



A TRADITIONAL PARENTS' GUIDE TO EDUCATION CHOICES IN CONTEMPORARY ONTARIO

“Empowering Families to Protect their Children
by Sharing Their Faith”



"Should the component of any course conflict with a religious belief of the parent (of minor-age children), or a student aged 18 or older, the right to withdraw from that component of the course shall be granted, on the written request of the parent..."

—Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, Ontario, April 17, 2008

Dear Traditional Parents*:

The changes taking place in public education that concern us the most—the instruction and celebration of values in conflict with traditional, Biblical principles; instruction that can lead to confusion in the minds of children about what is right or wrong for them—have occurred because the traditional faith communities have not been actively engaged in public education. Many if not most parents are so busy working that it is not possible for families to keep up with these controversial changes.

After spending 31 years as an educator (public school teacher, university instructor, and consultant) and witnessing the gradual destruction of the Ontario education system, my family and I decided it was best that I leave education and help parents “take back their children.”



The P.E.A.C.E. Project’s goals, as articulated in its vision, mission, and values statements, are as follows:

- To inform parents about how secular humanist philosophy places pressure on the tax-funded education systems (both Public and Catholic), and
- To provide parents with the tools to advocate for the traditional values they wish to instill within their child(ren).

We would hope to see a P.E.A.C.E. chapter in every community to help keep traditional values in the tax-funded school systems.

Note that this booklet provides some highlights from an audiovisual presentation intended to accompany this booklet. If you wish to obtain copies of the videos, please contact your local P.E.A.C.E. chapter or the P.E.A.C.E. Hamilton head office. Other information is being produced and will be available through your local P.E.A.C.E. chapter when available.

In service to Christ and the Family,

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* Any time word *parent* appears in this document, it can be read as *guardians* if applicable.

Theme Verse

“See how the wicked string their bows, fit their arrows to the string to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart. When foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

– Psalm 11:2–3

The answer is in these pages!



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ONTARIO'S EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STRATEGY

Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity (P.E.A.C.E.) started because of concerns over the recent changes to the curriculum and environment of Ontario schools.

The changes were introduced in 2009 by the Ontario Ministry of Education's document called *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* with its accompanying document *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*.¹

The purpose of the *Strategy* is as follows:

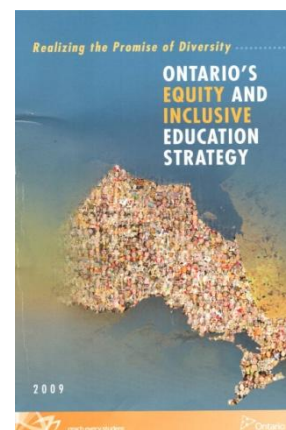
"The new equity and inclusive education strategy aims to close student achievement gaps by identifying and eliminating any biases, barriers, and power dynamics that may limit students' prospects for learning, growing, and contributing fully to society."

—Ontario Ministry of Education, *Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, pp. 10-11.

The *Strategy* was further defined in Ontario Ministry of Education document *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119*, which says:

"School board policies must be comprehensive and must cover the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The code prohibits discrimination on any of the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, disability, creed (includes religion), sex, sexual orientation, age, family status, and marital status."

Full implementation of the *Strategy* is expected to take four years,² which would take it to 2012.



IMPLEMENTATION IS PROBLEMATIC

What will it look like in the classroom?

Visit www.peacehamilton.org and click on the arrow titled "See It" to see the teacher training video "*It's Elementary*" (Recommended by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario)

This is a noble goal. However, in a society that has embraced a secular humanistic worldview and the sexual revolution, this otherwise worthy initiative is distorted. It shifts away from respecting people of LGBT orientation as *persons* to that of actively promoting *actions and behaviours* (like oral sex or same-sex genital activity) that have been traditionally seen as being immoral sex acts. For example, pages 16-17 of the *Strategy* document lauds the Toronto District School Board for celebrating the Gay Pride Parade, which is included in a list of otherwise unobjectionable cultural events³.

This concentration on sexual *behaviour* as defining the essence of a person has been a strong theme of LGBT activists for some time. This interpretation has been adopted widely in the education world. For example, on page 15 of the book *Seeing the Rainbow: Teachers Talk About Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Two-*

¹ Documents available on Ministry of Education website:

Strategy: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf>

Guidelines: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf>

PPM No. 119 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/119.html>

Quick Facts: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/EquityQuickFacts.pdf>

² From the *Quick Facts* document.

³ For more examples of problems with the *Strategy* document, see Campaign Life Coalition's in-depth analysis at <http://www.campaignlifecoalition.com/index.php?p=EIE%20Detail>

Spirited Realities published⁴ by the Canadian Teachers Federation in 2002, we read: "...it is natural to have sexual attractions and relations with members of one's own gender...To act on these feelings is natural."

Such teaching results in individuals and faith groups who hold traditional moral principles being marginalized and characterized as "homophobic."

