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Adult expectations still encourage boys to take shop, girls to choose home economics, just as at the turn of the century. New laws, forbidding the barring of children from courses because of their sex, may change this pattern.

Eliminate Sex Bias in the Curriculum

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Recent federal actions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or facility will effect profound changes in such curriculum areas as home economics, industrial arts, physical education, and vocational education.

AFFIRMATIVE action regarding sex discrimination is taking on new meaning in education circles. Until the summer of 1972, affirmative action was a term associated largely with equal employment opportunities and limited in education primarily to college campuses. Not any more.

As a result of recent federal actions in all three branches of government, a major change is occurring in education which will penetrate every nook and cranny of the educational system from the local district to the U.S. Office of Education and will affect all of the related agencies and supportive organizations in between. Recent judicial decisions, executive orders, and legislative acts have opened the doors of change wide enough to usher in a whole new reality. "Unrealistic" considerations of the past related to affirmative actions are now federal law.

Most relevant to curriculum change is Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The crucial passage reads: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrim-

ination under any education program or activity receiving federal assistance. . . ."

While there are a few exceptions listed in the Act (some religious and military schools), the coverage is broad and extends to any public or private preschool, elementary or secondary school, or any institution of vocational, professional, or higher education which receives federal financial assistance. Very few systems or educational institutions will remain untouched by Title IX.

For example, in the public schools, courses not deemed appropriate for teaching to both sexes on a non-sex-segregated and equal basis must be either revised or eliminated. This applies to all classes: home economics, including "bachelor foods"; industrial arts; physical education; sex education; science; career and vocational education. In elementary curriculum, this covers the entire spectrum. Instructional materials and curricular activities will need drastic revision. School budgets and scheduling systems must reflect a change with an emphasis on the equality of the sexes. Extracurricular activities, filled until now with stereotyped expectations and differential treatment of the sexes, must also undergo revision.

Administrators at all levels need help with retraining programs, not only for themselves but for their staffs, to develop a sensi-

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tivity to the bias which is so institutionalized in the school as to remain invisible to otherwise highly trained and sensitive educators. Guidance programs will also need special help in combating the problem of sex stereotyping. Personnel practices must be overhauled in order to counteract the stereotype of male bosses and female secretaries and teachers.

With a few possible exceptions, colleges of education are not presently dealing with these issues. School finance classes, administrative personnel courses, evaluation courses, school law courses, as well as the more obvious teacher preparation, curriculum, and guidance courses—every class in the entire schedule of courses—should be redesigned to sensitize educators-in-training to this important shift in the education of our young.

Although there are reports of 2,000 women's studies courses now being taught on college campuses, less than ten make such offerings.

Nevertheless, if educators have been blind to the inequities in the past, there are signs that their eyes are being opened by women's rights workers and others interested in promoting optimum development of human potential for both sexes. These groups are not likely to allow so potent an Act as Title IX to go unused.

Since 1969, as women's rights groups have begun to focus on the schools, the amount of material related to sex stereotyping in education has multiplied at a phenomenal rate, not only in professional educational journals and the mass media, but also through numerous networks among women's rights workers. In the July 1973 *Ms.* magazine, a list of 29 other women's rights magazines, 20 newspapers, and 19 newsletters followed an article describing the extent of the feminist network. "Hundreds" with more limited distribution were not listed, according to the article entitled "Hot Off the Feminist Presses." Sex bias in education is one of the most frequently discussed issues in the feminist press.

It should be noted that the networks of change are not limited to feminist organiza-

tions. More official sources have also documented the charges of sex bias in education. In November 1972, a 141-page task force report entitled *A Look at Women in Education: Issues and Answers for HEW* was issued as a result of a mandate by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare that the U.S. Office of Education eliminate any sex bias that might exist in education programs it administers. In this report, many examples of discrimination against students as well as employees of educational institutions are detailed.

