

# Charleston Daily Mail

Monday June 29, 2009 9:24 am

DAILYMAIL.COM



70°

Feels like 70°

» [More weather](#)Not a Member? [Login/Register](#) | [Subscription Services](#)

## Kanawha County

Monday June 29, 2009

### Diversity policy raises hackles

by [Ry Rivard](#)  
Daily Mail staff

Page 2 of 2

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The head of the Family Policy Council of West Virginia is prepared to battle the Kanawha County school system in court if it requires teachers to complete training that encourages tolerance of homosexuality and other sexual orientations.

Jeremiah Dys, a lawyer and the group's president, said that including sexual orientation as a trait included in and protected by the school system's cultural diversity training is unconstitutional because teachers who object to the "forced indoctrination" could have their paychecks withheld.

"With this policy you're forcing teachers to endorse behavior that is counter to what is being taught in most of the homes of Kanawha County and, quite frankly, West Virginia," Dys said.

He said that while he's not looking for a fight, "If this policy does pass and any teacher or student is burdened by this policy or has their paycheck held hostage, we will defend them at no cost."

The new policy, which the school board will vote on in July, also would prohibit the county from discriminating because of sexual orientation when it hires or promotes employees.

Advertisement - [Your ad here](#)

replay

**Hands-Free Package for FREE!**

- Free Moto™ EM330
- Free BLUETOOTH® headset
- Free priority shipping
- Free car charger
- Free case

[Shop Now](#)

at&t

\*Two-year contract and significant restrictions apply. Requires qualifying feature.

Dys said the policy would lead to deliberate recruitment of bisexual teachers.

School system attorney Jim Withrow said there appears to be a misconception of what the policy does.

"It does not encourage, support or otherwise put forward an alternative lifestyle or encourage other types of sexual orientation," Withrow said. "All it does is say and make a point of emphasis that we are not going to

discriminate against and we're going to protect people from harassment and discrimination and other maltreatment that may result from their sexual orientation."

He said it was not the intent of the proposed policy to encourage hiring bisexual teachers, nor would it have that effect.

Withrow also said the county would deal on a case-by-case basis with teachers who object to taking the training.

Teachers who do not complete several hours of mandatory in-service training each year can

be suspended without pay. This year, 61 employees, many of whom apparently just did not find the time to take the training, were suspended for a half-day without pay.

The diversity training session is one of eight training sessions school employees may be required to take each year, Withrow said.

The cultural diversity training consists of a 30 to 45 minute Internet-based session in which school employees read a 2,000-word document and answer 11 questions.

The training text the county plans to use during the next school year includes a section on how to prevent bullying and how to deal with homeless children but makes only one reference to sexual orientation.

"The term 'hate crime' is defined by various federal and state laws," the training document says in the section titled, "Preventing Youth Hate Crime." "In its broadest sense, the term refers to an attack on an individual or his or her property (e.g., vandalism, arson, assault, murder) in which the victim is intentionally selected because of his or her race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation."

The hate crime section goes on to suggest that educators try to eliminate hate-motivated crime and violence by creating a "comprehensive hate prevention program."

No questions are asked about how to prevent hate crime or how to be tolerant of differing sexual orientations.

But the diversity policy, which was put out for public comment by the county school board, had drawn nearly 200 comments by Friday.

One person said that when he was a student at Riverside High School, he was picked on for being gay.

"They say that high school is supposed to contain the best years of your life, but because of these many things I went through, they were my worst," he wrote. "I don't miss high school at all. I was tortured and bullied constantly everyday because of who I was. There were many days where I even tried to commit suicide, and no young high school student straight, lesbian, gay, or whatever you are should have to go through that."

Another person wrote: "Students bullying homosexual students should be punished just as any other student that bullies any other student. The board of education overstepped its boundaries by beginning sexual education in elementary school classrooms and now is going to do it again by teaching my children it is 'ok to be gay?' I think not. As a parent, it is MY responsibility to teach my children about these things and it is YOUR responsibility to develop my children for a career.

"Stick to preparing my children for their professional growth and let me handle their personal growth. I am the parent and I know what is best for my children, not the government."

Clayton Stover, who just graduated from St. Albans High School, went before the board in April to say he was tired of intolerance from students and school staff.

He said the words in the new policy may not be enough.

"It is a step that's needed and if it doesn't have the desired effect we need, we'll keep working on it until students feel safe in the school environment," Stover said last week. "What we don't want is a word in the policy, we want action being taken."

Contact writer Ry Rivard at [ry.riv...@dailymail.com](mailto:ry.riv...@dailymail.com) or 304-348-1796.

Advertiser



**8 Comments** on "Diversity policy raises hackles"  
[Post a comment](#)

Posted By: **Bolt** (13 minutes ago)

[Report Abuse](#)

HATE seems to be a West Virginia value. When I was growing up and attending WV schools, the F slur was used routinely against anyone different. Pity the poor kid who was gay and trying to find themselves then. Unfortunately, nothing's changed. This FRC push only bolsters the bullies who fling hate-filled slurs against our children. Shame on you, Mr. Dys. Stop the hysteria. This doesn't mean your world is coming down. Learn to love.

Posted By: **WWJD** (30 minutes ago)

[Report Abuse](#)

WWJD?, throw up over the behavior of these so called Christians preaching their hate. As a Christian, I am tired of these right wing ultra conservative people spreading fear ("...married %\*!!\*! are goin' take your guns..." type nonsense). These people are false witnesses. Hate is not a family value.

Posted By: **donniepauely** (48 minutes ago)

[Report Abuse](#)

I am an American succeeding many generations in this great nation, and a Christian first, and one who believes soley in our original Constiution that was written and signed to protect Christian values and protect those same beliefs from unwanted threats and distruction. We can not be unequally yoked with unclean and evil associations. It is time to fight and separate from uncleaniness and bring the Church and State together in the name of liberty and justice for all as it was intended from the very beginning of our independence! Even though we must pray for our enemies please believe that now praying is not enough. God wants and expects us to stand up for his word and warns if we deny him here on earth Christ will also deny us before his father in Heaven.

Posted By: **JustBecause** (1 hour ago)

[Report Abuse](#)

They're looking at the bigger picture. All this is is getting the foot in the door to start indoctrination of the teachers AND the students.

Start with this, label it as an anti-bullying policy, then you start with the other trash.

Look at what they're teaching the children, as early as Kindergarten, in California. How do you think all of that got started?

If you want your children taught that men having sex with men is normal and that they're weird for thinking otherwise, then just sit back and do nothing.

[More Comments »](#)

