

# Parent Action Guide

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Dear Parents,

Sadly, many American schools are replacing education with indoctrination. Instead of learning how to think critically and develop reading and writing skills, our children are being taught radical ideas about systemic racism, gender fluidity, and anti-Americanism—without our consent. Reasonable parents continue to be shocked and outraged by extreme, age-inappropriate content now being delivered to students, often beginning in kindergarten, in both public and private school classrooms across the country.

It is essential that we actively and vocally reject divisive policies and hold school districts and boards of education accountable for providing a quality, academically rigorous education that is free of political bias. We encourage you to have ongoing open, healthy dialogues with your school administrators and teachers about what they are providing to children inside and outside of the classroom. As parents, it is our fundamental right to partner with schools to direct the education of our children—without shame, fear, or intimidation.

This Parent Action Guide outlines important first steps that will empower you to take actions toward protecting our children's education.

**This guide is designed to assist you with:**

- How to request access to curriculum and materials used in your student's classroom
- How to escalate your concerns and to whom
- How to opt your child out of certain subjects and classroom activities
- Other tips and tools to successfully advocate for your child

## Section 1: Do Your Due Diligence

As a parent or guardian, you have a right, *protected by law*, to make decisions regarding your child's education and health in a manner that is consistent with your family's values. You can exercise your rights by staying actively informed about:

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- What your child is being taught in school
- Any written or electronic records about your child
- Your child's physical, emotional, and mental health
- Any abuse, neglect, or criminal offense against your child (if it does not impede an official investigation)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a federal law that requires disclosure of public records upon request. All 50 U.S. states have adopted FOIA laws (also referred to as “Sunshine laws”) that outline their own provisions.

## What kinds of things can you request under FOIA laws?

You may request any recorded information or communication held by a public authority, including but not limited to:

- Written or online educational materials (books, videos, activities, surveys, etc.)
- Academic curriculum
- Professional development curriculum, teachers' manuals, and training materials
- Vendor contracts
- Email or text correspondence between specific employees, board members, or administrators in office.

## How should I submit a FOIA Request?

First, consider whether the information you are seeking is already publicly available.

Second, it is best to submit your request in writing—a formal letter, email, or fax. Each school district or system usually provides instructions, forms and/or protocols on their website or through a FOIA coordinator. Read all guidelines carefully, and if possible, consider having your legal counsel support you in the process.

Keep in mind that submitting your request is just the beginning. Things could proceed in any number of ways.

**Your request requires clarification or additional follow-up.** If the public agency requests

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clarification or additional information, make sure to respond within the time limits. Failure to do so will result in your inquiry being denied.

**Your request is fulfilled.** If your request is not denied, the information provided will likely create more questions, but it will also point parents to additional and more specific document requests that will be helpful.

**Your request gets denied.** Don't be intimidated by the process. If at first you don't succeed, record the response and know that you can follow-up with an appeal. Alternatively, you or someone else in your group may also re-submit a modified request that is less likely to get denied.

Be aware that school districts are becoming increasingly savvy and may purposely evade or thwart having to produce an adequate response. In order to avoid getting denied, consider the following dos and don'ts.

## Do

**DO** ask to inspect and/or copy textbooks, written, or online materials that were used in a specific class or activity during a specific time frame.

**DO** ask for any correspondence between specific district employees, board members, or any other public official you suspect is involved in specific topics such as "diversity," "equity," "inclusion," "gender identity," "transgender," etc.

**DO** ask for any email or electronic correspondence (text, slack, or chat messages) that cite a specific resource, title, web meeting, website, etc.

## Do Not

**DON'T** ask for something that the public body has not already created, such as a summary, compilation or a list of book titles, resources, videos, or links. If no such document was maintained or created, the agency can legitimately deny your request.

**DON'T** make a "subscription" request or ask for documents that are not routinely created or distributed as part of regular business practices. Instead, ensure that communications and important decisions are regularly documented by means of agendas and meeting minutes.

**DON'T** request something that is considered exempt from disclosure, such as records that could interfere with formal investigations or constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

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## Section 2: Hold Officials Accountable

If you have encountered questionable or concerning curriculum, assignments, or assigned reading being used in your child's school, use this guide to take action and hold decision-makers accountable.

### 1. Gather Information and Talking Points

- a. Organize copies of curriculum, texts, lesson plans, assignments, training materials, or any communications that support your concerns.
- b. Identify relevant portions and make a list citing each source the information came from.

