from Phyllis Schlafly

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School Outrages in Michigan

The determination of the Michigan public school establishment to force classroom discussions of explicit sex on children is astounding. The Michigan public schools have no regard for parental rights, no regard for the child's latency period, and no regard for traditional canons of privacy and modesty.

This month's outrage was the 4-1 decision of the Birmingham, Michigan school board to make teaching about homosexuality a part of the schools, sex education curriculum despite vigorous opposition from parents including former Governor George Romney. Birmingham apparently aspires to be right behind New York City, where Chancellor Joseph Fernandez is trying to force a homosexuality-inclusive curriculum called "Children of the Rainbow" on school district 24 in Queens over the opposition of the principal.

Last month's Michigan outrage was an il1egal sex education test concealed behind an innocuous academic title, the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) health test. Consisting of 60 multiple choice questions, it was administered in all of the states 565 school districts; but in 71 schools, it contained 15 additional questions about sex.

Some of the questions given to l5-year-olds are too indecent to print in a family newspaper. A couple of the questions required first-hand knowledge of exactly how a condom is used before, during and after intercourse.

A couple of questions involve encouraging students to circumvent their parents. One question follows the theme of typical "abuse awareness" curricula in scaring children that they may be sexually abused by a family member.

Michigan has a state law requiring that parents must be notified in advance of the content of any sex education courses, be given a prior opportunity to review the materials to be used, and be notified of the right to excuse their children from the class. Not only was this law not complied with, but the sex test was given to some children whose parents had already opted then out of sex education.

These recent abuses will add fuel to the controversy already boiling over the Michigan Model for Comprehensive Schoo1 Health Education. This curriculum was the subject of a year-long investigation by a select committee of the Michigan State Senate.

After hearing testimony from hundreds of parents who oppose the Michigan Mode1, the just-completed Senate committee report is a superior summary of what's wrong with our failed public school system. In a previous column, I listed some of the committee's findings and recommendations, and now I would like to list the "main parental objections" found worthy of inclusion in the Senate committee report.

1. Through the process variously called values clarification or decision-maki.ng, the Michigan Model teaches students to decide for themselves what is right and wrong in al} kinds of risk-taking situations, especially those involving sex and substance abuse. The student is never told that anything is wrong, not even when it is iIIega1 (such as underage drinking).

2. Many parents believe that Michigan Model lessons on sex actually encourage teenage pregnancies, and that the lessons on AIDS could actually contribute to young people getting the disease. The curriculum teaches children so-ca1Ied "safe-sex" practices, assuming that they cannot control their sexual urges, and the schools label anyone a "religious fanatic" who advocates sexual self-control for youth.

3. The Michigan Model lessons include regular invasions of family and student privacy. Every child's innermost feelings about life and about self, and anything that any child perceives as "stress" in his family home, is considered a topic for discussion by other students in the classroom.

4. The Michigan Model uses classroom teachers as amateur psychotherapists experimenting on their students. The Senate report states that the curriculum "looks like psychotherapy, sounds like it, feels like it and is intended to have the same results." There is no excuse for allowing amateurs to conduct unlicensed psychotherapy in the classroom.

5. The Michigan Model includes exercises and practices that are commonly associated with the New Age religious practices. Parents complained that some practices put students in danger of being hypnotized.

The Senate committee discovered that 40 percent of, the Michigan Model’s “learning objectives” for ages 5 to 13 are psychological rather than academic. It’s no wonder that children can't read, write, spell, add or subtract, when such a large portion of the school day has been turned over to playing with their feelings and emotions rather than improving their minds.