

November 5, 2013

I am writing to clarify information you received from your administration earlier this week about the graphic novel, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. First, let me be clear – we are banning this book from our schools.

Persepolis was originally included as a selection in the Literacy Content Framework for the 10th grade. It was brought to our attention by a parent representative that it contains crass language, graphic violence, torture, sexual content, lewd humor, an instance of suicide, and other images that are not appropriate for general use in the tenth grade curriculum. Based on this information, I investigated the book for myself and found that it is a poor choice of novel for students in the Santa Maria Joint Union School District.

Not only is it inappropriate, but it also introduces the reader to many questionable philosophies and beliefs to which high schoolers simply need not be exposed. The main character, Marjane Satrapi, is not a good role model for our young, impressionable youth. Throughout the book she demonstrates her rebelliousness by going against her parents, teachers, and government. She is kicked out of several schools and residences and is jailed or detained by authorities on several occasions. She even talks about having multiple sexual partners and becoming her school's drug dealer! Lastly, her attempted suicide is the final straw that demonstrates this book's not appropriate for our 10th grade curriculum.

Furthermore, *Persepolis* is not a rigorous text that high schoolers should study, and it is closer to a comic book than a novel. If your tenth grade teachers have not yet taught this book, please ask them not to do so and to remove any copies of the book from their classrooms.

Also, please be reminded that central school library collections are governed by the New Collection Development Policy For School Libraries. We are requesting that you remove *Persepolis* from your central school library as well.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you and your staff.
Sincerely,

Johan Bennett
Chief Executive Officer, SMJUHS

P.S. Despite its shortcomings, we have determined *Persepolis* may be appropriate for students in Advance Placement classes and/or Honors classes once teachers have been trained appropriately. I have asked our Office of Teaching & Learning to develop professional development guidelines, so that teachers can be trained prior to presenting this content. Once this curricular determination has been made, we will notify you and reinstate this book for this select audience.

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