

Teacher Asks For Guidelines For Family Life Course

Health education in the schools was the chief concern of the York County Board of Education's Area 4 advisory educational committee on February 25.

Reporting to a meeting of the board on March 15, the committee's secretary, Russell MacDonald, superintendent of the area, summarized a presentation by Kelvin Tonner, head of physical education at Bayview Secondary School in Richmond Hill and reported that the committee executive will invite chairmen and secretaries of other area committees to a meeting to further discuss some of the ideas presented.

PARENTS FAILING
Mr. Tonner expressed concern that parents are abdicating their responsibilities for instructing their children in morals, personal relationships, health, etc. and stated that teachers feel that they must assume responsibility when the parents fail to do so.

He pointed out that teachers find it difficult to decide how far they should go in dealing with topics related to sex at different levels. He referred specifically to a film on child birth which is being shown to senior students at his school.

Some members of the committee felt that many parents are serious about their responsibilities and are concerned that the school is attempting to perform functions that rightfully belong to them.

It was suggested that, rather than attempting to present formal instruction on sex, the school could teach the concept of love and mutual respect; that the disintegration of the family as a unit is the source of many problems and that dealing with emotional problems is important.

Often, he said, prescribed programs are not adapted or readily adaptable to the questions that concern the students. Clear guidelines are lacking on treatment of touchy topics. There is a lack of co-ordination from school to school and through the grades.

Mr. Tonner spoke of issues which might be called "Family Life" or "Behavioral Studies" which are part of the program of health education.

HOW FAR CAN WE GO?
These include sex, social diseases, early pregnancies, drug use, and abuse, violence, alcoholism. These he cited as evidence of a sick or unhealthy life which seems to be relatively unaffected by the health education program in the classroom.

There are wide variations in the standards of behaviour which are accepted in our society, and the teacher can only exert an influence according to the standards which he personally holds. Mr. Tonner pointed out. Schools need guidelines to be established which will regulate the level of involvement in the problems, and the curriculum committees on health and physical education have a role to play.

CONFLICTING GOALS
At an earlier meeting of the committee, Mr. Tonner outlined some of the factors limiting more effectiveness in teaching health in the schools. These included conflict of

goals, attitudes and cultures of individual students; peer group pressures; faith in quick and magic cure-alls; soft living; indifference and disbelief; conflicts in interest between participation in physical activities and study of health topics.

What protection is there for the conscientious teacher who meets conscientious parental objection, asked Mr. Tonner.

He showed the committee the range of printed material, films, texts and programs available for teachers' use as well as resource periodicals for students.

In accepting the reports, trustees agreed that the questions posed by the committee should be studied further.

Trustees Approve School Building Projects

York County Board of Education approved two building projects at its meeting March 8—a new elementary school in Newmarket, and an addition to the Schomberg School.

The \$736,170 Rogers School in Newmarket will serve a new development in that community. The \$42,890 contract for the Schomberg addition includes renovations to the present building, including the original school built in 1927 and addition built in 1966.

In a recent report to the board, the school was described as having poor heating facilities, and walls in "fair" condition.

WILLOWDALE: School Board Chairman Dr. Lynn Trainor is off for a 21-day tour of cities in Eastern Europe and Russia for university administrators, professors and education leaders. The North York board is paying the fare as well as that of Assistant Director of Education Ken Mawson who will go on a tour for public school administrators in November. Total cost of the two tours is \$2,590.



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