

200-LRC

#

Re: State Board Public Testimony

January 8, 2020

Good afternoon,

I'm here today to express my concerns about the LGBT curriculum. A curriculum that will confuse our children.

I will be speaking about the "T" (Transgenderism) in LGBT.

People who are transgender have a gender identity that differs from their biological sex.

I'm well versed on this subject because my son came out as transgender in 2016. My life was turned upside down when my son told me he is really my daughter and I must pay for his hormonal treatments. If I did not give into his demands he would disappear and I would never see him again. My son never showed any distress over who he was as a child but somehow fell victim to the trans agenda. I found out years later at the age of 15 my son was exposed to transgenderism on the internet.

I could not find a therapist in New Jersey to help my son feel comfortable in the body he was born into. I didn't want him to be on life long meds and have surgeries. A therapist told me helping my son feel comfortable in his body is considered conversion therapy and that was illegal in New Jersey. I researched the law and found it to be true. I started a blog to inform parents about the flaw in this legislation. My blog is called NewJerseyMama.net please take a look at it.

I am also a member of The Kelsey Coalition, a national, non partisan, unfunded volunteer run organization. I connected with other parents who's children, teens, and young adults have been harmed by gender identity medicine. Our mission at the Kelsey Coalition is to protect young people from medical and psychological harms. I encourage you all to take the time to read some of the parent stories on the website.

"Transgender" identities are no longer rare. Among young people, they are shockingly common. The CDC recently found that 2% of all US high school students now identify as transgender. We have a social contagion on our hands.

This is a new, growing, and poorly studied worldwide phenomenon. The trans-agenda is dangerous. Children are told they might have been born in the wrong body. They are quickly being medicalized. Girls as young as 8 years old are being injected with testosterone. Teen girls are having mastectomies, boys at age 16 are having their penis and testes removed.

The media glorifies children who come out as trans. Children are showered with coming out parties and march in parades. This is child abuse.

The medical harms are serious. Hormonal treatments impact bone health, fertility, sexual function, cardiovascular health, and brain development. Surgeries are irreversible. The full extent of the harms to young developing brains and bodies are unknown. This has never been done before. There is NOT ONE long-term study to support such risky medical interventions on children. These hormonal treatments are experimental.

How is this ethical? How can we allow teachers to introduce transgenderism to our vulnerable children?

So why am I concerned about the LGBT history curriculum. Because it's the perfect scenario to introduce the transgenderism to our children. It's another opportunity to push gender ideology onto our kids.

If your child starts to question their biological sex after these ideas are implanted into their minds during the school day. The NJ conversion therapy law will not allow you to get your child proper mental care. The words gender identity and gender expression are written into the law which makes it illegal to question a child as to why they feel uncomfortable in their body but you can lead them down a path of transition. This is insanity.

There is NO HATE or bigotry when I express my concerns about this curriculum.

The LGBT curriculum must be revoked in order to protect our children. No group has the right to force others to comply with their beliefs and strip the rights away from parents.

Thank you for your time, Crystal

NewJerseyMama.net

www.kelseycoalition.org

January 8, 2020

Denise Cole

Education Advocate/Activists for New Jersey

Newark, New Jersey 07112

Good Afternoon,

I am here today to demand that this board began to address the systemic issues of racism in our New Jersey school districts and especially in the Newark School district and Elizabeth school districts.

"A race of people is like an individual until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood it can never fulfill itself." Malcom X

With this said reducing racism in our school districts must start with you acknowledging that it exist in yourselves,, as individuals and then in the governmental departments you service in and then making a conscious choice to deal with the issues by acknowledging beliefs and attitudes that are legitimized by symbols, behaviors, political power, administrative power, supervisor power and have been socialized like it is normal and passed down in successive generational systems through , elections, promotions, hiring at all levels ,and, culturally.

Our communities and Leaders recognize that this is one of the many systemic issues that we must demand be addressed so that our, superintendent, administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, move from tolerance to acceptance to reverence.

We also want to bring to your attention that the Newark community have not consented to a district of charters and did not agree as a community to a Broder Bolder Approach Model in our District.

Yet this is being forced on an unsuspecting community and the promulgated laws do not support this model nor decision without community being included in the decision making process,

ESSA, title 18A, title 6A was created to combat malice and malfeasance in the traditional Public School District and Charters were created by Politicians in New Jersey which has created two systems that are perpetuating institutional racism, segregation and apartheid in New Jersey.

We the citizens of New Jersey, Newark and Elizabeth New jersey do have solutions to these issues and are demanding you develop real accountability with engaged parents for solutions for our children and community.

We demand you look into the, superintendents, administrators, principles creating their own versions of policy that does not match the laws promulgated for the districts to give consistency.

We demand inclusion that our districts have not been providing. The districts come and present to you the continuous illusion of inclusion of Parents, Students, Teachers, Staff and community. We can provide the evidence it's happing in our school districts.

January 8, 2020

Anfal Muhammad Jenkins

Executive Director Newark SEPAC

Family Engagement Committee Member NJCDD

Newark NJ 07112

anfalmj@newarksepac.org

Good morning. My name is Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins. I am Executive Director for Newark SEPAC, an organization that serves more than 6,000 students receiving special education services within Newark Public Schools and their families and have been for the past 3 years.. I've come to provide testimony about the state of family engagement in many urban school districts, including Newark Public Schools. It is a known fact that Effective parent engagement is a cornerstone of positive student outcomes, especially in Title I school districts. ESSA mandates that School Districts offer programs and activities to involve parents and family members to seek meaningful consultation with parents. Moreover, ESSA further requires that those districts consult with parents to evaluate district family engagement policies and practices.

Unfortunately, in many urban districts like Newark, parent engagement is severely lacking at best and a mere fallacy at best. Consultation with parents is far less than meaningful. Without state regulations to guide implementation of the law, the term *meaningful* is left open to interpretation. Rather than being accepted as partners, parents are often mis treated as spectators by these districts. When parents raise valid concerns, they are portrayed as adversaries and tend to be bullied by district officials whose primary concern is to safeguard a more positive image of their work.

Grievances:

- I. Family engagement practices in large urban districts
 - a. Lack of relevant and timely communication to enable parent provision of meaningful input
 - b. They Perpetuate an Illusion of Inclusion**
 - i.
 - ii. Districts Host meetings, gatherings, and events at a significant cost in the name of Family Engagement when most participants are non-parents but are district staff.
 - iii. A recent Title I conference provides such an example where parent input was completely discarded and the event's theme completely unrelated to family engagement. ESSA makes it clear that these annual Title I meetings are meant to teach parents about the program and their rights to be involved.
 - iv. Parents are met with Blatant disregard and unresponsiveness whereby districts refuses to hear and acknowledge issues of students and families; refusing meetings

- v. With little guidance from State Regulations, Districts Lack enforceable policies to ensure proper implementation and maintenance of effective parent engagement strategies
- c. Anti parent culture that is retaliatory in nature
 - i. Pervasive throughout school district from local school administration to the BOE
 - ii. There is widespread Undermining of parent councils who push accountability of administrators.

This Board is implored to consider the impact of leaving these Districts with such autonomy in interpreting the law and implementing policies that are not guided by meaningful parent input. As citizens and taxpayers and as parents we demand further investigation into these district practices and taskforce of already engaged parents/community to ascertain and formally define meaningful parent engagement; and to develop mechanisms to establish accountability and enforcement

Let's Build On Our Successes

by Bret Schundler

My name is Bret Schundler. While serving as the Mayor of Jersey City in the 1990s I was centrally involved in the successful effort to pass charter school legislation here in our state. I later served as the Chief Operating Officer of The King's College in Manhattan, where I had the opportunity to lead a seminar on the findings of federally funded *Effective Schools* research. As New Jersey's State Commissioner of Education in 2010 – working with state legislative leaders from both parties, with your predecessors on the New Jersey State Board of Education, and with the excellent professionals in our New Jersey Department of Education – I had the opportunity to put into our state *Race to the Top* grant application many of the reforms encouraged by *Effective Schools* research as well as by the United States Department of Education under President Obama. In the years since, I have been gratified to see many of our proposed reforms implemented here in New Jersey, and to see them producing – as was intended and expected – increased student learning.

