

HWDSB EQUITY PILLAR POLICY: SEXUAL ORIENTATION  
*(Community Validation Session Brief)*

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Most people are familiar with the Biblical account of Jesus & the woman caught in the act of adultery. The religious establishment thought they had trapped Him into a legalistic dead-end that would force Him to consent to the woman being stoned to death as just punishment for her crime. His response? "Let him who is without sin be the first to cast a stone at her". Frustrated, they drop their stones & leave. Jesus asks the woman, "Where are your accusers?" She dares to look up to see they've fled the scene. Then He says, "I don't condemn you either. Go and sin no more." This account captures the heart of our response to this issue. As a Christian leader I do not consider myself "holier than thou" or someone without sin. I submit the following, then, from a posture of respect & humility.

People of faith like us are often labeled homophobic. What this apparently means is that we fear gay people; we hate gay people; we judge, condemn, & discriminate against gay people; & given the opportunity we would likely be abusive towards gay people. Not only is this untrue & unfair, the use of such labels marginalizes & stigmatizes anyone with a different point of view. Terms like "homophobic" & "heterosexist" are not intended to promote dialogue & understanding, but rather to prevent such "due process". I would suggest the authors of such discriminatory labels are not interested in human rights but rather in silencing dissenting opinion & advancing their agenda. Is it really valid to argue that anyone who stands for Biblical righteousness is by definition a hateful, potentially violent bigot? Is the Board's decision to proceed with the sexual orientation component of the Policy really about the best interests of our children?

A person with a same-sex orientation did not one day make an arbitrary choice against heterosexuality. That's an important fact in this debate. I can only imagine the fear, confusion, & pain as a person comes to terms with being gay. On the other hand, there is no conclusive evidence that being gay is the same as being, say, Chinese or Hispanic. There may be generational factors in some cases, but if there is no irrefutable proof that a gay person was born gay, then perceived discrimination about homosexual behaviour is not the same as discrimination against an ethnic group. I suggest to the Board it's neither malevolent nor bigoted to believe that being gay is more often related to environmental factors: childhood trauma, family life, parenting, etc. Moreover, it is common knowledge that homosexual activity is unhealthy & dangerous, putting those who engage in such activity significantly at risk...isn't such truth absolutely relevant & important to our children's education & well-being?

We wholeheartedly honour the Board's commitment to freedom & human rights for all people groups. If the Board deems it necessary to develop an anti-harrassment, anti-discrimination policy & curricula beyond what's already in place, we would not object. But if the Board determines that our children & grandchildren must of necessity be indoctrinated by their school into an unjust & irresponsible policy that discriminates against, & vilifies, a significant percentage of the population, then we must strenuously object. Are people like us, of whom there are many, to be marginalized & effectively silenced by such policy, wrongfully judged as being hateful & bigoted, without cause or basis in fact? Will our children be allowed no freedom of conscience? Should we advise parents that private schools are the only reasonable alternative?

The Board is on the verge of instituting policy changes with far-reaching implications for every child, every family, & every community in our Region. It would be difficult to overstate how serious such changes could be. Surely an anti-harrassment, anti-discrimination policy is a much more balanced, honest, & just alternative.

