

February 1, 2016

Dear State Senators,

I understand that you are considering SB320, relative to non-academic, and often intrusive surveys that have been taking a life of their own on in the public schools. I just finished a 2 year stint on the Rochester School Board. During that time, a few of us were trying to get a policy passed that would require an opt in rather than an opt out for these surveys. We were unable to get that passed.

The timing of SB320 is rather perfect as I have some examples of what parents are concerned about. Last Thursday, was the beginning of second semester 2015-2016 school year. My son, who is a freshman at Spaulding High started his mandatory Health class. The class/homework given on Thursday was a survey that wanted the following information.

Write about yourself. Please include the following.

- a. Physical traits: your age, gender, height, body build, physical abilities, health issues?
- b. Social traits: People with whom you live, types of friends you have, how you behave with people, are you comfortable being alone?
- c. Intellectual traits: Learn easy/hard. Favorite activities, hobbies and interests, strengths and weaknesses, favorite classes?
- d. Emotional traits: How you express emotion, common emotions for you?
- e. Spiritual traits: What motivates you, what ideals are important to you?

Talk about you educational experience. What schools have you attended, what are your favorite classes, who was your favorite teacher and why?

Is there anything a teacher should know about you that would help them teach you better?

You might assume that this teacher was just wanting to get to know his students. But this is a graded assignment, complete with a rubric that grades from Advanced to Not Yet Competent.

My guess is that my son will receive a NYC because he did not give the answers that are to be expected. He instead seemed to channel a character from Parks and Recreation, Ron Swanson. He explained in complete sentences why these questions were inappropriate and all of his pertinent school information, can be found in his school records.

Day 2: Friday was more of the same. This survey was to be completed and passed in at the end of class.

There were upwards of 60 true or false questions, I only have screenshots of 2 of the pages. Here is an example of a few.

- I only eat when I am hungry.
- I do not smoke.
- I do not get sick more than twice a year.
- I like my body.
- I would describe myself as a junk food junkie.
- I can go to a party and have a good time.

I like people.  
I am an intelligent person.  
I have a clear sense of right and wrong.

He passed this assignment in blank and without his name on it. And therefore, will get a NYC on that assignment as well.

On the school board, we spent a vast amount of time looking at statistics, and scores. Maybe, just maybe if we spent more time teaching academics, and less on non-academic surveys, our kids will be given a chance to achieve. Health class used to be about being able to identify the digestive, and nervous system. To know what our body parts are and how they work. We were taught about good hygiene and the four food groups, pyramid or whatever the latest food fad was. It wasn't meant to create a dossier on our kids.

I am asking you to pass SB320, and let the Teachers get back to teaching, and the students get back to learning.

Thank You,

Kathy Dunton  
Rochester, NH