Public education in New Jersey has been improved since the 1980s, and the people of New Jersey, and all of us who have been involved with education reform, should be proud of this. The improvements are nowhere more evident than in Jersey City, where I live. Our families now have many public school options: traditional neighborhood public schools, magnet schools operated by the Jersey City Public Schools district, magnet schools operated by the Hudson County government, State-operated special needs schools, and State-chartered public schools. Neighborhood public schools have been financially and educationally helped, *not hurt*, by the creation of these additional public school options. Consider, for instance, that with our rising local population, when a state-chartered public school is opened to meet the need for more public school seats, it leaves far more public funding available for our neighborhood public schools – such as P.S. 3, down the street from my home – than would the opening of an additional neighborhood public school, where per student funding levels are twice as great as at the State-chartered public schools in Jersey City. Also take note of the fact that student proficiency rates are rising not only for the Jersey City Public Schools district as a whole, but also of the district's demographic sub-groups. This shows that our school choice and other public education reforms are working.

It saddens me when I hear some opponents of the education reforms we have implemented in New Jersey call them failure and try to explain away the clear evidence that they have increased learning. That's why I am here today. I want to defend the empirical evidence of our success and encourage that we build on our reforms of the past thirty years, not reverse them. I currently work as a consultant to charter schools so I will use the charter school reform as an example.

Our State-chartered public schools fill their seats by lottery, operate under largely the same regulations, and receive lower levels of funding than traditional public schools. Yet urban charter public schools significantly outperform traditional neighborhood public schools that serve demographically similar children. Why?

Charter School opponents have begun to argue that it is a function of the *student selection impact of parental choice*. Children aren't assigned to charter schools; a parent or guardian must choose to apply, which requires filling out an application with contact information and the child's birth date. It takes only a minute, but pointing to this, charter opponents argue that urban charter schools outperform because the requirement that parents make a choice to apply results in charter schools being filled with the children of more engaged parents.

This may sound like a credible explanation to some. But if the *student selection impact of parental choice* was an important cause of charter school effectiveness, then since all charter schools are schools of choice, all charter schools would be effective. They aren't. Student learning data shows that charter

schools serving demographically similar children can vary widely in educational effectiveness. It must, therefore, be something else that has resulted in high performing charter schools being effective.

If you study highly effective, inner-city charter schools, you will find that most have amazingly similar systems and protocols in place: systems and protocols that long ago were shown by billions of dollars of federally-funded education research to be effective at increasing student learning. For instance, these schools work hard to develop a “No Excuses” staff culture in which educators never give up on a child and instead commit themselves to finding a way to help every child learn. They take similar approaches to teacher professional development training and coaching. They use data from student assessments to determine not only what each student has learned, but also why a given lesson succeeded or failed with different students, and how the instructional plan for each student should accordingly be modified. And they generally have 7-8 hour school days with much more time for instruction than is the case at traditional public schools.

When you study *ineffective* charter public schools – as well as *ineffective* traditional public schools – you find that they don’t have these research-proven systems and protocols in place or, if they do, that they have not been well-implemented.

Speaking as one who has reviewed a lot of education research, visited a lot of public schools and seen a lot of student learning data, it is clear to me that charter public schools outperform traditional neighborhood public schools in our cities NOT because of the student selection impact of parental choice, but because *it is easier for charter schools to implement research-proven systems and protocols*.

Why don’t neighborhood public schools more readily implement the same systems and protocols? The answer, in a word, is politics. To provide one example, research shows that children learn more when there is more time for instruction. But imagine if your local school board tried to extend the school day at your neighborhood public school from 6 ¼ to 8 hours. The board would face pitched political opposition. Afraid of losing the political fight, our popularly elected school boards at traditional public school districts seldom even consider implementing an 8 eight hour school day, in spite of the research that says it would increase student learning.

All public school districts – municipal, regional, county, charter – are instrumentalities of the State created pursuant to state statute and operated for public purposes. In New Jersey and most other states, very few state agencies or instrumentalities have popularly elected boards of governance. I note, for instance, that in only four states are the governance boards of state universities elected. The reason for this is that legislatures want state agencies and instrumentalities to be able to focus on the mission for which the state created them, not politics. Municipalities, counties and traditional school district boards are exceptions to this rule. State legislatures saw positives in having their governance boards popularly elected at the local level. But at least as far as public school districts are concerned, legislatures have also seen that there are some negatives. Charter school laws have been passed by state legislatures throughout America to create public schools that will be able to focus on their state-established mission and, within the bounds set by state regulation, do what it takes to maximize student learning without politics getting in the way.

There are few differences between charter public schools and traditional public schools here in New Jersey, but three differences are hugely important. First, to insulate charter school governing boards from politics, the Legislature made it so charter school board members are not popularly elected. (At charter schools, as you know, when a board vacancy opens, the remaining board members select

someone to fill the spot.) Second, to implement higher standards of accountability for performance and for adherence to state regulations, the legislature has the New Jersey Department of Education closely monitor charter schools and close those that violate state regulations or prove educationally ineffective. (If the NJDOE closed traditional public school districts that violate regulations or perform poorly, there could be times when there were no public schools operating in a community.) Finally, to reinforce the positive impact of BOTH aforementioned differences, the legislature ensured that no child was automatically assigned to a charter school and made it so charter schools only receive funding on a per student enrolled basis. This further insulates charter school governing boards from the political pressures experienced by traditional school district boards because parents who do not like a school's systems and protocols do not need to enroll their children in the school. This also further increases charter school accountability for performance because only by making themselves a school option that many other parents *will* choose for their children do charter schools receive funding.

Thus, we should not be surprised that charter public schools more readily implement systems and protocols proven by research to be educationally effective. One of the main reasons legislatures enacted charter school laws was to create a new kind of public school that would find it easier to do what it takes to increase student learning and could be held more highly accountable by the state for regulatory adherence and educational performance.

Charter and traditional public school leaders don't always know – or don't always *effectively implement* – what research has found to increase student learning. In communities where children come to school ready to learn, students may do fairly well even at charter and traditional schools where proven systems and protocols have not been effectively implemented. But in neighborhoods where children come to school without the same advantages, it is imperative that a school have effective systems and protocols in place or many children will not learn. The fact that charter public schools can more easily implement proven systems and protocols – and if they don't, and perform poorly, are closed – is why urban charter public schools outperform traditional neighborhood public schools serving demographically similar children.

In *Reinventing America's Schools*, author David Osborne laid out how states can build on their success with charter public schools and restructure their traditional school district model so that all of America's public schools can more easily implement systems and protocols that increase student learning. Those who care about improving public education should join the fight for this kind of systemic reform of America's public education system.

Equity and Equality: As Muslims we have our own laws that we abide to especially in this matter, which is basically derived from the precious advice that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave humanity in his last Sermon (The Sermon of Farewell) shows how much Islam values and appreciates the concepts of social equality, brotherhood, individual liberty and mutual cooperation as a guiding light for humanity fourteen centuries ago.

One of the most salient aspects of the Farewell Sermon is the repudiation of all forms of racism, with it being explicitly affirmed that no Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab or a White over a Black, except in taqwa –Piety (God consciousness).

As our teaching says, we've to respect every individual, give them their freedom and in return expect to be treated the same. On the spectrum of relationships, it's regulated in Islam to protect the individuals and community and guarantee the mankind existence and righteous living. Just as in Judaism and Christianity- genesis 19, Islam doesn't approve the notion of LGBTQ.

