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Calif. moves to comply with 2011 gay history law

California education officials took the first step this week toward complying with a law that requires public schools to include prominent gay people and gay rights' milestones in the curriculum, adopting a set of classroom material guidelines that prohibit "pejorative descriptions" based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The California Board of Education on Wednesday unanimously approved new standards stating that textbooks, workbooks and other teaching materials purchased with state funds must avoid "descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize individuals" who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

"Materials should not convey the impression that persons of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, or transgender identity, are any different from other people in their emotions or their ability to love and be loved," the standards read.

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Gay-Straight Alliance Network Executive Director Carolyn Laub, whose San Francisco-based group supported the law and helped lobby for its passage, said Friday that the state school board's support "sends a really powerful statement" and she hopes and expects school districts will move voluntarily in coming months to make sure that materials purchased with local dollars conform with the new guidelines.

"Our students have said to us, 'The only time I ever learned or saw any gay person ever reflected in any materials is when we learned about the AIDS epidemic,'" Laub said. "We need to make sure all curricular materials, regardless of subject, need to reflect the diversity of California and cannot perpetuate stereotypes and reflect adversely on any group."

Read the full article:

May. 10, 2013
News Article
http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_23218645/calif-m... [1]
Associated Press

Lisa Leff

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