

HOMESCHOOLERS BARRED **FROM RELIGIOUS** **MATERIALS**

Government issues order after luring parents into district program

Posted: April 24, 2004
1:00 a.m. Eastern

© 2004 WorldNetDaily.com

Homeschooling parents in a Canadian province have been ordered to stop using religious-based materials or other "unofficial" resources when they teach their children at home.

Pamela Nagle, a Christian, is one of many angry parents in British Columbia who say they will not abide by the order, according to the Vancouver Sun.

"They can't tell me what to do in my own home," said Nagle, whose son is homeschooled but attends a public school one day a week.

Nagle told the paper the materials she uses should not matter as long as her son's education meets British Columbia's standards.

"I don't like the fact that they believe they know what's best for my child," she said.

But Nagle is one of many parents lured into the public school system by a distance-education program, the Sun said.

Through the program, she received about \$600, Canadian, from the Langley school district in suburban Vancouver, which supplements the hundreds she spends of her own money.

About 6,800 children are in the program after it started as a pilot project with just 2,200.

The parents say they enrolled in distance education after being promised they could continue as their children's primary teacher.

The availability of teacher expertise, as well as funds, was the attraction for the parents, while the school district saw benefit from the increased accountability.

The children in the program also graduate with a provincial certificate, unlike the estimated 3,000 homeschoolers with no ties to the government's education system.

Meanwhile the district receives the same amount of per-student funding for the homeschoolers as it does for regular students, \$5,408, Canadian.

But many parents now appear set to quit. Anita Kosovic, with two-children in Langley's U-Connect program, said she's finished.

"I'm definitely not going back and I don't know anyone who is," she told the Sun.

Her family is not religious, she explained, but she does not want to be forced into using the province's approved materials, some of which she says are awful.

"I don't think anyone should be able to tell me what I can do in my own home and that's what they're telling us," she told the Vancouver paper.

The British Columbia Education Ministry insists the order is merely a "clarification" of the rules it laid out in September 2002, which said distance-education students had to follow the same rules as regular students.

"If a district receives full funding for a student, the student is not being home-schooled," the ministry stated.

With regard to faith-based resources, it stated: "Districts must ensure that students are not using religious materials or resources as part of the educational program and that parents are not being reimbursed for using religious materials or resources with students."

A Langley school district spokesman said the district is concerned about the directive, but Education Ministry spokeswoman Corinna Filion said parents who want religion in education should go to the independent school system.

