

Charter School Walks Church, State Line Classical Academy plans to teach conservative worldview, Bible

by [Nathaniel Hoffman](#)

Isaac Moffett, founder and operations director at the Nampa Classical Academy, a publicly funded charter school that opens in the fall, did not like school. While studying education at several colleges, including the College of Southern Idaho and Boise State, Moffett revolted against the major educational philosophies of the day.

"While there, I did not agree, or believe, what was being taught to me as an education student," Moffett said. "I did not agree with it, first as a parent, second as a human being."

Moffett bemoaned the works of secular progressives and atheists like John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and Howard Gardner that are taught at teacher colleges.

So he moved to Nampa and started a [public charter school](#) to fit his worldview.

"We're not a liberal school, we're not ... liberal may be too strong of a word, we are a conservative school, and I think people confuse that with religious," Moffett said.

Nampa Classical will teach Latin and Western classics, including the Bible. The school will not teach "certain sex ed," will eschew anti-American rhetoric and troop bashing and will impart the "good of America, the good of Western civilization," Moffett said.

Teachers will also discuss where America has failed to live up to its principles, he allowed, without being "presentist," or judging earlier epochs with modern values.

"In its proper context, the kids will learn about Native Americans," said Moffett, who will teach American history and geography. "If we're talking about westward expansion ... you can't understand why they were conquered so easily without understanding their culture."

Christopher Columbus will not be judged for introducing disease to the New World.

"In reality, he didn't do anything, it was a natural consequence of biology," Moffett said.

The academy borrows much of its curriculum from Hillsdale Academy, a private Christian prep school in Michigan, which is located on the campus of Hillsdale College, home of the William F. Buckley Jr. archives. But Moffett is modifying the curriculum to make it appropriate for public schools.

"Some of the books are too devotional, if you will, so we're not going to use that particular one," Moffett said of Hillsdale's reading list.

Moffett recommends that teachers and parents read the book *Classical Education: The Movement Sweeping America* published by Capital Research Center, a conservative think tank.

The book was written by Gene Edward Veith, provost at Patrick Henry College and author of some 20 books on engaging society with Christianity, and Andrew Kern, who once worked at Boise's Foundations Academy Christian School and now runs the Circe Institute, a Christian classical education consultancy based in North Carolina.

Kern was back in Boise last month to train the Nampa Classical Academy staff. It was the first public school that Circe, which identifies itself as a ministry, has been involved with.

According to Moffett, the Christian classical school movement started in the 1980s in Moscow, Idaho, with the Christ Church-affiliated Logos School. The Association of Classical and Christian Schools is also located in Moscow and Moffett has met with that group, but Nampa Classical is not a member.

Moffett said his school is not of the Christian classical variety, but a hybrid of the moral and democratic schools of classical education.

"There's just things we can't do because of being a public school," Moffett said. "Let's put it this way: you can still get a spanking at that school [Logos], which I'm not opposed to one iota. They are Christ-centered. We take a little different approach to that. Our version and their version is almost incompatible because of the God issue."



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I think the Boise Weekly should investigate deeper into the NCA founder, Isaac Moffett, and the intentions of this charter school. The Logos school, which the NCA founder bases his educational ideas on, was named by the Southern Poverty Law Center in a 1994 article on its founder, Doug Wilson, and others involved in a radical neo-Confederate movement. Is the NCA bringing this type of "education" to Nampa?

report

1 like, 0 dislikes  like  dislikePosted by [BlueinIdaho](#) on 07/09/2009 at 4:03 PM

To: blueinidaho

Tell me what you think the intention of NCA is. Are you afraid of an education that focuses on the family values that have contributed to the greatness of this country in the past? I believe the intentions are to give the citizens of Nampa an alternative to the liberal philosophical education that is sucking our kids into a way of life that will ultimately destroy them. Open your eyes and look around you to see the results.

