)

To shouts of "We want Trevor, we want Trevor", the union members turned on their traditional political allies, heckling Alliance MP Liz Gordon and shouting abuse about Mr Mallard. PPTA president Jen McCutcheon said members were insulted that neither he nor any other Labour ministers addressed them. Replied a smug Mr Mallard, "The idea that a bunch of rabble would call for a minister by standing outside and shouting is not the normal way for a minister to respond."

(But then these are all reasons we home educate in the first place: we want to save our children out of a system that is so flawed that not only do people resort to using other people's children (the ones whose lives they are supposed to improve) as pawns in a game to improve life for themselves, not only do they resort to nonsensical arguments, not only do they descend to name calling and abuse, but also no matter what you do to improve it, it comes out just as flawed....or worse. A senior official within the Ministry of Education told me years ago in a moment of candour that he had been somewhat deflated when he discovered that state schooling

was not just about children and learning but also about money and politics. I am understanding him more and more these days. — Ed.)

Letters

Good Advertising

I had a ring from a lady in Christchurch who had seen our conference in the *TEACH Bulletin* ~~and asked for a registration form~~ so she can come along. She will be up here at the time visiting parents. Isn't that great!

Huriana Collecutt
Whangarei

"Link" Schools

I rang you regarding my 15-year-old son who wanted to sit School Cert. this year but couldn't find a school willing to be the "link" school as required by the NZQA. We finally found one who looked at his work and said, "Yes, he can sit" — that being the extent of their involvement! So all's well that ends well.

C.T.
South Island

[The MoE advises that access to the new NCEA should be on the same basis: finding a school willing (they are not obliged) to help you by acting as a "link" school which records the student's name on the forms and gives him or her a place to sit for the exam. They may also coach you in the subjects, how little or how much is up to them, ensure internally assessed components are adequate, and they may charge you for the service or not. Every school's board of trustees has its own unique take on being, or not being, a link school for home educators. — Ed.]

Testing & Learning

[This letter appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, 12 June 2001.] Your letters (June 6) "What's the True Worth of Achievement Tests" reminds me that as of 1969 just over one-half of the Ph.Ds in America had graduated in the bottom half of their high-school class while, in all the history of the human race, only three great thinkers -- Land, Chomsky, and Oppenheimer -- have done well in

school.

Meanwhile, Harvard studies showed that the B students end up achieving more than the A students while the Cs often do the best of all.

In addition, based on a survey I've made of friends and teachers, it's safe to assume that there are no adults anywhere in the U.S. who would let the government force them into a school building for even three hours a week, make them study some obscure subject mandated from on high, test them on the art of transient storage, and then make their future careers dependent on passing the course.

But schools and colleges could become EDUCATIONAL institutions were we to abolish testing and instead stimulate, demonstrate and encourage kids to acquire those all-important basic skills as well as to keep on learning about the world with the enthusiasm and the efficiency of any preschool child.

Robert E. Kay, MD
robertekaymd@mymailstation.com

Will ERO Be This Patient with HEs?

In September this year the MoE announced intentions to close a state-run "alternative school", Mt Eden's Auckland Metropolitan College. Set up as an alternative school in 1978, Metropolitan College, decile 5 rating, offered a completely different way of educating a mixed-gender, ethnically diverse selection of secondary students in the Auckland area.

"But persistently, the ministry seems to refuse to acknowledge or to understand the alternative nature of the college and tries to foist conformist mainstream educational ideologies on the school," says Ernie Barrington, a former teacher at Metropolitan College and a senior tutor at Auckland University's centre for professional development.

"The guiding ethos of

Metropolitan College, Summerhill and other alternative schools of this type is that the students are given the power to take responsibility for their own learning. Released from rigid, controlling discipline to attend all classes and to choose subjects that they see as relevant, students who had formerly hated school often become enthusiastic about learning.”

Yet the 2001 ERO report had this to say:

Because of the optional nature of these classes, student attendance is sparse and sporadic.

