

Massachusetts School District Removes Christian Counselors

It's no wonder why homeschooling has become a more appealing option for Christians and conservatives than the liberal ideologies that are not only being taught at public schools, but also are also affecting and damaging the lives of some teachers and students.

Three staff members in the Amherst, Massachusetts public school system have been placed on leave pending the results of an investigation after a school newspaper used anonymous sources to accuse the counselors in so-called "conversion therapy" and not using the chosen pronouns of trans-identified students, media outlets have reported.

Attorneys for Hector Santos, Delinda Dykes and Tania Cabrera says the student-run newspaper for Amherst Regional Middle School used anonymous sources that were later cited by other news outlets and that the articles written put the Christian counselors' safety at risk by granting the sources anonymity.

The allegations held that Santos had performed "conversion therapy" before school hours in Amherst schools; that Dykes prayed against a so-called LGBT "demon" and "handed out chocolate crucifixes" and that all three failed to refer to students by using their self-declared pronouns, attorney Ryan McLane said.

The so-called "conversion therapy" was banned in Massachusetts for minors in 2019. It is often used by churches to help counsel people with unwanted same-sex attraction.

The Graphic, the student newspaper at Amherst Regional High School, attacked the "religious beliefs" of both Santos and Dykes. The unidentified source said Santos and Dykes allegedly "frequently expressed their religious views at school."

The source said he “became uncomfortable when Dykes prayed, ‘In the name of Jesus, we bind that gay demon that wants to confuse our children.’”

LGBT advocates are calling for action against “Christian ideology” for the incidents. And the district’s teacher’s union slammed the “Christian paradigm” of U.S. history.

The Graphic reported that Santos and Dykes “allowed religion to overflow into conversations with students and staff, and failed to provide support to students who were facing gender-based bullying or intimidation at school.” The paper also alleged that Santos posted religiously worded anti-LGBTQ material on a public Facebook page.

When The Graphic reached out to Dykes, Santos and Cabrera, they all refuted the claims made in that report.

According to the Amherst-Pelham Education Association website, they are “seeking to move beyond a ‘Christian paradigm of the U.S.’s history and present day’ and it has previously stated its opposition to any actions that threaten a ‘safe, supportive and [LGBT] inclusive PreK-12 education and schooling experience.’”

The “APEA Statement in Support of LGBTQIA+ and Racial Equity” also says that “Extremely harmful and dangerous attacks on public education and marginalized youth are occurring in many states and school districts in the United States, including legal attacks on curricula involving critical race theory and African American history and the histories of other marginalized racial groups, the criminalization of gender-affirming healthcare services for transgender youth, and the banning of drag performances (i.e. criminalization of gender non-conforming presentation); Amherst is no exception.” {eo}

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