ELEUSIS: THE SECONDARY SCHOOL IDEAL

Phi Delta Kappa's Task Force on Compulsory Education and Transitions for Youth will publish a platform statement this fall under the title, The New Secondary Education: A Phi Delta Kappa Task Force Report. This article is adapted from Chapter Four of the book.

WARNING: The last paragraphs of this article tend to shock or anger educators. Careful consideration of the author's purpose, however, should immunize you against these reactions.

The Phi Delta Kappa Task Force on Compulsory Education and Transitions for Youth first became interested in Eleusis Community School when one of our members circulated a report from the Carleton Register (September 25, 1975) in which a student, speaking to the local Rotary Club about a program for retarded children, referred to his school's constitution. Thinking of the revolutionary Bill of Rights printed in the underground literature of the sixties, we were surprised by this passage:

"The articles [of our constitution] called the Rights and Responsibilities of Students give us freedom to come and go from the school whenever we want to, after we're 14, but hold us responsible for reaching certain levels in a number of skills and for accomplishing certain tasks each year. One task requires us to form a team of five to 10 students and then work together to identify someone in our community who needs help, and to provide the service they need.

"Our team feels the retarded children at the Cedars spend too much time indoors, out of sight and out of contact with the community. So, with the help of Mr. Selwood, the resident psychiatrist, and Karen Parkins's father, we've designed a community recreation program for them... We hope you can give us the thousand dollars we need to rent a bus pretty regularly during the summer to get those kids around," Banek concluded.

The idea of a school constitution caught our interest. The emphasis on student responsibilities, as well as their rights, was a major concern in our own discussions. Voluntary attendance after 14, coupled with mandatory achievement, seemed an interesting variation on the compulsory education issue the task force had been charged to consider. And the kinds of tasks mentioned in the newspaper article suggested that the school authorities had found a way to stimulate the kind of community involvement, student initiative, practical learning, and value-oriented preparation for citizenship we were seeking. We telephoned the principal — actually, the director — of Eleusis, Austin Pelman, and arranged for two task force members to visit. It proved to be an important decision.

The school, we discovered in our morning tour, is not a single building but a collection of varied sites for many kinds of learning activities for differing groups of students and adults at various times. The Center, as the original high school building is referred to, is a clearinghouse for both staff and student operations. The main floor has been gutted to create a large library, resource center, and study space. The second floor consists mainly of classrooms converted into offices where students arrange to use the many other sites for learning, and into study rooms for work in the basic skills, although computer training and several other skill programs are offered at nearby Carleton Junior College.

The consultant in the Work-Experience Office showed us the files of all the places in town and in the surrounding countryside where senior students could complete their task in on-the-job experience. The year is broken into four three-month periods. Students can visit as many sites as they wish but must sign up for two work periods during their last three years. The selection is vast. Almost every business, professional, and community service offers on-the-job training and experience. We visited a trucking firm recently established in Carleton and found two students working in the office and four in the maintenance and repair shop. Why does the firm go to this trouble and expense? Pelman explained:

"It’s not just community spirit, though that certainly seems to be developing as a result of the changes we’ve made in the last three years. We offer incentives to

MAURICE GIBBONS is professor of education, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada. He was chairman of the Phi Delta Kappa Task Force on Compulsory Education and Transitions for Youth, which completed the first phase of its work last fall. Mr. Gibbons is the author of a classic Kappa article, “Walkabout: Searching for the Right Passage from Childhood and School,” May, 1974. It has been widely reprinted and was the inspiration for a newsletter, Walkabout, now published by Phi Delta Kappa with financial support from the Rockefeller Family Fund. Readers may obtain copies free of charge by addressing Willard Duckett, editor, in care of Phi Delta Kappa.
business, and we’ve tied them to participation in community education. No license is issued without a signed agreement to provide work for students, instruction on the job, and a rather vague thing we’ve called working relationships with adults. The state as well as local governments helped establish and enforce this regulation on an experimental basis. Besides tax incentives, newcomers now find benefits in the pool of trained people they can hire from among our graduates. That gave us a lever with established business. And once companies began signing up, it became an act against the community not to participate.

