

# TEACH Bulletin

## Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 11

November 1997

### No Reports This Year But be Ready for Reviews

A letter sent to all home educators in New Zealand by the Ministry of Education in October advised that the proposed self-evaluation report for 1997 will not be required.

In the meantime, the MOE is reserving the right to require one in the new year if it is felt necessary in order to satisfy auditing requirements. The decision will depend somewhat on the way in which the Education Review Office implements its review procedures for home educators.

Ron Williamson of the ERO said that office greatly appreciated the

feedback received from home educators regarding the draft of the brochure briefly outlining the review procedure as it would apply to home educators. They endeavoured to take on board some of the ideas, but that all of them would have required the writing of a book!

These final copies plus covering letter should be in the mail about the same time as this issue of *TEACH Bulletin*. Mr Williamson also said that the ERO intends to review 940 home educating families from all parts of the country by the end of June 1998.

### Exemption Applications Ask for Work Plans

It seems that most intending home educators are asked to provide an example work plan as part of the exemption application. It is arguably a good exercise to go through, to see how it is done, and some may find them actually to be a help as the weeks roll by.

However, not everyone could be called a fan of work plans. One professional teacher with many years' experience wrote to *TEACH Bulletin* the following:

*Produce a work plan. That really made me see red. I spent 16 years writing work plans when I was a paid government employee (teacher). The finished document I was producing did not result in my doing a better job of teaching — in fact, I often resented the time it took from more meaningful*

*tasks.*

*I'm not denying the need for planning — far from it. But if teaching the children efficiently is the only consideration, the fact of the matter is that a lot of the planning you can store very efficiently in your head. There are other things that I, at any rate, need to plan on paper — or a series of pieces of papers with mind mapping, key words scribbled on the appropriate part of the paper and arrows going here and there. It only makes sense to me, but it's the basis of the planning I need for subjects like social studies (which is integrated with other subjects anyway). Then when I break it into individual lessons I again have notes with my train of thought and references — but as a home educator I never go to the trouble of writing them out so that*

*they make sense to anyone else: why should I?*

*As a paid government employee I was paid to write out my planning in a way that my employer could know what I was doing (and believe me, there were times that I felt that the amount of paper work they required was cheating the children they were responsible for). I did it because I recognised it as part of the terms of my employment.*

*However, we are not government employees, and we must never allow them to turn us into government slaves, not merely because they don't pay us salaries but principally because it will be at the expense of our families, and that is what really matters to us.*

*There is another aspect to this. Teachers at whatever level have a mindset which we must never allow ourselves to slip into. The demand for work plans is, I believe, designed to impose some of that mindset on us and gradually force us into the mould. It's going to be a difficult one to argue because it's all they know and to them it's what life is about. It's got them where they are, so they're never going to see it as a stilted mindset built on many faulty premises. It's the less skilful ones who need to see a work plan. The more skilful ones can gauge what's happening by talking to you and the children and having a look at their work.*

*I was a teacher who decided to home educate and I struggled. First to realise that there was a problem, then to put my finger on the elements of the problem and then to break free of it. Don't underestimate the power of that mindset, and don't have a bar of it!!*

## 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. There is also a regular opinion poll regarding educational issues of the day that may impact home schoolers.

TEACH Bulletin is available for a subscription of \$16 per year for 11 issues (none in December); or by becoming a member of TEACH for a donation of \$30 or more. Some of the benefits of membership are:

- Discounts on Christian Home Schoolers of NZ National Family Conference fees.
- Discounts on TEACH National Leadership Forum fees.
- Coaching on how to participate in the Parliamentary process via letter writing, making submissions, lobbying MPs, etc.
- An annual free gift.
- Discounts on resources, books, T-Shirts, etc.
- Discounts on Sonshine Educational coach tours.
- An official TEACH tax-deductible receipt for your donation.

Your donation toward membership also helps to develop further services exclusively for home schoolers such as scholarships, summer schools, national tours by overseas experts, curriculum and home school resource fairs, national and international field trips.

