

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 26

April 1999

The Minister's Education Agenda — Priorities for '99

Last month *TEACH Bulletin* reported that the Minister of Education, Hon Dr Nick Smith, announced a complete overhaul of the Education Act during what is left of 1999 (before the elections!) He intends to have a discussion document out soon. The Minister describes himself as a pragmatist, one who has never been a risk-averse politician. He clearly holds some strong ideas when he can state:

The process for approving teaching training programmes is a dog's breakfast....I've got CEAC, PPC, CUAP, and it is a bunch of CRAP. He says further: I look at the huge Act and regulations and think of my daughter Hazel who is 14 months old. They are about the same size. I can't find much in the Act or the regulations about the educational development of my daughter to a mature, contributing New Zealander over the next 20 years. I see a whole lot of prescriptive rules, and an absence of words like learning, quality, standards or excellence. Parts of the Act are older than I am. Prescriptive regulations are along the lines of: 'The annual general meeting of each Board of Trustees shall not be held prior to the fourth full moon of the year during which the dog howls...'

The Minister said in this speech to the Secondary Principals Association of NZ Conference ("...my first major speech as Minister of Education, and I have given it a lot of careful thought") that "Education is the most important area of social policy"(emphasis is his). Of his eight areas of concern, literacy and information technology are

numbers one and two. Home educators would virtually all be incorporating these into their programmes already. He has three more priorities on institutional school concerns (improving teacher quality, confronting social issues impacting on schools and enhancing school self-management). And he has three more on issues that may interest home educators (better assessing pupil learning, sorting out school qualifications and meeting the needs of special education students).

All of his comments are set within his stated philosophy to which he said he was committed: "A core belief that every young New Zealander, regardless of wealth, status or location has the right to a quality education." Few would want to argue with that statement. The problem arises when it is the state which makes this assertion, for then it becomes a right granted by the state. The historical fact that it is an obvious duty and responsibility which naturally resides with the parents is then no longer quite so obvious. If it is a right granted by the state, it must be guaranteed by the state, which may bring the state's interests in guaranteeing to children the right

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Why Are We Paid a Supervisory Allowance?

Through the Official Information Act, the Editor has received the official reasoning behind the introduction of the Supervisory Allowance to parents of full-time Correspondence School students. This is reproduced below.

All the covering letter from the Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Education, said as to why home schoolers get this same allowance was, "Ministry officials understand that, following the establishment of supervision allowance to parents of Correspondence School students in 1987, homeschooling parents lobbied for a similar arrangement to be made available to them." And of course it did become available to us once the *Tomorrow's Schools* policies of 1989 were implemented.

Why it was given to home schoolers is still a bit of a mystery. One pioneer home schooler in Canter-

bury says, "We spoke to a lot of people back then, and even earlier on a parity with the Correspondence School. Got told no way, every time. The MOE were adamant we would never be paid anything." An officer within the MoE in Wellington said they did a search under the Official Information Act once before and came up with nothing at all regarding home schoolers.

In any case, here are some excerpts from the Correspondence School's "Financial Support for Parents Assisting Correspondence School Pupils" document of 11 October 1985, signed by Ormond Tate.

The Correspondence School Parents Association has requested payment for parents who assist Correspondence School pupils with their lessons. The first re-

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Desk Copy

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to an education into conflict with the parents' perception of their duties and responsibilities in that same area. Home educators know only too

Largest Study Ever Shows Home Educators Are Tops

A study involving the scores from standardised tests taken by 20,760 U.S. home schoolers in 1998 from grades 1 to 12, showed their median scores were mostly in the 70s & 80s percentile rankings among all students nationwide who took those exams.

The study's author was Lawrence M. Rudner, director of the Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Maryland, whose own children are in the public schools.

No difference was found between students who had at least one parent with a teaching credential and those with none, both scoring over the 80th percentile overall.

There was also little difference to overall scores if parents spent less than \$200 a year or more than \$600, with the first group at the 79th percentile and the second group at the 83rd.

Full report at: <http://epaa.asu.edu>, archive V7, No. 8.

well that what the state views as necessary for an education (and therefore necessarily compulsory), is often contrary to what parents and their children view as necessary (while the compulsory element makes it at best, suspect and at worst, anathema). As an example of this, the Minister stated in reference to meeting the needs of special education students, "Wherever possible, a parent's wish should be accommodated, but it cannot be an absolute."

In his comments on priority number one, literacy, the Minister said a Literacy Taskforce had been set up to work on giving "real meaning to the goal of 'read, write and do maths' by deciding exactly what is meant."

Well, this Task Force has submitted its report. To attain the Government's stated goal:

By 2005, every child turning nine will be able to read, write, and do maths for success.

the Literacy Taskforce came up with the following:

The Literacy Taskforce recommends that a description of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that nine-year-olds demonstrate when they are reading and writing for success, together with a description of the features of appropriate texts, be developed and promulgated to teachers and parents. (Report of the Literacy Taskforce, March 1999, p. 5) They want parents' involvement.