Students conduct on-the-job studies of various kinds, assisted by a staff member from the school or the work setting. Some perform job-related background research or training. Some identify problems faced on the job, study them, and develop workable solutions. Others study closely the job they perform.

Post-elementary education is divided into junior and senior segments, each of which can be completed in either two or three years. The senior segment involves self-directed study of a core of skills and a series of tasks in each of the following areas: service, work experience, imaginative expression, physical challenge, and something called Query, which is a problem-solving task requiring research and field work. These task activities can be conducted in every available space in the community and, as at least 20 Eleusis students have apparently demonstrated, in any part of the world.

In addition, there is a catalogue of short-term courses, workshops, and events open to all members of the community. A certain portion of these activities is required of all students. For instance, all seniors are required to participate in one of the five-week interpersonal skills workshops offered twice yearly, and some may be required to return for a second session. Each year, all must sign up for at least five of the many cultural events — theater, dance, art exhibits, and musical performances — arranged in cooperation with the Carleton Community Arts Council.

A fairly familiar program of traditional courses is also offered for those who prefer or need more direction and structure. Our guides reported that the number of students in this category dropped each year as a “Can’t you make it on your own?” attitude developed. Several courses continue to expand their enrollments, however, and three have had to offer more sections. The reason: “He (or she) is just a great teacher, and I’m interested in the subject.”

In addition to the new task-skills program and the traditional program, there is a third alternative route to high school graduation called Options. No matter how well planned, a program cannot embrace all the possible and desirable ways to learn, nor can it accommodate the diverse abilities and interests of all the people enrolled in it. To accommodate the exceptional person and the exceptional opportunity, the Carleton Educational Council developed the Options program, which is run by a small committee with representatives from business, community services, and the school who are empowered to consider any student proposal for an alternative approach to the secondary segment or a portion of it. The committee has three tasks: to approve or reject the proposal, to determine credit toward graduation which an approved option receives, and to arrange support for the student where necessary and possible. One student, whose father was sent to Brazil for a year, arranged to study the language and culture there. Another student, who became interested in computers while working on a skills program at the local junior college, arranged to take three courses in computer programming and technology. As a result of their performance, several students working on senior segment tasks received offers from their employers to do further work and studies. As Pelman puts it, “We want to be in a position to legitimize any opportunity for a young person to learn and develop.

Our job is to facilitate, not to hinder.” As a result, the committee is expanding so that it can help students identify the options they want and find suitable placements.

The junior segment of the program is quite different but is designed to prepare students for the senior segment. The overall plan is called Differential Schooling. Janet Axeford, junior levels director, explained:

Our junior high schools were the most disastrous and inappropriate schools in the district. We have to have a whole pattern of tracks, subjects, 40-minute classes, and seven periods a day. We weren’t getting anywhere with them anyway. Going from the modern elementary school to that baloney slider was the grossest culture shock of all. We wanted to increase the intensity, the duration, and the variety of learning experiences, so we divided the year into two-month blocks, gave each school or site a different focus, and required all students to attend all eight sites in as few as 16 months or as many as 36 months. We also require a minimum of three training sessions in self-directed skill development. These are run concurrently with the other programs so that students learn how to learn the basics. They have to be a whole function on their own in the senior levels. Many need more than three. It’s still a little shaky, but I think the ideas are coming, now that we’ve realized you really can do things very differently but as well or better.

During the day we heard both students and adults talk about the Wilderness Center, one of the junior level differentiated schools. Unfortunately, it was too far out of town for us to visit, but we learned it is a remote farm which the school board was able to purchase at a reasonable price. Initially, students lived in tents and devoted part of each week to converting the barn into a wilderness study center and meeting hall and to constructing bunkhouses, two of which are now completed. Living in the shelters in coeducational “families” or teams, along with a staff member and a parent or teacher, students cook their own meals and plan part of their day together. The program involves anthropology, archaeology, geography, astronomy, botany, zoology, and ecology — all studied in the field. In addition, students manage the stock and varied crops on the farm — from which
they gain much of their food—and they practice wilderness management and conservation in the uncleared acreage. These group activities provide a framework for more specific individual studies and projects.

