



## The Transgendering of Sex Education

Last month the *Mindszenty Report* explored the campaign for transgender rights in Western countries. The activist campaign, however, extends beyond demands for legal rights for transgendered people. Although President Trump's Department of Education in February 2017 withdrew the infamous Obama Administration letter that commanded federally funded schools to assign self-declared transgender students to bathrooms of their declared gender, the campaign to encourage transgender identification has moved into the classroom in other ways. Activist groups including Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and an array of other organizations have developed educational programs to promote transgender ideology to young children. These programs are finding their way into the earliest grades of U.S. elementary schools.

Grassroots parents' groups are fighting back against this curriculum, but they confront well-financed outside activist groups and much of the educational establishment. These parents are bewildered and outraged by what their young children are taught under the guise of enlightened sex education. A brief look at the curriculum being implemented in public classrooms in the earliest grades reveals why these parents are upset.

### Kindergarten Lessons

As described in the May *Mindszenty Report*, parents at the Rocklin Academy, a public charter school outside of Sacramento, CA, expressed shock in August 2017 when they found out about a lesson in transgenderism given to their kindergarten kids. Parents learned of the lesson when their kids returned home asking about whether they were boys or girls or could pick their gender for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Ankur Dhawan's 5-year-old daughter was in the classroom that day. The daughter came home from school to tell her mother, "We learned about a girl in a boy body." At the school board meeting, one parent complained that "My daughter came home crying and shaking, so afraid she could turn into a boy." District Superintendent Robin Stout maintained that parents were not notified because the book did not fall under

"opt-out" provisions; she contended that the book did not constitute sex education material.<sup>2</sup>

During the controversy at Rocklin Academy a parent complained that a little girl was sent to the principal's office when she referred to her transgender classmate by the wrong name and gender pronoun. The little girl had known the "transgender girl" the year before. She saw him and called him by his previous name. A teacher told her, "You can't do that, his name is this name" and "you need to call him a 'her.'" The little girl was called to the principal's office to make sure she understood the full message.

Activists are pushing transgender education not just in public schools but in private and home schools through accreditation bodies.<sup>3</sup> The campaign is nationwide.<sup>4</sup> Considerable controversy arose over reports that the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state of Washington issued instructional guidelines stating that the concept of gender identity should be introduced in first grade.<sup>5</sup>

### PFLAG's Well-Funded Involvement

The organization PFLAG's involvement in sex education offers a good example of transgender promotion in the classroom. PFLAG, previously known as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, was formed in the 1970s to encourage parents to support their LGBT children. Today PFLAG has more than 400 chapters across the United States. PFLAG receives major corporate support from **Walmart, American Airlines, General Motors, UPS, MetLife, Johnson & Johnson, CIT Bank, Whirlpool and Bloomberg.**

In recent years PFLAG has moved into promoting "safe spaces" in schools. Its website declares, "For the 9 out of 10 LGBTQ students who experience some form of mistreatment in school, education can be a frightening experience. It's incumbent upon parents, families, friends, and allies to make schools safer for ALL students. PFLAG chapters work directly with schools and stakeholders in their communities, providing support, resources, training, creative programs, and even model policy to create an environment of respect."

PFLAG proclaims that it is working “to raise visibility of the issues facing LGBTQ youth in learning environments.”<sup>6</sup> The organization prides itself on having spent decades on the front lines, fighting innumerable instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination in our nation’s schools and communities.

The Greater Boston PFLAG formed a group in 2004 to examine how LGBT topics affected elementary students.<sup>7</sup> Ellen Kahn, director of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation’s Children, Youth, and Families program, saw the advantage of PFLAG’s educational program and worked with the Boston group to develop the HRC Foundation’s “Welcoming Schools” program to advance sex education focused on LGBT rights. Prior to joining the HRC Foundation, Kahn spent 12 years at the Washington, DC LGBT-oriented nonprofit Whitman-Walker Health in various roles, including director of the Lesbian Services Program, associate director of LGBT Health Promotion and supervisor of a behavioral health program for people living with HIV and AIDS.

Welcoming Schools offers lessons on transgenderism under “Easy to use lesson plans” which call for helping students “understand ways gender stereotyping impacts all children. There are many ways to be a boy, girl, both or neither. Help all of your students understand transgender and non-binary children.”<sup>8</sup> Welcoming Schools receives large corporate support from **Wells Fargo, BBVA, Ernest Lieblich Foundation and John C. Kish Foundation.**

### Planned Parenthood Finds Time

**P**lanned Parenthood—the largest abortion provider in the U.S.—offers a sex education program that includes the latest ideology about transgenderism. In a program section entitled “How do I talk with my preschooler about identity?” Planned Parenthood asserts, “Most kids begin to identify strongly with gender around age 8. That includes transgender and gender nonconforming people, who also have a sense of their gender identity at this stage.” As a result, Planned Parenthood warns that “Putting daughters in pink princess rooms and boys in blue sports rooms before they’re old enough to choose for themselves can send the message that they have to like certain things because of their gender.”

Similarly, Planned Parenthood says that buying the wrong toy for a young child can be setting them on a wrong path: “You can expand those narrow gender boxes to include a range of other influences. When you pick a new toy or book, or sign your kid up for a new activity, ask yourself these questions to help you think through whether or not you’re reinforcing gender stereotypes.”

Kids need to be made aware, Planned Parenthood avers, about future dating roles. For example, Planned Parenthood offers the following advice to parents: “Talking to

(or in front) of your daughter about growing up and having boyfriends or marrying a man (and vice versa) sends the message that girls are supposed to like boys, and boys are supposed to like girls, and that anything else is wrong or not normal.” Planned Parenthood adds, “While kids this young don’t know their sexual orientation yet, assuming they’re straight could make them scared to come to you or feel bad about themselves later. This can lead to mental health issues, unhealthy relationships, and taking more health risks when they reach their teenage years.”<sup>9</sup>

Planned Parenthood offers plenty of advice on knowing if a child is transgender or gender nonconforming. The best thing, the organization advises, is to support your children in discovering themselves and to remember that recent research shows that 1 percent of people in the United States identify as transgender—more than 1.5 million people. As a result, “trying to steer your kid toward more typical gender expression ... does more harm than good.”<sup>10</sup>

### ACLU Meddling in Schools

**T**he ACLU provides legal and educational support for transgender students. The ACLU outlines its strategy and mission in its 54-page booklet *Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools*. The inside cover of this publication describes other organizations involved in this campaign, including Gender Spectrum, the Human Rights Campaign, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the National Education Association. Gender Spectrum provides “education, training, and support to help create a gender-sensitive environment for all children and teens” and an array of services to families, schools and organizations “to understand and address the concepts of gender identity and expression.”<sup>11</sup>

The guiding principle of protecting transgender students, the booklet states, is that “transgender identity, or any form of gender-expansive behavior, is healthy, appropriate and a typical aspect of human development.” Children should not be “encouraged or required to affirm gender identity or to express their gender in a manner not consistent with their self-identification,” according to the ACLU (p. 3). Gender is more than genetic traits, including people’s “own sense of gender identity and their gender expression” (p. 5). Those suffering from an “intense and persistent discomfort with the primary and secondary sex characteristics of one’s assigned birth sex” should be encouraged to undergo hormone therapy and “gender affirming surgeries” (p. 7). Gender identity is typically expressed between the ages of 2 and 4 (i.e., even earlier than the age 8 claimed by Planned Parenthood!). The ACLU recommends that schools develop a “tailored Gender Transition Plan” for each transgender student.

To ensure safe schools for the transgendered, the ACLU recommends that education about transgenderism begin

as early as possible, because “young students are more flexible in their thinking and capacity for understanding a peer’s assertion of their authentic gender” (p. 15). The ACLU emphasizes that gender self-identity is the child’s choice. Previous assigned first names should not be read or used in the classroom, and it is best for teachers and staff to use “gender-neutral” pronouns (pp. 23-24).

The ACLU concludes that at the onset of puberty, gender dysphoria can become incapacitating for transgender youth, and many transgender youth should begin to explore medications that delay the physical changes associated with puberty. Such medications press a pause button and “give youth the opportunity to explore gender identity without the distress of developing the permanent, unwanted physical characteristics of their assigned sex at birth” (p. 44).

