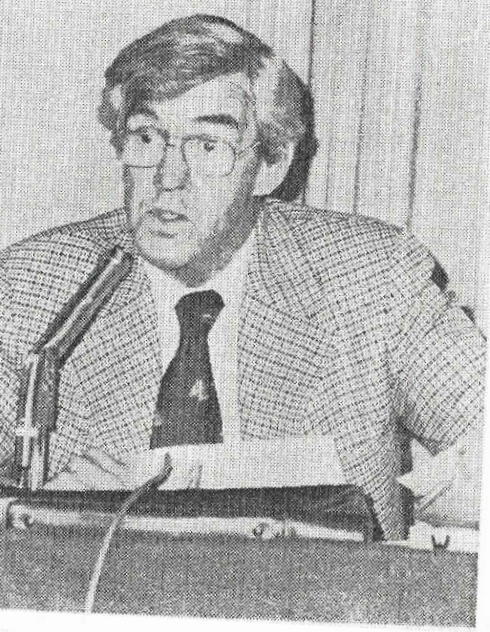


Book Panel Is Named in Island Trees

JOURNAL OF

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM & PRIVACY

Office for Intellectual Freedom, an office of the American Library Association



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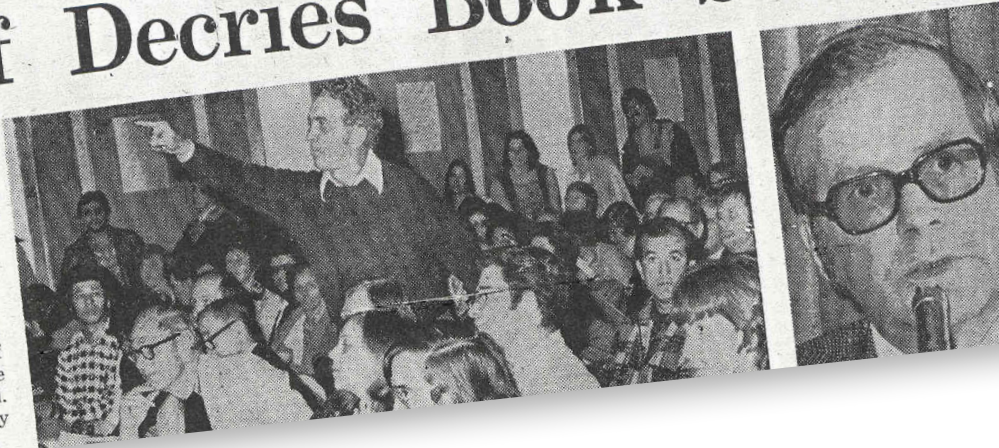
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School Chief Decries Book Seizure

By Angela Robinson

Island Trees—In his first public statement since the Island Trees book controversy erupted earlier this month, school superintendent Richard Morrow last night joined district residents who have criticized the board for seizing the books without following proper procedure.

Shortly before Morrow read his statement to some 500 parents and students crowded into the auditorium of the Stokes Elementary School last night, the board had approved a resolution setting up a committee of four residents and four staff members to review the books. The members are to be chosen by the board. The resolution was passed over shouted protests by some of those present.



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JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO . . . HAVE
YOUR CHILD READ ABOUT SOME OF THESE ISSUES,
DOESN'T MEAN THOSE ISSUES DON'T EXIST."

Hailie Bonz, a sophomore at Urbandale (IA) High School, *Success Stories* _ 88

 **Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School v. Pico** was decided 40 years ago on **June 25, 1982**. The lawsuit held that the Island Trees Board of Education violated students' First Amendment rights when they removed nine books from the high school library. The U.S. Supreme Court decided in favor of the students' right to read freely.

The nine books that were removed were:

- *Slaughterhouse-Five*, by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
- *The Naked Ape*, by Desmond Morris
- *Down These Mean Streets*, by Piri Thomas
- *Best Short Stories of Negro Writers*, edited by Langston Hughes
- *Go Ask Alice*, of anonymous authorship
- *Laughing Boy*, by Oliver LaFarge
- *Black Boy*, by Richard Wright
- *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich*, by Alice Childress
- *Soul on Ice*, by Eldridge Cleaver



Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy (ISSN 2474-7459)
 vol. 7, no. 1 _ Spring 2022

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Publisher

Deborah Caldwell-Stone, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom, an office of the American Library Association

Production

ALA Production Services: Tim Clifford and Lauren Ehle

Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) by the Office for Intellectual Freedom, an office of the American Library Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Ste. 1300, Chicago, IL 60601.



Documenting the Surge

Author _ Emily Knox (knox@illinois.edu), Editor, *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy*.

When the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* (JIFP) first started publishing in 2016, the United States was in a radically different political environment. Barack Obama was president and there was little thought given to a pandemic. The publication of this seventh volume comes after the election of Donald Trump, the first time the US has not had a peaceful transfer of executive power, and a pandemic that has killed more than 6.42 million people worldwide and more than 1 million in the US. Along with these huge shifts in our political and social structures, we have seen an incredible increase in the number of book challenges and bannings across the states.

The surge started in the fall of 2021 once students started going back to school in-person. Over this time JIFP's issue length has greatly increased. This is due to the work of our news editor, Eric Stroshane of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, who meticulously researches and documents every public instance of media challenges in schools and libraries in the country. Although other outlets also provide some of this information, only JIFP provides a fully comprehensive and documented record of these challenges. Eric's work is vital for preserving the historical record of this unprecedented time. Note that this increase in the number of cases that are documented has required us to change how journal issues are indexed. Now instead of having one index entry for title and author for targets, these are separated into two entries.

This issue also includes a commentary by Robert Holley that was previously published in *Against the Grain* on censorship from the progressive side of the political spectrum. The peer-reviewed feature by Paul Pedley covers the foundations of information privacy. Future issues of the journal will focus on COVID-19 as well as intellectual freedom and social justice. Calls for additional special issues are posted to the journal's website ([\[.ala.org/jifp\]\(https://journals.ala.org/jifp\)\). If you have suggestions or would like to serve as an editor for future special issues, please contact me \(\[knox@illinois.edu\]\(mailto:knox@illinois.edu\)\). The journal publishes commentaries and peer-reviewed feature articles that discuss censorship, freedom of expression, and data collection and dissemination, all understood broadly.](https://journals</p></div><div data-bbox=)

As I begin my service as editor of the JIFP, I would like to thank Shannon M. Oltmann for her work guiding the journal over the past five years. I would also like to thank our subscribers for their financial support. I am often asked "What can I do to support library workers and teachers during this time?" Along with voicing your support for their work at board meetings, in local media outlets, and on social media you can also join the Freedom to Read Foundation (<https://www.ftrf.org>). The Freedom to Read Foundation is the legal arm of the American Library Association and provides advocacy for libraries, education on intellectual freedom, and support for litigation in freedom of expression cases. Individual and organizational members of the FTRF receive a 50 percent discount to this journal. Please encourage others to support the vital work of the foundation and this journal.



“If You Ask Me” Op-Ed: Censorship from the Left

Changing Perspectives on Intellectual Freedom

Author _ Robert Holley, (aa3805@wayne.edu), Professor Emeritus, Wayne State University.

Editor’s note: Publication by JIFP does not constitute an endorsement of the content or represent the official position of the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) or the American Library Association (ALA). Commentaries, articles, and book reviews do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board of JIFP, OIF, ALA, or their affiliates.

Previously published in Against the Grain, August 13, 2021.

After many years of encountering censorship from conservative sources on the right, I have concerns about similar efforts from the liberal left. Most of this censorship does not currently affect items in library collections. The major effect to date has been to suppress public speech as well as the publication of materials that could be appropriate purchases for libraries. I will say at the outset that I’m radically opposed to censorship of all kinds and support discourse from all positions within the American political and cultural spectrum, even and especially those that don’t support my personal beliefs.

I prepared the first version of this column for the Emerging Issues Committee of the Freedom to Read Foundation where I provided examples of liberal censorship. For the current column, I have a section on “Implications for Political and Popular Culture” to provide some historical perspective and to expand my thoughts on the issues. I’m aware that this short column cannot claim to provide

a comprehensive treatment of the complexities of censorship. In the first section, I’ve chosen representative examples of censorship in selected categories; but others might have picked different ones. Finally, given the limited length for this column, I’ve made some broad generalizations where a more nuanced treatment would paint a more accurate picture. I defend, however, the substantive



accuracy of what I say. To provide more information on this subject, I've appended a short bibliography of general discussions of this topic in addition to the sources in the footnotes.

Definitions of First Amendment Rights, Censorship, and Intellectual Freedom

Wikipedia provides the following definition of censorship that will be used in this column: “Censorship is the suppression of speech, public communication, or other information. This may be done on the basis that such material is considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, or ‘inconvenient.’ Censorship can be conducted by governments, private institutions, and other controlling bodies” (“Censorship”). Censorship is a much broader term than First Amendment rights though many have trouble making this distinction. The First Amendment applies only to government bodies within the United States and speech that has been determined to be illegal such as incitement to violence and child pornography (“Freedom of Speech”). To give examples, libraries in federal and other state prisons are not allowed to provide only materials on Christian topics; and publicly funded colleges and universities can't prohibit peaceful public demonstrations based upon their political viewpoints. On the other hand, the American Library Association list of challenged books illustrates an attempt to censor publications only in this broad definition of the term by asking them to be removed from the library. In fact, any attempt to suppress or make illegal such challenges would itself be a violation of the First Amendment right “to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

This column will distinguish between illegal or potentially illegal censorship according to the First Amendment and legal activities on the part of government, private institutions, or individual, which meet the broader definition of censorship that includes any efforts to limit the free flow of ideas. In current intellectual freedom discussions, these legal activities to restrict information have much greater importance even if little can be done to eliminate them beyond the pressure of public opinion.

Intellectual freedom is the broadest term and will be used in this column in keeping with the American Library Association definition: “Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be

explored” (“Intellectual Freedom and Censorship”). This definition supports efforts to positively make information available on all aspects of any issue and thus goes beyond suppressing information from censorship.

Activities that are Potentially Illegal Because of the First Amendment

Activities in this category are limited. Conservatives are responsible for most cases including laws to restrict materials in public libraries, to enforce rules on what can be taught in public schools, and to remove certain classes of materials from prison libraries while favoring religious publications. Both the right and the left have sometimes agreed on efforts to restrict Internet access to pornography within public libraries. Conservatives do so on moral/religious grounds while liberal feminists consider pornography degrading to women (“Opposition to Pornography”). Overall, Supreme Court decisions have established the legality of consensual pornography by adults for distribution to adults (Stevens). Such distribution includes access on public library computers to such materials though not all libraries accept this decision, and some continue to discourage or prohibit such use (“Libraries, the Internet, and the Law”).

The left has supported restricting speech on public college campuses to specific areas or only after obtaining special permissions. Multiple court cases have reaffirmed the right to free speech on campuses and have ruled against most limitations (Alger; “Speech on Campus”). As David Wippman and Glenn C. Altschuler have commented: “Free speech and academic freedom in American education are once again under attack, from both the right and the left. The tactics differ, with the right relying more on state power—legislation and executive orders—and the left on social norms and peer pressure” (Wippman). In other words, the right focuses more on censorship that potentially violates the First Amendment while the left's activities are censorship in the broader definition of the term. More troubling has been efforts to restrict private speech of students, faculty, and staff—most often on social media. Court cases dealing with public institutions subject to the First Amendment have tended to support such private speech as long as the individual minimizes any institutional involvement and the speech does not cause disruption on the campus or in the school. For example, the Supreme Court has recently supported the rights of students to comment on social media about negative public school experiences (Liptak).



Activities That Are Legal but Potentially Restrict Intellectual Freedom

Restricting Speech that is Offensive to Some Groups

The left has been most concerned about racial or ethnic slurs. Even the most offensive language is protected by the First Amendment if this speech does not incite violence or other illegal actions. Part of the problem is that some of these words were commonly used in the past so that they appear in texts of literary importance. The most frequently cited example is the N-word. A major area of contention is teaching works by Mark Twain where this word often appears though the author is generally considered to be sympathetic to African American rights. Multiple court cases have generally supported the right of schools to teach his works (Powell). As another example, on the recent PBS special by Ken Burns on Hemingway, one of his texts had the offensive words crossed out on screen, an act that some would call censorship (Burns). The left often argues that this word and others like it should be suppressed. The right often criticizes this attitude as an attempt to eliminate speech that accurately reflects its time or is used for legitimate dramatic effect. Conservatives also argue that any derogatory speech against the dominant white majority should then be condemned. Furthermore, they point out that liberals often invoked free speech protection for works that offended conservative Christians as being “blasphemous” (Morrison).

Speech that Recalls Traumatic/Painful Events

The second category is less contentious because the speech is acceptable to many but can have a negative effect on some because of their past experiences. Common cases include sexual crimes including abuse and rape or PTSD for soldiers or victims of other traumatic events. Within all levels of education, the common proposed solution for these cases is to provide trigger warnings and allow individuals to be excused from any mandatory exposure to the troublesome speech (“NCAC Report: What’s All This about Trigger Warnings?”). The counter-argument is that exposure to such texts is a valid educational objective and that drawing the line of acceptability can be difficult.

The Issue of Historical Accuracy

Potentially offensive speech can also be tied to issues of historical accuracy with implications for the related issue of fake news. While changing the name of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award by the American Library Association was specifically stated not be an effort to censure her works, the reason given was that her works “reflect dated

cultural attitudes toward Indigenous people and people of color that contradict modern acceptance, celebration, and understanding of diverse communities” (LaRue). At issue is how a modern writer of history or especially historical fiction can accurately portray how people acted in this or many other periods without including some offensive passages that replicate the beliefs and actions of the people who lived then. On the other side, *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* created enough of a controversy that Scholastic pulled the book even though it “was written, illustrated and edited by a diverse group of people of color” and described a historically correct example of well cared for house slaves (Peralta). The counter-comment was that this “accuracy,” however, was overshadowed by the horrible lives of most enslaved African Americans and could be interpreted as an attempt to whitewash slavery.

Cultural Appropriation

Efforts to eliminate or reduce cultural appropriation may be the most controversial type of censorship in this brief column and much too complex to analyze in detail. To use the Wikipedia definition: “Cultural appropriation is the adoption of an element or elements of one culture or identity by members of another culture or identity. This can be controversial when members of a dominant culture appropriate from minority cultures” (“Cultural Appropriation”). None of these activities are illegal under the First Amendment so that they are censorship only in the broader meaning of the term. Opponents of cultural appropriation consider these actions as disrespectful while defenders contend that the borrowing from other cultures can be a sign of respect. In any case, activities such as wearing black face or practicing religious ceremonies of another culture are legal but considered unacceptable by many while Halloween costumes with foreign dress are much less controversial. To take this principle to its logical conclusion, cultural appropriation censors the right of the individual to change by adopting any elements of other cultures. “I didn’t choose my culture at birth, and I’ll be damned if some progressive with a penchant for labels insists I must act in accordance with his list of ‘white, middle-class behavior’” (Patterson).

Suppression of Publications Contrary to Liberal Views

Mainstream publishers are not immune to pressure that has the potential to harm their reputations and diminish sales. Protests and boycotts are legal but can restrict the flow of information. Both conservatives and liberals use such strategies. One example of liberal pressure already appears above in the successful efforts to cease



distribution of *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* (Peralta). Another example is the recent efforts by hundreds of employees and thousands of signatories to force Simon & Schuster not to publish Michael Pence’s upcoming book (Arken).

Implications for Political and Popular Culture

Since its founding, the United States has had a strong libertarian streak that has influenced its political and popular culture. The American Constitution reflects 18th century enlightenment values supporting intellectual freedom, opposition to censorship, and political and religious liberty, at least for white males. A pushback against these values in the late 18th century and the early 19th century helped create a Christian, white, male dominated culture that mostly persisted until the 1960s even with the freeing of the slaves and women’s suffrage. During this period, any efforts to fight censorship normally came from liberals who sought to strengthen the protections of the First Amendment and to counter censorship of legal materials offensive to mainstream values. Especially towards the end of this period, the American Library Association and many librarians took part in battles to expand their collections to include unpopular positions, support for marginalized groups, and works that offended the traditional morality of conservative Christians.

The liberals won many battles starting in the 1960s to support greater civil rights, feminism, LGBTQ equality and to impose fewer restrictions on creative works. Conservatives often fought back against these changes with only some success. In the last few years, the shape of the battle between conservatives and liberals has changed so that conservatives have become the defenders of intellectual freedom in order to oppose any censorship of their viewpoints. In my fifty year career as a librarian, my firm stance in support of intellectual freedom was directed against any censorship of liberal attacks against conservative viewpoints that dominated American politics and culture. Of late, some liberals have developed an orthodoxy that I personally mostly agree with but whose adherents have sought to impose upon the broader American community. I’m troubled by the fact that I find myself in opposition to censorship by those whose beliefs I basically support. I’m thus speaking out against any censorship from the left because of my firm commitment to intellectual freedom and from a sense of fairness that all should have the same right to present their viewpoints as I claim for myself.

From my perspective, both sides have used the same strategies to achieve their ends and to attack the opposing positions. The first step is to win or retain acceptance for their ideas in American culture so that their positions are generally accepted without argument such as happened for conservative beliefs in the 1950s. Doing so requires favorable media coverage; political power; and establishing, with or without proof, the rationality of their positions. At times, people strongly believe statements that aren’t factually true but have a great power to persuade. For examples, conservatives overlook research that indicates that sex crimes have lessened since the introduction of internet pornography. Liberals underestimate the gains won by BIPOC groups in many areas. The result is that both sides of the political spectrum have created orthodoxies that are accepted by their supporters and rejected by their opponents.

The second step is to mount attacks against the opposing orthodoxy. Both sides use the courts whenever possible to advance their points of view and, when they can, choose jurisdictions where they are more likely to prevail. For this column, I am more interested, however, when these attacks focus on the broader principle of intellectual freedom and the general agreement of many Americans in the libertarian principle of free speech. The attempts by conservatives to remove materials from public libraries is a good example. The American Library Association chose to frame these actions as banning books when actually most of the challenged materials remained on the shelves because the majority was opposed to removing such materials. The other strategy was to focus on those cases where the reasons for banning were particularly weak and would be more likely to elicit laughter than sympathy from the public. An excellent example from the political sphere was using humor to ridicule clothing nude marble statues in Washington (Associated Press “Nude or Barely Covered Statues”). In a similar fashion, one of the arguments used against censoring novels was the “truth” that many American engaged in illicit and immoral sexual activities and that soldiers commonly used the f-word in their conversations. Overall, the American public moved away from the hegemony of the earlier conservative periods to embrace a broader perception of intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights.

The dynamic has changed recently since some liberals now wish to restrict certain types of speech as indicated above while conservatives, so long opposed to free speech rights on matters that they disapproved of, now find that they can call upon the First Amendment and free speech rights to support their positions. Since I



started planning to write this column, I have monitored the *Wall Street Journal* for articles, editorials, and columns in support of free speech that either opposes liberal positions or makes fun of them. I’ll stress that this publication has a reputation for ethical journalism and occupies a position on the right equivalent to that of the *New York Times* on the left. I have such a large stack of materials that I would find it hard to single out a few specific examples. These conservatives have used the same strategies as the liberals before them. They have coined the catchy phrase “cancel culture” (Kurtzleben) and the derogatory expression “woke culture” (Sanderse). They also stress the broad scope of the First Amendment that protects hate speech, racist comments, and white privilege (Wermiel). Some conservatives explicitly state that everyone should learn how to deal with hostile attacks as part of life and that the focus should be on how far racial justice has progressed rather than on how much more is needed to be done.

The former unqualified support against censorship and for First Amendment rights and intellectual freedom has put organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Library Association in a difficult position of having to defend against the charge of logical inconsistency when they overlook liberal censorship after decades of opposing similar conservative actions. My personal opinion is that both organizations and others like them have to be consistently content neutral or change their mission statements to reflect their new realities. The new hardened position on both the right and the left have made discussions on controversial topics difficult. Reconciling such radically different viewpoints on American politics and culture in this polarized environment may be next to impossible. Both sides are likely to support censorship or free speech depending upon which option furthers their objectives.

Concluding Thoughts

To restate the basic principles of this column, First Amendment rights and intellectual freedom are two separate concepts. Legal application of the First Amendment is restricted to relatively few cases where the government attempts to suppress speech in publicly funded institutions

or to enforce legal limits on speech deemed harmful such as incitement to violence and child pornography. Many actions by individuals or organizations that are completely legal, on the other hand, can limit intellectual freedom and the free flow of information by hindering the availability of information sources of all types.

Overall, the focus of activities against intellectual freedom has shifted from being almost exclusively centered on materials that offended morality, usually in sexual matters, of conservatives to also include censorship of political positions against key liberal values. Most, but not all of these, seek to redress what the liberals perceive to be injustices against racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. While censorship from the right remains more prevalent and the greater danger to intellectual freedom in most areas, neglecting the recent threats from the left should not be overlooked.

To date, in my opinion, libraries have not been greatly affected in their ability to provide a broad range of information resources to meet the needs of their communities; but segments of the broader society have not been so lucky. Negative consequences, mostly in academia, have convinced some of the dangers of speaking against liberal values in the same way that speaking against conservative orthodoxy is punished in other milieus. Professors and students may currently hesitate to speak out openly against the prevailing liberal orthodoxy in the classroom, on social media, or in their publications for fear of public censure or faculty/administrative disapproval (Anderson; Kaufmann).

Finally, censorship from the left is in conflict with two widely held library principles on intellectual freedom. The first truism is that the answer to bad speech is more speech, not eliminating troublesome materials. Of late, some liberals have attempted to suppress speech by conservatives who say that social justice should have less priority in American political thought. The second truism states that everyone should find something in the library that offends them. Not offending has become a goal in much liberal thought. As librarians resisted censorship of moral standards that offend many conservatives, they should also resist censorship of political/social speech that offends many liberals.

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Protecting The Privacy of Library Users

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The purpose of this paper is to consider the best way of understanding the concept of informational privacy, including a discussion of what would be an appropriate theoretical framework and useful conceptual model; as well as how such a model can be used to investigate specific issues of library privacy.

Two methodologies were used for the research: a literature review, and a thematic analysis of three pieces of data protection legislation. The research project is still in its relatively early stages, and the intention is to use several other methodologies to test the initial findings.

Informational privacy is a derivative layer of other forms of privacy, and as such can only be properly understood in relation to each of the underlying privacy types. Where libraries rely for the delivery of their services on digital technologies provided by external vendors, they need to better understand whether and how those technologies impact upon each of the different types of privacy identified by (Koops et al. 2017).

Using three pieces of data protection legislation to identify key themes does not give a complete picture of informational privacy; nor does it fully address the wider privacy implications. A detailed review of relevant case law on privacy from the European Court of Human Rights was not undertaken as part of this project. The choice of words and phrases appearing in data protection legislation and the subsequent grouping of them into broad themes is subjective.

The observation that all library privacy scenarios have an informational privacy component alongside one or more privacy types has significant implications for information professionals intending to protect the privacy of their users; because, if correct, it means that simply complying with data protection laws does not fully address the protection of the underlying privacy types.

Protecting user privacy and confidentiality has long been an integral part of the mission of libraries. Caldwell-Stone (2012) defines library users' information privacy as the right to read and inquire anything, without the fear of being judged or punished. It is relevant to both bricks and mortar and digital libraries.



Library privacy is important because of the “chilling effect” whereby users either know or suspect that they are being monitored and change their behavior accordingly. The “chilling effect” threatens the ability of library users to explore difficult, controversial, or potentially embarrassing topics without fear of being judged.

Gorman (2000) identifies privacy as one of eight enduring values of librarians and believes that this consists of ensuring the confidentiality of records of library use and overcoming technological invasions of library use.

“Although privacy is one of the core tenets of librarianship, technology changes have made it increasingly difficult for libraries to ensure the privacy of their patrons in the twenty-first century library” (Newman and Tijerna 2017, ix).

Is it possible for librarians to protect the privacy of their users, and if so, how? If, for example, a library user accesses an ebook from home, their personal data is processed by the library; by the e-book vendor; by the e-reader software company; and possibly even by illegal entities.

Libraries rely on commercial products from external vendors to provide their services. Indeed Barron and Preater (2018, 87) say “Contemporary librarianship, as practitioners have constructed it, could not exist without library systems.” Technologies used include integrated library systems, discovery services, commercial products offering electronic newspapers, magazines, and e-books. Libraries have contracts in place with vendors, but not necessarily with everyone in the supply chain. For example, users may access e-book content through a third-party’s software (such as Adobe Digital Editions) with whom the library has no formal contract.

Examples of the privacy of library users being threatened include:

- The British Library withstood a brute force attack on its systems over a four-day period in which the attacker attempted to obtain customer data. The attack was unsuccessful and no data was lost (British Library 2016).
- Students were warned that some of their data may have been compromised after a breach at Trinity College Dublin’s library (McLysaght 2011).
- Keystroke logging devices were found on several computers in Cheshire libraries (BBC News Online 2011).
- Borrower records of 20 Fingal library users had been edited to contain data of a highly inappropriate, sexually explicit nature (Halpin 2018).

“Libraries and librarians have embraced technological changes in order to offer faster, more accurate, and

easier-to-access materials and information to patrons. But with these technological advances came an increased ability to intrude on the intellectual privacy of library patrons by both libraries and the vendors they contract with for patron services” (Newman and Tijerna 2017, 1).

How Best Can We Understand Informational Privacy?

Westin (1967) defined informational privacy as “the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how and to what extent information about them is communicated to others.” Westin’s definition is well suited to the 1960’s era from which it comes, because individuals typically provided their own data to organisations. However, half a century later, a significant proportion of data about identifiable individuals is gathered by other means: it is often observed, derived or inferred (Abrams 2016, 6–8).

Many scholars focus on informational privacy in terms of ownership and control. For example, Branscomb generated a list of information rights which includes the right to control the release of information and the right to withhold information about ourselves (Branscomb 1985, 81). Gorman (2000, 144) says that “our informational privacy is the right to control personal information and to hold our retrieval and use of recorded knowledge to ourselves, without such use being monitored by others.” Floridi (2016), however, believes privacy should be anchored around human dignity rather than ownership and control. We would go further and say that one should ask whether the result of someone processing personal data results in a violation of the human dignity of one or more individuals, thereby focussing on outcomes rather than intentions. In a world characterised by big data and algorithms it is only possible to identify patterns such as discrimination on the grounds of race, sexual orientation, gender, or religious beliefs if one views things from the wider group perspective.

Data protection laws are focussed on protecting the personal information of identified or identifiable individuals, and as such represent the procedural means through which the substantive right to informational privacy is enforced. But that raises the question as to whether data protection laws provide a satisfactory procedural means for comprehensively protecting an individual’s privacy. To learn how we can best understand informational privacy, we must consider informational privacy within its wider context.



Data protection is not a direct equivalent for privacy (Wright and Raab 2014, 16). Several scholars have looked at the distinction between privacy and data protection. (Kokott and Sobotta 2013) consider the overlaps as well as the significant differences between the right to data protection and the right to privacy by looking at the two underlying systems of fundamental rights protection (the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights). The Charter clearly distinguishes between data protection and privacy: Article 7 covers respect for private and family life whereas article 8 covers protection of personal data. The European Convention on Human Rights and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) do not contain similar distinctions.

Gellert and Gutwirth (2013, 529) examine the rights to privacy and data protection, and they apply the scope of these rights to three case studies: body-scanners, human enhancement technologies such as brain computer interface and neuro-enhancement, and genome sequencing. They found that even when both rights apply to the same situation, they do not always result in precisely the same legal outcome in terms of the legality of the situation.

The goal of data protection is not the protection of data but of the individuals to whom the data refer (Gutwirth et al. 2014, 222). Meanwhile the right to privacy as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights is a four-folded right covering private life, family life, home, and correspondence (Gutwirth et al. 2011).

Gellert and Gutwirth (2013) make a number of distinctions between data protection and privacy:

- Data protection and privacy differ both formally and substantially, although there are overlaps.
- Data protection is broader because it applies automatically each time personal data are processed whereas privacy is only triggered if there has been an interference with one's right to privacy.
- Data protection is narrower because it only deals with the processing of personal data, whereas privacy applies to the processing of personal and non-personal data where it affects one's privacy.
- The proportionality tests for the right to privacy and the right to the protection of personal data may well diverge.

Privacy types

Following in the footsteps of Blok (2002), Koops et al. (2017) believe informational privacy can be seen as a derivative or added layer of, or perhaps precondition to, other forms of privacy. This leads them to treat

informational privacy not as a privacy type but as an overlay related to each of the underlying privacy types.

Many scholars have built on one another's work to develop and refine lists of privacy types. According to Finn et al. (2013, 1), Clarke was "the first privacy scholar of whom we are aware to have categorised the types of privacy in a logical, structured, coherent way," citing Clarke (1997). However, we would point to two earlier categorizations.

Westin (1967, 35–42) identified four functions of privacy: personal autonomy, emotional release, self-evaluation, and limited and protected communication. Westin also expressed his ideas in terms of four states of privacy: solitude, intimacy, anonymity, and reserve.

Pedersen (1979) identified six types of privacy:

1. Reserve,
2. Isolation,
3. Solitude,
4. Intimacy with Family,
5. Intimacy with Friends, and
6. Anonymity.

He also undertook a factor analysis of ratings within each privacy type to find types of privacy functions (147). The factors found were

1. Contemplation,
2. Autonomy,
3. Rejuvenation,
4. Confiding,
5. Creativity,
6. Disapproved consumptions,
7. Recovery,
8. Catharsis, and
9. Concealment.

Clarke (1997) defined four types of privacy, adding a fifth in 2013:

1. privacy of the person (bodily privacy),
2. privacy of personal data (which is one component of informational privacy),
3. privacy of personal behaviour (restrict information about personal matters such as religious practices, sexual practices, or political activities),
4. privacy of personal communication (restriction on monitoring telephone, e-mail and virtual communications, another component of informational privacy), and



	Personal zone "solitude"	Intimate zone "intimacy"	Semi-private zone "secrecy"	Public zone "inconspicuousness"
(Emphasis on) freedom from "being let alone"	Bodily privacy	Spatial privacy	Communicational privacy	Proprietary privacy
(Emphasis on) freedom to "self-development"	Intellectual privacy	Decisional privacy	Associational privacy	Behavioral privacy

Figure 1. Typology of privacy by Koops et al 2017

5. privacy of personal experience (added in 2013, since many of our experiences in contemporary society are mediated through screens, which produce media that shape our experiences).

Finn et al. (2013) expanded Clarke’s list of privacy types based on the impact of six new and emerging technologies:

1. whole body imaging scanners,
2. RFID-enabled travel documents,
3. unmanned aerial vehicles,
4. second-generation DNA sequencing technologies,
5. human enhancement technologies, and
6. second-generation biometrics.

Their expanded list consists of seven types of privacy:

1. privacy of the person,
2. privacy of behaviour and action,
3. privacy of personal communication,
4. *privacy of data and image* (ensuring individuals’ data is not automatically available to other individuals and organisations and that people can exercise a substantial degree of control over that data and its use)
5. *privacy of thoughts and feelings* (thought does not automatically translate into behavior),
6. *privacy of location and space* (the right to move about in public or semi-public space without being identified, tracked, or monitored), and
7. *privacy of association* (including group privacy); it fosters freedom of speech, including political speech, freedom of worship and other forms of association.

