

To the Raymond School Board Members,

I would like to address with this board an assignment that was given to students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. More importantly, I would like to remind the members that these students are 12yr old children when addressing this assignment. My son alerted me to this assignment because it asked too “personal” questions and he was concerned more about getting into trouble by answering “no comment”. I asked the teacher for the assignment and she wrote me back that “, yes the questions are personal so students can start to think about their life..” After reviewing the questions, I found them quite alarming as to just how personal they were. The more I reread them, the more shocking I and other parents found them. This first led to a meeting with the principle and teacher, then a committee and finally the Superintendent who addressed them with a psychologist. And now, here we are.....

So why am I still pursuing this with the school board? I will list my concerns for you.

- 1) Mrs. Sharrow has over stepped her role as an English teacher. She is not here to have students “think about their life”.
- 2) The questions are ones that no adult would ever answer so why are we asking children to answer them? Would you answer any of these to the public during the meeting?
- 3) Mrs. Sharrow’s questions are all negatively based. Please notice how the questions are phrased with words such as “Peculiar habits, unconventional or strange behavior, anti social mannerism, vexing, troublesome, flaws, crazy ideas, intolerances, prejudices...etc”. With these 12 yr old children just trying to figure out puberty and are at the most sensitive time of their live....why are we asking them to view themselves in such a manner? This is **very dangerous**. She is not a psychologist, counselor nor life coach. SHE IS AN ENGLISH TEACHER...period. She told me that she had a psychologist’s friend review these questions when she wrote them. The fact that any teacher needs an assignment reviewed by a psychologist is a RED FLAG.
- 4) In a time where **Bullying** is so prevalent, these questions almost give others permission to point out quirks because now an adult is asking kids to recognize them and write about them. This part I find very shameful.
- 5) Mrs. Sharrow assured me that only she reads these assignments and that they are not shared with the class. Why are we assigning anything that cannot be shared with the class? Another RED FLAG. Why does she want this sort of information?
- 6) The questions go on to ask about, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, where you live and political beliefs. ALL of these are inappropriate for 12 yr old CHILDREN.

- 7) I was given a written response that this assignment was given to prepare these children for college entrance essays. I had to laugh at this stretch for an answer. College is 6 years away and no college would ever ask such questions. Please let me know which one does so I can alert the media.
- 8) I was told that the kids didn't have to answer the questions and that they were not "compelled" to answer. First of all, my son told me that she did ask the students to try and answer the questions. More importantly....of course 12 yr olds are COMPELLED by the sheer fact of their age and that they are taught to follow the direction of the adult teacher. They are too young to have the wisdom to say NO. AGAIN...these questions more than likely would not be answered by any adult. The ONLY exception would be to have this assignment in a college level psych class. This is NOT an English assignment for 12 yr old CHILDREN.
- 9) The questions listed are guided from an author named Lopate. After some research, this author is focused on challenging traditional conservative beliefs. Another RED FLAG. This is evident with question #7 about evaluating your beliefs as "flawed".
- 10) I also find this assignment a CHEAT. It is an imposter for some other agenda, but mostly, it cheats the children from their childhood. Why can't we let children enjoy the one part of their lives that is fleeting? Why can't we let kids be kids and not dump all these heavy emotionally taxing questions and ideas on them? Why can't the assignments be POSITIVE?
- 11) Finally, when I suggested that this assignment at least have a parent consent...I was told NO. WHY???????

THIS ASSIGNMENT IS INAPPROPRIATE, CROSSES BOUNDARIES, DANGEROUS AND SHAMEFUL. For the sake of all future children, please discontinue this assignment.