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Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! – Portland Schools Schedule Book-Burning Party

By John A. Charles, Jr.

The Portland Public School board recently voted to prohibit textbooks or classroom materials questioning the mainstream thinking about climate change.

The decision has sparked an outpouring of commentary, with many writers supportive of the School Board.

However, the wording of the Board resolution should greatly concern parents of Portland public school students. [Resolution No. 5272](#) is two pages long, but the most chilling part is the final sentence:

“[Portland Public Schools] will abandon the use of any adopted text material that is found to express doubt about the severity of the climate crisis or its root in human activities.”

The primary purpose of education is to teach students how to be critical thinkers. Now that the School Board has declared that expressions of doubt about complex scientific topics will be banned, what is the point of going to school?

Regardless of the subject we should encourage students to be skeptical. The more questioning, the better. They will be poorly prepared for adult living if they spend their childhood years being spoon-fed in schools where skepticism is prohibited.

Public education already faces a growing challenge from private schools, online learning, and home-based education. If Resolution 5272 is upheld, Portland Public Schools will give parents one more reason to leave.

John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.