Koops et al. (2017) developed a typology of eight privacy types, four being freedoms from (i.e., right to be let alone), four being freedoms to (self-develop). They also split privacy into four zones: solitude (personal), intimacy

(intimate), secrecy (semi-private), inconspicuousness (public zone). They believe every privacy scenario will, to a greater or lesser degree, have an informational element to it. Informational privacy is missing from the list of privacy types in figure 1 because Koops et al. use it as an overlay across all the other eight types. They do this because they want to minimise the risk of neglecting the other types of privacy.

In “The Fourth revolution” Floridi (2014, 129) says that it is common to distinguish four types of privacy, and speaks of these all being “freedoms from” something:

1. Physical privacy (freedom from sensory interference or intrusion)
2. Mental privacy (freedom from psychological interference or intrusion)
3. Decisional privacy (freedom from procedural interference or intrusion)
4. Informational privacy (freedom from epistemic interference or intrusion achieved through a restriction on unknown or unknowable facts about an individual)

There will always be an ongoing need to refine and adapt any typology of privacy in view of societal and technological changes. Finn et al. (2013, 21) say “privacy is a fluid and dynamic concept that has developed alongside technological and social changes.” Floridi (2014, 137) similarly acknowledges that the friction in the infosphere is importantly affected by technological innovations and social developments.

Vedder (2004) suggests a new category of privacy distinct from individual or collective privacy called *categorical privacy*. This is a reaction to the ease with which individuals can become associated with new groups as new technologies like data mining emerge. Sigmund (2017) points out that categorical privacy removes just one problem of the privacy concept, but that many others remain.



The above review of privacy types reflects the complex nature of privacy as a concept and helps make the case for a holistic approach to privacy, even if that is fiendishly difficult.

What is an Appropriate Theoretical Framework for Informational Privacy?

Over 50 privacy theories were reviewed. Noteworthy theories include:

- Neil Richards' theory of intellectual privacy is highly relevant to the work of information professionals, comprising freedom of thought, the "right to read," and the right to communicate in confidence (Richards 2015).
- Sandra Petronio's communications privacy management theory is a highly developed rule-based theory based around the idea of negotiated boundaries between the personal data that people choose to conceal and that which they are prepared to share with particular confidants (Petronio and Altman 2002)
- Helen Nissenbaum argues that privacy is best understood through a notion of "contextual integrity," where it is not the sharing of information that is the problem, but the sharing of information outside of socially agreed contextual boundaries. She proposes her "Framework of contextual integrity" (FCI) for analysis of potentially privacy-invading services and practices (Nissenbaum 2010) consisting of five key components (contexts, informational norms, actors, attributes, and transmission principles)
- Floridi's privacy theory forms part of his philosophy of information, and includes the concept of ontological frictions (Floridi 2006a). His theory is information- or data-centric.

Floridi (2008, 199) sees his theory as providing a minimalist, common framework that can support dialogue. He identifies four privacy types, of which informational privacy is the most important one; presenting them all as "freedoms from." Of all the privacy theories reviewed, we believe Floridi provides the best overall theoretical framework, but with some reservations. Firstly, to acknowledge the importance of the full range of privacy types we believe Floridi's privacy theory should be combined with the typology of privacy produced by Koops et al. (2017), who recognise eight privacy types with informational privacy as an overlay across all of them. They also split these privacy types into four "freedoms from" and four "freedoms to," thereby acknowledging the importance of

privacy in giving people the freedom to develop. Many aspects of privacy are not fully fleshed out in Floridi's minimalist theoretical framework; but precisely because of this the theory is flexible enough to cope with continually changing technological and social developments that directly impact upon privacy norms.

Tavani (2008) criticises Floridi's privacy theory on two grounds, the first of which supports our contention that Floridi's theory needs to be combined with one that acknowledges the range of privacy types over and above informational privacy. He says that an adequate privacy theory should be able to differentiate informational privacy from other kinds of privacy, including psychological privacy; and distinguish between descriptive and normative aspects of informational privacy in a way that differentiates a (mere) loss of privacy from a violation of privacy.

Floridi's privacy theory appeals for a number of reasons:

- He anchors privacy around human dignity, not ownership or control.
- His theory of ontological friction is a useful way of conceptualizing key issues in informational privacy: flows, movements, and data transfers; processing and use of data; safeguards, etc.
- He considers informational privacy to be the most important type of privacy.
- He treats whole groups as individuals. This modification of the level of abstraction acknowledges that some groups are holders of rights (Floridi 2017a, 83). Big data is more likely to treat types (of customers, users, citizens, demographic population, etc.) rather than tokens (you, Alice, me . . .), and hence groups rather than individuals. The debate between tokens and types is one between nominalism and realism (Floridi 2017a, 85).
- He recognises the revolutionary impact of digital technologies: "ICT's are more redrawing rather than erasing the boundaries of informational privacy" (Floridi 2013b, 230).
- It is the theory best suited to current and emerging challenges posed by developments such as big data, artificial intelligence, algorithms, and machine learning.
- He recognises the importance of data ethics, a new branch of ethics which shifts the level of abstraction of ethical enquiries from being information-centric to being data-centric (Floridi and Taddeo 2016, 1).



Spreadsheet	Conceptual model
Entity type Stakeholders Legal status Organisational attitude to privacy	Entities (individuals, groups, society)
Content (Personally identifiable information, sensitive personal data, demographically identifiable information)	Types of data
Ownership, access and control Public/private	Ownership, access and control
Ontological frictions Information behaviour Digital literacy	Ontological frictions
Purpose of processing Uses	Processing & use
Risks and harms Intent/outcome	Risks & harms
Remedies	Remedies
Rights of data subjects Duties of data controllers	Values, rights and freedoms

Figure 2. Development of the conceptual model mapping the information privacy landscape

What Is a Useful Conceptual Model for Informational Privacy?

During the research, three conceptual models have been developed. One maps the informational privacy landscape and includes a component covering ontological frictions (figure 5). A second model identifies ten types of ontological friction (figure 8). A third conceptual model was developed to address the privacy impacts of library technologies (figure 9).

A literature review was undertaken to understand the nature of informational privacy. This was used to help map out the informational privacy landscape in spreadsheet form, and this was further developed into a conceptual model (see figures 2 and 3). A number of key concepts were identified, and more detail was provided for each of the concepts that had been identified, although there isn't the space to include the more granular information in this article.

A key component of the model are entities. Informational privacy relates to the personal information of identifiable individuals, but the concept of entities was used more widely. For example, it includes library vendors processing personal data. Those companies fall under "groups."

Koops et al. (2017, 569) believe that "informational privacy combines both negative freedom (excluding access to information) and positive freedom (informational self-determination)." We believe it is important to acknowledge the positive aspects of privacy—the ways in which privacy provides space within which people have the freedom to develop, to become the people that they want to be rather than concentrating exclusively on the negative aspects of privacy. Writing in Roessler and Mokrosinska (2015, 79), Solove says that part of what makes a society a good place in which to live is the extent to which it allows people freedom from the intrusiveness of others. A society without privacy protection would be suffocating, and it might not be a place in which most of us would want to live. When protecting individual rights, we as a society decide to hold back in order to receive the benefits of creating the kinds of free zones for individuals to flourish.

Thematic Analysis

To further develop the conceptual model (figure 3) mapping out the informational privacy landscape, a thematic analysis was undertaken. Three pieces of data protection legislation were identified:

- the 1981 Council of Europe Convention for the



protection of individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data (Council of Europe 1981)

- the 1995 Data Protection Directive (EU Directive 95/46/EC 1995) and
- the 2016 General Data Protection Regulation (European Union 2016)

The Convention was chosen because it is the first binding international instrument to set standards for the protection of individuals’ personal data; while the two pieces of EU legislation were chosen because “the EU’s data protection laws have long been regarded as a gold standard all over the world” (European Data Protection Supervisor 2017).

The approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 79) was used to undertake the thematic analysis. They say that thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. They break down the process of undertaking such an analysis into six distinct phases:

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Coding the three pieces of data protection legislation identified 369 words or phrases. It was only practicable to allocate primary codes to each of them, whereas some could have slotted into multiple headings. The 369 words and phrases were categorized into 15 broad themes, which were eventually grouped into three categories.

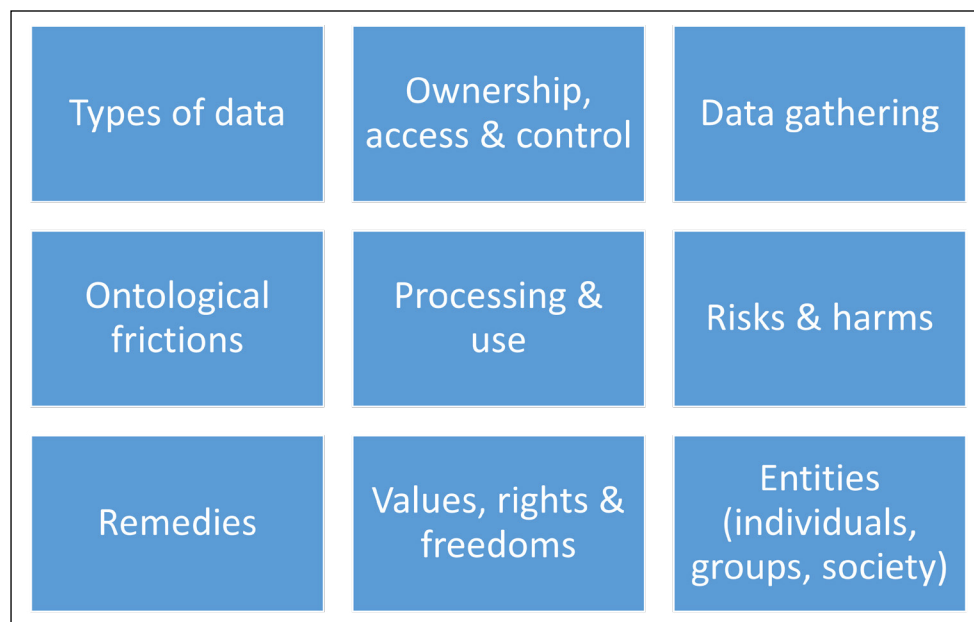


Figure 3. Original version of the conceptual model

Across how many of the legislative texts?	Entities	Flow	Other topics	Totals
1	66	39	64	169
2	54	23	62	139
3	30	4	27	61
TOTAL	150 (41%)	66 (18%)	153 (41%)	369

Figure 4. Breakdown of terms identified by broad category, and by how many of the texts they appear in

Entities

1. Natural persons
2. Groups
3. Society
4. Data protection role/function

Flows

1. Borders and frontiers
2. Flows, movements, and transfers
3. Enablers of data flow
4. Obstacles to data flow

Other Themes

1. Power and control
2. Safeguards
3. Values, rights, and freedoms
4. Access



5. Technology
6. National/international
7. Processing of data

Of the 369 words and phrases identified, 61 of them appear in all three pieces of legislation.

As a result of the findings of the thematic analysis, the model mapping the information privacy landscape was expanded to cover three new areas:

- Safeguards
- National/international perspective and territorial scope
- Data flows

The “Entities” were expanded to cover data protection roles and functions; while “groups and institutions” were split into six sub-categories: companies and institutions, groups of individuals, specific categories (such as “health professional” or “interpreters”), states and parties (such as “European Parliament,” “Non-contracting states”), legal status, and other groups.

We received feedback on the model suggesting that safeguards could form part of the remedies component. However our model envisages remedies as covering judicial remedies to address failures to protect personal data which have already taken place such as compensation, damages, costs, or complaints procedures whereas the safeguards component covers built in protections to prevent those failures from occurring. They can be clustered into:

- References to protect(ions): “Safeguard,” “Protect,” “Protection of legal persons,” “High level of protection”
- Emphasizing compliance: “legal requirement,” “comply,” “authorized”
- Qualifiers: “shall apply,” “shall take,” “shall provide”
- Specific requirements: “informed,” “relevant,” “fairly,” “transparency,” “explicit consent”

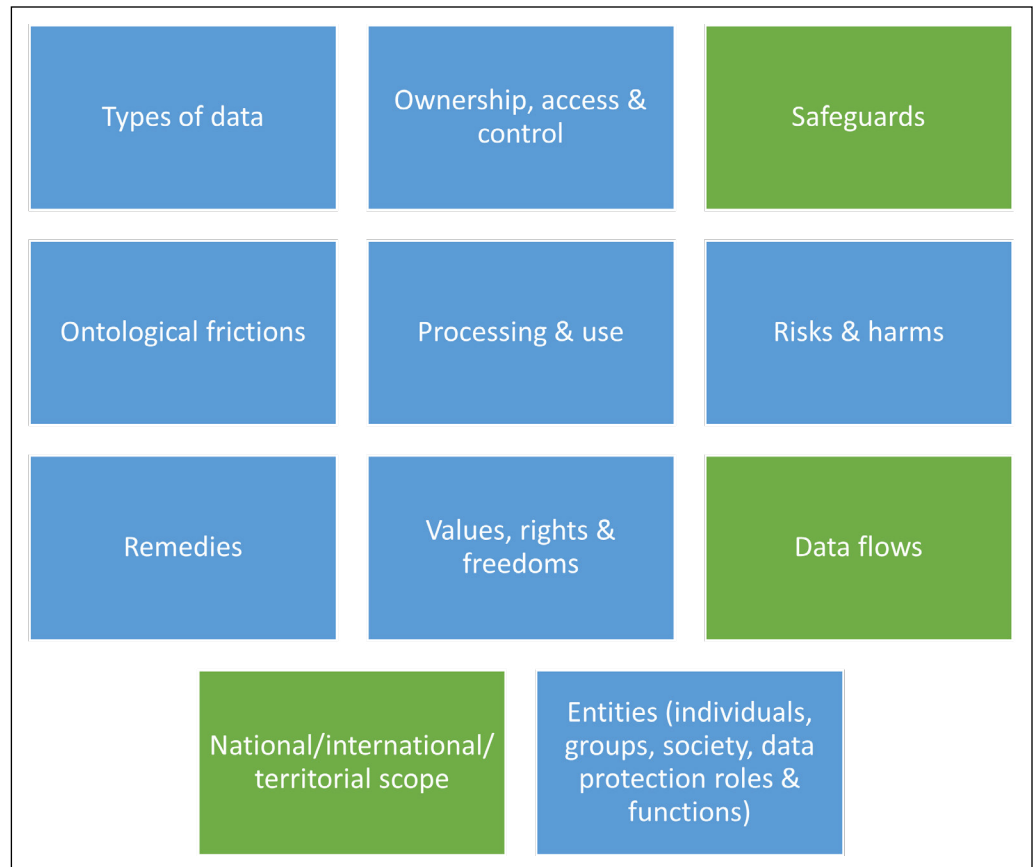


Figure 5. Updated conceptual model following the thematic analysis

Another piece of feedback suggested merging data gathering and data flow into a single component. The rationale for the data gathering heading was to cover the legal acquisition of data. It covers the question of whether consent is one time, unambiguous, or implied; and whether the data subject was fully aware, partially aware or totally unaware that the data was being gathered. Rather than merging “data gathering” with “data flows,” we opted to incorporate data gathering into the “safeguards” component.

The “values, rights and freedoms” component incorporates concepts of democracy, freedoms, human rights, liberty, peace, and respect as well as rights such as the right to rectification and erasure; the right not to be subject to automated decision-making; the right to object to processing; the right to information; the right of access; the right to restrict processing; and the right to data portability. This component intersects, to some extent, with other components. For example, it incorporates the *right* to remedy, whereas the “Remedies” component covers the range



Our model mapping the information privacy landscape	Daniel Solove's infographic on the GDPR
National / international / territorial scope	Territorial scope
Entities (individuals, groups, institutions, society, data protection roles & functions)	The players
Types of data	Personal data Sensitive personal data
Processing and use	Lawful processing
Safeguards	Responsibilities of data controllers and processors
Ownership, access and control	Consent
Values, rights and freedoms	Rights of data subjects
Remedies	Enforcement Data breach notification
Data flows	International data transfer
The following do not appear in Solove's infographic	Why I included them
Ontological frictions	Phrase used by Floridi (2005) for the forces that oppose the information flow within (a region of) the infosphere, and hence (as a coefficient) to the amount of work and efforts required for a certain kind of agent to obtain, filter and/or block information (also, but not only) about other agents in a given environment
Risks and harms	Article 29 Data Protection, Working Party 2017, Centre for Information Policy Leadership 2016; Richards and Hartzog 2015

Figure 6. comparison of Solove's GDPR infographic with our map of the information privacy landscape

of available remedies. The National/international/territorial scope component covers issues of jurisdiction but also covers other aspects such as international cooperation between supervisory authorities. One piece of feedback noted how territorial scope can be viewed in terms of the *right* for your personal data not to be transferred to territories that do not offer the same protections as the European Economic Area.

To test the validity of our model mapping the information privacy landscape, we cross-checked it with an infographic setting out the key elements of the GDPR (Solove 2017). Solove is a law professor with an international reputation for his academic work on privacy. Our model is not exclusively focussed on the GDPR, but it is nevertheless useful to compare the two models. Both models have eleven elements, although in a few cases several of Solove's components fit within one of our headings. Two of our elements have no direct equivalents in Solove's infographic, namely ontological frictions and risks and harms.

How Can a Conceptual Model be Used to Investigate Specific Issues of Library Privacy?

For each privacy scenario, there will be several key elements:

“Entities” covers library staff as well as individual library users or citizens. Information professionals advise companies and institutions on compliance and accountability as well as playing a crucial role in protecting the privacy of their users. That role includes providing education and advice on privacy-related issues.

Within “groups” will be companies and institutions. This will include the library's host organisation as well as the vendor companies supplying products and services to libraries, who rely on external companies to deliver the range of library and information services that they provide.



The state in the form of government, the security services, and so on can be seen as an institution through which society makes and enforces its public policies.

All library privacy scenarios will have an informational privacy component. Koops et al. (2017) believe that this can be seen as a derivative or added layer of, or perhaps a precondition to, other forms of privacy; and it is therefore important to be able to acknowledge the other privacy types that are involved in any given library-related privacy situation.

Ontological Frictions as a Means of Controlling the Flow of Personal Data

Floridi (2006a) uses the term “ontological friction” to refer to the forces that oppose the flow of information within a region of the informational environment, the “infosphere” as Floridi calls it. It is a useful way of conceptualizing key issues in informational privacy: flows, movements, and data transfers.

Given some amount of personal information available in a region of the infosphere, any increase or decrease in the level of informational friction will affect privacy: the lower the level of informational friction, the higher the accessibility to personal information about the agents will be and vice versa.

There is a limited amount of literature about ontological friction:

- Floridi (2006a) provides an outline of the ontological interpretation of informational privacy based on information ethics. This interpretation stresses that informational privacy is also a matter of construction of one’s own informational identity.
- Floridi’s ontological theory of informational privacy uses concepts such as ontological friction to interpret informational privacy. Barn et al. (2015) re-cast the theory in terms of modelling constructs and then applies the theory in the form of a Bayesian network of beliefs in the context of a research project aimed at developing a socio-technical system delivered as a mobile app in the UK youth justice system. They use a modelling language to provide a representation suitable for consumption by software engineers so that it can be used as a way of evaluating information privacy concerns in the design process.
- Bates (2018) further develops Paul Edwards’ concept of “data friction” by examining the socio-material forces shaping data movements in the cases of research

Entities	Privacy Types	Ontological Frictions
Individuals	Bodily privacy	Technological
Groups	Spatial privacy	Social
Society	Communicational privacy	Regulatory
	Proprietary privacy	Sensory
	Intellectual privacy	Spatial
	Decisional privacy	Information behaviour
	Associational privacy	Temporal
	Behavioural privacy	Training & awareness
	Informational privacy	Obscurity
		Contextual

Figure 7. Key elements for privacy scenarios: entities, privacy types, & ontological frictions

data and online communications data. He articulates a politics of data friction, identifying the interrelated infrastructural, socio-cultural and regulatory dynamics of data friction, and how these contribute to the constitution of social relations. Casanovas (2014) considers ontological friction in the context of Floridi’s information ethics.

- Hildebrandt (2011) discusses the “inference problem” whereby the emerging infosphere seems capable of anticipating our behaviours before we become aware of them. She believes such inferences could dissolve the “ontological friction” that safeguards our privacy. The notion of ontological friction is pivotal for an adequate understanding of privacy because it does not start from individual users that control “their” information, but from an infosphere that has as an affordance a measure of opacity of individual citizens.
- McGeeveran (2013) discusses frictionless sharing which discloses an individuals’ activities automatically rather than waiting for them to authorize a particular disclosure. He does not think a law of friction would address every situation, and he asks whether such a law should be enforced by government or a voluntary design guideline. His article does not cite Floridi.
- Pagallo (2010) stresses the impact of digital technologies on ontological friction. He believes that the ontological degree of friction set by P2P systems creates risks and threats for national security, copyright interests, as well as privacy (protection of the personal sphere from unwanted scrutiny).
- Taddeo and Vaccaro (2011) examine a criterion for the ethical assessment of P2P network implementations. They note that the absence of informational friction



does not depend on the type of information transmitted but solely on the way in which the information is produced, transmitted, and stored.

Other articles include Floridi (2013b; 2017b; 2014), Gutwirth et al. (2014), Martin (2011), Primiero (2016), Primiero et al. (2017), and Strikwerda (2010). These items were scanned for any mentions of potential friction types. In addition, material from the much broader literature review was trawled for factors which could be considered to represent ontological frictions, even if the sources used made no mention of either the phrase “informational frictions” or “ontological frictions.” Ten types of friction were found, and these were developed into a conceptual model.

Floridi does not give us a systematic list of friction types. In “The Fourth Revolution” (2014), however, he does provide a few examples of what might affect the informational gap (which he describes as a function of the degree of accessibility of personal data where the larger the gap, the lower the degree of accessibility to personal data). Using the examples given by Floridi, one can identify the following seven friction types:

1. *Sensory*: if the students have excellent hearing, (104); if the students have perfect sight, p. 104.
2. *Spatial*: whether the students have their own rooms (103).
3. *Temporal*: Floridi refers to a science fiction scenario regarding time, and to a device called a chronoscope, p. 104. Floridi says that because of their “data superconductivity,” ICTs are well-known for being among the most influential factors that affect the ontological friction in the infosphere (2006b, 110).
4. *Technological*: Floridi says that ICT’s “unquestionably and influentially affect informational friction” (105).
5. *Regulatory*: “solutions to the problem of protecting informational privacy can be not only self-regulatory and legislative but also technological” (139).
6. *Contextual* (Floridi discusses several contextual issues, e.g., social contexts (132), and public contexts (141), but the primary reason for identifying contextual frictions as one of the friction types is Nissenbaum’s framework of contextual integrity (Nissenbaum 2010).
7. *Social* (Floridi acknowledges that many factors can affect the ontological friction in the infosphere “including, most importantly, technological innovations and social developments” (2014, 137). These are not mutually exclusive, because the social

environment is itself increasingly dependent on technology. Floridi gives massive inurbation as an example of social frictions: the abandonment of rural areas in favour of a metropolis (2013b, 235).

In addition to the frictions inspired by Floridi’s writings, a further three friction types were identified from other academics and their writings on privacy:

1. *Obscurity* encompasses online obscurity, practical obscurity, and obfuscation. Hartzog and Selinger (2013) explores obscurity, the idea that when information is hard to obtain or understand it is sometimes safe. Obscurity does not mean inaccessible, rather the deterrent is the need for greater effort to get to the data. Selinger and Hartzog (2014) provide examples of why the lack of obscurity can be problematic, how privacy norms can change quickly, and how changes to social norms can quickly change the privacy landscape thereby giving rise to new breaches of etiquette, new privacy interests, and new privacy harms. In view of the way in which computers never forget, Bishop et al. (2013) consider a number of technical approaches to forgetting without deleting. However, these techniques make uncovering the truth harder and more expensive as well as presupposing that individuals have access to the appropriate economic, political, and technological resources.
2. *Information behaviour* is a type of friction because people make a calculated risk assessment as to whether to share information. Dinev and Hart (2006) attempt to better understand the delicate balance between privacy risk beliefs and confidence and enticement beliefs that influence the intention to provide personal information necessary to conduct transactions. They have produced a privacy calculus model to better understand how individuals develop privacy concerns and what consequences these perceptions have in influencing interactions with other individuals, groups, agencies, and vendors. Peoples’ behavior changes when they know or when they think that they are being watched—the chilling effect. Penney (2016) undertook an empirical legal study which identified a correlation between online government surveillance and a reduction in traffic to privacy-sensitive Wikipedia articles. PEN America examined how NSA surveillance drives American authors to self-censor, making the point that “we will never know what books or articles may have been written that would have shaped the world’s thinking on a particular topic

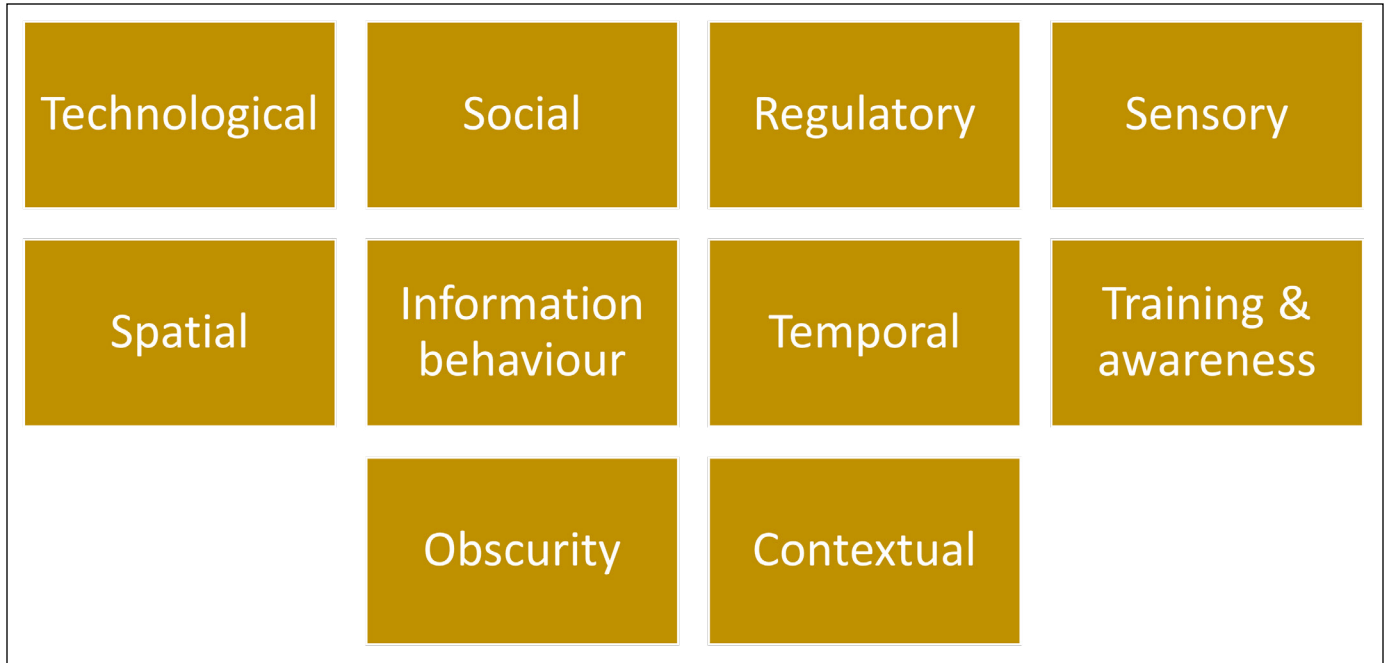


Figure 8. Ontological frictions

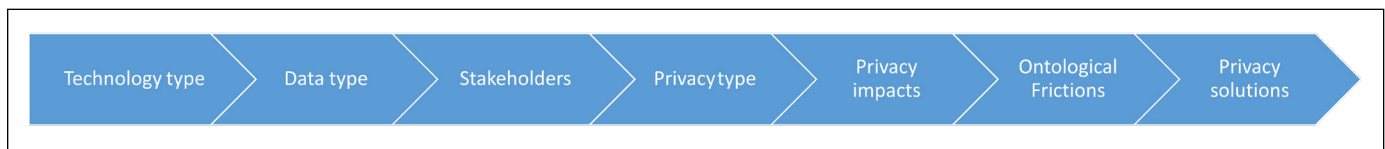


Figure 9. Privacy impacts of library technology

if they are not written because potential authors are afraid that their work would invite retribution” (PEN America 2013, 7).

3. *Training & awareness*: the difference that digital literacy training for library users (including safe online practices) can make, as well as privacy training for librarians. Noh (2014) considers the impact of privacy training on library staff—such as a change in attitude regarding data retention periods, and how the demand for user privacy education increased significantly after the librarian training course had been completed.

Conclusions

The original research question was “How best can we understand informational privacy.” It is clear from the work of Koops et al. (2017) that informational privacy is not a privacy type in itself but a derivative layer of other forms of privacy. The corollary of this is that to

understand informational privacy one needs to see it in the context of the underlying privacy types to which it relates. Koops et al. (2017) identified eight types: bodily privacy, spatial privacy, communicational privacy, proprietary privacy, intellectual privacy, decisional privacy, associational privacy, or behavioral privacy.

To apply a conceptual model on privacy to a library context, there are three key components that must be considered (figure 7): the entities involved, the types of privacy that are affected, and how the flow of data can be controlled (what Floridi refers to as ontological frictions). We identified ten friction types, seven of which were inspired by Floridi’s writings: sensory, spatial, temporal, technological, social, regulatory, and contextual; and a further three were inspired by the writings of other privacy scholars: obscurity, information behaviour, and training and awareness.

The model in figure 9 consists of seven components. The data types, stakeholders/entities, and ontological



frictions components build on earlier work from the first conceptual model. The privacy types component brings in the work of (Koops et al. 2017) to acknowledge that each library privacy scenario will affect informational privacy to one degree or another as well as affecting the underlying privacy types to which it relates.

Whilst it is possible to produce provisional lists of technology types, privacy impacts, and privacy solutions, their final composition will depend on the results of the planned Delphi study, questionnaires, and interviews.

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INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM ROUND TABLE

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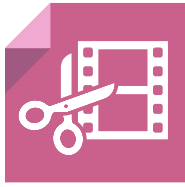
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Library Bill of Rights



Nationwide

As state legislatures ramped up in 2022, Republican governors and lawmakers expanded their efforts to limit discussions of race and gender in public schools. In addition to targeting “critical race theory” (CRT) and “divisive concepts,” they’ve begun introducing legislation to create “curriculum transparency” and “parental bills of rights.”

On January 7, conservative activist Christopher Rufo tweeted that shifting from CRT bans to curriculum transparency bills is “rhetorically advantageous” and will “bait the Left into opposing ‘transparency.’”

“The strategy here is to use a non-threatening liberal value—‘transparency’—to force ideological actors to undergo public scrutiny,” Rufo said.

