

Association for Homeschooling
Vereniging vir Tuisonderwys



FROM :

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TO :

The Acting Deputy Director General : Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Department of Basic Education

222 Struben Street

PRETORIA

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Dear Ms. M. Ramohapi

The Association for Homeschooling has represented homeschooling parents in South Africa since 1992 and promotes the freedom of parents to choose the type of education that is in the best interest of their children, as this is expressed in art. 26(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations which states : "*Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.*"

During the period of apartheid, home education was illegal in South Africa. The parents Andre and Bokkie Meintjies were jailed in 1994, and their children were placed in an orphanage, because they educated their children at home. Soon after this, home education was legalized in South Africa with the adoption of the new constitution in 1994. Since then, homeschooling has grown exponentially in South Africa.

Given that SA students have ranked almost last in all international studies from 1996 to 2008, South African taxpaying parents are getting the worst education value for their tax money in the world. In this situation, the association regrets that the DoE gives less than 2 months for taxpaying parents (*who fund the DoE and who's children are affected by the policies of the DoE*) to provide comment on a curriculum of more than 2200 pages. The DoE attempts to introduce a repackaged version of a failed curriculum without giving reasonable time for taxpaying parents to provide comment.

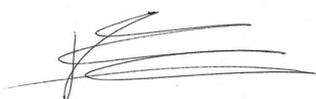
We have received numerous complaints from our members relating to (among others) the following elements in the curriculum:

- a) The notions of "*critical thinking*" promoted in the curriculum are limited to what seems to be based on neo-Marxist "*critical theory*". This manifests in the curriculum when consideration of social and ethical transformation are limited to conflict driven revolutionary analyses of social relations to the exclusion of other views of the ways in which societies operate. No criticism of the revolutionary ideologies is provided for. These, it seems, are to be uncritically accepted. This does not promote critical thinking. On the contrary, it limits critical thinking to one way of viewing society and social phenomena. As such, it inhibits critical thinking in exactly the same way in which the censorship of Bantu Education did, and amounts to blatant subversion of the curriculum to become a vehicle for ideological and political propaganda in the hands of the current ruling elite
- b) Social and economic views to be taught are limited to those based on socialist economic theories, to the exclusion of alternative views. The fundamental notion promoted is that of distribution of wealth, to the exclusion of economic principles promoting creation of wealth. Not only is this contrary to the best interests of the learners themselves, but it undermines the survival potential of our society. And, most certainly, this one-sided view makes nonsense of all claims that the curriculum promotes critical thinking.

- c) Contrary to the claims that the curriculum will help learners to be secure in their own cultural and religious identities, the curriculum expressly prohibits learners from viewing religious and other phenomena from the perspective of their own religion. This constitutes blatant, unreasonable and unjustifiable infringement of the right to freedom of belief and religion. What the curriculum does promote is the uncritical acceptance of fashionable multi-faith ideologies to the explicit exclusion of other views.
- d) The view of science, scientific discovery and the philosophy of science promotes outdated modernist views of scientific “*fact*”. Although the problem of scientific bias is addressed, even this issue is subverted to promoting the biased notion of “*neutral*” and “*objective*” scientific “*knowledge*” to the exclusion of views that are critical of the truth claims of science. This manifests clearly when indigenous knowledge is invariably restricted to indigenous knowledge of a cultural or religious nature. Indigenous knowledge that itself constitutes science or challenges the truth claims of “*science*” are carefully avoided. The most blatant example of is the complete absence of attention to “*creationist science*” – a development of indigenous systems of knowledge that directly challenges “*objective*” science on science’s own territory and utilizing the methods of science itself. Learners are, therefore, required to uncritically accept one view of science and scientific truth to the exclusion of all others.
- e) It is ironic, that a government with a history of corruption, where the majority of local authorities and departments do not get a clean bill of health from the auditor general, attempts to promote ethical values through a subject such as accounting. There is no reason to believe that a government that does not practise what it preaches will have any success in transferring any values to the next generation.

The Association for Homeschooling rejects this curriculum, because it infringes on a numerous constitutional rights. It infringes on right to freedom of religion because it does not allow the teaching of religion from any religious perspective. It infringes on the academic freedom of schools to choose the most appropriate content for their learners. It infringes on freedom of making political choices by propagating a specific political agenda through the curriculum. It infringes on the right of children to receive appropriate parental care by promoting values that many parents reject.

Yours sincerely



Bouwe van der Eems
(Chairman : Association for Homeschooling)