

# Catholic Schools Affected By Report on Sexism

By KATHLEEN POWERS,  
Capitol Correspondent

All Catholic schools in the state have been sent copies of a new report from the State Education Department which recommends changes in curriculum, language and teaching materials to remove sexism from elementary and secondary education.



"Reviewing Curriculum for Sexism" is an 88-page collection of examples of sexist terms taken from textbooks now in use in the state's public

schools. It also contains information on how current educational practices and materials reinforce stereotyping, on the overbalance of male images and female tokenism in textbooks, on ways to overcome biased instructional materials and on guidelines different publishing houses have begun to rid their publications of sexism.

Dr. Janet Gilbert, chief of the bureau of secondary curriculum development for the State Education Department and one of the two persons responsible for preparing the report, said that Catholic schools as well as public and private schools in the state will be encouraged to review their teaching materials for sexism. How well the suggestions made in the report are carried out in the Catholic schools will depend on local implementation.

Dr. Gilbert said her office is receiving many requests from school districts to have state officials go out to the schools to explain the suggestions to teachers. If and when the officials are able to get on the road to visit the schools, they will visit Catholic schools too.

One change the report suggests

is to avoid using the male pronoun "he" as well as words like "mankind," "primitive man," "manhood" and "chairman" and instead substitute collective words, such as "they," "humanity," "primitive peoples," "adulthood" and "moderator."

"Language usage and vocabulary are important conveyers of a society's prevailing value system. Use of unequal terms for the two sexes, consistent positioning of one sex before the other, labels which degrade or denigrate, even the assumption that 'One' is always 'he,' are all devices which denote one sex as of more worth than another," said the report.

Women should be referred to by their own names, and unnecessary emphasis on woman's marital status should be avoided, according to the report. A woman should always be referred to by the name by which she chooses to be known, including the title Ms. or Mrs. or Miss.

In a section of the report on balance and imbalance, the report said that history has overemphasized male achievement, especially military and political events. "If a girl is to have learning experiences which

develop a positive attitude of self-worth, she must see other females as having power, making significant contributions, sharing in the joys or sorrows of the events of past and present. Boys also must experience this kind of curriculum."

Research done by three teachers from the Rochester area for the report shows that the higher the grade level, the more male-oriented the state mathematics publications have tended to be. For example, one reviewer found that on four pages of one book there were a total of 16 math problems of which eight had references to male participants and none contained female references.

The researchers found that most science publications reviewed use male pronouns in referring to science teachers, and most science experiments show boys participating. One reviewer found 13 instances of pages on which boys were performing experiments; she finally found one page in which a girl was participating.

"Reviewing Curriculum for Sexism" was published at the suggestion of a task force on equal opportunity for women that Ewald Nyquist, commissioner of education, established two years ago after the Regents published their position paper, "Equal Opportunity for Women."

## Parent Power In Education

By JOAN M. SMITH

New rulings by the Supreme Court have given parents access to their children's school records which at one time were the exclusive property of the educational system. This and other recent legislative turns of events has inspired the term "parent power."

This reversal in legislative trends, however, is just a small crack in the education/government combine that directs a child's education.

Brother Thomas P. Draney, field representative for the Catholic Schools Administrators Association of New York State, in his five part series, "Parent Power in Education," gives parents an insight into what their power is and should be.

Brother Draney describes "parent power" as the right to decide what is best, proper, and important for their child's education and the means to implement this decision.

The articles also outline this power in practice: parents when they see serious deficiencies in personal, moral, and spiritual development of the child through values learned in school should be able to apply a remedy; parents can make basic decisions and then implement them through freedom of choice; urban poor parents could when schools in their area are physically unsafe, morally unsound, and academically unproductive band together to correct the situation; parents should determine what is best for the child's education, and if warranted, be able to shop around and choose the education that is best available.

Who is the Prime Educator; The Religion Taught in "Public Schools; Freedom of Belief-the American Way; and Parent Power what it is Not, are the issues that Draney tackles in his in-depth report on the complexities of the education system and the laws that guide it.

Draney advises that "parents must recognize that there are entrenched forces — vested interests in education, in government-sponsored; in church-sponsored and truly private education that will not contribute to a speedy introduction of any measures that promote parent power; parents, if they want the right to exercise their rights had better be prepared to organize and start promoting their own interests!"

### Education

Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave.

-Attributed to Henry Peter, Lord Brougham [1828]

## Girls to Speak

Patricia Kowalik, a senior at Bishop Kearney High School and Carol Ann Corbit, a senior at Cardinal Mobney High School will tell of their experiences and impressions of Empire Girls' State at the Monroe County American Legion Auxiliary meeting on August 15 at the Forty and Eight Club.

Empire Girls' State is a week-long session on youth citizenship

and politically oriented training concerned with the processes of state government which affords the girls the opportunity of living together and learning about the processes of state and local government, elections and the running of campaigns.

Patricia was sponsored by the Warner Claudius Unit of Irondequoit. Ira J. Jacobsen Unit of Charlotte sponsored Carol Ann Corbit.

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