

November 18, 2019

Dear Dr. Gazda,

The teacher's at Paul R. Baird Middle School have signed this letter to formally address the ongoing situation with the library and its inappropriate materials. Over the past eight years, there have been a number of complaints about books and the promotion of sexual behavior and promiscuity to our students. It has been acknowledged by the teachers, the unprofessional treatment received when trying to use the library for projects and they are uncomfortable bringing their students there. Several colleagues, when mentioning the unacceptable behavior and materials from the librarian on behalf of the students, have been met with challenge by the principal with nefarious motives. This is in complete juxtaposition that is expected of the principal.

Back in September, four teachers had incidences with books provided by the library to their "classroom libraries." They were told that the books were for students to take during "DIRT" reading time. The first book reported to the principal involved a scene in which a boy referred to his virgin girlfriend that will not have sex with him but she "gives a really good blow-job." There was no follow up on this book with the teacher.

The second book was reported by a parent. The teacher, who was accused of giving "pornographic materials" to her child (See Exhibit A). The teacher was told by the student that "everything was all set and they didn't have to talk about it." There was no follow up by the principal about how her reputation with the parent was restored.

The third book was reported by a teacher during "DIRT" reading. This student was being redirected several times to read his book when he finally yelled out that "I can't, it's inappropriate." The teacher took the book and look at the content. There were comments about "Nazi's, blacks, and blow-jobs" as described by the teacher. The teacher was very upset and concerned that this had happened in his classroom. The principal came to his room and took the entire bucket of books.

The same student from previous day came late to class from the library with the forth book involved. He check a book out from the library called, Sex is a Funny Word. This was questioned by the paraprofessional, however he was told by the librarian he could read it. The paraprofessional questioned the book because of the title and content. The boy was heard talking and showing pictures to other students. He was telling another boy that "they shave it". During "DIRT" reading in another teacher's class, he was reading that book. He began to put his hand up his shirt and rub his nipples. He proceeded to place his hand over his pants on his genitals. Both teachers in the room noticed and after the bell rang for the end of "DIRT", she went over and took the book from him. This book was read by the teacher in its entirety and she was very distraught over the content and the behavior displayed. This book was also reported and was met with confrontation by the principal. The principal has refused to discuss these materials with the staff involved or the problem in general.

Since then, more books have been reported by parents and staff with explicit sexual content and behaviors. It has been noted that there was a series of books removed with graphic sexual content (see Exhibit B). Another was titled Sold, that was about child sex slavery. In this, the main character is raped violently over and over. Included in the reported books are Crank(drugs and alcohol), Speak (rape), and most recently, Perfect Chemistry (explicit sexual content) (Exhibit E).

The teacher who reported "Sex Is A Funny Word" also reported another book several weeks later that was left on a student desk (11/4/19). In this, there is promotion of underage drinking, sneaking out of the house, sexual promiscuity/multiple partners and mature language.(see Exhibit C) This book was reported to Superintendent, Todd Gadza and he shared concern.

Students have reported the following to teachers:

- There is a "special" bookshelf in the library where you need to be "invited" to check out the books.
- "I am reading this book that I thought was a mystery, but it felt weird when the two boys were kissing, I didn't understand that."
- "There was a book I wanted to read and when I pulled it off the shelf, the first page had so many swears so I put it back."

On September 9, 2014, a visual display (Exhibit D) inside of the front door as you walk into the library had graphic language. This was reported by the teachers and it was taken down the following day (Open House was that night). The librarian claimed that she didn't read them, just put them up.

These book selections are concerning because we continue to have serious behavior issues with our students, and a serious substance abuse problem with them and the community. As professionals in the school district, we are responsible and tasked with protecting the well being of the children. This materials violates this charge and provisions set forth by the School Committee and request a resolution.

The situation has not improved and we continue to see and read materials from the Baird Library that violate the policy involving ideologies and profanity/obscenity. We are frustrated and disappointed with the lack of resolution and the continuance of the problem over many years despite teachers reporting individual books, posters, and behavior in the library. These materials continue to be checked out and personally recommended to "certain students". We all share these concerns for the known psychological and mental damage that these sexually explicit and pornographic materials can cause students at the middle school developmental level which ages range from eleven to thirteen.

We need to address the materials being provided, as it is an egregious negligence on the part of our librarian to encourage the vary behaviors we are trying to discourage and guide away from. The programed statement to the student "This contains mature content, if you fell uncomfortable reading it you can return it." is of no value at this point because the mental damage has already been done without the parents knowledge or consent. These students are minors and we are there to protect them from sexual exploitation.

Sincerely,

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