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Subject: Pride Month Declaration
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Greetings to Trustees and Superintendent Kaardal,

I want to reiterate to you all that I appreciate your dedication to serving on this School Board. I've come to learn how much time you all have and are investing in this school district. Thank you for your service.

Now, I want to let you know that I object to the Declaration of Item 7.2 for Pride Month: The Central Okanagan Board of Education declares June as 'Pride Month' in Central Okanagan Public Schools' as set out in the Agenda for May 24th (today) SD23 SB Meeting.

I object because there is no need to declare a whole month when the declared objectives of the school district already is to provide equity, diversity and inclusiveness within every aspect of the school curriculum and policies. Because of this I wholeheartedly disagree with any declaration or Action Item being put forward that will give any specific group or organization superiority over the general school population of staff and/or students. How will the students who identify as Christian, or some other special interest groups, feel included and equitable when they are not given the same month-long attention? Never mind that the school year already hyper-focuses daily on the LGBTQ as a result of the SOGI 123 learning resource.

Furthermore, I am wondering why no other group is given the same attention as the LGBTQ population. According to 2021 statistics Christians make up only about 40% of the population that identifying as religious in Kelowna and this group just celebrated a very important season of Passover to Pentecost, April 5 – May 28. There was no special observance in recognition of the many Christian students in the district. I understand that this is about the inclusion of LGBTQ students but believe it is reasonable to limit the celebration to one day rather than a full month. To put things in proper perspective, we get one day to celebrate Canada, July 1st, and one day to celebrate our veterans, November 11th, etc.

I would also like to remind you all that public spaces, ie school classrooms, hallways and the board office are to remain neutral. "The State of Neutrality" stipulates that neutrality must be adhered to and upheld by elected officials, school board trustees, and must be done so without favour and in respect of the law. Giving special rights to any one group is divisive and unlawful. Therefore, it is critical that all Central Okanagan School District spaces remain neutral in order to respect the beliefs of everyone.

Because there is a Declaration on the May 24th Agenda for the SB Meeting I look forward to seeing an amendment to the district's decision to declare a Pride Month in June or any other month of the year to remain as one day only.

Respectfully,

Linda Dueck,
Grandmother of 3 in SD23