PROBLEMS P.E.A.C.E. HAS IDENTIFIED

The *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* is thus leading to the following:

- 1) Curriculum changes that affirm and honour the LGBT *lifestyles* (rather than respect for persons), beginning in kindergarten. Question: Can we be sure that the critical thinking skills of our children in Kindergarten will be able to process this information without causing conflict with their Biblical Christian values?
- 2) Labelling anyone who is uncomfortable with homosexual, bisexual or transgender *activity* (rather than persons) as "homophobic," "heterosexist," and "transphobic."
- 3) Silencing of teachers, students, and parents who subscribe to a traditional Christian (or other faith) worldview. For example, the Ministry tells teachers to "*assume responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify personal beliefs and biases that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive education principles.*"⁵
- 4) Imposing a secular humanist value system that is incompatible with traditional faiths.
- 5) Clubs called Gay-Straight Alliances have been mandated in tax-funded schools.
- 6) Confusion: Christian children will be exposed to an environment that is in conflict with the values taught at home and church.

A humanism which excludes God is an inhuman humanism.
—Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 78

SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The provincial Strategy is at various stages of implementation across the province, but already we can see that there have been problems.

- School boards have also organized Gay Conferences held within secondary schools. (e.g. 2009 Gay Conference, Westmount Secondary School, Hamilton).
- The Government has said that students self-identifying as attracted to the same sex may not be presented with pro-chastity messages—even in Catholic schools⁶
- Gay clubs, called Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), have been mandated in tax-funded schools. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association has indicated support for the formation of Gay-Straight

⁴ Available from the Canadian Teachers' Federation, see the catalogue at their website here: <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/catalogue/>. They published a review of the book here: http://www.ctf-fce.ca/publications/pd_newsletter/PD2003_Volume3-2English_Article6.pdf

⁵ *Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, Ontario Ministry of Education, p. 58.

⁶ *Mandated gay clubs in Catholic schools can't help students overcome homosexuality: Ontario gvmt.*, LifeSiteNews <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/mandated-gay-clubs-in-catholic-schools-cant-help-students-overcome-homosexu>

Alliances in Catholic schools.⁷ Note that GSAs were developed by the mainstream LGBT community, a group for whom chastity is not a priority. Although some boards have resisted GSAs, the Ontario government is reported to have said that banning of GSAs goes against Ontario's policy on equity.⁸

FORMATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ADVOCATES FOR CHRISTIAN EQUITY (P.E.A.C.E.)

In response to the changing curriculum in Ontario, a group of 45 pastors from 12 different denominations in Hamilton met and examined the *Strategy* and the curriculum that will result. All the pastors/denominations had one common conclusion:

“This policy will result in the deconstruction of our children’s traditional, biblical-Christian worldview.”
—Pastoral Strategy Meeting, Crossroads, February 24, 2009.

This led to the founding of Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity (P.E.A.C.E.) in Hamilton.

OPTIONS FOR CONCERNED PARENTS

1. Leave the tax-funded school system.

- a. Homeschooling.** Sending children off to school is not historically the norm. Until the late 19th century, most people were educated at home by their parents for part or all of their education. In the last few decades, homeschooling has been undergoing a revival, for a variety of reasons. Homeschooling provides the ultimate in flexibility, where parents can combine packaged off-the-shelf materials and home-developed curricula in any combination desired. See Annex A for more information on home schooling.
- b. Private schools** are likewise flourishing for a variety of reasons. Most large cities have many Christian schools available—see Annex B. Many private schools charge on a sliding scale to match fees to parents' financial situations.

2. Staying in tax-funded schools, either Catholic or Public, is also option. Scripture encourages us to be "*in the world, but not of the world*" and to be "*salt and light*" that leads to positive change. Being in the world requires us to be actively involved, and maintain our values. To lessen the adverse effect of the equity strategy on your child(ren), it is essential that you be personally involved in your child(ren)'s education.

Pray: Establish, or become a member of a prayer group such as *Moms In Touch* <http://www.MomsInTouch.org> who have a specific spiritual mandate to pray for children and schools.

Volunteer in the school. Schools do need volunteers and parents who sincerely help; volunteers often have a positive influence on the school culture.

Attend School Council Meetings. If you support the school where you can, and you should be respected when you share your concerns.

Each day schedule time to discuss with your child what was learned that day. Listen without interrupting and be prepared to follow-up on any instruction that is in conflict with your values.

Communicate. Individually, or as a group of parents, request an appointment with the teacher or principal to share your worldview. Teachers are often quite willing to accommodate the family's values

⁷ See OECTA president's message for February here: http://www.oecta.on.ca/wps/portal/about/items?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/Web%20Content/oecta/about/presidents+page/presidents+commentary/feb+2011+gsas

⁸ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/toronto/banning-gay-straight-alliances-goes-against-equity-grain-mcguinty-warns/article1949974/>

when they are informed of what your values are. To do this, P.E.A.C.E. has developed a four-part common communication tool with standard, non-confrontational, wording (see Annex C).

Catholic Schools as an Option for Non-Catholics

Some Catholic families in the Catholic school system may feel that, like the Public system, the Catholic system has been negatively affected by secular society in recent years. Currently, Catholic school boards are being lobbied by LGBT interest groups and are being pressured by the government to incorporate instruction and activities that are not consistent with the Catholic faith. Nevertheless, Christian families who have switched from the secular Public system to the Catholic system have found it to be more consistent with their principles. Thus, non-Catholics in a Public School board may wish to consider switching to the Catholic board as an alternative.

