

I am Kevin Gagnon, residing at \_\_\_\_\_ with 2 children in SAU57.

\_\_\_\_\_ in Salem, NH,

I am appearing before you in good faith with a spirit of cooperation to discuss moral character and strategic planning.

After attending the October 26th Strategic Planning Community Forum, I was impressed with the collaboration of teachers, administrators, parents and community members. The consensus was that our schools' most important goal was to prepare our students to choose the best path for their lives, and to be the best person they could be, reaching their highest potential. There was talk about skills, professions and physical and mental health, but no mention of morals and values. It struck me how important this is. Without it, none of our good intentions and hard work and dedication matter. We don't want our students to be the best and most successful thieves, or murderers, or dictators, or criminals. We want their morals and values to be formed properly, not perverted or distorted.

The Salem community came together in the past to Save Our Schools, with bricks and mortar, keeping our students physically safe. Now is the time to Save Our Souls, with moral character, keeping our students spiritually safe.

One way to provide a good, healthy learning environment is to remove graphic, obscene, inappropriate material from our schools. The district already has many safeguards in place to protect students from exposure to obscenity. Some examples are:

- Strict disciplinary measures regarding obscenity, sexting and possession and/or distribution of pornographic material as stated in the student handbook.
- Strict hiring policies which include state and FBI criminal records check, with support from NH-RSA 650.2 regarding obscenity where the act involves a child.
- Strict technology restrictions with the 'Technology Responsible Use' student/parent contract, stating "Obscenity is illegal and not tolerated".

Where we are lacking in safeguards, is the access to obscene books and research material in our school libraries and on-line databases. The 'Library Materials Selection and Management Policy' document lists no restrictions for obscenity, and the physical books have no warning labels or obscene classification code, and typically have a book summary that portrays it as benign. Our school library webpage provides links to databases that are known to have embedded pornographic images and links to pornography sites. This is certainly cause for grave concern.

In the interest of parallelism of existing policies, I am proposing to the Board the development of a policy to review the content of all books to be offered to our students, assign all books an obscenity rating and reject all books that are deemed obscene and harmful to minors. This shall include the review and rejection of any books that are already available.

I am also proposing the board develop a policy to review the source of vendors and filters used to safeguard on-line content and prevent inadvertent exposure to all material that is deemed obscene and harmful to minors. This policy shall also require district collaboration with inside and outside information technology experts to provide control of filters so that they are static, not dynamic, assuring safety and security.

Back in September, the Woodbury Middle School offered their seventh graders, parents and teachers an opportunity to connect at Northern Essex Community College. We all learned about the inherent risks of social networking and how information discovered on-line and in person, could radically change your life, both mentally and physically.

I have taken all of this to heart and have faith that as a community we can work together to save our children.

Let's conclude this meeting with a moment of silence to reflect on how Salem & SAU57 will enhance its core values by including a moral compass and a spirit towards a lifelong love of learning.