Rufo is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. He led the efforts to misappropriate and weaponize the term CRT through appearances on the Fox News Channel. His meetings with the Trump administration spurred the Executive memorandum and Executive Order prohibiting training about racism, CRT, and other “divisive concepts” funded by federal dollars.

The Manhattan Institute and the Goldwater Institute published model bills, policies, and resolutions for legislators and school boards. As of January 20, 12 state legislatures had introduced such bills: Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The bills were passed by state legislatures in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, but both were vetoed by Democratic governors.

Teachers, teacher unions, and free speech advocates say such bills would place daily classwork under excessive

scrutiny. This might cause teachers to pull potentially contentious materials to avoid drawing criticism.

PEN America has referred to measures blocking the teaching of CRT as “educational gag orders.” In 2020, nine states passed anti-CRT laws restricting classroom discussions of race and gender.

According to UCLA’s Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access, 894 school districts introduced policies banning the teaching of CRT. They encompass more than a third of the country’s K-12 students.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: For the Record: Nationwide).

Reported in: NBC News, January 20, 2022; Forbes, February 16, 2022.

Alabama

The first complaint to be investigated by Alabama’s Department of Education under their new anti-critical race theory (CRT) law is an anti-discrimination training at Huntsville City Schools. An official from Huntsville schools expressed concerns that stopping the anti-discrimination training would violate orders from a federal judge stemming from a desegregation case.

Huntsville parent Adam Stephens reported the teacher training after he saw a social media post of whiteboards with the headings “discrimination,” “racism,” and “equity” on them.

The post was captioned: “The faculty here at Whitesburg Elementary is putting forth much effort to . . . making sure that ALL students feel welcome, heard, supported, and most important, a sense of belonging.”

Stephens said he believes this training violates Alabama State Board of Education’s controversial new rule barring CRT from public schools and that any training of teachers

would ultimately find its way into the classroom.

“I don’t think that I’m going out on a limb saying that straight white people are kind of targeted in a lot of ways,” said Stephens.

The new rule adopted by Alabama’s Department of Education does not delineate a process for resolving complaints.

Huntsville Superintendent Christie Finley said that Huntsville City Schools operate under a 1963 federal desegregation order and have been working to meet requirements to end court oversight. Finley said that the training conducted at Whitesburg “is a training per Consent Order and not a violation of state law.”

The school board’s attorney Chris Pape is working with the Department of Education to review the charges.

Reported in: Advance Local Alabama, December 11, 2021.

Indiana

Two bills with First Amendment implications for school and public libraries were introduced in the Indiana legislature in January. Both would criminalize the circulation of certain books from school and public libraries and open libraries to civil suits for circulating books to children; one bill would also restrict classroom lessons and conversations.

SB 17 would “remove schools and certain public libraries from the list of entities eligible for a specified defense to criminal prosecutions alleging the dissemination of material harmful to minors.” In addition to criminal prosecution, the bill allows parents and guardians to sue libraries for checking out “harmful materials.”

The bill’s definition of “harmful materials” includes those that contain obscenity, violence, and pornography. Crown Point Library director Julie Wendorf said, “Libraries support the



right to read and we provide material for the entire community, not just one viewpoint. We can say confidently that we don't collect pornography, but that still wouldn't stop people from suing over whatever they find objectionable."

In recent times, challenges to library material have primarily pertained to anti-racism books and books with LGBTQIA+ characters, authors, and themes.

Rhonda Miller of Purple for Parents advocated for the bill. Purple for Parents is an organization which has worked to manufacture outrage against school and public library books they consider to be "critical race theory," sex education materials, or which have LGBTQIA+ content.

(See: this issue, In Brief: Bremen, Indiana; *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Carmel, Indiana).

SB 17 passed the Senate education committee with a 9-4 vote along party lines.

HB 1134, which includes the text of SB 17, and would also limit teachers' speech and curricula regarding race, history, and politics, passed the house on January 26. The bill would prohibit social-emotional learning and the teaching of "divisive concepts" such as critical race theory (CRT), and also require teachers to remain neutral on topics such as Nazism, Marxism, and fascism.

It would also allow parents to sue schools if they believe schools have violated the bill's provisions. The bill would also require "curriculum transparency," the online posting of all materials and activities teachers plan to use in the classroom. (See: this issue, For the Record: Nationwide).

Opponents of the bill argued it would drive teachers from the classroom by subjecting them to undue scrutiny and drowning them in

additional work and civil action from parents who were unhappy with lessons. Educators expressed fears that they would not be able to speak truthfully about historical injustices or facilitate discussions on current events.

Representative Tonya Pfaff said the bill would "fundamentally change the way we teach and interact with our students."

HB 1134 ultimately died in the Senate on March 1.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: For the Record: Nationwide).

Reported in: *Chicago Post-Tribune*, January 18, 2022; *FOX59*, January 26, 2022; *Indianapolis Star*, February 1, 2022; *WNDU*, March 1, 2022.

Iowa

At a school board meeting in Johnston on November 18, president of the Iowa Senate Jake Chapman said there should be criminal charges against teachers who allow children to read books that he believes are obscene.

Two books which had been challenged by parents were being discussed during the meeting: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie and *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. Both books discuss race and racial identity and include mentions of sex. (See: this issue, Censorship Dateline: Schools: Johnston, Iowa).

"I can tell you, if this material was in my school, I'd be going to law enforcement. I would be asking for a criminal investigation. I would be asking for every single teacher who disseminated that information to be held criminally responsible," said Chapman.

Chapman said he would use his powers to make stricter laws and

create a felony charge for teachers who provide access to "obscene" library books. On Facebook, he also promised to create an avenue for parents to pursue civil action against teachers.

One community member said, "I wasn't going to speak today, but after hearing what the president of the Iowa Senate said, I'm flabbergasted. I don't understand how you can say this is too explicit for kids. When I was in high school I took a human sexuality class. Is he saying that they're gonna ban human sexuality class?"

Brad Zaun, president of Iowa's Senate Judiciary Committee, said he also supports charging teachers with felonies for having "obscene" books in school and classroom libraries.

"My warning to all the teachers and the administrators is you're going to be in jail, because this is distributing pornography. And I will work my tail end off and it will become law."

Chapman again advocated for the criminal prosecution of teachers who make "obscene" books available at the November 22 meeting of the Urbandale school board, where the reconsideration of a handful of books with LGBTQIA+ characters, authors, and themes was being discussed. (See: this issue: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Urbandale, Iowa).

During her Condition of the State Address on January 4, governor Kim Reynolds said she supports legislation addressing controversial books in school libraries and increasing curriculum transparency.

Reynolds called for a standard, streamlined book challenge process to be adopted for schools statewide which would include a process to appeal decisions to the State Board of Education.

Referring to school libraries, Reynolds said, "If a parent has a concern about what's in there, there



should be a process where they get answers and they should have options.”

Reynolds said it’s “not inappropriate” for a book like George M. Johnson’s *All Boys Aren’t Blue* to be in school libraries.

When asked in a January 20 interview if she supported comments made by Chapman, she refrained from endorsing his pledge to criminally prosecute teachers. “Do I think inappropriate things are being displayed in libraries and in classrooms across the state,” deflected Reynolds. “I absolutely agree with that.”

She then read an excerpt from *All Boys Aren’t Blue* without providing any context for it.

On January 5, Senator Amy Sinclair, chair of Iowa’s Senate Education Committee, announced she is drafting a “parents bill of rights” and that its passage is her “highest priority” for the 2022 legislative session. She said the legislation would require parental consent to check out certain books from school libraries and provide parents access to curriculum materials.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: For the Record: Nationwide).

Reported in: KCCI, January 24, 2022; Axios Des Moines, January 4, 2022; Radio Iowa, January 5, 2022; Daily Iowan, January 4, 2022; Iowa Starting Line, November 19, 2021, November 22, 2021, and November 30, 2021.

Mississippi

A bill to prohibit the teaching of “critical race theory” (CRT) was introduced in the Mississippi senate on January 12. Mississippi superintendent of education Carey Wright said CRT is not taught in the state’s schools, though the University of Mississippi law school offers an elective course on it.

SB 2113 does not at any point define CRT, but its text is largely identical to other legislation pertaining to “divisive concepts.” (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: For the Record: Nationwide). It provides that “no public institution of higher learning, community/junior college, school district or public school, including public charter schools, shall make a distinction or classification of students on account of race.”

The bill also prohibits teaching “that any sex, race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin is inherently superior or inferior.”

The ACLU of Mississippi said in a statement that laws opposing CRT “are thinly veiled attempts to silence discussions of race and gender among students and educators.”

Representative Zakiya Summers said “Censoring teachers, dismantling education bit by bit, attempting to erase the past, refusing to acknowledge the hurt and the horror and the heinous acts that have been done to my people and then hiding behind this ‘inferior versus superior’ argument—that’s what this bill will do.”

Black lawmakers walked out in protest of the bill before it was voted on in the Senate on January 21. It passed 32-2 with the only votes against it coming from White Democrats (because the Black lawmakers had walked out).

Senator David Blount, who voted against the bill, said “We trust our teachers to teach and we don’t need to pass laws to prohibit what’s not being done.”

Mississippi has the highest percentage of Black residents of any state. The bill was signed into law on March 14 by Governor Tate Reeves.

Critics of the legislation say it likely violates the state and US Constitutions. Section 213 of Mississippi’s constitution

holds that public universities “shall be under the management and control” of the Board of Trustees for the State Institutions of Higher Learning.

Matthew Steffey, who teaches constitutional law at Mississippi College said, “Universities are set up with promises of academic freedom as part of their accreditation process. It’s extremely problematic for state law to try to infringe on the existing contractual rights and commitment at the individual professor level and at the university level.”

Reported in: NPR, January 22, 2022; Mississippi Today, January 20, 2022; ABC News, March 3, 2022; Guardian, March 14, 2022.

Missouri

On January 11, two bills aiming to radically restrict what is taught in public schools were debated by Missouri house legislators. One bill would ban “critical race theory” (CRT), and the other would greatly increase parental influence of classroom curricula.

HB 1474 would bar any lessons identifying “people or groups of people, entities, or institutions in the United States as inherently, immutably, or systemically sexist, racist, biased, privileged, or oppressed.”

HB 1995 would grant parents access to school records and curricula, allow parents to restrict their children’s access to course materials, and grant them the power to censor class materials “based on such parent’s beliefs regarding morality, sexuality, religion, or other issues related to the well-being, education, and upbringing of such parent’s child.”

Under HB 1995, both parents and the state attorney general are granted the right to sue schools for violations of the bill’s provisions.

“Make no mistake: these bills are an attack on Missouri students.” said



Representative Paula Brown. “They have the right to learn in classrooms free from censorship.”

Brown also expressed concerns that the legislation could place school administrators in courtrooms on an ongoing basis.

Reported in: Associated Press, January 11, 2022.

New Hampshire

The New Hampshire chapter of Moms for Liberty announced it will pay a \$500 “bounty” to the first person who catches a teacher offering anti-racism training or otherwise breaking the state’s new law banning “critical race theory” (CRT).

Definitions of CRT as enacted in legislation and policy nationwide have been deliberately vague and the term has been wielded as culture war catch-all encompassing anti-racism material as well as books on gender and sexual identity, reproductive rights, feminism, and sex education.

The American Federation of Teachers New Hampshire condemned this announcement, saying it was tantamount to declaring “war on teachers.”

Moms for Liberty’s New Hampshire chapter is fundraising off this ploy and began referring to donations as “CRT Bounty’s [sic]” on Twitter. Shortly thereafter, they tweeted they had already received more than \$1,300.

Through spokesperson Ben Vihstadt, Governor Chris Sununu declared that he “condemns the tweet referencing ‘bounties’ and any sort of financial incentive is wholly inappropriate and has no place.”

The Council on American-Islamic Relations National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper said, “It is bad enough that any state would seek to ban teaching about systemic anti-Black racism, but to offer a ‘bounty’

to ferret out those who seek to educate our nation’s youth about the harm caused by bigotry is beyond the pale.”

New Hampshire’s anti-CRT law prohibits teaching that:

- Any group is inherently superior or inferior to people of another identified group
- Any group is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously
- Any group should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment
- Any group should not treat members of other identified groups equally

Parents or others who believe teachers have violated the law are allowed to sue school districts or file complaints through the Department of Education’s website. Complaints received may result in disciplinary action by the State Board of Education.

Moms for Liberty was started in Florida as a “parents’ rights group” opposed to school mask mandates. Their focus quickly shifted to limiting curricula and banning books from school libraries. They actively oppose sex education, anything they consider to be CRT, and books with LGBTQIA+ characters or authors.

Moms for Liberty receives funding from the Conservatives for Good Government PAC and Megyn Kelly-hosted fundraisers. It has been promoted on Fox News and has chapters in 35 states.

Reported in: *Newsweek*, November 18, 2021; *Baptist News*, November 29, 2021.

The American Federation of Teachers’ (AFT) New Hampshire chapter filed a lawsuit on December 13, claiming the state’s new law

prohibiting the teaching of “critical race theory” (CRT) is unconstitutionally vague and an abridgment of free speech.

The lawsuit says the statute forces teachers to “self-censor their own free speech to avoid . . . severe and draconian threats.”

New Hampshire’s anti-CRT law, which passed as part of the state’s budget bill, prohibits teaching that:

- Any group is inherently superior or inferior to people of another identified group
- Any group is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously
- Any group should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment
- Any group should not treat members of other identified groups equally

Parents or others who believe teachers have violated the law are allowed to sue school districts or file complaints through the Department of Education’s website. Complaints received are reviewed by the Human Rights Department and may result in disciplinary action by the State Board of Education.

The lawsuit charges that the law is unconstitutionally vague because it does not make clear what is prohibited. This lack of clarity creates a chilling effect in the classroom by making teachers susceptible to “arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement.”

AFT New Hampshire President Deb Howes released a statement noting that, “Educators are terrified of losing their teaching license over simply trying to teach.”

While the state’s Department of Education and Attorney General have issued guidance on the law, AFT



argues that confusion around it is unavoidable.

One example included in the lawsuit states that a teacher could not be sure whether it was legal to teach students that affirmative action policies were adopted because of historical and contemporary advantages held by White job and college applicants.

The lawsuit was brought in US District Court in the District of New Hampshire on behalf of three teachers and two parents. The state, its Department of Education, and the commissioner of the state's Human Rights Department are named as defendants in the suit.

Reported in: *Washington Post*, December 13, 2021.

New Jersey

On December 21, Governor Phil Murphy signed bill S108 into law, making New Jersey the 15th state to adopt “New Voices” legislation and codify student press freedom.

A New Voices law prohibits the censorship of student journalists except in narrow circumstances and protects student media advisors from retaliation for refusing to censor their students. They became necessary when the Supreme Court ruled student papers were not public forums subject to First Amendment protections if articles were written as part of a journalism class.

In their decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260 (1988), the Supreme Court created a vague and problematic standard for censorship of student-produced work. This decision has been used by school administrators to censor student journalists for subjective reasons. New Voices laws protect student journalists from such action in the states that have adopted them.

The Student Press Law Center (SPLC) praised New Jersey's adoption of New Voices legislation.

“Signing S108 is an important step, but it is only the beginning,” said SPLC executive director Hadar Harris. “We need robust implementation of the new law and need administrators, students, and advisors to understand it.”

SPLC did express concern that by including profanity on the list of speech not protected by S108, Governor Murphy “inadvertently encouraged school administrators to unconstitutionally restrict the use of profane speech when it is newsworthy.”

Reported in: *Student Press Law Center*, December 22, 2021.

North Dakota

North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum signed a bill banning the teaching of “critical race theory” (CRT) in schools into law on November 12.

The new law states that, “A school district or public school may not include instruction relating to critical race theory in any portion of the district's required curriculum.”

North Dakota has a Republican-controlled legislature and a Republican governor.

CRT is defined by this law as “the theory that racism is not merely the product of learned individual bias or prejudice, but that racism is systemically embedded in American society and the American legal system to facilitate racial inequality.”

The term has been used as a conservative culture war catchall to demonize and suppress speech on subjects such as anti-racism, gender identity, and abortion.

State Representative Jim Kasper, the bill's main sponsor, said that while CRT is not currently taught in North Dakota, he wanted to introduce a bill that would ensure it will not be taught in the future.

The law enacted is four sentences long. Critics pointed out that it fails

to indicate any means of enforcement, instead concluding with the statement “The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules to govern this section.”

Lawsuits against similar laws have cited the speech-limiting chilling effect created by their unconstititional vagueness.

(See: this issue: For the Record: New Hampshire).

Reported in: *Newsweek*, November 12, 2021; *KVRR*, November 15, 2021.

Mississippi

Mississippi State Auditor Shad White endorsed proposed legislation to ban educators from teaching anti-racism, “critical race theory” (CRT), or any books that criticize “whiteness” in schools.

On January 4, White posted a video to Facebook in which he spoke out against the Mississippi Humanities Council's “Anti-Racism Reading Shelf” program.

The program offered small grants to Mississippi libraries to purchase books about combating racism. It began in the Summer of 2020, after the police murder of George Floyd stirred nationwide interest in books on race and racism. The council spent about \$29,000 on the program, about two-thirds of which was raised through private donations.

Mississippi Humanities Council Executive Director Stuart Rockoff said the most popular title that was purchased through the program was *Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13* by Helaine Becker.

White's video focused on Anastasia Higginbotham's *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*, a title which “offers an emotional inlet to the crisis White children experience when they know people are being harmed and they are



actively discouraged from feeling anything about it.”

White claimed anti-racism books “hurt kids like sexually explicit materials hurt kids.”

White said, “Everyone should be for teaching civil rights history to children. They should not be for teaching kids that an idea about whiteness that some White lady made up five minutes ago is evil.”

Rockoff said that despite the auditor’s criticisms, the Humanities Council “stands behind this program.”

“I’m not sure why opposing racism is controversial, but there you go,” continued Rockoff. “For us, in a place like Mississippi, understanding the history of racism in our state and how that history still shapes our lives today and how we can work together to overcome it, that’s what our vision was for this program.”

Reported in: *Mississippi Free Press*, January 5, 2022.

Oklahoma

On April 21, 2021, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt signed HB1674 into law, granting immunity to motorists who unintentionally kill or injure protesters and increasing penalties for demonstrators who block public roadways.

The bill was introduced in response to an incident in Tulsa, where a man drove a pickup through a crowd of people protesting the police murder of George Floyd. The truck hit and injured three people, paralyzing a 33-year-old man from the waist down after he was knocked off the overpass.

State senator Rob Standridge, who sponsored the bill, said that in that incident, “The prosecutor declined to file charges, but that may not always be the case.”

The Oklahoma Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is

challenging Oklahoma HB1674 on constitutional grounds, claiming it was passed in response to racial justice demonstrations and could chill the exercising of First Amendment rights.

The NAACP lawsuit argues that HB1674 is “unconstitutionally vague and overbroad”; has a “draconian organizational-liability provision” subjecting “NAACP and other racial justice organizations” to “devastating fines” for the actions of third parties; and that it “criminalizes ‘standing’ in streets or ‘approaching motor vehicles’ in a manner that renders . . . ‘passage unreasonably inconvenient.’”

The suit states provisions of HB1674 violate the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Oklahoma Attorney General John O’Connor and District Attorney of Oklahoma County David Prater are the named defendants in the suit.

Reported in: *The Center for Public Integrity*, December 20, 2021; *NPR*, April 22, 2021.

On December 16, Oklahoma senator Rob Standridge introduced SB 1142 “prohibiting certain schools and libraries from maintaining or promoting certain books.” In addition to banning broad categories of books, the bill would grant parents and guardians the ability to request removal of books from school libraries and to litigate and receive injunctive relief if their request is denied.

The books the bill would ban from public schools and public charter schools are: those “that make as their primary subject the study of sex, sexual lifestyles, or sexual activity, or books that are of a controversial nature that a reasonable parent or legal guardian would want to know of or approve of prior to their child being exposed to it.”

The bill as introduced would also have required the dismissal of

any employee tasked with removing a book who fails to do so within 30 days and barred them from reemployment with a public school district or public charter school for two years.

A parent or guardian whose request for removal of a book is denied may seek monetary damages including reasonable attorney fees, court costs, and a minimum of \$10,000 per day that the book in question is not removed.

Standridge cited *Trans Teen Survival Guide*, *Quick and Easy Guide to Queer and Trans Identities*, *A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns*, and *The Art of Drag* as titles he was concerned about.

Critics of the bill called it unconstitutional and said it was targeting LGBTQIA+ books.

Standridge acknowledged that all the books on his list address LGBTQIA+ issues. He said he hadn’t seen any examples of “heterosexual books” to which he would object. He also said, “Most likely these things will end up in court.”

“My guess is the schools won’t comply and the parents will have to seek injunctive relief,” said Standridge. “That will be up to the trier of fact. They may well disagree with the parent and say reasonable parents would want their children to be exposed to transgender, queer, and other sexually-related books. I would doubt that.”

Morgan Allen, director of Oklahomans for Equality, said that bills like this are harmful to LGBTQIA+ youth and that legislators condemning student-lived identities “is telling them that they can’t be who they are, that they should be ashamed of who they are.”

“These books are there to give our kids the language that they need to express how they are already feeling,” said Allen. “These books are not there



for anything else other than to affirm and show the kids their love for who they are and that there are other people out there like them, that they are not alone.”

SB 1142 was given a “do pass” recommendation by the Committee on Education after amending it to remove the sections which required dismissal of staff and set the minimum monetary damages.

Reported in: LGBTQ Nation, December 28, 2021; Tahlequah Daily Press, December 22, 2021.

South Dakota

On December 20, South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem revealed a bill she drafted which would ban “critical race theory” (CRT) from the state’s public schools, universities, and technical colleges.

Noem’s bill would prohibit “teaching that any race, religion, sex, or ethnicity is inherently superior or inferior; that anyone should feel guilt, anguish, or distress because of their race, religion, sex, or ethnicity; or that people are inherently responsible for past actions because of their race, sex, religion, or ethnicity.”

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota said it opposes the bill as it could censor US history discussions and deprive local school districts of their ability to determine their own curricula.

Reported in: U.S. News & World Report, December 21, 2022.

On January 21, South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem announced a legislative proposal to ban nearly all abortions. The legislation is modeled on a restrictive 2021 Texas law that manages enforcement through lawsuits brought by private citizens. The constitutionality of Texas’s law remains unclear as legal challenges to it are ongoing.

The Texas law has been criticized for creating a “vigilante” justice system reliant on private enforcement.

Noem’s law would subject anyone aiding someone in getting an abortion after the sixth week of pregnancy to a minimum \$10,000 penalty. There is no exception for rape or incest, other than prohibiting the rapist from suing.

The bill also includes some of the nation’s strictest limitations on access to abortifacient pills.

South Dakota has only one clinic regularly offering abortions. South Dakota already has a law barring abortions in the event that the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision is overturned.

“Personal privacy and reproductive rights are among our most important constitutional liberties,” said Jett Joneilis, advocacy manager for the American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota. “Governor Noem doesn’t seem to care about our constitutional rights.”

Reported in: ABC News, January 21, 2022.

Texas

Texas Child Protective Services (CPS) stopped offering diversity-training courses after former state senator and gubernatorial hopeful Don Huffines called them “Marxist” and referred to them as “critical race theory.”

The courses were previously required by the Department of Family and Protective Services for all CPS employees seeking promotions.

In a four-minute video posted to YouTube on November 4, Huffines called on sitting Governor Greg Abbott to “stop using taxpayer dollars to promote critical race theory” and “weed out this poison” from state government and universities.

On November 19, CPS field director Erica Bañuelos informed employees that two of the “Knowing Who

You Are” courses would no longer be offered nor required for promotion.

“Staff at the field level are going to have lots of questions about the cancellation of the courses,” Bañuelos warned associate commissioner for CPS Deneen Dryden in an email. “Staff have lots of work already that is being done on equity in the community and they just want to make sure they can continue to do this work.”

The courses were introduced in response to a 2005 legislative requirement to “develop and deliver cultural competency training to all service delivery staff” and “provide culturally competent services to children and families of every race and ethnicity.”

CPS has been working for years to reduce the disproportionality with which it removes children on suspicion of maltreatment from Black and Hispanic birth families versus White families.

Austin CPS caseworker Lucia Montes said, “The department still has a long way to go in addressing these inequalities within itself.”

Reported in: Dallas Morning News, January 7, 2022.

On January 20, Texas Governor Greg Abbott introduced plans to amend the state constitution to expand parental influence over curricula and policies at public, magnet, and charter schools through what he’s calling a “parental bill of rights.”

At the January 20 event where he announced his “parental bill of rights,” Abbott celebrated recent legislation and initiatives aimed at purging “critical race theory” from Texas schools. He characterized the “parental bill of rights” as a direct extension of these efforts.

“Now Texas has the toughest anti-CRT protections in the nation, but there is more we must do to preserve the rights of parents and give our



children the future they deserve,” said Abbott.

According to Abbott, the constitutional amendment would require schools to provide parents with access to all course curricula as well as all books and other materials available in schools and ensure that any parental concerns about them “are heard quickly.”

Additionally, the “bill of rights” would stipulate that educational personnel convicted of providing minors with “pornographic materials” would lose their educational credentials, state licensure, and retirement benefits, and be barred from ever teaching in a Texas public school again.

While “pornographic materials” is not defined in the press release or on the informational one-pager on the “parental bill of rights” released by the governor’s office, the one-pager does state that “recently, Texas parents found pornographic materials in school libraries, prompting Governor Abbott to direct the Texas Education Agency TEA), the Texas State Library and Archives Commission [TSLAC], and the State Board of Education.”

Abbott’s initial letter was also sent a week after State Representative Matt Krause sent a letter to every Texas school district with a 16-page list of 839 unique titles he deemed “inappropriate.”

Most of the “inappropriate” materials targeted by Krause are works by or about LGBTQIA+ people. The remainder are books by or about Black, latinx, and indigenous people; books about race or racism; sex education materials; books about teenage pregnancy or abortion; and anything providing guidance on reducing the spread of HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections.

The letters sent by Abbott to TEA, TSLAC, and the Board of Education

cited In the Dream House by Carmen Machado and *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe as examples of the “pornography” in Texas public school libraries. Both are LGBTQIA+ memoirs.

Avatara Smith-Carrington, staff attorney at Lambda Legal, said “Governor Abbott’s letters labeling coming-of-age stories as pornography simply because they involve LGBTQ people are attempts to create environments rife with censorship of ideas and topics that students deserve to have access to. Students need materials and information created with them in mind, in which they can see their own identities and experiences reflected.”

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

Reported in: *Los Angeles Blade*, January 23, 2022.

Utah

On December 3, 2021, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) announced plans to create a new administrative rule governing how school library materials are selected and reconsidered. The change is being made in response to calls from parents demanding the removal of books from school libraries.

During the meeting’s public comment period, Davis County parent Sarah Johnson read a passage from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. She said the book was in her son’s school library and that she sent her son on a “secret educational mission” to check out other books she believes should be removed.

Library Media Specialist Naomi Watkins said that librarians seek input from many stakeholders when selecting materials and are concerned primarily with curricular support, enhancing literacy, and encouraging students’ recreational reading.

Sara Wiebke said books should not be removed without a formal complaint and review by a committee including school leaders, librarians, teachers, parents, and students tasked with reading the book in its entirety and voting on whether or not it should be retained.

Wiebke said libraries should have regularly updated reconsideration policies posted on their school’s website.

USBE board member Natalie Cline had different opinions about how the reconsideration process should work and on school library media specialist’s criminal liability for material selection.

Cline said that any inappropriate book “needs to be pulled off immediately. If it’s being put in there knowingly, that’s negligence and criminal, and we need to take strong actions against people that would intentionally try to sexualize our children.”

USBE’s administrative rules are legally binding for districts and charter schools. The third draft of the proposed school library rule revision was approved by the Law and Licensing Committee on January 14 and has been under board review since February 3.

Reported in: *KUER*, December 7, 2021.

Virginia

After being sworn into office on January 15, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin signed an executive order (EO-1) prohibiting the use of “inherently divisive concepts, including critical race theory [CRT]” in public schools.

EO-1 directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to end all policies that “promote inherently divisive concepts,” and remove all guidelines that promote or endorse divisive concepts.

Youngkin’s election campaign targeted CRT in schools and included a



60-second ad prominently featuring Laura Murphy, a mother who pushed to remove Toni Morrison's *Beloved* from English curricula. In it, Murphy laments that incumbent Governor Terry McAuliffe vetoed the bill that would have allowed her to do so. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Virginia).

McAuliffe said that "book banning and silencing esteemed Black authors is a racist dog whistle."

On January 24, Youngkin announced the creation of a tip line email address for reporting public school teachers suspected of teaching "divisive concepts."

"We're asking for folks to send us reports and observations," said Youngkin. "And we're going to make sure we catalog it all."

Loudoun County NAACP President Michelle Thomas called on Black parents to share their concerns: "This tip line has to be for everybody, not just for his supporters, right?"

Singer John Legend urged Black parents to flood the email address with complaints "about our history being silenced." Legend tweeted, "We're parents, too."

Reported in: Business Insider, January 16, 2022, and January 25, 2022; NBC Washington, January 25, 2022.

On January 27 the Virginia Senate's Education and Health Committee rejected legislation that would have required parental consent for students to check out sexually explicit books from school libraries.

The bill had been introduced by Senator Bill DeSteph and was part of governor Glenn Youngkin's education agenda. The initial version of the bill would have involved parents in the selection of all school library material, but it was narrowed in scope before the committee voted on it.

Supporters of the legislation argued that the very existence of the book *Gender Queer* justified its passage. State senator John Cosgrove said, "This last election showed us parents want to have more control over what's happening in schools."

State senator and Education and Health Committee member Chap Peterson disagreed. "I don't think we should be involved in micromanaging school libraries." He also cautioned that any such legislative initiative would sweep up far too many books, including "books that you don't intend to sweep up."

Reported in: ABC News, January 27, 2022.

Tully, New York

Knight Insight, a newsletter meant to spotlight seniors of Tully High School, refused to run the story of one senior they selected because he mentioned that he was gay in response to an interview question.

When asked what the biggest challenge in his life had been, Tyler Johnson responded, "The biggest challenge that I've faced was growing up gay and coming out. I had to learn how to become comfortable in my own skin and how to stay strong through bullying and all the negative experiences I had while trying to navigate through life."

Superintendent Robert Hughes said that Johnson's admission he was a member of the LGBTQIA+ community was the reason the article was pulled from publication.

Johnson said this action emphasized his point. "When they ask what my biggest challenge is and I answer it honestly, then they respond by showing that it is my biggest challenge by trying to silence me."

In a January 9 letter of apology to the school community, Hughes said the decision to pull the article was his

and he made it out of fear that Johnson's response would "stir up additional controversy" and "hinder the work we are doing related to the NYSED Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative."

Hughes said that "this was not the right decision" and that it went "against the values we are teaching our students, specifically tolerance, acceptance, and resiliency."

The next day, Hughes sent a second letter to the school community about the incident. In it, he announced that the Tully Board of Education (BOE) would be holding an emergency meeting to discuss how the district can address Johnson's concerns and move forward with their DEI initiative, and "create a climate and culture across our District that is supportive of LGBTQIA+ students."