According to the 10 bill of rights, and in the first amendment, which states the Freedom of Religion, Speech, and the Press, We've the right to defend, live and peacefully practice our religion and express it in our own way.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances"

That being said, I would expect to have my inherent basic rights in freedom of speech, religion and life.

The new curriculum that you're trying to implement without giving me the right to opt-out is not only violating my constitutional rights, but also my religious rights.

The percentage of the LGBTQ people in NJ is 4.1% according to the UCLA School of Law latest statistics, and according to the Pew research organization for religious statistics, Muslims in NJ are between 3-4% (which is the largest in the US), which is almost fairly equal to the LGBT statistics. Yet the bill signed for their curriculum without Opt-out option is infringing my religion and my freedom.

Ignoring our rights to refuse this bill, or at least have the opt-out option for our children is a clear discrimination against Muslim minority in NJ which I trust your wise decision not to oversee or neglect.

Re. LGBT Mandatory Curriculum Law

Not only does it violate our
freedom of religion by being
forced on our children & not allowing
parents to opt out, it is just not right.
It would be like Christians forcing your
children to read Bible scriptures at school
every day.

Kimberly J. Blanda

[REDACTED]

Old Bridge, N.J.

tel.
email:

[REDACTED]

Hi everyone, my name is Cassetta [REDACTED] I have a child in [REDACTED] grade at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I believe that all families should be able to choose to a
school they love with a high-level education and be in a state of the of the art
building that shows families that their children are entitled to the best. My
daughter has been at [REDACTED] since she began
elementary school in Kindergarten.

I chose [REDACTED] because I am originally from Newark, New Jersey, and I was
familiar with the quality of education [REDACTED]
provides its students. I knew that like [REDACTED] would provide a
unique school experience that would guarantee that my daughter would go to
college. Since she has been at [REDACTED], she continuously thrives
academically. As she's gotten older, she's gotten a lot wiser and a lot smarter.
She's in [REDACTED] school now and the work is much harder than it was in elementary
school, but she's making it work. She has all A's and B's. ^{4.0 GPA} She really likes performing
arts, because she likes to sing. In my opinion, renaissance schools are the key to
success. My daughter is learning on a higher level and she's being exposed to
college work, and it's keeping her focused on her goal to become a doctor.

[REDACTED] parents have more choices than ever before and our schools are finally
improving with renaissance schools like [REDACTED] I hope that me and my child
as well as all parents at our school can continue counting on the state to support
schools like [REDACTED] Thank you!

I request an immediate moratorium on the Garden State Equality LGBTQ Pilot Program because it is harmful to children and goes way beyond the requirements of the new LGBT Curriculum law. All the law requires is LGBT history in "an appropriate place in the curriculum" however the LGBTQ activists with this pilot program are imposing gender ideology into every subject area in an attempt to strip parents of the ability to opt-out for their child. LGBTQ is already in sex ed classes. But the LGBTQ activist lobby is not satisfied and want it infused in to Math, Science, Language Arts, etc. and taught according to their ideology which is dangerous and full of factual errors.

It is stated that this curriculum is needed to keep our schools "safe". "Safe" is a very broad term and used as a red-herring. What they are referring to is the proposition that introducing LGBTQ+ into the mainstream will reduce the high suicide rate amongst that (very small) population. Netherlands and Scandinavia have the most gay affirming and progressive culture, yet it hasn't impacted the LGBTQ suicide rate <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24236852>. Teens who identify as LGBTQ are troubled and my heart breaks for them. They need help and sensitivity. But promoting gender confusion in the general population will not fix the problem and will actually compound it. Gender ideology harms children according to the American College of Pediatricians. (<https://www.acpeds.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/gender-ideology-harms-children>). It is unsafe and unhealthy to introduce ideas which can lead to gender dysphoria. 61-98% of children who experience some level of dysphoria will outgrow it by adulthood if you leave it alone. <https://academic.oup.com/jcem/article-abstract/104/3/686/5198654?redirectedFrom=fulltext>. To have authority figures affirm and promote identity change with no involvement from parents will have tragic consequences. In addition, the LGB lifestyle has been proven to have an increased risk of serious health problems (such as specific cancers, STDs, substance abuse, depression and eating disorders). Transgenders face even worse additional effects (such as sterility, bone loss, and decreased mental acuity) from lifelong misuse of hormones and hormone blockers. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1070935/> If an adult chooses same-sex behaviors, they are responsible for their choices and we respect their freedom. However, to promote risky behaviors as healthy and normal among minors is completely contrary to the facts and not the place of the school system.

I'm all for tolerance, respect and kindness for all different types of people. As such, I am in favor of reasonable accommodations and the protections we already have through enforcement of existing discrimination and anti-bullying laws. However, this LGBTQ Pilot Program is different. It is designed to convert the hearts and minds of

the youth, whose brains are still developing, to their way of thinking, against the values taught at home. What happened to parents being the first teachers and parents being partners in education? Instead, the LGBTQ lobby wants total control over our children and to bypass any parental input. This is not education but indoctrination.

Parents who find this content inappropriate for their child feel trapped and violated. Indeed, I know many large families who are now making plans to homeschool due to this new law.

I don't agree with the new law and request a redress. But if it must be implemented, it can be done in a tasteful and age-appropriate way. The law leaves it up to local districts to determine how to teach and where they deem appropriate. However, in reality, Garden State Equality is determining how and what to teach and are doing so in the most progressive manner possible. By allowing the pilot program, you are ensuring they have momentum to dictate the state guidelines and policy language which is pushed electronically through the Strauss-Esmay law firm to over 500 schools at once. Individual districts will adopt the policy because it is easy and provides coverage for them. But since when do we allow special interest groups to determine curriculum content? Would we allow the NRA to come in to the school and teach gun safety classes? It seems like the fix is in and there is no room to tailor the implementation or respect religious freedom or the rights of conscientious objectors.

I think the education laws from the last 2 years have been purposely and quietly rushed through to avoid public scrutiny, comment and consent. We've seen first hand how the LGBTQ activists take a law that on its surface seems benign and advance it much further under the cloak of policy language. Case in point, the Bathroom bill when turned into policy was very broad with zero criteria for any age child to change their identity and parents are not allowed to be informed. There is nothing in that law that precludes parents from being notified, yet the activists made sure to sneak that in. Busy parents are often not aware of the policy language and its implications. Taxpayers are wary to express opposition through open public discourse because they see how those who speak out are vilified or labelled as being insensitive, archaic or bigoted. Teachers are put in an uncomfortable position but must remain quiet for fear of retaliation by a progressive administration.

It's time to take back our schools from activists who represent an extremely small yet well-funded and determined group that have an agenda which is antithetical to what is best for our children and for society.

Dear Sir/Mam,

I am here to represent many of my friends and family members who are not able to be here or to present their great concern over the new law enforcing an LGBTQ infused curriculum on our children and our education system without any option for parents to opt out. This concern has nothing to do with individuals identifying themselves as LGBTQ because I have nothing but love and respect for them. This is about a law passed by Governor Murphy taking away parental rights when it comes to the education of their children. This law was passed in the stealth of the night without anyone hearing or knowing about it because he knew that it would be faced with great opposition by many parents. The public-school system should be a place where our children learn about science, math, algebra and history and not a place to indoctrinate children into accepting certain views and agendas for the benefit of certain groups no matter who they are. Sexual behavior and preference should have no place in our public-school system and more so when such as behavior conflicts with the religious belief of so many people. Public schools have become ground for indoctrination by the state and by agendas without any regard for parental rights into the type of education that we as taxpayers are paying for. We as taxpayers are funding this public school system and we expect our educators to take a stand and protect our children against laws and policies that are harmful to them. This type of sexual education confuses young children who are still learning basics about who they are as human beings. You are overburdening them with confusing information that is stealing their innocence and causing them great psychological harm. We as parents are being forced to stay silent and accept whatever the state decides to throw our way. All this is being done under the name of tolerance, but this tolerance seems to be used only towards certain views and agendas and has no regard to the parents' religious views. This is a clear violation of our constitutional rights and separation of church and state. As members of the state board of education you have an obligation to represent the citizens' best interest and protect us from state-imposed laws that don't protect our parental rights. America is a country built on freedom of religion and we as parents should not be forced into accepting a belief system that is against ours. Forcing such a curriculum on our public-school system is a violation of our freedom of religion and a clear violation of our rights. This is not what this great country was built upon and the values that we came from countries afar to enjoy. We demand to be given an option to opt out as an absolute minimum until a complete revocation of such law is obtained. Thank you for listening and we do believe that you will do the right thing and honor our constitutional rights and religious freedom.

