

Urge Teens to Read

There is a growing awareness, nationwide, of the importance of reading. Parents and educators alike voice concerns about the fact that young people do not seem to read as much as they used to.

According to Dr. Lou E. Burmeister, Professor of Education and coordinator of Reading Education at the University of Texas at El Paso, there are two kinds of students who don't read as much as we would like. There are those who can read but will not, and those who don't read because they read very poorly.

Parents who are concerned about their high school student's lack of interest in reading should first find out which kind of a student he or she is. Past school performance will probably be one indication.

If the student has a consistently poor performance record in classes such as English, science, math and social studies, it may mean that he or she needs help in developing the reading skill necessary to cope with the required texts.

In most cases, the students' reading skills are adequate. There are more capable readers who don't read than there are poor readers.

Recent studies conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress reveal that 87 per cent of all 17 year olds surveyed are considered "functionally literate." That is, they can read well enough to cope in today's world.

"It is unfortunate that we often forget that many students of today read extremely well — way above grade level. This is a tribute to good teaching and concerned parents," says Dr. Burmeister.

In either case, there are things that parents can do to help their teenagers read

better or read more. Dr. T. Stevenson Hansell, assistant professor of Secondary Reading at the University of Delaware, suggests a few:

"Listen to your teenagers to find out what their interests are, then provide reading material on those topics.

"Books about popular figures such as sports personalities or rock stars are usually interesting to teenagers. Find books written about or adapted from popular movies or television shows

"Go to the library. Ask the librarian's advice about the most popular books and then bring some home.

"Talk to your teenagers about books and articles you are reading. They will get the idea that reading is a source of information and pleasure.

Mooney Student in Pageant

Cheryl Ann Mattle, a student at Cardinal Mooney, has been selected as a finalist to represent Rochester in the New York State Miss United Teenager Pageant

The state pageant will be held Sept. 9-11 at the Sheraton Gatehouse Motor Inn. The winner will receive a week's trip to Washington, D.C. in December to compete in the national pageant

The Miss United Teenager Pageant is designed to recognize outstanding young girls within the state's many communities for their scholastic and civil achievement.

Poor Writing Skills

According to a recent article in the New York State Education Department's Inside Education, a rumble of discontent has been building in the U. S. during the past few years about an apparent decline in the writing ability of children, particularly teenagers. It has been pointed out that the average scores on the verbal portion of the Scholastic Aptitude tests serve as an indicator of the slippage.

A 1974-75 study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) caused shock waves throughout the nation by indicating that students ages 9, 13 and 17 were experiencing great difficulty expressing their ideas. The students themselves bemoan the difficulties they have when they enter college and, faced with a variety of writing assignments, feel inadequately prepared to deal with these tasks

Because of this situation, no other recent development in English education is capturing nationwide public interest and attention as rapidly as the increased emphasis now being placed on writing skills from kindergarten through graduate school.

According to Robert Carruthers, chief of SED's Bureau of English Education, New York State schools are responding quite well to this writing skills challenge and by the time students graduate from the state's high schools, the majority are well prepared to deal with the challenges of their continuing education or their careers. Most schools are responding in some way, from acquainting teachers with new and useful classroom techniques to updating the entire K-12 writing program.

Enrichment Courses Part of School Life

Geneva — St. Stephen's School in Geneva will open in September with new faces. Joining the faculty are Miss Mary Sabine who will teach sixth grade and Miss Mary Kuryla and Mrs. Kathleen Smith who will be teaching seventh grades.

The Art Department will also have a new look. Mrs. Debbie Dieteman will take over the program which was begun four years ago, enriching the classroom art in grades K-8. St. Stephen's Mothers' Club has been responsible for financing this important part of the school curriculum.

Students from the kindergarten through eighth grade will enjoy gym classes two periods each week. DeSales High School makes available their gym facilities for this program. Mrs. Lorrie Morrin, Physical Education teacher, knows her students are behind her. During the past year they collected 25,000 Campbell Soup labels in an effort to equip this program and the Mothers' Club contributed in launching the project.

Liturgy is an important part of student life at St. Stephen's. Each month, one grade is responsible, under

the guidance of Mrs. Claudia Zeck, for the planning of the school First Friday Mass. Hymns, readings, intentions and offertory processions, are chosen by the group. A school Mass will open the new year on Friday morning, Sept. 9

Lawmaker Seeks 'Humanism' Ban

Harrisburg, Pa. (RNS) — Legislation that would prohibit teaching of secular humanism in Pennsylvania public schools has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Stewart J. Greenleaf.

The bill would add a paragraph to the religious literature section of the Public School Code. It would provide that "no course of study advocating or teaching the beliefs of secular humanism as defined by either the Humanist Manifesto I of 1933 or the Humanist Manifesto II of 1973 may be introduced or studied as a required course of study or as part of any other required course of study."



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