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City bans all school History Months over gay row

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10th August 2007 11:24
PinkNews.co.uk writer

When pupils return to school in Philadelphia this September, thanks to protests and threats to the school district, there will be no Gay and Lesbian History Month.

Officials said they took the decision to keep kids safe and that the threats had worried them.

But they also took the principled step of withdrawing recognition from similar history events, among them Hispanic Heritage Month and Asian Pacific American Month.

The new school calendar, mailed to 200,000 parents yesterday, showed that even the International Day of Disabled Persons will not be marked in Philadelphia schools.

Only public holidays, when the school closes, will be observed.

The school board's efforts to promote diversity last year by designating October as Gay and Lesbian History Month led to a serious and sustained backlash.

"We were just not prepared for the controversy," Cecilia Cummings, the district's senior vice president for communications and community relations, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

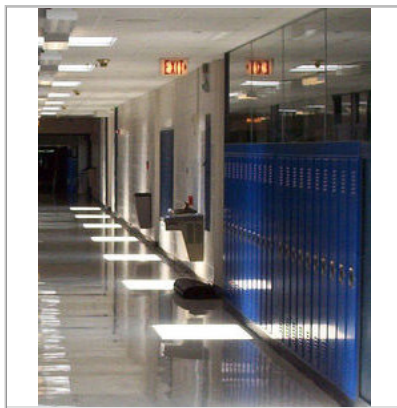
"We were besieged by calls, threats, letters, and we didn't have the manpower to staff it.

"Nor did we have the preparation or training to really figure out how to deal with this issue in a way that could keep kids safe. We had meetings where adults were calling kids names."

Others in the city of brotherly love were upset that the education authorities gave in to the pressure.

"It is appalling that a school district would drop months that recognise and educate our schoolchildren about the history and contributions of America's diverse fabric," Malcolm Lazin executive director of Equality Forum, an international gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender civil-rights group, told the *Inquirer*.

The American Family Association



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welcomed the decision.

Individual schools still have the right to celebrate diversity and it is expected that many of them will continue to celebrate gay and lesbian history with their own events.

Billy: Are we really supposed to believe that the company who own the lease had no knowledge of this? The

LooLoo: The Tories are a hateful, homophobic group, but nobody has banned them yet!

Michael R: These two brothers that take part in this experiment are going to be taking part in the ongoing rese...

James Whale: The petition to include the question of sexual orientation is here: <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/ce>

George: Benito Mussolini is alive and well it seems, and eager to out-do Hitler it seems! Someone should

Bill Perdue, RainbowRED Organi: Perhaps deputy mayor Giancarlo Gentilini should keep in mind the traditional Italian method of deali...

elizabeth veldon: these are the people who allege that Tinky-Winky is gay, remember. --but he DID carry a handba

elizabeth veldon: thankyou for your information concerning this. My knowlage on it was a little shaky to say the le

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