### Pope Francis Is Dubious

It is worth noting that, although he embraces certain left-wing causes, Pope Francis has indicated disapproval of transgender ideology. In an audience with members of the Pontifical Academy of Life on October 5, 2017, the pontiff stated:

The recently advanced hypothesis of reopening the way for the dignity of the person by radically neutralizing sexual difference and, therefore, the understanding between man and woman, is not right. Instead of counteracting the negative interpretations of sexual difference, which mortify its irreducible value for human dignity, it seeks in effect to cancel out such difference, proposing techniques and practices that make it irrelevant for the development of the person and for human relationships. But the utopia of the “neutral” removes both the human dignity of the sexually different constitution, and the personal quality of the generative transmission of life. **The biological and psychological manipulation of sexual difference, which biomedical technology allows us to perceive as completely available to free choice—which it is not!—thus risks dismantling the source of energy that nurtures the alliance between man and woman and which renders it creative and fruitful.**<sup>12</sup>

Previously Pope Francis had criticized the practice of teaching children that they may choose their gender.

### Emotional Distress of the Transgendered

Trans activists note that transgender children are more likely to attempt suicide, miss school, earn lower grades and not pursue a college education.<sup>13</sup> Activists claim that these problems have to do with the lack of inclusion and unsafe environments for transgender students.

Changing a hostile school environment into an inclusive environment, it is argued, will address these problems for an “at risk” population.

The Central Dauphin School District in Pennsylvania in 2016 undertook to train administrators and counseling staff in the 12,000-student district to understand what it means to be trans-friendly and inclusive. The school’s central office used guidelines from the model district program of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN). GLSEN is an activist LGBT organization founded in 1990 in Massachusetts which has grown into an international organization with chapters across the U.S. and a lobbying presence in the halls of Congress and in United Nations meetings. GLSEN receives support from major foundations, as well as corporations including **Wells Fargo, Target, Disney, JP Morgan Chase, HBO and Delta Airlines.**<sup>14</sup>

Statistics about suicides among transgender and gender “non-conforming” adults are truly shocking. In a national study conducted by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, researchers found that the **prevalence of suicide attempts for transgendered people is 41 percent**, which vastly exceeds the 4.6 percent of the overall U.S. population who report a lifetime suicide attempt. It is higher than the 10 to 20 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults who report ever attempting suicide.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly many transgender people, especially trans kids, are experiencing serious mental distress. Whether creating safe spaces, using different pronouns and establishing an inclusive environment will address these problems remains to be seen. Few people will argue against counseling to prevent suicide. Other questions arise, however: *1) Are these problems just a matter of a hostile environment? and 2) Is this campaign being conducted in the classroom over sexual identity really about helping our children to have better lives?*

### Poor Record of Sex-Change Surgery

The first question about the impact of a hostile environment is just beginning to be explored. In general, Americans and Western Europeans have become more accepting of gay people and gay culture. Yet suicide attempts among gays, lesbians and transgender people in the United States remain substantially higher than for the general population. More interesting, however, is a study conducted in Sweden that followed long-term consequences of persons undergoing sex reassignment surgery. Researchers found that people who have had sex reassignment surgery had **nearly triple the risk of mortality from all causes compared to the control group, a 19-fold higher risk of death by suicide, and a five-fold higher risk for suicide attempts.**<sup>16</sup>

As Ryan T. Anderson documents in his book *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*

(2018), the medical evidence suggests that sex reassignment does not solve the problems of people who identify as transgender. Even when the procedures are successful medically and cosmetically, and even in cultures that are relatively “trans-friendly,” sex transitioners still face poor outcomes.

Regarding the second question above—about whether these programs are truly helping our children—let’s be clear: This campaign is not simply creating safe zones and fostering inclusivity or sexual health. Instead, **it is an attempted revolution, which is proceeding rapidly, to undermine established moral and religious principles and parental rights.**

The revolutionaries are well-organized and fighting on many fronts. They seek to carry this sexual revolution into public schools, charter schools, private schools and homeschooling. They are supported by large corporations, anxious to avoid lawsuits, boycotts and accusations of intolerance. Standing against this onslaught are a few conservative organizations and small groups of parents objecting to what their young children are being taught in the classroom.