Hughes also announced during their regularly scheduled January 24 meeting, the BOE would vote on establishing a paid advisory position for a Genders and Sexualities Alliance Club and a Community-Wide Dialogue Club to raise awareness of structural racism.

Reported in: CNY Central, January 10, 2022; WSyr-TV, January 13, 2022.

Raleigh, North Carolina

A US District Court lawsuit filed by the Human Rights Defense Center (HRDC) alleges the state North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) has unconstitutionally banned prisoners from receiving issues of *Prison Legal News* and *Criminal Legal News*.

The magazines, both published by HRDC, cover a broad range of news concerning criminal justice, including: inmates' rights, court rulings, prosecutorial misconduct, police brutality, wrongful prosecutions, abuse by prison staff, surveillance, prison



labor, racial disparities in the criminal justice system, and the privatization of prisons.

Over two hundred people detained in correctional facilities in North Carolina have subscriptions to HRDC magazines. The suit lists 23 issues of HRDC magazines and annual reports being banned by DPS between January 2019 and August 2021, including issues dealing with censorship in prisons.

HRDC claims the magazine bans violated both the 1st and 14th Amendments of the US Constitution, and the lawsuit seeks damages and an end to the practice.

Reported in: *Raleigh News & Observer*, November 17, 2021.

Perkasie, Pennsylvania

Pennridge School District administrator Keith Veverka instructed teachers to avoid discussing the January 6, 2021, insurrection.

In an email sent on January 5 to social studies teachers and principals, Veverka wrote that if students ask about the insurrection, teachers should “simply state that the investigation is ongoing and as historians we must wait until there is some distance from the event for us to accurately interpret it.”

Kevin Foster, a parent of two children in the district, was disturbed and concerned by Veverka’s email. “When we start to meddle with what we want to tell kids or not tell kids in terms of history, that’s something that you find in authoritarian countries,” said Foster.

The insurrection occurred when supporters of former president Donald Trump stormed the US Capitol in an effort to stop the vote certifying the results of the 2020 election. Federal law enforcement officials have arrested more than 700 people who took part.

Pennsylvania is the state with the third-most accused insurrectionists arrested. Bucks County, where the Pennridge School District is located, was home to six, more than any other county in the state.

Pennridge School Board president Joan Cullen is a vocal Trump supporter who attended the rally that turned into an insurrection on January 6. Cullen also led the recent initiative to halt all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at the school.

(See: this issue: Censorship Date-line: Perkasie, Pennsylvania).

Reported in: *WHYY*, January 5, 2022.

San Antonio, Texas

Essence Prep, a proposed charter school, was forced to remove all references to anti-racism and community action and all quotes from Ibram X. Kendi from its website before the Texas Education Agency would approve it.

In early 2021, Akeem Brown submitted a nearly 500-page application, promising high academic standards and culturally responsive teaching in a proposal for a school focused on learning about public policy. The application quoted Kendi: “The opposite of racist isn’t ‘not racist.’ It is antiracist.”

Brown’s application progressed smoothly until Governor Greg Abbott signed HB 3979 into law on June 16. HB 3979 bars the teaching of “critical race theory” (CRT) and limits how race, racism, and slavery can be taught and discussed in Texas classrooms.

A four-page itemization of necessary revisions to Brown’s proposal from TEA references HB 3979 9 times, including the requirement to “remove references from website [*sic*] of any statements, authors, or written works in violation of Texas Education Code amended by 3979.”

HB 3979 does not name any specific texts or authors other than The 1619 Project. However, by referring to “authors or written works in violation” of the law, TEA seems to suggest that some writers are effectively barred from schools.

James Tager, research director of PEN America, said, “This is a state body saying our interpretation of the bill means you cannot refer to specific authors when developing your educational vision.”

Tager said that by extension, schools could reasonably interpret this to mean that Kendi’s work is barred from classrooms, too.

Reported in: *Chalkbeat*, January 6, 2022.

Southlake, Texas

On November 17, the US Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) confirmed they were investigating allegations of discrimination at the Carroll Independent School District (ISD).

The week before, the agency opened three investigations into complaints about discrimination against students based on their race, gender, and national origin.

OCR is responsible for enforcing federal laws protecting students from discrimination. Investigations are comprehensive so cases are often slow to reach a resolution.

Three years before the investigation opened, Carroll ISD promised to make sweeping changes to address racism in their schools after a video of white high school students chanting racial slurs went viral and dozens of parents, students, and recent graduates disclosed stories of racist harassment.

The district designed a Cultural Competence Action Plan to address the underlying causes through diversity training for students and staff, tracking racist bullying, and



committing to hold students accountable for acts of discrimination.

The plan was scuttled before it could be implemented, through efforts funded by the Southlake

Families PAC. This PAC backed successful campaigns to elect more conservative school board members and funded a lawsuit to block the plan's implementation.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Southlake, Texas).

Reported in: NBC News, November 17, 2021.



SCHOOLS Ohio

Hillsboro High School and Hudson High School both canceled productions of the play *She Kills Monsters* because of implications that one of the characters might be gay.

She Kills Monsters was written by Qui Nguyen and is set in Athens, Ohio, and tells the story of a young woman whose sister dies in a car crash. While attempting to learn more about her sister, she discovers the Dungeons & Dragons campaign she was playing in and that she may have been gay.

After the play's 2011 debut, it has become one of the most widely produced plays at high schools and on college campuses.

Hillsboro High School's administrators shut down their production on October 21, less than a month before it was scheduled to premiere. The superintendent issued a statement proclaiming "the fall play has been canceled this year because [it] was not appropriate for our K-12 audience."

The cancellation at Hillsboro came one week after pastor Jeff Lyle and some parents met with the play's directors.

Jon Polstra, a graduate of Hillsboro High who had both a son and daughter in the play said it was inappropriate "for the school to have allowed that influence to cause them to make their decision to cancel the show."

Students of Hudson High found out their production was canceled when they arrived for their first rehearsal on September 20. The play had been approved, auditions had occurred, and roles were already cast.

For months prior to the play's cancellation, Hudson school board meetings were dominated by debates about critical race theory.

At the September 27 meeting of the Hudson Board of Education,

resident Cara Wright attributed the play's cancellation to the influence of this group, which she said "is disabling our community and our Board from creating a well-rounded experience for our children."

"By not running that play that exposes and thoughtfully delivers different experiences and perspectives, our children are being implicitly told that these different experiences don't matter," said Wright. "Our children deserve better than this."

Hudson's fall production was replaced with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, a fictionalized account of the Salem Witch Trials which serves as an allegory for McCarthyism.

Reported in: *Cleveland Scene*, October 26, 2022; *WKRC*, October 22, 2021.

South Carolina

At the November 2 board meeting of the Fort Mill School District, parent Ellen Abramo said three books at the school contained pornography and critical race theory: *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson.

On November 3, Fort Mill School District superintendent James Epps Jr. instructed all three books be removed from all district libraries, despite a board-approved reconsideration policy requiring books to remain in circulation while under review.

On November 10, Governor Henry McMaster sent a letter to the South Carolina Department of Education calling for a "comprehensive investigation and a detailed explanation" of how inappropriate books with "obscene and pornographic depictions" entered school library collections.

In the letter, McMaster specifically cited the removal of *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe from the Fort Mill School District, which he claims

"contains sexually explicit and pornographic depictions, which easily meet or exceed the statutory definition of obscenity."

McMaster also sent a copy of the letter to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division Chief Mark Keel under the belief that "it is likely illegal under South Carolina law" to have materials like *Gender Queer* "in our state's public schools."

McMaster's letter precipitated a statewide spate of swift reviews and removals of school library material.

According to State Department of Education Chief Communications Officer Ryan Brown, a statewide meeting of district superintendents was held during the week before McMaster sent his letters, alerting them to what was to come.

Brown said that at the meeting, every superintendent was provided with the title of Kobabe's memoir and the name of its publisher and told to review their library materials for "appropriateness."

On November 11, Greenville County Schools (GCS) announced they would evaluate all illustrated novels in district libraries in accordance with McMaster's letter.

GCS director of media relations Tim Waller said the one copy of *Gender Queer* that was in the system was withdrawn from Riverside High School on the night of November 10 and was not approved for future purchase.

Also on November 11, the principal of Northwestern High School, under order of the school superintendent Tommy Schmolze, removed *Gender Queer* from the school library. The same day, the librarian for Rock Hill Schools was instructed not to purchase *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, which was on her order list.

On November 15, the Fort Mill School District announced the



permanent removal of *Gender Queer* from all high school libraries.

A district administrator checked Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer: A Memoir* out from a district library for review after learning McMaster had called it "pornographic."

A school district administrator for Lexington-Richland District Five checked Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer: A Memoir* out from a district library for review after learning McMaster had called it "pornographic."

On January 24, parents raised concerns about additional books available at school libraries in Lexington-Richland District Five. Passages were read from *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson and *Gr2grl* by Julie Ann Peters.

While board members typically refrain from responding to public comments, in this instance, board chair Jan Hammond interjected, "I need to find out what teacher is assigning these books."

Reported in: *Greenville News*, November 11, 2021; *The Hill*, November 12, 2021; *NEWS19*, January 25, 2022; *The Island Packet*, November 16, 2021; *WMBF*, November 11, 2021; *WLTX*, November 10, 2021.

Texas

On November 19, the Texas State Board of Education Agency (SBOE) rejected all but one of the middle school health textbooks submitted for approval.

The inclusion of sections on sexual health; consent; LGBTQIA+ issues; and abortion were the reasons the overwhelming majority of textbooks were denied approval.

This decision comes not long after the announcement of initiatives from Governor Greg Abbott and state representative Matt Krause to remove books on sex education, abortion, and

those with LGBTQIA+ themes, characters, or authors from school libraries. Democrats allege the decision is part of a larger effort to quell discussion around sexual orientation and gender identity.

Goodheart-Wilcox publishes the only book approved for use in Texas schools by the SBOE. Its approval came only after they removed references to HIV-prevention practices and to emphasize the effectiveness of abstinence in preventing pregnancy and sexually-transmitted infections above all other methods.

Goodheart-Wilcox also changed every recommendation of talking to a doctor, school nurse, teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult to recommendations to talk to a parent. No mention of gender identity, sexual identity, or LGBTQIA+ individuals exists in the textbook. However, a section discouraging talking about "identity" with teachers and classmates was added.

Board member Rebecca Bell-Metereau advocated for the adoption of more accurate and inclusive textbooks, but her opinions ran contrary to the majority of the board.

"The idea that mentioning anything to do with sex will harm our students is simply not validated by scientific research. The more students know about their bodies, the more likely they are to make wise decisions about their bodies," said Bell-Metereau.

In Texas, parents must opt-in for their children to receive sex education in public schools. In 2020, the SBOE voted to allow teaching about birth control methods other than abstinence for the first time since 1997. Those rules went into effect in August 2022. This was the first slate of health textbooks considered under the new rules.

According to Karen Rayne, a professor at the University of Texas who

researches the success of sex education programs, decisions made by the SBOE impact education at a national level.

"Textbook companies look to Texas to set their standards for the rest of the country because we are such a large textbook purchaser," said Rayne.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

Reported in: *San Antonio Express-News*, November 19, 2021; *The New York Times*, November 20, 2020.

Anchorage, Alaska

On November 11, Anchorage School District superintendent Deena Bishop instructed that all copies of *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe should be removed from district school libraries after a complaint from resident Pete Brown.

There was one copy of the book in the district. According to Bishop, it was moved to the public library.

Brown emailed a complaint to School Board President Margo Bellamy at the end of October. Bellamy forwarded the complaint to Bishop. A committee was formed to review the book. The review process was conducted between November 1 and 10.

Kobabe's graphic memoir is a 2020 American Library Association Alex Award winner and a Stonewall Award Honoree. *School Library Journal* called it "a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual, as well as for those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand."

School Library Journal recommended it for grades 9 and up and called it "a book to be savored rather than devoured, this memoir will resonate with teens. . . . It's also a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual as well as



those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand.”

Bishop said “the review process determined the book contained adult material,” and instructed that it be removed the day after the review concluded.

Bellamy said that she could not recall any other book being challenged in the Anchorage School District in the last 10 years. However, last year a reading list from the district’s Office of Equity and Compliance was removed from their website in response to a community member’s protests that it constituted critical race theory.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Anchorage, Alaska).

Reported in: *Anchorage Daily News*, November 18, 2021; *Must Read Alaska*, November 13, 2021.

Soldotna, Alaska

On October 16, Kenai Peninsula Education Association (KPEA) President Nathan Erfurth wrote that “a pattern of bullying and exclusion is developing in our school district.”

Erfurth’s comment was in response to five instances of “bullying and exclusion” targeting LGBTQIA+ students of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District during the current school year.

Incidents include the removal of pride flags from Homer High School, the recall of numerous LGBTQIA+ titles from the Seward High School library, and the principal of the Kalifornsky Beach Elementary School apologizing to parents after *Flight of the Puffin* was read to students in multiple classrooms.

Flight of the Puffin is a children’s book about acceptance that includes non-gender-conforming characters.

Assistant Superintendent Kari Dendrent recalled books ordered for

Seward High School after receiving a forwarded email from a warehouse worker reporting “many LGBTQ books and a CRT [critical race theory] book that was received last week.” The email was forwarded on by Kevin Lyon, the district’s Planning and Operations Director.

The books Dendrent recalled from the school library were:

- *Being Jazz: My Life as a Transgender Teen* by Jazz Jennings
- *The Gay Liberation Movement: Before and After Stonewall* by Sean Heather K. McGraw
- *Everything You Need to Know About Bisexuality* by Greg Baldino
- *I Am a Feminist: Claiming the F-Word in Turbulent Times* by Monique Polak
- *We Are Not Yet Equal: Understanding Our Racial Divide* by Carol Anderson
- *Gay-Straight Alliances: Networking with Other Teens and Allies* by Kristina Lyn Heitkamp
- *The Road to Marriage Equality* by John Mazurek
- *The New Queer Conscience* by Adam Eli
- *Everything You Need to Know About Nonbinary Gender Identities* by Anita Louise McCormick
- *LGBTQ: The Survival Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens* by Kelly Madrone

Dendrent asked the school secretary to “get the books back from students” if they were checked out. She also asked Follett for a refund for the titles, stating that they did not align with “our health curriculum and district policy.”

KPEA alleges Dendrent violated two district policies when recalling the titles: the board’s policy governing handling of “Public Complaints

Concerning Instructional Materials” and their administrative rule regarding “Challenges to Instructional Materials.”

District Superintendent Clayton Holland said that after two months in the district office, the books were returned to the library on October 11 after Soldotna High School Librarian Tamra Wear sent a letter to Holland, Dendrent, and members of the school board condemning Dendrent’s actions and calling for a “full disclosure” of the incident.

Reported in: *Juneau Empire*, November 1, 2021; *KTOO*, October 28, 2021.

Scottsdale, Arizona

On December 2, Paradise Valley Unified School District’s governing board voted to terminate the contract of Linda Ihnat, principal of Horizon High School, citing that Ihnat failed to follow procedure requiring her to inform parents about sensitive content in an optional book.

So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed by Jon Ronson was on last summer’s Advanced Placement English reading list. Ihnat was put on leave in November after parents complained of references to orgies and bestiality in the book.

Ronson is a Welsh journalist and his book focuses on the fallout from high-profile instances of shaming on social media, schadenfreude, and how shame functions as a form of social control. One section of the book quotes from a 2008 News of the World article about a “Nazi-style orgy in a torture dungeon.”

On November 16, Superintendent Troy Bales sent an apology letter to district parents in which he stated the book was not on a district-approved literature list and was not appropriate for high school-age readers.



Ronson's book was withdrawn from the Horizon High School's library.

Reported in: *Associated Press*, December 3, 2021; *Channel 12 News*, November 23, 2021.

Jonesboro, Arkansas

On October 15, the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library announced that it would be moving several titles from the children's section to the parents and teachers section of the library.

Library director David Eckert said this section "contains education resources for caregivers to help with school work, learning disabilities, and those who homeschool their children."

The titles moved were primarily sex education materials written for children ages 3 through 8. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*, a book intended for middle school-aged children, was also moved.

In a related turn of events, on November 8, the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library board voted 4 to 2 against a proposal that would have required the library director to receive board approval for the purchase of any "sensitive material." This was the third time since August that the board has voted on this issue. The Sensitive Materials Subcommittee also voted against recommending the change on November 1.

Former library board member Amanda Escue, who initially proposed the policy before resigning from the board, said "I don't know what makes y'all think that this is going away because you voted against [it]."

Following controversy around the a Pride Month display the library put up, "sensitive materials" is the term the library board has used to refer to books pertaining to sex education or

which have LGBTQIA+ characters, themes, or authors.

On November 11, Eckert announced his resignation, effective January 1, 2022.

These are the books relocated from the children's section to the parents and teachers section:

- *You Be You! The Kid's Guide to Gender, Sexuality, and Family* by Jonathan Branfinan
- *Where Do Babies Come From? Boys ages 6-8* by Ruth Hummel
- *The Baby Tree* by Sophie Blackall
- *Changing You: A Guide to Body Changes and Sexuality* by Gail Saltz
- *Who Has What? All About Girls' Bodies and Boys' Bodies* by Robie H. Harris
- *It's So Amazing! A Book About Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families* by Robie H. Harris
- *Understanding Gender Dysphoria* by Tammy Gagne
- *What's in There? All About Before You Were Born* by Robie H. Harris
- *It's Not the Stork! A Book about Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families, and Friends* by Robie H. Harris
- *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health* by Robie H. Harris
- *Sex is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and You* by Cory Silverberg
- *Why Boys and Girls are Different: For Girls Ages 3-5* by Carol Greene
- *Why Boys and Girls are Different: For Boys Ages 3-5* by Carol Greene

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Jonesboro, Arkansas and *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: Censorship Dateline: Libraries: Jonesboro, Arkansas)

Reported in: KAIT8, October 15, 2021, October 22, 2021,

November 1, 2021, November 8, 2021, and November 11, 2021.

Siloam Springs, Arkansas

On January 6, the Siloam Springs School District's board voted 3-2 to remove a book about transgender teens from the high school library.

Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out, by Susan Kuklin, compiles a series of interviews with transgender and non-binary youth.

The book was formally challenged by three parents who believed the book was inappropriate. One of them has a child in the school, two have children in middle schools in the district. According to superintendent Jody Wiggins, the book has not circulated since 2016, so it was never checked out by one of their children.

A committee was convened on December 17 to hear the parents' complaints and consider the book in its entirety. They determined that the book met the school's criteria and submitted a report recommending that it be retained in the library.

The parents appealed this decision to the school board, ultimately resulting in its withdrawal from the collection.

Board member Misti Stephens argued that the book was professionally done and that the excerpts the parents took issue with were not graphic.

"School is about getting different points of view, different perspectives, so that the kids will think through some of the things they have concerns and issues with," Stephens said. "We know there are kids dealing with these issues, so I believe they should have access to [this book]."

Stephens also pointed out that the book's presence on a library shelf does not indicate that the school's administration agrees with the views expressed in it.



Stephens and Board Vice President Audra Farrell voted to retain the book. Grant Loyd, Brian Lamb, and Travis Jackson voted to withdraw it from the school library.

Reported in: *Siloam Springs Herald Leader*, January 9, 2022.

Shelton, Connecticut

At their December 15 board meeting, Amy Romano, a member of the Shelton Board of Education, called on her fellow board members to review *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, which she considers inappropriate for ninth grade students.

Walls's memoir recounts the poverty, hunger, and abuse she experienced while coming-of-age in a deeply dysfunctional yet loving family. It spent more than eight years on the New York Times bestseller list, was nominated for the Lincoln Award, received the American Library Association (ALA)'s Alex Award as well as the Christopher Award, and was named an ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners.

The Glass Castle is required reading for freshmen enrolled in honors English at Shelton High School.

At the January 11 meeting of the board's Teaching and Learning Committee, ten people submitted testimony, all in support of retaining the book as part of the curriculum.

One of them, high school student Florian Hurlbert, recalled reading the book as a freshman. "This book informs about poverty, abuse, constant moving, real challenges that people go through in this life that you may never know about just by looking at them or talking to them."

Hurlbert said these issues need to be discussed, not removed from the curriculum.

"The job of the BOE is to set policy," Teaching and Learning

Committee Chair Kate Kutash stated. "We trust our educational professionals to select and set required curriculum to carry out our policies."

Kutash cited several portions of the board's policy book indicating that the board has no control over district curriculum. She said setting curriculum and banning books are "not within our governance."

Superintendent Ken Saranich said Romano would have to adhere to the district's reconsideration policy as a parent if she wanted them to entertain removing the book from the curriculum, instead of attempting to use her position on the board to exert undue influence.

"The micromanaging of curriculums, while both students and teachers are living through one of the hardest times in history, is hard for me to wrap my head around," read a statement from the Shelton Education Association. "My colleagues and I have spent years in our education . . . to become professionals in the classroom. I ask that you respect this and our judgment when it comes to what is put forward to our student body."

Reported in: *Shelton Herald*, December 18, 2022, and January 14, 2022.

Flagler, Florida

On November 9, Flagler County School (FCS) Board member Jill Woolbright filed a criminal complaint that *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson was available from the Palm Coast High School, Matanzas High School, and Buddy Taylor Middle School libraries.

Woolbright met with superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt and school board attorney Kristy Gavin on November 3 to discuss the book. She filed her criminal complaint after they did not bring her concerns to the rest of the board.

All Boys Aren't Blue is a memoir about Johnson's experiences growing up as a queer Black man which Kirkus referred to as a "captivating merciful mirror for growing up Black and queer today."

Publishers Weekly called it "a balm and testimony to young readers as allies in the fight for equality" and said "in a publishing landscape in need of queer Black voices, readers who are sorting through similar concepts will be grateful to join him on the journey."

All Boys Aren't Blue received numerous accolades including being the American Library Association's 2021 Rainbow List selection for Young Adult Nonfiction, one of the Young Adult Library Services Association 2021 Teens' Top 10, one of the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound, and a selection for the Goodreads Choice Award.

Woolbright told the Flagler County Sheriff's Office that "It's a crime to have [that] book in the media centers." Her complaint cited state statute chapter 1006.40 requiring school materials to be "free of pornography" and 847, which prohibits distribution of obscene materials to minors.

In Woolbright's criminal complaint, she notes that she did not read the whole book. "I don't think it matters what the whole story is if those parts are, under our state statute, obscene."

Woolbright submitted the copy of *All Boys Aren't Blue* she checked out from the Palm Coast High Library to a deputy as evidence.

"My book is not what is doing your child harm," said Johnson. "It is you who will do your child harm by not allowing them to one: learn that other people exist in this world who have a different lived experience than them and, two: not allowing them to have the language or this particular



resource to deal with the problems that will come to them in this world when they arise.”

The Flagler County Sheriff’s Office agreed with Johnson and found that no employee of FCS had committed criminal wrongdoing by having *All Boys Aren’t Blue* in libraries or by circulating it to students.

Sheriff Rick Staly’s statement also said that “the determination of whether the book is appropriate for school libraries rests on the shoulders of the Flagler County School District leadership. This matter should have been addressed by the school board . . . before being submitted to the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office as a criminal complaint.”

At the November 16 meeting of the FCS board, 79 public comments spurred by the news of Woolbright’s criminal complaint dragged the meeting out to nearly six hours. Three additional titles were contested during the meeting: *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson; *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds; and *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas.

A small group of mostly student protestors formed outside the meeting to demonstrate against book-banning and defend the rights of LGBTQIA+ students.

A counter-protest group also showed up carrying white power banners, Christian flags, and anti-LGBTQIA+ posters. They shouted obscenity-laden accusations of pedophilia at the protestors, alongside body shaming and other insults.

“Initially the counter-protest, while ugly and rife with homophobic slurs, . . . was still just a counter-protest,” said a teacher who attended the protest. “As the night wore on, however, the counter-protestors were replaced by men and women dressed in flak jackets, walkie-talkies, and full face and head masks or helmets.”

“The language was uglier, more intimidating,” said the teacher. “They kept shouting violently sexual threats toward a young man with a pride flag. As a result, it seemed less about a message against a book and more about intimidating those with whom they disagree.”

On December 2, the review committees submitted their reports to superintendent Mittelstadt. The committees determined that all four books were appropriate for use and should be retained in all libraries.

On December 7, Mittelstadt announced that *All Boys Aren’t Blue* would be removed from all district libraries, contrary to the review committee’s recommendation. *Speak*, *Stamped*, and *The Hate U Give* were retained.

At the January 18 school board meeting, a three-tiered structure introducing substantial parental restriction of students’ library access was announced. Tier one allows open access for students. Tier two gives parents the option to prohibit their children from accessing up to five titles they specify. Tier three only allows a student to check out titles that their parents have pre-approved.

Parents are required to have a meeting with administrators and school library media specialists before imposing tier two or tier three restrictions.

At the meeting it was also announced that *All Boys Aren’t Blue* would return to library shelves, now that parents had been provided additional tools to prevent their children from reading it.

Reported in: *FlaglerLive*, November 13, 2021, November 14, 2021, November 16, 2021, November 17, 2021, December 7, 2021, and January 18, 2022; *WFLA*, November 14, 2021; *CNN*, November 18, 2021; *Yahoo!*

***News*, November 19, 2021; *The Daytona Beach News-Journal*, January 19, 2022, and November 19, 2021; *Ask Flagler*, November 19, 2021, and January 21, 2022; *Palm Coast Observer*, November 11, 2021, and December 8, 2021;**

Indian River County, Florida

On November 16, the local chapter of Moms for Liberty showed up at the Indian River County School District’s board meeting to demanding the removal of a list of 216 books they considered to be “pornographic” from school libraries.

“Once you get into these books again, what you’ll see [is] they’ll have a sex act in them, or they’ll have the critical race theory [CRT],” said Moms for Liberty member Jennifer Pippin. “We’re following state statutes that were written to protect children.”

Teaching CRT was prohibited in Florida by the State Board of Education on June 10, 2021. Legislation strengthening and extending that prohibition has been championed by Governor Ron DeSantis.

The books challenged by Moms for Liberty primarily consist of titles with LGBTQIA+ characters, themes, and authors; books with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) characters and authors; and books about race and racism. A few sex education titles were also targeted.

Superintendent David Moore said that the challenged books were removed from circulation while undergoing review.

All Boys Aren’t Blue; *Blankets: An Illustrated Novel*; *Triangles*; *Grl2grl*; *Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda*; and *Gone Girl* were withdrawn from all school district libraries.

Before any of the other books are returned, they’ll have to be approved by both the district’s library media



center specialist and the school principal.

These are the titles challenged by Moms for Liberty at the Indian River County School District:

- *#BlackLivesMatter: Protesting Racism* by Rachael L. Thomas
- *A Bad Boy Can Be Good For a Girl* by Tanya Lee Stone
- *A Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
- *A Certain Slant of Light* by Laura Whitcomb
- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* by Jill Twiss
- *A Love Hate Thing* by Whitney D. Grandison
- *A Quick Easy Guide to Queer & Trans Identities* by Mady G
- *ABC: A Family Alphabet Book* by Bobbie Combs, Desiree Keane, and Brian Rappa
- *Ace of Spades* by Faridah Abike-Iyimide
- *Adam* by Ariel Schrag
- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Almost Perfect* by Brian Katcher
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson, Peter Parnell
- *Another Day* by David Levithan
- *AntiRacist Baby* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Saenz
- *Ask a Queer Chick: A Guide to Sex, Love, and Life for Girls Who Dig Girls* by Lindsay King-Miller
- *Ask Me How I Got Here* by Christine Heppermann
- *Autoboyography* by Christina Lauren
- *Bait* by Alex Sanchez
- *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki and Dom Lee
- *Beautiful* by Amy Reed
- *Beautiful Bastard* by Christina Lauren
- *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender Teen)* by Jazz Jennings
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin
- *Beyond the Gender Binary* by Alok Vaid-Menon
- *Black Enough: Stories of Being Young & Black in America* by Ibi Zoboi
- *Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable Story of a Teenage Wizard* by Echo Brown
- *Black Lives Matter: From a Moment to a Movement* by Laurie Collier Hillstrom
- *Black Software: The Internet and Racial Justice, from the AfroNet to Black Lives Matter* by Charlton D. McIlwain
- *Blankets: An Illustrated Novel* by Craig Thompson
- *Blended* by Sharon Draper
- *Blood Water Paint* by Joy McCullough
- *Bowery Girl* by Kim Taylor Blakemore
- *Boy2Girl* by Terence Blacker
- *Brave Face* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *Brave Leaders and Activists* by J. P. Miller
- *Breathless* by Jennifer Niven
- *Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas
- *Charmed* by Carrie Mac
- *City of Heavenly Fire* by Cassandra Clare
- *Coming Out and Seeking Support* by Robert Rodi, Laura Ross
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Cross My Heart* by Sasha Gould
- *Dead End* by Jason Myers
- *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone
- *Deogratias, A Tale of Rwanda* by Jean-Philippe Stassen and Beata Umubyeyi Mairesse
- *Did I Mention I Need You?* by Estelle Maskame
- *Dime* by E.R. Frank
- *Doin' It* by Ayshia Monroe
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Draw Me a Star* by Eric Carle
- *Dreaming In Cuban* by Cristina Garcia
- *Dumplin': Go Big or Go Home* by Julie Murphy
- *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell
- *Embrace* by Jessica Shirvington
- *Empty* by K. M. Walton
- *Everywhere Babies* by Susan Meyers and Marla Frazee
- *Exit Here* by Jason Myers
- *Exit, Pursued by a Bear* by E. K. Johnston
- *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer
- *Facts Speak for Themselves* by Brock Cole
- *Family Fletcher Takes Rock Island* by Dana Alison Levy
- *Feed* by M.T. Anderson
- *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E. L. James
- *Fly on the Wall: How One Girl Saw Everything* by E. Lockhart
- *Forever* by Judy Blume
- *Full Disclosure* by Camryn Garrett
- *Gender Identity: Beyond Pronouns and Bathrooms* by Maria Cook and Alexis Cornell
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *Girls Like Us* by Gail Giles
- *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn
- *Gossip Girl* (series) by Cecily von Ziegesar
- *Graceling* by Kristin Cashore
- *Grasshopper Jungle* by Andrew Smith
- *Grl2grl: Short Fictions* by Julie Anne Peters
- *Hear These Voices: Youth at the Edge of the Millennium* by Anthony Allison
- *Home at Last* by Vera B Williams
- *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi



- *House of Night* (series) by P.C. Cast
- *House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende
- *How I Paid for College: A Novel of Sex, Theft, Friendship & Musical Theater* by Marc Acito
- *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* by Roxane Gay
- *I am Alfonso Jones* by Tony Medina
- *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings
- *I am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika Sanchez
- *I Think I Love You* by Auriane Desombre
- *I'll be the One* by Lyla Lee
- *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics, and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck* by Adam Cohen
- *It Feels Good To Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identity* by Theresa Thorn
- *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris
- *Jesus Land: A Memoir* by Julia Scheeres
- *Joshua and the City* by Joseph F. Girzone
- *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love
- *Killing Mr. Griffin* by Lois Duncan
- *King & King* by Linda de Haan
- *King and the Dragonflies* by Kacen Callender
- *L8r, G8r* by Lauren Myracle
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Leah On the Offbeat* by Becky Albertalli
- *Let's Talk About Love* by Claire Kann
- *Lexicon* by Max Barry
- *Little & Lion* by Brandy Colbert
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Lucky* by Alice Sebold
- *Lucy Peale* by Colby Rodowsky
- *Lush* by Natasha Friend
- *Marriage of a Thousand Lies* by S.J. Sindu
- *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Mexican Whiteboy* by Matt De la Peña
- *Mommy, Mama, and Me* by Lesléa Newman and Carol Thompson
- *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
- *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera
- *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* by Christine Baldacchino
- *My Book of Life* by Angel by Martine Leavitt
- *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult
- *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult
- *Odd One Out* by Nic Stone
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *Our Class is a Family* by Shannon Olsen
- *Our Own Private Universe* by Rob-in Talley
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Out of the Easy* by Ruta Sepetys
- *Peacock Among Pigeons* by Tyler Curry
- *Perfect* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Perfect Chemistry* by Simone Elkeles
- *Purim Superhero* by Elisabeth Kushner and Mike Byrne
- *Rainbow Boys* by Alex Sanchez
- *Rape on Campus* by Bruno Leone
- *Ready or Not* by Meg Cabot
- *Real Live Boyfriends: Yes. Boyfriends, Plural. If My Life Weren't Complicated, I Wouldn't be Ruby Oliver* by E. Lockhart
- *Rick* by Alex Gino
- *Rift* by Andrea R. Cremer
- *Safe* by Susan Shaw
- *Seeing Gender: An Illustrated Guide to Identity and Expression* by Iris Gottlieb
- *Sex: A Book for Teens: An Uncensored Guide to Your Body, Sex, and Safety* by Nikol Hasler
- *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg
- *Sissy: A Coming-of-Gender Story* by Jacob Tobia
- *Sisters = Hermanas* by Gary Paulsen and Gloria Andújar
- *Sloppy Firsts* by Megan McCafferty
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *Someone I Used to Know* by Patty Blount
- *Sorted: Growing Up, Coming Out, and Finding My Place: A Transgender Memoir* by Jackson Bird
- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Spinning* by Tillie Walden
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
- *Strange Fruit: Why Both Sides are Wrong in the Race Debate* by Kenan Malik
- *Tenth Circle* by Jodi Picoult
- *Thanks a Lot, Universe* by Chad Lucas
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *The Berlin Boxing Club* by Rob Sharenow
- *The Best at It* by Maulik Pancholy
- *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta
- *The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person* by Frederick Joseph
- *The Black Kids* by Christina Hammonds Reed
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson
- *The Carnival at Bray* by Jessie Ann Foley
- *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *The Haters* by Jesse Andrews
- *The Infinite Moment of Us* by



- Lauren Myracle
- *The Kingdom of Little Wounds* by Susann Cokal
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen
- *The Music of What Happens* by Bill Konigsberg
- *The New Queer Conscience* by Adam Eli
- *The Nowhere Girls* by Amy Reed
- *The Opposite of Innocent* by Sonya Sones
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *The Rape of Nanking* by Iris Chang
- *The Stars and the Blackness Between Them* by Junauda Petrus
- *The Temptation of Adam* by Dave Connis
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- *The Truth about Alice* by Jennifer Mathieu
- *The Witch Boy* by Molly Ostertag
- *The You I've Never Known* by Ellen Hopkins
- *They Called Me Red* by Christina Kilbourne
- *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson (formerly James Dawson)
- *This Day in June* by Gayle E. Pitman
- *This is My America* by Kim Johnson
- *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki
- *Traffick* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Trail of Crumbs* by Lisa Lawrence
- *Triangles* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins
- *TTFN (Ta-ta for now)* by Lauren Myracle
- *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan

- *Vampire Academy* by Richelle Mead
- *Vincent Boys* by Abbi Glines
- *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen
- *Weird Girl and What's His Name* by Meagan Brothers
- *What Girls Are Made Of* by Elana K. Arnold
- *What is the Black Lives Matter Movement?* by Hedreich Nichols
- *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones
- *What We Saw* by Aaron Hartzler
- *Who am I Without Him?* by Sharon Flake
- *Wide Awake* by David Levithan
- *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate, Charles Santoso
- *Woke: A Guide to Social Justice* by Titania McGrath
- *Worm Loves Worm* by J.J. Austrian and Mike Curato
- *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick your Ass* by Meg Medina
- *You Against Me* by Jenny Downham

Reported in: WPTV, November 16, 2021; CBS12, November 17, 2021; Treasure Coast Palm, November 11, 2021.

