



The Washington Flyer
August 26, 2022

“If we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion, if we and they shall live always in the fear of God and shall respect His commandments, if we and they shall maintain just moral sentiments and such conscientious convictions of duty as shall control the heart and life, we may have the highest hopes of the future fortunes of our country. Our country will go on prospering.”

Daniel Webster

Christian School Refuses to Change Biblical Policy Despite Threats

A Christian school in Florida is [standing firm](#) in the face of severe criticism after the administrator confirmed through email that the school would adhere to a biblical policy regarding sexual behavior. Grace Christian School in Valrico, Florida, sent an email to the school families over the summer, stating, “We believe that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal dignity.” The email further explained, “Therefore, one’s biological sex must be affirmed and no attempts should be made to physically change, alter, or disagree with one’s biological gender—including, but not limited to, elective sex reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary gender fluid acts of conduct (Genesis 1:26–28). Students in school will be referred to by the gender on their birth certificate and be referenced in name in the same fashion.” The email also indicated that students who engage in any immoral sexual activity could no longer remain as students at the school. School administrator Barry McKeen said he was prompted to send the email to parents in light of the current cultural climate as a reminder of the school’s continued commitment to stand strong for biblical policy. After an article was published criticizing the email and the school’s position, the school and administrator received a slew of phone calls with threats of burning down the administrator’s house and killing his family, prompting the school to hire extra security for the school. However, Mr. McKeen has remained committed to the policy. In a [video response](#) to the criticism, he pointed out that the policy is one that is common to most Christian schools which seek to adhere to biblical values. He also explained why the school would continue to follow the policy: “We’re not going to change because God’s not going to change. We are not going to be hateful, but we are not going to back away from this policy.”

Despite the criticism from the media and many in the community, Mr. McKeen has noted that the school families are very supportive of the policy. Mr. McKeen noted in an [interview](#) with Fox News Digital on Sunday, “Our parents are so supportive. Many of them came to church this morning. They go to other churches normally, but they were here this morning to support. And we’re seeing tremendous support from all over the country even though we’ve been getting a lot of hate calls and hate mail.” One such supporter from across the country sent a \$5,000 check for the school with a note encouraging the staff to “stay strong” and “keep the faith.” During the interview with Fox News Digital, Mr. McKeen explained that the commitment to this policy is because of the school’s commitment to biblical values: “If I backed down from something like this, I’m abandoning what God has said is the truth. I . . . kind of rack my brain to like, ‘How is this hard for people to understand? This is what God said.’ This is one of the many reasons we have a Christian school, and we’re not going to abandon this policy. God has spoken on these issues.”

IRS Increase in 2022 Teacher Deduction

As educators across the country anticipate the start of a new school year by restocking classroom supplies and preparing for new students, teachers should be aware that they can deduct some of those expenses from their federal income taxes. The Internal Revenue Service announced in March 2022 that public and private school teachers will be able to deduct up to \$300 in classroom expenses from their 2022 federal income taxes. Teachers have been able to deduct classroom expenses prior to this year, but the rate has stayed at \$250 since 2002. Future years will be adjusted in \$50 increments according to rates of inflation. Married couples who are both educators can deduct up to \$600 in expenses with a limit of \$300 per person. The deduction applies even to educators who do not itemize their taxes and instead claim the standard deduction, making the deduction available for most educators. Educators can claim the deduction for classroom expenses such as books, classroom supplies, computer equipment, COVID-19 prevention items (such as disinfectant, hand soap, and hand sanitizer), and professional development courses. Homeschooling supplies do not qualify for the deduction. Educators should keep good records and receipts for any purchases they intend to deduct from their taxes. More information can be found on the IRS website [here](#).

Parents Continue to Shift Away From Public Schools

As the 2022 school year begins, reports show that parents are [leaving public schools](#) for other educational options, including homeschooling, private Christian schools, and alternative options such as [microschools](#) and educational pods. This shift in education began during the pandemic as parents became dissatisfied with the handling of COVID-related issues and also more aware of the philosophies being pushed in most public schools, such as critical race theory and gender ideology. Over the last two years, New York City public schools report a loss of over 50,000 students, and the Houston Independent School District reports a loss of [over 30,000 students](#). In [other areas](#), such as Salt Lake City, UT, and Oakland, CA, and some districts in Kansas, the loss of students has led to the closure of some public schools and cuts in teaching positions. According to one survey, approximately [1.2 million students](#) have left public schools nationwide since 2019. These losses, however, have translated into a tremendous increase in the number of homeschool families and students in private Christian schools. The American of Association of Christian Schools saw an overall increase of 17% in 2021–22 student enrollment in member schools and anticipates a similar increase for 2022–23, with schools reporting that some of the biggest challenges are finding enough teachers and space for the students interested in enrolling.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America's Children](#)

[School Choice Ensures Equality of Opportunity, Empowers Families, Experts Say](#)

[Opposition to School Choice Reeks of Elitism](#)