



SCHOOLS Costa Mesa, California

During the public comments section of the May 17 board meeting for the North Mesa Unified School District, a group of parents expressed outrage over the mistaken belief that the graphic novel *Flamer* by Mike Curato was in elementary school libraries.

Prior to the meeting, Henry Abraham had shared photos of pages from the book with the Facebook group Newport-Mesa Uncensored and asked parents to petition the board to remove the book. Abraham started the group to monitor board candidates and “hold them accountable.”

During the meeting, Superintendent Wes Smith said “We have an obligation to make sure that the material in our libraries is age-appropriate . . . If there is some suggestion that it isn’t, we’re obligated to act immediately to close the library to search for those books.”

On June 1, spokesperson Annette Franco stated all elementary school libraries would be closed so officials could conduct a thorough search for any titles that were not age-appropriate. Franco also confirmed that no copies of *Flamer* were ever held in district elementary school libraries.

The district also announced they would be reviewing the process used to order and approve library materials. Abraham said the district was not doing enough and that she was looking for candidates to run against the four school board incumbents up for re-election in November.

Reported in: *Daily Pilot*, June 4.

Weld County, Colorado

On May 21, an online petition to remove four books from libraries of the University Schools charter school in Greeley-Evans School District 6 was started: *All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson, *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia

Kobabe, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

The Bluest Eye, however, was not held in any University Schools library. The petition also included photos of pages from *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, but did not call for its removal or otherwise mention it. The petition received 307 signatures. The district serves more than 22,000 students.

On May 26, high school principal Jeff Casey responded to the petition, thanking all for their concern and referring them to the library’s selection and reconsideration procedures governing formal requests for the removal of library material.

Casey also invited the petition’s creators and signatories to call or email him directly if they wished to discuss school library or instructional materials. Neither the petition’s creators nor signatories attempted to contact school administrators or board members, however two parents submitted requests for the reconsideration of *Gender Queer*.

On June 15, a review committee voted to relocate *Gender Queer* from the high school library to the professional development collection, which requires parental permission for students to access.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report, *Greeley Tribune*, May 29, 2022

Brevard County, Florida

In response to passage of HB 1467, the Brevard County School District (BCSD) ended access to the Epic! Kids’ Books & Reading app and the online math game Prodigy (see: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.7 iss.2: *For the Record: Florida*).

District spokesperson Russell Bruhn said the district felt they could no longer provide access due to the new oversight requirements implemented by the law. Bruhn said they lacked the

capability to vet the more than 40,000 titles included in Epic.

Teachers and parents alike were surprised and frustrated by the announcement. Teachers said the services engaged young learners and that students used them for supplemental learning after class. While the district was able to provide them at no charge, parents will now have to pay monthly fees for their children to access them.

Tasmin Wright, a mother of two BCSD students, said her youngest daughter used Epic daily. “Whatever she was into, if it was animals, she would type in ‘animals’ and she would just go crazy devouring all these books about chickens and bunnies and farm animals.”

Wright characterized the books in Epic as being “appropriate almost to the point of being childish.” The app is intended for children age 12 and under.

Reported in: *Florida Today*, May 4, 2022.

Sarasota County, Florida

During the public comments section of the May 3 board meeting for Sarasota County Schools (SCS), the chair of the local Moms for Liberty chapter read an excerpt from *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. Another person in attendance read an excerpt from *Sold* by Patricia McCormick.

Formal requests for reconsideration of the books weren’t filed, but they were still pulled for review by superintendent Brennan Asplen. The books were returned to the shelves within 48 hours.

On July 1, resident Robert Louis Craft filed an emergency injunction requesting a judge to order law enforcement to remove a list of 51 titles including *The Bluest Eye* and *Sold* from SCS and calling for a grand jury investigation.

In his filing, Craft referred to the books as “sexually explicit” and “child



rape materials.” The titles he challenged were primarily works with characters who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) and/or as Black, indigenous, or people of color. A biography of Michelle Obama was included in his list.

Craft included criminal allegations against Asplen and members of the school board in his filing.

Daniel DeLeo, attorney for the school board, referred to the lawsuit as “a ridiculous document full of sovereign citizen pseudo-law and nonsense, making improper and baseless claims.”

Titles challenged through legal proceedings:

- *47* by Walter Mosley
- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Good Kind of Trouble* by Lisa Moore Ramée
- *All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *Better Nate Than Ever* by Tim Federle
- *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin
- *City of Thieves* by David Benioff
- *Class Act* by Jerry Craft
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!* by Tim Federle
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *Girls Like Us* by Gail Giles
- *Go With the Flow* by Karen SchneeMann
- *Ground Zero* by Alan Gratz
- *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings
- *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L.C. Rosen
- *King and the Dragonflies* by Kacen Callender
- *L8r, G8r* by Lauren Myracle
- *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Michelle Obama: Political Icon* by Heather Schwartz
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness* by Anastasia Higginbotham
- *On the Bright Side, I'm Now the Girlfriend of a Sex God* by Louise Rennison
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward
- *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* by Jon Ronson
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *This One Summer* by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki
- *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices* by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson
- *Weird Girl and What's His Name* by Meagan Brothers
- *What Girls Are Made Of* by Elana K. Arnold
- *When Wilma Rudolph Played Basketball* by Mark Weakland
- *White Bird* by R.J. Palacio
- *Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice* by Mahogany Browne, Elizabeth Acevedo, and Jason Reynolds

Reported in: *Patch*, July 3, 2022; *WUSE*, July 25, 2022.

St. Johns County, Florida

On May 24, the board of the St. Johns County School District (SJCS) voted 3-2 to retain seven titles about racism, sexism, and the lived experiences of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) and/or Black, indigenous, or people of color.

These books are part of a group of 56 titles challenged at SJCS by Moms for Liberty members. On March 30, a review committee recommended retaining these titles. That decision was appealed to the school board.

These are the titles retained:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *Boys Will Be Boys: Power, Patriarchy, and Toxic Masculinity* by Clementine Ford
- *Ho'onani: Hula Warrior* by Heather Gale
- *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad
- *My Rainbow* by Trinity Neal
- *Peanut Goes for the Gold* by Jonathan Van Ness
- *White Privilege* by M.T. Blakemore

On May 31, a review committee recommended retaining *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky and retaining the following titles with restrictions on students' access to them:

- *Lucky* by Alice Sebold—restricted to grades 11 and 12 with a content warning



- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick—restricted to grades 8 and up
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson—restricted to grades 6 and up
- *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher—restricted to grades 8 and up with a content warning

In August, the board voted on appeals to these review committee recommendations and three others that hadn't previously been reported. The decisions from May 31 were all upheld by a vote of 3-2. Additionally, they voted 3-2 to retain the following books (any restrictions applied are noted):

- *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah J. Maas—parental permission required for checkout
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell

The board members who voted against retaining the challenge material in all cases were Bev Slough and Kelly Barrera.

The remaining 41 titles which have been challenged were not reported.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report, *News4Jax*, May 24, 2022, *St. Augustine Record*.

Nampa, Idaho

On May 10, all librarians in the Nampa School District were sent an email from the district office informing them that during their May 9 meeting, the board voted 3-2 “to forego the book review process and to permanently remove 24 books from our libraries and classrooms.”

The librarians were instructed to box up all copies of the titles lists and send them to a warehouse. One of the titles was listed twice in the email and one of the titles listed had already been withdrawn as the result of a prior challenge.

Most of the books targeted were about the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) people and/or those who are Black, indigenous, or persons of color.

The books' removal was prompted by a complaint from the parent of a middle school student who alleged the books were pornographic and that distributing them to minors was a violation of state law.

