

January 15, 2020

Dear Lexington School Board,

Thank you for your service to our community-It is a noble service. Our local schools are the backbone of a good community. Our family is a proud supporter of our local schools. We supported the new schools, and our family tree is loaded with teachers!

So it is with this background that I come to you to raise the red flag.

In 1962 the US Supreme Court ruled that public schools are not permitted to promote religion.

On three separate occasions I have had teachers introduce and instruct my two boys in religious practices in a classroom setting. Each time I addressed it directly with the teacher.

Each of these instances involved Yoga. Now I know what some of you may not see Yoga as a religious practice and merely a form of exercise. I can tell you, you will not find a Hindu agreeing with you.

Yoga is an integral part of the Hindu faith. It is one of six major aspects of the Hindu faith and practice. In any given Yoga class you will hear references to Yoga Sutra- an ancient text Holy to Hindu. This text presents Yoga as a path towards a mystical state of enlightenment, as union with the Divine...merging with God.

Gary Kraftsow, who himself trains yoga instructors says that "yoga has never been secular, always religious."

A central leader of the Hindu faith, Pattabhi Jois said "The essence of yoga is to reach oneness with God."

A prominent Hindu website said a person doing yoga reaches an enlightened state where there is a cessation of thought and an experience of blissful union. The union maybe of the individual soul (atman) with the supreme reality (Brahman) or with a specific god or goddess.

Yes, I understand people do see yoga not as a religion but just an exercise. But believing something to be true does not make it so. If that is the case, why not just have the kids do exercise...sing head shoulder knees and toes...leave the yoga out of the public school system.

In March 2017 our son was instructed by a Lexington teacher via the GoNoodle website on various yoga meditation poses which included making praying hands in front of the heart to music. This is the Anjali Mudra (pronounced UHN-juh-lee muhd-RAAH) pose. This, according to the Hindi faith is considered a sacred hand gesture meant to open the heart and unite masculine and feminine energies. (See below)

In March 2018 another one of our sons was once again instructed in Yoga by a Lexington school teacher. The videos shared how to draw energy from heaven, earth and each other. We explained our concerns with the teacher. She was not responsive to our concerns so we had to ask Superintendent Ziegelhofer to intercede. Mr. Ziegelhofer promptly responded and was very understanding of our concerns. Thank you.

And here we are in 2019...and yes, once again our son was instructed AGAIN in Yoga. In August his sixth grade class was told that they were not "too cool" to sit out. The children were instructed in the "Saluting the Sun"pose. Hindu faith reveres the sun, believing it to be the heart of our world and a creator of life itself. The pose is meant to bow and adore the sun and to bring its energy into oneself.

Clearly this is a systemic problem. While Lexington already has a policy addressing teachers and religious practices...Yoga seems to have slipped through the cracks. I urge the board to act to protect our school district from potential litigation and amend our school policy specifically addressing Yoga as a prohibited school-sponsored activity.

Respectfully,

Amie Mutti

The two videos (warm up, and open heart qi) that are mentioned in the Five Treasures DVD in class examples are found at: <https://www.nqa.org/five-treasures> In these videos come references to: cleansing your body and collecting and circulating Qi or CHI (life-giving forces of the universe)...collecting Qi from the horizon into your heart.....etc As you watch the other videos in the Five Treasures DVD not shown in class, you can see the progression into spirituality.