Rates of student attendance have not improved since the July 2000 discretionary accountability review. During the on-site stage of the present review, attendance figures reached a maximum of 40, but more often were between 26 to 31, out of a total of 84 students on the school roll. Many students only attend sporadically for short periods.

Even when students attend school, many of them fail to attend the classes for which they are timetabled.

During the 2000 school year, 130 students enrolled at the school and 88 students left. Only a small proportion of enrolled students attend the school for extended periods.

Oh, well, attendance isn't everything, after all. Barrington also says, “The other important distinction between conventional secondary education and an alternative school such as Metropolitan College is that the school seeks to be democratic. Teachers and students join forces at school meetings to make joint decisions for the benefit of the whole community.”

Well, according to this year's ERO Report:

The school's curriculum deficiencies are underpinned by the mismatch between national curriculum requirements and the commitment of the board and staff

to being an alternative school. These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that the board and the staff have failed to clearly define their understanding of alternative education.

In light of the fact that the majority of students attending Auckland Metropolitan College have considerable social-behavioural and learning needs, the failure of the IEP (Independent Education Programme) system is a significant barrier to student achievement.

Consequently, student learning is disjointed and programmes do not allow students to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills, as evidenced by the substantial number of students who fail to gain recognised qualifications.

Programmes do not adequately provide for students' numeracy and literacy learning needs.

Just to emphasise the extraordinary patience the ERO has had with Metropolitan College, read the following extract from the 2001 Report:

This is the eighth Education Review Office report on Auckland Metropolitan College since 1990. Each of the eight reviews has been conducted by a different team of review officers; some teams have included personnel from outside the Auckland area. Six of the eight reviews have been discretionary reviews because of the Office's serious concerns about the poor quality of education provided at the school and the ineffective governance and management.

The findings of the last six reviews have been the same in relation to the poor quality of education being provided and the ineffective governance and management. Therefore, the Education Review Office sees no purpose in undertaking further discretionary reviews of this school.

It would be great to think the ERO would give that tiny number of HEs who receive negative reviews the same number of re-reviews

and opportunities to shape up as were extended to Metropolitan College.

It would also be nice to think the MoE and the taxpayer would feel as generous toward HEs in terms of both money and accountability. For its 84 students, Metropolitan College received from the Crown an average of \$664,477 a year over the last three years (this is not counting the other incomes from foreign students, student fees and the considerable consultation and monitoring help extended to this institution over the last couple of years). This is \$7910 per student per year. And remember, more than half of those students weren't even there.

The long-running scenario surrounding Metropolitan College and the sporadic nature of the teaching at state secondary schools at present due to the rolling teacher strikes all give a new meaning to the legal requirement that HEs teach “at least as regularly and well as in a registered school.”

Homeschooling in Hong Kong

Although the Government of Hong Kong has recently reiterated that it will not support home schooling, it is professional educators, such as Cheung Man-kwong, chairman of Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, who have spoken to the Government in favour of reviewing the present policy.

~~Secretary for Education and Manpower Fanny Law Fan Chui-fun~~ told Mr. Cheung in a written reply that the Education Department would follow the Education Ordinance and might issue an attendance order if parents “persistently do not send their children to school without valid reasons”. It was an offence if parents did not comply with an order, she said.

Mr Cheung urged the Department of Education to adopt a more flexible attitude, but unfortunately

he also suggests: "The Education Department should also pay regular visits to the families to ensure the children receive proper education at home."

It is time the law was reviewed, according to Dr. Philip Hui Kwok-fai, education studies lecturer at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. "There must be some parents who are fed up with the local education system and willing to make less money and stay at home to teach their children," Dr. Hui said.

Professor Wong Yuk-shan, vice-president of City University, said exceptions should be made for those who chose to school their children at home. Even with that blazing insight, Professor Wong still went on to warn parents that homeschooling might stop their children from developing social and communication skills, since they might not mix with a large peer group as at school.

