

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 9

September 1997

Reviews or Reports This Year ?

The Facts Are, It Depends !

One thing depends on another, and that depends on something else. Whether or not home educators will be asked to write self-evaluation reports as we did last year depends upon a number of things. An obvious one is whether or not the ERO can work out, within a suitable time frame, methodologies for a) the re-introduction of reviews and b) how the reviews are to be conducted.

Derek Miller of the MOE said on Friday 26 September that discussions were still continuing within the Ministry regarding the reports.

Whatever the case, the MOE will be contacting all home educators within three or four weeks. This would be at the same time we were contacted last year. The subject areas we may be requested to report on this year are science and social studies.

Rob Williamson of the ERO was also contacted on 26 September. He said that all home educators would be contacted by the ERO before Christmas, and that there may be a few reviews actually conducted by then, although the methodologies for that were not yet completed.

MOE Survey Results

Remember the lengthy survey forms sent to some of us (randomly selected) by the Research Unit of the MOE back in Feb/March 1996? The results have been analysed and are now available as a 32-page report. Known as the Unpublished Research Report of July 1997 and titled, "Exempt From School, but Learning at Home: An Exploratory Study of Home Schooling in Aotearoa-New Zealand", copies should be available from:

Jacqui Kerslake
Research Unit, MOE
Pvt Box 1666
Wellington

About 720 families were sent the surveys. The researchers got back 209 from families currently home

educating and 109 from families no longer home educating, a response rate of about 44%. They were not happy with this response rate nor with the fact that home educators using the Correspondence School seemed to be over-represented among the respondents. While only 9% of home educators in general use the Correspondence School, it was used by 29% of survey respondents.

The responses were in line with the kind of thing we have read elsewhere. People home educate because "they felt they could provide a better education for their children at home than that provided in a school"; "they, as parents, were unhappy with the school system and/or the teachers"; and "because of the negative

social influences present at school, including peer pressure, bullying, and differing moral or sexual values."

Mum does most of the teaching. It is usually at a desk in room or at the dining table. Socialisation was no problem. The advantages included absence of the negative peer pressure, the one-to-one tutoring, the ability to progress at the child's own pace, the obvious improvements in the children, the closer family relationships.

Disadvantages were the demand on parents, lack of competition and the cost. Only 20% commented that they would like to see some kind of monitoring, such as ERO Reviews.

Another interesting type of comment, by just under 20% of respondents, was regarding the lack of support they got from the MOE. "It would be very nice if we could gain the perception that the (Ministry of) Education was there to help us, not hinder us, so we could ask for help or advice if we needed it instead of having to hide our problems in case our exemptions are removed."

Of those children who commented, the majority were really positive about home education, how it was fun, they could work faster and learn more than at school, and how they were not made to feel stupid when asking for help.

The report makes no recommendations, but only refers to three issues raised by some of the respondents: the level of funding currently paid to home educators by the MOE; the cost of Correspondence School lessons; and the current lack of monitoring by the ERO.

Desk Copy

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.
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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.

All correspondence to:

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

Office of THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION Wellington, New Zealand

22 August 1997

Ms Christina Coward
Coordinator
Wellington Home Schooling Association
201 Melbourne Road
Island Bay
WELLINGTON

Dear Ms Coward

Thank you for your letter of 10 July 1997 concerning matters to do with homeschooling.

I have noted your comments on access by homeschooling parents to The Correspondence School. As part of its commitment to providing access to education for all New Zealand children and young persons, the Government resources The Correspondence School as a school of last resort for those parents who want access to state education but who find it impossible or impracticable to enrol their children in a regular school.

The Correspondence School is however not a school of choice. Parents who can send their children to other state schools do not have the option of choosing The Correspondence School. It follows therefore that The Correspondence School is not an option for parents who choose to move outside the state system by seeking and being granted an exemption from schooling in order to homeschool their children.

I feel obliged to comment on your understanding of the policy 'whereby parents have a choice over which school their children can attend'. The Government's policy has been to provide for choice wherever possible. It is simply not practicable for choice to be implemented as an absolute, given New Zealand's geography and the distribution of its population. Choice of state secondary school is not available in many provincial areas, and there is no choice of primary school in many rural areas. Fiscal responsibility and pressure on the finite resources of Vote-Education mean that the duplication that would ensure choice for all is simply not an option available to the Government, and particularly not in times of population growth.

As you note, homeschooling parents do have the option of purchasing course materials developed by The Correspondence School, for use in their homeschooling programme. This is a matter of personal choice and discussion of the fee for the service is properly a matter for the two parties concerned.

If enrolment at The Correspondence School or lesson material developed by them were to be available freely on request, this would completely change the nature of the School. I have in fact asked the Ministry of Education to consider the issues of the role, funding and enrolment policy of The Correspondence School as part of the 1997/8 Policy Work Programme and I expect it to report to me about the middle of next year.

The level of supervision allowance for homeschooling families, which you also discuss in your letter, is related to the supervision allowance paid to Correspondence School parents. Their children have to attend that school in order to meet the legal requirement that they enrol and attend a registered school. Any policy work which considered all the implications of a change of role for The Correspondence School would need to include consideration of the rationale for the allowance under any new regime. This would include its level, and the appropriate controls on its payment and use - for both Correspondence School parents and any possible flow on effects for homeschoolers.

