

March __, 2026

Anchorage School Board Members

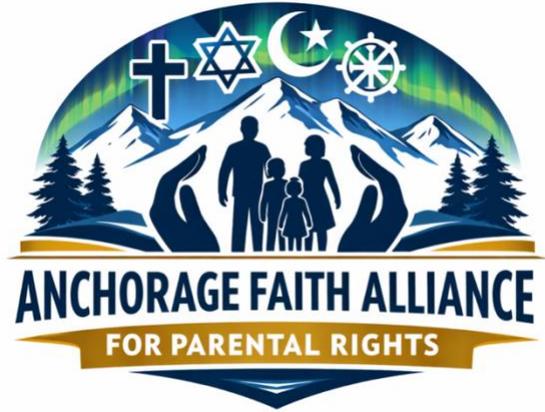
Anchorage School District
5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99504

and

Dr. Jharrett Bryantt

Superintendent - Anchorage School District

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99504



Dear Members of the Anchorage School Board and Superintendent Bryantt :

We, the undersigned faith leaders representing diverse traditions and communities with hundreds of families attending ASD schools, write to you with deep respect for the important role public education plays in our shared community. At the same time, we affirm the fundamental and longstanding rights of parents — rooted in both **Federal constitutional protections and Alaska law** — to direct the upbringing, moral formation, and religious instruction of their children.

As spiritual shepherds, clergy, and community guides, we seek clarity and consistency in the Anchorage School District’s policies regarding **instruction on gender ideology, sexuality, and matters related to the LGBTQIA agenda**. It is our sincere conviction — shared by many families we serve — that parents must be **fully informed in advance** about any such instruction and must be afforded a meaningful **right to opt their children out** of it, without penalty or prejudice.

Federal Constitutional Protections

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees, among other things, the **free exercise of religion** and protects the rights of parents to raise their children in accordance with their sincerely held moral and religious convictions.

In *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, 606 U.S. ___ (2025), the **U.S. Supreme Court** reaffirmed these principles in the context of public school instruction. The Court held that a school district’s refusal to provide **advance notice and opt-out rights** for instruction involving LGBTQIA-related materials **likely imposed a substantial burden on parents’ free exercise of religion**. The Court emphasized that parents are not seeking “to micromanage the public school curriculum, but rather to have their children opt out of a particular educational requirement that burdens their well-established right ‘to direct the religious upbringing of their children’” under the Free Exercise Clause. Importantly, the decision mandates notice to parents and the ability to excuse children from offending instruction.

The Supreme Court recognized that parents have the right to know “**whenever one of the books in question or any other similar book is to be used in any way**” in the classroom, and to ensure that children may be **excused from instruction** that conflicts with their family’s religious beliefs. This affirmation of parental authority is rooted in Constitution-level protections and reflects a national consensus that families — not government entities — are best positioned to guide their children’s moral and spiritual formation.

Alaska Law: Notice and Opt-Out Rights

The State of Alaska has also clearly articulated legal standards that bolster these parental rights. In its November 16, 2023 memorandum, (see attached) the **Alaska Attorney General** analyzed statutes including **AS 14.03.016** and **AS 14.30.361**, concluding that:

- Parents and guardians must be **notified in advance** of instructional content involving sensitive topics such as human sexuality and gender identity.
- Parents have the right to **exclude their children** from any such instruction, consistent with both procedural due process and parental authority over the education and moral upbringing of their children.

These statutory protections affirm that parents cannot be kept in the dark about curriculum that touches on deeply held beliefs and values. Nor can families be compelled to acquiesce to instruction that may conflict with their religious conscience.

Religious Liberty and Sincerely Held Beliefs

Our faith traditions — while diverse — share a profound commitment to the sanctity of conscience and the inviolability of religious liberty. Whether articulated in the scriptures, teachings, or moral convictions of our congregations, parents hold deeply held beliefs about human sexuality, identity, and the moral formation of youth. For many families, instruction that implicitly endorses specific ideologies regarding gender or sexuality is not a neutral educational matter but a subject of core spiritual significance.

Compelling children to participate in such instruction without prior notice and opt-out rights effectively forces families to choose between their religious convictions and compliance with school policy. This is contrary to both Federal constitutional protections and Alaska statutory law.

Request for Policy Clarification and Assurance

In light of the foregoing legal authority and moral considerations, we respectfully request that the Anchorage School Board and District leadership:

1. **Affirm formally** that parents and guardians will be notified in advance of any instruction, materials, assemblies, or classroom activities involving gender ideology, human sexuality, or LGBTQIA-related topics at any grade level.
2. **Establish clear and unambiguous opt-out procedures** that allow parents to exclude their children from such instruction without academic or disciplinary penalty.
3. **Ensure that policies are consistently applied** across all schools, grade levels, and instructional formats (including classroom lessons, library books, guest speakers, and supplemental materials).
4. **Provide staff training** to ensure compliance with both Alaska statutory requirements and constitutional protections for parental rights and religious liberty.

We submit these requests with respect for the difficult and important work of educating our community's youth. Our purpose is not to hinder the educational mission of Anchorage schools but to ensure that all families — especially those guided by conscientious religious convictions — are treated with fairness, respect, and legal clarity.

We stand ready to engage in constructive dialogue and to collaborate in developing policies that uphold both educational excellence and fundamental parental rights.

Respectfully,

Pastor Ron Hoffman
Mountain City Church

Mohammed Ali
Muslim Community of Alaska

Moyce Polanco
Hispanic Leader

Matt Oberlander
Anchorage Cross and Anchor

Dr. David Terwilliger
All Saints Episcopal Church

Dmitry Vakulich
New Chance Church

Ben Schoffman
Chugach Covenant Church

Masami Kageyama
Anchorage Holy Community

Dr. Ken Friendly
Lighthouse Christian