



Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Fwd: Book complaint reference HS library

17 messages

Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>

Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 11:02 AM

To: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Cc: Garry Scott <gscott@ewsd.org>

Beth,

Below is an email received today from Ron Hoague regarding a complaint against Essex High School Library for a book in circulation. I wanted to bring the issue to your attention. We don't have much more than this at the moment. As we learn more we'll bring everything to your attention.

Thanks.

Brian

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ron Hoague** <rhoague@essex.org>

Date: Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 10:44 AM

Subject: Book complaint reference HS library

To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>

Cc: Garry Scott <gscott@ewsd.org>

Good morning. Just making you aware of a complaint that was emailed to me last night. The person has asked that I keep their name anonymous as you can see below so I have redacted parts to protect them for now. I've attached the material that they provided. I am going to forward their email to the Chittenden State's Attorney to get an opinion as to whether this meets the statute and the likelihood of prosecution. I can let you know what that opinion is after I receive it. Let me know if you have any questions.

Hello Chief,

I am contacting to report a complaint against Essex High School for making obscene, pornographic material available to minors in its library. In particular, the book Gender Queer. I am attaching word doc containing the images and text within the book from the Essex High School Library shelf. Can you investigate?

I believe these images and its verbal content violate Vermont's Obscenity laws.

I prefer my name to remain anonymous because I do not want myself or my child targeted for reporting this. But this is not okay and is against Vermont laws. So if they think it's acceptable to break the Vermont laws linked below, what others do they break? They are being negligent in their duty of care of minors they are supposed to be educating.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/13/063/02802a><https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/13/063/02804b>



Ron Hoague | Chief of Police
ESSEX POLICE DEPARTMENT
145 Maple Street | Essex Jct., VT 05452
Ph. 802-857-0093

NOTICE: This e-mail is covered by the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. Sec. 2510-2521, is confidential and is legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, including any and all administrative governmental staff, you are hereby notified that any viewing, retention, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. Please reply to the sender that you have received this message in error, then delete or destroy it.

--

Brian Donahue

Chief Operating Officer
ESSEX WESTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
51 Park Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
(office) 802.857.7040
(cell phone) 802.324.5675



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.



Gender Queer Porn images.pdf
20811K

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>

Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 11:44 AM

Okay, thanks. I think we should involve Erin - what are your thoughts on that?

Here is the library selection procedure on our website of policies and procedures: <https://www.ewsd.org/Page/8397>

Beth

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Beth Cobb
Superintendent
Essex Westford School District
District Office: (802) 857-2002
Cell: (802)535-5300
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Follow me on Twitter: @ewsdsmpt



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. THIS MESSAGE MAY NOT BE FORWARDED.

The information contained in this communication, including any attachments, is confidential, constitutes privileged communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. This message may not be forwarded without prior consent from the sender. The information in this e-mail is also protected by the rights afforded under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and school district policies. Any unauthorized use, forwarding, distribution, disclosure, printing or copying is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately at 802-879-8192 or return e-mail, and delete any copies of this message immediately. Any inadvertent disclosure of this communication shall not compromise the confidential nature of the communication.

Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>
To: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 11:46 AM

Yes, Erin and Brendan I think should be looped in and maybe share the policy and procedure with them. I think we can anticipate more of this coming toward the district based on what is happening nationally.

[Quoted text hidden]

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>

Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 12:52 PM

I actually didn't mean that Erin, I meant Erin Maguire.

I don't think we have a policy on this. We have this new procedure. Maybe I've overlooked the policy. We can use our equity policy.

[Quoted text hidden]

Garry Scott <gscott@ewsd.org>
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>
Cc: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 1:54 PM

I have confirmed that the SA's office is not considering this an issue and will obviously not have it investigated.

On Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 11:02 AM Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>
Cc: Garry Scott <gscott@ewsd.org>

Sun, Oct 31, 2021 at 1:56 PM

Here is a link to an article: <https://vermontdailychronicle.com/2021/10/29/controversial-gender-queer-book-in-circulation-at-essex-high-school-library/>

On Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 11:02 AM Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Beth Cobb
Superintendent
Essex Westford School District
District Office: (802) 857-2002

Cell: (802)535-5300

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Follow me on Twitter: @ewdsdapt



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. THIS MESSAGE MAY NOT BE FORWARDED.

The information contained in this communication, including any attachments, is confidential, constitutes privileged communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. This message may not be forwarded without prior consent from the sender. The information in this e-mail is also protected by the rights afforded under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and school district policies. Any unauthorized use, forwarding, distribution, disclosure, printing or copying is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately at 802-879-8192 or return e-mail, and delete any copies of this message immediately. Any inadvertent disclosure of this communication shall not compromise the confidential nature of the communication.

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>

Sun, Oct 31, 2021 at 1:58 PM

Are you okay if I share this with Don and Tamara?

Beth

On Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 11:02 AM Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Beth Cobb

Superintendent

Essex Westford School District

District Office: (802) 857-2002

Cell: (802)535-5300

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Follow me on Twitter: @ewdsdapt



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. THIS MESSAGE MAY NOT BE FORWARDED.

The information contained in this communication, including any attachments, is

confidential, constitutes privileged communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. This message may not be forwarded without prior consent from the sender. The information in this e-mail is also protected by the rights afforded under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and school district policies. Any unauthorized use, forwarding, distribution, disclosure, printing or copying is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately at 802-879-8192 or return e-mail, and delete any copies of this message immediately. Any inadvertent disclosure of this communication shall not compromise the confidential nature of the communication.

Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>
To: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 2:43 PM

Meant to touch on this during our meeting...yes, of course. I also think some type of heads up to Erin Knox would be good.

[Quoted text hidden]

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>, Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 5:29 PM

Hi Don and Tamara,
This complaint below came to Chief Hoague. It was sent to the State's Attorney and they are not going to do anything with it.

I think it would be good to have a conversation with the librarian on this. What are their thoughts. I think it may come to the board level. If it does come it would be good for me to know if the discussion is happening. Maybe it comes out of circulation until it can be resolved.

What are your thoughts?

Beth

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ron Hoague** <rhoague@essex.org>
Date: Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 10:44 AM
Subject: Book complaint reference HS library
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>
Cc: Garry Scott <gscott@ewsd.org>

Good morning. Just making you aware of a complaint that was emailed to me last night. The person has asked that I keep their name anonymous as you can see below so I have redacted parts to protect them for now. I've attached the material that they provided. I am going to forward their email to the Chittenden State's Attorney to get an opinion as to whether this meets the statute and the likelihood of prosecution. I can let you know what that opinion is after I receive it. Let me know if you have any questions.

Hello Chief,

I am contacting to report a complaint against Essex High School for making obscene, pornographic material available to minors in its library. In particular, the book Gender Queer. I am attaching word doc containing the images and text within the book from the Essex High School Library shelf. Can you investigate?

I believe these images and its verbal content violate Vermont's Obscenity laws.

I prefer my name to remain anonymous because I do not want myself or my child targeted for reporting this. But this is not okay and is against Vermont laws. So if they think it's acceptable to break the Vermont laws linked below, what others do they break? They are being negligent in their duty of care of minors they are supposed to be educating.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/13/063/02802a>

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/13/063/02804b>



Ron Hoague | Chief of Police
ESSEX POLICE DEPARTMENT
145 Maple Street | Essex Jct., VT 05452
Ph. 802-857-0093

NOTICE: This e-mail is covered by the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. Sec. 2510-2521, is confidential and is legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, including any and all administrative governmental staff, you are hereby notified that any viewing, retention, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. Please reply to the sender that you have received this message in error, then delete or destroy it.

--

Brian Donahue

Chief Operating Officer
ESSEX WESTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
51 Park Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
(office) 802.857.7040
(cell phone) 802.324.5675



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

--

Beth Cobb
Superintendent
Essex Westford School District
District Office: (802) 857-2002
Cell: (802)535-5300
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Follow me on Twitter: @ewdsupt



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. THIS MESSAGE MAY NOT BE FORWARDED.

