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# Gender Identity Curriculum Angers Parents in Virginia

*Editor's Note: This story was originally published June 10. It has since been updated.*

The Fairfax County Public school board recently approved lessons about homosexuality and gender identity in its Family Life Education curriculum.

The board approved the controversial lessons in a 10-2 vote June 25.

According the Fairfax County School board website, "The early elementary program emphasizes the importance of families, distinction between good and bad touch, sources of help, and the importance of friendships. Human sexuality is first introduced in grade four."

In middle school, students will build "on information learned in late elementary and physiology as well as the physical, psychological, and social changes that occur during adolescence."

"Ninth and tenth graders will be provided definitions for heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and transgender and that persons deserve to be treated with respect regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity."

Parents opposed to including the lessons protested at the hearing. Many are concerned that they won't be able to opt their children out of the classes because the lessons have been moved from the Family Life Education curriculum into health classes, which are mandatory.

According to *The Daily Caller*, school board member Elizabeth Schutlz, who voted against the curriculum, said, "Once you move something out of family life, the Family Life Education curriculum delivery method and into a health curriculum, by default, a parent no longer has the right to opt out."

CBN News is investigating the issue further as well as unconfirmed statements made by Traditional Values Coalition President Andrea Lafferty during an interview on this matter posted on our website June 10, 2015.

***CBN News reporter Charlene Aaron spoke with Lafferty in June about the school district's motivation and how the controversial curriculum could spread to other school districts across the country.***

Earlier, CBN News reported that the district's Family Life Education (FLE) lessons will include teachings on heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual, and transgender identity. The school board voted in May to add gender identity to the list.

The move angered many parents over what they see as forcing them to expose their children to issues that are not even part of state requirements.

Fairfax County Public Schools wrote a letter to parents in response to misperceptions about the new curriculum.

"Most sections in the FLECAC committee's report have been a part of the curriculum in past years, with the difference being that many of the instructional objectives now meet the Virginia Dept. of Education's (VDOE) general Health Standards of Learning," the board wrote.

"As-such (they) no longer have an opt-out option. These topics include conflict resolution skills, respecting individual differences such as disabilities, ethnicities and cultures and mental health areas," they wrote.

Read the entire letter below:

*"A message from FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS*

*Dear Parents,*

*We would like to ensure that all Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) families have the correct information regarding the proposed lesson objectives and curriculum for our Family Life Education (FLE) program. The changes under consideration by the School Board are the result of a series of recommendations from the Family Life Education Curriculum Advisory Committee (FLECAC), which is a standing citizen advisory committee that reviews the FLE curriculum on a regular basis and is comprised of school board appointees, community members, students, teachers and administrators. The committee has been working on the curriculum recommendations for more than a year.*

*Most sections in the FLECAC committee's report have been a part of the curriculum in past years, with the difference being that many of the instructional objectives now meet the Virginia Dept. of Education's (VDOE) general Health Standards of Learning, and as-such no longer have an opt-out option. These topics include conflict resolution skills, respecting individual differences such as disabilities, ethnicities and cultures and mental health areas.*

*The question has been asked: "Will parents still be able to opt their child out of Family Life Education lessons?" The answer is yes. Parents have been able to opt their students out of FLE designated lessons in the past and will continue to have that ability under the FLECAC committee's recommendations - including the sexual orientation and gender identity lessons. Other topics that parents will be able to opt their child out of include reproductive anatomy, contraception, abstinence, STIs, and many others.*

*Parents and community members will have the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed curriculum revisions during a 30 day period, which begins May 21. I encourage you to visit our web page for additional information about the FLE curriculum and to learn how you can participate in the comment process:*

*Our parents' role in determining if their child will receive Family Life Education lessons has not changed. As parents, you continue to have the final say. I hope you find this information helpful and that it dispels many of the misperceptions that are currently being posted regarding our FLE curriculum in the media and elsewhere.*

*Thank you for your support and understanding.*

*Karen Garza  
Superintendent  
Fairfax County Public Schools"*