

**SPI CANDIDATE DR. AL RUNTE WOULD REPEAL NEW SEX EDUCATION “HEALTH”  
STANDARDS FOR WASHINGTON KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS.**

As the new state Superintendent of Public Instruction, I would bring common sense back to the classroom. On my first day as state Superintendent, I would take immediate action to repeal the new state standards that require sex and gender education to be taught to kindergarten students who are on average 5 to 6 years old.

Classroom teaching at this level should be all about helping children begin to learn the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. Adult social concepts should not be forced on kids when they are first beginning their schooling. Social concepts of adults such as gender identity have no place in kindergarten classrooms in Washington State.

At kindergarten age, children see one another through a near perfect lens. It is adult bureaucrats in Olympia who insist on passing regulations that cloud our children’s clear vision of who they are and who are the people inhabiting their world. Justifying the regulatory pursuits of highly-paid, out-of-touch Olympia bureaucrats will not be tolerated if I am elected state Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Certainly, kindergarten is not the time to begin shaping the minds of children with adult social propaganda that divides people categorically into different social categories or identities. At 5 or 6 years of age, kids barely know who they are. Instilling a child at the earliest age with an appetite and a love of learning is the most important task facing early learning educators. This kind of early instruction on gender identity is a distraction from that overriding mission.

Bureaucratic originated health initiatives such as these new state kindergarten standards make no common sense at all. This is another example of the self-indulged, social agendas of so-called experts dominating what is taught in our state’s classrooms. These kind of dictates from ivory tower elites in Olympia are replacing real instruction in the basics of education. The regulators are cluttering local school curriculums with extraneous subject matter that prevents learning what is most important.

Teachers and local school districts need to be unburdened from having these kind of intrusive state regulations placed on them. As state superintendent I will set teachers free to teach the things that matter most. We must

prepare students with the knowledge and learning skills they will need throughout their lives.

Gender identity for kids in kindergarten is a social agenda run amok. This is but another ridiculous example of regulation that produces absurd wastes of classroom instruction time and valuable state education resources. All this points to is the pressing and long overdue need to change policy direction in Olympia. We can no longer afford an education system that fails our kids.

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Dr. Al Runte is a lifelong educator with more than 20 years of teaching experience in public schools and universities. Before joining the University of Washington in 1980 as assistant professor of history, he was assistant director of Environmental Studies at Baylor University.

Now an independent scholar and specialist on the national parks, Dr. Runte was both an adviser to and featured personality in Ken Burns's popular PBS TV series "The National Parks: America's Best Idea." Runte has authored five highly-acclaimed books, including: *National Parks: The American Experience*, considered standard in the field. He holds a B.A. degree from Binghamton University of the State University of New York; a M.A. from Illinois State University; and received his Ph.D. in American Environmental History from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Runte describes his lifelong commitment to education as having been inspired by his mother, a 23-year veteran of New York State's public schools who in retirement served on her local school board. "My brother August also taught middle school math. I began my education career teaching high school history. My courses at the University of Washington were highly rated by students because of my passion for classroom teaching. Students wanting to learn more about challenging subjects knew they would be challenged. That is the primary task of any teacher—to inspire learning. That mission should not be impeded by an Olympia-based, bureaucratic elite issuing absurd, cookie-cutter standards and mandated tests that only prevent students from getting a meaningful education," Dr. Runte said.