



# California Parents Refuse to Accept Controversial “Teen Talk” Curriculum

In 1692 Salem, Massachusetts, hundreds of innocent men and women were falsely accused of witchcraft, and more than a dozen were executed for their “crimes” in the infamous Salem Witch Trials. As these dark days in American history unfolded, influential ministers including John Wise and Increase Mather relentlessly contended that the way the courts were run was in direct violation of the law. And when the jury of the people stood with these impassioned ministers, in opposition to the courts, the governor agreed with the claims and dismissed the trials.



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Today, if courageous parents, grandparents, and all responsible adults stand firmly against elected officials like the jury of men who resolutely refused to endorse the witch trials, school-board members who adopt curriculum that harms rather than helps our children could be removed from their positions of extraordinary power.

While parents have been sleeping, local governments, school boards, radical teachers and administrators, and entitled youth have implemented a wildly left-wing, progressive agenda designed to transform the role of educators and indoctrinate and reprogram students into obedient, political activists for the state.

Yet a great and vast awakening is moving across the nation, and parents with good intentions are finally beginning to realize time is running out and that they must act to stop the leftist takeover of American schooling. They know the best solution is to [pull the children out](#) of the government system altogether. Yet many, and not just parents, are attempting to make a difference in their local communities by responding to the crisis and fighting the leftist dogma infiltrating our schools, all too aware that the education and future of the next generation is gravely at stake.

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## Sexualizing Sex Ed

In California’s diverse Conejo Valley, located some 30 miles north of Los Angeles, residents have risen up in fierce opposition to the newly passed “Teen Talk” sex-ed curriculum, igniting intense and ongoing debate within the Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD).

Per the curriculum guide, “Teen Talk” is designated “the comprehensive sexual health materials for seventh and ninth grade students as contracted with the company Health Connected for staff professional development.”

Yet the highly sexualized and perverted choice of curriculum, which teaches, among other things, anal and oral sex, transgender ideology, as well as prioritizing sexual pleasure and a child’s “right” to sexual



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pleasure, are not the only subjects alarming CVUSD parents.

Many concerned parents believe their views have been ignored by the district regarding a number of topics, including controversial changes to curriculum, the handling of COVID, revisions to the dress code, and the recent recommendation to adopt “Teen Talk.”

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On June 1, some 100 parents and distressed residents of the Conejo Valley protested the adoption of “Teen Talk,” even though the [school board](#) was already nearing the end of the selection and recommendation process.

In the fighting spirit of Reverend Mather, parent Barton Jones sternly addressed the six trustees, emphasizing that many families are recognizing the only way to protect their kids from the harmful teachings imposed on them in the public schools is to take them out entirely:

Every week, we meet amazing parents with good children who are opting out of these specific and related issues.... Parents are leaving [the district] in droves. What would CVUSD look like if half the families left, and those were children from good families who value education?

Demanding answers about the new dress code, which requires “clothes only to cover the genitals, buttocks, and nipples,” Liz Pierce exclaimed, “This new code was implemented by the students, not evaluated by teachers or parents. We elected you [school board members] to represent all students and families, not just these seven students and their correspondents.... Many conservative families will leave the district because of this new dress code and the ‘Teen Talk’ sex ed.”

Mother of three Marsha Blackmer calmly told the board, “Coming from a Third World country, I have seen what Third World countries are. Public education is pretty much catered to the poor people and the uneducated.”

Screamed Blackmer, “with all the policies and politics you are forcing down our throats [the school] is becoming more and more like my country, the countries we leave for more opportunities and because of danger.... You have to have some morals! You represent us not yourselves or your private agendas!”

Dozens of other disquieted parents and citizens joined these strong voices echoing the brave ministers of colonial Massachusetts, decrying problematic policies enacted by the CVUSD board in recent months.

Yet, following hours of outcry on June 1, the board approved the adoption of “Teen Talk” in a unanimous vote of 5-0.

## **What Is “Teen Talk”?**

The path to reform sexual education in the state of California started with the [California Healthy Youth Act](#) (CHYA), previously known as the California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act, which was signed into law on January 1, 2016.

CHYA requires school districts across the state to ensure that all students in grades kindergarten through 12 receive “age-appropriate comprehensive sexual health education, with students in grades seven to 12 to receive HIV/AIDS prevention education.”

California is not the first state and most certainly will not be the last state to approve legislation



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requiring updates to state sex-education curriculum.

In late May, the Illinois General Assembly passed by a very small margin [Senate Bill 0818](#), requiring sex-education curriculum in grades K-12 to be “culturally competent and medically accurate,” and aligned with [National Sex Standards](#), which are part of the [Future for Sex Education](#) initiative promoting “the institutionalization of comprehensive sexuality education in public schools.”

