

A Statement of Principles of Fairness for Students and Parents and of How They Can be Used to Remedy the Injustices of the Corren Settlement Agreement

Principles

1. We affirm our common desire to see established within the schools of British Columbia an atmosphere in which harassment or abusive conduct directed at any student is not acceptable, regardless of their actual or apparent association or identification with any group.

2. Access to the means of influencing the development of curriculum for all subjects in British Columbia public schools should be open to all citizens without discrimination. No special rights of access or influence should be given to particular private citizens or groups.

"Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* 15 (1)

3. Parents have the right to educate children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions. Public schools must be transparent and accountable to parents about what is taught to students. Teaching materials should be open to examination by parents, and particular care should be taken that parents are directly advised, well in advance, when sexuality or other controversial or sensitive topics are to be discussed.

"Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that should be given to their children." *From Article 26 - United Nations, 'Universal Declaration on Human Rights' – 1948*

"The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents." *From the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, Principle 7*

4. Nothing in the curriculum or practice of British Columbia public schools should denigrate the legally protected moral and religious beliefs of parents and children.

How the above principles can be used to remedy the inequity of the Corren Settlement Agreement

Preamble: Because it unfairly gives privileged procedural access to Peter Corren and Murray Corren, the Corren Settlement Agreement has created a dangerous precedent in the curriculum review process. We ask for recognition of the 'prior right' of parents to choose the

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kind of education their children receive. We request that the Minister extend full consultation to parents and other stakeholders.

1. New Internal Review Guidelines for the development of IRPs ("Integrated Resource Packages") must be drawn up with input from all interested parties, as identified in the Charter Article 15 (1).
2. Similarly, input from all interested parties should be welcomed in finalizing each IRP.
3. The Social Justice 12 Course provided for in Section 3 of the Corren Settlement Agreement should be balanced with respect to Charter Article 15 (1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
4. Delivery guidelines to assist teachers in delivering the Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum should be developed openly with recognition given to the prior right of parents to choose the kind of education their children receive.
5. Parents of students should be permitted to make arrangements for Alternative Delivery of sensitive topics in a manner that respects the individual needs and interests of their children.
6. Any further changes in matters covered in the Corren Settlement should be arrived at by a regular democratic process in a manner authorized by the legislature and subject to alteration by that body.
7. The Ministry of Education should send a letter to the parties named in the Corren Settlement Agreement (Section IB) affirming the prior right of parents and stating a policy of openness in the development of curriculum.

23 September, 2006
Richmond, BC

Signatories:

BC Parents and Teachers for Life
Catholic Civil Rights League
Christian Coalition International
Christian Social Concerns Fellowship
Concerned Parents of BC
REAL Women
Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship