



We all want safe and caring schools. We want to ensure that all vulnerable students, including sexual and gender minority students, have the support they need.

However, over the last few years many MLAs, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), activists & some school boards have used parents' good intentions and loving hearts against them. Under the guise of false "outing" rhetoric, parents are abdicating the care of their own children, as young as five, while ignoring many risks.

This progression culminated with *Bill 24: An Act to Support Gay Straight Alliances*, which passed into law in November 2017 and amended several sections of the *School Act*. The following five concerns are related to these important changes in Alberta law.

1. Enforces secrecy

- Prevents staff from engaging parents in the care of their own children
- No exceptions for age, special needs, past trauma, self-harm risk, etc.
- Creates void of care for children without proper oversight or accountability (e.g. who facilitates and what are their qualifications related to sexual/gender counseling?)

2. Exposure to sexual content

- explicitly exempts GSAs & activities from parental notification/opt-out for sexual topics
- especially concerning because government-recommended Alberta GSA Network previously allowed access to sexually graphic material through community support links intended for K-12 children.
- egregious materials such as the "Sex from A-Z Cards" (google them at your own risk) are described by some "experts" as appropriate for certain populations of youth.

3. Clubs for activism and social change intended to impact all students in the school

- The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) resource *GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers* outlines 4 types of GSAs, including two described as tools of activism and social change where children can, among other things, "initiate schoolwide educational activities and programs (eg, guest speakers, assemblies, pride week activities)" and offer "an anti-oppression educational mandate across intersections of difference."
- Imposition of activism on a captive, impressionable audience of children undermines the neutrality that undergirds the integrity of our education system and the responsibility to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all children of diverse perspectives
- Violates standards of Alberta's *Guide to Education* which states that schools "need to exercise sensitivity to ensure that students and others are not ridiculed, embarrassed or intimidated for positions that they hold on controversial issues" and that "the school plays a supportive role to parents in the areas of values and moral development."

- “Expert” GSA Network site imposes singular perspective on gender & sexuality:
 - Gender/sexuality fluid, subjective & on a spectrum of limitless possibilities, including identities such as asexual, ace, agender, boi, multisexual, pansexual, polysexual, to name just a few.
 - definitions page link claims references to “biological male/female” are considered “defamatory and inaccurate.”
 - Reinforces same perspective as controversial PRISM Toolkit resource published by ATA
- Ideology of an activist style GSA can be hostile to foundational principles of unique faith or culturally focused school settings and individual student perspectives in public schools

4. Transforms principal’s role from responsiveness to local needs into govt compliance

- All principals would be forced to “immediately grant permission” to all GSA clubs and activities or risk legal repercussions if they do not comply
- Strips principals of professional decision-making authority in schools and disempowers them from responding to diverse needs within their schools.

5. The government usurps the power to re-write school board policies

- empowers Education Minister to amend or replace any policies of any school board that do not comply with Ministry’s demands & impose any terms or conditions of the Minister.
- sweeping state power strips autonomy of local school boards, even enforcing policy that is explicitly hostile to the foundational principles of unique school settings.
- destroys genuine school choice: freedom of choice is meaningless if all choices forced to be the same.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Stay informed

- ✓ Browse through informative print and video resources available parentchoice.ca
- ✓ Subscribe to email newsletter and blog by signing up on PCE homepage
- ✓ Join PCE’s Facebook page (parents4choice)
- ✓ Inform others – print and email resources from our website as well as share them on social media to challenge false rhetoric and help spread awareness of this important information

2. Stay engaged

- ✓ Become a member of a political party
 - Be involved in policy development & voting for policies at the political party’s AGM
 - Have a say in whose name ends up on the election ballot - be involved in nomination process
- ✓ Consider becoming a candidate yourself
- ✓ Volunteer for a campaign
- ✓ Vote wisely
- ✓ Contact your MLA & school board trustee to discuss your concerns through email, phone, in-person – your elected representatives should know your name and face
- ✓ Sign PCE’s “Parental Consent is Key” open letter campaign

3. Financially support organizations like PCE & donate to candidates who represent your values

4. Persevere, be courageous and proactive

- ✓ An informed and engaged population is the best defense
- ✓ Be courageous and don’t be intimidated by name-calling
- ✓ Stay engaged for the long-term and don’t give up - our children are worth it