

Opinion: DeSantis saves Florida kids from being indoctrinated with math

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When Florida released the names Monday of the 54 math textbooks it had rejected, most for allegedly including “critical race theory” or other “prohibited topics,” I was struck by how the publishers had adjusted their titles to reflect the state’s singular interpretation of the subject matter. The books had names such as “Florida Reveal Math,” or “Florida’s B.E.S.T. Math,” or simply “Florida Math.” The titles essentially codified what Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis’s censorship program has accomplished: There is math — and then there is Florida math. On one level, we already understood that “Florida math” is not the same thing as “math”:

Problem 1: In an election, the Republican candidate gets 232 electoral votes and the Democratic candidate gets 306. Who won?

Answer: It was rigged.

Problem 2: Florida had 153 coronavirus deaths per 100,000 people over the past year while California had only 58 per 100,000. How much higher is Florida’s death rate?

Answer: I’m going to do my own research.

It’s easy to laugh at Florida’s claim that it rejected 28 math textbooks over “publishers’ attempts to indoctrinate students” with such “special topics” as CRT, “culturally responsive teaching,” “social justice” and “social emotional learning.”

But then I opened the 2020 edition of one of the banned textbooks, Cengage’s “Precalculus With Limits” — and was horrified by the “indoctrinating concepts” I saw. If this is Precalculus With Limits, I’d hate to see the kind without limits.

At a time when Floridians by law “don’t say gay,” much less “trans,” this banned book brazenly teaches about the “Transitive Property of Equality.” Not only are impressionable minds taught about the “transformation of functions,” but also they are even indoctrinated in “describing transformations” and — appallingly — “sketching transformations.”

At a time when DeSantis is trying to restore the traditional definition of marriage as between a man and a woman, “Precalculus With Limits” has endless references to “sin” and “polynomials” — even “multiplying polynomials.” On Page 318, for example, it tells children to believe that “sin x takes on its full range of values.” Valuing sin! On Page 734, incredibly, it orders children to “sketch the graph of the degenerate conic.” Disgusting.

At a time when Florida is banning the acknowledgment of gender fluidity or any identity outside male and female, this subversive textbook unabashedly tells suggestible children that such things exist as “reciprocal identities,” “cofunction identities,” “additive identity property” and even “multiplicative identity property.”

Right now, all Floridians should be fighting the radical socialists, but “Precalculus With Limits” is inviting children to find the “simplest form of a radical equation,” or even to take a perfectly normal equation and “rewrite with a radical.” Which radical? Saul Alinsky?

I am not being hyperbolic. Or even parabolic.

This terrible tome is packed with mentions of “regression” and other forms of deviancy (“define conics in terms of eccentricity,” it commands); it tries to promote forbidden teachings about sexuality in requiring young people to identify “the product of conjugate pairs.”

Some of its indoctrinating concepts are merely gross (“Gaussian elimination”), while others are downright disgusting. “The focal chord perpendicular to the axis of the parabola is called the latus rectum,” it says on Page 702. It goes on to tell Florida’s children to “find the length of the latus rectum.” I don’t even want to know how that is done.

As radical as it is filthy, “Precalculus With Limits” tries to undermine parental authority. On Page 74, it teaches children how to “write an equation for the transformation of the parent function,” even providing “plotting points” for “translating a parent function.” Had this book hit the classrooms, kids would have been graphing parents out of existence with a “double stem-and-leaf plot.”

The textbook sneaks critical race theory into the curriculum in insidious ways. It teaches children about “classifying by discriminant,” and its author appears to be obsessed with the far-left concept of addressing inequality: “solving linear inequalities” (p. 40), “how to solve a polynomial inequality” (p. 184), “solving a system of inequalities” (p. 512). The book blatantly and repeatedly commands students to “solve the inequality” even though they did not cause it and are not responsible for it.

Don’t think this is about color? Well explain this, on Page 512: “Using a different colored pencil to shade the solution of each inequality in a system will make identifying the solution of the system of inequalities easier.”

Thanks to DeSantis, Florida’s children will never have to learn about such “indoctrinating concepts.” In fact, they won’t have to learn much of anything at all.