The goals of sex education aligned with such standards would emphasize learning related to “diversity of gender and sexual orientations,” focusing on issues of “[consent and identifying signs of abusive romantic relationships](#).”

Opponents of the bill and the latest version of national sex standards argue that the material is too explicit for elementary and middle school students. But some lawmakers, such as State Representative Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago), who is “gay,” asserted that LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum backed by the national standards could “[prevent teens from feeling ostracized and even suicidal](#).”

Conversely, Republican State Representative Tony McCombie (Savanna) told [National Public Radio](#), “The goal of sex education is to help young people grow into healthier sexual relationships and healthier adults. [The bill] is not age appropriate; it is sexually charged.”

Throughout this year, the CVUSD board has been *subtly* informing parents of their intent to implement an explosive sex-ed curriculum into the schools for the 2021-22 school year.

According to agenda notes from the June 1 CVUSD board meeting, on January 26, 2021, the board approved three courses to be considered for adoption for middle school and high school sexual education curriculum: Positive Prevention Plus; Rights, Respect, Responsibility; and Teen Talk.

Steps were reportedly taken by the board “to pilot and seek input from stakeholders across the district,” yet parents seemed suddenly to awaken to the news just prior to June 1, as the school board prepared to vote the “Teen Talk” curriculum into existence.

Superintendent Dr. Mark McLaughlin later admitted in the meeting that “Teen Talk” is not CHYA compliant. “There are a lot of gaps to be filled in,” he said.

## **Outraged Parents Demand to be Heard**

One mother with whom I spoke said that, of the three curriculum choices, many parents were in favor of the Positive Prevention Plus program, and they had vocalized this to the school board early on. Yet, apparently, those comments had no impact on the school’s choice, as “Teen Talk” was ultimately approved.

At the time of this writing, the “Teen Talk” curriculum was not available to review online. Director of Middle Schools and Professional Development Kenny Loo noted during the meeting that copies would *not* be available to parents and educators unless it was licensed by the district. However, parents could read the curriculum on site at specific school locations that purchased a copy.

“Teen Talk” offers a wealth of “activities” — among them, “film guides.” Two films that captured my attention were *Straightlaced*, aiming to help students “understand homophobia and transphobia as issues of discrimination,” and *A Place in the Middle*, seeking to encourage students to “define personal values on gender norms and understand homophobia and transphobia as issues of discrimination.”

Elsewhere, an activity titled “Opinions About Abstinence” teaches that “abstinence means ‘not having sex,’ *but* people’s definitions of sex and waiting to have sex are all different.” Additionally, the activity



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“Giving Your Parents ‘The Talk’” tells children how to “identify a trusted adult in their life to talk about sex and gain skills for discussing the topic of sexuality and sexual health with adults.”

Not surprisingly, parents are outraged that their children would be encouraged to seek out adults other than parents to learn about sex and, according to the guide, the many ways to understand gender identity, i.e., that some people who are biological men identify as a woman, others who are biological women identify as a man, and still others as trans, non-binary, gender queer, and gender fluid.

One father attending the board meeting blasted the curriculum as “a Godless program,” stating that “Teen Talk” encouraged “ease of abortion access and failed to address abstinence. Children should be taught to refrain from sex until they reach adulthood; yet, ‘Teen Talk’ encourages sexual promiscuity,” he said, adding, “rather than teaching our kids to honor and respect their bodies, and to have dignity as it pertains to their sexual relationships, this curriculum encourages promiscuity, exploration, and teaches children that sexual pleasure is their right.”

Critics of the “Teen Talk” curriculum have called it an attack on conscience, confidence, and faith, as well as extremely sexually explicit and suggestive. Yet board members defended their choice, arguing that teachers would ultimately create the lesson plans.

For those educators, a parent had a few pointed questions: “Is teaching kids how to have oral sex age appropriate? What about seductive role playing, models of vagina and penises, and how to seek out oral pleasure? Who teaches that stuff and who thinks this is appropriate?”

As parents pleaded with the board to table the agenda and remove “Teen Talk” from consideration, the board gave no hint of a response as they hid behind their masks, determined to move forward with “Teen Talk” and the real agenda of the meeting, but dutifully allowing parents and concerned citizens their required two minutes.

Attached to the meeting minutes were documents reviewing the proposed sexual health [curricula](#), including a summary of information, stakeholder feedback, teacher and student recommendations, as well as a [timeline](#) for updating sex curriculum according to CHYA guidelines and [guidance](#) from the Adolescent Sexual Health Work Group (ASHWG).

The inclusion of such materials at the board meeting seems to suggest that the board had no intention of reconsidering their decision to adopt “Teen Talk,” despite the community’s frustrated demands that the board remove the curriculum.

## **The Board Speaks**

Following public comments, time was allotted for board members seemingly to address the issues just presented. However, none of the trustees spoke to a single concern of the people in attendance, illustrating the blatant disconnect between parents of children in the school district and the school board.

