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.


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.


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.


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
- Ficce, 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
- LBGTB 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 Perez
- 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


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
- Hōnomani: 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
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.

"All of our students deserve safety and representation; you are not providing that," said Dewsnup. "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
- **Leah On the Offset 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


**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 Davis stated that the books were purchased as a package and not specifically selected by the district.


**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.


**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 Davison 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 (LGBTQQIA+) 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


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.


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.

Daron 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.”


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 Ruhi 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

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.


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.


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 Margaret 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 Sham* 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
- *Guerrillas. Volume 1* by Brahm Revel
- *Guerrillas. 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
- *Maid* 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 Kohei 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.*
Censorship Dateline _ News

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.


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


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.


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 Abiké-Iyimíde
- 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
- Scavenger 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
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 Robie H. Harris
- 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
- Tricks by Ellen Hopkins


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.”


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
- Dune 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

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.”


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).


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 Bisbikos’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.

Bisbikos 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.


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.

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


**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.


**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 CatholicVox 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 Hoopla.

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 Chencica 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 Kamarani
- Peaces by Helen Oyeyemi

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 Newsman 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, protestors 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, the 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 “transexuality 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 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:

- 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


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 chil-
dren 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
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
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 respon-
sibility 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 rec-
commended 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-Mani-
  festo by George M. Johnson
- And They Lied... 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 Chil-
  dren, 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 Blue’s 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 adminis-
trators 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 sec-
tion. 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
chiarship.”

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 pro-
clamation in June.

Gina Woodlee, who has been pro-
testing 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 charac-
terized 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.


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 censoring 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.