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Good Public-school Teachers Under Siege

Public schools do hold good teachers who want to follow the best education practices and who object to the indoctrination of the LGBTQ agenda, but they are being penalized.



AP Images

When the National Education Association (NEA) partnered with a radical homosexual and transgender group known as the “Human Rights Campaign” to create “welcoming schools,” a lot of public-school teachers felt uncomfortable, if not outraged. But when the groups sent out a mass e-mail encouraging teachers to ask young children what “pronouns” they prefer — he, she, they, z, tree, and so on — that was a bridge too far for many.

In a video produced as part of the campaign, two transgender children discuss their preferred pronouns with each other. One of the children prefers the plural pronoun “they,” while the other, who claims not to be a boy or a girl, prefers “zee.” Seriously. After that, the two children discuss the alleged need to “educate” their own teachers, especially substitutes, on the supposed importance of using the newly invented pronouns that students choose for themselves.

If that all sounds crazy, that’s because it is. Teachers are already finding themselves in hot water for refusing to play along with the madness. Indeed, teachers such as Peter Vlaming at West Point High School in Virginia have already been fired from their jobs for refusing to refer to girls using male pronouns, and vice-versa. In California, teachers say they are required to submit to the gender madness or be fired, too.

Polling data reveal that the number of Americans who recognize that children are being harmed by the government-school system is growing. Indeed, about seven out of 10 parents would prefer not to send their children to government schools at all. But it is important to recognize that it’s not just children who are victims of the education establishment. Increasingly, public-school teachers are being ordered to tolerate, aid, or perpetrate evil — or leave. And many good teachers are being driven out.

In interviews with *The New American*, almost a dozen current and former public-school teachers expressed serious concerns about the changes taking place in “education.” Some had already been ordered by superiors to violate their conscience and common sense in order to comply with outlandish



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statutes, regulations, or policies. Others know full well that the day is fast approaching when they will have to choose: Obey the system, or obey God and their conscience.

Transgender Locker Rooms

At Chasco Middle School in Pasco County, Florida, it was a day just like any other day for physical education teacher Rob Oppedisano — at least until his principal walked into the locker room, shut the door, and asked to have a chat. “There is a girl identifying as a boy who is going to be in here, changing and showering,” Oppedisano recalls the principal saying, adding that he was told he would have to be in there supervising it all.

Naturally, Oppedisano, a Christian, told his boss that there was no way he could stand in there and watch a minor girl get undressed. He explained that it would be inappropriate to subject the boys in his class to that, too — especially without even notifying their parents. “I told him, ‘I just can’t do that,’” Oppedisano told *The New American* in a phone interview. “He came back and said to me, ‘Rob, I don’t want you to lose your job over this. Why don’t you just think about it, and we can talk later.’”

Still, Oppedisano resisted, noting that there was no written policy on this, while asking that the school district get involved. Eventually, the district sent over an attorney, who held a two-hour meeting advising Oppedisano to comply — or else. The lawyer also claimed, falsely, that Oppedisano was the only one who had a problem with the idea of a girl changing and showering in the boys’ locker room.

The attorney said parents would *not* be notified and that the district was not at all concerned about lawsuits, Oppedisano recalled. “He said we are the largest employer in Pasco County and that we get sued all the time anyway,” the PE teacher said.

Then, the lawyer from the district offered a transfer, which Oppedisano declined. “What good would that do if the policy is the same?” he asked. The district operative then warned Oppedisano that he could lose his job and even his teaching certificate, meaning “I would never be able to teach in Florida again,” Oppedisano recalled about that meeting. “I said ‘No, I don’t want to lose my job, but I’m not going to quit on these kids, and their parents need to know.’” The union representative, instead of standing up for teachers, also urged Oppedisano to surrender.

Then, the big day came. “She came in, just walked right by us, and the boys ran out half dressed, and said, ‘Coach, we have a problem, there’s a girl in the boys’ locker room!’” Oppedisano recalled about that day. “But there was nothing we could do. After that, throughout the whole semester, my principal or assistant principal would take the girl in the locker room with the boys, and I’d just sit in the hallway.”