Both academics said that, in general, parents who chose to homeschool children should not be required to have training or qualifications or to undergo assessment.

Home schooling mother Donna Kouri (not her real name, but the one she uses among a group of around 20 fellow homeschoolers) said parents would not come forward for fear of being forced to send their children to school. Many lacked confidence in the education system and were concerned about an increase in suicides and crime among juveniles, she said.

"Many families do not like the bullying and bad labelling of students that goes on, the time spent travelling to and from school and the many exams and hours of homework that force children to go to bed well after midnight," said Ms. Kouri, who added that some Western families in Hong Kong have to home school their children either because they could not secure a place in an international school or could not afford the school fees.

(Parts extracted from "Ban on Home Schooling to Remain" by Polly Hui and "School is not the only Option" by Cynthia Wan both of the *South China Morning Post*, 17 February 2001 and 29 December 2000 respectively.)

Canadians Challenge Cherished Concepts

Children who are educated at home have better social skills and achieve higher grades on standardized tests than students in private or public schools, according to a new report by the Fraser Institute, a Vancouver-based conservative think-tank. Home educated kiddies are happier, better adjusted and more sociable than those at institutional schools.

Children taught at home in Canada score, on average, at the 80th percentile in reading, at the 76th percentile in languages and at the 79th percentile in mathematics, the report shows.

The report's author Patrick Basham, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a conservative public policy group in Washington, said he was surprised to see such positive results linked to home schooling.

"People think these children are neurotic, unsocialized and can't function in normal society. But the opposite is true. I think the fact children educated at home do better than private school students would also surprise people. It is not something that is widely debated or studied," he said.

Home-schooled children are still a tiny minority in Canada, although an increasing number of parents are opting for this style of education. In 1979, 2,000 children were educated at home. By 1996, 17,500 students -- 0.4% of total enrollment -- were home schooled. The most recent figures show the number has risen to 80,000 children.

"Although parents home school their children for myriad reasons, the principal stimulus is

dissatisfaction with public education," said Claudia Hepburn, director of education policy at the Fraser Institute.

Home schooling is legal throughout Canada, but most provinces require parents to comply with provincial education legislation, which means they must provide satisfactory instruction. Alberta is the only province that funds home-based education.

None of the provinces requires that parents have teaching qualifications. However, having one parent who is a certified teacher has no significant effect on the achievement of students educated at home, the research shows.

Gary Duthler, executive director of the Federation of Independent Schools in Canada, the association for non-public schools, said children educated at home likely do better and are more sociable because of the smaller student-teacher ratio and the fact students of all ages learn together.

"In institutional schools, there is social pressure for 10-year-old children to behave like other 10-year-olds and they tend to not play with any older children at school. In a home setting, that same pressure is not there, so it helps the children mature."

(Parts extracted from article by Julie Smyth of the *National Post*, Ontario, Canada, 15 October 2001)

Bad News in Brazil

In Brazil, Carlos Vilhena and his wife Maria, who live in the state of Goias, have been home schooling for about 10 years, despite a compulsory attendance law that says children must attend school from ages 7-14.

Mr. Vilhena, a federal prosecutor, hoped to change the law and brought his case before the federal Council of Education, which, to his shock, ruled against his family last December. The case is now on appeal, and officials gave the Vilhenas until fall to enroll their five children in state-run schools.

Mr. Vilhena said many people home school in Brazil but they are underground since it is not officially recognized. He contacted the American Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) asking them to help legalize home schooling there.

HSLDA alerted home school leaders around the U.S. to contact Brazil's Federal Council of Education and urge them to support home schooling. Unfortunately, although these efforts won over some of the council, the majority ruled that the Vilhena family could no longer home school — and then proceeded to prohibit home schooling for everyone in Brazil! (Please take note: sometimes it may be better to let sleeping dogs lie. This could be the case here in New Zealand where conditions for home education are so very good. However, should we ever be threatened by the imposition of new unacceptable legislative restraints, then we would all need to work together to defeat such measures that would lesson our civil and religious liberties. Until such time, why stir up the authorities with demands when they can so easily take from us what we have? -- Ed.)

