



The Sandstorm: Reigning in Rogue Educators

To ensure transparency, all classroom lessons should be recorded.

Larry Sand

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Over the past year, there have been many suggestions as to how concerned parents could deal with the “woke” agenda that has become all too prevalent in our nation’s classrooms. Most recently, a new group, Parents Unite, held a conference in which several fight-back strategies for parents were put forth – common sense stuff, like becoming more active in their kids’ school lives and getting involved with the myriad groups that have arisen to fight Critical Race Theory.

The one recommendation that really jumps out is “demand transparency.” The organization justly insists that parents have a right to know what schools are teaching, and that if a school is withholding, parents should file a public records request.

In the same vein, the American Enterprise Institute’s Max Eden writes that parents need a clear and direct window into school curriculum. He cites the Goldwater Institute’s Matt Beienburg who proposes that schools should “publicly post all materials used in the classroom so parents can see – at a glance online – what is being taught.”

While this strategy certainly should be employed, it does not go far enough. Schools can post all sorts of materials, rules, etc., but when the kids are in a classroom with a teacher, and the lesson is conducted behind closed doors, school rules don’t mean much if a teacher decides not to follow them.

A good case in point is Gabriel Gipe, a teacher at Inderkum High School in Natomas, CA. In a video that he did not know was being recorded by Project Veritas, he explains that he wants to turn his students into “revolutionaries,” and gives extra credit to those who attend left-wing protests. An admitted member of the Sacramento branch of Antifa, Gipe told Project Veritas he

wants to “scare the f—” out of students in an effort to sway them toward his far-left political philosophy.

The way to eradicate this type of indoctrination is to record all lessons and make them available to parents in real time. Just a year ago, I wrote that capturing live police activity had become very popular. In fact, a July 2020 poll from the University of Maryland shows that nearly 90 percent of respondents support body cameras, including 85 percent of Republicans, 86 percent of independents and 94 percent of Democrats. This is consistent with a 2016 Cato Institute poll which revealed that 89 percent of Americans support “requiring police officers to wear body cameras” to record their on-duty interactions.”

The benefits of cop-cams are many – for all concerned. They provide transparency for interactions with the public, faster resolution of citizen complaints, corroborating evidence in arrests, and training opportunities for rookies. It is even popular with cop unions. Sean Smoot, a police union attorney, writes, “Though unions have concerns regarding BWCs (body worn cameras), most unions also recognize that BWCs provide added layers of protection and accountability for officers. They protect officers from false claims when the alleged behavior is captured (or, more frequently, its absence is captured) by BWC video.” A study conducted on the Rialto, CA police department in 2013 bolsters Smoot’s statement, showing an 87.5 percent decline in citizen complaints against officers who wore the cameras.

But there are parents who object to having their kids appear in a live video stream. For example, Joel Withers, a father of two young children in Virginia, told the *Washington Examiner* he’s “not comfortable with complete strangers watching [my children’s] every move.” So instead of employing video, I propose having all lessons recorded and streamed using just a microphone – no visuals whatsoever. That way, teachers’ lessons will come through loud and clear for parents and concerned taxpayers to hear, while children are mostly left out of the process.

Needless to say, there will be pushback from all the usual suspects. Indeed, recording teachers’ lessons became an issue for the California Teachers Association when, due to the Covid-related shutdowns, online learning became the norm in the spring of 2020. At the time, the union argued that “school districts lack the authority to force teachers to do live online instruction or to record lessons for later use.” CTA pointed to Education Code 51512, a 1976 law that provides privacy protections for teachers. “It prevents unauthorized recording in a classroom and requires a teacher’s and a principal’s consent for the use of any ‘listening or recording device.’” Hence, in California, each teacher has to okay any recordings. (If they have nothing to hide, why would any teacher be uncomfortable being recorded?)

Teachers are entrusted with our children, and at the same time are paid by taxpayers to do their important work. Requiring these public servants to be transparent is not asking very much. California and anywhere else that has faux “privacy protections for teachers,” must eliminate them. We have no interest in recording teachers’ “private” lives, only when they interact with our children, and are using our taxpayer dollars to do so. As public servants, they owe us nothing less.