Note that by law, a Catholic high school must admit non-Catholics upon request⁹. For elementary schools, admission of non-Catholics is usually on a space-available basis at the individual school being requested. Non-Catholics in Ottawa are directed to one of the two Catholic school boards:

<p>Conseil des Écoles Catholiques du Centre-Est 4000, rue Labelle Ottawa (Ontario) K1J 1A1 Téléphone : (613) 744-2555 Télécopieur : (613) 746-3081 http://www.ecolecatholique.ca</p>	<p>Ottawa Catholic School Board 570 West Hunt Club Road Nepean, Ontario K2G 3R4 Phone: 613-224-2222 Fax: 613-224-5063 http://www.occdsb.on.ca</p>
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IMPORTANT: If you are leaving the Public system for the Catholic system, then once you have registered with the Catholic School Board:

- 1) Please send a letter to your Public school board trustee explaining why you have left the Public system and ask that it be shared at the local school board meeting.
- 2) Please send a copy of that letter to P.E.A.C.E.. P.E.A.C.E. will keep a copy on file, and when we need to make a public statement to the Ministry of Education requesting a faith-sensitive alternative education program within the Public system that meets the needs of traditional families¹⁰, then these letters will be helpful.

Note on Catholic Schools

Catholics have a constitutional right to educate their children from a Catholic faith perspective. To prevent this right from continued erosion, it is imperative that faithful Catholics get involved in their system (seek election as trustee, become involved in school counsel, write letters to trustees, attend Board meetings, etc.) and communicate their expectation to have these rights upheld.

Parents with children in the Catholic school system should consider completing the parent forms provided in Annex C and submitting them to the school. These forms help you to communicate to the school your traditional faith, your desire that your child(ren) be educated in a way that is consistent with the Catechism.

⁹ *Education Act*, §42(1) http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90e02_e.htm#s42s1

¹⁰ For example, there is a Christian alternative program within the Public School system in Alberta. See page 4 of the *Alternative Programs Handbook*, April 2010, from the Alberta Ministry of Education. <http://education.alberta.ca/media/434640/alternative%20programs%20handbook%20policy%20branch%20edits%20march%2027%202009%20april%2013%202010%20kwrt.pdf>

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario has been making a number of efforts to retain the Catholic character of the schools in the face of pressure from the Ministry of Education. They issued a statement¹¹ in October 2010 that asked the question:

“It is acknowledged that the Ministry reflects a social mindset around these issues that does not correspond to Catholic teaching, leading to the question: will these directives force Catholic schools to betray their own principles and act in ways that contradict their purpose and identity?”

After describing some of the efforts they have made over the years to mitigate the effects of the sexual revolution, the statement concludes:

“... The Bishops of Ontario believe that it is possible for publicly-funded Catholic schools to be faithful to their identity and mission while responding to the legitimate demands made upon them by the society in which they operate. This is no easy task, but is facilitated by the goodwill and collaboration of all those who care for Catholic education. It is in this spirit that we present this summary of our past activity in this area as a pledge of our continued vigilance and leadership.”

Thus, those Catholic school supporters who choose to use the P.E.A.C.E. forms can also note that they are supporting the efforts of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario in maintaining this vigilance.

¹¹ A Statement from the Catholic Bishops on Policy Development Associated with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. <http://www.acbo.on.ca/englishdocs/Statement%20-%20Equity%20&%20Inclusivity%20in%20Education%20Oct%204%202010.pdf>

ANNEX A – INFORMATION ON HOMESCHOOLING

Homeschooling is legal

Homeschooling is legal in Ontario and in all Canadian provinces. Ontario Education Act Section 21(2)¹² says that a child is not required to attend school if “...*the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere.*”

If withdrawing a child from school with the intent to homeschool, it is best to provide written notification to school board that you will be educating your child(ren) at home. This notification should be renewed each year. PPM No. 131¹³ contains some form letters that could be used for this purpose.

The simple sending of the letter should constitute proof of the satisfactory nature of the home instruction. PPM No. 131 says that upon receiving the letter, “*Normally, the board should not investigate the matter. However, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the child is not receiving satisfactory instruction at home, the board should take steps to determine whether the instruction is satisfactory ... The following is a list of some of the reasons that may give a board cause to investigate a particular instance of home schooling:*

- *refusal of a parent to notify the board in writing of the intent to provide home schooling*
- *a credible report of concern by a third party with respect to the instruction being provided in the home*
- *evidence that the child was removed from attendance at school because of ongoing conflicts with the school, not for the purpose of home schooling*
- *a history of absenteeism by the child prior to the parent's notifying the board of the intent to provide home schooling”*

Freedom and flexibility of homeschooling

Homeschooling parents can customize their teaching to suit the individual needs of their children by choosing from an entire palette of teaching styles and curricula. Everything is possible, from complete packaged lessons purchased from curriculum suppliers, to entirely home-developed curricula, and everything in between.

Homeschooled children progress at their own individual pace. The parents can provide enrichment or remedial assistance exactly when and where required. This avoids the potential embarrassment for the child of being singled- out in class. Thus, homeschooling can be less stressful on a child who requires remedial assistance in one or more subjects or skills.

