

**Email Communication to Fox News Reporter on Monday, April 22, 2013**

*Good afternoon Mr. Starnes:*

*Having just read your article, Middle School Anti-Bullying Lesson Includes Lesbian Role Play, I feel obligated to clarify the record for your readers.*

*I am hopeful you will update your article with some of these facts.*

*These sessions were designed by the building leadership in an effort to have eighth graders treat each other with respect and to develop in our young adolescents an appreciation for personal dignity. To suggest that we would condone or promote sexual activity among teenagers is absurd. It is equally absurd to suggest that an activity, designed to have young women feel more confident saying no to unwanted advances from boys, is in some way promoting a lesbian lifestyle. It is my understanding that the role playing activity is part of a program supported by conservatives such as Laura Bush.*

*The definitions given to students, while overly granular in my opinion, were put forth to make sure that students understand that all gender identities and/or sexual orientations are protected in law in New York State as part of an effort to curb harassment, discrimination, and bullying. It is our intent to adjust this document and be less granular in future lessons.*

*Please also know that the two college students who helped facilitate these sessions were guided and supervised by the principal and guidance counselors. They were not acting without direction. And, there is no evidence to suggest that they were inappropriately interacting with the students. Reports indicate the opposite is true. I have read both their written accounts of the sessions and written feedback from students. It was all very positive.*

*We acknowledge that better communication from the building leadership is necessary for future sessions of this nature. We pride ourselves in Red Hook on working with parents to do what is in the best interest of all the students. Having attended the parent information session last week, I can speak with absolute certainty that the parents present at the meeting appreciated the District's intent and left knowing that the middle school principal will adjust for any implementation weaknesses moving into the future.*

*Again, I hope you will update your article to more accurately reflect what actually occurred.*

*Thank you.*

*Paul Finch, Superintendent of Schools*