Documentation of the charges, however, is only a first step. Action to create change is now the order of the day. Because of Title IX, funding agencies must refrain from issuing grants which perpetuate sex stereotypes or which fail to address or take into account the issue of discrimination because of sex. The U.S. Office of Education has been responsible in the past for gross inequities in its allocations of funds with regard to equality of the sexes, according to its own Commissioner's task force report issued in November 1972. However, the gears have begun to shift there, too. Neither the Office of Education, the National Institute for Education, the National Science Foundation, nor any other educational institution will any longer be indulging, legally, in practices or the granting of funds which perpetuate the assumption of second class citizenship of females, be they students or employees in the field of education. Instead we may expect grants which lead to the converse of this result.

Moves To Eliminate Sexism

One such grant was awarded last November when the National Education Association sponsored the First National Conference on Sex Role Stereotyping. The conference was planned by a coalition of minority groups and women and paid for by a grant from the U.S. Office of Education. Two hundred women and men from several ethnic backgrounds, and known to be actively working to combat sex stereotyping, met together and shared ideas and concerns. Plans for further efforts by the NEA were

announced in the January 1973 issue of the *NEA Reporter*. The headline of this monthly newspaper read "NEA Launches Fight on Sexism."

The NEA plans can be explained in the context of similar and cooperative efforts by the Ford Foundation, the Women's Equity Action League, and the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. The Ford Foundation announced, during the fall of 1972, the appointment of a commission to study possible uses of Ford Foundation monies for the purpose of eliminating sex discrimination. In December 1972, a large grant from the Ford Foundation to the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education was announced. This money was given to help develop a resource center to counter sex bias in elementary and secondary schools. According to a February NEA memorandum to human relations leaders in local teacher associations,

... the Center would provide technical assistance for implementation of recent legislation banning discrimination against women in education and would seek to heighten interest in the effects of sex role stereotyping in school textbooks, curriculum, and counseling. Its activities would include gathering data on the extent of sex bias in education, organizing conferences, and providing materials and consultation services to teachers, school districts, and national and community groups.

Both the National Education Association and the Women's Equity Action League agreed to cooperate with the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education in the effort to eliminate sexism in education. Seven areas of the project funded by the Ford Foundation were described in a March 1973 memo to all WEAL members. These areas included: (a) textbooks, (b) teacher behavior, (c) counseling, (d) physical education, (e) extracurricular activities, (f) in-service training, and (g) administrative positions. The WEAL memo also announced that materials for eliminating sexism in these seven areas were under development, that a coalition of groups working on sexism in education was being organized, and that technical assistance from the newly funded

Resource Center would be provided for groups willing and able to sponsor conferences.

The long arm of HEW has already reached out to create change in local districts and state departments of public instruction.

In February 1973, the Secretary of HEW sent a memorandum to all "Chief State School Officers and Local School Superintendents" informing them of the basic provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The memo informed them that individuals and corporations may challenge any practice or policy prohibited under Title IX by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, HEW, or any other appropriate federal agency.

Title IX is only one of several legal actions which herald the need for comprehensive affirmative action programs in educational institutions.

The courts are finding sex discrimination cases in educational institutions to be a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. Court cases may not be necessary, however. With the new legislation, nothing more than a simple letter to the Office of Civil Rights, HEW, or the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission is necessary to bring action where grounds for a complaint exist. Furthermore, anonymity may be requested if desired or if harassment is feared. In fact, harassment following a sex bias complaint is in violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972.

Affirmative action to correct sex role stereotypes and discrimination in education should not have to await investigations and corrective action by HEW or the courts. It should be begun because it is sound educational policy.

Affirmative action in school systems must be initiated, whether by local or state boards of education through policy changes; by colleges of education through a variety of training programs for district staff; through community or college efforts to establish affirmative action clinics and consulting services; or by individual or group complaints about biased practices. The challenge is great, but so is the promise of freedom from sex role stereotypes in education. □

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