Note that homeschooling does not usually require as many hours in a day as school-based education because one-on-one tutoring is more efficient. This leaves the home-educated child with more time for enrichment activities, hobbies, crafts, music, sports, art, social activities with other homeschooled children, or whatever other interests the child may have.

Associations of homeschoolers

New homeschooling parents may wish to consider joining an association that helps homeschooling parents in starting out, getting organized, and getting materials. Many provide curriculum reviews, curriculum exchanges, and annual conferences. Local groups also offer opportunities for group field trips, club days, theme days, or other special outings.

The following local groups have websites:

Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents

<http://www.ontariohomeschool.org/>

Ontario Christian Home Educators' Connection

<http://www.ochee.org/>

¹² *Education Act*, §21(2) http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90e02_e.htm#s21s1

¹³ Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 131 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/131.html>

Home School Legal Defence Association of Canada
<http://www.hsllda.ca/>

Osgoode District Home Educators
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/osgoodedistricthomeeducators/>

Homeschooling in Ottawa
<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/OttawaHomeschool/>

Ottawa Home Based Learning Network
<http://sites.google.com/site/ottawahbln/Home>

Rideau Valley Home Educators' Association (Christian group)
<http://www.rvhea.org/>

Sa-voir (groupe francophone de l'Outaouais et de la région de la capitale nationale)
<http://cf.groups.yahoo.com/group/sa-voir/>

Christian Homeschoolers Adventuring Together Co-op CHAT (upper Ottawa valley)
<http://www.chathomeschool.webs.com/>

A list of 21 different Canadian homeschool groups is available here:
<http://www.home-school.com/groups/canada.html>

Resources for Homeschoolers – Many others available on the web, just search for homeschool resources

Catholic Homeschool Support
<http://www.catholichomeschool.org>

Home Education Magazine
<http://www.homeedmag.com>

Canadian Home Education Resources
<http://www.canadianhomeeducation.com>

The entire Ontario curriculum is available at the Ministry's website and makes a good reference:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/curricul.html>

ANNEX B – ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION APPROVED CHRISTIAN PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE OTTAWA AREA

The following list comes from the Ontario Ministry of Education website (see the website for more schools further away from Ottawa):

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/privsch/index.html>

Académie Providence—les Soeurs Antonines

Maternelle à la 8^{ème} année, Catholique

998, rue Frances, Ottawa, K1K 3L5

Téléphone: 613-744-8489, Télécopieur: 613-744-6762

http://www.antoninesisters.ca/ap_bref.htm

Bibleway Ministries Christian Learning Centre

Elementary/ Secondary, Christian

3049 Carling Ave, Stes 204, Ottawa ON K2B 7K3

Tel: (613) 820-5558, Fax: (613) 820-5558

(don't seem to have a website)

Bishop Hamilton Montessori School

Elementary, Christian

West Campus: 18 months to 14 years

2199 Regency Terrace, Ottawa, ON K2C 1H2

Tel: (613) 596-4013, Fax: (613) 596-4971

East Campus: 6 months to 9 years

1395 Youville Drive, Orleans, ON K1C 4R1

Tel: (613) 834-6265, Fax: (613) 834-9540

<http://www.bhsmontessori.ca/>

Member of: Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators <http://www.ccma.ca>

Calvary Christian Academy

Grades JK-8, Christian

9749 Hwy 15, RR#6, Smiths Falls, K7A 4S7

Tel: (613) 283-5089, Fax: (613) 283-6949

<http://www.calvaryca.com>

Community Christian School

Grades K-8, Christian

2681 Glen St, Metcalfe, K0A 2P0

Tel: 613-821-3669, Fax: 613-821-6135

Member of: Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools <http://www.oacs.org>

École Notre-Dame Du Mont Carmel

Maternelle à la 8^{ème} année, Catholique

40, rue Cobourg, Ottawa, K1N 8Z6

Tel: (819) 775-0078

<http://www.ndmc.ca>

Life Christian Academy

Grades K-12, Christian

1080- B St. Pierre Street, Orleans, ON K1K 1L3

Tel: 613-834-6588, Fax: 613-860-8606

<http://lifechristianacademy.ca/>

Member of: Association of Christian Schools International <http://www.acsi.org>

Ontario Accelerated Christian Education Association <http://www.acecanada.net/>

Maryvale Academy

Grades K-8, Catholic

1000 Brookfield Road East, Ottawa, ON K1V 6J1

Tel: 613-321-2186, Fax: 613-321-2186

<http://www.maryvaleacademy.ca/>

Ottawa Adventist School

Grades K-8, Seventh Day Adventist

2200 Benjamin Ave, Ottawa, K2A 1P5

Tel: (613) 722-3770, Fax: (613) 722-3767

<http://www.ottawaadventistschool.org/>

Member of: Ontario Federation of Independent Schools <http://www.ofis.ca>

Ottawa Christian School

Grades JK-8, Christian

255 Tartan Drive, Ottawa, K2J 3T1

Tel: (613) 722-5836, Fax: (613) 722-1793

<http://www.ocschool.org/>

Member of: Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools <http://www.oacs.org>

Christian Schools International <http://www.csionline.org>

Redeemer Christian High School

Grades 9-12, Christian

82 Colonnade Rd N, Nepean, K2E 7L2

Tel: (613) 723-9262, Fax: (613) 723-9321

<http://www.rchs.on.ca/>

Member of: Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools <http://www.oacs.org>

