From: Zapatka Jeni - TLC on behalf of Zapatka Jeni - TLC <JENIZ@ckschools.org>
To: Beckon Jeanne - JW; Prince Erin - JW
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Cougar Valley Poster -- A 2007 CKHS Grad Note
Date: Friday, September 24, 2021 12:45:20 PM

From: Maggie Rich <maggie.r.rich@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2021 12:14 PM
To: Zapatka Jeni - TLC <JENIZ@ckschools.org>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Cougar Valley Poster -- A 2007 CKHS Grad Note

Hi Jeni,

My primary concern, as I shared in my email, is that your district leaders believe this poster to be unfit for a K-5 classroom. Are you willing to share with me why, specifically, this poster is deemed age inappropriate? Transparency and explanation is critical during this kind of decision making, and while you repeat that the decision is because it is not age appropriate I do not see an explanation for why district leaders, specifically, think the poster is age inappropriate. What metrics were used to evaluate this poster? What aspects of the poster, specifically, were found to be age inappropriate? What language on the poster is age inappropriate and why?

I am aware that KSSN communicated with CKSD about their poster -- as a board member of QYR, we connected with KSSN about this decision. KSSN is a loose network of advocates, and not all KSSN members share the same understanding of the posters and their age appropriateness. When communicating with QYR about this issue, **Arlis Stewart told QYR that "KSSN does not designate the age appropriateness of posters."** In your email to me it sounds like CKSD is treating KSSN's communication as policy designation. This surprises me.

I remain deeply disappointed by CKSD's choice to stand by a decision that very clearly sexualizes LGBTQ+ students and people, deeming reference to their relationships and to love of all kinds something that doesn't, as you said, *"belong"* in an elementary school classroom. This is an ideological belief, and the decision unfortunately communicates that CKSD shares that ideological belief. I am even more disappointed that CKSD hasn't shared why, specifically, this poster was evaluated to be age inappropriate, nor how that decision was reached.

I understand that you are likely replying to a large volume of communication and that I shouldn't expect a personalized reply. I do look forward to participating in conversations with CKSD as a board member of QYR in the coming weeks.

M. Rich

On Fri, Sep 24, 2021 at 11:13 AM Zapatka Jeni - TLC <JENIZ@ckschools.org> wrote:

> Ms Rich,
> Thank you for your email around the poster in an elementary classroom and your beliefs

experiences as a former CK student. We also want children feeling accepted and aware that our families come in a variety of forms. This poster was not removed because it was deemed "political", it was removed because the district leaders do not believe that, this particular poster belongs in a K-5 classroom. CKSD believes that all students need to know that school is a safe place where they feel comfortable, valued and welcome. We believe that schools need to provide age appropriate materials related to the topic of sexual orientation and gender identity.

We have partnered with Kitsap Safe Schools Networks for many years with a common desire to support students who are part of the LGBTQ community. There are many Safe School posters which provide a staff, and students with a "we support you" message. District leaders believe the poster "Love Has No Gender" is not age appropriate for K-5 students. When the concern for this specific poster first came up, I reached out to Kitsap Safe Schools, the creators of the posters. The response was that when the poster was put into distribution it was intended for secondary students.

CKSD stands behind the decision to remove the "Love Has No Gender" poster. The District has underlying authority and wide discretion to control the décor in its classrooms. When considering whether to allow or remove a given poster, there could be any number of relevant and potentially interrelated factors to consider. These might include, for example, the educational value of the poster; its potential to contribute to positive relationships or morale; appropriateness for the setting and audience; the potential for disruption to the learning process; and whether superior alternatives are available. In this case, we believe Kitsap Safe Schools has provided a variety of alternative posters which are age appropriate. These alternatives will meet the above criteria for promoting an inclusive and safe environment for all of our students. The alternative posters from Kitsap Safe Schools will also comply with our district Equity policy to ensure a welcoming and safe environment.

If you would like to discuss this further, please give me a call.

