

Schools should teach respect, not diversity

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Do educators have a responsibility to teach children values?

If those values are consistent with respect, I would say you are right on the mark.

But if the quest for respect — which teaches people to be tolerant of differences even if they disagree — is used to promote respect for a perverse kind of "diversity," then I think educators have to redefine diversity.

Let's take the case of Jodi Hoffman, a Florida mother.

She and her husband Paul have pulled their three children out of the Broward County public school system and have filed a class-action suit against the school board to stop what they term the board's promotion of homosexuality in sex education courses.

"Ninety-eight percent of parents out there have no idea what's going on in their schools," Jodi Hoffman said. "We know we've got a problem when they prosecute if you talk about God anywhere near a school, but it's okay to teach students that anal sex is an acceptable method of birth control."

The Hoffmans claim that at one middle school the board invited officials from a community group to tell the children they would be "lucky" to be on the receiving end of oral sex.

In Vermont, Joel and Felicity Bachman are upset that in the daughter's high school sociology class, the students were given materials the parents said encouraged those students who lacked self-confidence to have sex in order to "build up their pleasure-giving abilities." They said their daughter also had literature which said that "two lesbians make a more nurturing relationship than a heterosexual couple."

This is going too far. Is it any wonder that our kids are performing so dismally in reading, math and science? Is it any wonder they have no basic grasp of history?

We are too busy teaching them diversity.

Farmers

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and 47 other Black farmers protested in front of the White House demanding a meeting with President Clinton.

They returned to the nation's capital to protest the USDA last April 23, two months after the agency released a report acknowledging the discrimination problem and vowed to develop a plan of action. More than 250 Black farmers and their supporters protested the inadequacy of the plan and the inaction of the USDA in resolving the problem.

Black farmers are losing 9000 acres per week, according to reports. Between 1920 and 1992, Black farms decreased from 925,000 to 18,816. Government statistics show that Black farmers are going out of business at three times the rate of their White counterparts. The average income of a Black farmer is one third that of Whites, while poverty rates for the Black farmer are 20 percent higher than Whites.

Concerning financing, an Associated Press analysis of lending practices between 1980 and 1992 revealed that Black farmers receive 51 cents for every dollar loaned to Whites. Over that period, the number of loans dropped by 66 percent for White farmers and 82 percent for Black farmers.

In 1982, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission wrote a report entitled, "The Decline of Black Farming in America," in which it said that "unless government policies of neglect and

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— United States Civil Rights Commission
1982 Report

discrimination are changed, there may be no Black farmers by the year 2000."

According to several advocacy groups and agriculture experts, some of the Black farm loss can be attributed to the devastating conditions confronting small family farmers such as government policies favoring corporate, big business farmers, low prices, and natural disasters. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said "the heart of the problem is economic."

For more information, contact Gary Grant at (919) 826-3017. Black farmers who want to be a part of the suit should call 1 (800) 448-FARM.

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