report

 like  dislikePosted by [JH](#) on 07/09/2009 at 10:57 PM

Geez, don't go all jingoistic on me, I have legitimate concerns because a relative is enrolled. The founder's background indicates that he has fringe ideas regarding other races and the history of the United States. So, before you start beating me with the flag and Limbaugh talking points, do some homework. This school should not be financed by public funds and these founders have no idea what they are doing. It is the kids that will suffer, including my relative.

report

1 like, 0 dislikes  like  dislikePosted by [BlueinIdaho](#) on 07/10/2009 at 9:28 AM

To be fair, the public school movement in general was founded on some questionable principles. Horace Mann, the "father of American education," said that the purpose of schools was social engineering and bringing children across the nation into a single sociopolitical world view. If there are questionable ties with the new charter school, then they should be investigated. But please do not pretend that the glorious government schools are free of bias, that they are not attempting to turn each generation into a malleable crowd of followers, easily susceptible to platitudes like "Hope" and "Change." And we, the taxpayers, pay an exorbitant price for that product, regardless of whether we will ever use it.

I imagine that the only ones who would raise concerns about a school that desires to teach Latin and hold children to a standard long abandoned by the government school movement, contributing to its subsequent decline, are those who fear that children will begin to be "indoctrinated" by a philosophy other than the usual liberal fare.

report

 like  dislikePosted by [Publius772000](#) on 07/13/2009 at 8:20 AM

At an early meeting of NCA organizers and parents, conducted by Moffett, one parent asked whether the theory of evolution would be taught in science class. The speaker responded with scorn, indicating that the idea that "humans evolved from monkeys" would not be taught in this school.

I wonder how familiar NCA founders are with the case of Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District. While it's clear that they have received some legal counsel in this area, and it's admittedly difficult to know how the espoused anti-evolutionary views will ultimately play out in NCA's science classes, if the goal is to re-attempt an introduction of intelligent design in place of science, there is some fairly clear legal precedent to suggest that this might be an error.

<http://www.pbs.org/wqbh/nova/id/judg-nf.ht...>

The concerns of citizens and parents on many sides of these and other related issues have already been heard somewhat in local media. It seems almost certain that more controversy looms over NCA, especially if its leadership has hidden motives to use public funds to promote what may be revealed to be not only socially conservative but religious views. The former is acceptable, even if some might find it disagreeable. The latter could possibly fall on the wrong side of public law.

report

 like  dislikePosted by [hopinforthebest](#) on 07/13/2009 at 9:18 AM

I truly hope that any student of this school goes on to a Christian college or avoids any science major in public colleges. Any science professor will scoff at the idea of creationism. Even at Boise State University, evolution is taught in every single biology class, and at least mentioned in chemistry classes. Every graduate of NCA is going to be severely behind in the science fields if their teachers don't learn about evolution, much less teach their students properly.

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 like  dislikePosted by [BSUstudent](#) on 07/19/2009 at 3:12 AM

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 like  dislikePosted by [BSUstudent](#) on 07/19/2009 at 3:16 AM

I spoke with Mr. Moffett just last week regarding the issue of evolution. As a Bible-believing parent of a Christian-schooled student, I was concerned about possible 'brow-beating' regarding the issue of creation vs. evolution.

Mr. Moffett very clearly stated that NCA is a public school, therefore, will be teaching 'modern science' i.e. evolution. Keeping with the school's principle of learning however, the children are also taught how to clarify and successfully debate their beliefs, regardless of secular or religious content.

As taxpayers, we all have the right to question this school's intentions. If NCA is found to be using public funds fraudulently, then they will be found out, however, I'm very excited for our kids to have an opportunity to learn the old fashioned way. I am hopeful that the public will be put at ease as NCA proves the legality of what they're teaching, and the honesty of their intentions towards our students and the taxpaying public.

report

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Posted by della on 07/28/2009 at 12:09 PM



I think they should have to prove that the Bible includes and historic accuracy before it can be used as a tool for teaching history. Teaching mythology as history is a bad idea. What's next? Alchemy and astrology instead of science and astronomy?

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Posted by jeff on 07/30/2009 at 11:48 AM

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