

HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER REJECTS PARENTAL OVERSIGHT



A recent Editorial from the Kirkwood High School Student Newspaper (The Kirkwood Call)¹ **claims that parents do not have the right to complain about books in the School Library.**

“Call Ed: Mom and Dad Don’t Know What’s Best”

<https://www.thekirkwoodcall.com/opinion/staff-editorials/2022/03/29/call-ed-mom-and-dad-dont-know-whats-best/>

This article has concerned parents for several reasons:

First: It “calls out” parents. . .

“American parents, we urge you to let librarians do their jobs, they are paid experts, so they know a thing or two about literature for students.”

“If we let parents start to ban and regulate books at our schools, where would it end?”

The students apparently don’t realize that school Librarians don’t generally read books before putting them on library shelves. There are too many titles. Still, parents have a right to expect that their children’s schools are safe and that they will not have access to school materials that may cause harm. Harm is possible, according to academic studies.

According to Lin, Liu, and Yi (2020),² “many studies have documented that early exposure to sexually explicit materials may have various negative impacts on the development of risky sexual behavior.” Concerned parents are trying to get sexually explicit books out of schools because they want to protect their children from being exposed to this inappropriate material.

Second: The article suggests that “they” know what’s best for your children with regards to their sexual development and preparing for the “real world” . . .

“Exposing students to sensitive topics prepares them for the real world, and many ‘graphic’ books contain the realities teenagers face. While reading about sex may make you feel uncomfortable, this feeling is a normal part of life, and students need to learn early on how to embrace it instead of avoiding it.”

The students apparently don’t realize parents aren’t concerned if the word sex is mentioned. Instead, the concern is graphic, detailed descriptions or images of sex acts.

At a recent KSD school board meeting, the Board of Education President; clarified the issues when she said, **“This is about content in books, that if a staff member reads it out loud to students it would be a violation of multiple policies . . . We can represent all students without sexualizing them.”**³

A Missouri Law later forced school districts to remove books that contain sexually explicit images.⁴

Parents want age-appropriate material in K-12 Schools, sexually explicit books are not appropriate for minors, and this has been upheld by a Missouri Law.

(Missouri Statute 573.550, Aug 28, 2022)

Third: The Kirkwood Call article appears to show that school staff are fostering an environment that encourages students to call parents “extremists” and book banners if they want to keep sexually explicit materials out of K-12 schools (see article).

The right of parents to protect their families is in the core of our Constitution. It recognizes the individual’s right to protect their domain and their family.

Even the United States Supreme Court has weighed in. Since teachers and administrators are the ultimate decision makers of what is published or what is not published in the student newspaper, they are ultimately responsible. (Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier)⁵

<https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-hazelwood-v-kuhlmeier>

If you are concerned about your children having access to sexualized materials through their schools, please make your concerns known to your school Principal and School Board. Insist on accountability. Our children are worth it!

Sources

¹TKC Staff, ‘Mom and Dad don’t know what’s best’: *Kirkwood Call*, <https://www.thekirkwoodcall.com/opinions-2/>

²Lin, W.H., Liu, C.H., & Yi, C.C. (2020). Exposure to sexually explicit media in early adolescence is related to risky sexual behavior in emerging adulthood. *PLoS One*, 15(4). <https://doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0230242>.

³Wilkinson, M. (Sept 30-Oct 6, 2020). ‘Kirkwood, Webster School Districts remove books from library’: *Kirkwood-Webster Times*, https://www.timesnewspapers.com/webster-kirkwoodtimes/kirkwood-webster-school-districts-remove-books-from-library-shelves/article_a774e008-3ff9-11ed-8f98-57e40900e28f.html#:~:text=The%20Kirkwood%20School%20District%20has,the%20removal%20of%20the%20books

⁴Missouri Law, (Aug 28, 2022), Banning Explicit sexual materials in schools. <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=573.550&bid=51068&hl=>

⁵The United States Courts, Facts and Case Summary—Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, (Jan, 1988), <https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-hazelwood-v-kuhlmeier>.