



Lexington Public Schools

1557 Massachusetts Avenue ❖ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

William J. Hurley
Superintendent of Schools, Interim

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May 4, 2005

Mr. David Parker

██████████
Lexington, MA ██████████

Dear Mr. Parker:

This confirms my response to your request for parental notice and an automatic opt-out for your son when “gay headed houses, same sex unions/transgender/transgender issues are exposed to him at school,” particularly “when teacher/staff/adults participate in discussion of such matters.” You have requested that the automatic opt-out occur even when “such discussions arise spontaneously.”

Based upon your previous discussions with Lexington’s administrative staff, it appears that your request is particularly aimed at your first grade son’s exposure to some of the concepts of family raised by the book *Who’s in a Family?* This book was among several included in a “diversity book bag” that children in the Lexington Public Schools are permitted to take home for parents to read with their child if they wish. The book is designed for young children and includes illustrations of children accompanied by various parent figures, including two individuals of different genders, two individuals of the same gender, grandparents, bi-racial couples, as well as a one-parent family.

Lexington Public Schools’ policy, adopted under state law (Chapter 71, Section 32A), provides for notice and opt out of curriculum that “primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.” The issues for which you have requested notice and opt out go beyond that required by the policy and the statute. Indeed, while Lexington does have curriculum that falls within the scope of the policy and statute, it is generally not taught until grade 5. Thus, I am denying your request at this time. In doing so, I note not only the policy and statute, but also the impracticality of implementing your request. Delay by staff in responding to issues raised spontaneously by children in order to provide an opt-out for your son would be particularly impractical and inappropriate.

You may have the school committee review my decision if you wish. In order to initiate such review, please submit a written request to Helen Cohen, School Committee Chair, at Lexington Public Schools, 1557 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420.

Sincerely

William J. Hurley
Interim Superintendent

WJH/mls

cc: Joni Jay, Estabrook School Principal
Helen Cohen, Lexington School Committee Chair