Newly elected board members representing groups including the Idaho Freedom Foundation and Parent 2 Parent are believed to have driven the effort to forgo the district's official reconsideration policy.

During their June 14 meeting, the board discussed what to do with the books now that they were stored in a warehouse. Nampa High School teacher Shelby Dewsnap urged them to return the books to school libraries.

“All of our students deserve safety and representation; you are not providing that,” said Dewsnap. “Go through a process, learn what you can, and then . . . reverse your book ban.”

On August 11, the ACLU of Idaho issued a press release asserting “the trustees may have violated the First Amendment . . . when they voted in May 10 [sic] to permanently remove 22 books from school libraries and classrooms.” They urged the district to return the books to the library shelves.

Aadika Singh, legal director for the ACLU of Idaho, said they were considering a lawsuit to “force the school district through litigation . . . to return these books to the shelves or at least undertake a thorough unbiased process.”

The board discussed revising their reconsideration policy during its September 12 meeting.

The titles withdrawn district-wide were:

- *33 Snowfish* by Adam Rapp
- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
- *City of Heavenly Fire* by Cassandra Clare
- *Clockwork Princess* by Cassandra Clare
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell
- *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer
- *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *L8r, G8r* by Lauren Myracle
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Leah On the Offbeat* by Becky Albertalli
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Prince and the Dressmaker* by Jen Wang
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed Their Lives* by Dashka Slater
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; KTVB7, May 11, 2022, and June 18, 2022; Boise State Public Radio News, July 7; KIVI, August 13, 2022; Idaho Ed News, September 8, 2022.

Covington, Louisiana

On May 24, Kimberly Gardner, assistant superintendent for St. Tammany Parish Public Schools, sent a robocall to parents of fifth grade students in schools receiving Title 1 funding to



notify them that the summer reading backpacks their children received contained *Shaping the Debate: Defining and Discussing Free Speech* by Christy Mihaly.

The robocall was made in response to complaints received from parents that the book on the First Amendment had a liberal bias for covering the “Bong Hits 4 Jesus” Supreme Court case (551 U.S. 393), Colin Kaepernick kneeling during the national anthem in protest of racial injustice, and Russian protest punk group Pussy Riot.

The call informed parents that some may consider the contents of the book to be sensitive, encouraged them to review the book before giving it to their child, and let them know it was not part of the curriculum and no one would be tested on it.

District spokesperson Angela Daviston said that the books were purchased as a package and not specifically selected by the district.

Reported in: NOLA.com, May 26, 2022.

Gorham, Maine

On March 18, Gorham School District (GSD) received a request for reconsideration of *All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson from a community member who does not have a child at the high school. The complainant said, “I find this book to be blatantly pornographic and incestuous.”

The complainant also filed a request for the reconsideration of *The Handmaid's Tale (graphic novel)* by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault.

Separately, at the May 11 board meeting for GSD, superintendent Heather Perry received multiple requests to remove a “Gender 101” poster from classrooms. The poster defines terms including cisgender, transgender, and non-binary.

When the request to reconsider the poster was received, Perry informed the

complainant about the district’s process for resolving the request, the first step of which was for them to meet and discuss the issue. The complainant refused to meet with Perry and wrote that he objects “to the process of finding a resolution with the perpetrator of a crime against me.”

Perry informed him she would not pursue his complaint as he was unwilling to follow district procedures. She said that if he was unhappy with this outcome, he could appeal the decision to the board.

Another parent and a grandparent also submitted requests for the reconsideration of the poster, arguing that posters on “straight sexuality” and “genders assigned at birth” should also be in classrooms.

Perry stated this claim was inaccurate as the Gender 101 poster included all genders and sexual orientations.

The outcomes of these challenges are unknown.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; *Portland Press Herald*, May 25, 2022; June 22, 2022.

Carroll County, Maryland

On June 6, the board of Carroll County Public Schools voted 4-1 to prohibit the display of Pride flags and other “political flags” on school property. The decision came following hours of testimony, including from current students.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) students, parents, and other community members who supported inclusivity wore shirts to the meeting proclaiming “Acceptance Empowers.”

The agenda item was added after some staff members complained that they felt pressured to support the LGBTQIA+ community by a donation of rainbow flags from the national advocacy group PFLAG.

Dr. J.D. Murphy, whose children attend district schools, stated that LGBTQIA+ children are often bullied and are more likely to be suicidal. “We need to affirm these children. We need to support them. We need to normalize them. We need to be inclusive,” said Murphy.

A parent who objected to the display of Pride flags told the board that “over-sexualizing the classroom” was unacceptable. Another expressed their belief that the flags encouraged discussion of topics that were not age appropriate.

Under the new policy, flags displayed in classrooms are limited to the American flag; the Maryland flag; the Carroll County flag; flags denoting recognition of achievement; sport tournament banners; banners for college, university, and professional sports teams; and flags representing the many nations of the world, so long as they are smaller and less prominent than the American flag.

Students are still allowed to display Pride flags on their clothing.

Reported in: WBFF, June 8, 2022.

Davison County, North Carolina

During the public comments section of the May 2 meeting of the Davidson County Schools (DCS) board of education, a number of people expressed concerns about certain titles available from school libraries.

Resident Polly Leonard read an excerpt from Nobel laureate Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and then stated, “This is pure pedophilia.”

Leonard said a group of parents have assembled a five page spreadsheet listing books they consider to be explicit. Commissioner Chris Elliott requested a copy of the spreadsheet, then declared that she believed several of the titles included were “against the law.”

The only other publicly disclosed title from the spreadsheet is *It’s*



Perfectly Normal by Robie H. Harris. It is unknown if any action was taken regarding the titles on the list.

On May 5, it was reported that DCS was suspending their participation in the statewide Battle of the Books competition. Superintendent Emily Lipe said DCS paused participation over concerns about the content of some of the books.

North Carolina School Library Media Association selects the titles and organizes the statewide competition annually. Students from participating schools read books from a list and then compete in quiz show tournaments to test their knowledge of the books.

Lipes did not specify which titles resulted in DCS withdrawing from the tournament. Several titles included in the high school and middle school lists have been challenged as part of a nationwide movement targeting library books about the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) individuals, as well as those who are Black, indigenous, or people of color.

Books on the 2022–2023 middle school Battle of the Books list that have been challenged at other school districts include:

- *Black Brother, Black Brother* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai
- *The Shape of Thunder* by Jasmine Warga

Books on the 2022–2023 high school Battle of the Books list that have been challenged at other school districts include:

- *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Saenz
- *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo

- *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed Their Lives* by Dashka Slater
- *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager* by Ben Philippe

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge reports; *The High Point Enterprise*, May 3, 2022; WGHP, May 5, 2022.

Moore County, North Carolina

In April, Moore County Schools board member Philip Holmes initiated three more requests for reconsideration of school library books: *The Alchemist: A Fable about Following Your Dream* by Paulo Coelho, *Life is Funny* by E.R. Frank, and *Looking for Alaska* by John Green. Holmes initiated a request to remove *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez earlier in the school year.

Holmes was also one of the board members who voted for the removal of *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino when it was challenged. The majority of the board voted to retain it, however (see: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.7 iss.2: *Success Stories: Schools: Moore County, North Carolina*).

Out of Darkness, *Life is Funny*, and *The Alchemist* were withdrawn. *Looking for Alaska* remains available at one of the district's high school libraries.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; *The Pilot*, May 13, 2022; July 12, 2022.

Multnomah County, Oregon

On July 1, a patron requested that the Multnomah County Library withdraw the July/August 2022 issue of *Rolling Stone*, as they felt the cover objectified women.

Library staff reviewed the material and determined it was aligned with their collection policy. The patron was

notified the library would retain the issue on July 19.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report.