Obeying God, or Men

And now, that is one of the issues the superintendent is upset about — he felt Oppedisano’s job duties required him to watch the underage girl undress, something that just a few years ago would have landed him in prison, and for good reason. Without the non-profit Christian legal group Liberty Counsel representing him, Oppedisano believes he already would have been fired.

While that gender-confused student has moved on, the unwritten “policy” remains firmly in place. So Oppedisano is just waiting until the next “transgender” student comes along to make similar demands, and for the administration to retaliate. He does not hold it against his boss, though, knowing full well



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that the demands came not from the school administration, but from “above their heads.” There have been claims of “federal mandates,” but Obama’s bizarre and flagrantly unconstitutional rules on the subject were promptly repealed when President Trump took office.

Either way, Oppedisano cannot watch a girl undress. “Between the morals and the safety issues, being a follower of Jesus Christ — and remember, innocent kids are being put in a really bad situation here — I wanted no part of that,” Oppedisano said, getting emotional. “I fought for the parents too. They should have been involved. This is a serious situation. And it wasn’t just the boys. What about the girl, being put in there with a bunch of boys? It is bad for the staff too. Any way you look at it it’s a bad situation. It’s just terrible policy.”

And girls in the boys’ locker rooms is just one part of the problem. “It’s all coming in,” he said. “More and more of the LGBT agenda is being put out there. I also teach a health class, and they are starting to present the LGBT stuff in a positive manner. It’s definitely coming. I don’t know why it’s happening or where it’s coming from or how it got started. All I know is these policies — we’re supposed to call children by the name they prefer, then we are supposed to try to hide it when their parents come in. It’s happening here, and in other places.” Most parents still have no idea, Oppedisano added.

For Christians and other faculty members of faith, the situation is looking increasingly grim. “If a policy is going to force you to go against what you believe in, you’re not going to have too many choices,” he said. “They wanted to put me out of work and they refused to tolerate my beliefs. If you’re a Christian and you stand up for something, you can rest assured that that would be looked upon as behavior that’s not going to be tolerated. That puts a lot of pressure on us — either we suppress our faith and give in, or we stand up and live by what we believe.”

Blatant Discrimination Against Christian Teachers

The hostility and discrimination against teachers in public schools is now a nationwide problem. When teacher Roxie Hunter decided to become the sponsor for the Christian club at her public school in Phoenix, Arizona, for instance, she never could have imagined the persecution that would be unleashed against her and her students. From trying to prevent them from wearing Christian T-shirts to seeking to ban Bibles on campus, government education officials went wild in the effort to suppress the Christian student club.

“We were discriminated against in many instances,” Hunter told *The New American* in Phoenix in an on-camera interview about the group, known as “Lions for Christ.” While teachers could actively participate in other student groups, including highly controversial ones, Hunter was barred from doing anything at all with her Christian students. “They said it was against the Constitution,” Hunter explained when asked what the school administration used as a pretext to persecute the Christian club.

Hunter was not buying it. “I explained to them that it was against the Constitution in the USSR, but not in the United States of America,” she said. “They also said the courts had ruled that we couldn’t do certain things. So I had to do the research, and I found that many of the things that were said were basically rumors that had been passed along.”

In reality, courts have consistently upheld the right of students and teachers to do precisely what Lions for Christ was trying to do. “Students have the right to assemble, they have the right to pray, and they have the right to bring their Bibles to school,” she said, adding that many of her students had been told



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they were not allowed to do those things by school officials.

Quackery Must Be Used, or Else

Aside from ordering teachers to violate their conscience, the education establishment is also forcing teachers to teach in ways that go against what they know is best for their students. In interviews with *The New American*, numerous teachers expressed serious concerns. Some left the public-school system altogether to avoid becoming complicit in harming children, while others are still fighting.