Indignant parents cannot count on school boards, principals or corporations in their fight to preserve their parental rights and protect their children from indoctrination. These parents can thwart the revolution, however, by organizing, standing fast in their principles and rallying public support against an activist minority.

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- 1 Rod Dreher, “Gender Ideology’s Kindergarten Commissars,” *The American Conservative*, August 24, 2017.
  - 2 Joe Khalil, “Transgender Kindergarten Lesson has Rocklin Parents Split,” [www.fox40.com](http://www.fox40.com), August 16, 2017.
  - 3 Rod Dreher, writing in *The American Conservative*, reproduced a chain of emails between a principal and a parent with a first grader enrolled in a Washington, DC public charter school about parental consent involving discussions or instruction relating to topics of gender identity, marital norms or sexuality. The principal responded after
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## Mindszenty Report Reprints

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much delay, declaring, “I will not exempt any child from classroom discussions or instruction relating to topics of gender identity and ‘marital norms.’ As it relates to formal instruction regarding sexuality and sexual reproduction I will ask your permission before these concepts are introduced in 4th grade. When they are introduced, I can say they are conducted with cultural humility and inclusivity—thoughtful of our children and all their families.” Rod Dreher, “Gender Ideology’s Kindergarten Commissars,” *The American Conservative*, August 24, 2017.

- 4 Second graders in South Bend, IN schools, one of Indiana’s largest public school systems, are getting an education in transgenderism from a substitute teacher named Megan Buell, born a male, who dresses and identifies as a female. Buell, who is executive director of Transgender Resource Education & Enrichment Services in South Bend, bragged in a speech in LaPorte, IN hosted by the Indiana Youth Institute about how he was confusing second graders about gender identity. Buell, who wears a cross and describes himself as a minister, told the conference he was perplexing his students with his deep voice and female dress. He said that “If they [children] want to identify as a marshmallow, we should say OK, let’s talk about it.” Peter Heck, “Transgender Substitute Brags about Confusing Indiana 2nd Graders” (op-ed), [www.Christianpost.com](http://www.Christianpost.com), November 9, 2017.
  - 5 The Washington state office of Public Instruction denied that transgender education was mandated and declared that the guidelines did not even use the word “transgender.” The office is correct technically and conservatives might have overstated their case. Nevertheless, the guidelines do state clearly that under “self-identity” students in kindergarten should “Understand there are many ways to express gender”; Grade 1 “Explain that there are many ways to express gender”; Grade 2 “Understand there is a range of gender roles and expression”; Grade 3 “Explain there is a range of gender roles and expression.” By 5th grade students should be able to “Describe how media, society, and culture can influence ideas regarding gender roles, identity, and expression.” <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/washington-state-to-teach-transgenderism-to-kindergartners/>.
  - 6 [https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr\\_support\\_center/trans-gender-identity/#sm.00001khys8ip8flg10d8g102undyp](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr_support_center/trans-gender-identity/#sm.00001khys8ip8flg10d8g102undyp).
  - 7 <http://www.welcomingschools.org/our-program/>.
  - 8 <http://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/lesson-plans/transgender-youth/transgender-with-books/>.
  - 9 <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents/preschool/how-do-i-talk-with-my-preschooler-about-identity>.
  - 10 Ibid.
  - 11 ACLU, “Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools,” <https://www.aclu.org/report/schools-transition>.
  - 12 <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/10/05/171005d.html>.
  - 13 Sarah McKibben, “Charting a Course to Transgender Inclusion,” *Education Update*, January 2016.
  - 14 <https://www.glsen.org/sponsors>.
  - 15 Ann P. Haas, Philip L. Rodger and Jody L. Herman, “Suicide Attempts Among Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Adults: Findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey,” *American Foundation of Suicide Prevention*, January 2014.
  - 16 Dhejne C. Lichtenstein et al., “Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden,” *PLOS*, February 22, 2011.
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