Viola Girges
E. Brunswick, NJ

Thank you for having us here today. My name is Kaitlyn Wojtowicz and I represent Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey. We advocate on behalf of the tens of thousands of individuals who receive health care and educational programming from Planned Parenthood in our state.

We are excited to partner with this committee and strengthen our state's standards on sex education as a part of the review of the New Jersey Health and Phys Ed Student Learning Standards review. We all want to do right by our state's young people, and equip them with the skills they need through education.

Young people deserve to have the information, resources, and skills they need to protect their health and build their future. This is why sex education in particular is *essential* to young people's health, relationships, and life goals.

Sex education *is* education. It gives young people developmentally appropriate, medically accurate information and provides answers to their questions about sex and relationships, without shaming or judging them for their experiences or feelings.

While New Jersey already has strong sex education policy in place, there is work to be done to ensure that our state is the gold standard for sex education across the country. To identify the specifics of what needs to be improved, a coalition of parents, community members, and advocacy groups spent time in 2019 conducting surveys of the key stakeholders in this conversation: schools, parents, and students. The findings of these surveys were published in a new report called "New Jersey's Sex Ed Report Card," which was released in December. The full report is available from our website, sexednj.org.

The report outlined six key themes, which together paint a picture of a mixed bag of sex education experiences in our schools. Sex education is not provided in a consistent manner from district to district, school to school, or even teacher to teacher. While some students receive excellent sex education, other students reported significant gaps in their experience.

We learned that there is a strong commitment to sex education from schools, parents, and teachers. Parents and students reported that they wish more time was spent on sex education in schools. Teachers also reported that they want more training, guidance, and resources to teach effective sex education. And parents overwhelmingly support sex education – in fact, more than 90 percent of our survey respondents support sex ed being taught in schools, which mirrors the results of other national studies.

We also heard from students that certain topics were not adequately covered in their sex education classes, especially topics relating to LGBTQ identities and issues of sexual assault and consent. While the New Jersey State Legislature passed bills last session that will work to fix these gaps, more work can be done to provide a commitment to teaching the full range of sex education topics.

In line with the findings of New Jersey's Sex Ed Report Card, our coalition has submitted recommendations to this committee about ways that our state's sex education standards can be further improved.

Several of our recommendations dealt with the topics included in the current standards, and the way in which they are taught. For example, we have recommended that our state standards incorporate all of the topics outlined in the National Sexuality Education Standards, which provide a model template for which content areas should be delivered at each grade level. We have also recommended that the standards incorporate the Principles for Sex Education, developed by the Center for Sex Education, in order to help educators create a nonjudgmental, respectful, positively-framed, inclusive environment in their classrooms that will help all students feel welcome.

Relatedly, we recommend that the standards eliminate the use of a gender binary, in order to ensure that all of New Jersey's students are included and welcome in the classroom, including gender nonbinary and transgender students. And we recommend that the language used throughout the standards be examined to avoid shaming, stigmatizing, or other fear-based tactics. We also recommend that all references to accessing health care include accessing sexual health care, and ensuring that sexual health care for services like contraception, abortion, and access to condoms be mentioned.

We have also recommended the removal of language related to "stressing abstinence." To be clear, we support teaching young people about abstinence, as part of education on sexual decision making. However, stressing abstinence above and beyond placing it on equal footing with other methods of preventing unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections can shame young people and is ineffective. Young people need education that helps them to be successful with the decisions they make, whatever those choices might be.

Further, several of our recommendations relate to the professional development for educators. We feel it would be beneficial to develop minimum criteria for these educators; in the same way we would not expect trigonometry to be taught by an educator with no background or professional preparation in math, we should not expect educators to teach sex education without proper training. And, requirements should be developed to help sex educators complete annual professional development hours to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field.

Finally, to ensure that the quality of a student's sex education experience no longer widely varies across the state, we recommend that these standards include some type of mechanism to ensure that the implementation of sexuality education throughout New Jersey is executed and consistent.

We look forward to collaborating with this committee to incorporate these recommendations for a robust, high-quality, comprehensive sex education program in our state.

Thank you.
Kaitlyn Wojtowicz
Vice President of Public Affairs
Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

Good afternoon my name is Jennifer Perez, I'm a parent advocate leader with Parents for Great Camden School, I'm also a resident in Camden.

In December emergency aid was given to many other districts but Camden was missing from the list. I'm here today to speak about emergency funding What is the current status of the aid?

When will the commissioner update families in Camden? Last school year Superintendent McCombs wanted to close the Veterans Memorial Family School in order to ensure the financial health of the district, but she kept it open in response to the state's promise.

It is impossible for the district to do it's planning without this state aid, and it's unfair to parents to keep us in this state of uncertainty.

We are doing our part, now it's time to do yours.

Our children deserve a high quality education, and school choice.

Jennifer Perez


jennifer@greatcamdenschools.org

Good afternoon, my name is Pastor Steve Nash. I have been pastoring in NJ for 39 years, serving 3 churches.

My wife and I have 7 children and 14 grandchildren. I have lived in Hillsborough, NJ for 30 years.

My reason for being here today is that I am tremendously concerned with the recent developments concerning the LGBTQ curriculum imposed upon us by this state and your department.

I believe it is a God-given responsibility for parents to provide wholesome education for our children.

Most parents delegate and trust the public schools to meet that needs to educate. We pay for that with our taxes.

We Parents are responsible, knowing we will stand before our God and give an account.

The Constitution protects parents' fundamental right to control their own children's education and upbringing.

In the Supreme Court (Meyer vs. Nebraska) has recognized and repeatedly reaffirmed this right.

"The child is not the mere child of the state; those who nurture them and direct their destiny have the right and the high duty, to recognize and prepare them for additional obligations. It is the prerogative of parents, not the state, to determine what children are taught about fundamental moral, religious, and philosophical issues.

Students, too, have constitutional rights to freedom of speech and the free exercise of religion.

Schools may not force them to engage in activities that violate their consciences or endorse messages they find objectionable."

To the State Department of Education,

In the name of our Holy God, I ask him to give me the right words. First, I thank God up to this hour and I thank you for listening to me. My name is John Nicola from South River NJ. This is my first time speaking in public. But as I felt that the public school is taking my right as a parent, I said, I must do whatever I can for my children. I see that the LGBT curriculum being forced on my children is an assault to my parental rights and against our family values and our faith. I am not here to show hatred against anyone nor to judge anyone, but God gives me the right as a parent to raise my children and to guard what they are learning in school. Please don't try to tell me that the government cares about my children more than I do. As a parent, I wish and pray that my children would have a better future than me. I believe my tax money shouldn't be used to teach children LGBT, it should be used to teach children how to read, write, and do mathematics.

Please, I ask God to open your hearts. I am totally against the LGBT curriculum being taught to our innocent children. Also, I ask you to please stop this from being implemented. Every time I hear about this new curriculum, I feel that I am being trapped in a box where I can't afford putting my 2 girls into catholic school, and now I don't feel safe leaving them in public school where they are being taught everyday ideologies against my faith. The only option you are giving me as a parent is to pull my children out of school. We don't send our children to school to learn about the LGBT agenda when they still can't read, write, or do math. I pray for everyone who is responsible for our children's curriculum, and I pray that God will touch your hearts and help you to reconsider this LGBT curriculum, everything is possible in our God's hand. I have been raised in this country and I choose to raise my children here as well because we have freedom of religion. But now if the public schools will be forcing on teaching the LGBT agenda, there will be no freedom of religion here. It will cause our children to be confused. They are minors, how can they make a decision to change their gender when they are still minors?