Fairview, Pennsylvania

On June 1, *Broad + Liberty* reported that Fairview School District had withdrawn the title *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe without following the district policy, which requires review of challenged material by a committee of professionals.

In an email, superintendent Erik Kincade stated that it was the first time during his 16 year tenure that a book had been challenged in the district. He said that he personally reviewed the book after receiving a complaint form a parent, and determined it should be removed based on some graphic images.

On July 11, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) sent a letter to the district board drawing their attention to the superintendent's apparent breach of district policy. NCAC urged the district to return *Gender Queer* to the library and follow the formal review process called for in their policies.

Reported in: *Broad + Liberty*, June 1, 2022; National Coalition Against Censorship, July 11, 2022.

Kutztown, Pennsylvania

At their May 16 meeting, the Kutztown Area School District's board of directors approved a motion by a vote of 5–4 to require a signed parental permission form for any student to check *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe out of the high school library. At the time the vote was held, no one had checked the book out from the library. No other book in the library requires parental approval.

Board members Caecilia Holt, Al Darion, Michael Hess, and Dennis Ritter opposed the restriction. Ritter stated that he had actually read the



book, unlike those who were characterizing it as obscene.

Darion stated it was ironic that in Pennsylvania “a 16-year-old can consent to have sex, but needs parental permission to read about it.” He said that “sounds a little inconsistent to me on a practical basis.”

During the public comments section of the meeting, Robyn Underwood expressed dismay over the board’s decision. “If parents would like to manage their own children and leave my children out of it, they’re welcome to do so,” said Underwood.

Community member Dan Wismer voiced his concerns about critical race theory and diversity, equity, and inclusion. He then objected to the American Library Association (ALA) “deciding the curriculum for schools” and blamed ALA for the district’s purchase of *Gender Queer*.

James Koch then referred to ALA as “a Marxist organization.”

Reported in: Kutztown Area School District Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, May 16, 2022; Reading Eagle, May 20, 2022.

Newtown, Pennsylvania

During the March 14 board meeting of the Council Rock School District, board member Bob Hickey spoke out against library material he felt was inappropriate and proposed numerous ways his concerns could be addressed.

“I would like to see major changes to what our kids are allowed to see in school,” said Hickey. He recommended adopting a ratings system such as the Motion Picture Association of America uses for movies. He also proposed requiring parent permission for students to access “certain books.”

Proposals to amend district policy 109, which governs the reconsideration of instructional and library material, were also made.

The policy changes were discussed by the district’s policy committee during their March 14 meeting.

District parent Chris Kinsey voiced staunch opposition to the proposed changes. “The creep of right-wing extremist politics into schools that we’ve been reading about in the news seems to be coming into our own community,” said Kinsey. “We will not let our schools become petri-dishes for open racism, bullying, bigotry, or fascist ideology.”

During the April 7 board meeting, parents and students pushed back against the district making any changes along the lines of what Hickey had proposed. Anne Murray characterized proposals to ban books, such as those brought by Texas Representative Matt Krause, as efforts “to disrupt small communities” and “put their name on the map.” (See: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.6 iss.4: *For the Record: Texas*).

Concurrently, a district parent began submitting forms requesting the reconsideration of 35 titles frequently challenged by members of Moms for Liberty.

A preponderance of the books are about the lived experiences of those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) or Black, indigenous, or people of color.

A review committee recommended that the first book to be challenged, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel, be retained at the high school level. On June 16, the acting superintendent overrode the committee and ordered the removal of the book.

These are the additional titles that have been challenged at the Council Rock School District:

- *Almost Perfect* by Brian Katcher
- *Beautiful* by Amy Reed

- *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin
- *Burned* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Damsel* by Elana K. Arnold
- *Fallout* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Forever* by Judy Blume
- *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *Glass* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Go Ask Alice!* by Anonymous
- *Hooked* by Catherine Greenman
- *I’ll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson
- *Identical* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Impulse* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Jesus Land: A Memoir* by Julia Scheeres
- *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
- *Lucky* by Alice Sebold
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *Monday’s Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Perfect* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Red, White & Royal Blue: A Novel* by Casey McQuiston
- *Rumble* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Scars* by C.A. Rainfield
- *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, The Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* by Kurt Vonnegut
- *Smoke* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *Tilt* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; *The Centurion*, May 12, 2022.



Greenville County, South Carolina

On March 10, the Greenville County School District received a request for the reconsideration of *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino. The complainant stated their belief that “transgender material is not age appropriate for . . . school children of any age.”

The complaint was submitted by the parent of a child at the A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School. At the time the complaint was submitted, *Melissa* was held by libraries in six elementary schools, six middle schools, and one high school in the district. It was not used as part of the curriculum for any grade level.

After reviewing the book and the complaint, the district’s elementary material review committee met on April 20. They voted to retain the book in elementary and middle school libraries, but restrict access to children in grades 5 and up.

At their May 24 board meeting, the district’s trustees voted 10-2 to withdraw the book from elementary school libraries and require parental approval for middle school students to check it out.

The board also voted to send a letter to state lawmakers requesting that publishers provide ratings for books and descriptions of any controversial content they contain.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; WSPA, May 24, 2022.

Rapid City, South Dakota

On June 7, the Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) board of education voted unanimously to delay their decision on destroying five titles purchased for use as part of the 12th grade English curriculum.

Officially, the decision was delayed so the board could receive advice from

legal counsel. Board member Troy Carr added the delay to the agenda to allow “for more discussion on the process of how the books got picked” for destruction.

The books were selected by teachers from Rapid City’s three public high schools and approved by a committee. The books arrived in May 2021.

On June 8, 2021, four new board members were elected. Their campaigns received funding from the Family Heritage Alliance, the Free Republic Political Action Committee, and/or the Shining Light PAC.

In August 2021, all copies of the five titles were warehoused. Valerie Seales, district director of teaching, learning, and innovation, sent an email to superintendent Lori Simon stating that “I think some English teachers are going to want to fight this fight to keep the books. I am taking the stance that they are inappropriate and we will not use them for assigned or voluntary reading list[s].”

Simon then sent an email to principals stating “Now more than ever, what curriculum and resources/books we use will be subject to public scrutiny. Let’s avoid issues proactively.”

The district then reviewed the books that were approved during the previous board’s tenure a second time. They decided to remove five of the titles, including some that were currently being taught.

The plan to destroy the books, many of which had never been read, was first publicly discussed during the district’s May 3 board meeting. At the meeting, the books were declared “pornographic” and, according to the board, likely in violation of South Dakota Codified Law 22-24-27, which prohibits the distribution of sexually explicit material that is “without serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value” to minors.

Before their June 6 meeting, the board circulated a new policy that read

“Parental/guardian knowledge and consent if required for ALL LGBTQ/gender identity related discussions, handouts, videos, or online/printed materials except in mandatory reporting situations.”

During the meeting, a local pastor who was invited to speak by the board, condemned children who identify as trans.

On June 16, high school English teacher Timmi Bubac resigned, saying “I’m tired of the fear-based decision-making.”

The novels slated for destruction:

- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel—35 copies
- *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo—30 copies
- *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue—185 copies
- *The Circle* by David Eggers—30 copies
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky—75 copies

On November 8, the RCAS board voted to sell three of the titles instead of destroying them: *How Beautiful We Were*; *Girl, Woman, Other*; and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

The copies of *The Circle* and *Fun Home* were missing from the warehouse when district staff attempted to locate them in August. RCAS interim chief executive officer Nicole Swigart said it was possible the books were sold at auction.

Reported in: Rapid City Journal, June 3, 2022, July 8, 2022, and November 9, 2022; The Washington Post, June 24, 2022.

