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Code of Conduct Editions
Student Achievement and Well Being Committee Meeting
May 28, 2019

Good evening Director, Trustees, staff, members and guests of the board. As a parent, I am alarmed by this proposal to add the words, "gender identity," "gender expression," "marital status," and "family status," to the prohibited grounds of discrimination contained in the Board's Code of Conduct.

Some will support adding the terms "gender identity" and "gender expression" to protect students from being bullied. Of course we agree that there should be no bullying of students, especially based on sexual attraction, or feelings of gender dysphoria. But adding those terms is not really necessary since the policy already includes "gender" and "sexual orientation".

And there are good reasons to oppose their inclusion, namely that Pope Francis has spoken out strongly against allowing Catholic schools to adopt and teach what he calls the "ideology" of gender instead of the Genesis teaching that God created two sexes, male and female.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis decried the "ideology of gender" being imposed on children at school, and urged that young people "need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created" [para 285].

And again in a 2016 speech, "You, Irina, mentioned a great enemy to marriage today: the theory of gender. Today there is a world war to destroy marriage. Today there are ideological colonizations which destroy, not with weapons, but with ideas. Therefore, there is a need to defend ourselves from ideological colonizations."

How do we properly defend ourselves in this particular case?

By opposing the addition of these terms which relate to gender ideology. Something that could be threatened by the addition of these four terms is that the board could be pushed to allow the hiring of teachers and staff living outside of heterosexual marriage, or who may participate in any variety of gender expressions, which remain inconsistent with the teachings of the faith, and the expectations of Catholic parents.

The Supreme Court has ruled that Catholic schools have the right to demand that teachers follow the prescriptions of the faith concerning marriage in *Caldwell v. Stuart (1984)*.

To sum up, I believe that from a Catholic point of view, the addition of these terms should not be supported by the Board. I respectfully request Trustees not to vote to add them in, when the Code of Conduct comes up for a vote.