### 2. Consider Your End Goal

- a. Do you want this curriculum/assignment/resource to be removed from the classroom entirely? If so, be prepared to suggest an alternative.
- b. Do you want this curriculum/assignment/resource to be supplemented with a different viewpoint? If so, be prepared to suggest the counterpoint.

### 3. Create a List of Leaders to Contact

- a. Use your school district, city, and state websites to obtain names and contact information of decision-makers.
- b. Start small and local, and move your way down the list as needed:
  - i. Your child's teacher and principal of the school
  - ii. Parent Teacher Association or Advisory Board
  - iii. District Superintendent
  - iv. School board members for your district
  - v. City council
  - vi. City mayor
  - vii. Members of state legislature's education committee
  - viii. State education board
  - ix. State legislators
  - x. State governor

### 4. Recruit Other Parents and Stakeholders

- a. There is power in numbers, so don't go at it alone. Even a small, like-minded

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- group can influence change.
- b. If possible, recruit a parent or spouse who has legal expertise and is familiar with education laws and regulations.
  - c. Mobilize members of your community, including parents from your school or district, neighbors, family members, or members of any social or religious groups you're a part of.
  - d. Write a letter (*see template and sample letters in Section 4*) or phone script to share with your group. Have your group members contact your designated decision-makers using the script to guide the conversation and/or correspondence.
  - e. Have group members record contacts and responses.
  - f. Press the leaders for specific actions they can and will take.
  - g. When a leader responds positively to your contact, ask them to provide the names of others you can reach out to.
  - h. Use your script as a talking point to speak at school board meetings, parent-teacher meetings, PTA meetings, and city council meetings.

## 5. Be Persistent and Take Advantage of Public Forums

- a. Don't give up if you do not receive a favorable response from leaders. Have multiple members of your group contact them and press them for action.
- b. If one-on-one discussions are not fruitful, it may be more effective to address your grievances in public forums, such as town halls or school board meetings.
- c. Record responses from leaders, follow-up, and hold them accountable for what they say they will do.

## Section 3: Exercise Choice

Parents should and can choose the education and healthcare that they deem best for their child. There are at least two ways that parents can exercise choice.

1. Choose what instruction, surveys, or healthcare your child does or does not receive through opt-in and opt-out policies. (*See Section 4 for opt-out forms*)

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2. Choose a school that aligns with your values. We recognize that your choices may be limited based on location, financial need, and other factors, but consider the following:
  - a. A different public or charter school, even if it isn't your zoned neighborhood school
  - b. A private or religious school
  - c. Homeschooling or homeschooling pods

Many families who had once ruled out homeschooling have discovered that it is within reach. If you are exploring homeschooling or considering a homeschooling pod, check out these resources on our PragerU Resources for Educators & Parents (PREP) webpage (<https://www.prageru.com/resources>).

## Homeschool



Curriculum specialist and homeschool parent Cathy Duffy reviews homeschool curriculum and other resources for those interested in homeschooling and education.

[Explore Cathy Duffy Reviews >](#)



Five annual, regional homeschooling conventions with attendees from all over the United States. Dozens of speakers, 100s of workshop sessions, a huge curriculum exhibit hall, and more.

[Great Homeschool Convention >](#)



Hillsdale College K-12 Academy helps parents and teachers offer time-honored classical education to their students, whether at home or in the classroom.

[Access Hillsdale College K-12 At Home >](#)



An online educational platform where parents and teachers can find creative and engaging learning materials to teach children topics in history, math, science, geography, and language arts.

[Access Learn in Color >](#)



Information for parents about nearly 5,000 homeschool-oriented resource providers.

[Access The Homeschool Resource Roadmap >](#)



On-demand courses for becoming a confident parent and providing your child a first-rate education at home.

[Access The Smart Homeschooler >](#)

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## Section 4: Tips, Tools & Templates

### Template Letter

**Greeting:** Hello *[recipient's name]*,

**Identification:** I'm *[your name]*, a *[mom, dad, grandparent, community member]* in *[location]*. I'm calling/writing on behalf of concerned parents and community members.

**Reason for call/email:** I'm calling/writing to you regarding *[curriculum/topic]* being used in my child's classroom. I'm concerned about it because *[Summarize your opposition in a couple of sentences. Insert facts or statements from experts who also oppose.]*.