Hi my name is Debbie Nelson and I am here on behalf of the children, parents and educators of New Jersey. The 1st Amendment says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." But that is what's happening here. Although I have no ill will toward the people who are living this life style It is against my Christian beliefs and by teaching the LGBT curriculum to my grandchildren it's directly opposing my beliefs and therefore prohibiting my freedom to exercise my religion freely. It is wrong to indoctrinate our children to the LGBT lifestyle. We should should be doing everything in our power to preserve their innocence. It is not the school or the states place to expose our children to sexual behaviors. We have allowed education to take a backseat to political agendas in our schools and it is time for parents and educators to stand up for our children. Parents and educators who stand up against this new law should not be targeted or bullied for standing up for their constitutional rights to religious freedoms. I hope that you will choose to stand up for the constitution of the United States and stop this political agenda in our schools. Thank you for your time.



Re: New Jersey State Board of Education Meeting, Open Public Testimony

Liz Parlett Butcher
Regional Membership Director, New Jersey
Association of American Educators (AAE)
199 New Road, Suite 61, Linwood, NJ 08221

T: [REDACTED]
E: liz@aaeteachers.org

January 8, 2020

Honorable members of the New Jersey State Board of Education, Honorable New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Lamont Repollet, and esteemed education colleagues my name is Liz Parlett Butcher. I am the regional membership director for the New Jersey chapter of the Association of American Educators (AAE). AAE is a non-profit, non-partisan professional education association serving teachers, education support staff, principals, college professors, and classified staff throughout the country.

AAE NJ serves public charter school educators, traditional district public school educators, private and parochial school educators, administrators, and university professors. Along with providing our members with professional benefits and support, we seek to ensure their voices are heard on the education policies that affect them, their colleagues, and, most importantly, the students they educate. We believe that by empowering educators to advocate and by amplifying their perspectives and their stories in platforms such as today's public testimony, we serve all educators and students.

Today I am here to share just a few of the many successes of the charter school educators across the state and how they make an immediate impact and lasting difference in the lives of their students each and every day. I believe these stories and many others will be helpful to policymakers evaluating proposed changes on how we educate children. Their stories and best

practices were shared with AAE NJ in our statewide *NJ ChartersSpotlight* newsletter, and today I share them with this Board. Their individual stories are just as unique as the students they serve.

I began working for AAE in February of 2018 and admittedly did not appreciate the extent of public charter schools' educational impact in the state, or the diverse student population they serve. In a short time, I quickly learned that these public charter schools are life-saving learning environments for many of New Jersey's children. Charters allow thousands of children the opportunity to access a high quality public education in New Jersey. For one reason or another these students were not thriving in their previous school setting. I have learned in my time with AAE that a student's zip code should never determine whether or not they can access a high quality public education in New Jersey. I believe the right to receive a high quality public education is a basic human right that no child should ever be denied. These charters do in fact save lives, and it has been my esteemed honor and privilege to witness these incredible stories in my current role.

A few of our public charter school educators share how they approach student learning:

"For me, it is essential that character education and social-emotional learning occurs fluidly and within the parameters of an already robust curriculum. I do not necessarily believe in setting time aside for students to 'practice' character education, as lessons within this framework tend to be vacuous and disconnected from curricula. Instead, I make it a priority to weave elements of character education in daily classroom discussions, our analysis of literature, or historical observations."-Matthew Persico, Teacher, Hoboken Charter School

"We believe that a diagnosis shouldn't keep kids from the same level of rigor and opportunities as their peers, so the teachers and staff supporting those classrooms work alongside grade teams to ensure that there's plenty of opportunity for kids to generalize social skills and academic skills whenever possible. We also believe that our kids deserve an explicit, specialized, and tailored approach to their programming."- Kerry Boccher, Projects Director, Special Education KIPP NJ

"Advocacy is all about being solutions oriented and bringing hidden voices to light. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work in a community talking to families about our school. It is their stories about having a choice for their child's education that keep me going and believing in our schools."-Roseangela Mendoza, Teacher, The Ethical Community Charter School

"The goal is to teach our children that small hands working together make a big difference in the lives of those whom we serve."-Susan Little, Chief School Administrator, Compass Academy Charter School

“Our two behavior intervention specialists clinically address the difficult and challenging behaviors of our general education students and develop comprehensive plans to facilitate healthy behavior adjustment. In addition, their leadership in the harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) process has resulted in significant benefits to the overall school climate.”

-Jazmyne Mitchell, MSW, LSW, School Social Worker, Central Jersey College Prep & Middlesex County STEM Charter Schools

“It is a privilege to be able to provide school choice to the parents of Paterson. As public charter schools, we too have the same goal of educating students as traditional public schools. We are so thankful to our community for their tremendous interest in sending their kids to our school, which is a great testimony for us. It encourages us to continue to do our best to graduate literate, responsible and self-directed citizens.”- Mr. Riza, Leader Person, Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology

“Each day, I am thankful for the opportunity to serve our Artists; I celebrate their diversity, their individuality, and the thread that keeps us together - their passion for the Arts.”- Brian McGuire, Ph.D, Lead Person, CharterTech High School for the Performing Arts

“At Elysian we strongly believe that creative expression plays a key role in a student's emotional development. Using creativity to unlock each child’s potential, all students can access the joy and wonder of learning. Developing intellectually curious students is one of the greatest gifts a teacher can impart. (Plus, we like to have a little fun too!)”-Susan Grierson, Director, Elysian Charter School

“Our students are excited to come to school! They are making real connections, finding their people, their voice, and their best selves.”-Cori Solomon, Executive Director of Appel Farm Arts & Music Campus and Founder of Creativity CoLaboratory Charter School

There are many more dedicated educators whose voices should be included today, along with the parents of students attending charter schools and the students themselves that are vitally and equally important to any discussions we have about the future of public charter schools and public education in the state of New Jersey. I thank the Board for your time today and the opportunity to present.

Testimony - Mr. Dane [REDACTED]

| 1

Good Afternoon. My name is Dane [REDACTED] I'm from Newark and I have 3 sons. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Two of my sons attend [REDACTED] of Newark. I'm here today because I need you all to understand having a choice of where your children can be educated is essential to all parents.

I grew up in Newark and attended Newark public schools. I first learned of charter schools as a Father when I heard about a school that had 100% graduation rate. I personally had never heard of that in a high school. It intrigued me and I learned that charter schools existed. I learned that my children didn't have to go to a specific school because of the proximity of our home to the school and our zip code. I realized my children could have the opportunity to get a top-notch education, that was tuition-free as well.

My oldest son graduated from my alma mater [REDACTED] in Newark. It was a struggle because of the obstacles we faced between 2013-2017. Cami Anderson was the superintendent at the time and she was trying to completely change the administration at [REDACTED] halfway through my son's high school career. The parents rallied support for our principal and she stayed on through his junior year. Over that summer she was fired for no apparent reason. It was very underhanded how it was done. However my son graduated from [REDACTED] and went on to college at DSU.

I currently have a third grader who has an IEP and attends [REDACTED], a charter school in Newark. I always heard charter schools get rid of children with IEPs because they're not equipped to handle them. This is definitely untrue. My child came into Kindergarten with his IEP. [REDACTED] made sure my child had every resource -- pull out instruction, small group instruction, a reduced amount of homework, extra time for tests and the option to have questions read aloud to him for tests and quizzes. He received speech therapy. Not to mention, he understood that it was alright that he needed these services and he was never shamed by anyone. For him it's completely normal to have these supports, as it should be. My

son has since tested out of his IEP programming and only receives speech therapy. Xavier is in [REDACTED] grade and has been in [REDACTED] since Kindergarten. Like any [REDACTED] year old he says he hates school. The truth comes out in our one on one conversations. He really hates homework! (Yeah, me too). He truly loves the school he attends. His teachers truly care and want him to succeed. They see the bright and talented child that I see. He has made honor roll literally every quarter he has been there. Except one quarter in 6th grade when he got a girlfriend. He has since learned balance; somewhat.

