



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 14, 2016

## Kindergartner Provokes Debate Over Transgender Policy at Minnesota School

Parents of a five-year old “transgender” child are asking the school’s kindergarten class to take up the task of educating students on gender dysphoria, the condition of identifying as a sex that is opposite of one’s biological makeup. The request has prompted opposition from a number of parents, while several others have voiced their support.



According to the Daily Caller, it began when the parents of a gender-confused boy, who remains unidentified, sent their child to Nova Classical Academy, a charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota, wearing a girl’s jumper and pink shoes. The parents, Hannah and Dave Edwards, indicated that they were concerned that their son may be bullied, and asked that the school pre-empt any potential bullying at an instructional level. “He has said before, ‘I feel like a girl in my heart, I feel like I have both boy and girl,’” dad Dave Edwards told the Fox station. “We’re not yet sure of the person that our son is. He’s in kindergarten.”

The parents stated that they do not wish to force any gender labels on their child, and have asked that the school provide special treatment to accommodate their son’s circumstance. “We don’t label him,” said Dave Edwards. “We know from what he has shown us this far, that we are going to need some protections in place to keep him safe while he’s in school.”

Eric Williams, executive director at Nova Classical, states the teachers and staff have been trained on gender identity and that the teachers have been working to educate the students on the sensitive subject. “If they understand that, they will be less likely to bully, because understanding is the first step to getting along,” Williams said.

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Teachers have also read school-aged poems to students that dealt with the subject of gender identity. “At that point, we talked about girls wanting to play with boy things and boys wanting to play with girl things,” Williams [told the Minneapolis Star Tribune](#). “I would say the majority of parents are supportive of our efforts.”

However, not all parents are pleased with the school’s actions. “Some of the parents who are opposed to that say this is going to confuse some of their own children,” he said. “What do you say to that?”



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Their concerns seem to ask why it is OK for their children's beliefs to be challenged yet not be considered bullying, but it is not OK to disagree with the beliefs of a delusional child, especially since there is no need to teach that transgenderism is normal in order to prevent bullying.

Many of the parents raised concerns during a January 13 presentation by the Minnesota Family Council, a local Christian group opposed to the school engaging in gender discussions with students. The *Star Tribune* reports that approximately 50 to 75 people were in attendance, and that most attendees were "sympathetic to the council's stance."

One parent at the school told KAAL, "I'd have a problem with them teaching that gender is a state of mind to my children because I don't believe it."

Parent Leslie Lynn articulated similar concerns. "Talking about sex and gender for children who are five, six years old is something that many parents, representing hundreds of kids, think is inappropriate," [Lynn told KMSP-TV](#).

She also told reporters that she was concerned that the book entitled *Jacob's New Dress* has been made available to the kindergartners.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Williams emphasized that the school does not share the same position as the council. "We're trying to bring forth some understanding, so with that comes compassion and respect," he said. "We wanted to be absolutely crystal clear where the board stood. We support ... transgender students."

The council's meeting was presented by Autumn Leva, the director of policy and communications, who addressed Title IX, Minnesota's antibullying law and the Minnesota Human Rights Act, which are being used to advocate for transgender issues. The Family Council is opposed to the antibullying law because of its expansive definition of bullying. "Is it bullying when a child says my parents taught me that someone is born male or female?" Autumn Leva asked during the presentation, according to the *Star Tribune*. "Disagreeing with someone isn't automatically bullying."

Leva provided research that showed the cause of gender identity disorder is not fully understood but that studies show "most kids grow out of it."

Some in attendance at the presentation silently advocated for the school to participate in lessons on gender identity by holding signs such as "We love our transgender children," "This Nova parent supports gender inclusion," and "Yes for trans justice." The idea behind the protest being that to not accept the child's delusion is somehow wrong, but would it also be considered wrong if a child had lycanthropy (thought he was a werewolf and occasionally howled at the moon)? Or what if the child believed he was obese and needed to diet, though he was skin and bone? And if not, what would be the difference, as each are delusions? According to the *Star Tribune*, the protesters group left the meeting first but stood outside of the room holding up their signs as the others filed out. No words were reportedly exchanged between the opposing groups.

The Edwards family is supported by several local transgender support organizations, including Gender Justice, OutFront Minnesota, and Transforming Families MN. The organizations issued a joint statement objecting to what they've dubbed "discrimination against children."

KAAL TV reports that the school board will be holding a meeting at the end of the month to discuss a more expansive gender inclusion policy.

But according to Paula Rothstein, parent of two children at Nova Classical Academy, the efforts are less



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about “the bullying of a child,” and more about “a political agenda.”

Meanwhile, several other school districts in Minnesota are reportedly developing transgender policies, particularly to deal with the issue of the bathrooms, according to WCCO, Minnesota’s local CBS affiliate.

The Family Council notes that hundreds of Nova parents have signed a petition against mixed-sex bathrooms, and that some parents have already pulled their children out of the school or off the waiting list in anticipation of possible changes.



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