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Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching.  
-- Proverbs 1:8

## Manawatu Home Educators Awareness Week 1997

The organisers of this activity for this year were Megan McLeay, Gail Alderson and Barbara Smith. It was held in the week of 13-18 October, falling immediately after the Sept/Oct school holidays.

We held a manned display in the Plaza Shopping Centre of Palmerston North with contributions of children's work, photos of different activities associated with home education, a Show & Tell on Tuesday afternoon, and a Choir group singing on Thursday afternoon. Friday morning we had a morning tea in the library, and Saturday evening we held a Debate in the Terrace End School Hall.

### Plaza Display

It was very difficult to get people involved in manning the display, but the reason for manning it was to protect the material on display, and to also be available for people to talk to us if necessary. In the end, the committee had to ring everyone involved in MHE, and ask for a commitment to time. In the end the time slots were all covered, and it proved very beneficial in the long run.

### Morning Tea

This was not as well attended as last year. We had about 15 home educators and only 3 non-home educators attend. Wednesdays may be a better day for such an activity as we had better attendance last year on a Wednesday than this year on a Friday.

### Debate

This year we had between 40 and 50 attend the debate held on a Saturday night in a school just out of the centre of town, whereas last year we had about 80 on a Friday night at the city library.

The statement debated was: "That State School is the Best Place to Educate Your Child". The teams consisted of:

### Affirming:

**Brian Pegler**, retired professor at Palmerston North College of Education;

**Janine Rankin**, our celebrity guest debater, a parenting journalist with the Evening Standard; and

**Dr Peter Lineham**, history professor at Massey University.

### Negating:

**Dr Martin Minnee**, local MD and home educating dad;

**Catherine Sandbrook**, home education mum of seven children;

**Lawrence Alderson**, self-employed computer sales/service and home educating dad.

The debate was timed, refereed and judged by the local Toastmasters Club. *Technique counts for a lot, it seems.* The Affirmative team opened, and Mr Pegler gave a very calm and rational presentation of the overall issues. When Dr Minnee got up as first speaker for the Negative team, he verbally bashed the previous speaker's comments all over the room with all the passion, conviction and humour he could muster. *It called to mind the way last year's first Negative speaker, Dr Lineham, had similarly put the boot into the home educators' first speaker after his cool, calm and scholarly opening statements.* The home educators never let up on the attack, and secured the win for the Negative team. Each member of each team was awarded a pewter participation goblet sponsored by Gerald's Gallery. Dr Lineham once again won the Best Overall Winning Speaker, receiving the Digital Mobile Cup.

### Sponsorship

We were a lot more successful this year in receiving sponsorship for the week, with several businesses donating total of \$625. We were very careful in stressing to each business approached that even the

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Letters to Editor



## Saddened

It saddens me that the past Executive of the Homeschooling Federation was unable to get on with other home schooling organisations and individuals.

Our local support group in South Auckland is a good example of how 50+ home schooling families can peacefully co-exist. We are a diverse bunch: most of the families are Christians (from a variety of churches), but not all. There are many ethnic groups represented. We have differing home schooling philosophies, ranging from very heavily structured programmes to very loosely structured way-of-life approaches. Even though we are all so different, we still get on with each other!

How is this possible? This is possible for two main reasons. The first is that we all respect each other's choices. The second is that nobody is "in charge", because nobody feels that they are "better" than their fellow home schooler or that they have the right to "lord it over" other people.

By contrast the Federation Executive insisted that they should be the one and only opinion on home schooling.

Rosalind Peterson  
Auckland

(The following are two bits of private correspondence received by the Editor, hence the anonymity.)

## Propaganda

We just thought we would let you know, in case you are not already aware, of the Homeschooling Federations of NZ's attitude to you. We enclose the relevant literature we have received from them concerning

their propaganda against you. We note the last paragraph on the yellow sheet and are pleased to tell you, "You can speak for us anytime". Thanks for your informative magazines. May God continue to bless you in your work.

From  
Wellsford, NZ

## Over the Limit

I'm not usually one for controversy, but the past few Federation *Updates* have just pushed my tolerance over the limit! Especially as up to a couple of years ago I totally believed all their PR stuff. Grrrr!!