St. Clement Academy

Grades 7-12, Catholic

88 Main Street, Ottawa, K1S 1C2

Tel: (613) 236-7231, Fax: (613) 236-9159

<http://www.st-clement-school.org>

Member of: Ontario Federation of Independent Schools <http://www.ofis.ca>

St. Timothy's Classical Academy

Elementary, Christian, Greek Orthodox, Catholic

1900 Lauder Drive, Ottawa, K2A 1B1

Tel: 613-794-1750

<http://www.st-timothys.ca/>

Member of: Ontario Federation of Independent Schools <http://www.ofis.ca>

ANNEX C – P.E.A.C.E. COMMUNICATION TOOLS: EXPLANATION AND USE

PEACE has created a package to provide a clear and simple way to share your faith with your child’s school and to ask that your faith be respected. ***One package is required for each child.*** Feel free to make extra copies as needed. These forms are also available on our website www.peacehamilton.org

Instructions:

1. The full package contains the following four items:
 - a) **“Our Family’s Traditional Values Letter”**
 - b) **“Letter from the Ministry of Education”** – the letter specifically states that parents, who may find curriculum to be in conflict with the religious beliefs of the home, should let the school know in writing, and their values will be accommodated.
 - c) **“Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form”**– Complete this by placing a check mark beside the issues that are of concern to you.
 - d) **“Spiritual Values - General Notes”** provide explanation for the specific areas of concern.
2. Make a photocopy of the completed package and keep it at home. Make a second copy of the “Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form” to send to your local P.E.A.C.E. chapter (see step 3 v below).
3. Submit the original package to the school. There are two options for submitting the forms to the school:

Option 1 – Taking the forms in to school yourself. Call the teacher and schedule an appointment – this helps build a good relationship with your child’s teacher. At the appointment, experience has shown it most helpful to stay calm and avoid criticizing school board policy, or the curriculum, or getting into a debate about your faith. Do share and explain what you believe, and ask that your principles be respected through relevant, reasonable, and respectful accommodations for your child(ren).

- i. Use the “*Our Family’s Traditional Values Letter*” to introduce the reason for the appointment, then use the “*Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form*” to guide your discussion.
- ii. Request that your values be respected. Ask specifically to be informed *in advance* when activities are planned that may be in conflict with the values that you are instilling within your child.
- iii. Refer to the letter from the Minister of Education that explains that families have permission from the Ministry to be exempted from instruction in conflict with their values.
- iv. Request that a copy of the entire package be placed in the OSR (Ontario Student Record), and that all teachers who instruct your child be informed of your wishes.
- v. Please keep PEACE informed about your meeting and the teacher’s response. Knowing how teachers receive the material in the package helps us to gauge the effectiveness of the work. Kindly send the second copy of the “*Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form*” to:

PEACE Ottawa
c/o Kathleen Murphy
2783 Wexford Way
Ottawa, ON K1V 8K4

Or send by email to: murphyk@travel-net.com

Option 2 – Have PEACE take the forms in on your behalf. Sharing your faith with the school system can be intimidating, but do not let this stop you from setting boundaries on the materials to which your child is exposed. Send the completed package and the extra copy of the “*Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form*” directly to your local P.E.A.C.E. chapter or to your parish or church P.E.A.C.E. Team. Parish or church Teams will collect all the forms and send them to the local P.E.A.C.E. chapter for sorting. The local PEACE chapter will forward collected forms to the appropriate school, along with a letter of explanation. Alternatively, if you did not hear about P.E.A.C.E. at church, then send the forms in to your local P.E.A.C.E. chapter at the address above and ask that they be sent in with the others.

Our Family's Traditional Values Letter

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Child's Name: _____

School Board: _____

Child's School: _____

School Address: _____

Grade Level (as of the date the form is completed): _____ Date: _____

Dear Principal(s) / Teacher(s):

I/we wish to thank the school for its commitment to my/our child and his/her education. As a parent(s)/guardian(s) I/we understand the responsibility of being "Partners in Education" and are committed to working with the school to achieve the best for my/our child.

I/we understand that, as educators in a multicultural community, the school instructs children from many cultural and spiritual backgrounds. Pluralistic Boards of Education will attempt to respect and understand the values of children of all faiths and cultures who attend their schools. An understanding of the cultural and spiritual background of each child helps the teacher(s) connect the learning in the classroom to the child's cultural and spiritual understandings¹⁴ and not accidentally undermine the values taught at home.

As a family, we adhere to a set of values based on traditional principles. I/we believe that it is our responsibility to teach these values to our children and that the application of these values is important for attaining eternal life. To assist the school, I/we have included the attached information to identify some of the issues that we would find sensitive and controversial.

My/Our request is that whenever issues, concepts, or values are presented that may conflict with the values of the home, the teacher(s) contact me/us prior to instruction. With an understanding of what is to be taught, I/we may choose to have my/our child not participate. Alternatively, I/we may choose to include my/our child in the instruction and have a family discussion about what was covered in the classroom. Either way, we are interested in helping him/her to better understand who they are and how they fit within a multi-cultural, multi-faith community.