One of the girls told us, “The scary part is when you go out alone for two days with hardly any food, and when the first night comes, and it gets dark and cold.” Answering our questions, she revealed that she went out three times, even though only once was required. She said, “The first time I went because I had to, the second time to prove I could do it on my own, the third time to get away from the family for a while and straighten out some of the hassles in my head.” Other outdoor activities include back-packing, orienteering, river canoeing, mountain climbing, and working with the younger children who come out for shorter visits during the week. While the community campfire programs at which each family entertained the others seemed to be the most pleasant memory, the adventure challenge at the end seemed the source of greatest personal pride.

We visited the Center for Fine, Applied, and Performing Arts (FAPA) but could not see much because most of the students were out on introductory experiences with musicians, artists, actors, craftsmen, newspaper editors, sign painters, and the like, and the rest were working their way up what they called competency ladders on their own. As Axeford pointed out, in addition to the center, students are using studios, workshops, and stages spread all over town. “We’ve got as many adults in this town as kids,” Axeford told us. “This is the school they most like to come to start over as students or begin as teachers.”

In the Local Bureau of Investigations (LBI), students learn the investigative procedures used by police, reporters, city planners, doctors, chemists, and other members of the community. The other centers in this pattern of differentiated schooling are equally unique, diverging widely from familiar forms of junior high school: the Workshop in Practical Activities, the Center for the Study of the World, the Humanities Center and Life Skills Laboratory, the Institute of Advanced Studies, and the School for Self-Guided Education.

The last two actually are schools. The institute is for intensive academic study in one or two academic areas; and the School for Self-Guided Education helps students learn the complex system of identifying, planning, implementing, and evaluating their own program of studies.

We asked Axeford how they developed the principle of differential schooling for the junior segment and how they decided on the particular eight programs of two months each. She gave a great deal of credit to Pelman and his knowledge of planning:

He would not let us make any decisions until we considered what he referred to as the universe of possible alternatives. People wanted to get to work on the new school and got quite annoyed when he said the ideas sounded too much like what we were doing before without success. We spent weeks gathering ideas from other schools and inventing our own. Gradually a skeleton program started to take shape. Then our plans developed very quickly.

From the many things she and the others said, four guiding principles underlying the program emerged:

1. The new program must be geared to the way children from ages 12 to 14 grow—intellectually, in personality, socially, and physically—and to what they need for that growth.

2. The program must be designed to help every child develop a competence. That means greatly extending the range of possible competencies and the ways to achieve them. Students still learn “about,” but now the emphasis is on learning “how.”

3. Parents and the community at large must become full partners with the school in planning and executing the broad program, if the program is to become appreciably more powerful.

4. The actual learning in the program and beyond is the student’s responsibility. The program must be designed to convey this message to students and to empower them to learn in a variety of ways and settings on their own. The effectiveness of the program will be evaluated according to the success of students in designing and implementing their own learning.

We interrupted the tour to stop for lunch at the Lake Shore Winter Club. That is, we thought we were interrupting the tour, until we saw the number of young people swimming in the club pool or lounging in small groups around it. Martin Babitch, the manager of the club, joined us briefly. We asked him about the heavy use of the outdoor facilities, and he told us:

We’re a private club, all right. But Pelman and his gang really put it to us. They’re a kind of benevolent Mafia. “More taxes, or greater use of the club in slack hours,” he told our board. It’s kind of a reverse on the protection money racket. Money was getting tight, and the community had to decide whether to build new athletic facilities or make wider use of the facilities around town. When the directors of the clubs, the recreation centers, the Y.M.C.A., and the present school facilities got together, we decided we had lots of areas, equipment, and people to provide social and recreational programs for all the kids in the foreseeable future. We might even benefit from sharing as well.