Sumner County, Tennessee

In November, 2021, Portland High School principal David Woods informed Jennifer Heyboer and Vickie Baker, the two librarians, that the



graphic novel adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* by Maragret Atwood and Renee Nault was unacceptable in a high school library.

Woods instructed the librarians to review every graphic novel in the collection for anything “questionable.”

Heyboer reminded Woods of the district’s reconsideration policy and asked if he’d read *The Handmaid’s Tale*. He said he had not and that page 30 was all he needed to see.

Baker and Heyboer reviewed every graphic novel in the collection and flagged any instance of nudity with a post-it note. Woods instructed every book identified to be withdrawn.

Baker also pulled graphic novels for other reasons, including violence, profanity, and the depiction of guns. Additionally, Baker was the one who initially brought *The Handmaid’s Tale* graphic novel to Woods’s attention.

When Heyboer submitted a purchase order for books in March, she received a note from Woods instructing her to remove three titles from it: *Slaughterhouse-Five, or the Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* by Kurt Vonnegut, *Summer in the City of Roses* by Michelle Ruiz Keil, and *This is Where it Ends* by Marieke Nijkamp.

Woods informed Heyboer that books would only be ordered if both librarians agreed. Baker had expressed concerns that Common Sense Media indicated these titles had violence and/or sexual content.

Graphic novels challenged and withdrawn in this case:

- *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* [graphic novel] by Tse Po
- *Action Comics Annual. No. 4, 1992. The Evil of Eclipso vs. the Power of Shazam!* by Dan Vado
- *Dante’s Divine Comedy* by Seymour Chwast
- *Dare to Disappoint: Growing up in Turkey* by Özge Samancı

- *Deogratias, a Tale of Rwanda* by Jean-Philippe Stassen
- *Guerillas. Volume 1* by Brahm Revel
- *Guerillas. Volume 2* by Brahm Revel
- *Hunter x Hunter. Volume 3* by Yoshihiro Togashi
- *Inuyasha: A Feudal Fairy Tale* by Rumiko Takahashi
- *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* by Damian Duffy, Danez Smith
- *Little Nemo’s Big New Dreams* by Josh O’Neill
- *Long Way Down: The Graphic Novel* by Jason Reynolds
- *Maids* by Katie Skelly
- *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children: The Graphic Novel* by Ransom Riggs
- *My Hero Academia. 13: A Talk About Your Quirk* by Kōhei Horikoshi
- *My Hero Academia: Vigilantes*. [Series] by Hideyuki Furuhashi
- *Naruto* by Masashi Kishimoto
- *Nubia, Real One* by L.L. McKinney
- *Shirley Jackson’s The Lottery: The Authorized Graphic Adaptation* by Myles Hyman
- *Slaughterhouse-Five, or the Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death, a Graphic Novel Adaptation* by Ryan North
- *Speak: The Graphic Novel* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Squad* by Maggie Tokuda-Hall
- *The Handmaid’s Tale (graphic novel)* by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report.

Frisco, Texas

During their June 13 board meeting, the Frisco Independent School District (ISD) updated their policies governing how they handle the reconsideration of library materials.

Under the new policy, it is now possible for a book to be removed from the collection based on a single sentence. Previously, books were considered on

their merits as a whole. The district is also working to update their administrative guidelines regarding the selection of library materials.

The policy revisions came in the wake of repeated calls from two residents for Frisco ISD to remove library materials they consider to be obscene. State representative Jared Patterson has also been critical of the district’s libraries on social media, where he called for the removal of every book included on a target list compiled by state representative Matt Krause (see: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas*).

In addition to withdrawing seven titles from high school libraries and one title from middle school libraries, the district also withdrew the magazine *Kirkus Reviews*, a professional book review publication used by librarians to aid in the selection of material.

At the meeting, it was stated that *Kirkus* was being withdrawn because all the books challenged at the district received positive reviews in it.

Book titles withdrawn from Frisco ISD libraries:

- *Blue is the Warmest Color* by Julie Maroh
- *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L.C. Rosen
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg
- *Trans Mission: My Quest to a Beard* by Alex Bertie
- *Triangles* by Ellen Hopkins
- *What Girls Are Made Of* by Elana K. Arnold

An additional title was also challenged at the district, but its title was not reported.

Reported in: Frisco Enterprise, June 22, 2022.



Houston, Texas

During the May 9 board meeting of the Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District (ISD), parent Monica Dean requested a notification system that would alert parents whenever one of their children attempted to check out a book from the school library and give them the option of approving or rejecting the book's circulation.

On June 9, it was reported that 11 titles had been challenged in the school district. Four of them were removed because they were included on a "watch list" distributed by state representative Matt Krause sent to every Texas school district on October 25, 2021 (See: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

The books that were withdrawn for their inclusion on the Krause list were: *Bend, Don't Shatter: Poets on the Beginning of Desire* edited by T. Cole Rachel, *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe, *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson, and *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson.

An additional five titles were removed because they had been challenged in other Texas school districts. Those titles were: *Forbidden* by Tabitha Suzuma, *Forever for a Year* by B.T. Gottfred, *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L.C. Rosen, *The Nerdy and the Dirty* by B.T. Gottfred, and *What Girls Are Made Of* by Elana K. Arnold.

After undergoing the prescribed review process, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park was retained. Against the odds, *Flamer* by Mike Curato was also retained, despite appearing in both Krause's list and several other challenges at Texas school districts.

Reported in: Community Impact, June 9, 2022.

Richardson, Texas

During the September 20, 2021, board meeting for the Richardson Independent School District (RISD), parent Sherry Clemens voiced complaints

about a book that contained profanity which was on an optional reading list for a junior high school gifted and talented English language arts class.

The book Clemens objected to was *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely. After the meeting, RISD reviewed the list and instructed two titles to be removed from junior high school classrooms: *Burn Baby Burn* by Meg Medina and *Everybody Sees the Ants* by A.S. King. Students who were currently reading those titles were allowed to finish them if their parents approved.

Following this, Clemens and other parents started making Facebook posts containing excerpts from books they considered to be pornographic. Early in 2022, one of those posts started receiving a significant amount of attention. The post consisted of a warning and included a list of 17 titles in RISD libraries.

Most of the titles on the list deal with issues of race and racism and the lives of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+). The list included *All American Boys* as well as the two books RISD already removed from junior high school classrooms.

The list of books and book banning generally were discussed by school board candidates during the April 10 RISD district 2 forum.

All titles challenged in this case:

- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
- *All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *Burn Baby Burn* by Meg Medina
- *Class Act* by Jerry Craft
- *Every Day* by David Levithan
- *Everybody Sees the Ants* by A.S. King
- *Far from the Tree* by Robin Benway
- *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender

- *Fighting Words* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *How it Went Down* by Kekla Magoon
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *On The Come Up* by Angie Thomas
- *Parachutes* by Kelly Yang
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

Reported in: Lake Highlands Advocate, May 4, 2022.

Canaan, Vermont

In March, a group of parents submitted requests for Canaan Schools to remove three titles from their libraries. The titles were not part of any curriculum, but all of them deal with the lives and experiences of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+).

The movement to challenge the books was led by Ashlie Lynch, whose daughter is in sixth grade. On one of the reconsideration forms she submitted, Lynch that "sexual orientation should not be taught or promoted to students."

A review committee was formed in April to make recommendations regarding the challenged titles.

They determined that *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Lesléa Newman was appropriate for all grade levels. They voted to keep *A Quick & Easy Guide to Queer & Trans Identities* by Mady G. in the high school library where it was shelved. They recommended removing *How to be Ace: A Memoir of Growing Up Asexual* by Rebecca Burgess until the school board rendered a verdict.

On May 9, the school board voted to retain all three titles.



