



Hamilton – Wentworth Family Action Council

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING FAMILY VALUES

P.O. Box 66714, 38 King Street East
STONEY CREEK, ONTARIO L8G 5E6
www.hamiltonfamilyaction.org

September 4, 2006

HWDSB Trustee Candidates

Dear Candidates for HWDSB Trustee Position:

We are a local grassroots group of citizens very much interested and supportive of our public education system. We are particularly interested in ensuring that policies and curriculum are in keeping with Section 264(1)(c) of the Education Act in that they show ‘*respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality*’. We believe that the Ministry of Education documents, education-related federal documents, and local HWDSB policies all reflect the principles of secular pluralism. That is, all diverse religions and worldviews are respected, and no one religion is to be given primacy over the others.

Our families practice their Christian belief and faith every day, in all aspects of our lives. We believe that schools are a place where all students may come and, if age-appropriate, discuss the worldview, religious or otherwise, that they are being taught at home, and in turn, to learn the different worldviews of others in our society, so that better understanding and tolerance may result.

We would appreciate it if you would consider completing and returning to us the attached questionnaire in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope so that we may better understand your viewpoints on several issues. Please call or email us if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gloria Turner
HWFAC Director
info@hamiltonfamilyaction.org

Questions of HWDSB Trustee Candidates – Election: November 13, 2006

Question	Yes	No	Not Certain	Comments
1. Do you support the school board's intention to normalize and promote through activities and an all-encompassing curriculum various sexual orientations and associated high-risk sexual activities to students from K. to 12 and to all staff?				
2. Do you support parents that object in principle to the teaching of such activities and curriculum and parents' right to opt their children out of such teaching?				
3. Do you support education tax dollars that enable and encourage students to explore and to engage in sexually promiscuous, high-risk activities?				
4. Do you feel public education should tolerate, respect and acknowledge students' various religious and moral beliefs in our pluralist society (*secular pluralism)?				
5. Do you feel policies and curriculum should reflect purely **secular humanistic values? (Humanism will not tolerate any critical thinking, discussion or argument that is based on the premise that God exists and that there is absolute truth.)				
6. The Education Act states the following: "Statute 171.7 - <i>"School Boards have the authority to determine the numbers and kinds of schools."</i> If an alternative faith-sensitive program were presented to the HWDSB, and said program were proven to be financially viable, would you be open to considering piloting such a program within the public school system as is demonstrated in the following public school boards? - Grand Erie District which has a Mexican-Mennonite program; - Niagara District School Board's Christian alternative high school at Eden High School; - Upper Grand District School Board's Old Order Mennonite school; and - Sturgeon Creek's Alternative Program in Stratton, Ontario, an elementary equivalent to Niagara's Eden High School?				

***Secular Pluralism:** A system operating under secular pluralism is not under the control of any religion or singular belief system, nor does it give primacy to any religion, but is representative, respectful, and accommodating of the various cultures, faiths and world-views of the different communities within its jurisdiction.

****Secular humanism** is a secular philosophy based upon humanistic principles. Secular Humanists became a significant force in public education after the original Humanist Manifesto I was published in 1933. John Dewey, "father of progressive education," is reputed to have been the author. Public education often reflects secular humanistic worldview. Secular humanism was founded upon humanistic and atheistic philosophies and is often identified as 'without religion'. A secular humanistic worldview is based upon the beliefs outlined in the Humanist Manifesto I (1933)¹, Humanist Manifesto II. (1972)², and The Secular Humanist Declaration (1980)³. The fundamental proclaimed beliefs are:

- *That the nature of the universe, as depicted by science, makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values;*
- *Morals are rooted in the human experience and that supernatural beliefs are, at best an irrelevant diversion;*
- *The universe is regarded as self-existing and not created;*
- *Man is part of nature and has emerged as part of a continuous process (evolution);*
- *As there is no life after death, man will take the path of mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking;*
- *Religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as possible as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world;*
- *This is the only life of which we have certain knowledge and we owe it to ourselves and others to make the best life possible for ourselves and all those whom share this fragile planet;*
- *We find the traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitive. We reject the divinity of Jesus.... Secular Humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance. Humanist Manifesto II*

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Gloria Turner
HWFAC

¹ <http://www.jjnet.com/archives/documents/humanist.htm>

² <http://www.jcn.com/manifestos.html>

³ <http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=declaration>