A minute later he excused himself, “Before Pelman gets me to keep paying members off the premises on the weekends.” Pelman told us that Babitch was the chairman of the Recreation Council and that, without him, he doubted that the territorial disputes of the various recreation directors could have been resolved. But with his help, apparently, all the facilities in the community—including some private ones—are now available to students for some part of each day. As well as recreational and social programs, the council has developed a range of training programs in athletics. All the high school teams but one are now Carleton community teams.

The one team is the Carleton Capi...
R

tors, the basketball team. Carleton is apparently “basketball crazy.” The team has been a strong contender for the state title for a decade and won it in 1972. The Alumni Association saw the shift to community recreation centers as a break in tradition and organized opposition to the plan, using their members on the Town Council to spearhead it. Somehow their opposition became opposition to the whole recreational program. The Recreation Council overreacted with an all-or-nothing theme and, but for a last-minute compromise, the entire program might have been stalled or rejected. “We simply left the team at the School Center,” Pelman said. “Makes no sense really; there’s no gym there. But all solutions are not logical. We have to respect their feelings and be flexible enough to respond. We almost weren’t and almost paid for it.”

Returning to town, we discussed the constitution and the process which produced it. “You can’t imagine the mess our schools were in. Rising numbers of dropouts, failing achievement in reading and writing, growing unrest among students, soaring costs, increasing clamor among parents, and demoralization among the ranks of teachers. Something had to be done,” Pelman said. “We couldn’t go back to a traditional program and we couldn’t go on with our disastrous, haphazard accumulation of faintly liberal innovations.”

“Why not?” we asked.

“In the first place, there is no evidence that a ‘return to the basics’ alone will significantly improve overall educational performance. To most people that return means a return to the whole medieval caste system of traditional schooling. The price in loss of students, in class and out, and in punishment to a predictable half of those who remain and fail, would be too great. And we believe the exacerbation of the unrest which already exists among students who find school inappropriate would bring the final cataclysm.

“But the school had become loose. The major innovation seemed to be a general abandonment of the concept of excellence. Alternatives were added. Enjoyment became a primary goal. And generally we were pleased — gave the student ‘positive feedback’ — for just about anything he did — if he’d just come and do something. That had to change. If we don’t want regimentation, we still want disciplined effort. If we don’t want high anxiety, we still want rigor. And if we don’t want intense competition, we still want achievement, excellence,” he said.

“But if you were experiencing the malaise of so many other schools only four years ago, how did you come so far in so short a time?”

“We decided to eliminate adolescence.”

Pelman’s reply astounded us. The PKD task force was attempting to adapt schooling to adolescence; Carleton was attempting to wipe it out. Our confusion was unmistakable.

“Let me put it this way: Schools encourage youngsters to remain children. They are sheltered, protected, directed, entertained, organized, and generally indulged in the great school-as-womb. The result, with a lot of help from the business community, the media, and home, is an extended childhood.”

Pelman organized our afternoon. “Marsha McNaughton is the leader of the Center Council. She’s the best informed and most articulate person on the subject of our brief history. I’ll introduce you to her and warn Phil Peobles, the coordinator of skill training programs — referred to inescapably as STP around here — that you will be stopping by.”

Marsha McNaughton quickly brought our discussion to the point:

“How to conduct an act of conversion. That’s what you’re asking, isn’t it? Well, if I censor the gory scenes I’d have to say that an ornery group of parents — a large ornery group of parents — brought education in Carleton to a standstill. Secondary education, in their ability to use it, and their willingness to use it for more than their own good. Instead of being sheltered, they are challenged. Instead of being protected, they are encouraged to take reasonable risks. Instead of being directed, they are challenged to direct themselves as much and as soon as possible. Instead of being organized, they are required to structure much of their own time and effort. Rather than being entertained, they are encouraged to create their own entertainment. We provide training and support for students, but the school is no longer a womb — or a tomb. A support system, yes, but only to sustain them until they are strong enough to cut loose. We do not serve their adolescence, we serve their becoming adults and do all we can to assist them in gaining that personal power. It’s a generous/selfish act of community. Their power is our power.”