If all children could have the experiences my children receive in charter school, I believe they would have more discipline and structure when it comes to their schoolwork and even in their daily behaviors. They would become critical thinkers with more originality. They would learn to be more self sufficient. In general I think they would be happier. It feels good when the teacher calls on you and you actually know the answer. My kids know the answers because they are getting an excellent education. Their confidence level is AMAZING!

We need to make sure that ALL parents have the power to choose what's best for their child and have options that will give their children the excellent education they deserve. I recently was privileged to go to Pittsburgh for the "so-called" Public Education Forum. I am part of a group of concerned parents involved in the Powerful Parent Network. This grassroots organization involves parents from all across the nation to rally together to demand that parents have choice for where their children receive their education. The focus was for us to be able to attend that Forum, that was filled with the democratic candidates, and let them know that we as parents know what's best for our children. Politicians, administrators and even teachers don't know our children better than we do. They would not grant us access to that public forum but one candidate, Michael Bennet, did come talk to us and listened to our plight. We certainly appreciated that.

I am very proud of my school and glad that I had the ability to choose a charter school for my child. It was the right choice for my family and it has made a huge difference in our lives. I'm not opposed to traditional public schools at all because I am a product of them myself. I think I turned out pretty damn good if I do say so myself.

Because I was able to exercise choice in making decisions for my children's education, I feel confident that my children will be empowered to be the greatest version of themselves that they can be. There is nothing more satisfying than a parent being able to see their children become what they dream they could be. My right to choose should be God given but instead I have to plead with the "powers that be". I'm not opposed to this concept as long as those "powers" understand that my children deserve the best option available to them. If the available option is not the best then move out of my way so I can create a better option. For my children, the options are ENDLESS. That's all they will ever know because I don't intend to let them believe otherwise.

John Hanna

Ramsey, NJ 07446

Confirmation #

January 8, 2020

Department of Education
100 Riverview Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

State Board of Education Public Testimony

Members of the State Board of Education, thank you for receiving my testimony. My statement concerns the implementation of the LGBT curriculum (NJSA 18A:35-4.35 and 18A:35-4.36) through Garden State Equality.

Garden State Equality (GSE) is an LGBTQ activist organization, devoted to instilling its sexual and gender ideology throughout society, advancing its understanding of "justice" through an "LGBTQ lens," to employ GSE's own verbiage.

The law, as it is being implemented, instills sexual and gender ideology within the school curriculum. Granting GSE the power to shape the New Jersey public school curriculum doesn't advance an educational purpose, but inculcates beliefs. GSE doesn't merely present a viewpoint, but intends to fully persuade any and all of New Jersey's students to adopt the lens through which it sees the world.

For example, sexual and gender ideology asserts that when a biological male claims that he's a woman, that his saying so makes it so. In that case, the word "woman" becomes a word without meaning, devoid of any referent that anyone can point to to define "woman." As does the word "man" in situations where a biological female identifies as a man. How can we mandate our children use words without meaning on command? That doesn't enlighten or inform but enforces irrationality. This doesn't serve the educational interest of NJ's school children, but the adult interests of sexual and gender ideology.

Sexual and gender ideology mandates that children who experience gender dysphoria be given puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, even endorsing the removal of healthy body parts. This is profoundly evil. It is the sexual, physical, and emotional abuse of children. Teaching such doesn't serve an educational purpose, but effectively makes children vulnerable to their own abuse. I do not use the words "evil" and "abuse" haphazardly or provocatively, but advisedly with the gravity they are due.

I appeal to your conscience and humanity to consider what you are imposing upon our children.

Moreover, I submit to you that both the United States Constitution and the New Jersey Constitution require the removal of GSE's teachings and curriculum from New Jersey's public schools, as it is the establishment of a state religion.

This is borne out by GSE's own description of an LGBTQ lens through which to see the world. Sexual and gender ideology is, according to its own understanding, a worldview, providing a comprehensive perspective on the most basic questions concerning our humanity and well-being, addressed by religion and morality.

That is why the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 *Obergefell* same-sex marriage decision was effectively a theological and moral writing referring to transcendence, meaning, love, sacrifice, devotion, freedom, intimacy, and spirituality. Yet, even in ruling as it did, the Supreme Court encouraged an "open and searching debate" within our society with respect to the fundamental beliefs it addressed.

It is such "open and searching debate" that sexual and gender ideology in general, and GSE specifically, vehemently oppose. It is not simply the case that sexual and gender ideology is religious in its character. But at the core of its convictions, from which it derives its power, is intolerance of disagreement and dissent. Sexual and gender ideology maligns those who don't adhere to its tenets as "haters" and "bigots," no different from the slaver-holders, segregationists, and racists who have marred American history.

Its goal, with the support of state power, is to eradicate opposition from society. Sexual and gender ideology advocates insist that to even permit the questioning of their beliefs, degrades, and even endangers, the lives of those whose interests they claim to speak for. Not separate from, but embedded within, the ideology itself is the demand that every new idea, every new word, must not be opposed. Acceptance of sexual and gender ideology renders a person defenseless to its demands. Such teaching does not foster intellectual and civic development, but mars it.

Thus, my argument here is not with or against individuals, especially children and adolescents, who may struggle or be distressed. My opposition is to an ideology that is assuming social and legal authority over language, and even thought, about the most basic questions of life and meaning, mandating conformity, having its teachings made a curricular requirement in New Jersey. That is plainly unconstitutional.

When I was nine years old, my family immigrated to the United States from Egypt, an officially Islamic republic, where Islam is taught in the public schools. Yet, even in Egypt, all school students and citizens are not required to profess the state religion. Embedding sexual and gender ideology, through GSE, within New Jersey schools goes further than that, requiring adherence to the state religion. This is contrary to the principled civic pluralism embedded within the character of the nation to which my family immigrated when I was a boy.

Should New Jersey impose this curriculum upon its students, my family would be more free going back to Egypt than if we were to remain in New Jersey.

When I was nineteen years old, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. And it is in keeping with that oath I took in New Jersey that I am here today.

Accordingly, due to its violation of both the U.S. and New Jersey Constitutions, in its establishment of a state religion, I request the removal of Garden State Equality's curriculum, in total, from any and all New Jersey public schools. Thank you.



Dr. Luann Breese

[REDACTED]
Point Pleasant, NJ 08742

Special education teacher

Elizabeth Public School
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Good Afternoon Members of the State Board,

My name is Dr. Luann Breese and I am a recently retired special education teacher from the Elizabeth Public Schools. I would like to address the illegalities that take place on a daily basis throughout the school system. As a result of the lack of bilingual, special education teachers within the district, the bilingual students do not receive the services they are entitled to with respect to the goals and objectives that are implemented in their IEP. Special education teachers, who are not present in the bilingual setting, are forced to sign IEP's for children who are not present in their classrooms as well as asked to tell parents that services are provided to their children when in fact they are not. We are asked to put our certifications on the line and lie to make the district look as if they are following the law. Many bilingual students are neglected and forgotten throughout the district. If the parents are not informed or don't speak English, they are taken advantage of and are in fact, lied to by the Child Study Teams and Special Education supervisors throughout the district. There is a significant lack of bilingual, special education teachers in the district, presenting the problem for lack of services to the bilingual special education population. Actually, special education supervisors demand the special education teacher for that specific grade level, meet with the bilingual teacher for 30 minutes a week to review lessons and make accommodations for the students with IEP's. It never happens as the special education teachers don't have the time in their schedules to provide the time or the

services. They are given one prep a day and are often asked to cover classes when a general education teacher is not present. Special education teachers have complained to supervisors and they have been ignored year after year. You are told to find the time and make the accommodations.

