



Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>

Inappropriate content - "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe." - Parental Rights -

7 messages

Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 3, 2023 at 8:43 AM

To: Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>

Cc: "sgilmartin@kippnyc.org" <sgilmartin@kippnyc.org>, Jamie Axelrod <JAxelrod@kippnyc.org>

Bcc: Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>

Mr. Negron,

Hi. Bill Santiago here. I am writing to bring up a matter of great concern to me. Yes, another one. And so early into the year. Last year was all golden. But there are some notable chinks in the armor here in Cielo's 7th-grade year so far at Kipps Beyond Middle School.

I attended the Curriculum Night last week, and was highly impressed by the presentation and the teachers, as I expressed to you personally afterwards.

But a troubling aspect of the curriculum has come to my attention.

I was having dinner with my girls, Cielo and Valentina, and one of Cielo's classmates and her mother last Friday, after the rain and flash flood alerts.

During the dinner, Cielo's classmate blurted out that she had just finished a book in ELA that involved a highly sexualized love story between two boys, that includes an exchange about masturbation between the main characters, and a sexually charged last page where one of the boys trembles with his ardent fantasy of making love to the other boy.

The classmate added that parents would definitely not approve of the content. Cielo concurred, underscoring later to me that she did not like reading the book.

As you can imagine, this piqued my interest. I perused the book, "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe," and the associated google classroom lessons. And I was quite disturbed to discover that the girls were correct.

As a parent of a 7th grader, I do not consider such content appropriate in any way, regardless of the genders or orientations involved.

Yet, we had the curriculum discussion a month into the school year just last week. And only after the book had already been assigned and taught in the classroom.

Moreover, at the meeting there was absolutely no forthright explanation or a heads up about such controversial subject matter by the teacher.

Instead, the actual content parents should have been informed about upfront in a frank manner, was totally glossed over as if it were a benign matter of including depiction of diversity.

I think this was clearly done in a manner to keep the parents out of the discussion until it was too late, and I think that's a clear violation of parental rights.

Moreover, there are endless universally recognized great works of literature that would have been better suited for seventh graders, and provided much better examples of what great literature and great writing aspires to.

The fact that there was a simultaneous school-wide dress code discussion and controversy about whether or not leggings are revealing versus suggestive, is only the hypocrisy cherry on top, so to speak.

I am curious as to whether you yourself have read the book, and whether as a parent, you would be OK with your own children reading this book in 7th grade.

I would be surprised if you answered affirmatively and honestly to both. But the point is, that is your prerogative as a parent, at home, to decide such matters as you see fit.

It is an entirely different matter for a school, a faculty, a teacher, a school district, to circumvent parental consideration and rights over their own children. Rather than choose transparency, Kipps Beyond has kicked off the year by choosing to expose my child to a book defined by controversially inappropriate content, in a manner designed to obfuscate that very egregious fact.

Even the title of the book, "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" is misleading and had me hoping the emphasis would be on cosmological explorations and musings.

Please note, my brother is gay.

I have countless LGBTQ cousins.

In fact, I have one cousin who is currently pregnant and having the baby with her wife, inseminated by a third party. The plan is for my cousin to become impregnated by the same third party and give birth to the second child next time around.

I love and embrace them all dearly for who they are and as my family.

That does not mean that I approve of the content of the book in question for my 7th grader, again regardless of the genders or orientations involved.

Also note, I work in an industry, as a standup comedian, where inappropriate material is practically mandatory.

Yet, I wouldn't expose my girls to most of the performers in my industry either, until they were old enough to go to nightclubs.

And although I strive to work "clean" myself, some of my own material I would not want my girls exposed to till they were more mature and ready, according to my judgment as a parent.

I have enough trouble on a daily basis trying to keep my young girls from listening to, memorizing and singing Nicky Minaj lyrics. It's a daily assault on any parent trying to protect their children from such inappropriate content. Especially in NYC.

Now I have to worry about the school too?

I am highly concerned, angered by the surreptitious run around about the actual content in question by the teacher and the school, to effectively keep parents in the dark and override their rights as parents of underage children.

What other similarly inappropriate content is on that 7th grade reading list?

Parents have the right to have an opportunity to see and understand the materials being taught to their children **beforehand**, when it's clear that such content is so controversial. And to express their approval or lack thereof.

This is not about banning or burning books. Every parent has a right to deem what is fit for their own child to read at home. When it comes to school curriculum, no school should have the right to flagrantly override the judgment of parents, by not including them in the discussion of such matters as addressed throughout this email.

Parents need to be included, without a glossing over of the material facts.

I have entrusted this school with my child's best interests. That trust is broken.

The entire reading list should be reviewed and discussed openly and immediately in meetings dedicated specifically to concerns about such content with parents.

If the lesson in this book has not been completed, I think the lesson should be suspended until parents have the opportunity to express themselves on the matter.

I am not in agreement with this content for my daughter.

