

Follow-up on Seeking Clarifications on Non-Religious (i.e. Secular) Issues Related to Bill 10

Ref: My email "Seeking Clarifications on Non-Religious (i.e. Secular) Issues Related to Bill 10," dated February 16, 2017.

Dear Trustee

I very much appreciate the feedback received from a number of School Boards and the substantial cooperation shown in attending to the concerns and questions raised in my February 16, (Ref.) email.

My request in this email is to focus in on two of the six concerns and only five of the original 22 questions posed to Public School Trustees.

CONCERN #1: Opt-out Provisions for Sexual Orientation Indoctrination

Q1 - Will the School Board clarify whether parents will be notified of all sexual orientation indoctrination and discussion of variant genders and sexual expressions, for the purpose of allowing parents to withdraw (opt-out) their children from the instruction?

Q2 – What will be the legal obligation/practical use of School Act S.50.1(1) for parents, if the term "human sexuality" does not exist in the forthcoming Alberta "Health and Physical Education Curriculum;" and furthermore, instruction in sexual orientation, gender identities, and sexual expressions, is dispersed throughout the curriculum and expressed under different terminologies?

Q3 – Do you know why AHRA S.11.1 was repealed and School Act S.50.1 was retained?

Additional Background

One School Board suggested Q1-3 would best be answered by asking the Minister. When I sent these three questions (in a slightly different articulation) to Minister Eggen, I received a form response – "Please be advised that the Minister receives a large volume of correspondence; however, be assured that your email will be brought to his attention."

Subsequently, I discovered that on April 14, 2016, Minister Eggen wrote the following in a [letter](#) to the Provincial President of The Catholic Women's League of Canada: (quoted extracts)

No changes to curriculum or parental rights under Section 50.1 of the School Act

The policies I asked school jurisdiction to create do not impact Alberta curriculum or Section 50.1 of the School Act, which gives parents the ability to withdraw their children from instruction or exercises that are primarily and explicitly about human sexuality or religion. Parents will also continue to receive notice where courses of study, education programs or instructional materials, or instruction or exercises, include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality, and there will continue to be no academic penalty for a student who is absent from that discussion or lesson.

Purpose of the Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions

These guidelines were created as a resource to be used by educators as they work to accommodate their students. The guidelines are not legally binding and are intended only to

provide examples of best practices for supporting students with diverse identities and gender expressions.

It would appear from the above that each School Board has been empowered to be able to answer at least Q1 and Q2 above. After significant dialogue with three School Boards on this concern, trying to get a clear answer, I have now honed the questions to allow for a simple “yes” or “no” response:

1 - Will your School Board be notifying district parents of courses of study, educational programs or instructional materials, or instruction or exercises, including subject-matter that deals primarily and explicitly with “*sexual orientation, sexual identity, or sexual expression*” for the purpose of allowing parents to opt their children out of this instruction? Please - Yes or No

2 – For the purpose of implementing School Act 50.1, does your School Board interpret the term/topic/curriculum category - “human sexuality,” to include/incorporate/cover all indoctrination in “*sexual orientation, sexual identity, or sexual expression*”? Please - Yes or No

Your caring response to these two simplified questions would be most appreciated.

CONCERN #6: Encouraging Experimentation & Growing the Sexual Minority Demographic

Q19 – Could the School Board clarify who, if anyone, in the Education Ministry, is fact checking ATA assertions, data, and so-called “evidence-based” doctrines, and does it matter that most, if not all, of the ATA sexuality/orientation/homophobia publications are not the outcome of Alberta curriculum requirements?

Q21 – Will the School Board clarify whether you are concerned about institutional promotion of experimentation toward sexual minority identities and lifestyles within district schools?

Q22 – What specific actions will the School Board take to ensure that Bill 10 and existing implementation guidance will not result in more students [misguidedly] self-identifying with sexual minority identities and lifestyles?

Additional Background

The ATA has published, along with iSMSS, a resource brochure titled [SAFE SPACES](#). The brochure lists the [Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services](#) (iSMSS) as an endorsed resource stating:

iSMSS provides evidence-based resources that serve as a starting point to help increase knowledge and enhance services designed to support sexual and gender minority children, youth and families, and the professionals that serve them.

iSMSS is [paid by the Alberta Government](#) to organize the [Alberta GSA Network](#), intended to support a target audience that includes children ages 5 to 17 years old. [Dr. Kristopher Wells](#) is the iSMSS Faculty Director and Co-founder of [Camp FYrefly](#). He is also the original author of [GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers](#). In published [biography](#) on Dr. Wells is written:

Dr. Wells is the driving force behind the creation of many ground-breaking initiatives including Camp fYrefly, the Alberta GSA Network, PrideTape, and NoHomophobes.com, which has been featured across the world in more than 50 publications including the Economist, Atlantic, Independent, and Guardian.

Dr. Wells is also the original author of the ATA publication [GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers](#).

Very recently, [Informed Albertans](#) has exposed the Alberta GSA Network promoting access for children K-12 to [sexually explicit and graphic pornography](#). According to Informed Albertans, *“Dr. Wells has publicly shared posts from Fruit Loop on his own social media, including a [“fast-paced ad”](#) featuring naked young people who ‘share an erotic kiss on a tennis court’ and ‘are often seen embracing, rolling around on the ground together.’ Clearly, he is not ignorant of the sexually graphic content of their posts.”*

According to [CBC](#), Dr. Wells said: "It's unfortunate that we were not contacted directly. **It's always a challenge when you're listing community organizations and you're not responsible for the content that's posted.** And this is the first time anyone's ever raised a concern with any of the content on the Alberta GSA network website, which is a great website and resources for students, parents and teachers across the province." [My bold]

Theresa Ng, founder of Informed Albertans, writes: "Why is it up to citizens to vet these government funded and recommended resources?"

Your caring response to questions 19, 21 and 22 would be most appreciated.

Sincerely

Carman Bradley