I have spoken out for years against the injustices that take place in the district and it falls on deaf ears year after year. I have been called a trouble maker by the Board of Education and been chastised by the administrators in my building. Administrators who are not properly certified to hold the position, are telling teachers to break the law on a daily basis. Another huge problem in the district has been administrators who have been given positions they are not qualified or certified for. Nepotism is rampant and paying for positions in the norm. If you support someone on the Board of Education and contribute greatly to their campaign, you are guaranteed an administrative position, regardless of your education.

I have had offices taken away in two schools and been transferred to the worst class in the worst school in the district for speaking up for teachers and for special education students. Being an advocate for special needs students labels you a trouble maker and you are sanctioned for your actions. I have made appointments with the Director of Special Education to discuss my frustration and they have been canceled every time. I have gone to the Union County Superintendent who told me he would look into the critical situation but nothing has changed. I sent my information to the Attorney General of New Jersey who informed me that the school district is not in violation. According to State Law, violating an IEP, for a special needs student, is breaking the law. Special education students have rights and they are violated every day in the Elizabeth Public School district. I have sent Ethics violations to the State Department and every one of them has been sent back saying, the district is not in violation of breaking any laws. It

seems the level of neglect and the illegalities are rampant within the district. According to the New Jersey Department of Education website the school district is given over 435 million dollars from the State of New Jersey. Why then, are special education students in the district neglected?

I am asking for help with the injustices to the teachers, students and parents who are only asking for what their children are entitled to by law. Administration in the district is well aware of the violations but choose to ignore them. They have preyed on a population of children and parents who are uninformed and afraid to speak up. They have taken advantage for years and continue today to violate the civil rights of the special needs students in the district. They are aware that many of the parents are afraid to advocate for their child and so they ignore the law and disregard the needs of the students.

I hope to bring to light, the illegalities and injustices that have prohibited children from obtaining the education they are entitled to. The situation is critical and needs to be addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this delicate matter.

New Jersey Board of Education

Jan 8, 2020

Good afternoon.

I stand before you as a concerned grandparent of two little boys, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Not only am I [REDACTED]'s grandmother but I become his guardian when his mom who is a US soldier gets deployed.

I am here to ask this board to please reconsider the mandatory teaching of this LGBTQ curriculum to our children.

My reservations are due to the following.

1. My Faith. As a Christian, the bible teaches me and I have taught my children and grandchildren the way of God concerning sexuality.
2. As a taxpayer of this State, I am aware that portion of my tax paying dollars go toward education and as a taxpayer, I expect to have a say in this decision.
3. Why are we not given the option to opt out of this curriculum? .

Let it be known that even though I stand against this curriculum, I have no ill feelings against the LGBTQ community.

Please allow us to opt out of this curriculum. Thank you.

Good afternoon, my name is Gehan Sultan, I am a mom and a K-5 certified teacher, I immigrated to the States 22 years ago. I left Egypt, my home, to escape from christian persecution, looking toward raising my children in the land of the free, with freedom of religion and the ability to live out my expression of faith without limitation. My first decade living in the States was like heaven on earth, in my perspective, until gradually I felt as though my freedoms were slowly melting away and eventually robbed from me. In recent years, I have felt as though my beliefs and ideas have been shut down in many aspects. One of these areas, is based on how my christian views on marriage and sexual orientation, have been quickly rejected, if not verbally attacked and scrutinized both in physical interactions as well as through social media.

Nowadays I am facing an issue that threatens my personal interactions with my own children: I am talking about the violation of my ultimate authority as a parent to my children. The LGBTQ+ policy, as well as the up and coming curriculum are a violation of FERPA. The policy and curriculum also conflicts with the doctrine of my Christian faith by indoctrinating my children to believe that marriage is not supernaturally designed for a male and female. Parents and families must be able to teach their children in relation to their own beliefs and ideas without being pushed away by a school system that causes division and conflict between parents and their children.

According to a National Assessment and Educational Progress Reports, around 67% of eleventh graders can not read at grade level and 85% can not do math at grade level. School boards are failing at their primary mission. Instead of facing the opioid crisis and the rising rates of suicide among the youth. The board is implementing a policy that encourages the use of drugs like puberty blockers and opposite sex hormones, which result in a very high suicide rate.

We hear stories about girls who are staying home or holding their urine causing emotional and health damages as they fear to end up in the bathroom with a biological male. Boys are running naked from their locker rooms when a biological female is found inside. Under the US Constitution, the Ninth Amendment states that no one's Constitutional right should be used to infringe upon the rights of another citizen.

The LGBTQ curriculum is going to be infused in every single subject, math, history, social studies, music, art, and spanish. This means there is no opted out if it contradicts my christian views. The objective is to teach and affirm in an effort to normalize the lgbt lifestyle. Curriculum is written by a special interest group and from only one point of view that violates my Christian faith and beliefs. It's being sold as a way to stop lgbt students from being bullied. Bullying should never be tolerated but must be handled based on the schools and bullying policies. The notion that teaching the sexuality of lgbt persons creates a safer environment is a falsehood.

Safe schools are attained by promoted good behavior and teaching children to be kind and compassionate to all regardless of differences. It is not necessary to learn about ones bedroom policy to be kind and compassionate.

Teaching sexuality and family life are the responsibility of parents not the government. America was founded on religious liberty and guaranteed under the constitution. We are all entitled to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and freedom of religion . THIS IS NOT FREEDOM. We all have the right to choose how we want to live that is best for our families as long as those choices do not infringe on others' rights.. This law is a direct assault to our parental and religious freedom.

Politicians and young activists, ~~who are not educationally qualified~~, should not be writing curriculums or deciding what is best for our children. ~~Children have the right to be safe, healthy, and secure in their schools. Parents have the right to know what is being taught to their children and to have a say in what is taught.~~ Public schools are NOT a place to promote a political agenda. After all, these schools are run by our tax money, and nothing should take place without our consent.

In conclusion, LGBT- policy and curriculum are a violation of the US Constitution, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, ninth amendment, and our parental authority. It is non-scientific, not age appropriate and should not be implemented in the public school system. We are seeking your help and asking you to take an action to protect the children from being sexualized.

These policies and curriculum will NOT promote respect, and understanding. On the contrary, it will promote confusion, bullying, and violence toward those who believe otherwise. I believe all children should be cared for, respected, and protected, however this can not mean that those with religious views are discriminated against.

Please see attachments

3 years old gingerbread person lesson

2nd grade worksheet

Thank you

Gigi Sultan

Understanding Our Bodies

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT: By the end of 2nd grade students will be able to: 22.CC.1 Use proper names for body parts including male and female genitalia.	2nd Grade
TOOLS NEEDED: PowerPoint	2nd Grade

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE:

You will notice that this lesson refers to "girls" and "boys" when identifying body parts. The use of a binary construct of gender as well as using gender (boys and girls) rather than the more accurate biological sex (male and female) is purposeful given the developmental stage of students. Lessons in higher grades use more precise language and begin to introduce a broader concept of gender. This lesson does, however, acknowledge that "there are some body parts that mostly just girls have and some parts that mostly just boys have. Being a boy or a girl doesn't have to mean you have those parts, but for most people this is how their bodies are." And, "Most people have a vulva and a vagina or a penis and testicles but some people's bodies can be different. Your body is exactly what is right for you."