The Taskforce suggests some possible descriptors.

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.

TEACH Bulletin is available for a subscription of \$16 per year for 11 issues (none in December) or two years for \$30.

All correspondence to:

The Editor, Craig S. Smith
4 Tawa St., Palmerston North 5301
New Zealand
Ph/Fax: +64 6 357-4399
keystone.teach@xtra.co.nz

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

Most of it is a good description of how adults should read. There are some old tricks of the trade which are being brought back such as:

- has the skills to decode (work out) words that may be familiar in spoken vocabulary but not in print using phonics (letter-sound relationships)
- understands written language features (comma, full stop, capital letters, paragraphs, and exclamation and question marks)
- is developing an awareness of the purposes of quotation marks
- is able to add, change, delete, and reorder the language to make sense, for grammar and for impact
- understands some parts of speech (word classes) and their functions, for example, noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, preposition, and adverb.

But there are some suspicious looking suggestions which seem to contradict other suggestions. For example:

- knows how to use their own background knowledge and experience to bring meaning to text

seems to contradict:

- thinks critically about what is being read, that is, can get under the surface of the words, analyses and interprets what the author is saying

In reference to his intention to overhaul the Education Act this year, the Minister mentions the Working Party on the Length of the School Day and the School Year, headed up by Margaret Austin. She and five other professionals have just this month produced a 29 page discussion document on the issue. (I won't say I can think of few issues more banal and useless to the education of children, for then you might think I was being nasty — Ed.). Finally, in an election year, it is most refreshing to read in the Minister's speech his humble reference to only the possibility of him still being Minister next year.



Trading Post



Wanted:

Little House series of books, either single or whole set.

For Sale:

Pathway Series:

- Learning Through Sounds, Gr 1, Books 1 & 2.....\$5
- First Steps reader and workbook (Preprimer).....\$6
- Days Go By reader & workbook (Primer).....\$6
- Learning Through Sounds, Teachers Ed.....\$5
- Days Go By, Teachers Ed.....\$5
- Learning Language Arts Through Literature, red book & yellow book.....\$15 each.

Contact:

Cheryl Brunke
132 McMurdo St.
Ashburton
ph (03) 308-2606

Wanted:

- Cornerstone Curriculum Project (David Quine)
- Making Math Meaningful, Level 2 or 3
- Science: The Search -- Bk 1 or 2
- Adventures in Art -- Gallery I

Contact:

Cheryl
ph. (07) 825-2900
(Ohaupo)

For Sale:

- BJU Computer Science for Christian Schools (Teachers Ed.).....\$20
- Springboard to Foreign Language Series, Spanish for Children (book & 2 cassettes).....\$20
- "Adventures with a Microscope" by Richard Headstrom.....\$5
- "The Indian How Book" by Arthur C. Parker.....\$5

Contact:

Kay Cripe
ph/fax: (07) 377-2428
tkcripe@reap.org.nz

For Sale:

- Smart Kids NZ Ltd., -Contraction Bingo Game.....\$10

Lady Bird Books:

- Fun with Spelling.....\$2
- Test your Maths.....\$2
- Sounds OK, Books 1 & 2, by Tony Walsh (Folens).....\$6 each
- Phonics in Context (Martin Education): consonants through to blends, black line masters, Teacher.....\$25

Contact:

Evelyn
ph. (03) 248-5256
Southland

Wanted:

Weaver Curriculum
Any volumes of the Weaver Curriculum Day by Day Planner and Wisdom Words.

Contact:

Carolyn Timmins
Mackenzie Settlement Rd.
R.D. 5
Palmerston North
ph. (06) 329-0972
fax (06) 329-0971

For Sale:

- Bob Jones
Maths 5, Teacher's edition and student text (Set).....\$35
- Maths 3, Student text (new)....\$15
- Getty & Dubay
Italic Handwriting
Italic A.....\$5
Italic B.....\$5
- Christian Liberty readers - Set of early readers (It is Fun to Read, Pals and Pets, A Time at Home and It is a Joy to Learn).....\$3 each or.....\$10 for the set

Wanted:

- Saxon Maths 54, 87, Algebra 1/2
- Learning Language Arts Through Literature - Orange, Green & Grey Books
- Back Yard Scientist series - any book
- A Beka Science Grade 8 - Matter in Motion in God's Universe - Student text (recent edition please).

Contact:

Gea Willemse
2 Pebble Beach Place
Howick, Auckland
Ph: 0-9-273 7133
email: mwillemse@xtra.co.nz

Allowance

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quest was made in 1950 and it has been submitted regularly since 1968.