The information contained in this communication, including any attachments, is confidential, constitutes privileged communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. This message may not be forwarded without prior consent from the sender. The information in this e-mail is also protected by the rights afforded under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and school district policies. Any unauthorized use, forwarding, distribution, disclosure, printing or copying is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately at 802-879-8192 or return e-mail, and delete any copies of this message immediately. Any inadvertent disclosure of this communication shall not compromise the confidential nature of the communication.



Gender Queer Porn images.pdf
20811K

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 6:21 PM

To: Erin Kennedy Knox <ekennedyknox@board.ewsd.org>, Brendan Kinney <brendan.kinney@board.ewsd.org>

Hi Erin and Brendan,

Please see the email from Chief Hoague below. I am working with the high school principals on this - we are having conversations.

It was sent to the State's Attorney's office and they are not considering this an issue and will obviously not have it investigated.

As I work with the high school, I will keep you informed. I have no idea if this will come to the board level.

Beth

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ron Hoague** <rhoague@essex.org>
Date: Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 10:44 AM
Subject: Book complaint reference HS library
To: Brian Donahue <bdonahue@ewsd.org>
Cc: Garry Scott <gscott@ewsd.org>

Good morning. Just making you aware of a complaint that was emailed to me last night. The person has asked that I keep their name anonymous as you can see below so I have redacted parts to protect them for now. I've attached the material that they provided. I am going to forward their email to the Chittenden State's Attorney to get an opinion as to whether this meets the statute and the likelihood of prosecution. I can let you know what that opinion is after I receive it. Let me know if you have any questions.

Hello Chief,

I am contacting to report a complaint against Essex High School for making obscene, pornographic material available to minors in its library. In particular, the book Gender Queer. I am attaching word doc containing the images and text within the book from the Essex High School Library shelf. Can you investigate?

I believe these images and its verbal content violate Vermont's Obscenity laws.

I prefer my name to remain anonymous because I do not want myself or my child targeted for reporting this. But this is not okay and is against Vermont laws. So if they think it's acceptable to break the Vermont laws linked below, what others do they break? They are being negligent in their duty of care of minors they are supposed to be educating.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/13/063/02802a>

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/13/063/02804b>



Ron Hoague | Chief of Police
ESSEX POLICE DEPARTMENT
145 Maple Street | Essex Jct., VT 05452
Ph. 802-857-0093

NOTICE: This e-mail is covered by the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. Sec. 2510-2521, is confidential and is legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, including any and all administrative governmental staff, you are hereby notified that any viewing, retention, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. Please reply to the sender that you have received this message in error, then delete or destroy it.

--

Brian Donahue

Chief Operating Officer
ESSEX WESTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
51 Park Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
(office) 802.857.7040
(cell phone) 802.324.5675



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

--
Beth Cobb

Superintendent

Essex Westford School District

District Office: (802) 857-2002

Cell: (802)535-5300

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Follow me on Twitter: @ewdsupt



Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow; every day, every way, every one.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. THIS MESSAGE MAY NOT BE FORWARDED.

The information contained in this communication, including any attachments, is confidential, constitutes privileged communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. This message may not be forwarded without prior consent from the sender. The information in this e-mail is also protected by the rights afforded under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and school district policies. Any unauthorized use, forwarding, distribution, disclosure, printing or copying is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately at 802-879-8192 or return e-mail, and delete any copies of this message immediately. Any inadvertent disclosure of this communication shall not compromise the confidential nature of the communication.

Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>
To: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
Cc: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 6:23 PM

Hi Beth,

I bought the book on my Kindle and read it. It's a graphic (comic book) novel that has important information for any student working out their gender identity. The majority of the novel is totally fine. The book takes the tone of answering questions young people may have. There are several pages that I wish the author hadn't included. Here are the parts of the book people have been getting upset about:

- The pages about masturbation (these are unnecessarily detailed)
- The Greek artwork on a vase showing a sex act
- The page with the "strap-on" simulating oral sex

If we remove this book, it should be replaced with 10 other books that help students explore their gender identity (and that aren't as graphic). I worry that bringing this to a board decision could harm our LGBTQIA+ youth. Also, the Vermont Law does seem pretty clear.

Tamara
[Quoted text hidden]

--

Tamara L. Parks
Principal of Teaching & Learning
[Essex High School, VT](#)
Pronouns: she, her, hers

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>
Cc: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 8:26 PM

Tamara,
This should not be a board decision and I'm pretty sure they will allow me to make the decision. I was saying that I think someone from the community will bring it to board. I can convince the board to leave it my decision.

Maybe we should replace it with other books that are not as graphic. Could you have a conversation with the librarian?

I agree it could be devastating to the LGBTQ+ population. I wondered if a conversation with the librarian, yourself and some students would be beneficial. I looked at the graphics. I can see how it would be upsetting to some. I agree with your bullets.

Beth
[Quoted text hidden]

Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 9:03 PM

To: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
Cc: Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>

Thanks Beth.

I forwarded last week the article that Liz shared with me. It's about this same book. Liz told me today that she had an email from a faculty (or staff, I'm not sure) asking about the book. She was looking for advice on how to respond.

Tamara, let me know if you need anything from me. I will let Liz know you will be connecting with her.

Don V.

Donald S. Van Nostrand
Principal of Administration
Essex High School, VT
Pronouns: he, him, his

[Quoted text hidden]

Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>
To: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>
Cc: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 9:28 PM

Hi Beth and Don,

I'm happy to talk with Liz and I can also pull together a Bias Panel. The goal of the panel could be to reduce harm with the response (adding more books, explaining why the book is being questioned and other things the panel may recommend).

I'll send a draft of a form letter Liz (or we) can use to respond to parents. Don- maybe you can proof read it and offer feedback? Liz can also forward the conversations to me.

Tamara
[Quoted text hidden]

Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>
To: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>
Cc: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 9:56 PM

Hi Don,

Here is a [draft form letter](#). I'd love your feedback on any part of the letter.

Thank you!

Tamara
[Quoted text hidden]

Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>
To: Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>
Cc: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>

Tue, Nov 2, 2021 at 9:02 AM

Thanks, Tamara. I think the bias panel would be a good place to bring this. I also appreciate the conversation that you will have with Liz.

Beth
[Quoted text hidden]

Tamara Parks <tparks@ewsd.org>
To: Beth Cobb <bcobb@ewsd.org>

Tue, Nov 2, 2021 at 10:44 AM

Cc: Donald Van Nostrand <dvannostrand@ewsd.org>

Hi Beth and Don,

I spoke with Liz Von Nagy and she will be attending the Bias Panel tomorrow. The panel will consist of members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Notes from the panel can be shared with the three of us.

Liz feels that pulling a book from circulation is a "slippery slope" and sets a precedent for other books to be pulled without procedure. The book meets the criteria outlined in the EWSD D-P3 Media Selection Procedure. Liz also showed me that the book won the [NJ Garden State Teen Book Award for grades 6-12](#). It received good reviews from Publishers Weekly and School Library Journal and is recommended for classrooms by Publishers Weekly.

I believe the issue is that the EWSD D-P3 does not address a boundary line for material that would be prohibited by [13 V.S.A. § 2802a](#) § 2802a. Disseminating indecent material to a minor outside the presence of the minor, if I am interpreting this law correctly.

There is an EWSD Request for Reconsideration Form that has to be filled out by anyone requesting a book be pulled from circulation. There is also an EWSD Freedom to Read statement. If the EWSD Request for Reconsideration Form is filled out, then a panel of librarians meet to discuss whether the book should be pulled. Should we go this route and have a panel of librarians discuss the book?

Tamara

[Quoted text hidden]