Orlando, Florida

Orange County Public Schools removed Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer: A Memoir* from library shelves after receiving a complaint. The district did not follow their policies governing challenged materials.

A couple with five children in the district complained about the book during the October 26 school board meeting. Alicia Farrant said, "There should be no pornography allowed in schools."

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex

Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

Before the meeting, Farrant spoke with Jacob Engels, a far-right blogger, protege of Roger Stone, and associate of the Proud Boys. At the meeting Engels read from the book during the public comments section.

The book was part of the libraries of the Boone, Dr. Phillips, and Lake Buena Vista high schools. After the board meeting, Shari Bobinski, a spokesperson for the district, sent an email stating that "Leadership determined it is not appropriate for the targeted age group and have removed it from circulation.

On October 28, Boone principal Dusty Johns apologized to parents in a Facebook post.

On November 17, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) sent a letter to the board of Orange County Public Schools urging them to ensure that "all challenges are addressed pursuant to District regulations."

NCAC noted that by deviating from standard procedures, "the District raises the suspicion that the removal of the book was motivated by hostility to the book's position on gender nonconformity," which would be a First Amendment violation.

Reported in: National Coalition Against Censorship, November 17, 2021; Orlando Sentinel, November 3, 2021.

Polk County, Florida

Polk County Public Schools (PCPS) Regional Assistant Superintendent John Hill and several of his colleagues drove to every school in the district to remove every copy of books from a list of 19 titles identified



in a complaint emailed by County Citizens Defending Freedom.

The conservative pressure group alleged the books were in violation of Florida Statute 847.012, dealing with distributing obscene or harmful materials to children.

Superintendent Frederick Heid sent an email to all middle and high school principals and media center librarians stating that “While it is not the role of my office to approve/evaluate instructional or resource materials . . . I do have an obligation to review any allegation that a crime is being or has been committed.”

District spokesperson Jason Geary said that the books were placed “in quarantine.” Geary said the books had not been banned, but rather “removed so a thorough, thoughtful review of their content can take place.”

Geary said the process in place requires establishing a review committee of curriculum and literacy staff, media specialists, parents, and other community members and since copies of some of the titles were held at multiple locations, the review was being conducted at the district instead of the school level.

Stephanie Yocum, representing PCPS librarians, said they were alarmed by the book removal as books typically remain available during a challenge. Yocum also said that based on the titles targeted, the challenges seemed to be about oppressing minority voices.

“If you don’t want to have your child read them, you can choose that. Out of one side of their mouth they want all this ‘parent choice,’” said Yocum. “But with this, they’re choosing for all kids, not just their own.”

Yocum said the books in question depict the mistreatment of people. She wondered if autobiographies about life during the Nazi occupation or in

concentration camps would be next. “Is that the road we’re going down? It sounds like it.

A timeline for the review process has not been disclosed.

Titles challenged:

- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer
- *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- *Vincent Boys* by Abbi Glines
- *It’s Perfectly Normal* by Robie Harris
- *Real Live Boyfriends* by E. Lockhart
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *I am Jazz* by Jazz Jennings
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Almost Perfect* by Brian Katcher
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison

Reported in: *The Ledger*, January 26, 2022; *Lakeland Now*, January 26, 2022.

Ridgeview, Florida

On December 8, Clay County Schools announced they were withdrawing George M. Johnson’s coming-of-age memoir *All Boys Aren’t Blue* from its libraries.

All Boys Aren’t Blue is a series of essays about Johnson’s experience growing up as a queer Black man. Publishers Weekly said the book’s “Be yourself” message remains a radical stance for doubly marginalized

individuals” and is “a balm and testimony to young readers as allies in the fight for equality.”

Kirkus named *All Boys Aren’t Blue* one of the best young adult biographies of 2020, it made the American Library Association’s “2021 Rainbow List Top 10 Titles for Teen Readers” and the Young Adult Library Services Association’s “2021 Teens’ Top Ten,” and was a nominee for the Goodreads Choice Award.

Johnson said attempts to silence Black and queer voices were entirely too commonplace. “I knew it was going to rattle the nerves of people who have always suppressed strokes like mine.”

The book was removed from the school district after a group of parents complained to the school board about its existence.

Spokesperson Laura Christmas said the decision was made after a review process and was “based on board policy and state statute.”

Clay County Education Association President Vicki Kidwell expressed concerns over the district’s decision and the emerging trend of censorship. “I think we owe it to our students to give them those viewpoints where they can see themselves,” Kidwell said. “Our librarians are tasked with resisting censorship.”

Reported in: *WCJT News*, December 16, 2021; *WPTV*, November 16, 2021; *Treasure Coast Palm*, March 3, 2022.

St. Petersburg, Florida

The Pinellas County School District instructed high schools to withdraw Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer: A Memoir* from circulation at their libraries.

The district did not receive a formal complaint regarding the book and did not follow the procedures laid out in its “Controversial Material” policy when it removed the titles.



Kobabe's graphic memoir is a 2020 American Library Association Alex Award winner and a Stonewall Award Honoree. School Library Journal called it "a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual, as well as for those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand."

District spokesperson Isabel Mascareñas said in a statement that the book was removed from the shelves of the Lakewood High School and the Dunedin High school libraries "due to the graphic illustrated sexual nature of some of the content." She noted that it "is still available to district staff," however.

Mascareñas said the district reviewed the book after hearing concerns about it from a parent. No formal request for reconsideration was ever received. The district's integrated library system has the ability to prevent circulation of a title to a child upon parental request, however no explanation was given as to why that wasn't done in this case.

Nora Pelizari, spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Censorship, said "When you pull a book off the library shelf, you're dictating what other peoples' kids are allowed to read. That can't be allowed to happen."

Mara Rish, editor-in-chief of Lakewood High's student newspaper, Spartan News Network, said students were "really shocked" to learn the book had been withdrawn from circulation.

Pinellas School Board member Nicole Carr said the district had reviewed the "Controversial Material" policy with their media specialist the week before *Gender Queer* was withdrawn from circulation.

"We do not want to get in the habit of banning books," said Carr. "We want to make sure our process

is well-defined, uniform, and consistently followed."

According to Lakewood High School media specialist Heather Robinson, that process was not followed in this case.

Pinellas Park High media specialist Ginger Brengle said, "I'm extremely disappointed in our district for not following the policy it just instructed us to use."

Angela Dubach, president of the Moms for Liberty Pinellas chapter, has questioned the availability of other books from district libraries, including *All Boys Aren't Blue*.

Reported in: *Tampa Bay Times*, November 19, 2021; *Spartan News Network*, November 18, 2021.

Post Falls, Idaho

On December 18, police arrested a man armed with a loaded handgun and a knife who allegedly trespassed on Hayden Library property while protesting Rainbow Squad, a program for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Rainbow Squad is a monthly Community Library Network (CLN) program for LGBTQIA+ youth and allies where attendees participate in crafts, games, and other activities. They also have sessions for parents, where they can meet other parents, ask questions, and support their children.

CLN Director Amy Rodda said LGBTQIA+ topics aren't generally discussed at the Rainbow Squad teen meetings. "These teens are in a supportive environment where they do crafts and games," Rodda said. "It's just teens being teens."

At the November 20 meeting, attendees were met by a crowd of protestors holding anti-LGBTQIA+ signs. The protestors yelled at youth as they entered the library for Rainbow Squad.

"There were some people who felt intimidated from entering the

building [and] others left because they were feeling so terrible," said North Idaho Pride Alliance Outreach Coordinator Jessica Mahuron, who attended the event. "For some, this is nothing new to them, so they stood strong."

Mahuron believes the picketing stems from nonpartisan library trustee positions being filled by partisan candidates.

"There was an individual who ran blatantly on a campaign wanting to remove Rainbow Squad . . . and also targeting books in the library," said Mahuron. Once elected, this person began "rallying people to library board meetings to speak against programming or books." (See: Journal for Intellectual Freedom and Privacy v.6, iss.2: Is it Legal?: Libraries)

The December meeting of Rainbow Squad was a private event held outside of the library's operating hours. Advance registration was required to attend. A presence from the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office was requested at the meeting after Post Falls police were needed to prevent protesters at the November meeting from obstructing library use.

The protests were organized by Steven Hemming, a pastor at Family Worship Center in Hayden. Police said they "clearly conveyed" the restrictions against blocking the fire lane, parking lot access, and the entryway to Hemming in advance of the meeting.

According to court documents, Thomas Meyer, 67, left the demarcated protest area and refused to return when instructed to by police. While he did eventually return to the designated area, he then left again and approached the library's entrance. After refusing multiple orders from law enforcement, he was arrested for trespassing and obstructing officers.



Reported in: *Coeur d'Alene/Post Falls Press*, December 1, 2021, and December 21, 2021; *KREM*, December 17, 2021.

Downers Grove, Illinois

On November 15, members of the far-right neo-fascist group the Proud Boys attended a Downers Grove school board meeting to demand that Maia Kobabe's memoir *Gender Queer* be banned from school libraries.

Both Edgar Delatorre, who participated in the January 6 insurrection and was caught on video pummeling a protestor at an Anti-Biden rally he organized, and Brain Kraemer, who was charged with brandishing a hunting knife in a threatening manner after driving into a crowd of people at a Black Lives Matter demonstration in Joliet, were in attendance at the school board meeting.

Members of the Proud Boys who attended held signs saying "No Porn" and jeered at board members, parents, and students.

While 18-year-old senior Josiah Poynter addressed the board supporting *Gender Queer's* place in the library, Kraemer shouted "You're a pedophile. You promote pedophilia." According to Poynter, Kraemer drove up to him in the parking lot after the meeting and again shouted "Pedophile" at him.

"The last thing we need is some 30- or 40-year-old man who lives in the middle of nowhere to be calling . . . some kid a 'pedophile,'" said Poynter. "That's not OK."

Lauren Pierret, a senior at Downers Grove North, said "it made me very uncomfortable" to have "men in the back yelling things out for no reason" while she and her friends addressed the board.

Tabitha Irvin, a Downers Grove North junior, said "It kind of fell apart after the board meeting." She

said she's begun seeing students wearing Trump garb to class and starting arguments against the book.

"Students are now getting caught up in the political controversy . . . and that's exactly what fuels groups like the Proud Boys," Irvin said. "We can't stoop down to their level and engage with them, because it only strengthens them."

Reported in: *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 21, 2021.

La Grange, Illinois

At both the November 15 and December 20 board meetings of the Lyons Township High School board of education, Laura Tussing read passages from the books *All Boys Aren't Blue* and *Monday's Not Coming*, which she described as "pornographic."

All Boys Aren't Blue is a series of essays about Johnson's experience growing up as a queer Black man. Publishers Weekly said the book's "Be yourself" message remains a radical stance for doubly marginalized individuals" and is "a balm and testimony to young readers as allies in the fight for equality."

Kirkus named *All Boys Aren't Blue* one of the best young adult biographies of 2020, it made the American Library Association's "2021 Rainbow List Top 10 Titles for Teen Readers" and the Young Adult Library Services Association's (YALSA) "2021 Teens' Top Ten," and was a nominee for the Goodreads Choice Award.

Monday's Not Coming received the Coretta Scott King-John Steptoe Award for New Talent and was a School Library Journal "Best Book," a 2019 YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults "top ten" selection, and a Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature Honor Book, among other accolades.

Jackson's novel deals with issues of gentrification, race, poverty, mental

illness, and cultural biases about the value of missing children. School Library Journal recommended it for grades 9 and up and called it "a spell-binding, profoundly moving choice for YA collections."

Both books are available from the high school library and *Monday's Not Coming* was on last year's summer reading list.

"Salty language. Is this what qualifies as quality literature today?" Tussing asked. She also stated that the books were "less than well-written."

La Grange Trustee Beth Augustine gently pushed back against Tussing's repeated calls for the books' withdrawal from the two high school campus libraries.

"I am concerned not that people have different opinions about literature, but [that] people think that banning books essentially is the way to go," said Augustine. "While we all might not be comfortable with that content, where do we start or where do we end if we begin banning books again? There's an internet full of things that our kids can easily get a handle on."

The district's library collection development policy has procedures covering the reconsideration of material. These require receipt of a written complaint form to initiate the process. Unless Tussing submits a formal request for reconsideration, a committee will not be formed to review the materials to which she has raised verbal objections.

Reported in: *Patch*, November 24, 2021, and December 23, 2021.

Oneida, Illinois

On November 15, after receiving parent complaints, the ROWVA District 208 Board of Education directed the principal to suspend teaching of Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*. A freshman English class was halfway



through reading it at the time. No date was set for when the temporary suspension would end.

The complaints about the book were that it contained strong language and portrayed police in a negative light.

The Hate U Give is a young adult novel narrated by a Black teenager who witnesses a White police officer shoot and kill an unarmed Black man during a traffic stop. It won the Michael L. Printz Award, the William C. Morris Award for best debut book for teens, and was a Coretta Scott King Book Award Honor Book.

The board's decision to suspend teaching of *The Hate U Give* was made during a closed session which was not on the agenda. Following backlash against this maneuver, they opened up discussion of the book for public comment at their January board meeting.

On January 18, the ROWVA District 208 Board of Education announced that *The Hate U Give* would remain suspended from classrooms until it has been reviewed by a curriculum committee. However, it will continue to be available for circulation from the school library.

Board member Missie Shepherd cautioned that "I think as a board we're walking a thin line between critiquing our teachers to the point where they feel that we don't value their expertise."

District Superintendent Joe Sornberger argued that the book should neither be banned nor suspended. "When you deny the author the right of free expression, you in turn deny everyone else the right to see a different perspective," said Sornberger. He noted the district already has a policy in place allowing parents to opt their children out of reading assignments to which they object.

Board member Ryan West made a motion to remove *The Hate U Give* from the curriculum but retain it in the library. The motion died on the floor, failing to find a second.

A motion was made by Matthew Johnson to postpone any further action on the book until the board has approved "the core values of the ROWVA school district," a curriculum committee has been established, and the book has been reviewed by them. The motion carried 4-2, leaving the fate of the book indefinitely in limbo.

Reported in: WQAD8, January 19, 2022; *The Register-Mail*, January 19, 2022.

Muncie, Indiana

On November 15, Muncie Central High School (MCS) students protested the school's handling of student artwork related to police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of complaints from school resource officers.

The posters were created by students as part of a class assignment to reflect on Alan Moore's graphic novel *V for Vendetta* and issues in America today. The posters were displayed outside of the classroom. The school resource officers complained that the posters negatively portrayed law enforcement.

All three of the school's resource officers confronted Emma Martin, a Junior, about her poster, and got into a heated debate with her.

School resource officers are members of law enforcement. They are armed with tasers and batons and have the authority to arrest school children.

According to MCS Chief Communications Officer Andy Klotz, "The display created a disruptive discussion between a student and school resource officers that the student and other observers found offensive."

One of those offended by the officers' actions was teacher Melissa Zimmerman. "The things revealed to me that day broke my heart. I'm one of the only Black teachers in the school. They felt comfortable and emboldened to say the things they did. I was told 'police brutality is not a thing,'" said Zimmerman.

Katy O'Connor, the teacher who assigned the project, was asked to move the posters inside her classroom to reduce their visibility.

Students from O'Connor's class then organized and staged a peaceful protest in the main atrium of the school, demanding the posters' return to the hallway and accountability for the school resource officers.

Klotz said, "The students voiced their concerns and engaged in civil discussion with school and district officials."

Despite their civil response, MCS sent the students home and switched to online classes for the following three days in an effort to quell further protests.

The school board sent an email to parents informing them that the return to in-person instruction was done "in order to ensure school safety for all and to permit the educational process to move forward, there will be no more in-school protests allowed."

School Board President Jim Williams wrote, "We are listening to their voices with the goal to address constructive concerns and to get our students back into class as soon as practicable."

Muncie Human Rights Commission organized a peaceful protest on November 23, including a March from the school to City Hall.

Reported in: *Liberation*, November 30, 2021; *Motherboard*, November 18, 2021; *Muncie Star Press*, November 16, 2021.



Carmel Clay, Indiana

Parents attending the July 26 Carmel Clay Schools Board meeting complained about several books offered at school libraries because they included transgender characters or had sexually explicit content.

Superintendent Michael Beresford said the district would examine all of the books mentioned during the meeting.

On their Facebook page, Unify Carmel states they are targeting any book they can find through the search terms “transgender” and “gender identity.” Unify Carmel is a local conservative group opposed to wearing masks, teaching “critical race theory,” and to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

After the meeting, Unify Carmel member Michelle Ball added Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* to the list of books they were challenging. Ball sent an email to Carmel Clay Schools’s attorney calling for the immediate removal of the book based on the belief it was violating Indiana code 35-49-3-3 regarding dissemination of matter harmful to minors.

In response, *Homegoing* was collected from students and removed from the classroom and the curriculum.

The disposition of the other challenged titles has not been reported on or documented in school board meeting minutes.

Additional titles challenged by Unify Carmel:

- *Call me Max* by Kyle Lukoff
- *Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship* by Jessica Walton
- *It’s Perfectly Normal* by Robie Harris
- *Doing it Right: Making Smart, Safe, and Satisfying Choices About Sex* by Bronwen Pardes

- *L8r, G8r* by Lauren Myracle
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Phoenix Goes to School: A Story to Support Transgender and Gender Variant Children* by Phoenix Finch
- *Sparkle Boy* by Leslea Newman
- *The Infinite Moment of Us* by Lauren Myracle
- *Jesus Land* by Julia Scheeres
- *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen
- *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* by Christine Baldacchino
- *Woke: A Guide to Social Justice* by Titania McGrath
- *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *Seeing Gender: An Illustrated Guide to Identity and Expression* by Iris Gottlieb

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Carmel, Indiana).

Reported in: FOX 59, July 27, 2021; Unify Carmel, August 27, 2021.

Westfield, Indiana

A group called Unify Westfield started an online petition calling for the removal of all books dealing with gender identity or sexual orientation from Westfield Washington elementary schools.

At their February 9, 2021 meeting, Parent Veronica Winkleman spoke to the school board regarding her concerns with the books on the petition as well as the title *Sometimes People March* by Tessa Allen.

Winkleman said she felt it was inappropriate for elementary students to learn about reproductive rights. She also said she “does not like people choosing their pronouns.”

At the March 9 board meeting, six people expressed concerns about the availability of books about gender identity at the school library. At the

April 20 meeting, nearly 90 people addressed the board about the books.

All of the books challenged were moved behind the counter at the library, out of students’ reach.

The Westfield Washington School District has a materials challenge process that requires review by a committee following the submission of a request for reconsideration form. It does not appear the policy was followed in this instance.

Brooke Watkins, district director of secondary curriculum instruction and talent development, told the board that the district has only received four requests for reconsideration in the past four years.

Books targeted:

- *I am Jazz* by Jazz Jennings
- *It Feels Good to Be Yourself* by Theresa Thorn
- *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* by Christine Baldacchino
- *One of a Kind Like Me* by Laurin Mayeno
- *They, She, He, Me. Free to Be* by Maya Christina Gonzalez

Reported in: Indianapolis Star, April 2, 2021, August 30, 2021.

Ankeny, Iowa

On November 24, Ankeny school district removed Maia Kobabe’s memoir *Gender Queer* from all district libraries, following the recommendation of a committee convened to review it.

Kobabe’s graphic memoir is a 2020 American Library Association Alex Award winner and a Stonewall Award Honoree. *School Library Journal* called it “a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual, as well as for those who know



someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand.”

School Library Journal recommended it for grades 9 and up and called it “a book to be savored rather than devoured, this memoir will resonate with teens. . . . It’s also a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual as well as those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand.”

The committee determined that while *Gender Queer* met the criteria of the district’s selection policy and was “in no way pornographic, the explicit visual and graphic nature of the graphic novel overshadowed the message to the reader.”

The committee recommended that three other books be retained by district libraries: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson, and *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews.

According to the librarian, parents have also challenged *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison and *Queer, There, and Everywhere* by Sarah Prager, but the fates of these titles were not delineated in the school district’s press release.

Reported in: *Ames Tribune*, December 7, 2021; *Ankeny Community School District News*, November 24, 2021.

Johnston, Iowa

Parents Mandy and Rodney Gilbert submitted formal reconsideration requests to remove the books *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie from the curriculum of the Johnston Community School District.

The Gilberts objected to the themes the books contain and the profane language they include. Rodney Gilbert

went so far as to claim that the school was violating the law by making the books available. “It’s about the law and giving obscene things to children. If I gave this to my 15-year-old neighbor, I would be arrested,” he said.

The first meeting of the reconsideration committee took place on November 3 at a fraught time for both Iowa politics and the school board. Brad Zaun, president of the state Senate Judiciary Committee, attended the meeting and said he supports charging teachers with felonies for having “obscene” books in school and classroom libraries.

Earlier this year, Governor Kim Reynolds signed a law barring the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) and other concepts from government training and classroom curricula.

On the day before the meeting, three candidates who signed the 1776 Action Pledge to “defeat toxic, CRT-inspired curriculum and restore honest, patriotic education” were elected to the board.

Former school board president Justin Allen, who was not re-elected, expressed concerns about these candidates’ actions before the election. “If you sign a pledge to an outside organization, you’re no longer thinking independently [about] what’s best for the district.”

Allen wasn’t alone in holding these sentiments. A protest against the board members who signed the 1776 Action Pledge was organized by community members and held outside the library on November 22.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is a semi-autobiographical novel about Junior’s life on the Spokane Indian Reservation and attending a nearly all-White public high school. It explores themes of poverty, racism, alcoholism, and bullying.

Alexie’s book won numerous awards including the National Book

Award for Young People’s Literature, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and the Odyssey Award for the best audiobook for children or young adults.

The Hate U Give is a young adult novel narrated by a Black teenager who witnesses a White police officer shoot and kill an unarmed Black man during a traffic stop.

Thomas’s book has also won numerous awards, including a 2018 Michael L. Printz Award, three Goodreads Choice Awards, the 2018 William C. Morris Award for best debut book for teens, the 2018 Indies Choice Award for Young Adult Book of the Year, and it was a 2018 Coretta Scott King Book Award honoree.

Jake Chapman, president of the Iowa State Senate, attended the second meeting of the reconsideration committee on November 18. He said he would work to make providing youth with such books a felony and would see that teachers are charged.

“I don’t know why the school thinks that they’re above the law, but I intend to do something about it,” said Chapman.

Numerous Johnston High School students in attendance spoke out in defense of the books. Regarding *The Hate U Give*, Sofia Bristow said “This book should not be censored to make lessons of racial injustice palatable to White audiences.”

“I experienced my first act of racism at six years old,” said freshman Kaylee Jones. “All that *The Hate U Give* is doing is drawing attention to the problem and I’m asking you to hear me out.”

The reconsideration committee issued a recommendation to keep the books in the curriculum, provided that detailed notice about the books would be given to parents going forwards. Superintendent Laura Kacer endorsed their recommendation.



The Gilberts appealed the committee's decision, requiring a determination from the school board.

At their regular December 13 meeting, the school board voted 4-3 to uphold the recommendation that had been made by the reconsideration committee and endorsed by Superintendent Laura Kacer.

The three board members who voted against the motion were Deb Davis, Clint Evans, and Derek Tidball, the newly elected members who signed the 1776 Action Pledge.

Reported in: WHO13, November 18, 2021; KCCI, November 22, 2021; Des Moines Register, November 19, 2021.

Muscatine, Iowa

Numerous residents voiced their opinions about banning books during the public comments section of the November 15 meeting of the Muscatine school board.

While there was no related item on the agenda and while the parent of a high school student had complained about the book *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson, no formal request for reconsideration was received until January.

All Boys Aren't Blue is a memoir about Johnson's experiences growing up as a queer Black man which Kirkus referred to as a "captivating merciful mirror for growing up Black and queer today."

Publishers Weekly called it "a balm and testimony to young readers as allies in the fight for equality" and said "in a publishing landscape in need of queer Black voices, readers who are sorting through similar concepts will be grateful to join him on the journey."

All Boys Aren't Blue received numerous accolades including being the American Library Association's 2021 Rainbow List selection for

Young Adult Nonfiction, one of the Young Adult Library Services Association 2021 Teens' Top 10, one of the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound, and a selection for the Goodreads Choice Award.

During the school board meeting, most residents spoke out in opposition to book bans of any kind.

Resident Tom Emerick said "Our students need an unrestricted library, and in this critical time we can't afford to have students without critical thinking skills."

Boy Scouts of America troop leader Frantz Silberger spoke about the requirement for new scouts to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion in order to earn their Citizenship in Society merit badge.

"If we want people to live in Muscatine, I personally believe we need to educate people—and that includes our children—on the importance of welcoming all people, regardless of their differences," said Silberger. "As you move forward, I hope you consider who we are and who we want to be before you ban educational materials for youth."

Deb Hagy spoke on behalf of Faith United Church of Christ's Open and Affirming Committee. "As citizens of Muscatine and people of faith, we respectfully ask you to consider the banning of books as both divisive and undemocratic."

"We believe the school library should reflect and respect the diversity of the community. We also believe that school libraries should honor and support the freedom of speech and the freedom to learn about the world from multiple perspectives," Hagy said.

"I have some experience with being abused as a child," said Shelly Servadio Elias. "The library was my refuge." She said reading about women overcoming similar experiences gave her hope.

"Banning books, education, and those safe spaces and places where children can read about different experiences and backgrounds cuts off lifelines to the outside world . . . If you take that away from them because you want to ban a book because of your own ideology or narrow world view, that's about you, not about what's best for your child."

All Boys Aren't Blue is currently under committee review in accordance with the district's reconsideration policy for books and instructional materials.

Reported in: Muscatine Journal, November 19, 2021.

Greenville, Michigan

During the December 13 meeting of the Greenville Public Schools Board of Education, two residents raised concerns about books available from school libraries.

Jon Behrends did not specify any titles he was concerned about, but lamented that the district was a place where "vulgar pornographic content" was available for students to check out. Behrends asked, "Does the board support 13-year-old children reading vulgar material?"

Behrends requested that the board tender a list of every book within district libraries, a list of every book ordered in the last four years, and a breakdown of the district's social-emotional learning curriculum.

Resident Jennifer Gunderson focused her comments on *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews, which is available at the high school library.

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl is a coming-of-age novel about two high school friends who make films together and a classmate with leukemia. It explores themes of friendship, jealousy, and loss. It was selected as one of the Young Adult Library



Services Association “2013 Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults” titles.

“This book is full of disgusting language,” Gunderson lamented. “Why are our students reading this type of stuff?”

Superintendent Linda Van Houten said that the district has an established process for reconsidering materials, which Gunderson and Behrends were welcome to utilize.