“What is that power you speak of? It sounds military.”

“No, no!” Pelman answered. “It is nothing more than the ability to learn and the willingness to act for the benefit of others as well as oneself.”

The elimination of adolescence was a provocative concept, but the day was coming to an end and we still knew nothing of the dynamics which transformed the old program into this new system which seemed to be operating successfully despite the magnitude of the change involved and the number of people whose cooperation had to be enlisted. And there was also the question of the skills program — how and how much?

When we arrived back at the Center, Pelman organized our afternoon. “Marsha McNaughton is the leader of the Center Council. She’s the best informed and most articulate person on the subject of our brief history. I’ll introduce you to her and warn Phil Peobles, the coordinator of skill training programs — referred to inescapably as STP around here — that you will be stopping by.”

Marsha McNaughton quickly brought our discussion to the point:

How to conduct an act of conversion. That’s what you’re asking, isn’t it? Well, if I censor the gory scenes I’d have to say that an ornery group of parents — a large ornery group of parents — brought education in Carleton to a standstill. Secondary education, in their ability to use it, and their willingness to use it for more than their own good. Instead of being sheltered, they are challenged. Instead of being protected, they are encouraged to take reasonable risks. Instead of being directed, they are challenged to direct themselves as much and as soon as possible. Instead of being organized, they are required to structure much of their own time and effort. Rather than being entertained, they are encouraged to create their own entertainment. We provide training and support for students, but the school is no longer a womb — or a tomb. A support system, yes, but only to sustain them until they are strong enough to cut loose. We do not serve their adolescence, we serve their becoming adults and do all we can to assist them in gaining that personal power. It’s a generous/selfish act of community. Their power is our power.”

“What is that power you speak of? It sounds military.”

“No, no!” Pelman answered. “It is nothing more than the ability to learn and the willingness to act for the benefit of others as well as oneself.”

The elimination of adolescence was a provocative concept, but the day was coming to an end and we still knew nothing of the dynamics which transformed the old program into this new system which seemed to be operating successfully despite the magnitude of the change involved and the number of people whose cooperation had to be enlisted. And there was also the question of the skills program — how and how much?

When we arrived back at the Center, Pelman organized our afternoon. “Marsha McNaughton is the leader of the Center Council. She’s the best informed and most articulate person on the subject of our brief history. I’ll introduce you to her and warn Phil Peobles, the coordinator of skill training programs — referred to inescapably as STP around here — that you will be stopping by.”

Marsha McNaughton quickly brought our discussion to the point:

How to conduct an act of conversion. That’s what you’re asking, isn’t it? Well, if I censor the gory scenes I’d have to say that an ornery group of parents — a large ornery group of parents — brought education in Carleton to a standstill. Secondary education, in their ability to use it, and their willingness to use it for more than their own good. Instead of being sheltered,
it up, and just when it seemed a
bonnie fracas was in the offing, the
board and the school ad-
ministrators agreed to meet with
the parents. It was a no-nonsense
meeting by the time we dismissed
reorganization of the P.T.A. and
a few other token gestures and
made it clear that there would be
widespread reform or nothing.

Pressure from the legislature, we
learned later, helped to make possible
the chemistry that led to the new
programs. First, a bill making education
compulsory to age 14 rather than 16
was going into its first reading. Second,
a bill tying in quality control or demon-
strated performance with funding be-
ond the basic secondary school budget
was known to be in preparation. Carle-
ton's problems were regularly cited as
evidence supporting the need for both
measures. The chance that regular
schools might drop severely in popula-
tion and the threat of minimal funds
combined to make administrators,
trustees, and teachers anxious to find
alternatives.