From  
Auckland

(Continued from page 2)

smallest donation would be gratefully received, and we secured 12 businesses this way. The remainder of the funds came from fundraising. We sold Peanut Busters and Rocky Roads in the Plaza, and a few people sold them among their friends and family. (The contact for these is Chocolate Sensations, ph. 0800 105 108. If you order more than three boxes, there is no freight charge. On three boxes each of Rocky Road and Peanut Busters, there is a total profit of \$146.23. Peanut Busters were easier to sell, and there is more profit per box.)

## Recommendations for 1998

**Advertising**  
It is certainly worthwhile having one

person only responsible for the advertising. They can form their own sub-committee if necessary. We should have more press releases to all the papers, more leaflets around town and a radio interview.

## Debate

It is suggested that in 1998 we start the debate with a group of home educated children debating with some state schooled children, as the evening is basically quite short as it is. Then we have the adults debate following the children's one. We will look into this early next year — to begin training the children.

## Support TEACH via CLEAR

CLEAR Communications have provided us with updated support forms (enclosed). So once again, make sure your local support group is incorporated so it can receive the CLEAR and Telecom support from you. If that is not possible, please consider directing your support to TEACH.

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A.L.P., 5 STOCK RD., MURCHISON, SOUTH ISLAND  
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# Coming Events

## Homeschooling Information Workshop

Saturday 22 November 1997, Windsor Park Baptist Church, 550 East Coast Bays Rd., Mairangi Bay, Auckland. \$20 per person or couple. Keynote address and 12 electives. Contact Dorinda (09) 480-6878, Lesley (09) 483-8036 or Lyn (09) 444-4998.

## Canterbury Home Educators Family Camp

28 - 30 November 1997, Hibburt Park, Spencerville, North Canterbury. Guest Speaker: Tony Cross from ERO, Wellington. Write to Chris Bell, Shands Rd., R.D. 6, Christchurch 8021 or ring Jill at (03) 352-7554.

**TEACH Leadership Forum**  
Thursday 5 February 1998, Palmerston North

**TEACH National Home Educators Athletics, Swimming & Games Competitions**

6-7 February 1998, Ross Intermediate and Freyberg High Schools, Palmerston North.

## CHomeS National Family Conference

6-7 February 1998, Freyberg High School, Palmerston North. Guest speaker: Duncan Lennox, Hastings. Contact: C & B Smith, 4 Tawa St., Palmerston North, ph/fax (06) 357-4399.

## What's Going On, Anyway?

Many *TEACH Bulletin* readers have been wondering what the fuss in the "Letters" column is all about, with various home educators saying one thing and then another about "the Federation". One can easily tell from the letters that feelings are fairly strong. There is a long and sometimes complicated history behind all this (my involvement goes back to 1986 — Ed.) which hopefully will one day be written for all to read, possibly in these very columns. It will make great reading as there will be so much to learn from it. At present, however, there are some extremely sensitive negotiations going on among the various

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produced by Kate Jaunay for the Home Educators' Network of Aotearoa (HENA)

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**Home Educators' Network of Aotearoa**  
The Home Educators' Network of Aotearoa, (HENA) was set up in April '95 as a vehicle to facilitate communication between homeschoolers and to assist us to support each other by exchanging ideas and information and sharing activities of interest.

Subscription is \$15.00 per year. This entitles you to receive a phone list of HENA subscribers throughout the country and a list of Support Group contacts, and the magazine, all published quarterly.

It is a forum for the sharing of information, resources and ideas pertinent to home schooling. We encourage all subscribers to participate. Please send your contributions (articles, letters to the editor, children's stories, poems, book reviews, pictures, want ads, for sale items, etc.) to:

Kate Jaunay, HENA Editor P O Box 11-645, Ellerslie 1131 Auckland. ph. (09) 579-8573. Reprints cost \$1.50 apiece.

actors in this home educator drama.....neither the MOE or ERO is involved.....so until the dust settles, perhaps the less said the better.

