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“Freak Dancing” — When Parents Advocate Misbehavior

Wednesday, November 21, 2007



The Wall Street Journal is out with one of those eye-opening stories that defies common moral sense. It seems that Jason Ceyanes, the 35-year-old superintendent of schools in Argyle, Texas, decided to crack down on sexually-suggestive dancing at the local high school. But, when the superintendent banned “freak dancing,” he got into trouble with some of Argyle’s parents.

Here is how *The Wall Street Journal* introduced its account of the controversy:

A new resolve by school officials in this booming Dallas suburb to crack down on sexually suggestive dancing — and skimpy clothing — has sparked a rancorous debate over what boundaries should be set for teenagers’ self-expression. Argyle joins a long list of other schools around the country that have banned the hip-hop inspired dancing known as “grinding” or “freak dancing.”

But in Argyle, a once-sleepy farming community strained by explosive growth from an influx of well-to-do suburbanites, the controversy has gotten vicious. Some parents blame the newly installed school superintendent, Jason Ceyanes, 35, for ruining their children’s October homecoming dance by enforcing a strict dress code and making provocative dancing off-limits. Disgusted, a lot of kids left, and the dance ended early.

Mr. Ceyanes says he fears current cleavage-baring dress styles combined with sexually charged dancing could lead to an unsafe environment for students.

“This is not just shaking your booty,” he said. “This is pelvis-to-pelvis physical contact in the private areas...and then moving around.”

“Freak dancing” is well known throughout the nation, and it involves what can only be described as “sexually charged” physical contact and movement. But many of the kids in Argyle were “disgusted” that freak dancing was banned at the homecoming dance, so they left. That might be fairly easy to understand. After all, adolescents are expected to exhibit adolescent patterns of misbehavior. What makes this story so interesting is that so many parents responded by joining their adolescents in immature response. In fact, their protest of the superintendent’s policy is shocking.

As the paper explained, “Many parents support Mr. Ceyanes’s actions. But another vocal faction has been harshly critical of the new superintendent, creating a deep rift in the community. These parents defend the children of Argyle as ‘good kids,’ and say they should be trusted to dance and dress the way they want.”

Here is one of the moral hallmarks of our confused age. Parents defy authority and propriety and justify the misbehavior of their own children while calling them “good kids.” In this case, they argue that these “good kids” should be allowed “to dance and dress the way they want” — even if that means sexually suggestive dress and sexually charged dancing.

Mr. Ceyanes held a public meeting for parents and played a video of freak dancing. “I cannot imagine that there is a father in this room who could watch this video and be all right with a young man dancing with his daughter in that fashion,” he told the parents.

This is further evidence of a trend long in coming. Fashion styles for adult women now mimic those of adolescent girls. Why? So many moms want to act like teenagers and dress as provocatively as their offspring. Far too many parents want to act like their teenagers' friends and peers, not like parents. Parents, after all, are expected to act like adults, and this is a society that depreciates adulthood and valorizes adolescence.

When a story like this makes the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*, something significant has shifted on the moral landscape. When parents demand that their "good kids" be allowed to freak dance at school events, the real story shifts from the kids to the parents.

The Wall Street Journal also features this [video coverage](#) of the story [[go here](#)]. We discussed this issue on Tuesday's edition of *The Albert Mohler Program* [[listen here](#)].

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