**Make your request:** I represent a group of local voters and parents who oppose *[curriculum/topic]* being used in the classroom, and we'd like your help in correcting this. Given the *[inaccuracies, harm, or list other concerns]*, we want this *[removed from the classroom or replaced with XX]*.

### Sample Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a parent of a prospective/currently enrolled student of your school. I am so grateful for your commitment to my child's wellbeing and am honored to partner with you in his/her education.

As you may be aware, many American schools are adopting politically biased lessons and curricula. In so many classrooms, instead of learning critical thinking and good values, children are being taught to focus on racial differences, to explore gender identity, and to see mostly the negative about America.

As my child's primary institution of learning, my family has entrusted you with a sacred responsibility to help educate my child. The lessons and curricula taught at school should prepare

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my child to be a model American citizen and provide a foundational education in basic disciplines like science, math, history, civics, and English without political bias.

As a parent, I want to feel confident about what my child is learning from the staff, teachers, and administrators. It is my belief that the classroom should primarily be a place of academic growth and not a training ground for social activism.

Towards this end, I wish for transparency about my child's education and discourage the use of any politically biased lesson or curriculum. I request, therefore, that the school inform me prior to the teaching of any of the following topics:

1. **Race.** Many schools now focus on our differences instead of the values that unite all Americans. Instead of teaching colorblindness and that individuals should be judged by the content of their character as opposed to the color of their skin, many schools now focus on race in a divisive manner. Curricula goes by many different names, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Critical Race Theory (CRT)
  - b. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
  - c. Anti-Racism
  - d. Black Lives Matter (BLM) Curriculum
  - e. "Affinity groups" that divide students or teachers by race, color, gender, etc.
  - f. Lesson plans where students are asked to publicly or privately denounce their whiteness or "privilege"
  
2. **Sex Education and Gender Identity.** Children in elementary school and even younger are often exposed to inappropriate sex education that robs them of their innocence and sows confusion. As a parent, I would like the right to have these initial conversations about sensitive sexual topics with my child at an age and in a manner which I determine to be most appropriate. Topics include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Gender Fluidity
  - b. Transgenderism
  - c. Sexual Preferences



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- 3. Anti-Americanism.** Instead of teaching our children the values that have made America the freest, most prosperous society in the world, many schools now spend more time focusing on the negatives about our history and culture. Our country is not perfect, but children should learn the whole truth about America—its errors as well as its amazing accomplishments. Reframing history to highlight an anti-American narrative could deprive our children of a true, balanced education. Anti-American topics and curricula include, but are not limited to:
- a. The 1619 Project
  - b. Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States* and similar books
  - c. Teachings from Herbert Marcuse and/or the Frankfurt School
  - d. Lesson plans that criticize free markets and glorify Marxism, socialism, or communism
  - e. Lessons that denounce or disparage the U.S. Constitution and its founding principles
  - f. Lessons that leave out the whole picture and teach only the negative about America

I know you take the responsibility of educating our children very seriously, just as I do. If staff, teachers, or administrators are unsure whether or not parents ought to be notified about any lesson plan, I am more than happy to act as a resource and provide guidance. It is an honor to partner with you and provide further feedback about issues, and I hope to assist wherever I can to keep this school a wonderful place for students and their families.

Sincerely,  
[Name]

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## Opt-Out Forms

Use these forms to legally opt your child out of the following:

- Sex Ed
- Surveys on student's or parent's personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion
- Surveys on student health behaviors and risks
- Health instruction in conflict with religious beliefs or personal moral convictions
- Statewide performance assessments

### Find your state's opt-out forms and instructions here:

<https://www.pacificjustice.org/resources/for-parents/public-school-opt-out-forms/public-school-opt-out-forms-content/>

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## Sources:

"Public School Opt Out Forms Content." *Pacific Justice Institute*

<https://www.pacificjustice.org/resources/for-parents/public-school-opt-out-forms/public-school-opt-out-forms-content/>

Pullman, Joy. "10 Steps For Resisting Joe Biden's Order To Transgender Public Schools." *The Federalist*, 2 Feb. 2021

<https://thefederalist.com/2021/02/02/10-steps-for-resisting-joe-bidens-order-to-transgender-public-schools/>

*PragerU is happy to provide informational resources to parents and educators through materials and Action Guides such as this, but please note that we do not provide official legal advice, and nothing construed in this guide should be deemed as such.*