## Re-negotiate with MOE so that ERO Can Conduct Review?? No Way, José!

Representatives from a prominent home education organisation based in Auckland recently spent some time with ERO personnel and gained some very useful information. One issue in particular, however, must be challenged as otherwise it could lead to home educators being saddled with *de facto* charters. This is the reasonable sounding idea that the ERO would use the information put down in the initial exemption application as a

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## Manawatu Home Educators' Starting Out Pack

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## Canterbury Home Educators' "Getting Started in Home Schooling"

Many good tips and contacts for those just starting out. \$3. Write to Jill Hanna, 17 Rathlin St., Redwood, Christchurch.

benchmark for the Review. The home education organisation actually reporting this went on to recommend that individual home educators renegotiate their exemptions if they have significantly changed their curriculum approach since filing the exemption application!! No way!! Three reasons: 1) The MOE expects home educators to change and develop over time, so that statements in the exemption application would naturally become redundant. 2) 90.4% of home educators disagree with such a move (see page 5). And 3) the ERO has already said they want to accommodate the vast range of educational approaches used. One of the most used and valued approaches of all, used by every home educator under the sun, would be FLEXIBILITY. Being tied to exemption application statements would not enhance but only deny us our flexibility.

# Summary (Nov '97) of TEACH Bulletin Opinion Poll #3

## How would you like to see reviews of your home education programme conducted?

(This summary is based on the 136 replies received as of 12 November 1997)

1. I would like to see a range of review options from which to choose (Circle one).
- |            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| 56.6% (77) | A. Yes, I would.   |  |
| 11.8% (16) | B. I would be happy to go along with whatever reasonable review methods the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education said I had to use.       |  |
| 28.7% (39) | C. No, I don't think either the MOE or the ERO need to review my home education; the exemption application form and the statutory declarations are enough. |  |

2. Please rate **each** of the following proposed review options on this scale of 1 to 5:

1=highly favoured 2=favoured 3=not sure 4=against 5=strongly against.

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Review in my home.

1=14.7% (20)    2=33.8% (46)    3=15.4% (21)    4=15.4% (21)    5=19.8% (27)

\_\_\_\_\_ B. Review in ERO Office.

1=0% (0)    2=11.8% (16)    3=17.6% (24)    4=40.4% (55)    5=29.4% (40)

\_\_\_\_\_ C. Review at a neutral venue, such as public hall, library.

1=7.4% (10)    2=22.8% (31)    3=27.9% (38)    4=27.2% (37)    5=14.0% (19)

\_\_\_\_\_ D. Review with other home schoolers as a group.

1= 9.6% (13)    2=17.6% (24)    3=27.9% (38)    4=33.1% (45)    5=11.0% (15)

\_\_\_\_\_ E. Written reports instead of personal review.

1=17.6% (24)    2=36.0% (49)    3=18.4% (25)    4=19.1% (29)    5= 5.1% (7)

\_\_\_\_\_ F. Submit standardised test scores and examples of child's work.

1= 5.9% (8)    2=22.8% (31)    3=18.4% (25)    4=21.3% (29)    5=31.6% (43)

\_\_\_\_\_ G. Submit activity diary and examples of child's work.

1= 6.6% (9)    2=30.9% (42)    3=17.6% (24)    4=29.4% (40)    5=14.7% (20)

3. With which statement would you agree? (Circle one.)

7.4% (10)    A. If the ERO does review our home educational programme, it should do so on the basis of the information I wrote down on the initial exemption application form, since that outlines the agreement our family made with the Ministry of Education in order to get the exemption certificate.

90.4% (123)    B. If the ERO does review our home education programme, the information I wrote down on the exemption application should not necessarily be used as a basis for the review because my understanding of the educational task is constantly maturing and my child's educational needs do change from time to time.

4. If the ERO were to review my home as the learning environment for health and safety issues as well as educational issues (circle one or more as appropriate):

11.8% (16)    A. I would have no problem with it and would probably appreciate any advice and comments they may make.

78.7% (107)    B. I would strongly object since the state's interest in those areas is relevant to a state institution such as a school, but not to my private home.

35.3% (48)    C. I would want assurances that they are not "fishing" for evidence to pass on to the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare or CYPFS.

(These figures include 3.7% (5) who marked an "AC" combination, and 23.5% (32) who marked a BC combo.)