Van Houten said that the district has a request for reconsideration form “that allows individuals to submit their concerns to be reviewed. This form is reviewed by the professionals in the field, administration, and a committee representative of our district, before decisions are made. We must balance the interests of all students and families within our district with the opinions of some.”

In January, the district received requests for reconsideration for *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* as well as for *Looking for Alaska* by John Green.

Reported in: *The Daily News*, December 30, 2021.

Kirkwood, Missouri

During the public comments section of the November 29 meeting of the Kirkwood School District Board of Education, a parent claimed that school libraries had 21 “pornography-related books.”

Another speaker raised objections to *Stamped from the Beginning* by Jason Reynolds on the grounds that it promoted critical race theory (CRT).

Other parents praised the work of the district’s equity task force and spoke about the importance of avoiding censorship and allowing children access to a wide range of ideas, books, and authors.

“Apparently, I’m supposed to be outraged by the books in our school libraries. I am not,” said parent Sarah Pitt Kaplan. “I can’t deem what is

appropriate for another person’s child, nor should I have them dictate what my children can read.”

The spate of community members who came prepared to speak either for or against the banning of books from school libraries was apparently spurred by an event at the October 25 board meeting. During that meeting, Jessica Crandell left the podium and approached the board members with a copy of Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer*.

The book was not in any district library and Crandell was barred from school board meetings for a year for failing to follow the policy governing

The district confirmed that all but one of the titles mentioned were in school libraries and available for circulation to students.

Formal requests for reconsideration have not been filled out and submitted regarding these books.

At the board’s January 10 work session, the district’s policy governing the reconsideration of library materials was updated.

The policy now requires that principals receive all book reconsideration requests; that committees reviewing materials for reconsideration consist of two teachers, the principal or designee, a librarian from the school, two parents of students at the school, a district patron, and an additional administrator.

Committee members are required to read challenged materials in their entirety. Decisions made by a reconsideration committee apply to all schools in the district and the same items cannot be challenged again for 36 months.

The titles challenged during the public comments section of the November 29 board meeting were:

- *Fences* by August Wilson
- *#MurderTrending* by Gretchen McNeil

- *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Black Girl Unlimited* by Echo Brown
- *Breathless* by Jennifer Niven
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon
- *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Perez
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Girl Who Fell From the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow
- *Haters* by Jesse Andrews
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *Testaments* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi

Reported in: *Webster-Kirkwood Times*, December 6, 2021, and January 17, 2022.

Lindbergh, Missouri

In October, a group of parents submitted forms requesting reconsideration of 16 titles held by libraries in the Lindbergh Schools District.

The books were not read in their entirety, but the parents listed a litany of complaints, including “college-level novel,” “consensual sexual encounters,” “drug use,” “drinking blood,” “abortion,” “rape scene,” and the strange claim that presenting a book including sexual content to a minor constituted pedophilia.



The review committee recommended retaining *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe, *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson, *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood, and *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson.

The parent group appealed this decision to the school board. At their December 16 meeting, the board voted 6-1 to retain *The Handmaid's Tale* for library use and for use in the curriculum. They also voted 6-1 to retain *Gender Queer* in libraries.

On February 24, the board voted 6-1 to retain *All Boys Aren't Blue* and *The Testaments*. The board voted unanimously to retain *This Book is Gay* but with a the label "mature for high school" added to the online catalog and inside the cover.

The disposition of the additional titles is yet to be determined.

Titles challenged:

- *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Perez
- *Black Girl Unlimited* by Echo Brown
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Fences* by August Wilson
- *Anger is a Gift* by Mark Oshiro
- *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon
- *The Handmaid's Tale: The Graphic Novel* by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *Testaments* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow
- *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson

Reported in: FOX 2, November 4, 2021, and December 22, 2021; ; Call Newspapers, March 3, 2022.

Monett, Missouri

In response to complaints from parents, Monett High School removed Nic Stone's *Dear Martin* from the curriculum.

Dear Martin is about Justyce McAllister, a Black student attending a predominantly White Preparatory high school in Atlanta. After being thrown to the ground and handcuffed by a White police officer, he attempts to make sense of life as a Black teenager today by writing letters to the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear Martin was nominated for numerous awards and was included on the American Library Association's 2018 Top Ten Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers lists.

Suzy Gonzalez was disturbed by the decision to remove the book from the curriculum, as her son felt a personal connection to it.

"His peers in his class started telling him that racism didn't exist," Gonzalez said. "To me, it is important for the community to know that this is a problem in their own backyard."

Superintendent Mark Drake said that the book wasn't pulled because of its content, but because it wasn't properly approved for use in the curriculum.

Principal Stephanie Heman wrote to parents that "Selecting books for students to read in the classroom will undergo strict review to avoid similar situations."

An updated process that will use a committee of teachers, administrators, and parents to review all reading materials is expected to be in place for the 2022-2023 school year.

Drake said that *Dear Martin* "would be a book that would go through the

committee if the teacher still wanted to teach that or even if we wanted to have it on the shelf of the library."

Director of communications Ana Espinoza said that the district has copies of the book which parents can check out if they want to read it.

Andy Brandt, who has three children in the district, expressed concerns over the proposed plan to pre-screen new reading material.

"They don't need to be banning any more books because of a small, vocal minority," Brandt said. "If they think this book is wrong, I question their ability to filter the other books."

Students who had been assigned to read *Dear Martin* will be reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, instead.

Reported in: Associated Press, January 14, 2022; Springfield News-Leader, January 13, 2022.

North Kansas City, Missouri

During the October 26 board meeting of the North Kansas City School District, members of the Northland Parent Association (NPA) lobbied for the removal of *All Boys Aren't Blue*, *Out of Darkness*, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, and *Lawn Boy*.

A Google Sheet called "MO State Public School Books List" was shared by NPA prior to the meeting. It identified a total of 32 books, the number of copies of each held by every high school in two school districts, whether they were digital or hard copies, and the "offensive pages" in each title.

The sheet was riddled with typos and three of the five tabs—the ones for middle and elementary school library holdings—remained unused by NPA. The tabs for high school materials contained numerous empty columns labeled "[School Name] (School District)." The formatting and lacuna suggest that some manner of book



banning template was utilized by the association.

All the challenged books were by or about Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and/or had LGBTQIA+ authors, characters, and themes.

Following the October board meeting, superintendent Dan Clemens instructed librarians to remove *Fun Home* and *All Boys Aren't Blue* from the libraries of the North Kansas City, Oak Park, Staley, and Winnetonka high schools in violation of district policy.

Upon learning of this, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) sent a letter to the board pointing out that “it is obviously improper for the District to ignore duly adopted Board rules and regulations.”

NCAC pointed out that the books which were improperly removed from district libraries both serve to support the district’s mission statement to “inspire lifelong learning” and “embrace inclusion.”

Fun Home is a graphic memoir exploring themes of sexual orientation, gender roles, suicide, emotional abuse, and family dysfunction. It received numerous accolades including the Eisner Award for Best Reality-Based Work and a nomination for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Publishers Weekly named it the best comic book of 2006 and The New York Times, Amazon.com, and The Times of London all named it one of the best books of 2006.

All Boys Aren't Blue is a memoir about Johnson’s experiences growing up as a queer Black man which Kirkus referred to as a “captivating merciful mirror for growing up Black and queer today.”

Publishers Weekly called it “a balm and testimony to young readers as allies in the fight for equality”

and said “in a publishing landscape in need of queer Black voices, readers who are sorting through similar concepts will be grateful to join him on the journey.”

All Boys Aren't Blue received numerous accolades including being the American Library Association’s 2021 Rainbow List selection for Young Adult Nonfiction, one of the Young Adult Library Services Association 2021 Teens’ Top 10, one of the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound, and a selection for the Goodreads Choice Award.

On November 2, a group of students started an online petition against banning books from the North Kansas City school district. It garnered over 1,100 signatures.

On November 19, the school district sent a letter to parents announcing that *Fun Home* and *All Boys Aren't Blue* would be returned to library shelves in the district as their earlier removal had violated students’ First Amendment rights.

Prior to this reversal being reported, but after it took place, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Missouri sent an email to school board president Jan Kauk stating that “The Constitution prohibits community members or school officials from imposing their own personal views and concerns upon an entire school community.”

“The Board has no basis for denying student access to a specific book based on the disagreement and discomfort of certain parents with the book’s content,” wrote Anthony Rothert, Director of Integrated Advocacy for ACLU of Missouri. “Removing a book from library shelves constitutes unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination while also impermissibly stigmatizing students who would choose to read the book.”

The ACLU email called for the return of *Fun Home* and *All Boys Aren't Blue* to the shelves; for books to remain continuously available to students while titles or district policies are under review; to deny further requests to ban books; to review policies and practices related to library book selection to ensure “conformity with constitutional law”; and “for student advocates to have an opportunity to be heard on this issue.”

This is the full list of titles targeted by NPA:

- *#MurderTrending* by Gretchen McNeil
- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Anger is a Gift* by Mark Oshiro
- *Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable Story of a Teenage Wizard* by Echo Brown
- *Blended* by Sharon Draper
- *Breathless* by Jennifer Niven
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Dead End* by Jason Myers
- *Fences* by August Wilson
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Lily and Dunkin* by Donna Ge-phart
- *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Testaments* by Margaret Atwood
- *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 Girl Who Fell From the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Handmaid's Tale (The Graphic Novel)* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *The Haters* by Jesse Andrews
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson (formerly James Dawson)
- *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki
- *Trans Mission: My Quest to a Beard* by Alex Bertie

Reported in: *ACLU Missouri*, November 22, 2021; *The Hill*, November 22, 2021; *National Coalition Against Censorship*, November 23, 2021; *NewsOne*, November 23, 2021; *KSHB*, November 22, 2021; *Northtown News*, November 4, 2021.

Rockwood, Missouri

Three parents came to the October 21 meeting of the Rockwood School District Board of Education to voice objections to books that were available through district libraries.

They distributed flyers with passages and illustrations from five of the books they were challenging: *Crank*, *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, *The Haters*, *Looking for Alaska*, and *This One Summer*. The fliers also listed which school libraries the books were available at.

Janet Deidrick called the books “pornography” and said they include drinking, foul language, teen pregnancy, oral sex, and a rape scene.

Assistant superintendent Shelley Willott said Rockwood had policies in place to allow parents to place restrictions on what their children

are allowed to check out from district libraries. The district also has a policy governing how requests for the reconsideration of materials are handled.

“It’s important to remember that for every person that doesn’t want their child to read a certain book, there’s somebody who does want their child to read those books,” said Willott.

Willott noted that no formal challenges had been received for any of the books parents objected to at the meeting.

Two books for which formal requests for reconsideration had been received were on the official agenda, however.

The board voted unanimously to retain *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas in the district’s middle school libraries.

The Hate U Give had previously been used in an 8th grade “critical literacy unit” and the review committee recommended retaining the book as the unit was now called “analyzing contemporary literature” and it no longer included Thomas’s book.

The board also voted unanimously to retain *Batman: The Brave and the Bold—Clobbered by Clayface* in the Chesterfield Elementary School library.

After the October 21 meeting, nine formal requests for reconsideration were received from the district.

Language Arts Department Chair Lisa Donovan expressed her belief that people at the board meetings have taken elements of the books out of context and represented the material in an inaccurate fashion.

“I think some of the accusations have been a bit exaggerated. I think teachers and librarians give thoughtful time to choose books that will help kids in any way possible,” said Donovan.

At the December 16 board meeting, it was announced that a review committee of two teachers, two librarians, a curriculum coordinator, a school board member, four parents, and two high school students decided to retain *All Boys Aren’t Blue*, *Crank*, *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, *Looking for Alaska*, *The Haters*, and *Where I End and You Begin* without restriction.

Willott says that the person who challenged the book shares their concerns with the committee and then is dismissed so the committee can “have authentic conversation without interruption and without fear of their conversation ending up on social media.”

“We did have an instance where we did have a challenger take pictures of the committee in one of our sessions, so there was concern from them,” noted Willott.

The three other books under review are *This One Summer*, *Heroine*, and *The Breakaways*.

Additional titles which were objected to during board meetings or on social media but which were not formally challenged are:

- *Breathless* by Jennifer Niven
- *Dead End* by Jason Myers
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Monday’s Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie

Reported in: *The Lancer Feed*, January 4, 2022; *Leader*, November 1, 2021; *St. Louis Public Radio*, November 18, 2021; *FOX2 Now*, December 29, 2021.

Wentzville, Missouri

On January 27, the Wentzville R-IV School District’s board voted 4-3 to withdraw Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* from its library, despite the



review committee's recommendation to retain it.

A formal request for reconsideration of the book was received last October, citing a scene of rape and incest. Six members of the committee voted to retain the book, two voted to retain it with restrictions, and one voted to withdraw the title.

Keri Skeeters, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, sent the committee's recommendation and comments to the board on January 13 and asked the board to approve their recommendation and retain *The Bluest Eye*.

Emboldened by the board's willingness to ban books, requests for reconsideration were then submitted for the following:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon
- *Invisible Girl* by Lisa Jewell
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathon Evison
- *Modern Romance* by Aziz Ansari

The board voted to remove all of them, despite the fact that *Heavy*, *Fun Home*, and *All Boys Aren't Blue* were never reviewed by a committee, as required by the district's "Challenged Materials" policy.

On February 15, the ACLU of Missouri filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri "to stop the removal of books that are by and about communities of color, LGBTQ people, and other marginalized groups."

Anthony Rothert, Director of Integrated Advocacy of ACLU of Missouri said, "The First Amendment

protects the right to share ideas, including the right of people to receive information and knowledge. We must protect this right, including educators' and students' rights to talk and learn about race and gender in schools."

Reported in: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 26, 2022; *ACLU Missouri*, February 15, 2022.

Hillsborough, New Jersey

On November 8, a student's artwork was removed from the Hillsborough Middle School on orders from a board member, despite objections from principal Joseph Trybulski.

"What happened today dishonored the work of those who defend our communities and our Constitution. What happened today was an affront to critical thinking, academic freedom, and the freedom of expression of our young people," says Trybulski.

The student's poster was part of a display of African American history, literature, album covers, and icons, which included social commentary and pieces on social justice. The removed poster depicted a raised fist labeled "Black Lives Matter" superimposed over the names of individuals who were victims of police violence along with the caption "Stop Police Brutality Now."

"It is abhorrent to me that any public official, including a member of this board of education, would use his or her authority to advance an agenda in censoring the views of others in an academic or any other setting."

John Oliver, the board member who ordered the removal of a student's artwork, said he took issue with the student's decision not to show the other side of police brutality. "We need to give both opposing views and let our young students and let our children make the decisions for themselves."

As the National Coalition Against Censorship pointed out in their November 18 letter to the Hillsborough Township Board of Education, "our courts have time and again reaffirmed that the First Amendment prohibits public school officials from censoring student speech, including artistic expression, merely because they find it offensive or provocative."

Disagreement with an opinion expressed in a student's artwork does not meet the standard established by the Supreme Court in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969), that "students have the right to speak on school grounds as long as they do not substantially disrupt the activities of the school."

Reported in: *National Coalition Against Censorship*, November 19, 2021; *Patch*, November 10, 2021.

Haywood, North Carolina

At the January 10 board meeting for Haywood County Schools, Superintendent Bill Nolte said Nic Stone's *Dear Martin* would be removed from the tenth grade English curriculum after a parent complained that it contained strong language.

Dear Martin is about Justyce McAllister, a Black student attending a predominantly White Preparatory high school in Atlanta. After being thrown to the ground and handcuffed by a White police officer, he attempts to make sense of life by writing letters to the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Nic Stone said the shooting deaths of Jordan Davis and Michael Brown inspired and informed her writing.

Dear Martin was nominated for numerous awards and was included on the American Library Association's 2018 Top Ten Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults and Top Ten Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers lists.



The district has a policy governing “parental inspection of and objection to instructional materials.” While the policy does not require review by a committee, it does state “the board believes professional educators are in the best position to determine whether a particular instructional material is appropriate for the age and maturity of the students and for the subject matter being taught.”

The policy also states that “books and other instructional materials may be removed from the school media collection only for legitimate educational reasons and subject to the limitations of the First Amendment.”

According to Smoky Mountain News, “when a parent takes issue with an assigned reading, the course of action in Haywood County Schools is for the parent, teacher, and principal to discuss the issue and then provide the student with an alternative reading assignment.”

Nolte’s actions in this case do not align with either district policy or past practice.

No copies of *Dear Martin* are available from the school library, so with its removal from the curriculum, students can no longer access the book at school.

Reported in: *Smoky Mountain News*, January 26, 2022.

Hillsborough, North Carolina

Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson posted a Facebook video on October 9 calling for the removal of *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe from all schools in North Carolina.

Robinson has repeatedly called on parents to report schools to law enforcement if these and other books

with LGBTQIA+ themes are available in their libraries.

In the video he referred to homosexuality and transgenderism as “filth” and “garbage” and condemned school districts for pushing “an LGBTQ agenda.”

On October 11, droves of protesters showed up at the Orange County Board of Education meeting—some supporting Robinson’s crusade, others opposing it.

“The idea that I, as an educator, brainwashed children into being trans or bisexual or queer is absurd,” said teacher Jayme Carr. “If I could brainwash, my kids would be doing better in school.”

After the meeting, a parent filed a formal complaint about *Gender Queer*, *Lawn Boy*, and *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez in a letter to Orange County High School principal Carlos Ramirez.

The school review committee, consisting of the principal, media coordinator, and teachers, read the books and recommended they be retained in the library based on their educational value and age-appropriateness.

The parent appealed the decision to school district administrators. The district review committee reached the same conclusions as the school review committee.

Board member Sarah Smylie said “I do not agree with pandering to these attempts to limit students’ access to voices of people of color and LGBTQ perspectives.”

The parent then appealed their decision to the Orange County Board of Education.

Board chair Carrie Doyle said that students who met with board members were unanimous in wanting to retain access to the books.

“They needed these books. It was already hard enough being LGBTQ+

in our schools,” said Doyle. “These books were a comfort to them, these books helped develop empathy. These books helped them understand their peers. These books speak to the stories of racial minorities.”

Board vice chair Brenda Stephens said, “As a librarian, I don’t ban books. I try to get books in the hands of as many people as possible because we need to learn from them.”

On January 31, the board voted to retain the books indefinitely.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: North Carolina).

Reported in: WRAL, October 10, 2021, and October 11, 2021; *The News & Observer* February 1, 2022; WCHL, February 2, 2022.

Wake County, North Carolina

On December 2, nine criminal complaints were filed with the Wake County Sheriff’s Office against the largest school system in North Carolina. The complaints alleged that the Wake County Schools district was distributing obscene and pornographic material to minors through their libraries.

The complaints listed the following books:

- *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Red, White & Royal Blue* by Casey McQuiston

All of the titles included have LGBTQIA+ characters, themes, and/or authors.



Separately, Wendy Runyon, one of the parents who filed a criminal complaint, said that she and other parents had found 144 different titles at the 188 schools in the district. She said they were motivated to seek them out by Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson's complaints about the existence of sexually explicit books in the state's public schools. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: North Carolina).

Runyon said she didn't expect charges would be filed as a result of the complaints, but hoped her actions would draw attention to the issue and serve as a warning to other parents.

Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman elected not to file any criminal charges, having determined that the circulation of these library books was not a criminal matter.

A request for reconsideration of *Lawn Boy* was also submitted to Wake County Schools. The review committee recommended that it be retained on December 16 and the parent appealed that decision from the school level to the district.

Lawn Boy is a semiautobiographical coming-of-age novel exploring themes of poverty, racism, and sexual identity. It won a 2019 Alex Award, given by the Young Adult Library Services Association to adult books that have special appeal to young adults.

The district supported the school's decision to retain the item, and the parent then appealed to the board to review the book. On March 10, the board upheld the earlier decisions to retain the title.

"I found overall the theme of this book was about perseverance and overcoming trauma and self-sufficiency and hope" said board member Christine Kushner. "I felt this book could help kids who do have trauma in their lives. If it helps one student, then that's enough."

Reported in: *The Charlotte Observer*, December 3, 2021; *The Raleigh News & Observer*, January 12, 2022; *WRAL*, March 10, 2022.

Bristow, Oklahoma

At the January 10 school board meeting for Bristow Public Schools, it was announced that as a result of challenges to 47 books, 8 titles were removed from district libraries, 10 books were relocated (such as moved to the high school library from the middle school library, moved to AP English classrooms, or moved to classrooms for higher grade levels from where they were previously available), and 7 were restricted by being marked 16+.

The books were removed from classroom and school library shelves throughout the district in November when a group of parents first raised objections to them. Assistant superintendent and director of instruction Krista Buden said the district has a review process in place that could have been used, but no parent ever filled out the paperwork to begin the process.

Batschelett, one of the parents who spoke out against the books, said she refused to fill out a request for reconsideration form, because "Once it's been reviewed, it cannot be reviewed again for five years, regardless of the result of the review." In other words, if she followed the official process, there was a chance she would have to accept the outcome if the committee's opinion of the books' appropriateness differed from hers.

Library media specialist Allison Hilburn served on the committee that reviewed the challenged books. She said the eight books that were removed did not meet the district's selection criteria regarding overall purpose and quality.

Burden said that all of the reading materials provided are grade-level appropriate.

"There are varying opinions from parents as to what is appropriate for their child and that's why library media centers are about access and parents making that choice and being involved in the process of what their child is going to read," said Burden.

Bristow schools allow parents to place restrictions on what their children can check out, including barring them from using the school library, classroom libraries, or anything flagged for 16+.

Books challenged (note: 4 of the challenged titles were not disclosed and the titles which were removed or restricted to 16+ were not identified in board records; some of the titles which were relocated were also not identified):

- *A Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley—moved to junior/senior AP classroom libraries
- *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah Maas
- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds
- *Bad for You* by Abbi Glines
- *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver
- *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys—moved to the high school library
- *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya
- *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson
- *Broken Things* by Lauren Oliver
- *Burned* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Dear Evan Hansen* by Val Emmich
- *Eclipse* by Stephenie Meyer—moved to the 8th grade English classroom
- *Fairest: Levana's Story* by Marissa Meyer—moved to the high school library
- *For Black Girls Like Me* by Mariama Lockington
- *Hold Me Closer: The Tiny Cooper Story* by David Levithan



- *House of Furies* by Madeleine Roux
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
- *I Was Here* by Gayle Forman
- *Infamous* by Elana Arnold
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding—moved to the 7th grade English classroom
- *Mastiff* by Tamora Pierce
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *On Thin Ice* by Julie Cross
- *Other Broken Things* by C. Desir
- *Red, White & Royal Blue* by Casey McQuiston
- *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz
- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson—moved to the high school library
- *Symptoms of Being Human* by Jeff Garvin
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison—moved to junior/senior AP classroom libraries
- *The Dark Descent of Elizabeth Frankenstein* by Kiersten White—moved to the high school library
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton—moved to the 8th grade English classroom
- *The Prom: A Novel Based on the Hit Broadway Musical* by Saundra Mitchell
- *The Way I Used to Be* by Amber Smith
- *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei
- *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher
- *You Should See Me in a Crown* by Leah Johnson

Reported in: KJRH, January 11, 2022; News 9, December 13, 2021; Sapulpa Times, November 9, 2021.

Newberg, Oregon

On November 3 the Newberg Education Association filed a suit over a policy passed by the Newberg school board barring school employees from displaying “political, quasi-political or controversial” signs or images on campus.

The policy started out as a directive to remove signs and posters supporting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement or expressing LGBTQIA+ Pride.

At the July 13 school board meeting, vice chair Brian Shannon said display of BLM and Pride symbols “equates to indoctrination of students into certain ideological beliefs.”

Some Newberg community members countered that they wanted the district to affirm support for Black students and the district’s LGBTQIA+ community.

After being advised that their initially proposed ban would be blatantly unconstitutional for singling out certain types of speech, they pivoted to the current verbiage of the ban, which passed 4-3 when it was voted on in late September.

Public protests against the board’s actions and in support of BLM and the LGBTQIA+ community followed the policy’s passing.

The ACLU, the State Board of Education, and Democrats in the Oregon legislature have all issued statements against the controversial policy.

The 18-page lawsuit claims the policy violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The suit also argues the policy violates Article I, Section 20 of the Oregon

Constitution which protects “against vague laws that confer unbridled discretion.”

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Newberg, Oregon)

Reported in: OPB, November 4, 2021.

Dubois, Pennsylvania

On November 18, the board voted to restrict access to Angie Thomas’s *The Hate U Give*. Going forwards, students will only be able to check out the book if their parents give permission for them to do so.

The Hate U Give is a young adult novel narrated by a Black teenager who witnesses a White police officer shoot and kill an unarmed Black man during a traffic stop.

Thomas’s book has also won numerous awards, including a 2018 Michael L. Printz Award, three Goodreads Choice Awards, the 2018 William C. Morris Award for best debut book for teens, the 2018 Indies Choice Award for Young Adult Book of the Year, and it was a 2018 Coretta Scott King Book Award honoree.

“We, the leadership of the DuBois Area School District, support the freedom to read,” said superintendent Wendy Benton. She went on to stipulate that since Thomas’s book is recommended for individuals that are 13 or older, “and because the majority of students at the middle school are not 13 or older, *The Hate U Give* will be made available to students upon request with parental permission.”

The book was initially challenged during the public comments section of the school board’s October meeting by parent Deidre Brown. Brown criticized the school for purchasing books that had not been approved by every parent in the district and demanded they remove *The Hate U*



Give as she found it “disgusting and unacceptable.”

Justifications she provided included its appearance on the American Library Association’s Banned & Challenged Books List and a list published by Social Justice Books.

“In case you haven’t decoded yet,” Brown said, “We’re talking about books that promote and encourage critical race theory.”

In response, Benton said “I want to apologize that you were offended by the content of that book. I agree with you that it is inappropriate and it should not be on the shelf.”

Reported in: *Bucks County Courier Express*, October 29, 2021, and November 21, 2021.

Perkasie, Pennsylvania

In an email sent to parents in December, the Pennridge School District announced they were removing all “library books with content regarding gender identity from the current elementary student circulation.”

Anthony Rybarczyk, assistant superintendent for elementary education, said the books would be moved to a part of the building accessible to administrators and guidance counselors and that titles would be made available to parents who request them.

A list of the books removed from the district’s school libraries has not been made available and the only title confirmed to have been swept up in the purge of LGBTQIA+ content is *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newman.

Melissa Burger, an elementary school librarian for the Central Bucks School District, said the book’s removal seemed to be discriminatory and unconstitutional.

Burger said that *Heather Has Two Mommies* is “a very developmentally appropriate book for that age group

... and there’s no reason why that shouldn’t be in the library.”

The letter the district sent out regarding the books’ removal stated that since “some books referencing gender identity will not show up in a search” of the library catalog, all remaining library books would be subject to challenge using the process for reconsideration in the district’s “Procedures for Selecting Library Books.”

Resident Stacey Smith said the district’s decision to remove LGBTQIA+ titles from their libraries was a discriminatory act.

“The library section should represent the entire student population,” said Smith. “Removing these books from the general student population and sticking them in a counselor’s office only accessible with parental permission not only insinuates that the student interested in this topic is doing something wrong or needs some sort of psychological help, but could also very well be in violation of a student’s First Amendment rights.”

On December 15, Cheri Derr, director of pupil services, also sent guidelines to elementary school guidance counselors, social workers, and nurses stating that “we do not discuss or use terms related to LGBTQ.”

Derr also provided guidelines that name and pronoun changes for students at any grade level can only be made with parental approval.

Witold Walczak, legal director for ACLU Pennsylvania, said the new disclosure requirements detailed in the document for medical professionals, guidance counselors, and social workers “raise very serious concerns about professional confidentiality requirements that they have.”

“Very often in these kinds of situations, parents are not an option. Sometimes parents are the problem. If you impose this disclosure

requirement, you’re shutting the door to students being able to talk to school professionals,” said Walczak. “From a policy perspective, you’re setting these students up for a situation where there is no adult that they can talk to.”

There is already precedent at Pennridge High School for the harm to students that can result. James Peuplie, a transgender student, said that in 8th grade he asked his teacher to use his proper name and pronouns. The school asked his mother and father to come in to discuss his gender identity.

“A couple of nights later, my dad ended up kicking me out,” said Peuplie. He ended up in the hospital where he was diagnosed with situational depression.

At the December 20 meeting of Pennridge School District’s Community Committee, resident Jane Cramer said her daughters have been bullied in district schools because they have “two mommies.”

“A robust DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] plan for the district would include training for teachers and other school personnel to support my daughters,” said Cramer. She said it would also “educate all students in an age-appropriate way on LGBTQ families.”

Pennridge currently has no DEI plan, as the board voted to indefinitely pause all DEI activities at their August 23 board meeting.

Numerous attendees of the meeting requested a list of all the LGBTQIA+ titles which the district had removed from circulation.

School board and committee members Megan Banis-Clemens and David Reiss said *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe had been withdrawn from the high school library but they were unable to provide information about any other titles.

Earlier in 2021, the district removed books by two Black authors



from the 9th grade English curriculum, *This is My America* by Kim Johnson and *American Street* by Ibi Zoboi. Local pressure group called “Pennridge for Educational Liberty” posted a message on Facebook on August 22 celebrating that the district made the change they requested.

During the public comments section of the January 25 school board meeting, community member Dave Bedillion applauded the district for reviewing every book in the elementary school libraries in order to restrict access to all LGBTQIA+ content. He thanked the board for keeping books like *Call Me Max* by Kyle Lukoff, which he read from, out of children’s hands.

A group called the Pennridge Improvement Project organized a virtual book drive as a way of resisting the district’s initiatives to remove LGBTQIA+ books and books by Black authors from school libraries. They’re placing the titles in little free libraries in the eight towns which comprise the district.

At the January 3 meeting of the Pennridge Curriculum Committee, a proposal to use Social Studies Alive! for the elementary social studies curriculum was postponed for further review.

The text was used in a pilot program in some district elementary school classes during the 2021-2022 school year and the district’s social studies supervisor Keith Veverka and instructional coach Dana Pivnichny both praised the textbook and advocated for its adoption.

Board and committee member Christine Batycki said she would prefer the district to use the Hillsdale College 1776 curriculum instead. The 1776 curriculum emerged from Donald Trump’s 1776 Commission and was designed to support “patriotic education.” Larry Arnn, president

of Hillsdale College, chaired the commission.

Board and committee member Ricki Chaikin agreed. “America’s past should be celebrated,” she said. Chaikin criticized Social Studies Alive! for saying that “Puritan women could not vote” and for its portrayal of the Second Amendment.

American Historical Association executive director James Grossman called the 1776 commission report that was the seed for the 1776 curriculum “a hack job. It’s not a work of history, it’s a work of contentious politics designed to stoke culture wars.” Others characterized “patriotic education” as a dog whistle for White nationalism.

Reported in: WHYY, December 26, 2021, January 15, 2022; The Reporter, January 3, 2022, and January 10, 2022; Los Angeles Blade, December 27, 2021; Bucks County Courier Times, August 31, 2021, December 29, 2021.

Westerly, Rhode Island

After months of complaining about the book *Gender Queer: A Memoir* during the public comments sections of Westerly Public Schools’ board meetings, resident Robert Chiaradio submitted a formal request for its reconsideration on February 17.