The Government is unlikely to make any decision on the allowance in advance of its receipt next year of the report from the Ministry of Education on the appropriate role for the school.

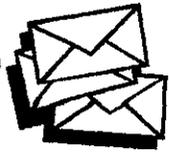
Yours sincerely


Wyatt Creech
Minister of Education

Trading Post



Letter to Editor



For Sale:

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Contact: C & B Smith, 4 Tawa St., Palmerston North, ph/fax (06) 357-4399.

I have recently written a formal letter of disclaimer to the Ministry of Education disassociating myself as an individual from the NZHSA now calling itself the Federation (there has been no legal name change).

I am now taking the opportunity to suggest that this could be a useful step for other home educators who, like me, have been feeling uncomfortable for some time and now feel a need to go one step further than merely resigning from, or not renewing subs to, the Federation.

I am willing to supply a copy of my letter to anyone who requests it but will not copy it here because it is from me as an individual and perhaps others should write according to their own feelings.

I will say however that I am concerned that the way in which the NZHSA treats its members may reflect the way they deal with officialdom and this is not how I want to be represented. I have concerns over the way business is done within the organisation - particularly the lack of accountability to

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members - outside of the AGM; as well as the unconstitutional way the last AGM was run. There are regular instances of dishonesty through omission. i.e. phone calls to support group co-ordinators that purport to be from individuals when they are in fact from people working on behalf of the Federation to set up meetings or to ask for support with Fundraising. The final straw for me was the publication of unprofessional and unpleasant newsletters which were verging on libellous.

I am really tired of the fear engendered by the actions of this group whenever people speak out. I understand things are quite different outside of Auckland and for that I am thankful. You will no doubt be wondering about the emotional stability of some of us in Auckland. Let me assure you that what we have to put up with here is totally unacceptable and just ignoring things and trying to get on regardless is not working. Having said that, I'm quite sure that I will be the next target for character assassination and am trying to view this with a sense of humour.

Yours in Home Education
Maureen Perkins
Auckland

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Kate Jaunay, HENA Editor P O Box 11-645,
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**Canterbury Home Educators'
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Many good tips and contacts for those just starting out. \$2. Write to Jill Hanna, 17 Rathlin St., Redwood, Christchurch.

**More on MMR
Vaccine**

The Soudens of Masterton very kindly sent a copy of a newsletter titled,

"What Your Doctor Will Never Tell You".

The issue on MMR is eight pages long and quotes from distinguished journals such as *The Lancet*, *New Zealand Medical Journal*, *British Journal of Medicine*, etc. Write to the newsletter c/- Private Bag MBE, P345, Auckland.

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If your local support group is not registered with either Telecom or Clear in the following way, then make sure they get registered, and make sure you are supporting them! Otherwise, you can have Telecom and/or Clear donate 5% of your toll bill to CHomeS (Christian Home Schoolers of NZ), of which TEACH Publications and *TEACH Bulletin* are a part, costing you not a penny extra.

To direct **Telecom** to send 5% of your toll bill to CHomeS, ring their toll-free number
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and say you want to support CHomeS under their School Connection Programme. CHomeS's phone number is (06) 357-4399 and the account reference number is 1089 8651.

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and say you want to support CHomeS under their Friends of the School Programme. CHomeS's phone number is (06) 357-4399.

Coming Events

National Home Schooling Awareness Week
13 - 18 October 1997. For free information pack, write: MHE, PO Box 4133, Palmerston North.

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. 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.

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TEACH Bulletin Opinion Poll #3

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

1. I would like to see a range of review options from which to choose (Circle one).
 - A. Yes, I would.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - B. Review in ERO Office.
 - C. Review at a neutral venue, such as public hall, library.
 - D. Review with other home schoolers as a group.
 - E. Written reports instead of personal review.
 - F. Submit standardised test scores and examples of child's work.
 - G. Submit activity diary and examples of child's work.
 - H. Other (please describe) _____

3. With which statement would you agree? (Circle one.)
 - 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.
 - 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):
 - A. I would have no problem with it and would probably appreciate any advice and comments they may make.
 - 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.
 - C. I would want assurances that they are not "fishing" for evidence to pass on to the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare or CYPFS.

5. After receiving the exemption certificate from the Ministry of Education, the initial review should occur no sooner than (circle one):
 - A. six months later.
 - B. 12 months later.
 - C. 18 months later.
 - 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.)
- A. Yes.
B. No.
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”.
_____ B. Arrive with a colleague you had not been told about.
_____ C. The appointment was made with one of your children over the phone or with your answering machine.
_____ D. The ERO officer wants to take your child aside for a private interview.
_____ E. The ERO officer wants to inspect your child's bedroom since it contains a study area.
_____ 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.
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.
- A. Agree. B. Disagree. 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.
- A. Agree. B. Disagree. 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.
- A. Agree. B. Disagree. C. Don't know, not sure.

**Please complete this survey as soon as you can
and post or fax the results to:**

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The more surveys we get back, the more reliable and useful are the survey results. If you would like more blank survey forms for others who do not have any, just let us know how many you want! Thanks a million!