Carlos Vilhena explained, "The laws in Brazil are slightly less harsh than the ones in Germany considering school life. The peaceful nature of Brazilians does

not preclude the possibility of Brazilian home school pioneers suffering the same constraints as their German counterparts. With this in mind, we are asking for international help to bring acceptance of home schooling to Brazil and that it would serve as a model of peaceful change."

The action by U.S. home schoolers did convince the court to allow the Vilhenas to continue to home school during the appeal process. But while this victory was only temporary, the outcome of the Vilhena's current crisis could have a permanent effect on home schooling in Brazil -- for better or for worse.

Consequently, Christopher J. Klicka, the HSLDA's director of international affairs, is calling on all home educators throughout the world to put pressure on Brazilian embassy officials and on the Brazilian Government Ministers who will be ruling on the case. An email from Mr Klicka on 12 October this year advised that while they did not know when the case was coming up, they did believe it was going to be soon.

For those who would like to pursue this matter, you can visit the HSLDA website: www.hslda.org, or email Mr Klicka at chris@hslda.org or look up a Brazilian embassy contact on their web site at <http://www.mre.gov.br/Embaixadas.htm>

(Extracted in part from "Brazil's Home-schooling Ban Draws Outcry from U.S. Group" by Andrea Billups of *The Washington Times*, 12 February 2001.)

Home Education in Other Places

The climate for home schooling differs from nation to nation. Families in Mexico are beginning to organize, and more than 600 people attended a recent home-school conference held in Saltillo, near Monterrey.

"Without clear compulsory

attendance laws, home schooling is flourishing legally in Mexico", said Chris Klicka of the Home School Legal Defense Association in Virginia, USA.

"Quality education is hard to come by in Mexico, and many families are poor. Home schooling is providing an answer to this educational dilemma," he added.

Last year, two home-school organizations formed in Japan, the National Home School Association and the Christian Home Educator's Association. And in Hungary, Gene Antonio, a home-school father of seven, is helping put together a national home-school association.

A new group was also formed in Germany called Schulunterricht zu Hause. The group will assist families around the nation, many of which conduct their schooling underground, including seven that are now in court.

German compulsory attendance laws are enacted by each state, Mr. Klicka said. Although none specifically allows home schooling, each state has its own discretion to approve alternative education.

Home schooling is legal in Ireland after families there argued against tough government restrictions assisted by HSLDA. In the Philippines, a new home-school organization has just begun and leaders are looking to the United States for help, Mr. Klicka noted.

Home schooling was officially legalized in Taiwan in June 1999. The Home Educators' Fellowship, a Christian organization founded by Shou-kong and Chuo-chuin Fan, now has more than 120 member families nationwide.

(From "Brazil's Home-schooling Ban Draws Outcry from U.S. Group" by Andrea Billups of *The Washington Times*, 12 February 2001.)

NZ's Knowledge Wave Swamped by Illiteracy

Christchurch electronics pioneer Sir Angus Tait said last month that New Zealand's economic future was being jeopardised by abysmal standards of literacy displayed by students and university graduates. He expressed dismay at the poor literacy level of his university-trained employees, who had a "black hole" when it came to matters of grammar. Punctuation, grammar, spelling and sentence construction were all skills that seemed to be falling by the wayside.

Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce chief executive Peter Townsend said the lack of basic communication skills had to be addressed for the sake of business productivity. Invensys South Island manager Bruce Grant said the spelling of technicians in his industry was "dreadful". "I've had job sheets coming through today with leak spelt leek," he said. "I see that constantly. They can't write letters and they can't write reports." Such employees could never be promoted into administrative roles.