I/We appreciate being able to share this with the school. Thank you for your respect and understanding.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent (or Student if 18 years of age or older)

Attachments:

- Spiritual Values / Issue in Education Form
- Spiritual Values – General Notes
- Letter from the Minister of Education

¹⁴ The Standards of Practice for the Teaching profession calls teachers to be sensitive to factors that influence individual student learning. *Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession*
http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards_of_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA

LETTER FROM MINISTER OF EDUCATION

See PDF attached.

Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Child's Name: _____

School Board: _____

Child's School: _____

School Address: _____

Grade Level (as of the date the form is completed): _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent (or Student, if 18 years of age or older)

Dear Teachers and Principal:

I/we request that we be advised prior to my/our child's involvement in any activity or program containing the following issues and topics:

A. VALUES AND/OR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

1. ___ **Values Neutral Education** – The instruction of students in “moral relativism” and principles of situational ethics. This “ism” is a tenet of “secular humanism.”
2. ___ **Occult Principles and Practices** such as witchcraft, black magic, spirit guides, Satanism, wizardry, new age, channelling, astrology, horoscopes, psychic powers, certain aspects of Hallowe'en and other such practices contradictory to Judeo-Christian principles.
3. ___ **Environmental Worship** and the placing of environmental issues and/or concerns above the value of Judeo-Christian principles and human life.
4. ___ **Darwinian Evolution** when this is presented as fact and not theory, i.e. as evidence of a purely materialist origin of the universe or as something that disproves the existence of a creator (God).
5. ___ Other (please explain) _____

B. FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION

1. ___ Instruction in **Sex Education**.
2. ___ Discussion of **Premarital or Extramarital Sexual Activity** as natural, healthy, or something to be encouraged or discussions about chastity that present it as unrealistic or unachievable.
3. ___ Discussion or portrayals of **Unusual Sexual Activity** that I/we determine to be unnatural and/or unhealthy (e.g. masturbation, anal sex, oral sex, sadism, masochism, fetishes, bondage, bestiality, etc.).

4. ___ Discussions or portrayals of, **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans-sexual** activities and/or transgenderism as natural, healthy, or something to be encouraged.
5. ___ Teaching about or provision of **Birth Control** drugs and devices.
6. ___ Teaching that **Abortion** is an acceptable method of birth control and that life does not begin at conception.
7. ___ Encouraging the acceptance of **Infanticide** or **Euthanasia**.
8. ___ Discussions with regard to the **Purported Effectiveness of Condoms** in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
9. ___ Other (please explain) _____

C. MEDICAL TREATMENT

___ As long as I remain liable under the Family Law Act of Ontario to provide support to my child, I request that all employees and agents of the school board refrain from counselling, treating, or referring my child for non-emergency treatment, admission to a care facility, or personal assistance services within the meaning of the Health Care Consent Act of Ontario, without my knowledge and prior consent; subject only to a written waiver of this instruction for particular forms of treatment in specified circumstances, and circumstances qualifying as "emergencies" under that statute.

I/We request that my/our child not be approached for his/her consent to participate in any of the above activities, with the intent to nullify this communication.

As the Ontario College of Teachers "Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession (1999, 2006)" encourages teachers to "connect learning to the child's life experiences and cultural and spiritual understanding" (Ref. 1), this information will be important for a teacher who is educating the child. Therefore, I/we request that all teachers who will be in contact with the child be informed about this communication and that this document be made available in the child's OSR. (Ref. 2)

References:

- (1) Standards of Practice http://www.oct.ca/standards/standards_of_practice.aspx?lang=en-CA
- (2) From the Ontario Student Record Guideline 2000, Section 3 "...an OSR will contain additional information identified as being conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the child."

Spiritual Values - General Notes

Dear Principal(s) and Teacher(s):

It is difficult for a public school system to be all things to all people. For this reason, I/we, the parents/guardians, wish to share with you that my/our child is raised in traditional Judaeo-Christian principles

I/we feel that it is important that information about the sensitive issues selected in the *Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form* be taught only when the child has developed beyond a certain level of spiritual maturity. This may be suggested in Ministry of Education documents, but ultimately the level of maturity will be gauged by his/her parents. Furthermore, I/we feel that this material must be introduced in a way that positively connects the teaching in the classroom to the child's Judaeo-Christian understanding. An example of such an activity would be to examine, within supportive peer groups, the practical, medical, social, emotional and spiritual reasons why his/her value system teaches that abstaining from sexual activity until marriage is the only truly safe and healthy choice.

To prevent conflict and confusion in the mind of my/our child, and to promote success, I/we request that those topics I/we selected in the *Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form* not be introduced to my/our child without my/our prior consent. Further, I/we ask that when opportunity arises my/our child would be encouraged to connect the work in the classroom to his/her spiritual understanding by incorporating his/her values within their school work (e.g. writing about what they believe with respect to a topic, or completing a piece of art work that includes communicating their faith).

In an effort to promote understanding, please find below explanatory notes about the issues listed in the *Spiritual Values / Issues in Education Form* that could lead to conflict.