In fact, one of the “gory scenes”
apparently occurred when a committee
of parents and representatives of the
teachers union confronted each other
on the issue of direct community in-
volvement in school decision making
and teaching. The president of the local
is reported to have shouted, “No way,
no possible way! We’ll shut the school
down first!” Although he cited union
regulations, teacher certification laws,
and other evidence, he could not silence
the parents, particularly a prominent
local lawyer among them. He replied
that if the teachers union was going to
stand in the way of improving educa-
tion, the community would have to take
them to court or go directly to the
legislature. “The schools belong to
the community. We hire you to do a job for
us. We pay for the schools for you to
work in. Now you think they are your
private preserve. Well, if we have to
fight you for them, we will. And we will
win.” Marsha McNaughton went on:

In this atmosphere, the com-
missioner of education dropped
his bomb. Every secondary school
in the state was ordered to pro-
duce a plan for renewal which
would be the work of citizens and
students as well as teachers and
administrators. This process, he
stated, must generate goals, and
the goals must represent the com-
unity’s aspirations, improve-
ments in schools which all mem-
bers can work toward together.

Under these conditions, the first
community meeting was held. From
what we could piece together later, two
decisions created the organization and
the operating rules for the renewal of
definition of education at Carleton. The first was a
decision to form the Council of Educa-
tional Leadership (CEL), in which the
membership would be shared by repre-
sentatives from the administration, the
teachers, the community, and the stu-
dents. This became the central planning
body for educational services in Carle-
ton. The second was a decision to write
a constitution which clearly stated the
rights and responsibilities of each
group — with safeguards, checks, and
balances — and described the operating
procedure by which the process would
function.

One of the teachers told us, “We
realized that, if we were going to im-
prove the quality of education, it would
mean a number of changes and that
those changes would be impossible with-
out changing the setting. Without a
redistribution of authority and responsi-
bility, a new planning procedure, and a
new sense of purpose and direction,
little could change.” After the con-
stitutional changes, the meetings focused
quickly upon basic skills, competence,
practical skills, challenging experiences,
active citizenship, and academic excel-
ence as major considerations. CEL con-
sulted experts, set up committees to
bring forward recommendations, and
gradually generated the three-pronged
secondary education design: a modified
academic program, the junior-senior seg-
ment competence program, and the
out-of-school options program. That de-
sign was the key to opening the plan-
ing process for real community partici-
pation. Axeford explained:

We knew from the research
that smaller units of staff and
students are more flexible, more
likely to innovate, and generally
more viable as social environ-
ments. Our design created a net-
work of such units, each with its
own setting, staff, and students.
We made each unit totally autono-
mous in developing its program,
except that it must fulfill its
purposes within the community
network and must share planning
with parents and students. With
the numbers of people involved
sharply reduced, with a much
more focused purpose, and with a
staff unified behind that pur-
pose — though not about how the
purpose should be achieved —
planning was much more intense
and productive.

Two procedures clearly helped the units
to plan efficiently. One was the Plan-
ning Book and the other was an ad-
vocacy procedure for presenting pro-
gram proposals to the council.

The Planning Book identified the
major problems to be solved in planning
a small school. Each entry stated one
problem clearly, identified the major
options, discussed the possible ad-
vantages and consequences of each, in-
vited other alternatives from partici-
pants, and suggested a basis for deciding
among them. Once the program and the
organization were developed, the school
committee prepared a proposal for an
open meeting of the council. Copies
were widely circulated. At the meeting

"How many times must I tell you — it's 'cat' before 'temple' except after 'slave'."
two council members questioned the committee, one probing the shortcomings of the proposal, the other attempting to emphasize its strengths. An empty-chair procedure enabled others to come forward and question. But the emphasis was constructive so that the council could make the best possible decision: either to approve or to recommend revisions. This process, we were told, at once motivated and guided the planners, and increased communication and understanding throughout the system and the community. The debates were still intense, but much more pointed and productive.

Many problems of implementation arose, but the people needed to solve them were usually represented on CEL and so could provide the necessary knowledge, influence, connections, and resources. For instance, when the problem of cooperation of local business in the work-study program arose, the president of the Rotary Club formed a group of leaders to solve the problem. Carleton found it had the resources and the cooperation. The problem was to organize the program and to repay the service with useful help from students and some cooperation from the community. It was not so much a case of whether it was possible as how to make it feasible and operational. As Pelman pointed out, "We discovered that the resources for our programs are there, often already organized but in separate places. Our problem was pulling them together, organizing them, and using them intelligently, with some payoffs for the assistance."

