

Email Regarding Revising "A Muslim Primer"

Thu, Dec 22, 2011 10:06 am

Concerns about materials used in 9th grade World History class

From [redacted]

To jennifer_price jennifer_price@newton.k12.ma.us

...I am very concerned about some of the materials used in the World History class' study of religions...[which] contain inaccurate and misleading statements about both historical events and the teachings of Judaism and Christianity.

The most glaring example is the absurd contention set forth in an excerpt from "A Muslim Primer" that "social and economic reasons are forcing the [Roman Catholic] Church to consider polygamy as an Christian option". There are literally hundreds of books about Islam available, and I seriously question the use of material which contains such a ridiculous and untrue claim. That chapter also contains several other significant misstatements and omissions...

Thu, Dec 22, 2011 9:53 pm

Re: Concerns about materials used in 9th grade World History class

From Jennifer Price Jennifer_Price@newton.k12.ma.ushide details

To [redacted]

Cc Jonathan Bassett Jonathan_Bassett@newton.k12.ma.us

...It will help our conversation if you can highlight specific incorrect statements, so we can be clear about your concerns during our conversations. We already know about the footnote referencing polygamy. That level of specificity is very helpful...

The first six months of 2012 were concentrated on the removal of the [Arab World Studies Notebook](#), which had come to public attention and was more widely used (at least seven chapters) than the single chapter of [A Muslim Primer](#). The Notebook was removed in late June, 2012.

After being told in August, 2012 by Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Ann Frederick that our concerns about class materials would "never" be listened to and that parents concerned about the curriculum should "find another school", we focused on obtaining class material to prepare for filing an action with the state education department.

During this time I also corresponded extensively and met with School Committee Geoff Epstein, who eventually recommended to Superintendent David Fleishman that we meet to discuss resolving our differences. Unfortunately his recommendation was not followed. Mr. Epstein decided not to run for re-election, and since then we have not met with any School Committee members.

Sat, Nov 3, 2012 6:42 pm

World History II materials

From [redacted]

To cynthia_bergan cynthia_bergan@newton.k12.ma.us

Cc jennifer_price jennifer_price@newton.k12.ma.us, david_fleishman
david_fleishman@newton.k12.ma.us, Katharine_Heidlage Katharine_Heidlage@newton.k12.ma.us

...[our child's] class also used a book, A Muslim Primer, which claims that the Catholic church is "reconsidering polygamy as a Christian option" (untrue), that Neil Armstrong is Muslim (he isn't), that there were 4-5 million Muslims in the U.S. in 2002 (untrue; even today with a vastly increased population size there are 2.6 Muslims in the U.S.), that Islam was the third largest religion in the U.S. in 2002 (untrue; even today there are more Buddhists than Muslims), and that there was an equal number of Christians and Muslims worldwide in 2002 (untrue; even today there are 2.2 billion Christians and 1.6 billion Muslims)...

Sun, Dec 9, 2012 7:20 am

Re: A Muslim Primer

From Jonathan Bassett Jonathan_Bassett@newton.k12.ma.us hide details

To newtonexcellence newtonexcellence@gmail.com

Cc Jennifer_Morrill Jennifer_Morrill@newton.k12.ma.us, geoff_epstein
geoff_epstein@newton.k12.ma.us

...You should also know for the record that teachers at North have whited out the footnote in the chapter which referred to an academic journal article which suggested that the Catholic church in Africa may be considering loosening restrictions on polygamy. We felt that this footnote might be misleading.

Cheers,

Jonathan Bassett
History & Social Sciences Department Chair
Room 359
Newton North High School