5. After receiving the exemption certificate from the Ministry of Education, the initial review should occur no sooner than (circle one):

12.5% (17)    A. six months later.

46.3% (63)    B. 12 months later.

30.9% (42)    C. 18 months later.

10.3% (14)    D. don't know.

6. The ERO has the power, when conducting reviews, to ask for and receive any copies of any documents or information on computer disks. Would you be happy for this to occur in your home? (Circle one.)

4.4% (6)    A. Yes.

72.8% (99)    B. No.

19.1% (26)    C. Don't know.

7. Here are some possible scenarios of a Review Officer in your home. Please rate how you would feel about each one according to the following scale:

1=I would welcome such a move. 2=I would agree with such a move. 3=I am not sure, but not too worried. 4=I would not agree with such a move. 5=I would oppose such a move.

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Arrive without making an appointment — just doing a “spot check”.  
1=00.0% (0) 2=0.7% (1) 3=5.1% (7) 4=18.4% (25) 5=75.0% (102)

\_\_\_\_\_ B. Arrive with a college you had not been told about.  
1=00.0% (0) 2=2.9% (4) 3=16.2% (22) 4=35.3% (48) 5=44.9% (61)

\_\_\_\_\_ C. The appointment was made with one of your children over the phone or with your answering machine.

1=00.0% (0) 2=00.0% (0) 3=3.7% (5) 4=25.0% (34) 5=70.6% (96)

\_\_\_\_\_ D. The ERO officer wants to take your child aside for a private interview.  
1=0.7% (1) 2=1.5% (2) 3=5.9% (8) 4=16.9% (23) 5=73.5% (100)

\_\_\_\_\_ E. The ERO officer wants to inspect your child’s bedroom since it contains a study area.  
1=00.0% (0) 2=5.1% (7) 3=22.8% (31) 4=14.7% (20) 5=55.1% (75)

\_\_\_\_\_ F. The ERO officer asks questions regarding safety and health issues of the child’s bedroom, the kitchen, the lounge since these were all learning areas.

1=2.2% (3) 2=5.1% (7) 3=24.3% (33) 4=19.9% (27) 5=47.1% (64)

8. There needs to be a clear set of written guidelines, procedures and protocols covering the unique review situation Review Officers face with home educators, and both Review Officers and home educators need to have copies to study before a review takes place.

93.4% (127) A. Agree.  
0.7% (1) B. Disagree.  
2.9% (4) C. Don’t know, not sure.

9. Any set of written guidelines, procedures and protocols for ERO reviews with home educators would ideally be formulated with input from several home education support groups or networks.

97.1% (132) A. Agree.  
00.0% (0) B. Disagree.  
1.5% (2) C. Don’t know, not sure.

10. Review Officers need to have special training to become aware of and to gain an appreciation for the vast range of educational philosophies, curricula and methodologies used among home educators.

91.9% (125) A. Agree.  
00.0% (0) B. Disagree.  
5.9% (8) C. Don’t know, not sure.

Once again, we find that home educators are a real mixed bag. This shows up most clearly in the responses to question two where people were asked to rank how much they would favour various real and hypothetical review options. Responses were most evenly spread over having the Review take place in the home: 48% favoured it, 35% were against it, and 15% were unsure. This “unsure” category seemed significant on all of question two, as it ranged from 15% to 28%, possibly indicating a large measure of general uncertainty as to the future implications of any review procedure. Home educators were most unsure about being reviewed at a neutral venue or along with other home educators (options C & D)! Written reports fared fairly well with a 53% approval rating, the highest of the lot. The only reasonably clear indication of anything is that going to the ERO office is not on: 70% disapproval of that option.

The greatest area of agreement was concerning ERO officer behaviour: 97% want input to establishing ERO procedures and protocols; 96% want the ERO to contact them as parents direct; 93% want to see a clear set of ERO guidelines established and would not like ERO officers just arriving without notice; and at least 90% would like to see ERO receive special training in dealing with home educators, but would not like to see ERO officers take their children to one side for a private interview or use their original exemption application as a base for conducting the review. The idea that ERO officers might be checking for health and safety issues was also highly unpopular with a 79% disapproval rating.



