



## EDUCATION

# Italian City Invites Florida Students, Parents to Visit 'David' Statue

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What does a small school in the American state of Florida have to do with the famous Italian statue of David in Florence, Italy?

Well, the mayor of Florence and the museum where David is housed recently invited parents, students and the former **principal** of the school to visit.

The invitation came after some parents were **upset** when their sixth-**grade** children at Tallahassee Classical School saw a photo of the statue during an art class. Sixth graders are 11 or 12 years old.

Renaissance artist Michelangelo completed the 5-meter-tall statue of David in 1504. The famous work shows the Bible story of David getting ready to fight Goliath. David is represented without clothing and armed with a **sling** over his shoulder and a rock in his hand.

Two Florida parents said, under school policy, they should have been warned that their children were going to see the image of David's statue without clothing. A third parent called the statue pornographic – or overly sexual.

The principal of Tallahassee Classical school in Florida said she was asked to leave her job as a result. But school leaders claimed it was one of several reasons for her removal. The private school follows a program of studies designed by a conservative Christian college.

Cecilie Hollberg is the director of the Italian museum in Florence. She told the Associated Press, "To think that David could be pornographic means truly not understanding the contents of the Bible, not understanding Western culture and not understanding Renaissance art."

## Visitors coming to see David

The statue of David is the main reason thousands of people visit the museum, called Galleria dell'Accademia, every day. Following the **controversy**, visitors, including many Americans, arrived in large numbers this week to see the statue.

Isabele Joles was there with a school group from the U.S. state of Ohio. She studies French and Italian art. "It's part of history," she said. "I don't understand how you can say it's 'porn.'"

Brian Stapley is from Seattle, Washington. He said he was sad for the school's children. He called the statue "one of the most **incredible** parts of our history," and said he feels "sorry for the children that don't get to see it."

Back in Florida, the local newspaper in Tallahassee reported a large crowd came out to a school **board** meeting on Monday night. Some parents disagreed with the decision of the school leaders to remove the **principal**. And the board chairman rejected a request from a teacher to resign.

I'm Dan Friedell.

*Dan Friedell adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on a report by the Associated Press.*

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## Words in This Story

**former** *-adj.* a person who does not hold a position or title anymore

**principal** *-n.* the leader of a school

**upset** *-adj.* the feeling of being hurt or angry

**grade** *-n.* a year in school

**sling** *-n.* a small weapon made from animal skin used to throw a rock

**principal** *-n.* the leader of a school

**controversy** *-n.* something that has many people concerned or upset

**incredible** *-adj.* something hard to believe

**board** *-n.* a leadership or advisory group for a school, university or business

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*We want to hear from you. Would you permit your children to see David in person or in a class?*

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