

Middle School Girls Told to Ask for Lesbian Kiss During Class

Parents of children attending a Red Hook, N.Y., middle school are outraged after a recent anti-bullying presentation at Linden Avenue Middle School.

The workshop for 13- and 14-year-old girls focused on homosexuality and gender identity. They were also taught words such as “pansexual” and “genderqueer.”

Parents say their daughters were told to ask one another for a kiss, and they say two girls were told to stand in front of the class and pretend they were lesbians on a date.

“She told me, ‘Mom we all get teased and picked on enough. Now I’m going to be called a lesbian because I had to ask another girl if I could kiss her,’” parent Mandy Coon told reporters.

Coon says parents were given no warning about the presentation and there was no opportunity to opt out. Both the school principal and the district superintendent are defending the workshops and advising they will schedule more.

“The school is overstepping its bounds in not notifying parents first and giving us the choice,” another parent said. “I thought it was very inappropriate. That kind of instruction is best left up to the parents.”

“I was absolutely furious—really furious,” a parent who asked to remain anonymous told reporter Todd Starnes. “These are just kids. I’m dumbfounded that they found this class was appropriate.”

Superintendent Paul Finch told *The Poughkeepsie Journal* the presentation was “focused on improving culture, relationships,

communication and self-perceptions.”

“We may require more notification to parents in the future,” Finch said.

He claimed the sessions are required under the state Dignity for All Students Act, which prohibits harassment and bullying in the classroom.

Principal Katie Zahedi and guidance counselors at the middle school worked with Bard College students to organize the workshops.