Cameron Moore, president of the Canterbury Manufacturers' Association, said today's graduates brought additional technological skills, which were valuable, but were falling short in their basic arithmetic and writing. "I shouldn't have to correct or vet the letters my university graduates write, but when it's going out in my business name I can't trust what they're doing," Mr Moore said. Manufacturers' concerns were not just with graduates but with all employees, whose lack of basic skills was "staggering". "In a maths test of my workers we had an 80 per cent failure rate," Mr Moore said.

At the Knowledge Wave conference last August, Reserve Bank Governor Don Brash quoted a study that showed nearly half of the work-force in New Zealand could not read well enough to

work effectively in the modern economy.

And of course August was the month when the Parliamentary Education and Science Select Committee released its report calling for a re-emphasis on phonics instruction to stem the rising tide of illiteracy in schools.

University of Canterbury Students Association head Jarrod Gilbert agreed that standards of literacy attained by students coming to university were poor. "It is bad," he said. "I've tutored and the point is well made." Then he adds a note of caution into the symphony of condemnation: "I would question just how important these skills are now in a computer age. Look at text messaging. Look at emails. As long as you can communicate, arguably does it matter how you do that?"

Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Canterbury University Dr John Freeman-Moir also cautioned that the claim students were not up to it was made in every generation, but no-one had any way of knowing whether it was well-founded. "There is no systematic evidence that has been gathered over time to demonstrate it." He said if there were widespread concerns about particular skill shortages, then they needed to be studied further so they could be properly addressed.

If home educators ever wanted help with planning their curriculum, the daily papers give all the guidance one needs. This editor is confident that HEs will not be waiting for the issue of illiteracy in schools to be "properly addressed" but will instead continue to ensure their children do the obvious thing to make them hot material in the eyes of most employers: master the ever basic skills of reading (that is, all the information intake skills -- reading and listening with comprehension and being able to interpret the nuances and body language), writing (which is not just penmanship and spelling, but all the information output skills -- grammar, composition and oratory

with a bit of interpersonal relationship building tossed in on the side) and arithmetic (which for the vast majority of us will mean little more than +, -, x, ÷, decimals, percentages, fractions, proportions, doing a budget and balancing a cheque book.) We are not talking rocket science here: help your children *master* these few skills and the evidence seems to say your children will be way ahead of the competition.

(Parts extracted from an article by Tara Ross in *The Christchurch Press*, 28 September 2001.)

Classroom Insanity

John Holt, an early advocate of home education, brilliantly explains some frightening facts about state schools in his book, *What Do I Do Monday?* Holt applies insights about human psychology from Ronald Laing's *The Divided Self* to show how teachers drive children to insanity -- or rather, to "cognitive dissonance" to preserve what little sanity they can salvage. Comparing public school to Black chattel slavery, he goes on to describe the psychological conditioning in which parents are unwitting collaborators (pp.56-7):

"[T]he schools are the only organization of our times that can make people accept and blame themselves for their own oppression and degradation. The parents cannot and do not say to their children, "I can't prevent your teacher from despising and humiliating and mistreating you, because the schools have more political power than I have, and they know it. But you are not what they think and say you are, and want to make you think you are. You are right to want to resist them, and even if you resist them only in your heart, resist them there." On the contrary, and against their wishes and instincts, they believe and must try to make their children believe that the schools are always right and the children wrong, that if the teacher says you are bad for any reason, or none at all, you are bad. So, among most of the poor, and even much of the middle class, when

Coming Events

Challenging the Concepts of Education

Friday 26 October
8:30am to 3:40pm &
7:00pm to 9:00pm

Crossroads Community Church,
AOG Church
10 Mill Rd., Regent
Whangarei

International Speaker:
Margaret Spicer

Single: \$15.00

Couple: \$20.00

Or Per Session: \$5.00

Late Registration: \$25.00

(After 13th October)

*Speaking the Languages of Love

*Creating Memories

*Intro to HE & Negotiating the
Curriculum Maze

*Learning Styles

*Reading and Writing

*Phonics for All Ages

*Music Workshop

*Making Maths, Spelling and
Reading Fun

*Using Unit Studies

*Preparing for Further Education

Contact:

