



St. Paul Education Regional Division No.1

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Dear Parents:

Bill 44, passed in 2009 by the Alberta legislature, gives parents the option of pulling their children out of class when lessons related to human sexuality, religion or sexual orientation are being addressed. The addition of Section 11.1 to Bill 44, Human Rights Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, came into effect on September 1, 2010. This section requires a school jurisdiction to provide notice where courses of study, educational programs, instructional materials, classroom instruction or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion, sexuality or sexual orientation.

Our Catholic schools within St. Paul Education Regional Division No. 1 offer an education that is permeated by our Catholic faith values. Catholic religion is not only a subject that is taught within our schools, but is the foundation of the daily educational experience provided to our students. As such, St. Paul Education Regional Division No. 1 has modified its registration forms with the following additional wording:

“Pursuant to Section 11.1 of the Alberta Human Rights Act please be advised that you are enrolling your child in a school district where religious instruction, exercise and instructional materials are used and that religion permeates the school program.”

At the beginning of each school year your child receives information as to the content of each of their subjects, in the form of course registration, course outlines, course descriptions or direct written communication to parents. For more specific information on course content or to learn more about Alberta Education's interpretation of the Alberta Human Rights Act, parents can visit <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/resources/guidetoed.aspx>

Alberta Education has done a review of the programs of study to identify those courses that contain outcomes that deal primarily and explicitly with religion, human sexuality or sexual orientation. For your reference, the following courses have been identified:

- Health (Grades 4, 5 and 6) – human sexuality
- Health and Life Skills (Grades 7, 8 and 9) – human sexuality
- Religious Ethics 20 (High School) – religion
- Religious Meanings 20 (High School) – religion
- World Religions 30 (High School) – religion
- Aboriginal Studies 10 (High School) – Theme II: Aboriginal Worldviews – religion
- Career and Life Management (High School – CALM) – human sexuality
- Career and Technology Studies (High School – CTS) – Reproduction and Readiness for Parenting – human sexuality
- Career and Technology Studies (High School – CTS) – Developing Maturity & Independence – human sexuality

Of note, Social Studies classrooms must and still will be able to discuss current events — even when, especially when, they involve a clash of cultures, values, and even religions. That is not teaching religion — that is acknowledging the reality of today's society and developing students who are global citizens. Science will continue to teach about the cell structure and its continuing adaptive evolution. The Division, therefore, approves the exploration of some controversial issues in its classrooms in a structured way to develop students' capacities to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view, and to reach sound judgments. Teachers are required to meet the learning outcomes as prescribed by Alberta Education, and as such, parents will not be notified when their instruction complies with the requirements as outlined in the Act.

Parents retain the right to remove their children, if under the age of majority, from a program or selected aspects of a program. Alternatively, parents may also choose to have their child remain in the classroom where the instruction is taking place, but not participate in the lesson. **Such requests must be submitted in writing to the principal.** It is also important to note that these accommodations will be made with no academic penalty to the student.

Sincerely,

Glen Brodziak
Superintendent of Schools