

I have always been an advocate for the LGBTQ community. I grew up in a unique environment in the Netherlands, where many Americans, fearful of losing their jobs for "coming out," came to teach in safety. In fact, there are two young adults who are gay who call me mom, after being disowned by their biological mothers. I have played in basketball leagues that were primarily lesbian. As an educator I have worked with students in middle and high school who are members of the LGBTQ community. .

I have 3 of my own children, who are now young adults. When the pastor in our church promoted the signing of an anti-gay marriage petition, all 3 of my children, who were teens at the time, got up and walked out. We have raised our children to embrace each individual, regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation.

With that being said, as I looked at the curriculum map, I became very concerned by the ages at which serious issues related to sexuality are going to be addressed. I do not think it is developmentally appropriate to talk about gender or sexual orientation with 5 year olds. I do not think it is appropriate to talk with 4th graders about sexual orientation. I do not want 4th grade students to feel additional pressure to "choose an orientation." I am in favor of conversations with middle school students about gender and sexual orientation, as long as the focus is on providing students with information and promoting acceptance.

I am concerned about the prioritization of this curriculum over all else. There is already so little time. Should we mandate the teaching of gender and sexual orientation before the teaching of "From Time Immemorial," our Native American curriculum? In my opinion, NO. Teachers are already pressed for time to efficiently teach the current curriculum. This information could be incorporated into the regular health curriculum.

Erin Jones

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