A. VALUES/RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

1. **Values-Neutral Education** (moral relativism and situational ethics): Secular Humanism, the value system often assumed by public institutions to be acceptable to everyone, is broadly accepted as a religion. It has a set of doctrine outlined in the Humanist Manifestos (I & II) and the Declaration of Secular Humanism (1980). Teachings from the position of moral relativism and situational ethics, basic tenets of secular humanism, are directly opposed to our family's values and my/our child's spiritual understanding of absolute rights and wrongs.
2. **Occult Principles and Practices.** These practices are expressly forbidden to members of our family's faith and are considered to be of the highest seriousness. As there is almost no way to handle this material appropriately to our family's background, and I/we are requesting advance notice of any curriculum materials involving these topics so we can ascertain whether our child should remain in class during this section of the curriculum.
3. **Environmental Worship:** Naturalism, which denies the existence of a Creator, is another principle of secular humanism. Our family believes that God created the physical world and that humans must be its responsible stewards. As such, we agree with many of the goals of the nature conservation movement. However, these principles can be presented from a worldview that is either utilitarian (for the benefit of humanity to live as long as possible) or naturalistic (deifying the Earth). Both of these are in conflict with our family's faith, which requires that we place God above all else. Thus, for our child, the laudable goal of ecological conservation could be taught more successfully when connected to our child's spiritual understanding of being responsible to their Creator for the careful use of His creation.
4. **Darwinian Evolution.** The theory of evolution has undergone considerable development since Charles Darwin first proposed it; the word "evolution" thus has a number of meanings. Some of these meanings may be compatible with our family's Bible-based Christianity whilst others are not. Our family believes that God is the ultimate origin of universe and of life. Teaching my/our child about evolution will be most successful if discussion stayed within the bounds of the science behind genetic mutations and natural selection without extrapolating beyond the science to speculate from a secular humanist perspective on the origins and meaning of human life.

B. FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION

1. & 2. Sex Education and Premarital, and/or Extramarital Sexual Activity. I/we choose to inculcate in my/our child, by precept and example, the virtues of purity, chastity, and prudence and I/we encourage sexual self-control before marriage and faithfulness after it. This is in keeping with s.264 (1)(c) of the Education Act of Ontario (see Ref. 2). Within that context, our child could be taught about the sex act and conception, provided the learning positively connects with the child's life experiences and spiritual understandings of the value of abstinence from sexual activity until marriage.

3. Unusual sexual practices I/we choose to inculcate in my/our child, by precept and example, the virtues of purity, chastity, and prudence, which is in keeping with s.264 (1)(c) of the Education Act of Ontario (2). Catholics believe that, because sexual intercourse is ordered towards the generation of children, any individual sexual act in which there is an *active effort* to make an otherwise fertile act into an infertile one is not licit. This includes actions such as masturbation, artificial contraception, sexual acts between persons of the same sex, oral sex, anal sex, bestiality, etc. that by their nature would never lead to conception even between healthy, fertile individuals. For different reasons, many Protestants also believe these sexual practices are sinful. These sexual practices should not be presented as positive goods to my/our child.

4. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Trans-Gendered Activities. I/we acknowledge that people have the liberty to choose the lifestyle they wish to lead and the value system to which they wish to adhere. However, certain alternative lifestyles based upon sexual orientation are logically incompatible with Judeo-Christian spiritual values. To reduce the spiritual conflict within the child, teaching about sexual orientation should focus on *respect for persons* and not require acceptance or approval of specific sexual practices. In a Catholic school, the teacher should reference the Catechism of the Catholic Church, articles 2357 through 2359. In all cases, this subject must be introduced in a way that positively connects to the child's life experiences and spiritual understandings.

5. Birth Control. I/we are raising our child to value chastity until marriage and believe that talking about birth control can encourage additional sexual activity amongst young unmarried persons. Further, I/we believe that nature has given the instinctive desire for pleasure in the sexual act, not as an end in itself, but rather for the service of life. In this, Catholics follow the Church's consistent teaching "that every attempt of either husband or wife in the performance of the conjugal act or in the development of its natural consequences which aims at depriving it of its inherent force and hinders the procreation of new life is immoral; and that no 'indication' or need can convert an act which is intrinsically immoral into a moral and lawful one." (Pius XII, *Allocution to Midwives*). Some Protestants believe that artificial contraception is always intrinsically wrong based on Psalm 127:3-5. Sometimes called "Quiverfull" families, these Protestants have an open, accepting, and obedient attitude toward the possibility of birthing children, regarding children as unqualified blessings, and believing God Himself maintains sole provenance over conception and birth. Thus, at the appropriate level of maturity (as suggested within Ministry documents but ultimately as decided by me/us) our child could be instructed on the topic of contraception if the Catholic and Quiverfull positions on the subject are acknowledged to exist and are not denigrated in class. One example of a learning activity appropriate for my/our child would be to research and write about our faith's position on the subject of contraception, such as those stated in such documents as Pius XI's *Casti Conubii* (1930), Pius XII's *Allocution to Midwives* (1951), Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* (1968), and John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

6. & 7. Abortion, Infanticide, and Euthanasia: Our family believes that the deliberate killing of human beings (other than in legitimate self-defence/war or possibly for the most heinous of crimes) fundamentally undermines the basis of law and public morality. Our family also believes that abortion results in the death of an innocent human. Thus, any rationalization of abortion along the lines of "my body; my choice," is incompatible with our family's spiritual values. To reduce spiritual conflict within the child, teaching on these end-of-life issues must connect with our child's life experiences and spiritual understanding of Biblical teachings, making decisions consistent with those teachings; that the decisions made in this life affect their relationship with their Lord and could have consequences for their eternal life; that human life as a gift of the Creator; and that human life at all ages and all states of health has great value. In a Catholic school, the teacher should reference documents such as Pope Pius XII's 1951 *Allocution to Midwives*,¹⁵ which noted "The direct

¹⁵ Pope Pius XII, *Allocution to midwives*, October 29, 1951.
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P511029.HTM>

destruction of so-called "useless lives," already born or still in the womb, practiced extensively a few years ago, can in no wise be justified.”