According to the [National School Boards Association](#), “the most important responsibility of school boards is to work with their communities to improve student achievement in their local public schools. School boards derive their power and authority from the state. In compliance with state and federal laws, school boards establish policies and regulations by which their local schools are governed.”

Thus, school boards are driven by the state and ostensibly have nothing to do with parents or children. This helps to make sense of the board’s absolute refusal to respond to the parents at the meeting. Their comments could not have been farther from the objections conveyed by the parents and concerned



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community members.

As the judges in the witch trials blessed the girls for their courage in proclaiming spectral evidence that sent community members to the hangman's noose, so the Conejo Valley school board stated the need for students and educators to work together, side by side, in deciding the educational goals for schools. They began the next portion of the meeting by effusively lauding student school reporters for a job well done.

Board Clerk Karen Sylvester summarized an equity conference she attended in Ventura County, recalling a student panel on institutional racism and marginalized identities, featuring a speaker who is a student at the local high school and member of the school's equity task force.

"One of the [panel's] primary messages," said Sylvester, "is just how important it is for students to have their voices heard and how they need to and want to be in groups alongside educators. They'd like to see more conversations around race and identity and current events discussed in the classroom, and they feel there is tremendous value in having both teachers and students share their experiences and background and culture."

Sylvester continued, "It was very affirming to hear the CVUSD student comment that she had seen some positive change in our district. She cited the work on the equity task force, our diversity, equity, and inclusion webpage, and the confidential reporting form."

One wonders what students would be "confidentially reporting," and why Sylvester seemed to encourage students to inform on one another.

In anticipation of graduation, trustee Lauren Gill said she would be "smiling like crazy under my mask," and "June is Pride Month. Love is love."

Trustee Cindy Goldberg praised efforts by parents and teachers to accommodate COVID restrictions, noting how children were grateful for the "gift" to go back to school. Goldberg also praised the civics education program "We the People," which she has been judging for decades.

Of that program, she said, "They talked about civic engagement and we had great conversation about individual rights and the common good. They talked about the pandemic, they talked about masks ... a Snapchat case before the Supreme Court. It was really nice to hear students talk about the importance of remaining respectful and arguing the facts effectively to promote civil discourse."

President Jenny Fitzgerald encouraged people to get their vaccines: "I'm very thankful for that opportunity," she said. Hopefully that [getting the vaccine] will help get us all back to a normal school year next year." Fitzgerald then wished everyone a "happy Pride Month" and addressed the LGBTQ community directly, stating, "I want to make sure that you know, as members of our LGBTQ+ community you are loved and appreciated for who you are exactly as you are."

Though mental health issues have skyrocketed for *all* teens during the past year, Fitzgerald focused only on the needs of the LGBTQ community: "As we celebrate this month it's a good reminder of another opportunity to continue raising awareness and working toward inclusiveness and equal rights for everyone and for a safe world for our LGBTQ community and for our students in our district."

From Superintendent Dr. Mark McLaughlin came the reminder to fill out and return the learning model preference survey. "It's great information for us as we prepare for the next school year," he said.

## **Where Do We Go From Here?**



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While some responsibility lands on the shoulders of parents for not paying attention to the people they elect to their school boards or to the introduction of anti-American studies and explicit sexual curriculum, the progressive Left has been subtly but decisively adding the dangerous ideas now widely known as CRT (Critical Race Theory) and gender studies throughout the American public education system. Only in the past year has the escalation increased to an explosion of absurd but injurious studies for children in K-12 schools.

For the sake of the next generation, it is imperative that parents and other members of the community push back on school boards that implement policies damaging to kids. Yet as evidenced by the callous, non-response of the Conejo Valley school board to these concerns, it's clear that simply removing these elected officials, and replacing them with representatives who believe that American values and history are to be taught in American schools, would not be enough, though it's still important. These radical progressives have to go!

In the meantime, parents must make the right decision and remove their children from the public schools. A reduction in enrollment means a reduction in funding. For example, in the small South Whidbey School District in Washington State, the school district receives approximately \$1,000 per child. If 100 children stopped attending, the district would lose \$100,000, which would force the district to reexamine their policies and curriculum choices. Does pulling the kids out mean that parents should stop fighting for change? Absolutely not. As education experts Alex Newman and Dr. Duke Pesta write in *The New American's* recent Special Report on education, "[Save Our Children](#)":

Even after you have made the decision to save your own children, you could not, in good conscience, allow other children to be destroyed. It is imperative that you help sound the alarm and warn the nation. To that end, consider ordering extra copies of this magazine, getting active at the local level, bringing in speakers, working with your church, and letting your community know that the government schools are on fire! ...If enough children can be saved in time, it may still be possible — with God's help — to restore all that was once good about America. Act now!



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