Teaching mothers of full-time primary pupils of the Correspondence School have no choice but to bear the responsibility of supervising and giving teaching help to their children, running a normal family home, being a wife in the context of the family enterprise and denying themselves the avenues of other activities which other mothers enjoy to the full.

The family is taxed on the same basis as other families who enjoy normal schooling, but the mother receives no reward for one thousand hours of work she has to do as a result of isolation.

The work is either mandatory to her or else the family must in some way provide an alternative teacher or housekeeper involving further cost.

Failure to undertake these roles results in a truancy charge situation — undertaking the roles results in no recompense.

Parents of Correspondence School pupils: a) provide a service by assisting their children with supervision, teaching and resources; b) save the state money for these services, both capital and operating costs; c) are affected as this service encroaches on their working and home life, and prevents them from doing other things.

The payment is recompense for facilities and services provided and should be non-taxable. A graduated decreasing payment per additional child is proposed as the amount of parent time in supervision or the cost of resources and services provided does not double or treble with two or three children, as it would if the children boarded away from home.

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Allowance

The proposal is linked to the boarding bursary rather than to a teacher aide salary or to the salary of a supervisor of a Correspondence School Unit, as this seems to be a much closer parallel. Parents provide space, desk, lighting, heating, supervision of study, etc., like a boarding hostel does.

The Boarding Bursary at the time was \$980, but by the time the supervisory allowance was actually paid out two years later, another formula based on the Boarding Allowance (more research required to determine what that is/was) was used. It read:

First child: \$743 50% of Boarding Allowance + 5% GST compensation. For subsequent children the %age of the BA decreased, but the GST compensation remained.

(As an aside, on 23 April 1999 the Editor contacted Marilyn Thompson, Funding Officer of the Ministry of Education, who was able to provide the following current supervisory allowance (s.a.) payout figures but unable to explain the differences or the 5% GST compensation mentioned above.)

CS s.a.	HE s.a.	%age Diff.
\$760	\$743	2.24
646	632	2.17
533	521	2.25
380	372	2.11

CS = Correspondence School
HE = Home Educators

It can probably be assumed that the above arguments were applied to home educators when the s.a. was made available to us. The emphasis is on giving CS families an equity of instruction (the lessons and ERO reviews) and an equity of lifestyle (the monetary compensation of the s.a.) enjoyed by the conventionally schooled majority. Private school families get equity of instruction (via ERO reviews) and already have the equity of (a child-free) lifestyle. And it seems we home educators also

have the equity of instruction (via exemption applications, statutory declarations and ERO reviews) and also the lifestyle equity monetary compensation of the s.a. to make up for the non-child-free lifestyle we chose to live and prefer anyway!!

Home Education Awareness Week 11-15 October 1999

Diana Waring Visit

In the March/April 1999 issue of *The Teaching Home*, a non-commercial article about support groups says the following about Bill and Diana Waring, who will be touring NZ in the first half of September this year and from February onwards in 2000, making themselves completely available to us!

Both our beginning and veteran home school parents have been encouraged by the practical suggestions and real-life anecdotes that the Warings share for establishing a successful home school lifestyle. The Warings have dealt with the following topics with honesty and humor.

- *Learning styles and modalities (excellent hands-on approach)*
- *Organisation/scheduling/chore charts*
- *Curriculum choices*
- *Lesson planning and record keeping*
- *Effective use of the library*
- *Home schooling with preschoolers*
- *The three Rs and other subjects*
- *Computer and Internet usage*
- *Home schooling through high school*

Bill, Diana (Author of "Beyond Survival: A Guide to Abundant-Life Homeschooling") and their three teenaged children (Isaac 17, Michael 15, and Melody 13) are booked in for a seminar in South Auckland venue to be announced
Saturday 4 September 1999

and again from 9:00am - 3:30pm on
Saturday 11 September 1999
at the
Windsor Park Baptist Church
550 East Coast Rd.
Mairangi Bay, North Shore
Auckland.

Between those dates and until the 18th of September, they are free to travel anywhere in Northland and Auckland at your invitation.

They attend a YWAM course in Auckland from 18 September to 4 February 2000, and from then on are once again making themselves available to home schoolers anywhere in points south.

Coordinating their tour of the North Island are:

Craig & Barbara Smith
4 Tawa St.
Palmerston North
ph. (06) 357-4399
hedf@xtra.co.nz

Coordinating their South Island jaunt are

Ian & Dot Brown
PO Box 186
Rangiora
ph. (03) 312-8790.

Dorinda, ph (09) 480-6878
and

Lesley, ph (09) 483-8036
have been organising one-day home school seminars in Auckland for two years now, and are happy to share their knowledge, expertise and ideas with anyone who would like to stage a seminar with the Warings.

Contact any of these folks if you would like to help out with accommodation, transport or organising a meeting of any size. This really is a rare opportunity.