



St. Joseph Public Library

The St. Joseph Public Library (SJPL) has existed since 1890 when a vote of our community created the library district. Since that time, SJPL has been governed by a Board of Trustees made up of citizens of the library district. Board members are appointed by the mayor and approved by the St. Joseph City Council.

The administrative rule 15 CSR 30-200.015, submitted by Secretary of State Ashcroft, is confusingly vague and seems politically motivated, while it purports to seek to protect minors. There are many issues with the rule but what follows are most concerning to me.

It is a parent's responsibility to decide what is appropriate for their own children to check out from the library. That has always been the case at SJPL. An issue with this rule is that a parent would be able to block a child from another family from checking out a book they deem inappropriate for their own child. Every parent has their own standards of appropriateness and we want to continue to allow parents this freedom. The policies the rule requires already exist at SJPL and are publicly available on our website.

One of the most troubling issues with this proposed administrative rule is that it is not supposed to cost a political subdivision more than \$500 to implement. SJPL is a political subdivision and, if we are required to follow this rule, it will cost much more than \$500. Section B states "No funds shall be used to purchase or acquire materials in any form that appeal to the prurient interest of any minor." To comply we would have to hire an additional library staff member whose sole purpose would be to determine if materials could be considered prurient by any child or teen. SJPL would be required to review our entire juvenile and teen collections and decide if even one child or teen could possibly take a prurient interest in any of the materials at the library. The salary alone for one such position would be at least \$40,206.00.

Public libraries exist for our entire communities. Every family who visits the St. Joseph Public Library has the right to find books and other materials that reflect their own family and values. Reject this rule so that SJPL can serve our entire community while continuing to let parents be the arbiter of what their children read.

Respectfully,
Mary Beth Revels
Director, St. Joseph Public Library