Huriana, ph. (09) 436-3649

Margy, ph. (09) 433-8683

Diane, ph. (09) 433-7008

the schools say something bad about a child, the parents accept it and use all their considerable power to make the child accept it. Seeing his parents accept it, he usually does. So far--I hope not much longer--few parents have had the insight of one who not long ago said to J. Herndon, author of *The Way It Spozed to Be*, "For years the schools have been making me hate my kid." Even the most cruel and oppressive racists have hardly ever been able to make people do that."

Unlike slave parents who demanded their children act with subservience to the master to save them from harm, parents today demand their children act with subservience because they believe it is right. As a result, in the school child's reality, he has no one to turn to, nowhere to go, no sanctuary even in his mother's

Home & Country Show

Saturday 1 December

Manawatu Home Educators

Ashhurst

Community Centre

Animals, Pets, Baking, Floral, Handcrafts, Construction, Art, Photography, Bike Decorating. Judged by Professionals. Games, Fellowship, Entertainment, Food!

Contact:

Megan, ph. (06) 355-2368

Christian Home Schoolers of NZ Worldview Conference

Sunday to Friday

7-12 April 2002

Willow Park Convention Centre

Bucklands Beach

Auckland

Speakers: Dr David Noebel, author of *Understanding the Times* a detailed analysis/comparison of Marxism/Leninism, secular humanism and Biblical Christianity; and Chuck Edwards of Summit Ministries, Colorado Springs, USA.

Live-in, fully catered=\$180 adult or \$160 teen student.

\$30 per full day; \$10 per evening & other options.

19 lectures, plus discussions & sports.

For Brochure Contact:

Carol, ph. (09) 410-3933

cesbook@intouch.co.nz

arms from his abusers. With the time worn excuse, "It's for your own good," the wedge between parent and child that was inserted by the very fact of enrolling him in school, tantamount to pushing the young child out of his home before he is ready, is driven further with each passing school term.

[Excerpted from an essay by Cathy Cuthbert, HE mother and editor of *The School Liberator*, published by the Alliance for the Separation of School & State, 4578 N First #310, Fresno CA 93726, USA, ph. (559) 292-1776, <http://www.sepschool.org>.]

South Auckland

HEs Workshop

Saturday 3 November

9:30am to 4:00pm

Papakura Baptist Church

44 Clevedon Rd.

Papakura

\$20 per person or couple.

Teens free with adult.

***Basic philosophies of HE** and open forum on resources — Carol Munroe

***Home schooling:** a family affair — Murray Drinnan

***Maths** — Rosalind Peterson & Sharon Drinnan

***Classical studies** — Barbara Smith

***People & places:** prime resources — Christine Whetton

* **Charlotte Mason Philosophy** in action — Jill Meyer & Diane Grey

***Vision for the Future** — Craig Smith

***Reading:** motivating and monitoring — Sheryl Aiken & Christine Whetton

***Art** for the "Artistically Challenged" — Lyn Strong

***Preschoolers** and Home Schooling: do they mix? — Sharon Drinnan & Rosalind Peterson

* **Unit Studies** — Christine Windsor

***Avoiding Burnout** — Barbara Smith

***Preparing for tertiary** — Carol Munroe & Craig Smith

***What's up with the government?** — Kate Jaunay

***Maximised Learning** — Marsha Fellet

Bring & Buy table: bring your unwanted resources.

For more information contact:

Michelle, ph. (09) 292-5868

For more info & to register:

Clevedon Country

Home Educators

Sharon ph. (09) 530-8119

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the_whetttons@xtra.co.nz

Homeschooling Families: Ready for the Next Decade

(The following statement was formulated by the National Homeschool Association's Roundtable Conference held at Becket, Massachusetts, October, 1996. The NHA has since dissolved, effective 15 Sept 2000, as they perceived their major objectives to have been accomplished. <<http://n-h-a.org/>> Home education is, by definition, a political act. Consequently home educators need to be politically aware. I see some very sound, very important ideas set forth in this statement and would like to see them widely disseminated and discussed among home educators. I will add some comments at the end, noted like this: [1], and I invite readers to make further comments for inclusion in later issues of *TEACH Bulletin*. — Ed.)