Chiaradio has no children attending district schools. He has also been objecting to “critical race theory” and “white shaming” at the school since the September 22 board meeting. Allegations Chiaradio made against teachers resulted in a weeklong investigation that determined Chiaradio fabricated the story.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was

nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association’s 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

Gender Queer has been part of the Westerly High School library’s collection for a year. It has only circulated once: to Superintendent of Schools Mark Garceau, who wanted to review it after reading about challenges it has faced in other school districts.

Chiaradio’s supporters brought poster-sized reproductions of a page from the book.

Garceau said individuals typically start to understand their sexual identities between the ages of 12 and 20 and that this book could play a valuable role in the lives of young members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

“I don’t think anyone would seek to access this book unless they were part of the LBQT [sic] community or were interested in learning more about it,” said Garceau. “I think to people who fall into either of those two groups, it could prove to be a very valuable resource.”

No parents have asked that their children not be allowed to borrow the book.

Reported in: The Westerly Sun, December 18, 2021, September 24, 2021.

McMinn County, Tennessee

On January 10, the McMinn County school board voted 10-0 to remove Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel *Maus* from the 8th grade language arts curriculum.

Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* is a genre-blending work of non-fiction borne of interviews conducted with his father about his experiences as a Holocaust survivor. It depicts experiences from before World War II, his parents’ liberation from Nazi concentration camps, and his mother’s suicide when he was 20.



Specific objections informing the board's decision to remove Maus from the curriculum were its use of the word "goddamn," an image of female nudity in a depiction of Polish Jews during the holocaust, and its portrayal of violence and suicide.

"It looks like the entire curriculum is developed to normalize sexuality, normalize nudity, and normalize vulgar language," said board member Mike Cochran. "If I was trying to indoctrinate somebody's kids, this is how I would do it."

Board member Tony Allman said, "It shows people hanging. It shows them killing kids. Why does the educational system promote this kind of stuff?"

"I was a history teacher and there is nothing pretty about the Holocaust," rebuffed Assistant principal Julie Goodin. "For me, this was a great way to depict a horrific time in history."

Director of Schools Lee Parkison said that when objections to the book were first raised, he "consulted with our attorney" and they decided the best approach was "to redact it to get rid of the eight curse words and the picture of the woman that was objected to."

Board members expressed concerns that doing so would be a copyright violation so it would be more appropriate to redact the book from the curriculum.

Spiegelman expressed confusion when he learned of his book's removal. "Tennessee is obviously demented," said Spiegelman. "There's something going on very, very haywire there."

On May 24, 2021, Governor Bill Lee signed a measure into law banning the teaching of certain concepts about race and racism. The law went into effect on July 1 and prohibits, among other things, teaching that "an individual, by virtue of

the individual's race or sex, is inherently privileged, racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously."

The law permits only "impartial discussion of controversial aspects of history." Legislation in Tennessee and other states have fueled fears that schools will be forced to alter history lessons to remove content pertaining to racism.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: For the Record: Nationwide)

Reported in: CNBC, January 26, 2022; Newsweek, January 26, 2022; The Washington Post, January 27, 2022.

Williamson County, Tennessee

On January 25, Williamson County Schools removed one book from the district's elementary curriculum and set teaching restrictions on seven others.

The action came in response to a lengthy challenge to the Wit and Wisdom curriculum submitted by the Williamson County chapter of Moms for Liberty.

The books they targeted primarily dealt with the civil rights movement, immigrant groups, and indigenous peoples. Their objections included that "we are not sending kids to learn about social justice." Moms for Liberty chair Robin Steenman does not have any children attending district schools.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech, an award-winning book about a Native American girl struggling to deal with her mother's disappearance, was removed from the curriculum.

The seven titles that can only be used with "instructional adjustments" are:

- *Feelings* by Aliki

- *George v. George: The American Revolution as Seen from Both Sides* by Rosalyn Schanzer
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
- *The River Between Us* by Richard Peck
- *Sea Horse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea* by Christine Butterworth
- *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh

Going forwards, teachers will be required to skip certain pages when reading these books aloud and warn school counselors in advance if any of the books will be read in the classroom.

All challenged titles will remain available through school district libraries. However, the district is currently in the process of reviewing and updating their policy governing reconsideration of instructional materials.

Separately, Moms for Liberty also pursued the removal of *Separate is Never Equal* by Duncan Tonatiuh and three other titles through a complaint with the Tennessee Department of Education that including the books in the curriculum violated the recently-passed legal prohibition on teaching critical race theory.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Censorship Date-line: Williamson County, Tennessee; this issue: Success Stories: Williamson County, Tennessee)

Reported in: Williamson Herald, January 14, 2022; The Tennessean, January 25, 2022.

Granbury, Texas

At the January 25 school board meeting for the Granbury Independent School District (ISD), students spoke out against a recently approved amendment to district policy that expanded grounds for withdrawing



instructional material and allowed books to be removed from circulation prior to undergoing formal review.

A junior said, “I’m simply going to say that no government—and public school is an extension of government—has ever banned books and banned information from its public and been remembered in history as the good guys.”

On January 27, the Granbury ISD announced it had removed 134 titles from school libraries for review by a committee.

Unlike a typical book challenge which occurs when a parent or resident fills out a request for reconsideration form, the reconsideration of these books was initiated by the school board.

The books targeted for removal primarily deal with issues of racism or portray members of the LGBTQIA+ community; others are sex education materials and books about abortion.

Most of the books removed for review appeared on the list of 839 titles targeted by State Representative Matt Krause. A photo of boxes of books labeled “Krause’s List” being carted out of the Granbury High School library on a dolly was shared on social media.

A sophomore who attended the January 25 board meeting said, “So many histories, such as those of LGBTQ+ people, indigeonous people, and that of the true history of our country will be erased if this book ban [goes] through.”

The district confirmed that *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez, *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson, *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson, and five novels by Abbi Glines were permanently withdrawn from school libraries.

Titles challenged:

- *7 Days at the Hot Corner* by Terry Trueman
- *A Love Story Starring My Dead Best Friend: A Novel* by Emily Horner
- *After* by Amy Efav
- *After the Game* by Abbi Glines
- *Afterworlds* by Scott Westerfeld
- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
- *All the Things We Do in the Dark* by Sandra Mitchell
- *Almost Perfect* by Brian Katcher
- *Another Kind of Cowboy* by Susan Juby
- *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Saenz
- *As I Descended* by Robin Talley
- *Ash* by Malinda Lo
- *Ask the Passengers* by A. S. King
- *Bad for You* by Abbi Glines
- *Being Jazz: My Life as a (transgender teen)* by Jazz Jennings
- *Bioethics: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Who Decides?* by Linda Jacobs Altman
- *Black Rabbit Summer* by Kevin Brooks
- *Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas
- *Cinderella is Dead* by Kalynn Bayron
- *Class Act* by Jerry Craft
- *Cradle and All* by James Patterson
- *Darius the Great Deserves Better* by Adib Khorram
- *Daughters Unto Devils* by Amy Lukavics
- *Death Wind* by William Bell
- *Dishes* by Rich Wallace
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Dreadnought: H.I. V.E. Vol. 4* by Mark Walden
- *Equal Rights* by Maureen O’Connor
- *Fans of the Impossible Life* by Kate Scelsa
- *Far From You* by Tess Sharpe
- *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender
- *Firestarter* by Tara Sim
- *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *Geography Club* by Brent Hartinger
- *Gingerbread* by Rachel Cohn
- *Girl Nearly 16, Absolute Torture* by Sue Limb
- *Gone, Gone, Gone* by Hannah Moskowitz
- *Grasshopper Jungle* by Andrew Smith
- *Gravity* by Leanne Lieberman
- *Great* by Sara Benincasa
- *Grl2grl: Short Fictions* by Julie Anne Peters
- *Guardian* by Alex London
- *Her Royal Highness* by Rachel Hawkins
- *History is All You Left Me* by Adam Silvera
- *Hold Me Closer: The Tiny Cooper Story* by David Levithan
- *Hooked* by Catherine Greenman
- *How to Love* by Katie Cotugno
- *I’ll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson
- *In Our Mothers’ House* by Patricia Polacco
- *Infinity Son* by Adam Silvera
- *Jack* by A.M. Homes
- *Last Exit to Normal* by Michael Harmon
- *Let’s Talk About Love* by Claire Kann
- *Like Water* by Rebecca Podos
- *Losing the Field* by Abbi Glines
- *Luciana* by Maggie Wells
- *M or F?* by Lisa Papademetriou
- *Making a Play* by Abbi Glines
- *Masked* by Norah McClintock
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews
- *Meet Cute* by Helena Hunting
- *Meg & Linus* by Hanna Nowinski
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Miles Away From You* by A. B. Rutledge
- *Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily M. Danforth
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera



- *My Awful Popularity Plan* by Seth Rudetsky
- *My Invented Life* by Lauren Bjorkman
- *My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer* by Jennifer Gennari
- *My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, & Fenway Park* by Steve Kluger
- *Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List: A Novel* by Rachel Cohn
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *No Girls Allowed: Tales of Daring Women Dressed as Men for Love, Freedom and Adventure* by Susan Hughes
- *Notes from the Blender* by Trish Cook
- *Odd One Out* by Nic Stone
- *Of Fire and Stars* by Audrey Coulthurst
- *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies* by Sonya Sones
- *Openly Straight* by Bill Konigsberg
- *Ordinary Hazards* by Nikki Grimes
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Playing a Part* by Daria Wilke
- *Proxy* by Alex London
- *Queer, There, and Everywhere: 23 People Who Changed the World* by Sarah Prager
- *Rage: A Love Story* by Julie Anne Peters
- *Roe v. Wade: A Woman's Choice* by Susan Dudley Gold
- *Roe v. Wade: Abortion* by Susan Dudley Gold
- *Safe Sex 101: An Overview for Teens* by Margaret O. Hyde
- *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Sex: If You're Scared of the Truth Don't Read This!* by Carl Sommer
- *She Loves You, She Loves You Not* by Julie Anne Peters
- *Shout* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli
- *Sonny's House of Spies* by George Ella Lyon
- *Stained* by Jennifer Jacobson
- *Stamped From the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Star-Crossed* by Barbara Dee
- *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* by Chris Crutcher
- *Symptoms of Being Human* by Jeff Garvin
- *Target* by Kathleen Johnson
- *Tessa Masterson Will Go to Prom* by Emily Franklin
- *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed Their Lives* by Dashka Slater
- *The Baby Tree* by Sophie Blackall
- *The Best Man* by Richard Peck
- *The Boy I Love* by Nina de Gramont
- *The Dateable Rules: A Guide to the Sexes* by Justin Lookadoo
- *The Gravity of Us* by Phil Stamper
- *The Last to Let Go* by Amber Smith
- *The Love Interest* by Cale Dietrich
- *The Midnight Lie* by Marie Rutkoski
- *The Migration North* by James De Medeiros
- *The Past and Other Things that Should Stay Buried* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *The Red Scrolls of Magic* by Cassandra Clare
- *The Sin-Eater's Confession* by Ilsa J. Bick
- *The Upside of Unrequited* by Becky Albertalli
- *The Vincent Brothers* by Abbi Glines
- *The Whispers* by Greg Howard
- *The You I've Never Known* by Ellen Hopkins
- *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera
- *They Called Themselves the KKK: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson (formerly James Dawson)
- *Totally Joe* by James Howe
- *Under the Lights* by Abbi Glines
- *Unpregnant* by Jenni Henriks
- *Until Friday Night* by Abbi Glines
- *Until the End* by Abbi Glines
- *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore
- *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *What if it's Us* by Becky Albertalli
- *What They Always Tell Us* by Martin Wilson
- *When the Moon Was Ours* by Anna-Marie McLemore
- *Whistle Me Home* by Barbara Wersba
- *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* by David Levithan and John Green
- *You and Me and Him* by Kris Dinnison
- *You Know Me Well* by Nina LaCour

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas)

Reported in: WFAA, January 27, 2022; Newsweek, January 25, 2022.

Katy, Texas

At the November 15 board meeting of the Katy Independent School District (ISD), parents complained about and read from books they felt were too explicit to be on the shelves of high school libraries. The parents called for an audit of every school library in the district.

This spate of challenges at Katy ISD came shortly after challenges to *New Kid* and *Class Act*, two award-winning graphic novels by Jerry Craft. Craft's speaking engagement was also canceled at the district on the grounds that he was promoting "critical race theory" and "Marxism." (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom*



& Privacy, v.6 iss.4: Success Stories: Schools: Katy, Texas).

Parent Karen Perez argued that the books brought up during the meeting and others like them should only be accessible with parental permission. “They have the worst porn you’ve ever seen,” she said.

On November 16, Katy ISD released a statement that six books mentioned during the meeting would be made “unavailable for student access” while undergoing review.

On December 7, superintendent Ken Gregoski sent a letter to parents informing them that five of the books objected to at the November 15 board meeting were being permanently removed from district libraries and classrooms for “pervasively vulgar content.”

The books removed were *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L. C. Rosen, *Forever for a Year* by B. T. Gottfred, *The Nerdy and the Dirty* by B. T. Gottfred, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews, and *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison.

In the letter, Gregoski also stated that Katy ISD would re-evaluate their book selection process and add an online portal for parent book complaints. He encouraged parents to send their feedback through the portal.

At the December 13 school board meeting, parents and students alike complained that websites providing resources and support for LGBTQIA+ individuals were being blocked by the school district.

The sites blocked included the Trevor Project, a suicide prevention nonprofit; The Montrose Center, a Houston nonprofit to empower LGBTQIA+ youths through services and support groups; and The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), an organization dedicated to ensuring that LGBTQIA+ people are treated as full and equal citizens.

Cameron Samuels, a senior at Seven Lakes High school, said having access to “a suicide prevention life-line like the Trevor Project is a matter of life or death. The same applies to resources like the Montrose Center, and it is undoubtedly discriminatory that an internet filter category like this had existed in the first place.”

This online censorship was compounded by the fact that many of the books challenged and banned at Katy ISD had LGBTQIA+ authors, characters, and themes.

In January, Katy ISD unblocked access to four LGBTQIA+ websites: Montrose Center; Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN); and HRC.

Other sites, such as *The Advocate*, a national magazine focused on news, politics, art, and entertainment of interest to the LGBTQIA+ community; and *Out Smart*, Houston’s LGBTQ magazine remain blocked.

The additional books challenged at Katy ISD during events covered by this story were:

- *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Losing the Girl* by Mari Naomi
- *Marcelo in the Real World* by Francisco X Stork
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *Scary Stories for Young Foxes* by Christian McKay Heidicker
- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson
- *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- *White Bird* by R. J. Palacio

Reported in: ABC13, November 16, 2021, and December 16, 2021; KHOU11, November 15,

2021, and November 16, 2021; Houston Chronicle, December 7, 2021, and December 14, 2021; The Texan, December 9, 2021; Out Smart, January 24, 2022.

Keller, Texas

During the November 16 board meeting of the Keller Independent School District (ISD), parents called for the removal of 27 different titles from every school library in the district. Almost all of the books listed had characters or authors who were members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

One parent called on the school board to immediately remove all such material or resign.

The review of library material at Tyler ISD began shortly after Governor Greg Abbott called for an investigation into “pornography” in public schools and state Representative Matt Krause distributed a list of 839 books of interest to every school district in the state. Krause requested that audits be made of which schools have each of the titles, how many copies are held, and how much was spent to obtain them.

Most of the books on Krause’s list had LGBTQIA+ characters; are by authors who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), or discuss race and racism. Also included on his list were sex education materials and books about the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision.

One parent expressed concern that the book challenges were focused on LGBTQIA+ titles and beseeched the district to consider the impact their removal would have on students who identify as part of that community.

“I ask that you think of having to raise my boys in what amounts to be a homophobic suburb. I ask that you really think of the students before you start pulling books off the bookshelves,” said the parent.



In late November, The Texas Education Agency (TEA) opened a state investigation into the Keller ISD for allowing students to have access to “sexually explicit content.” This is the first such investigation to have occurred in response to Governor Abbott’s call for TEA to prevent the “availability of pornography and other obscene content” in schools.

Abbott called for “prosecution to the fullest extent of the law” for anyone involved.

After Governor Abbott threatened educators with the possibility of criminal penalties for making school library materials available, Keller ISD began holding their challenge committee meetings privately and withholding the identities of committee members from the public. Keller ISD attorneys cited Abbott’s threats as justification for these measures.

On December 2, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) sent a letter to the Keller ISD school board in response to the withdrawal of numerous titles from district collections in a fashion that did not adhere to the board’s policies.

NCAC urged the district to return the titles to school libraries and to ensure that books remain accessible to students while undergoing review, in accordance with district policy.

NCAC’s letter also states that by violating their policies to remove LGBTQIA+ titles like *Gender Queer*, the district “raises the suspicion that the removal of the book was motivated by hostility to the book’s position on gender nonconformity.”

District administrators said they placed a moratorium on the purchase of adult fiction until between ten and fifteen thousand books have been reviewed by district librarians.

Books challenges and outcomes:

- *47* by Walter Mosley—Withdrawn

from classroom libraries, retained in school libraries

- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sara J. Maas—Withdrawn
- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sara J. Maas—Pending review
- *Afterward* by Jennifer Mathieu—Retained
- *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson—Retained
- *Anne Frank’s Diary: The Graphic Novel* by Ari Folman and David Polonsky—Pending review
- *Empire of the Storms* by Sara J. Maas—Pending review
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato—Withdrawn
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel—Challenged, but not held
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe—Withdrawn
- *Girls Like Us* by Gail Giles—Withdrawn from middle school classroom libraries
- *Go With the Flow* by Karen Schneemann—Retained
- *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings—Retained
- *If You Could Be Mine* by Sara Farihan—Withdrawn
- *Infinity Reaper* by Adam Silvera—Withdrawn
- *Jack of Hearts* by L.C. Rosen—Withdrawn
- *Keeping You a Secret* by Julie Anne Peters—Withdrawn
- *King and the Dragonflies* by Kacen Callender—Retained
- *L8r, G8r* by Lauren Myracle—Withdrawn
- *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo—Retained
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews—Retained
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino—Retained
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur—Pending Review
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam

Silvera—Withdrawn from middle school libraries; retained in high school libraries

- *Moxie* by Jennifer Mathieu—Retained
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez—Restricted to high school students with parental consent
- *Panic* by Sharon Draper—Withdrawn
- *So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed* by Jon Ronson—Withdrawn
- *Storm in the Barn* by Matt Phelan—Retained
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison—Retained
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson—Retained
- *The Holy Bible*—Pending review
- *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki—Retained
- *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson—Withdrawn from middle school libraries; retained in high school libraries
- *Weird Girl and What’s His Name* by Meagan Brothers—Retained
- *What Girls Are Made Of* by Elana K. Arnold—Retained

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

Reported in: *The Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 2021, and December 29, 2021; CBS DFW, November 15, 2021; NBC DFW, January 10, 2022; *National Coalition Against Censorship*, December 3, 2021; WFAA, November 16, 2021; KUT 90.5, November 10, 2021.

Lamar, Texas

During the November 16 meeting of the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD), Rebecca Clark voiced concerns about sexual content and profanity in library books. “I think that we can all agree



that children should not be exposed to or have access to pornography, vulgarity, or illegality . . . yet, this is what is happening in LCISD.”

LCISD Chief Communications Officer Sonya Cole-Hamilton said in an email that a stakeholder had provided a list of books “of noted concern” prior to the board meeting and that the district “immediately” checked to see if they were available to students and pulled those that were for review.

On November 19, 2021, LCISD sent an email to parents announcing they had “proactively removed any books” believed to “contain sexually explicit material.” “Librarians are in the process of pulling additional literature that may contain . . . inappropriate language from our campus libraries for review.”

These actions by the district came shortly after Governor Abbott tasked the Texas Education Agency to come up with standards to keep “pornography or other inappropriate content” out of public schools and State Representative Matt Krause sent his list of 839 targeted books to all school districts in the state (see: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

On January 3, 2022, it was reported that seven books had been temporarily removed while undergoing review for permanent removal.

These are the titles under review:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Forever for a Year* by B. T. Gottfred
- *Jack of Hearts (and Other Parts)* by L. C. Rosen
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy Johnson
- *The Nerdy and the Dirty* by B. T. Gottfred

Reported in: *Houston Chronicle*, November 18, 2021; *The Fort Bend Star*, January 3, 2022.

Leander and Round Rock, Texas

On December 14, the Williamson County Court of Commissioners (WCOC) voted 4-1 to delay allocating \$8.7 million in federal CARES Act money to the Round Rock and Leander school districts over concerns with school library books and the belief that they’re teaching critical race theory (CRT).

“I’m not okay with giving money to school districts that teach critical race theory or allow books in libraries, especially classroom libraries, where there’s no supervision,” said Commissioner Valerie Covey.

Any CARES Act money that is unallocated by December 31 must be returned to the federal government.

Round Rock Independent School District (ISD) spokesperson Jenny LaCoste-Caputo said “All parents and members of the public in Round Rock ISD have complete access to the entirety of our school library catalog.” She added that if parents are concerned about a book, they can contact staff directly to have it reviewed by a reconsideration committee.

Leander ISD reviewed numerous titles throughout 2021 in response to parental requests for reconsideration, including 140 optional book club titles primarily written by Black and LGBTQIA+ authors. Police reports were also filed against the district for making Jonathan Evison’s *Lawn Boy* available for circulation.

To date, 11 book club kits with eight copies of each title were withdrawn and 13 were approved for use. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.2: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Leander, Texas; *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v6. Iss.4:

Censorship Dateline: Schools: Leander, Texas).

Commissioner Cynthia Long felt the books also needed to be removed from school and classroom libraries. “I checked and some of those books you talked about are still in classrooms in Leander ISD.”

“We had a dad come not too long ago and read us excerpts from some books that were allowed in the Leander school district,” said Covey. “It was appalling. It was embarrassing to hear him read it. It was not right.”

Three books have also been challenged at Round Rock ISD: *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez.

Members of the public have been speaking out against library books and CRT during the public comments sections of board meetings for both the Round Rock and Leander ISDs.

Parents at the meeting voiced frustration with the commissioners’ decision to withhold funding unless students lose access to certain library books. One said censorship “harms society, and that often censorship has to do with fear from people that don’t like what’s being said.”

Joe Vasquez, a junior at Leander High School, said “I think either way, kids are going to read those books. I hope [the commissioners] realize just taking some money over some books is not going to benefit anybody.”

Vasquez also suggested a novel solution: the districts should withdraw the books and then buy new copies once they get the money.

Terry Cook was the only commissioner to vote against withholding funding from the school districts. “I think we are outside our lane if we try to micromanage the ISDs,” said Cook. “Ultimately, school board[s] and administrations make those decisions.”



On December 17, Long sent an email to Leander ISD superintendent Bruce Gearing stating she would “support ranting” the district their CARES Act funding if they remove 11 books from school and classroom libraries which had previously been removed as book club titles. Gearing invited the commissioner to submit requests for their reconsideration using the district’s established process.

On December 20, a handful of democratic state representatives sent a letter to WCOC. “As representatives of these communities, their taxpayers, and their children, we find it unconscionable that our public schools, teachers, and students would be punished through no fault of their own, but because of political disputes,” read the letter.

On December 21, WCOC voted to approve release of the CARES Act funds to both districts, though they stipulated that Leander ISD would have to withdraw *Brave Face*, *The Handmaid’s Tale: The Graphic Novel*, *In the Dream House*, *None of the Above*, *The Nowhere Girls*, *Out of Darkness*, *Red at the Bone*, Shirley Jackson’s “*The Lottery*”: *The Authorized Graphic Adaptation*, *Shout*, *V for Vendetta*, and *Y: The Last Man: Book One* from all school and classroom libraries in order to receive it.

Reported in: *Austin American-Statesman*, December 15, 2021; *Community Impact*, December 21, 2021; *FOX 7 Austin*, December 14, 2021, December 21, 2021; *KVUE*, December 16, 2021, and December 20, 2021; *KXAN*, December 7, 2021.

San Antonio, Texas

On December 2, the North East Independent School District (NEISD), which serves roughly 60,000 students, removed 431 unique titles from their 68 schools for review.

The titles pulled were ones which state representative Matt Krause included on a list of 839 books sent to every school district in the state along with a request to audit which schools have each of the titles, how many copies are held, and how much was spent to obtain them.

The books were removed from circulation not long after Governor Greg Abbott called for an investigation into “pornography” in public schools. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

Most of the books on Krause’s list had LGBTQIA+ characters; are by authors who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), or discuss race and racism.

Superintendent Sean Maika wrote to families to inform them of the mass book review to remove “obscene or vulgar material” on December 7.

After the district’s compliance with state-directed censorship became public, Mariajose Llama created an online petition requesting NEISD to stop its review of titles from the Krause list. “Many Black and LGBT students in NEISD are appalled and hurt by NEISD’s decision to comply with Matt Krause and suppress our harmless resources and stories.” It has received over 14,000 signatures.

In a December 20 letter to NEISD’s board of trustees, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCSC) noted that the manner in which the district was reviewing the titles violated their own policies.

District policies require books to remain in circulation while they undergo review, they require review of books in their entirety, and by a committee. According to reports and statements from the district, the books were removed from circulation during review, reviewed by individuals, and removed or relocated based on isolated

elements as opposed to their holistic content.

As of March 15, 110 titles had been withdrawn from all district libraries. Five titles were relocated from elementary school libraries to middle school libraries. Six titles were relocated from middle school libraries to high school libraries.

Books reviewed because of their inclusion the Krause list and their current disposition, when known:

- *#BlackLivesMatter: Protesting Racism* by Rachael L. Thomas
- *10 Things I Can See from Here* by Carrie Mac
- *101 Questions About Reproduction: Or How 1 + 1 = 3 or 4 or More* by Faith Hickman Brynie—Withdrawn
- *101 Questions about Sex and Sexuality: With Answers for the Curious, Cautious, and Confused* by Faith Hickman Brynie—Withdrawn
- *7 Days at the Hot Corner* by Terry Trueman
- *A Guy’s Guide to Sexuality and Sexual Identity in the 21st Century* by Joe Craig—Withdrawn
- *A Home for Goddesses and Dogs* by Leslie Connor—Relocated from elementary to middle school libraries
- *A Line in the Dark* by Malinda Lo
- *A Love Story Starring My Dead Best Friend: A Novel* by Emily Horner
- *A Very, Very Bad Thing* by Jeffery Self
- *Abortion* by Bonnie Juettner Fernandes—Withdrawn
- *Abortion: A Documentary and Reference Guide* by Melody Rose—Withdrawn
- *Absolute Brightness* by James Lecesne—Withdrawn
- *After* by Amy Efaw
- *Afterworlds* by Scott Westerfeld
- *Alan Cole is Not a Coward* by Eric Bell—Withdrawn



- *Alex as Well* by Alyssa Brugman
- *Alison, Who Went Away* by Vivian Vande Velde—Withdrawn
- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds, Brendan Kiely
- *All Eyes On Us* by Kit Frick
- *All the Things We Do in the Dark* by Saundra Mitchell
- *All We Can Do Is Wait* by Richard Lawson
- *Almost Perfect* by Brian Katcher
- *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* by Paul Ortiz
- *Ana on the Edge* by A. J. Sass
- *And She Was* by Jessica Verdi
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson, Peter Parnell
- *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden—Withdrawn
- *Another Kind of Cowboy* by Susan Juby—Withdrawn
- *Archenemy* by Paul Hoblin—Withdrawn
- *Are You LGBTQ?* by Jeanne Nagle
- *As Far as You'll Take Me* by Phil Stamper
- *As I Descended* by Robin Talley—Relocated from middle to high school libraries
- *Ash* by Malinda Lo
- *Ask Me How I Got Here* by Christine Heppermann
- *Ask the Passengers* by A. S. King
- *At the Edge of the Universe* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *Autoboyography* by Christina Lauren
- *Away We Go* by Emil Ostrovski
- *Beast* by Brie Spangler
- *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children* by Kirstin Cronn-Mills—Withdrawn
- *Becoming Nicole: The Extraordinary Transformation of an Ordinary Family* by Amy Ellis Nutt
- *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender Teen)* by Jazz Jennings
- *Being the Change: Lessons and Strategies to Teach Social Comprehension* by Sara Ahmed
- *Best Best Colors* by Eric Hoffman—Withdrawn
- *Between Mom and Jo* by Julie Anne Peters—Withdrawn
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Beyond Dreams* by Marilyn Reynolds—Withdrawn
- *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin
- *Big Guy* by Robin Stevenson
- *Bioethics: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Who Decides?* by Linda Jacobs Altman—Withdrawn
- *Birthday* by Meredith Russo
- *Black Rabbit Summer* by Kevin Brooks—Withdrawn
- *Blood Countess* by Lana Popovic
- *Blood Sport* by Tash McAdam
- *Boy Erased* by Garrard Conley
- *Boy Girl Boy* by Ronald Koertge
- *Brave Face* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *Caste: The Origin of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson
- *Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas
- *Chainbreaker* by Tara Sim—Withdrawn
- *Cider House Rules* by John Irving—Withdrawn
- *Cinderella is Dead* by Kalynn Bayron
- *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine
- *Class Act* by Jerry Craft
- *Combat Zone* by Patrick Jones
- *Coming Out: Telling Family and Friends* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Considering Hate Violence, Goodness, and Justice in American Culture and Politics* by Kay Whitlock
- *Cradle and All* by James Patterson
- *Crossing Lines* by Paul Volponi—Withdrawn
- *Crush* by Carrie Mac
- *Cut Both Ways* by Carrie Mesrobian
- *Darius the Great Deserves Better* by Adib Khorram
- *Dating, Relationships, and Sexuality: What Teens Should Know* by Wendy Hart Beckman—Withdrawn
- *Daughters Unto Devils* by Amy Lukavics
- *Dear One* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Death Wind* by William Bell—Withdrawn
- *Deepest Breath* by Meg Grehan
- *Deposing Nathan* by Zack Smedley
- *Detour for Emmy* by Marilyn Reynolds—Withdrawn
- *Doing It Right: Making Smart, Safe, and Satisfying Choices About Sex* by Bronwen Pardes—Withdrawn
- *Doing It! Let's Talk About Sex* by Hannah Witton
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Draw the Line* by Laurent Linn
- *Dreadnought* by April Daniels—Relocated from middle to high school libraries
- *Dreadnought: H.I.V.E. Vol. 4* by Mark Walden
- *Each of Us a Desert* by Mark Oshiro
- *Echo After Echo* by Amy Rose Capetta
- *Empress of the World* by Sara Ryan—Withdrawn
- *En el Bosque* by Robin Stevenson
- *Equal Rights* by Maureen O'Connor
- *Everything Leads to You* by Nina LaCour
- *Everything You Love Will Burn: Inside the Rebirth of White Nationalism in America* by Vegas Tenold
- *Fan Art* by Sarah Tregay
- *Fancy White Trash* by Marjetta Geerling—Withdrawn
- *Far from the Tree: How Children and their Parents Learn to Accept One Another, Our Differences Unite Us* by Andrew Solomon
- *Far From Xanadu* by Julie Anne Peters—Withdrawn
- *Far From You* by Tess Sharpe
- *Feeling Wrong in Your Own Body: Understanding What it Means to Be*



