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HOW SCHOOLS ALIENATE CHILDREN FROM PARENTS

Are the schools in your area pro-parent or anti-parent? Anyone with a child attending school should take time to evaluate the school and its curriculum in order to find out the answer to that question.

The reason it is necessary to ask such a question is that, in the seven days of Hearings held across the country in March 1984 by the U.S. Department of Education, much testimony was presented about courses which directly or indirectly alienate children from their parents, from their authority and from their value system. Let's take some examples.

Witness Ann McClellan from Tucson testified: "In an exercise in a high school Health class, the teacher taught the normalcy of hating your parents. At the beginning of the unit, she asked, 'How many of you hate your parents?', and about three students indicated that they did. At the end of her very effective presentation, she asked the question again, and all but three students raised their hands."

Mrs. McClellan went on to describe a classroom exercise in which her daughter "was required to defend her religion and values under extreme ridicule from the group leader and from her peers." She told of another occasion when a teacher, choosing from a list of 19 subjects, talked for a half-hour "on how to deal with parents who embarrass the you-know-what out of you."

Witness Marcy Meenan from Pittsburgh, a cluster chairperson for parent representatives in the Pittsburgh public schools, told how many parents complained about the diaries which their children are forced to write. One mother told how she discovered that her daughter had written in her diary that she was angry with her mother and that she "wanted to kill her." The teacher had responded to this by writing in red ink in the margin of the child's diary, "Don't kill her, just punch her out."

Witness Archie Brooks displayed a questionnaire given to schoolchildren in Oregon which included the anti-parent questions: "Would you rather live with someone else?

Would you like to have different parents? What chores do you have at home on a regular basis? Why did your parents get married? Do your parents ever lie to you?"

Naturally, many parents were upset at this invasion of student and family privacy. So was witness Angela Hebert who told about a film shown in school on "how a little boy could get away with disobeying his mommy."

Witness Marcella Warila of Oregon told how, in a class called a "Risk-Taking Workshop," 14-year-old pupils were told: "Your parents' values are different from yours. They grew up at a different time and have a different field of experience."

Mrs. Warila testified that the teacher told the pupils that they (the pupils) "are beginning to take risks, that is, make decisions that their parents might not approve, that they are running into conflicts with their parents, and that up to now, their parents have 'got away with' directing or controlling them." She said that "every mention of parents was negative."

According to Mrs. Warila, the teacher told the pupils that, "in making decisions, one of the things they need to evaluate is loss of support of people who are close to them. She said that, when their beliefs are bombarded by a sufficient number of opposing beliefs, their entire set of values will be shifted and be replaced by a new set of values."

Witness Michael Lisac told how a course in the Oregon schools called Transactional Analysis for Teens "devastates the relationship between parents and children." The course taught the children "how to bring out the 'parent' in people. For example, they could do this by destroying things of value. The middle finger in the air is an excellent way to bring parents down on you. Spilling things consistently, over and over and over, is another example of bringing out the 'parent.'"

Witness Joanne Lisac told how her son was taught at school, in a course in Transactional Analysis, to apply "the principle of 'playing stupid' at home whenever his Dad or Mother gave him a chore to do." Mrs. Lisac told how third graders were given this question for group discussion: "How many of you ever wanted to beat up your parents?"

It looks like it has become necessary for parents to debrief their children every day after school to find out if the child is being taught to be anti-parent.