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

It is important to share the PowerPoint diagrams with your supervisor prior to teaching this lesson to ensure they are acceptable for your use.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Correctly identify at least four body parts of the female genitals. [Knowledge]
2. Correctly identify at least four body parts of the male genitals. [Knowledge]
3. Describe why it is important for them to know the correct names for the genitals. [Knowledge]

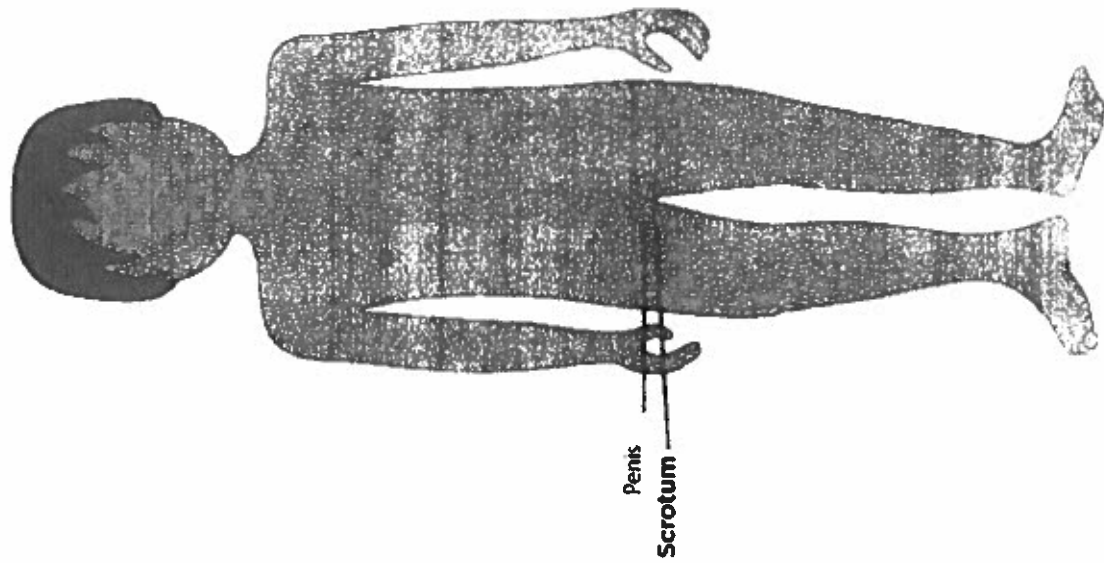
PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Introduce the topic by saying, "Today we are going to talk about bodies, including parts that everyone has in common, parts that we have that are different, and parts that are usually covered when we are in public. Explain that it's also important that everyone with a body knows how their body works and how to take care of it so we can all be healthy. (1 minute)

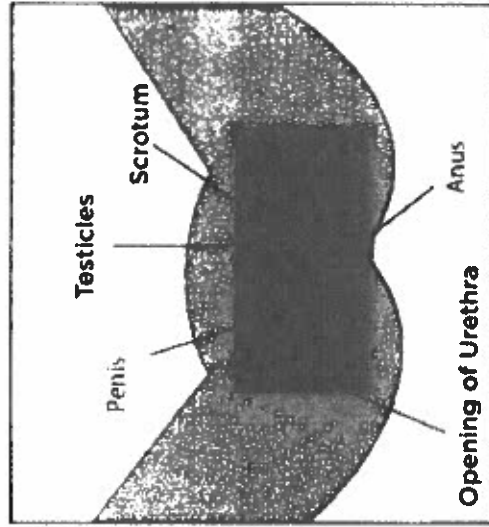
STEP 2: Ask the students to name body parts that most people have in common.

Note to the Teacher: Student answers might include most everyone has arms, legs, feet, fingers, head, eyes, mouth, etc. Some students may mention that not everyone has two arms or all ten fingers.

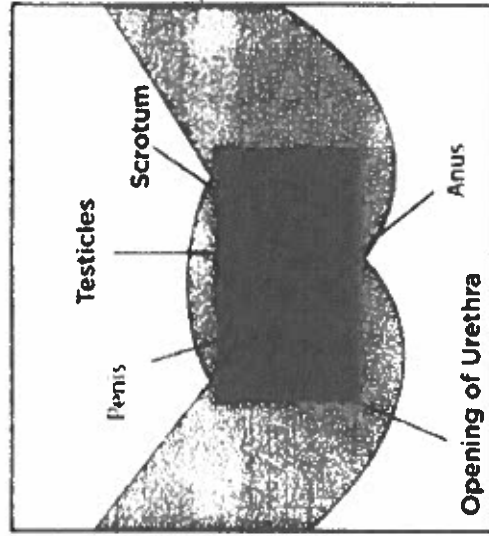
Male



intact/uncircumcised



circumcised



The Genderbread Person

Genderbread Person

Genderbread Person

Genderbread Person

Genderbread Person

Genderbread Person

Danielle Fienberg

Email: [REDACTED]

#26

I'm coming here, to you, to beg for help. I do mean beg. I'm out of options. I've followed all of the steps I'm supposed to, talked to all of the people I could reach, and even went through over 300 days of due process to try and support my preschooler.

His demographics label him privileged. He's white, male, and comes from an educated, two parent household. If what we have experienced is privileged, then the systemic issues we've experienced must be far worse for children without our resources.

He's been suspended, though no written record was made despite my request, he's been told the police will come and get him, he's been denied much needed special education services. We've even been told he needed to be properly medicated with a doctor's note to return to school. We've had our parenting questioned and judged when asking for evaluations or support that are mandated by law! We've even had DCPD called to try and stop our advocacy, claiming, involved and ever present as we are, that we neglected him. Please, remember, this is a disabled pre-k student.

We aren't asking for much. We just want him to be evaluated, his challenges supported, and his learning needs met. Literally, what we are asking for is FAPE. Free, appropriate, education. We just want Elizabeth Public Schools to comply with a law that is decades old.

Most of our district isn't as privileged as I am. Our district is a low-income, high minority, high ELL district. The majority of these parents don't have the same access to resources as my family. This might be why Elizabeth can get away with classifying only 12% of their students as students with disabilities when the state averages 17% and districts with similar risks identify between 18 and 21%. That's a huge gap.

As the VP of the Special Education PTA, I see this with gap with desperate and frustrated parents at every meeting. They tell me that they don't know who to talk to about their 7 year old being held in prone restraint, belly on the floor with a staff member on their back, their 5 year old being sent home all the time and their job is now on the line, their 15 year old failing because they've missed over 45 days of school but no one will document it, nor will homebound instruction be provided, a 10 year old who can't read, but is denied an IEP because somehow, he moves from grade to grade. I've lost count of the parents who told us that DCPD was suddenly involved after a press for services, or they pushed back against harsh disciplinary measures. What about the kindergartner who was getting in trouble constantly for being sleepy, but come to find out that the school nurse wasn't comfortable with the child's oxygen being in the classroom, so she kept it stored across the school, a floor away with the administration's blessing?

I understand that these are anecdotes, but what but anecdotes build into systemic violations? These are the stories behind the numbers. I can give you some harder numbers: 30 thousand kids, an autism program, but not a single BCBA on staff. Only 67% compliance with the Least Restrictive Environment... 5 YEARS after a settled lawsuit. Number of parent-chosen parents on the SEPAC? Number of times parents spoke about Special Education at the Local Board of Ed meetings in the last 12 months? 58.

Danielle Fienberg

Email [REDACTED]

I'm not sure what else I can say other than that we are desperate for help in Elizabeth. I'm speaking on behalf of and with the blessing of over a dozen other parents who cannot afford the gas to come here, let alone afford to lose a day's pay. Our experiences and the numbers tell the same story: Elizabeth Public Schools is failing special needs children and we parents are left without recourse.

I was going to end here, but I wrote this a few weeks ago. Just yesterday, my son was suspended, again. I had to come pick him up at lunch time, and when I came to get him, the supervisor informed me that he was going to be placed on homebound. When I said that was inappropriate, aren't we supposed to have an IEP meeting to discuss changes of placement, I was told that "other parents understand this type of situation." I don't understand violating procedural safeguards and denying FAPE to a tiny, struggling little boy with autism. I'm not asking for much. I'm just asking for him to be treated with dignity and his rights to be upheld.