

Waterloo Record

One open-minded school system is best

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Jim Howard

The issue of faith-based education isn't going to go away. It shouldn't.

As the provincial Progressive Conservative party states: "All children should be included in the system of public education without exception." That's absolutely true.

So how can it possibly make sense to entrench a system of separation by funding organizations that are exclusive by their core reasons for existing? It makes more sense to include all children in a system that offers an environment where they can all study (if they so choose) a broad range of religious, philosophical and cultural perspectives. Offer basic, intermediate and advanced course options that expose those who wish to explore other faiths and concepts in one common public school structure. Create understanding, and challenge old and new societal issues in a setting where all can learn more about the world around us.

This is not about growing exclusive groups of Muslims, Jews, Roman Catholics, or any other group. Why not provide all students the opportunity to learn of these, along with Shamanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, ancient religions and whatever else an enlightened society would enjoy understanding?

One "public" school system, where diverse ideas can be explored and cultures can mix to learn to appreciate and understand one another, is far preferable to exclusion, isolation, ignorance, mistrust and separation.

The issue in this election has often come down to misinformation and fear-mongering about cultures and faiths few know anything more about than sensationalized headlines or television news captions.

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