

June 6, 2007

HWDSB

Dear Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak about our concerns on the new Equity Policy: Sexual Orientation.

My husband and I are very concerned about the new sexual orientation policy that the HWDSB is now in the process of validating. We have 4 children, one presently in grade 3, another presently in grade 1, and the other going to JK in the fall, and one still at home. As concerned Christian parents, this policy, as it stands, is very intolerant to our values and beliefs, I use the word intolerant because this policy was done to promote equality and tolerance in the school but in that process that and other words have been redefined to suit the needs of the policy makers who are in favour of this policy as it stands.

The SUPREME COURT OF CANADA, comments on what tolerance is NOT, I quote, " as my colleague points out, the demand for tolerance cannot be INTERPRETED AS THE DEMAND TO APPROVE OF ANOTHER PERSON'S BELIEFS OR PRACTICES. WHEN WE ASK PEOPLE TO BE TOLERANT OF OTHERS, WE DO NOT ASK THEM TO ABANDON THEIR PERSONAL CONVICTIONS"( Chamberlain V Surrey School District #36 per McLachlin C-J (S.c.c)

This new policy is totally opposite to the meaning of tolerance. We as Christian parents chose to send our children to the public school instead of our own Christian school set up by our local church congregation. We are the ONLY parents to send our children to public school out of a congregation of over 400 people. We have been approached by leaders in our church and school board and asked many times over the last 4 years to send our children to Christian school and they have always questioned us about it and asked us to have a change of heart. We have always maintained that the Lord has directed us this ways and we have kept a strong stance to keeping out children in the public school system, however, if this policy goes through, you will give us no choice but to take our children out of your school board. We WILL leave and put them in Christian School. We will then feel obligated to tell friends and family to do the same and why we had to do this and encourage them to seek alternate avenues of education for their children as well because our beliefs and values are seen as "intolerant" or "biased" when in fact this is biased against us and our beliefs.

Our prayer for this whole committee is to seriously consider rewording or rewriting this policy, and making it one of tolerance, because when and if this policy is passed as it is, many Christians and other faith groups will have no choice but to remove their children from the HWDSB.

Yours in Christ

Mark and Michelle Verwey  
Concerned Parents