Karen Conroy, superintendent of the Essex North Supervisory Union, said these were the only challenges to library material she could remember taking place during her 25 year tenure.

Lynch was undaunted by the outcome and said she would continue to work to get LGBTQIA+ books removed from school libraries.

Reported in: VT Digger, May 12, 2022.

Fauquier County, Virginia

During the July 11 board meeting for Fauquier County Public Schools (FCPS), Moms for Liberty members demanded the removal of a list of 46 books from school libraries, claiming they had sexually explicit content.

The books they targeted ranged from children's picture books to young adult fantasy novels. Most of them are about the lives and experiences of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) and/or as Black, indigenous, or people of color.

Many in attendance spoke out in opposition to the proposed book bans. Resident Mary Brown Haak said that reading books from other perspectives is "the best way to gain insight into the lives and challenges facing others."

Margareta Grady said that removing books on the experiences of marginalized populations would do harm to students who belong to those groups. Grady also highlighted the need to trust professional educators.

On July 6, it was reported that three additional titles had been challenged by the Fauquier County chapter of Moms for Liberty. Amie Bowman, the chapter's treasurer, said they exceeded their June membership goal by 25%. Members were working to submit requests for reconsideration of their targeted titles at each of the high schools in the district.

On August 26, it was reported that Moms for Liberty members had submitted requests for reconsideration of nine additional titles at FCPS schools.

District policy dictates that titles will remain available for circulation while undergoing review.

During their September 12 meeting, the FCPS board announced they would be revising their collection and reconsideration policies, in response both to the spate of challenges they've received and the passage of SB 656 (See: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.7 iss.2: For the Record: Virginia).

The outcomes of the sundry requests for reconsideration at FCPS remain unknown.

Titles challenged in this case:

- *A Bike Like Sergio's* by Maribeth Boelts
- *A Boy Called Bat* by Elana K. Arnold
- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Quick & Easy Guide to Queer & Trans Identities* by Mady G
- *A Song Only I Can Hear* by Barry Jonsberg
- *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin* by Jen Bryant
- *Ace of Spades* by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé
- *Alex as Well* by Alyssa Brugman
- *Almost Perfect* by Brian Katcher
- *An Ocean Apart, A World Away* by Lensey Namioka
- *Ana on the Edge* by A.J. Sass
- *Be Gay, Do Comics* by Matt Bors
- *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* by Richard Rodriguez
- *City of Thieves* by David Benioff
- *Crane* by Jeff Stone
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Deogratias, a Tale of Rwanda* by Jean-Philippe Stassen
- *Dress Codes for Small Towns* by Courtney C Stevens
- *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell
- *Fade* by Lisa McMann
- *Fever Crumb* by Philip Reeve
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Gender Identity: The Ultimate Teen Guide* by Cynthia Winfield
- *Girl Mans Up* by M-E Girard
- *Girls Like Us* by Gail Giles
- *Grasshopper Jungle* by Andrew Smith
- *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings
- *Image and Identity: Becoming the Person You Are* by Kris Gowen
- *Ironhead, or, Once a Young Lady* by Jean-Claude van Rijckeghem
- *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo
- *Lobizona* by Romina Gerber
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera
- *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult
- *One Half from the East* by Nadia Hashimi
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Ramona Blue* by Julie Murphy
- *Rethinking Normal: A Memoir in Transition* by Katie Rain Hill
- *Rick* by Alex Gino
- *Ruin of Stars* by Linsey Miller
- *Scavenge the Stars* by Tara Sim
- *Seeing Gender: An Illustrated Guide to Identity and Expression* by Iris Gottlieb
- *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* by Jon Ronson
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *The Deep & Dark Blue* by Niki Smith
- *The Full Spectrum: A New Generation of Writing About Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Other Identities* by David Levithan
- *The Goldsmith's Daughter* by Tanya Landman
- *The Hazards of Love. Book 1, Bright World* by Stan Stanley



- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *The Mermaid, the Witch, and the Sea* by Maggie Tokuda-Hall
- *The Polar Bear Explorers' Club* by Alex Bell
- *This One Summer* by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki
- *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *What Girls Are Made Of* by Elana K. Arnold
- *Wildthorn* by Jane Eagland

Reported in: *Fauquier Now*, July 13, 2022; WUSA, July 14, 2022; *Fauquier Times*, July 6, July 13, 2022, and August 26, 2022; WTOP, September 15, 2022.

Frederick County, Virginia

A group of parents expressed concerns over the content of some library books during the public comments section of the May 3 board meeting for Frederick County Public Schools. Other parents in attendance decried the calls to remove books as acts of intolerable censorship.

School board member Miles Adkins characterized the library books discussed as “vile” and “disgusting” and stated he was “ashamed that they’re in our school.”

At the October 12 school board meeting, Cindy Rose, who is running for the board on the Education Not Indoctrination slate, submitted a list of 35 titles and called for their immediate removal from district libraries.

Rose used the website Rated Books to compile her list. She read excerpts from two of the books she was challenging, then told the board members she would hold them “personally responsible for allowing child pornography to be made available to our children using our tax dollars.”

The board’s curriculum and instruction committee is scheduled to discuss the books on Rose’s list in December. They will also discuss *Gender Queer*:

A Memoir by Maia Kobabe, which the board had also received several challenges for. A single copy of *Gender Queer* was ordered for the district. It has not yet made it to the shelves.

Titles challenged in this case:

- *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Silver Flames* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Wings and Ruin* by Sarah J. Maas
- *All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *Breathless* by Jennifer Niven
- *Confess* by Colleen Hoover
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Damsel* by Elena K. Arnold
- *Deogratias, a Tale of Rwanda* by Jean-Philippe Stassen
- *Empire of Storms* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Forever* by Judy Blume
- *Forever for a Year* by B.T. Gottfred
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *I Never* by Laura Hopper
- *Identical* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Infamous* by Elana K. Arnold
- *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L.C. Rosen
- *Jesus Land: A Memoir* by Julia Scheeres
- *Kingdom of Ash* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Let's Talk About It: The Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human* by Erika Moen
- *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
- *Lucky* by Alice Sebold
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *My Friend Dahmer* by Derf Backderf
- *Normal People: A Novel* by Sally Rooney

- *People Kill People* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Push* by Sapphire
- *S.E.X.: The All-You-Need-To-Know Progressive Sexuality Guide to Get You Through High School* by Heather Corinna
- *Slaughterhouse-Five, or the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death, a Graphic Novel Adaptation* by Ryan North
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *Triangles* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins

Reported in: *The Winchester Star*, May 5, 2022; *The Frederick News-Post*, October 14, 2022.

Roanoke County, Virginia

In November, the award-winning picture book *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff was formally challenged at Horn Elementary School, part of Roanoke County Public Schools (RCPS). The book’s titular character is Black and transgender.

A committee of librarians from elementary, middle, and high school libraries in the district reviewed the request and the book and determined it should remain in the collection.

This decision was appealed to a committee of three community members: one selected by the parent who challenged the book, one selected by the school’s principal, and one selected by the other two committee members from a list of candidates provided by an RCPS board member.

The appeals committee determined the book should be relocated from the school library to the guidance counselor’s office where it would only be made accessible to parents.

Following the implementation of access restrictions to the title, RCPS spokesperson Chuck Lionberger announced they would be revising their school library selection policy, their reconsideration process, and



their teacher guidelines for classroom discussions.

On June 23, the board voted unanimously to approve a restrictive new selection policy. Before any book can be added to a district elementary school library, two elementary librarians must read it and write reviews of it. After which, every elementary school librarian must agree to add the title. For middle and high school libraries, only one librarian is required to read and review each book, but unanimous consent from librarians of the respective school level is still required.

