# Maryland student risks graduation denial over objection to LGBTQ+ inclusive health course



A senior student in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Maryland, is facing the prospect of being denied graduation next month after her family raised objections to a mandatory health course on religious grounds. The family describes the curriculum as containing "LGBTQ+ affirming" content that conflicts with their deeply held Christian beliefs, leading to a protracted dispute with the school district.

The student, identified only as “Jane” to protect her privacy, has an exemplary academic record. According to her parents and documented records, she maintains a weighted GPA of 4.76, scored 1450 on the SAT placing her in the 96th percentile, and is actively involved in extracurricular activities and leadership roles at her high school in Montgomery County.

Despite her academic achievements, Jane will not be allowed to graduate without completing a health education requirement. Her family objects to the course content, contending that it contains elements they consider religiously discriminatory. For over two years, the family has sought an exemption from the course or permission for Jane to complete an alternative class, either through a private school or independent study supervised by a teacher of their choosing. These appeals have been consistently denied by the Montgomery County Board of Education (MCBE).

Jane’s father expressed the impact of the situation, saying, “She’s pretty distraught about not being able to graduate with all her friends and experience that rite of passage.”

The controversy began in August 2022 when the parents discovered that the health class, required for graduation, included LGBTQ content extending throughout the year-long course rather than being limited to the specific Family Life and Human Sexuality unit as done previously. The family provided Fox News Digital with screenshots from teacher training documents indicating that instructors were encouraged to incorporate more inclusive language surrounding LGBTQ+ topics across the curriculum.

These materials reportedly classify various groups into “privileged” and “oppressed” categories, listing “Christians” as privileged and “Non-Abrahamic Religions/Spiritualities” as oppressed. Lesson plans direct teachers to help students identify groups affected by health inequities, including transgender or gender-expansive individuals and those identifying with non-Christian faiths. Another document instructs teachers to recognise “White supremacy culture” in both the classroom and home environment.

In response to their concerns, Jane’s parents withdrew her from the health course while seeking detailed information on the curriculum. They requested access to lesson plans and permission for Jane to opt out of the class entirely, both of which they allege MCPS denied. Their proposal included taking the course at a local accredited Catholic high school or via independent study overseen by a former MCPS teacher with relevant qualifications. MCPS rejected these alternatives, insisting that the course be taught by a current MCPS instructor or fulfilled through dual enrolment at a community college. The latter option was impractical due to scheduling conflicts and lacked provisions for exemption from the contested curriculum.

After the school board denied the family’s request, they escalated the matter to the Circuit Court of Montgomery County in August 2024. In December, the court upheld the school’s decision, prompting the parents to file an appeal to the Appellate Court in January 2025. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the case, the parents have petitioned the Maryland Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari to expedite review while the appellate process continues.

The family’s petition argues that MCPS contravened state law by embedding LGBTQ+ affirming content throughout the health course rather than confining it solely to the Family Life and Human Sexuality portion. They maintain that parents have a legal right to receive notice of and opt their child out of this specific unit. In a letter to the Maryland State Board of Education dated 7 March 2024, the parents clarified: “We are not trying to get MCPS to stop teaching about LGBTQ+ or change its curriculum. We are trying to get MCPS to keep that teaching restricted to the Family Life and Human Sexuality part of the curriculum so we can get notice of it and opt-out our daughter, or if MCPS is allowed to spread LGBTQ+ instruction throughout the entire health class, as its teacher instruction materials say it is doing, it follows that MCPS should allow us to opt-out our daughter from the entire class. We are trying to get MCPS to refrain from discriminating against religion.”

The parents have chosen not to transfer Jane to another school district, citing concerns for other religious students in Montgomery County whose families may not have the means to attend private or home schools.

In addition to contesting the curriculum, the family filed a separate complaint in March 2025 accusing MCPS and the Board of Education of “knowingly and willfully” withholding public records related to the class in violation of the Maryland Public Information Act.

The Montgomery County Board of Education and MCPS declined to comment on the pending litigation, as did the Maryland State Board of Education.

This case is one of several involving MCPS and religious liberty currently before the courts. The district is also involved in a high-profile lawsuit brought by a coalition of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim parents challenging the school board’s removal of opt-out provisions for parents disputing LGBTQ-themed storybooks in classrooms. The case, which has reached the U.S. Supreme Court, revolves around allegations that the school is violating religious freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment by requiring children to participate in instruction at odds with the families' faith. Oral arguments were conducted recently, with reports suggesting the court’s conservative majority showed significant support for the parents’ position.

The developing legal battles in Montgomery County highlight ongoing tensions around the inclusion of LGBTQ content in public school curricula and the extent to which parental and religious rights can influence educational standards and requirements.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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