8. Purported Effectiveness of Condoms with respect to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The teaching of this topic cannot effectively be achieved for our child without interfering with his/her spiritual understandings of the value of abstinence until marriage and faithfulness within it. For Catholics and for some Protestants, their view of the inherently disordered nature of contraception discussed in B (5) above must also be taken into account. The issue of STIs and condoms deal with values and principles that are often delivered from a secular humanist perspective contrary to our family's spirituality that could negatively affect the teachings at home and our child's spiritual development. However, knowledge of the symptoms of STIs and of when to seek medical advice is a subject that could be introduced when our child has reached an appropriate level of maturity in the opinion of the parents.

C. MEDICAL TREATMENT CONSENT: The reason for this request is to be sure that such treatment, counselling, etc. is consistent with our spiritual value system.

IN THE EVENT A VALUES CONFLICT ARISES

In the event that the teacher identifies that some materials or curriculum that would be in conflict with the requests outlined, I/we would appreciate that the teacher contact me/us and briefly describe the intended teaching.

In the event that I/we identify that a conflict has actually arisen, I/we plan to take the following approach to reach an understanding and resolution of the issue:

1. Parent(s) will communicate directly with the teacher
2. In the event that the issue cannot be resolved at the parent/teacher level, then an interview will be requested with the principal.
3. If the issue is still not resolvable, then a meeting will be requested with school board officials (Superintendent and Trustee).

References:

- (1) Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982) states that “everyone has the: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.”
- (2) S. 264(1)(c) of the Education Act of Ontario.” [Teachers have a duty]...to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues.”

Acknowledgements

Thank you to so many who have encouraged and supported this effort:

- Pastor Gord, who saw my passion and encouraged life into this mission many years ago,
- Jim, Gloria, Clea, Lynne, and many other community advocates and good friends, with whom this started long ago,
- Father Geoffrey who provided the inspiration, base, and technical support for this communication tool
- Geoffrey C. who created the first draft of the spiritual values document
- the many pastors, lay leaders concerned about the members of their flock,
- the PEACE Executive who have given unselfishly,

Most importantly, to my caring and supportive wife (Ruth) and my wonderful children (Jennifer & Daniel, Krysten, and Andrew) who have allowed this passion to grow. They have been the source of encouragement, cheered from the sidelines, and pitched in when needed. Their support made this work possible.

Phil / Dad

P.E.A.C.E. Project

Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity

Vision

Our vision is that all children would receive quality education in an environment that “connects the learning in the classroom with the cultural and spiritual understandings of the child.” (*Standards of Practice in the Teaching Profession* 1999, 2006)

Mission

P.E.A.C.E. will work with local churches, parents, private schools, home school groups, government representatives, and publicly funded school systems to:

- 1) Help the all stakeholders (including publicly funded school systems) to understand the need for educational curricula, and where requested by parent(s), educational alternatives that connect the learning in the classroom with the cultural and spiritual training provided by the parent(s).
- 2) Work with all stakeholders to develop educational options and alternatives that meet the needs of these families
- 3) Inform families of the following:
 - a. The importance of being educated in an environment that is consistent with the Judeo-Christian principles being taught at home;
 - b. The policies and current curriculum which may have a negative impact on the Judeo-Christian values being taught at home;
 - c. The available educational options and alternatives where children receive a quality education in an environment that connects the learning in the classroom with the cultural and spiritual understandings of the child.
 - d. How to communicate their beliefs to tax-funded school systems.

Values

Relationship –The P.E.A.C.E. Project will work to establish strong relationships with all stakeholders in the community, particularly with the local churches.

Faith- It is by faith that we recognize our purpose and partnership with God and believe that ultimately He is able to help us to work with the system to develop educational alternatives.

Advocate – P.E.A.C.E. advocates for the needs of traditional, Biblical Christians with children in the public education system. When requested, PEACE will also assist other communities and families that hold traditional values/morals, those of different faiths and those who do not adhere to any faith.

Respect – P.E.A.C.E. respects the fact that we live in a secular, pluralistic society. We ask that society respect our desire to raise our children using traditional Christian principles.

Empowering families – P.E.A.C.E. will enable families to take action, having made informed decisions about the best educational setting for their child(ren).

Commitment – P.E.A.C.E. understands that the important things in life take time, and is committed to supporting those educational environments which are consistent with our vision.

For more information, or to find out how to establish a P.E.A.C.E. Chapter in your community, contact our head office at

E-mail: phillees@shaw.ca

Post: P.E.A.C.E. Hamilton Project, Box 306, Binbrook, Ontario, L0R 1C0

Phone: 905 869 6334

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