I am not sure yet which is the highest educational authority with which I can address my concerns.

But I would like to meet with you and Cielo's ELA teacher, Mr. G, in person to discuss the matter asap.

Thank you,

Bill Santiago, Cielo's very concerned father.

PS: I was very pleased that the original class assignment kerfuffle was addressed and Cielo was no longer separated from all her friends. I am hoping this situation, which is vastly more upsetting and urgent, can also be addressed satisfactorily.

Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
To: tarzlync@gmail.com

Tue, Oct 3, 2023 at 11:08 AM

[Quoted text hidden]

Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>
To: Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
Cc: Sean Gilmartin <SGilmartin@kippnyc.org>, Jamie Axelrod <JAxelrod@kippnyc.org>

Wed, Oct 4, 2023 at 5:40 AM

Mr. Santiago,

I know you had spoken last night with Ms. Axelrod.

Would you be available to meet afterschool on Thursday, 10/5? I'm available between 4 and 6:30PM.

Mr. Negron

From: Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 8:43 AM
To: Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>
Cc: Sean Gilmartin <SGilmartin@kippnyc.org>; Jamie Axelrod <JAxelrod@kippnyc.org>
Subject: Inappropriate content - "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe." - Parental Rights -

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER

[Quoted text hidden]

CAUTION: This email came from outside of KIPP NYC.

Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are sure that you recognize the sender and know that the content is

safe.

The original sender of this email is billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com

Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
To: Joe Negron <jnegron@kipnyc.org>

Wed, Oct 4, 2023 at 9:44 AM

Hi Mr. Negron.
I have the girls that night.
Friday 10/6 would be better for me,
but let me see if I can arrange for someone to watch the girls
Thursday.
Thank you,
Bill

[Bill Santiago](#) | Comedian | [415.748.8997](tel:415.748.8997)

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Bill Santiago @billsantiago · Aug 10

Wow. Thanks so much!

Matthew A. Everett @MatthewAEverett

#mnfringe review - The Immaculate Big Bang - 5 stars - "not just a series of related jokes from @billsantiago; it's a window into one man's heart, mind and soul; a powerful, mind-bending, hilarious hour of Fringe" - Very Highly Recommended - tinyurl.com/ya2s9jng

Currently touring my show: **"The Immaculate Big Bang."**

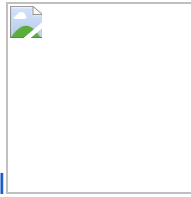
"No cosmic question is too challenging to escape the laser wit of Bill Santiago"

- DC Metro Arts. [FOUR-AND-A-HALF-STARS8.gif](#) **BEST OF THE CAPITAL FRINGE!**

Read the [Review](#)



<https://www.instagram.com/billsantiago/>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/BillSantiagoChannel>

<https://www.facebook.com/billsantiagocomedy/>

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Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>
To: Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 4, 2023 at 9:51 AM

I can also do Friday, same time.

From: Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 9:45 AM
To: Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>
Subject: Re: Inappropriate content - "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe." - Parental Rights -

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER

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Thank you,

Bill

[Bill Santiago \[billsantiagocomedy.com\]](https://www.billsantiagocomedy.com) | Comedian | 415.748.8997
[Bill Santiago on Apple Music - iTunes \[itunes.apple.com\]](https://music.apple.com/artist/bill-santiago)



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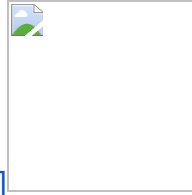
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Read the [Review](#) [dcmetrotheaterarts.com]



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Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 4, 2023 at 11:46 AM

To: Joe Negron <jnegron@kipnyc.org>

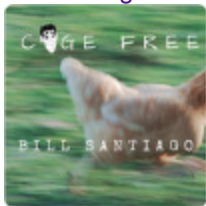
Let's do Friday 4:30 or 5. Please confirm that Mr. G will be at the meeting as well.

Thank you,

b

[Bill Santiago](#) | Comedian | [415.748.8997](tel:415.748.8997)

[Bill Santiago on Apple Music - iTunes](#)



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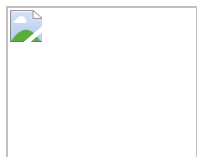
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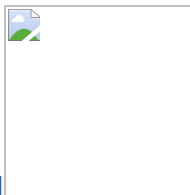
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 <https://www.youtube.com/user/BillSantiagoChannel>

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Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
To: Maria <mariadlacorral@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 4, 2023 at 1:37 PM

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

From: **Bill Santiago** <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Oct 3, 2023 at 8:43 AM
Subject: Inappropriate content - "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe." - Parental Rights -
To: Joe Negron <jnegron@kipnyc.org>
CC: sgilmartin@kipnyc.org <sgilmartin@kipnyc.org>, [Jamie Axelrod](mailto:JAxelrod@kipnyc.org) <JAxelrod@kipnyc.org>

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