While creating a pattern of schooling which challenges the young to reach out toward the limits of their energy, ability, imagination, and compassion, the people of this district moved school back into the community, and by that process have helped to regenerate the sense of community itself. As one secondary level girl told us,

At graduation, when everyone is showing what they’ve done, and the parents and teachers and younger kids are all around, you really feel like you’re part of something and what you’re doing’s important.

It was an appropriate concluding remark on our tour.

By now it is apparent that Carleton is a fictitious place, and the Carleton Secondary School Program and all the people in it are imaginary. The reason for presenting this vignette is to help readers visualize our proposals in operation before they confront the more abstract, theoretical descriptions of them in the following chapter. Some aspects of education in Carleton may seem familiar. Several have been written about elsewhere and many individual elements are already in operation in different centers around the country, giving the less familiar aspects of Carleton an air of reality. But the Carleton model is far from a collection of unrelated alternatives. It is an attempt to integrate a number of developments into a new form of secondary education with a distinctive purpose, process, and context which will have a powerful and beneficial influence on the maturation of adolescents and their transition to adulthood.

Eleusis Community School is named after the temple city of the Greek goddess Demeter. When her daughter Persephone was stolen by Hades and taken to the underworld, Demeter devastated the earth and threatened to leave it dried out and sterile until her daughter was returned to her. Finally, the gods relented and permitted Persephone to return for a portion of each year. Demeter celebrated her return every spring by renewing the earth with fresh growth. Similarly, we seek the renewal and growth of secondary education—not just a major step forward, but a process of regular regeneration. Eleusis Secondary School and the Carleton School District represent the kind of education we are working to accomplish.

Is TM Religious or Secular? U.S. District Court To Decide

> A lawsuit in U.S. District Court seeks to halt the teaching of transcendental meditation in the public schools. The suit, Malnak et al. v. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi et al., is also aimed at stopping public funding of TM courses.

A coalition of Protestant and Catholic parents, together with Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Coalition for Religious Integrity, and the Berkeley Christian Coalition, filed the lawsuit in February against five New Jersey high schools, the New Jersey public schools, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The suit, to be heard this summer, charges that a federal grant of $43,000 in Title III funds was used to set up high school courses in TM.

John E. Patton, attorney for the plaintiffs, said the conspiracy and fraud charges being leveled against the Maharishi (and the TM movement) are based on the fact that the Maharishi’s followers have represented TM as a science rather than as a religion, and thus have “wrongly and fraudulently” applied for federal funds, according to Education Daily. Patton asked District Judge H. Curtis Meanor for an injunction ending the TM project because student interest waned, but thought there was enough educational benefit to offer TM regularly as an elective, Education Daily reported. The four other school districts are reportedly still offering the course.

The heart of the issue is the nature of TM itself: Is it religious or secular? “If the judge decides it’s a religion, we win the case. If the judge decides it isn’t a religion, we lose,” Patton has said. Edd Doerr, educational relations director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said, “We feel we have an airtight case.” Doerr predicted the case would be decided in the plaintiff’s favor by summary judgment this summer.

Doerr called TM as it is being presented in the New Jersey schools a religion, “or the closest thing there is to it.” He maintained that TM began as a religion and is closely linked to Hinduism; even though it may have proven physical and psychological benefits, it should not be supported by public tax money, he said.

Susan Boardman, a TM community development coordinator in Washington, D.C., told Education Daily that TM has nothing to do with another world or the supernatural.

Doerr said Americans United has learned that $320,000 in federal funds has been distributed to schools nationwide for work with TM since 1972. A court injunction would halt further funding of such programs.

* * *

There is great beauty in old trees.
Old streets and ruins old;
Why should not I as well as these
Grow lovely growing old?

— Marker in graveyard,
Cornwall, England
(quoted by Ted Gordon)