After a book is approved, the title will be published to give district parents two weeks to review it and raise objections. Following the vote, board member Cheryl Facciani said the policy was why she and other board members were elected last November.

The ACLU of Virginia stated on social media that the new policy placed “an absurd burden . . . on school librarians” and was “a tactic of censorship.”

At the meeting, district parent Laura Bowman chastised the board for their prejudice and cowardice. “Imagine a school board that exhibited such deeply ingrained fear, bias, and prejudice through its policymaking that it hurt the children it claimed to care about and was supposed to be serving. I don’t have to imagine it. I’m looking right at it.”

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; *The Roanoke Times*, May 29, 2022, and June 23, 2022.

Spotsylvania County, Virginia

In early May, the parent of a Spotsylvania County Public Schools (SCPS) student submitted requests for the reconsideration of eight high school library books.

Most of the books challenged are about the lived experiences of people

who identify as Black, indigenous, or people of color and/or as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+).

A committee of SCPS staff, parents, and community members determined that all eight were appropriate for high school students and should remain in school libraries.

The parent appealed the committee’s decision to the superintendent and the school board. At previous board meetings, chair Kirk Twigg declared that he intends to “clear out our libraries,” and made headlines nationwide when he said he wants to burn all the books they remove (*see: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.7 iss.1: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Spotsylvania, Virginia*).

The outcome of the appeal is unknown.

Titles challenged:

- *All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *America* by E.R. Frank
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *Dime* by E.R. Frank
- *Like a Love Story* by Abdi Nazemian
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick

The outcome of the appeal is unknown

Reported in: *The Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, May 26, 2022.

Muskego, Wisconsin

On June 13, the Muskego-Norway Schools board’s Educational Services Committee, which is composed of three members of the board, rejected the use of *When the Emperor was Divine* by Julie Otsuka in the 10th grade accelerated English curriculum. They said the award-winning novel lacked balance in its portrayal of the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Newly-elected board member Laurie Kontney, who ran on a platform opposing critical race theory, derided the book as “diverse” and “divisive.”

The decision prompted outcry from residents and advocacy groups. Resident Ann Zielke, said there is “no need for this type of false balance or both-sides-ism in telling the story of Japanese internment. The American government was wrong and has apologized for the racism that led to Japanese internment.”

The national nonprofit group Japanese American Citizens League sent a letter to the school board calling on them to reconsider their decision. The statement concludes: “The story of what happened to the Japanese American community is an American story, one that balances the challenges of injustice, but also the patriotic stories of service and resistance. If anything, these are stories that need to be told more in our schools.”

Reported in: *Wisconsin Examiner*, June 22, 2022.

Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

In June, Alexandra Schweitzer, president of the local chapter of No Left Turn in Education, became embroiled in legal action regarding four titles she alleged were age-inappropriate and available from Oconomowoc Area School District libraries.

The books challenged by Schweitzer all include representation of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+):

- *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?* by Sarah Savage
- *It’s Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed Their Lives* by Dashka Slater
- *The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens & Young Adults Exploring*



Gender Identity by Rylan Jay Testa, Deborah Coolhart, and Jayme Peta

Schweitzer first spoke out against the books in February during a hearing of the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Education. The school district's attorneys said the books have not been available since Schweitzer made her comments and that they are not being used in classrooms.

Schweitzer published statements about the district inappropriately providing access to the books in May on No Left Turn in Education's website. The district responded by threatening a defamation lawsuit.

Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) is representing Schweitzer. The conservative law firm previously pressured the Elmbrook School District not to provide physical or electronic access to LGBTQIA+ titles (*see: Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, v.6 iss.3: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Brookfield, Wisconsin*).

Reported in: Fox News, June 19, 2022; *Oconomowoc Enterprise*, June 21, 2022.

LIBRARIES Colchester, Connecticut

On June 27, Mayor Andreas Bisbikos posted on Facebook that he had ordered staff of the Cragin Memorial Library to remove *Who is RuPaul?* by Nico Medina and review the rest of their children's materials. The title was part of a Pride display at the library. Bisbikos said he received a complaint from a parent about it.

Bisbikos ended his post with the directive, "We encourage parents that come across any materials in the children's section that may be deemed questionable, to bring it to the attention of the library staff immediately."

Library director Kate Byroade responded by informing Bisbikos that the library had a policy in place

governing challenges to materials and the policy would be followed.

On June 29, the library received an official request to reconsider the title. This resulted in the book being checked out for internal review.

On July 7, the board voted down Bibikos's directive for staff to individually review the more than 20,000 titles in the children's collection. They said it would be too time-consuming of an undertaking and that instead, staff would review any materials they received requests to reconsider.

Bibikos felt this was a mistake and said, "I pray to God that there are no further books that are highly questionable in that library."

After review, the library retained *Who is RuPaul?* in the children's collection.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; *Hartford Courant*, June 29, 2022; *NBC Connecticut*, July 8, 2022.

Boundary County, Idaho

Efforts to recall four out of five members of the Boundary County Library Board were initiated by a group called Boundary County Library Board Recall in mid-July.

The group formed after the board voted 3-1 to update the library's Materials Selection and Collection Development Policy on June 16.

The revision added a statement that the board "recognizes that given the increasing emphasis on frankness and realism of materials including those that explore social, sexual, and ethical issues, some members of the community may consider some materials to be controversial and/or offensive."

The updated policy continues that "selection of materials will not be affected by any such potential disapproval and the Boundary County Library will not place materials on

'closed shelves' or label items to protect the public from their content."

The one board member who wasn't present for the vote worked on the changes and was included in the recall initiative because he did not go on record as being opposed to the revisions.

The website of the group set on recalling the board identifies their mission as "to protect children from explicit materials and grooming." In addition to that dog whistle, it includes documents specifically opposed to library materials with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) characters and themes.

On social media, the group expressed objections to Marxism and to board members' perceived intent "to bring LGBTQ+ and social justice propaganda to affiliated libraries." The group pointed to the library's involvement with the American Library Association (ALA) as "a method to bring morally bankrupt materials to our children's minds and eyes."

Approximately 130 members of the group were turned away from the library's July board meeting, as there was not sufficient room to accommodate them in the Armory building where the meetings are held.

On August 16, library director Kimber Glidden announced her resignation effective September 10. In her public statement, she said "Nothing in my background could have prepared me for the political atmosphere of extremism, militant Christian fundamentalism, intimidation tactics, and threatening behavior currently being employed in the community."

She stated that while she had not received specific threats, she had experienced threatening behavior and that "bizarre, threatening biblical quotes" had been directed at her,



such as “repent of wanting to harm our children.”

Members of the Bonners Ferry Police Department and Boundary County Sheriff’s Office were on hand for the August 18 board meeting to help keep the meeting peaceful. About an hour into the meeting, an attendee blew a shofar, a traditional Hebrew goat horn historically used as a call to battle.

NBC News reported that the group had challenged more than 400 titles, primarily young adult books with LGBTQIA+ characters. The Boundary County Library did not own any of the books the group objected to.

This is a complete list of the titles targeted on the recall group’s website:

- *All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Identical* by Ellen Hopkins
- *It’s Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *Let’s Talk About It: The Teens’ Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human* by Erika Moen
- *Rise Up!: How You Can Join the Fight Against White Supremacy* by Crystal Fleming
- *The ABC’s of LGBT+* by Ashley Mardell
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *The Pronoun Book* by Chris Ayala-Kronos
- *This is Our Rainbow: 16 Stories of Her, Him, Them, and Us* by Katherine Locke

Reported in: *Bonners Ferry Herald*, July 14, 2022, August 18, 2022, and August 19, 2022; *NBC News*, August 23, 2022.