Kim Pendleton, who has been involved in education for over 15 years, saw firsthand the carnage being unleashed on children and educators by the Obama-backed national standards known as Common Core. “Many teachers feel the creators of Common Core were idiots who knew nothing about education and child development,” she told *The New American*, giving examples of the wildly inappropriate standards used to ensure that children fail to learn properly. “I know in my heart this is not true. The powers that be knew everything about child development and created a system for failure, frustration and illiteracy.”

After seeing firsthand the damage being wrought on children, Pendleton knew she had to get out. She now teaches at FreedomProject Academy. “The only reason that public education has not completely crumbled yet is one thing: educators who know better,” Pendleton explained. “I am acquainted with many of them, and they are priceless. However, they are leaving, either through retirement or abandonment. Their mental health is taking a toll. I am not sure how long it will be before it all collapses, but if we continue on this path, it will happen.”

Pendleton often felt conflicted between doing what was right, and doing what the system demanded — especially in reading and writing. The curriculum used for reading and writing, for instance, was a disaster. “The lessons were convoluted and were more akin to pep talks as opposed to actually teaching good writing and reading,” she explained, adding that Common Core and the dysfunctional sex-ed were not helping children at all. “The ones who did well usually had an educated family and had been ‘taught’ fundamentals long before they arrived at school.” Even experts involved in the writing of Common Core have warned that it does not reflect reality in terms of how students learn to read.

The modern classroom environment is also totally out of control, Pendleton explained, noting that student misbehavior consumes an enormous amount of classroom time and is getting worse. “I was often dealing with that as opposed to teaching,” she recalled. “I was sworn at by third and fourth graders and punched one year. There were little consequences for students, and when they figured that out, the behavior escalated.”

And when teachers go against the harmful system, they face retaliation, Pendleton said. Among other tactics, such teachers are given poor evaluations. Many of them are scared to speak out, too, because their salary and their retirement is at stake, forcing many teachers to remain silent even though they know all of this is wrong.

Getting Worse

Aaron Potsick has been teaching for almost two decades. During that time, he has seen things go downhill, fast. “There is much less value placed on quality teaching and more value placed on the newest pedagogy put forth by the state and curriculum companies — and it changes every year,” he told



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The New American. “It’s more of how well can you parrot what you’re told. Each year the newest ‘best practice’ is shown, and countless professional developments are given on how to teach better. Everything from the last month or year’s ‘best practice’ is thrown out the window. Teachers are constantly having to learn new curriculum and teaching strategies and leave behind proven models.”

Even the teaching of actual subjects is low on the priority list unless it is being tested, Potsick said. “The way to ‘perform’ is to get the testing topics covered and adhere strictly to those topics,” he explained, adding that which material is taught or not taught is controlled in this way. “Any additional information that the district or the state doesn’t deem as ‘important’ is not taught. To teach outside the guidelines means you are falling behind the others you are ‘competing’ against and then your class will not perform as well.”

“This all clearly leads to all of our students’ learning being a ‘mile wide and an inch deep,’” continued Potsick, who taught middle-school history in his final years in a public school before going on to teach through private alternatives, mostly online. “As you know, teaching something as intricate and important as Civics without context is to not really teach it at all. If there is no foundation for why, then there is no understanding, which leads to our students being easily politically misled and influenced — just what our country needs!”

The teacher training was often suspect, too. “There was always the underlying liberal mindset that was encouraged,” he explained. “The underlying idea of America as being characterized by slavery and Native American devastation was regularly covered as an underlying element of lesson ideas. This was clearly accepted by the vast majority.... At my school, we regularly had teachers telling the students how horrible Trump was and condemning his actions without anything close to the full story.”

Potsick also noted that there have been a number of things he was ordered to teach and do that made him uncomfortable. In history, for instance, he had a mandated textbook that included an entire factually challenged chapter on supposed “American Imperialism,” demonizing America and Americanism.