Homeschooling Families: Ready for the Next Decade

A Foundation for
Ongoing Conversations

Homeschooling Works!

* People are born ready to learn. Learning involves everyone everyday. Living and learning are not separate activities. Learning cannot be contained in a place or time. Learning is too wonderful and powerful to limit it by turning it over to conventional schools. [1]

* Children need the love and support of their families and communities, just as adults do. Throughout time, families have raised their children to be knowledgeable and competent adults. Having a sincere desire to homeschool qualifies a parent to homeschool. A homeschool is a good place for people to heal from the inaccuracies and injustices that accompany labels such as ADD and LD.

* People gain social experience and skills by interacting with a

diverse group of people of all ages. Homeschooling provides opportunities for such interaction easily and naturally.

Regulations

* Hundreds of thousands of families are showing that homeschoolers do not need to be regulated by the state. There is no evidence that any regulations foster better homeschooling. [2]

* To maintain homeschooling freedoms, homeschoolers learn what rights and responsibilities they have, refuse to do more than the minimum required by law, and avoid setting precedents that exceed the law and cause difficulty for homeschoolers. Laws and court cases cannot protect our freedoms. Any law, even one that is viewed as good, can do damage. No law, no matter how good, is enough. Exercising our rights and responsibilities daily and consistently, even on seemingly small points, is essential. [3]

* We oppose special regulations or requirements for small groups of homeschoolers, such as those who want to play sports; those who have been labeled "at risk," "ADD," "LD," etc.; and those who have been accused of truancy. Increased regulation of any homeschooler can easily lead to increased regulation of other or all homeschoolers. Homeschoolers are not joining the bandwagon to beat up on those for whom conventional schools do not work.

* Attempts of homeschoolers to regulate each other are unnecessary, complicated, divisive, and dangerous. [4]

Federal and State Goals and Standards

We are concerned about the way state and federal standards in education, standardized tests and assessments, and school-to-work programs are moving conventional schools toward "compulsory education" (different from the currently required "compulsory attendance") which will undermine the basic freedoms

needed to maintain a free society. We are committed to resisting the homeschooling movement being drawn into this web of compulsory education.

Not Mixing Causes

For homeschooling to remain about homeschooling, we must resist being used by others for their agendas.

Diversity

There are many approaches to homeschooling that work. A major strength of homeschooling is the diversity of people, methods and philosophies involved. Having close connections across diversity lines is a radical act.

Homeschoolers foster diversity by:

- * Respecting and celebrating diversity.
- * Respecting anyone's desire to homeschool while remaining true to principles that make homeschooling freedoms possible.
- * Understanding that what supports one family's homeschool might not be right for another's.
- * Working to maintain the rights of families to make their own decisions regarding the education of their members.
- * Developing and maintaining inclusive organizations across cultural and religious diversity lines.
- * Describing to others the diversity within the homeschooling community.
- * Refusing to speak for homeschoolers; rather, providing forums for individuals' voices to be heard. [5]

Support

The knowledge and effective support homeschoolers offer one another are major strengths of the homeschooling movement. Homeschoolers who create and

participate in support groups, share resources, and gather for activities and discussions are making an important contribution to the growth and stability of the homeschooling movement. Grassroots organizing and networking have been a source of the homeschooling community's strength. [6]

Vouchers

We would not expect the government to give away tax money with no strings attached and no accountability. Government programs to supplement homeschoolers' educational resources (by providing services or funding) would have accountability strings attached. We realize that vouchers given to families would lead to increased government presence in our homeschools. Vouchers inevitably lead to increased government regulation and unacceptable reductions in our homeschooling freedoms.

