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WOMEN'S EQUITY EXTRAVAGANZAS

If Ronald Reagan needs any documentary evidence to bolster his resolve to abolish the Department of Education, he can find it in the 1980 annual report of the Women's Educational Equity Act Program. Here is a handful of the 70 grants totalling $7,307,453 of our tax dollars which WEEA handed out last year.

WEEA gave $103,025 to the Council on Interracial Books for Children in New York for "EMBERS (Equity Models for Basal Readers)." This was to develop readers for grades 3 and 5 "especially designed to increase student understanding of the need for sex, race and handicap equity in education." WEEA is frank about the purpose: "The uniqueness of the project lies in the fact that it represents the first attempt to create a feminist model of a basic elementary textbook and to create positive examples of what feminists want in basic elementary reading textbooks."

WEEA gave $89,183 to the Orange County (FL) School Board to "eliminate sex segregation at the pre-school level" because "the earliest intervention possible is needed." The project is to develop a Manual "designed to increase awareness of sex stereotypes of preschool administrator and parents, as well as specific nonsexist techniques and skills which teachers may use in the classroom."

WEEA gave $98,285 to Berkeley Productions, of Berkeley, CA for a project called "New Partnerships" designed "to change high school seniors' attitudes." The project "will produce three half-hour filled dramas and a curriculum in order to explore these issues with high school seniors. Attitude change in young men will be a particular focus, to assist them in accommodating to women's participation in the labor force and ensuing 'new partnerships' in family life."

WEEA gave $46,419 to the University of Delaware for "reducing invisible discrimination in educational institutions." The purpose of "this action-research project is to develop informational materials and a procedural model to sensitize education decision-makers to the psychological mechanisms which cause unconscious, unintentional discrimination against women in education ... which occurs in unconscious neural processing of information."

WEEA gave $110,889 to the Rural Alternatives Institute of Huron, SD to develop "(1) a Title IX Handbook for Children (grades K-3), (2) a Title IX Implementation Resource Book for Parents, (3) a Title IX Puppet Kit, (4) a Sex-Equity Teacher Center Guidebook, (5) a Title IX Media Blitz Kit, (6) a Title IX Implementation Guidebook for Rural Schools."

WEEA gave $35,925 to Joan T. Casale to write three one-act plays called "Movers and Shakers." Each play must have a cast of three women and one man.

WEEA gave $146,049 to Creative Resources Institute of New York for "Child-Focused Media Packages to Address Sex Stereotypes in Pre-School Children." The project's goal is to probe "the world of 4-5 year olds for motivational catalysts that can be imaginatively turned into a logical series of bias-free vignettes."

WEEA gave $99,420 to the University of Virginia School of Education for "Project RAMP" for "children (3-8 years) who will participate in workshop and play experiences." The project produced three manuals "to reduce elements of sex-role socialization which have, in the past, been fostered through play and the social reinforcers inculcated during childhood."

WEEA gave $137,016 to the Los Angeles Unified School District Commission for Sex Equity for a project called "Aequus III (pronounced "eh-kwis" -- Latin word for equality) to develop a model program for influencing leaders in educational policy and administration."

WEEA gave $94,289 to the Educational Sport Institute in Chevy Chase, MD for a project called "The Missing Link in the Development of Coed Physical Education Classes." It seeks to "reduce sex-biased attitudes, change teacher behavior to reduce sex role stereotyping."

WEEA gave $160,004 to the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund for a "Grassroots Action Campaign" to train people in "how to build a broad-based coalition, how to use the press to promote sex equity, and how to convince school leaders to move sex equity to the top of their agendas."

WEEA gave $141,443 to Rutgers University Women's Studies Institute to implement coeducation in the middle school through "physical activities such as jogging, mass games, aerobics, volleyball, dance, weight training and gymnastics. Health units will focus on sex education, sex roles, and parenting and family living."

Somehow the feds have lost sight of the fact that the best service which schools could provide to girls (and boys) would be to teach them how to read and write, add and subtract.

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