And then more recently, the system began pushing “Social and Emotional Learning” (SEL) that really made him uncomfortable. During his last two years, it even had “mandated SEL time in all classrooms,” he explained. “It started innocent enough: learning conflict resolution skills, dealing with anger, being a good friend, and so on. But then, it began overtly pushing ideology.” Indeed, teachers were even ordered to show videos glorifying homosexuality, transgenderism, bisexuality, and more. As a Christian, Potsick refused, but the school had not yet worked out a system to check on every class to ensure the LGBT propaganda was being foisted on students.

Even though he has witnessed the rapid deterioration of education since the beginning of the 21st century, Potsick also said very few teachers are willing to go against the status quo in a meaningful way. “The whole system from college classes in education to get your degree, to teacher training, to many administrators’ expectations; it’s such a monolith that not many challengers get through,” he said. “When they do, they usually just leave because they get worn down.”

Eventually, Potsick left, too. “I left because teaching became less about what I could bring to the table as a teacher and more about the extra stuff that was meaningless to a real education,” he said. Other concerns included not being able to give children the failing grades they deserved, having to deal with outrageous behavior including threats and flagrant disobedience only to have children lie about the



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teacher, and so on.

“Schools are developing more and more mindless, entitled future citizens that expect to get things their way, without any hard work, because that’s what they get at public schools!” he continued.

Teachers Not Valued, Scared to Speak Out

As an elected member of his local school board, teacher Ted Lamb has a unique vantage point from which to consider the “many problems” he sees plaguing the government education system. Being a teacher today “can be very challenging,” he told *The New American* after attending a “Rescuing Our Children” talk by this writer this summer. “The bureaucracy of mandates, policy, and standardized curriculum with assessments has destroyed many things in education.”

Like Potsick, Lamb has felt conflicted between doing what is right — and doing what the system demands. “Giving grades that students did not deserve has been the big one,” he said, pointing to decisions made by administrators that he knew would cause “significant issues.” Other problems include “the lack of teaching critical skills,” the “overkill of bureaucracy,” and the endless “unnecessary mandates” that represent an enormous burden. Another concern is Common Core and controversial sex-education programs, which Lamb said “absolutely” do not benefit students.

Teachers and their knowledge and experience are not valued by the system, either. “We are not asked about key and important policies,” he said. “Many times teachers are treated as though they are replaceable.”

But again, echoing a constant theme heard throughout *The New American’s* conversations with teachers across America, Lamb said teachers were scared to speak out about all the problems they see. “Teachers are scared to speak out across the nation because of perception of what has happened to their colleagues,” he said, noting that there can be “retaliation” when a teacher goes against or even questions certain policies. “If you do not agree with the policy of the district or division then you are ‘blackballed’ many times.”

Teachers Under Siege

Despite several generations of indoctrination and dumbing down — especially in colleges of education across America — there is still a large number of amazing teachers and administrators working in the public-school system. There are, for instance, still teachers who risk the ire of the education establishment or worse by ignoring Common Core mandates and secretly teaching children how to read using systematic, intensive phonics instruction. There are also those who ignore the mandates and teach their students real American history, including the Christian history of the United States and the fact that America’s Founders were fighting for *God-given* rights.

Unfortunately, the system is increasingly turning against those great educators, working to force them into submission or early retirement. Countless teachers, faced with those grim alternatives, have already left the system. Many more will be leaving in the years ahead as the system gets better at weeding out dissenters. While it is indeed true that there are still great men and women inside the system, it is also true that they are severely limited in what they can do.

Americans should encourage and pray for the brave teachers who are still holding the line, but no more children should be sacrificed to the false idol of government schools. To survive as a free society over



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the long term, the rest of America should follow the lead of public-school teachers who are *far* more likely than parents as a whole to educate their children in private schools or at home, according to a 2015 survey conducted by Knowledge Networks for the journal *Education Next*. That is because they know what is going on.

Photo shows West Point School Board in Virginia, which fired teacher Peter Vlaming for refusing to address a “transgender” student using objectivelyt incorrect pronouns: AP Images

Alex Newman is an educator and co-author (with the late Sam Blumenfeld) of the book Crimes of the Educators: How Utopians Are Using Government Schools to Destroy America’s Children.

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