Conclusion

Homeschooling strengthens families and communities. Strong homeschools are an asset to our communities and our nation. They provide alternatives to conventional schools, save taxpayers' money, and provide valuable perspectives on learning and education.

This statement was written to stimulate discussion, not to speak for all homeschoolers. You are encouraged to reproduce this and distribute it widely.

Notes:

(Comments by *TEACH Bulletin* Editor. Please post or email your thoughts on some or all of the points made for inclusion in future issues of *TEACH Bulletin*):

[1] Learning is the *object* of schooling/compulsory attendance. The logistics of compulsory schooling, however, work against efficient learning. Home education *enables* efficient learning because of its many educational advantages:

- * tutoring/mentoring one-on-one;
- * parent to child relationship;

- * maximum timetabling flexibility;
- * maximum freedom from distractions and unproductive administrative hassles;
- * intensely individualised study programme;
- * maximum exploitation of student's learning style;

[2] Neither do regulations foster better learning within compulsory schooling.

[3] Home educators need to be informed about rights and responsibilities. Government bureaucracies will often assume more powers than they have, and only informed home educators are able to (very nicely, but firmly) challenge them. Doing only the minimum the state requires is not a reference to your curriculum or learning objectives, but to how much you conform to the desires of the MoE. I say desires rather than requirements, for there are virtually no requirements — truly objective, measurable requirements — in NZ's Education Act regarding home education. Beware of precedents which we may set — future generations of home educators may pay a heavy price in terms of state oppression because we today acquiesce to what at present seems a harmless practice: i.e., ERO reviews in private homes may become windows for CYPS, the police, the IRD and others to investigate your home for possible infractions of their regulations.

[4] To protect our diversities and the freedom of future home educators to likewise be so richly diverse, we need to learn to represent ourselves at the local and national level. This is not hard to do in New Zealand. Individual home education families can write letters and appear before Parliamentary Committees as well as visit their own MPs. When thousands of us do this on a certain issue, the Government gets the message. Be wary of leaving your lobbying duties up to someone else. National home education organisations, which make much of their democratically elected officers,

serve a valuable and necessary purpose. However, they can only be said to represent a majority of their members, meaning only a fraction of all home educators. Let them do this by all means! But let them not claim more than this.

[5] The Home Education Foundation's annual TEACH Forums have endeavoured to accomplish this last point since 1996.

[6] Establishing local support groups, allowing them to multiply in numbers, being able to join several at once and developing and using the networks that exist among the groups and individual home educators can together be far more effective for lobbying, encouraging one another, information dissemination and all-round communications because of their horizontal networking than are national organisations which rely on vertical lines of communication from executive to officers to members and back. This is not to deny the validity of national organisations. Home educators must not see it as an either/or choice for political representation: it is a both/and choice. We should use all means at our disposal to protect and preserve our freedoms!

Rise in Military Career Opportunities

USA -- Thanks to an amendment to the Defense Reauthorization Act over two years ago, home school graduates have had their ranking changed from a Tier 3 status (high school dropouts), to Tier 1 (equivalent with high school graduates). This has dramatically increased enlistment opportunities for home schoolers.

The Center for Naval Analysis recently said of this pilot project that during the 2000 enlistment period, 400 home school graduates joined the Army, 650 joined the Navy, 300 the Air Force and 200 the Marine Corps. Just a few years ago, less than 100 home schoolers were admitted in all four of the Armed Services

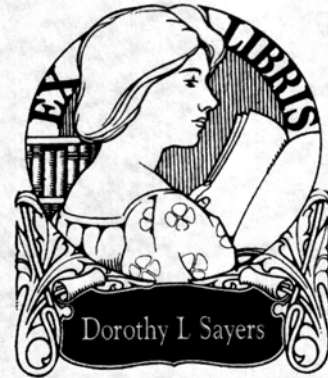
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