Lafayette, Louisiana

On May 31, the Lafayette Public Library announced a new policy forbidding displays on specific segments of the population, including Pride Month, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and any displays on native American history, or cajun heritage.

The policy went into effect shortly before Pride Month began. Cutting to the quick, library manager Cora Chance observed that “This is absolutely an LGBTQ issue.” She noted that the only displays the board had previously attempted to prevent or remove were Pride displays.

Library Director Danny Gillane said the policy was put in place to help protect the library’s collections, as putting such materials on display feels “like I am inviting people to challenge these books.”

Lynette Mejía, an administrator of the Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship (LCAC) Facebook page, condemned the action. “It goes against everything a library is supposed to stand for,” said Mejía.

LCAC started a petition urging the library to revoke this policy and resume their displays. Mejía said “If you’re not highlighting different cultures . . . and these books are just kind of sitting in the background where they’re not easily found, that makes it harder . . . for people to learn about these things.”

Local advocacy group Move the Mindset is also asking the library to reconsider this policy. In a statement, they said if the library is only displaying “classic texts and traditional genres . . . in reality, it privileges the stories of certain races, classes, ethnicities, genders, and cultures over others.”

In violation of the board’s by-laws, board president Robert Judge refused board member James Thomas’s request to put a discussion about the display policy on the agenda for their June 22 board meeting.

On June 22, prior to the meeting, the Lafayette chapter of the NAACP held a protest and press conference in front of the library in opposition to the display policy.

Around 70 people attended the library board meeting and discussion of the display policy dominated the public comments portion of the meeting. The board took no action on the policy.

Reported in: *The Acadiana Advocate*, May 31, 2022, and June 23, 2022; *KLFY*, June 10, 2022; *KATC*, June 10, 2022.

Frederick County, Maryland

On June 1, Heather Fletcher, a candidate for the Frederick County Public Schools Board of Education, demanded that the Brunswick Branch of Frederick County Public Libraries take down their Pride display or move it to a location where children couldn’t see it.

When staff did not, Fletcher checked out all of the displayed books, following a plan mapped out in *CatholicVote* called “Hide the Pride” (*see: this issue: For the Record: Nationwide*). She also absconded with a cup full of pronoun pins.

Fletcher said she checked the books out to prevent other library patrons from reading them.

Frederick County Public Library issued a statement saying they restocked the display with other books and refreshed their supply of pins. They also explained that the pins were purchased with funds from their Friends group and not paid for with taxpayer dollars.

Fletcher said she would return the books but would not use the library again.

A photo Fletcher shared on social media included some of the books she checked out in protest. The remaining titles aren’t known:

- *David Bowie Made Me Gay: 100 Years of LGBT Music* by Darryl W. Bullock



- *How to Survive a Plague: The Story of How Activists and Scientists Tamed AIDS* by David France
- *Indecent Advances: A Hidden History of True Crime and Prejudice Before Stonewall* by James Polchin
- *Love that Story: Observations from a Gorgeously Queer Life* by Jonathan Van Ness
- *We Are Everywhere: Protest, Power, and Pride in the History of Queer Liberation* by Matthew Riemer and Leighton Brown
- *When Your Child is Gay: What You Need to Know* by Wesley C. Davidson

Reported in: *The Frederick News-Post*, June 2, 2022; *WMAR*, June 3, 2022.

Litchfield, New Hampshire

In observation of Pride Month, the Aaron Cutler Memorial Library created two displays, one in the adult/teen area with a sign proclaiming “Read with Pride.” The display featured a variety of titles related to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) community.

A second display in the children’s section had a sign reading “Welcome to the Children’s Room” accompanied by titles on non-traditional families and children with non-traditional interests.

On June 6, a library board member requested that library director Vicki Varick remove all Pride signs from the library. The director refused to take them down, as the library has a board-approved reconsideration policy that states materials and displays will not be removed while undergoing review as part of a reconsideration process.

On June 7, the board member came to the library and checked out all of the titles that were part of the adult/teen section, but did not venture downstairs to the children’s display. Later that day, three women came for the books on

the children’s display and checked out the last four that weren’t already in circulation.

News of the books’ removal spread quickly on social media, spurring more than 30 residents to come to the June 13 board meeting. After more than a dozen residents spoke about the display, board member Jennifer Ford made a motion for the board to request that the patron return the books. The motion passed.

Chair Donna Ferguson said, “What that person did was wrong and it is censorship. The library is for everyone and to restrict books is wrong.”

Ferguson said that the issue of the displays was added to the agenda after three residents emailed in protest of the books’ removal, inquiring if the board had a role in the act of censorship, and requesting the board to support Litchfield’s LGBTQIA+ families and individuals.

On June 15, the library shared a post on Facebook with photos of the restored displays and links to lists of LGBTQIA+ titles available through Libby and Hooopla.

Books temporarily removed from Pride displays:

- *A is for Activist* by Innosanto Nagara
- *A Queer History of the United States for Young People* by Michael Bronski
- *A Quick & Easy Guide to Asexuality* by Molly Muldoon
- *Across a Field of Starlight* by Blue Delliquanti
- *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold
- *D’Vaughn and Kris Plan a Wedding* by Chencia C. Higgins
- *Fred Gets Dressed* by Peter Brown
- *Golden Boys* by Phil Stamper
- *I Think Our Son is Gay. Volume 1* by Mangaka Okura
- *Our Dreams at Dusk: Shimanami Tasogare* by Yuhki Kamatani
- *Peaces* by Helen Oyeyemi

- *Rainbow Revolutionaries: 50 LGBTQ+ People Who Made History* by Sarah Prager
- *Tell Me How to Be* by Neel Patel
- *The City Beautiful* by Aden Polydoros
- *The Henna Wars* by Adiba Jaigirdar
- *Thirsty Mermaids* by Kat Leyh
- *To Paradise* by Hanya Yanagihara
- *Trans Figured: My Journey from Boy to Girl to Woman to Man* by Brian Belovitch
- *We Make it Better: The LGBTQ Community and Their Positive Contributions to Society*

Reported in: *Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; Manchester Klink*, June 15, 2022.

New Hanover County, North Carolina

On June 21, a Pride storytime event at the Pine Valley Library was disrupted by protestors, including members of the Proud Boys. Pine Valley Library is part of the New Hanover County Public Library system.

The hour-long event featured readings of *Daddy & Dada* by Ryan Brockington and *Heather has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newsum and craft time. The program was for children under 7 and their parents and attendance was limited to those who registered in advance.

Outside the library, protesters carried signs proclaiming “pedophiles are using LGBTQ to groom kids,” “stop supplying pornography to our students,” and “New Hanover County guilty of child abuse.”

At one point, a group of seven to eight Proud Boys who were part of the protest entered the library and attempted to gain access to the room in which the storytime event was taking place. They were not allowed entry, but shouted loudly enough for the parents and children attending to hear them.

According to community members Angie Kahney and Ashley Daniels, who



were present at the event and shared photos from it on social media, protesters closed in on the families who attended as they left. Kahney said many fled to their cars and that she saw children crying.

The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office confirmed that demonstrators entered the library and attempted to gain access to the programming room during the Pride storytime event. However, she reported that "after the reading, all the participants left the library with no incident."

Reported in: WHQR, June 22, 2022; Port City Daily, June 22, 2022.

Chillicothe County, Ohio

On June 23, the Chillicothe and Ross County Public Library received a request to reconsider *Miss Rita, Mystery Reader* by Sam Donovan.

In the written complaint, the patron articulated her beliefs that books with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) characters could not "be accepted in any situation involving a child" and that she "could see someone losing their job over it or worse."

The book was retained at all library locations.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report.

Greenville, South Carolina

On June 22, the chair of the Greenville County Library System (GCLS) called all 12 branches and instructed them to take down their Pride displays. This action was taken in response to complaints received from community members.

