

The *Vitsaxaki v. Skaneateles Public School District* Case

Case Name: *Vitsaxaki v. Skaneateles Public School District*

Case Action: Case filed on January 31st, 2024, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York, Syracuse Division.

Significance: Whether public school districts can violate essential parental rights.



Background: Jennifer Vitsaxaki always trusted the counselors, teachers, and employees at Skaneateles Central School District to share any information about her daughter, especially if they noticed concerns in her behavior. When Jennifer noticed signs of depression and anxiety in her daughter, in addition to significant resistance to going to school, she asked school staff if they had noticed anything at school to explain her daughter's behavior. The school reassured her that nothing was happening. That reassurance, however, concealed the truth. For several months, school staff had been treating Jennifer's daughter, 12-years-old at the time, as if she were a boy, secretly socially transitioning her. They used a masculine name and the third-person plural pronouns "they" and "them" when addressing Jennifer's daughter. Acting in accordance with school policy, every teacher, counselor, and school official kept this information hidden each time Jennifer came to the school with concerns about her daughter's behavior and well-being. Eventually, one staff member could no longer conceal the information and urged the school principal to disclose the secret social transition to Jennifer. When he did, Jennifer immediately told the school to stop. She wanted time to learn more about her daughter's struggles and to get her daughter individualized help to address everything she was dealing with. But school-district policy required employees to continue treating her daughter as a boy, despite Jennifer's instructions. Because of the school district's deception, Jennifer had to withdraw her daughter from the school. Now, Jennifer has filed a lawsuit against the Skaneateles Central School District over their violation of her parental rights.

Key Points

- When school district policies require concealing information from parents, kids get hurt.
- School districts should partner with parents to educate their children and should not treat parents as an obstacle.
- Teachers and school administrators should not betray parents' trust by hiding information.
- We must protect parents' fundamental right and duty to direct the upbringing, education, and healthcare of their children.

Key Facts

- A district policy required school employees to actively keep Jennifer in the dark, hiding the fact that they were treating her daughter as a boy behind her back.
- Jennifer trusted the District to help and serve her daughter, but the District's actions broke her trust. They even continued with their "social transition" despite Jennifer's clear instruction that they stop.

The Bottom Line: Parents have a right to know what is happening to their children.