



Pan-Orthodox Association of Greater Hamilton

Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. - Psalm 133:1

MAILING ADDRESS

c/o 10 Princip Street
Hamilton, Ontario
L8W 2M3

MEMBER CHURCHES

**Our Lady of Glastonbury
Orthodox Church**
Father James Deschene

**All Saints of North America
Orthodox Church**
Father Geoffrey Korz

**Holy Resurrection Romanian
Orthodox Church**
Father Lucian Puscariu

**St Demetrius Greek
Orthodox Church**
Father Demetrios Gianniou

**St Nicholas Serbian
Orthodox Cathedral**
Father Vojislav Pavlovic

**St Nicholas Serbian
Orthodox Church**
Father Lazar Vukojev
Father Djuro Samac
Father Stevo Stojavljevic

**Our Lady of Glastonbury
Orthodox Church**
Father James Deschene

**Panagia Greek Orthodox
Church**
Father Theologos Drakos

**St Vladimir's Ukrainian
Orthodox Church**
Father William Makarenko

April 2, 2009

Dr. Chris Spence, Director

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board

100 Main Street W., P.O. Box 2558

Hamilton, Ontario L8P 1H6

Dear Dr. Spence:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed "Equity Policy" and its implementation plan.

Your correspondence was directed to an incorrect address, and just came into our hands in the last few days. As a result, we are submitting our response now.

In light of our review, we would offer the following feedback:

1. **The Policy neglects concerns for the equity of the views of families from a wide variety of backgrounds** who hold traditional moral values;
2. **The Policy and its implementation continue to be the deliberate assertion of a narrow agenda** dedicated to the promotion and normalization of sexual behaviors that are rejected by most residents of our city when it comes to the raising of their children;
3. **The Policy represents a culturally exclusive moral perspective**, actively opposing the deeply held views of the majority of cultural minority groups in Hamilton, including members of our faith community (Russians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Serbians, Romanians, Middle Easterners, Africans, South East Asians, and others);
4. **The Policy brings into question the assertion that yours is a "public" school board**, supporting a diversity of worldviews without undermining those held by families;
5. **The Policy ignores any and all of the input provided by our Association**, along with over three dozen other written and verbal presentations submitted to the Board and raising detailed concerns about the Policy.

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6. **The Policy and its Implementation Documents neglect to provide implementation details** promised by Board officials and trustees on numerous occasions during the past two years;
7. **The Policy fails to protect the freedom of conscience and religion of students and employees who subscribe to the Orthodox Christian Faith**, and in this respect puts the Board in a position of conflict with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, leaving the Board open to a costly court challenge at public expense.

In light of these points, we cannot endorse the program of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board as one that is compatible with the life and practice of Orthodox Christian life.

We will therefore urge our faithful to seek out alternatives to the program offered by your system.

We once again urge the Board to reconsider the details of its Equity Policy.

We regret that the Board and its officers have repeatedly and steadfastly refused to address concerns that have been voiced, and instead have pursued with vigor a predetermined agenda. This process has been long and costly, yet has demonstrated little if any authentic discourse on the part of the Board and its officers.

We look forward to the day when students of diverse cultural and spiritual backgrounds can once again find a home in Hamilton public schools, and would ask you to keep us informed of developments surrounding the Equity Policy and its implementation.

Yours sincerely,



Father Geoffrey Korz+

General Secretary

P.S. – Please note in your records the change in our Association mailing address.

cc. Trustee Jessica Brennan, Chairman

Mr. B. Monkley

Trustees