This action prompted assistant librarian Victoria Slessman to resign her position at the Simpsonville branch. Slessman said staff were also instructed not to include their pronouns in their email signatures.

Laura Baker resigned from the GCLS board over the issue, stating that the board never voted to remove the displays and that she was not consulted about the decision. She called on board chair Allan Hill and GCLS director Beverly James to resign.

On June 23, the board reversed their decision, according to a joint statement that was released by Upstate SC Pride, Upstate SC LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce, and the American Civil Liberties Union—South Carolina.

On September 12, the Greenville County Republican Party's (GCRP) executive committee unanimously passed a resolution calling on the County Council to investigate who ordered the library Pride displays to be put up. The resolution listed several children's books that they believe promote "transsexuality and LGBTQ ideology to children."

GCRP's resolution also stated that they "formally denounce any and all sexual indoctrination of children in government-funded schools and libraries."

GCRP chairperson Jeff Davis said party members have checked books out of the library and plan to continue to do so in order to prevent them from being displayed.

PFLAG Greenville, issued a statement which noted that LGBTQIA+ people contribute to the tax base and deserve representation in public spaces.

"There are thousands of LGBTQIA+ children across our state and thousands of children with LGBTQIA+ parents," PFLAG said in their statement. "Those children should have unfettered access to books that celebrate the beautiful diversity of humanity and represent their families."

Titles targeted by the GCRP:

- *Daddy and Dada* by Ryan Brockington

- *Generation Brave: The Gen Z Kids Who are Changing the World* by Kate Alexander
- *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Lesléa Newman
- *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *Love, Violet* by Charlotte Sullivan Wild
- *My Fairy Godmother is a Drag Queen* by David Clawson
- *Pride Puppy* by Robin Stevenson
- *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silberberg
- *You Don't Have to be Everything: Poems for Girls Becoming Themselves* by Diana Whitney

Reported in: Greenville News, June 24, 2022; The Post and Courier Greenville, June 25, 2022, and September 17, 2022.

Abilene, Texas

At the June 9 Abilene City Council meeting, a group of people requested restrictions on the availability of books with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) characters and themes at the Abilene Public Library.

Erica Batten, a homeschooling mother of six, said that materials "dealing with LGBTQ issues" were "not age-appropriate." Batten said the library would not be safe unless those books were kept away from children in another part of the library along with books on "witchcraft and other sensitive topics."

Mayor Anthony Williams gently pushed back, stressing the importance of an inclusive collection, particularly given the higher suicide risk of LGBTQIA+ teens.

Williams said "We do want you, as a public library, to respond to the whole community, and provide a response that allows us to help individuals, especially



our youth, navigate the complexities of this life.”

The library’s reconsideration policy and procedures were discussed as part of the meeting.

The same group came to the July 6 board meeting of the Abilene Public Library, again raising objections to the accessibility of LGBTQIA+ titles.

The group’s objections resulted in the board tabling a draft policy on parental responsibility. The group argued that the library’s board and staff were responsible for protecting children from books the group considered to be inappropriate.

Linda Ingram, focused on one book in particular, characterizing Erika Moen’s *Let’s Talk About It: The Teen’s Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human* “pornography” and “harmful to children [as] it is primarily used as a grooming tool.”

Moen’s book covers topics including gender, sexuality, anatomy, body image, and safe sex, and was a *Publisher’s Weekly* “best book of 2021,” a best books 2021 selection from the New York Public Library, and included in the Chicago Public Library’s list of “best teen non-fiction of 2021.”

A group of 62 people attended the August 1 meeting. The board approved a policy affirming that it is the responsibility of parents to supervise their children’s library use.

The board also voted to create a three-person committee to review *Let’s Talk About It*, in response to two formal requests for its reconsideration.

The library review committee recommended retaining the title, but moving it from the adult nonfiction section of a branch library to the adult nonfiction section of the main library. The library board voted to support the committee’s recommendation. The city manager, however, determined the book should be removed from the collection.

A list of 28 additional titles have also been challenged by the group, but the result of those challenges is unknown.

All books challenged in this case:

- *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Wings and Ruin* by Sarah J. Maas
- *All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson
- *And They Lived...* by Steven Salvatore
- *Bumped* by Megan McCafferty
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Damsel* by Elena K. Arnold
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Foul is Fair* by Hannah Capin
- *Kingdom of Ash* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Let’s Talk About It: The Teen’s Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human* by Erika Moen
- *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov
- *My Body is Growing: A Guide for Children, Ages 4 to 8* by Dagmar Geisler
- *Queer: A Graphic History* by Meg-John Barker
- *Red Hood* by Elena K. Arnold
- *Red, White & Royal Blue: A Novel* by Casey McQuiston
- *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, the Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* by Kurt Vonnegut
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Handmaid’s Tale (graphic novel)* by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson
- *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan
- *What Girls are Made Of* by Elena K. Arnold
- *Yolk* by Mary H.K. Choi
- *You Too?* by Janet Gurtler

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge reports; Abilene Reporter News, June 9, 2022, July 7, 2022, and August 6, 2022.

Arlington, Texas

On May 23, Arlington city administrators forbade the Arlington Public Library from putting up displays for Pride Month.

On October 6, the library advisory board discussed a proposed update to their display policy that would restrict Pride Month displays to the adult section. After four hours of discussion, the board tabled the vote until the next board meeting.

Board chair Catherine Serna-Horn called the proposal an act of “quiet censorship.”

Board member Zoe Wilkerson said that the existence of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) is not political.

The group driving the discussion at the library has also spent more than a year pressuring Mayor Jim Ross to stop proclaiming June Pride Month. Ross adamantly refused and issued the proclamation in June.

Gina Woodlee, who has been protesting against Pride in Arlington since July 2021, said during the meeting that LGBTQIA+ is a “lifestyle . . . whose main goal is to expose our children to sexual content.” She accused those who supported inclusivity in libraries of “grooming” children.

Bennett Reddig, president of the youth library ambassadors said, “I think most of the people there are falling for a manufactured controversy.” He characterized members of the pressure group as “using the platform of this meeting to just spew their hateful rhetoric.”

On October 27, the library board voted 9-1 to create designated LGBTQIA+ sections in the shelving areas for children, teens, and adults,



and to restrict Pride Month displays to the teen and adult sections.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; KERA, October 7, 2022, and October 28, 2022.

Bedford County, Virginia

On June 14, the Forest Library branch of the Bedford Public Library System (BPLS) moved its Pride Display after receiving complaints from members of the Bedford County chapter of Moms for Liberty.

All the books that had been part of the display were checked out by one individual, following a plan for censoring Pride materials recommended in CatholicVote (*see: this issue: For the*

Record: Nationwide). When the display was replenished, all the books were promptly checked out a second time.

Due to concerns for staff safety raised by spoken and emailed threats, the remainder of the display was moved to a less visible area of the library.

At their July 12 board meeting, people spoke in condemnation of the censorship efforts targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) materials. Many expressed dismay over the actions which made the library feel less safe and inclusive.

Elizabeth Mansel expressed concerns that attacks targeting a marginalized group were taking place in her community and said it felt like a “slippery

slope.” She also pointed out that removing resources from libraries drives young people to seek answers from sources that are less safe and reliable.

James Jones, a volunteer with the library’s Friends group, said he was deeply concerned by the threats and harassment that were directed at library staff. “Tolerance of others is a sign of a healthy community,” said Jones. “Let our libraries continue to serve us one and all.”

According to Debbie Bahouth, chair of the BPLS board, Pride displays were not targeted at any other library in the system.

Reported in: WSET, June 15, 2022; WSL, July 12, 2022; Lynchburg News and Advance, July 14, 2022.