Jeni Zapatka
Director of Equity 2021-2022
Central Kitsap School District
360-662-1712
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From: Maggie Rich <maggie.r.rich@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2021 12:32 PM
To: Prince Erin - JW <ErinP@ckschools.org>
Cc: Zapatka Jeni - TLC <JENIZ@ckschools.org>; Galbreath Monday - CV <MondayG@ckschools.org>; Bruce Richards - Director 1 <Director1@ckschools.org>; Robert MacDermid - Director 2 <Director2@ckschools.org>; Drayton Jackson - Director 3 <Director3@ckschools.org>; Jeanie Schulze - Director 4 <Director4@ckschools.org>; Eric Greene - Director 5 <Director5@ckschools.org>

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Superintendent Prince and CKSD Board Members,

My name is Maggie (M.) Rich, and I'm a 2007 graduate of Central Kitsap High School. My dad graduated from Central Kitsap High School--my family has a deep connection to the district and the lands it serves. I am also a board member of Q Youth Resources, an LGBTQ+ youth and family serving organization in Kitsap County. Today, I am writing to you as an individual.

I am deeply saddened to learn of the District's choice to instruct Cougar Valley's music teacher to remove the "Love Has No Gender" poster he had up in his classroom. I am even more saddened to learn that your primary concern is that the poster is "age inappropriate."

The poster in question? It has generic figures representing gay and straight relationships, and the words "homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, transgender --- we are all equal." What about this, specifically, is age inappropriate? **Being gay, being transgender, is not inherently sexual**. When you say that words describing identity, and gay relationships, are "age inappropriate," you are sending the message that you believe LGBTQ+ people and relationships are inherently sexualized, "adult," and inappropriate for children. <u>This is an ideological belief most often based in specific religious practice, not a secular fact.</u> Does this mean that you believe out gay teachers who have photographs of their spouses and partners are inappropriate for children? What about children who have parents who are gay? Lesbian? Transgender? Are they to learn *from their school* that their parent's identities are inappropriate for their age and only discussed when they are older? Being gay isn't inherently sexual just as being straight isn't inherently sexual -- they are identities. What of young LGBTQ+ teachers seeking jobs in your district? Are they to learn that your district finds any mention of their identities to be inappropriate for children? **Though likely not your intention, *your* decision sexualizes your LGBTQ+ students and staff of all ages.**

As a gay adult, I look back on my time at CKJH and CKHS with a mixture of fondness and also struggle. Though not too many years ago, school climates were strikingly different when I was in your schools. I was too afraid to be out, to be myself. There were no teachers like me, and there were no teachers with any visuals in support of LGBTQ+ people and families. Being gay was highly politicized, most often commented on from a place of secrecy or condemnation, or debated as an identity worthy of civil right. I grew up watching my identity, my future marriage, be sexualized, demonized. My rights to an equal society and protection under the law debated. "Gay" was a pejorative, and no teachers regularly intervened to interrupt bullying about perceived sexual orientation. The news was swirling with debate about my identity and my school was silent on simple matters of equality and inclusion. I didn't learn about LGBTQ+ people in school, I didn't learn about our fight for civil rights. The biggest touchstone for LGTBQ+ identity was briefly learning about the AIDS crisis, most often in the context of learning about STDs. I feel this decision is a time warp--reflecting the time I grew up in, in which I'd be unsurprised to find out a poster like that was removed from a 2005 classroom.

If I had seen a poster like that in a classroom as a student of any age, I'd have felt the

profound relief I didn't find until I was much older. A teacher would have been recognizing the need for specifically making LGBTQ+ students and their families feel seen and understood as ***normal, okay, and not inappropriate***. Your decision reflects a very particular religious ideology. One that deems LGBTQ+ people as oppositional to family values and inappropriate and dangerous for children. I'm deeply saddened that this is also CKSD's official value and urge you to reconsider your harmful stance. I look forward to the time I get to enroll my future children in your school district, but this policy gives me profound pause about their future safety in your the school climate you are creating with this choice.

I'm hopeful you are *really listening* to the testimony you are receiving, and reflecting deeply on your own bias and assumption about LGBTQ+ people and their lives.

Please let me know if you'd like to talk more about my thoughts. I'm more than happy to connect.

All my best,
Maggie Rich