from Phyllis Schlafly

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The Arrogance of the Public School Establishment

Just suppose that the so-called Religious Right placed one of its own as superintendent of the New York public school system, who then tried to install a curriculum disparaging homosexuality or depicting the "Ozzie and Harriet" family as society's norm. It's easy to imagine the orgy of sanctimonious indignation against "imposing values" on schoolchildren that would stream forth from the fax machines of People for the American Way, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Education Association.

Now put the shoe on the other foot. The trendy liberals have placed one of their own as chancellor of New York's public schools, Joseph A. Fernandez, who has implemented a 445-page "multicultural" curriculum cal1ed "Children of the Rainbow." It requires first-grade teachers to "include references to lesbians/gay people in all curricular areas" and insists that same-sex "parents" deserve the same dignity as a married mother and father.

When the nine-member loca1 school board of District 24, which was elected from a multi-ethnic, working-class neighborhood in Queens, superseded the two offending pages, Fernandez just "fired" the board and appointed three of his own employees to run the district!

Under New York City's unique decentralization structure, the 32 community school boards are supposed to be in charge of curriculum at the elementary and middle schools. Fernandez attempted to justify his unprecedented action by saying it is a matter of "policy," not curriculum. But what's the point of electing a school board if it can't make a decision like this?

District 24 parents and school board president Mary A, Cummins have read the curriculum and they won't accept it, no matter what it is called. Mrs. Cummins calls it "dangerously misleading homosexual/lesbian propaganda" which undercuts religious and moral value. A gutsy grandmother, she led a huge demonstration standing on top of a truck outside of Fernandez's office.

One of the first-grade readers recommended by the Rainbow curriculum, "Heather Has Two Mommies," describes how two lesbians became mommies: one of them was artificially inseminated by a "special doctor to the liberal oligarchy that runs the public schools, any parent who tries to protect first graders from this information deserves to be attacked -with the epithets "censor," "right-wing fundamentalist," and "enemy of the public schools."

“Daddy's Roommate,” which pictures Daddy and his male roommate in bed together, is another book sanctioned as a first-grade reader. A third reader in the Rainbow collection is “Gloria Goes to Gay Pride.”

Before this flap, Fernandez was principally known as the man who started condom distribution in the public schools. Last year, he began distributing condoms in New York’s 120 high schools, thumbing his nose at parents who protested.

After all, why should parents have anything to say about it! Big Daddy Fernandez is the “expert,” and he refused to let parents opt-out their children from this controversial experiment! He has similar contempt for members of the city-wide school board who disagree with him, calling Ninfa Segarra, the board's Bronx representative, "a political- prostitute'! when he didn't like her vote on condom distribution.

So much for “diversity” and “respect for other people's values and opinions.” Diversity, respect and multiculturalism apparently don't extend to the culture of the parents in Queens who are attempting to preserve traditional middle-class family values in a hostile city.

Speaking of culture, Fernandez's autobiography, published by Little,

Brown and just released to the press, describes how he regularly snorted and injected heroin for years as a teenage dropout on the streets of Harlem, more than once passing out from a near overdose. He certainly is a man from the streets of New York, and his foul language, ungrammatical English, and what some call his “abusive temper” have stayed with him.

Fernandez's own New York City school board finally realized that he had gone too far and voted 6-to-0 (with one abstention) on December 9 to reinstate the nine-member board in District 24. The New York Tines, which had editorialized that Fernandez “was right to act decisively” in firing the Queens school board and that he “stands tall” in his battle against parents, reported as surprising that even the mayor’s own appointees would not back Fernandez in this dispute.

In a typically biased news report, the Times resorted to a religious slur, calling the Queens school board “all white, conservative and Roman Catholic.” (Try substituting a different race, ideology and religion for the Times language and you will see how offensive it is.)

Most of the newspaper articles reporting the “Rainbow” controversy noted that Fernandez is prominently mentioned as a possible appointee to the Department of Education in the Clinton Agroinfiltration. I wonder which of Fernandez's unique attributes makes him so attractive to President-elect Clinton.