- Transgender* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender
- *Final Takedown* by Brent Sherard—Withdrawn
- *Finding Community* by Robert Rodi
- *Firestarter* by Tara Sim
- *Flamer* by Mike Curato
- *Forget this Ever Happened* by Cassandra Rose Clarke
- *Freak Show* by James St. James
- *Freakboy* by Kristin Elizabeth Clark
- *Freaks and Revelations: Inspired by Real Events in the Lives of Matthew Boger and Tim Zaal* by Davida Wills Hurwin—Withdrawn
- *Friendship, Dating, and Relationships* by Simone Payment—Withdrawn
- *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *Gallup Guides for Youth Facing Persistent Prejudice. The LGBT Community* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Gay and Lesbian Role Models* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Gay Believers: Homosexuality and Religion* by Emily Sanna—Withdrawn
- *Gay Issues and Politics: Marriage, the Military, & Work Place Discrimination* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Gay People of Color: Facing Prejudices, Forging Identities* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Gays and Mental Health: Fighting Depression, Saying No to Suicide* by Jaime Seba—Withdrawn
- *Gender Danger: Survivors of Rape, Human Trafficking, and Honor Killings* by Rae Simons
- *Gender Equality and Identity Rights* by Marie des Neiges Leonard
- *Gender Identity* by Nicki Peter Petrikowski
- *Gender Identity: The Search for Self* by Kate Light
- *Gender Identity: The Ultimate Teen Guide* by Cynthia Winfield—Withdrawn
- *Gender Issues* by Kenneth McIntosh—Withdrawn
- *Geography Club* by Brent Hartinger
- *Getting It* by Alex Sanchez
- *Gingerbread* by Rachel Cohn—Withdrawn
- *Girl Crushed* by Katie Heaney
- *Girl Made of Stars* by Ashley Her-ring Blake
- *Girl Mans Up* by M-E Girard
- *Girl Nearly 16, Absolute Torture* by Sue Limb—Withdrawn
- *Girls vs. Guys: Surprising Differences Between the Sexes* by Michael J. Rosen
- *GLBT Teens and Society* by Jeanne Nagle—Withdrawn
- *GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for the Queer & Questioning Teens* by Kelly Huegel—Withdrawn
- *Gone, Gone, Gone* by Hannah Moskowitz
- *Gracefully Grayson* by Ami Polonsky
- *Grasshopper Jungle* by Andrew Smith
- *Great* by Sara Benincasa—Withdrawn
- *Guardian* by Alex London
- *Hang-Ups, Hook-Ups, and Holding Out: Stuff You Need to Know About Your Body, Sex, and Dating* by Melisa Holmes—Withdrawn
- *Happy Families* by Tanita Davis—Withdrawn
- *Hear Us Out: Lesbian and Gay Stories of Struggle, Progress, and Hope* by Nancy Garden
- *Hello Now* by Jenny Valentine
- *Hello, I Lied* by M. E. Kerr - Withdrawn
- *Her Royal Highness* by Rachel Hawkins
- *High Drama* by Brandon Terrell
- *Highly Illogical Behavior* by John Corey Whaley
- *History is All You Left Me* by Adam Silvera
- *Hold Me Closer: The Tiny Cooper Story* by David Levithan
- *Homophobia: From Social Stigma to Hate Crimes* by Bill Palmer—Withdrawn
- *Homosexuality Around the World* by Jaime Seba—Relocated from middle to high school libraries
- *Honestly Ben* by Bill Konigsberg
- *Hook Up* by Kim Firmston—Withdrawn
- *Ho'onani: Hula Warrior* by Heather Gale
- *Hot Dog Girl* by Jennifer Dugan
- *How (Not) to Ask a Boy to the Prom* by S. J. Goslee
- *How it All Blew Up* by Arvin Ahmadi
- *How Prevalent is Racism in Society?* by Peggy J. Parks—Withdrawn
- *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *How to Love* by Katie Cotugno—Withdrawn
- *Hurricane Child* by Kacen Callender—Relocated from elementary to middle school libraries
- *I Hope You're Listening* by Tom Ryan
- *Identifying as Transgender* by Sara Woods
- *Identity & Gender* by Charlie Ogden
- *Identity: A Story of Transitioning* by Corey Maison
- *If I Was Your Girl* by Meredith Russo
- *If You Could Be Mine* by Sara Farizan
- *I'll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson
- *Image and Identity: Becoming the Person You Are* by Kris Gowen—Withdrawn
- *In Our Mothers' House* by Patricia Polacco
- *In the Role of Brie Hutchens...* by Nicole Melleby



- *Infinity Son* by Adam Silvera
- *Into the Real* by Z Brewer
- *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man's Education* by Mychal Denzel Smith
- *It's Not Like it's a Secret* by Misa Sugiura
- *It's Not the Stork!: a Book about Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families, and Friends* by Robie H. Harris
- *It's Our Prom (So Deal With It): A Novel* by Julie Anne Peters
- *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris—Withdrawn
- *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World* by Ashley Herring Blake
- *Jacob's New Dress* by Sarah Hoffman
- *Jacob's Room to Choose* by Sarah Hoffman
- *Jane Against the World: Roe v. Wade and the Fight for Reproductive Rights* by Karen Blumenthal
- *Jane, Unlimited* by Kristin Cashore
- *Jaya and Rasa Fall in Love* by Sonia Patel
- *Jess, Chunk, and the Road Trip to Infinity* by Kristin Elizabeth Clark
- *Julian at the Wedding* by Jessica Love
- *Juliet Takes a Breath* by Gabby Rivera
- *Jumpstart the World* by Catherine Ryan Hyde
- *Just Kill Me* by Adam Selzer
- *Kaleidoscope Song* by Fox Benwell
- *Keeping You a Secret* by Julie Anne Peters
- *Kiss Number 8* by Colleen AF Venable, Ellen T. Crenshaw
- *Kissing Kate* by Lauren Myracle
- *La Carta de Ivy Aberdeen al Mundo* by Ashley Herring Blake
- *La Tormenta* by William Bell—Withdrawn
- *Last Exit to Normal* by Michael Harmon —Withdrawn
- *Late to the Party* by Kelly Quindlen
- *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me* by Mariko Tamaki
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison—Relocated from elementary to middle school libraries
- *Let's Talk About Love* by Claire Kann
- *LGBT Families* by L. K. Currie-McGhee
- *LGBTQ Families: The Ultimate Teen Guide* by Eva Apelqvist
- *LGBTQ+ Athletes Claim the Field: Striving for Equality* by Kirstin Cronn-Mills
- *Lies My Girlfriend Told Me* by Julie Anne Peters—Withdrawn
- *Life at School and in the Community* by Richard Worth—Withdrawn
- *Life in Outer Space* by Melissa Keil
- *Lily and Dunkin* by Donna Ge-phart
- *Little & Lion* by Brandy Colbert
- *Living with Religion and Faith* by Robert Rodi
- *Lizard Radio* by Pat Schmatz
- *Lobizona* by Romina Gerber
- *Look Past* by Eric Devine
- *Love Drugged* by James Klise
- *Love is the Higher Law* by David Levithan—Withdrawn
- *Love, Creekswood: A Simonverse Novella* by Becky Albertalli—Withdrawn
- *Marco Impossible* by Hannah Moskowitz
- *Masked* by Norah McClintock—Withdrawn
- *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *Middle School's a Drag* by Greg Howard
- *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides
- *Mighty Heart of St. James* by Ashley Herring Blake
- *Miles Away From You* by A. B. Rutledge
- *Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily M. Danforth—Withdrawn
- *Moonstruck Volume 1 Magic to Brew* by Grace Ellis
- *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera
- *More than a Game: Race, Gender, and Politics in Sport* by Matt Doeden
- *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* by Christine Baldacchino
- *My Best Friend, Maybe* by Caela Carter
- *My Girlfriend's Pregnant!: A Teen's Guide to Becoming a Dad* by Chloe Shantz-Hilkes
- *My Heart Underwater* by Laurel Flores Fantauzzo
- *My Invented Life* by Lauren Bjorkman—Withdrawn
- *My Life as a Diamond* by Jenny Manzer
- *My Life as a Rhombus* by Varian Johnson—Withdrawn
- *My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer* by Jennifer Gennari—Withdrawn
- *My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, & Fenway Park* by Steve Kluger
- *Nate Expectations* by Tim Federle
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *No Girls Allowed: Tales of Daring Women Dressed as Men for Love, Freedom and Adventure* by Susan Hughes
- *None of the Above* by I. W. Gregorio
- *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness* by Anastasia Higginbotham
- *Notes from the Blender* by Trish Cook
- *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard* by Lesléa Newman
- *Odd One Out* by Nic Stone
- *Of Fire and Stars* by Audrey Coulthurst
- *Of Ice and Shadows* by Audrey Coulthurst
- *On the Come Up: Based on a True Story* by Hannah Weyer—Withdrawn
- *One Half from the East* by Nadia Hashimi
- *One Man Guy* by Michael Barakiva



- *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies* by Sonya Sones
- *One True Way* by Shannon Hitchcock
- *Openly Straight* by Bill Konigsberg
- *Ordinary Hazards* by Nikki Grimes
- *Orpheus Proud* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth
- *Parrotfish* by Ellen Wittlinger—Withdrawn
- *Pearl* by Johanna Knowles
- *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi
- *Pink* by Lili Wilkinson—Withdrawn
- *Playing the Field* by Phil Bildner—Withdrawn
- *Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community* by Robin Stevenson
- *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders
- *Promposal* by Rhonda Helms
- *Protect and Defend* by Richard North Patterson
- *Proxy* by Alex London
- *Putting Makeup on the Fat Boy* by Bil Wright—Withdrawn
- *Rage: A Love Story* by Julie Anne Peters—Withdrawn
- *Rainbow Boys* by Alex Sanchez
- *Rainbow High* by Alex Sanchez
- *Rainbow Revolutionaries: 50 LGBTQ+ People Who Made History* by Sarah Prager
- *Rainbow Revolutions: Power, Pride, and Protest in the Fight for Queer Rights* by Jamie Lawson
- *Rainbow Road* by Alex Sanchez
- *Raise the Stakes* by Megan Atwood—Withdrawn
- *Ready or Not?: A Girl's Guide to Making Her Own Decisions about Dating, Love and Sex* by Tina Radziszewicz—Withdrawn
- *Red at the Bone* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Redwood and Ponytail* by K. A. Holt
- *Reluctantly Alice* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- *Remake* by Ilima Todd
- *Rethinking Normal: A Memoir in Transition* by Katie Rain Hill
- *Reverie* by Ryan La Sala
- *Rick* by Alex Gino
- *Roe v. Wade: The Untold Story of the Landmark Supreme Court Decision that Made Abortion Legal* by Marian Faux—Withdrawn
- *Safe Sex 101: An Overview for Teens* by Margaret O Hyde—Withdrawn
- *Saturdays with Hitchcock* by Ellen Wittlinger
- *Say the Word* by Jeannine Garsee
- *Scars* by C. A. Rainfield
- *See You at Harry's* by Johanna Knowles
- *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Sex, Puberty and All That Stuff: A Guide to Growing Up* by Jacqui Bailey—Withdrawn
- *Sex: If You're Scared of the Truth Don't Read This!* by Carl Sommer—Withdrawn
- *She Loves You, She Loves You Not* by Julie Anne Peters
- *Shine* by Lauren Myracle
- *Ship It* by Britta Lundin
- *Should Abortion be Legal?* by Carla Mooney
- *Should Teens Have Access to Birth Control?* by Don Nardo—Withdrawn
- *Shout* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli
- *Sister Mischief* by L Goode—Withdrawn
- *So Hard To Say* by Alex Sanchez
- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- *Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen* by Arin Andrews
- *Something Like Gravity* by Amber Smith
- *Sonny's House of Spies* by George Ella Lyon—Withdrawn
- *Sparkle Boy* by Lesléa Newman
- *Spinning* by Tillie Walden
- *Stained* by Jennifer Jacobson—Withdrawn
- *Stamped From the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Star-Crossed* by Barbara Dee
- *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* by Chris Crutcher—Withdrawn
- *Stick* by Andrew Smith—Withdrawn
- *Suicide Notes: A Novel* by Michael Thomas Ford—Withdrawn
- *Symptoms of Being Human* by Jeff Garvin
- *Taking Responsibility: A Teen's Guide to Contraception and Pregnancy* by Donna Lange—Withdrawn
- *Tattoo Atlas* by Tim Floreen
- *Teen Legal Rights* by David L Hudson
- *Teen Pregnancy* by Patrice Casedy—Withdrawn
- *Teenage Sex and Pregnancy* by Peggy J. Parks—Withdrawn
- *Teens & Sex* by Hal Marcovitz—Withdrawn
- *Teens and Gender Dysphoria* by Don Nardo
- *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel* by Sara Farizan
- *Tessa Masterson Will Go to Prom* by Emily Franklin—Withdrawn
- *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed Their Lives* by Dashka Slater
- *The Abortion Debate* by Courtney Farrell—Withdrawn
- *The Abortion Debate: Understanding the Issues* by Johannah Haney—Withdrawn
- *The Accidental Adventures of India Mcallister* by Charlotte Agell—Relocated from elementary to middle school libraries
- *The Art of Being Normal* by Lisa Williamson
- *The Art of Saving the World* by Corinne Duyvis



- *The Baby Tree* by Sophie Blackall
- *The Best Man* by Richard Peck
- *The Birds, the Bees, and You and Me* by Olivia Hinebaugh
- *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta
- *The Breakaways* by Cathy G. Johnson—Relocated from elementary to middle school libraries
- *The Bridge* by Bill Konigsberg
- *The Confessions of Nat Turner* by William Styron
- *The Cutting Room Floor* by Dawn Klehr
- *The Deep & Dark Blue* by Niki Smith
- *The Devouring Gray* by Christine Lynn Herman
- *The Difference Between You and Me* by Madeleine George—Withdrawn
- *The Downstairs Girl* by Stacey Lee
- *The Edge of the Abyss* by Emily Skrutskie
- *The Edge of the Water* by Elizabeth George—Withdrawn
- *The Fight* by Elizabeth Karre
- *The Fire Never Goes Out: A Memoir in Pictures* by Noelle Stevenson
- *The Five Stages of Andrew Brawley* by Shaun David Hutchinson—Withdrawn
- *The Gallery of Unfinished Girls* by Lauren Karcz
- *The Gods of Tango* by Carolina De Robertis
- *The Gravity of Us* by Phil Stamper
- *The Great American Whatever* by Tim Federle
- *The Grief Keeper* by Alexandra Villasante
- *The Handmaid's Tale (graphic novel)* by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault
- *The Hookup Artist* by Tucker Shaw—Withdrawn
- *The House You Pass On the Way* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *The Last Time I Wore a Dress* by Daphne Scholinski
- *The Last to Let Go* by Amber Smith
- *The Less-Dead* by April Lurie
- *The Love & Lies of Rukhsana Ali* by Sabina Khan
- *The Love Curse of Melody McIntyre* by Robin Talley
- *The Love Interest* by Cale Dietrich—Relocated from middle to high school libraries
- *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen
- *The Meaning of Birds* by Jaye Robin Brown—Withdrawn
- *The Migration North* by James De Medeiros
- *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar
- *The Music of What Happens* by Bill Konigsberg
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- *The Other Boy* by M. G. Hennessey
- *The Pants Project* by Cat Clarke
- *The Past and Other Things that Should Stay Buried* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *The Questions Within* by Teresa Schaeffer
- *The Red Scrolls of Magic* by Cassandra Clare
- *The Sin-Eater's Confession* by Ilsa J. Bick—Withdrawn
- *The Stars and the Blackness Between Them* by Junauda Petrus
- *The Summer of Jordi Perez (and the Best Burger in Los Angeles)* by Amy Spalding
- *The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door* by Karen Finneyfrock—Withdrawn
- *The Teenage Body Book: A New Edition for a New Generation* by Kathy McCoy—Withdrawn
- *The Test* by Peggy Kern
- *The Traitor Game* by B. R. Collins—Relocated from middle to high school libraries
- *The Truth About Keeping Secrets* by Savannah Brown
- *The Truth Is* by NoNieqa Ramos
- *The Ultimate Guys' Body Book: Not-So-Stupid Questions About Your Body* by Walter L. Larimore
- *The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan* by Jenny Nordberg
- *The Upside of Unrequited* by Becky Albertalli
- *The Vast Fields of Ordinary* by Nick Burd
- *The Way Back* by Carrie Mac—Withdrawn
- *The Whispers* by Greg Howard
- *The Year They Burned the Books* by Nancy Garden—Withdrawn
- *The You I've Never Known* by Ellen Hopkins
- *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera
- *They Called Themselves the KKK: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
- *They, She, He, Easy as ABC* by Maya Christina Gonzalez
- *Things that Make White People Uncomfortable: Adapted for Young Adults* by Michael Bennett
- *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson
- *This is Kind of an Epic Love Story* by Kacen Callender
- *This Is Your Time* by Ruby Bridges
- *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki—Relocated from middle to high school libraries
- *Tips On Having a Gay (Ex) Boyfriend* by Carrie Jones—Withdrawn
- *Tomboy: A Graphic Memoir* by Liz Prince
- *Tomorrow will be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality* by Sarah McBride
- *Totally Joe* by James Howe—Withdrawn
- *Trans Mission: My Quest to a Beard* by Alex Bertie



- *Transgender Rights and Issues* by Andrea Pelleschi
- *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan
- *Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film About the Grapes of Wrath* by Steven Goldman
- *Under Threat* by Robin Stevenson
- *Underneath it All: A History of Women's Underwear* by Amber J. Keyser
- *Understanding Gender* by Juno Dawson (formerly James Dawson)
- *Unpregnant* by Jenni Henriks
- *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore—Withdrawn
- *Wayward Witch* by Zoraida Cordova
- *We Are Lost and Found* by Helene Dunbar—Withdrawn
- *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *We March* by Shane W. Evans
- *We Now Return to Regular Life* by Martin Wilson
- *We the Students: Supreme Court Cases For and About Students* by Jamin B. Raskin—Withdrawn
- *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *What Happened To Lani Garver* by Carol Plum-Ucci
- *What if it's Us* by Becky Albertalli
- *What Philosophy Can Do* by Gary Gutting
- *What They Always Tell Us* by Martin Wilson
- *Whatever* by S. J. Goslee
- *When the Moon Was Ours* by Anna-Marie McLemore
- *When We Were Magic* by Sarah Gailey
- *Whistle Me Home* by Barbara Wersba—Withdrawn
- *White Rabbit* by Caleb Roehrig
- *Who I Was With Her* by Nita Tyndall
- *Wide Awake* by David Levithan
- *Will* by Maria Boyd
- *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* by

- David Levithan and John Green
- *Willful Machines* by Tim Floreen
- *With or Without You* by Brian Farrey—Withdrawn
- *Wonders of the Invisible World* by Christopher Barzak
- *You Know Me Well* by Nina LaCour
- *Zenobia July* by Lisa Bunker
- *Ziggy, Stardust & Me* by James Brandon

Reported in: *National Coalition Against Censorship*, January 5, 2022; *San Antonio Express-News*, December 7, 2021, and December 8, 2021; *San Antonio Report*, December 9, 2021; *Huron Daily Tribune*, December 9, 2021; *Atlanta Black Star*, December 10, 2021; *KSAT*, December 13, 2021; *The Texas Tribune*, December 6, 2021.

Spring Branch, Texas

After removing Cathy Johnson's Breakaways from school library shelves, the Spring Branch Independent School District (ISD) announced on November 2 that it was also removing all copies of *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Spring Branch, Texas).

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

The Breakaways also portrayed LGBTQIA+ characters. A third graphic novel with LGBTQIA+ characters, *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier, has also been challenged at

the district. Lisa Andrews Alpe, who initiated the challenges of all three books, has been leading the effort to review books in Spring Branch ISD libraries.

"We found probably close to 100 books that we are concerned about," said Alpe. Alpe also said she had referred to representative Matt Krause's list of 839 books he directed all Texas school districts to audit their libraries for.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

Reported in: *ABC13*, November 2, 2021.

Tyler, Texas

At the November 15 board meeting for the Tyler Independent School District (ISD), Chrstin Bentley, Founder and President of the Texas Freedom Coalition, called for a school-sponsored independent audit of sexually explicit library material that would include community input.

A written statement from superintendent Marty Crawford that was read at the meeting stated that, "The board and district administration are in agreement with our community that resources, curriculum products, and classroom instruction should be in alignment with local, public expectations and within State of Texas standards as set forth by the Texas legislature, the State Board of Education, and Texas Education Agency [TEA]."

In October, Governor Greg Abbott called for an investigation into "pornography" in public schools and state Representative Matt Krause distributed a list of 839 books of interest to every school district in the state. Krause requested that audits be made of which schools have each of the titles, how many copies are held, and how much was spent to obtain them.



Most of the books on Krause's list had LGBTQIA+ characters; are by authors who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), or discuss race and racism. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

On November 17, the Texas Freedom Coalition filed a Freedom of Information Act request asking Tyler ISD to disclose all documents from the Tyler Legacy High School library pertaining to the following list of books, including circulation records for students and staff, who ordered the books, and when they were purchased:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Blue Is the Warmest Color* by Julie Maroh
- *Brave Face* by Shaun David Hutchinson
- *Exit, Pursued by a Bear* by E. K. Johnston
- *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *Girl Mans Up* by M-E Girard
- *I'll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson
- *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me* by Mariko Tamaki
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *Red, White & Royal Blue: A Novel* by Casey McQuiston
- *Stealing Parker* by Miranda Kenneally
- *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta
- *The Circus Rose* by Betsy Cornwell
- *The Hookup Artist* by Tucker Shaw
- *The Little Black Book for Girlz: A Book on Healthy Sexuality* by St. Stephen's Community House
- *We are All Made of Molecules* by Susin Nielsen-Fernlund
- *Whatever: Or How Junior Year Became Totally F\$@cked* by S.J. Goslee

All but two of the books on Texas Freedom Coalition's list prominently feature LGBTQIA+ characters.

On November 19, Tyler ISD announced they were removing *All Boys Aren't Blue* and *Lawn Boy* from all school libraries.

All Boys Aren't Blue is a memoir about Johnson's experiences growing up as a queer Black man which Kirkus referred to as a "captivating merciful mirror for growing up Black and queer today." It received numerous accolades including being the American Library Association's 2021 Rainbow List selection for Young Adult Nonfiction, one of the Young Adult Library Services Association 2021 Teens' Top 10, and one of the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound.

Lawn Boy is a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novel exploring themes of poverty, racism and sexual identity. It won a 2019 Alex Award, given by the Young Adult Library Services Association to adult books that have special appeal to young adults.

In late November, TEA opened a state investigation into the Keller ISD for allowing students to have access to "sexually explicit content." That was the first such investigation in response to Governor Abbott's call for TEA to prevent the "availability of pornography and other obscene content" in schools. (See: this issue: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Keller, Texas).

At the December 13 board meeting of the Tyler ISD, parents called for more books to be removed from school libraries and for more transparency regarding the book selection process.

At the board meeting, Bentley read from *All Boys Aren't Blue* and claimed it was pornography masquerading as a children's book. She said she had a list

of 120 "questionable books" she had found at Tyler ISD libraries and that she was still finding more.

Jennifer White, a parent of a Tyler ISD student, read from the recently withdrawn *Lawn Boy* before saying, "Some of the books have been removed, and it's a start, [but] there's been no transparency in this process and no parental involvement in this process. Those things are necessary for public trust which y'all have lost a lot of."

Among other requests, White asked that parents receive notifications about all of their children's "library activity."

Reported in: *Once in a Blue Spoon*, January 27, 2022; *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, December 15, 2021, December 25, 2021; *28 News*, November 18, 2021; *The Tyler Loop*, January 20, 2022.

Canyons, Utah

On October 29, the Canyons School District removed eight titles from the libraries of its four high schools in response to social media posts made by Utah Parents United (UPU). UPU has led efforts against school mask mandates, critical race theory, and social-emotional learning.

The titles were:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *L8r, G8r* by Lauren Myracle
- *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov
- *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez



UPU became involved with the Canyons School District after a mother cc'ed them on an email she sent to school administrators regarding book titles she had concerns about after seeing them on social media. They said that every book in the district should be reviewed for sexual content.

UPU published a list of 153 “obscene” titles to search for on their website alongside guides on how to challenge them. They also released an hour-long video encouraging parents to call the police to report offensive titles found in school libraries.

By November 18, three additional titles were removed from Canyons School District libraries following what district spokesperson Jeff Haney described as hundreds of emailed complaints: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *The Opposite of Innocent* by Sonya Sones.

With the exception of *Lolita*, all titles removed focus on issues surrounding race and the LGBTQIA+ community. It is worth noting that UPU’s website promotes twelve “good books,” including transphobic titles by Erin Brewer, Abigail Shrier, Barbara Anderson, and Matt Walsh; an anti-CRT screed; and a book about students who band together to defend the police who kill unarmed Black men.

The district’s policy governing reconsideration of instructional material, last updated in May of 2020, allows only those with a direct tie to a school, such as a student, the parent of a student, or an employee, to challenge a book. It also stipulates that “the material in question will remain in use during the challenge process.”

The mother who sent the original email had children at middle and elementary schools in the district, but not at one of the high schools. All the

books she raised objections to were held in high school libraries.

The board, recognizing that she did not have grounds to challenge the materials according to the policy, opted to pre-emptively remove all of the books objected to until the policy could be changed and they could be formally challenged.

Rita Christensen, president of the Utah Library Association, said “Abandoning constitutional principles, bypassing legal and transparent processes, and ignoring the rule of law while imposing personal, political, or moral values on others is a dangerous pattern that is anti-rule of law, anti-democracy, and anti-American.”

The removal of the books is in violation of district and policy prompted responses from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), PEN America, and contributed to a response from Utah Governor Spencer Cox.

John Mejia, legal director for ACLU, said “It gave us great concern, particularly because a lot of these books were about marginalized and oppressed identities, and it’s important that students with these identities have access to books that relate to them and put them in a positive light.”

Richard Price, an associate professor of political science at Weber State who runs the blog *Adventures in Censorship*, said “If you don’t want to look at it, then you don’t have to check it out. But I fear what this group is trying to do is forbid all people from reading them. They’re trying to parent for all parents.”

On January 4, the district announced they had changed their review and selection policy. On January 20, they announced that the books that had been removed in October and November had been returned to the shelves. By March 1, *Gender Queer*,

Lawn Boy, and *Lolita* were permanently withdrawn.

Reported in: KSL.com, December 1, 2021, and November 20, 2021; KJZZ, November 19, 2021; Deseret News, November 18, 2021, March 1, 2022; KSL 102.7 FM, November 18, 2021; National Coalition Against Censorship, November 10, 2021; FOX 13, November 22, 2021; The Daily Universe, January 20, 2022; ACLU of Utah, November 22, 2021; The New York Times, November 29, 2021.

Washington, Utah

On October 26, a parent in the Washington County School District and member of Utah Parents United, requested that the district remove four books from its libraries. (See: this issue: *Censorship Dateline: Canyons, Utah*).

The books she objected to were *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino, *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez, *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, and *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki.

All of the titles focus on issues surrounding race and the LGBTQIA+ community. They were written by LGBTQIA+, Black, and Latinx authors.

Formal requests for reconsideration were submitted for *Out of Darkness* and *The Hate U Give*.

During a special work meeting on November 15, Superintendent Larry Bergeson and the members of the school board discussed ways to screen library materials more carefully, restrict access to books they consider to be controversial, and automatically notify parents of every book title their children check out.

On December 14, *The Hate U Give* was withdrawn from elementary and middle school libraries, and



Out of Darkness was withdrawn from all district libraries. Bergeson cast the tie-breaking vote to withdraw Out of Darkness.

“As I read through all of it . . . I was depressed,” said Bergeson about Out of Darkness. “When something’s criminal, when something goes over things like incest and rape . . . that’s wrong. I can’t go there. My decision is, it’s out.”

“If we have less information, I think we are poorer for it. I think that if we engage ideas, we don’t fear them,” said Erika George, director of the Tanner Humanities Center and a law professor at the University of Utah. “But if we curtail, we harm ourselves and we harm our society.”

George said that, “The notion that there are some texts that can’t be discussed, that can’t be read, that can’t be engaged with, it’s really kind of the preconditions that we see in societies that aren’t free and aren’t open.”

Reported in: KUER, November 1, 2021; St. George News, December 20, 2021.

Fairfax, Virginia

At the December 2 Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) board meeting, Stacy Langton, the parent who unsuccessfully challenged *Gender Queer* and *Lawn Boy* in September, called for an “army of angry parents” to show up at the school board meeting during a radio show.

Protesters gathered outside the board meeting, holding poster-sized signs of school board members’ faces emblazoned with the word “resign.”

During the meeting, Langton once again inaccurately characterized the books as illegal pedophilia-depicting pornography and called for their removal.

Both books depict members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Students spoke out against the politicized efforts to restrict access to LGBTQIA+ books.

“What is happening is vulnerable Queer students who are looking for some sort of affirmation in their life because we don’t have enough support resources are going into these libraries looking for books,” said Aaryan, an FCPS student and founder of the Pride Liberation Project. “They’re taking that away and that’s incredibly harmful to our community.”

The school board took no action on them at this meeting, as they had recently voted to return the books to library shelves, and called them “valuable in their potential to reach marginalized youth who may struggle to find relatable literary characters that reflect their personal journeys.”

In solidarity with the school system, the Dolley Madison Library put up a display in which *Gender Queer* and *Lawn Boy* sat alongside a gnome in rainbow-clothing holding The Holy Bible. The display was removed on December 7, in response to objections from Langton.

“Fairfax County Dolley Madison Library mocks my effort to remove porn in schools and mocks Christianity,” tweeted Langton.

Library director Jessica Hudson said that the “reading display was intended to highlight the freedom to read” and that “it was not the intention of staff to create a display that could be construed as offensive.”

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Success Stories: Schools: Fairfax, Virginia).

Reported in: ABC 7 News, December 9, 2021; WUSA9, December 2, 2021; WTOP News, December 8, 2021; Fox News, December 2, 2021.

Harrisonburg, Virginia

During the November 4 meeting of the Harrisonburg City school board, parents objected to the availability of Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer: A Memoir* through the high school library. One parent accused the board of violating state law and pushing LGBTQIA+ narratives to confuse children.

Many of those who spoke out in opposition to LGBTQIA+ literature during the meeting identified themselves as being from surrounding communities in Rockingham County. Superintendent Michael Richards said that they technically shouldn’t be speaking at other tax-based jurisdictions’ board meetings.

Nonetheless, in response to their complaints and in violation of district policy, Richards made the decision to remove *Gender Queer* from the Harrisonburg High School library.

Richards was well aware of the policy as he cited it during the board meeting and detailed the appropriate process for having a book reconsidered. “Despite the fact that they didn’t follow the process, I took the graphic novel off the shelves for review,” said Richards.

After Richards removed the book from the library, he claimed his “responsibility to protect the safety and wellbeing of students” outweighed his obligation to follow district policies and allow challenged materials to be considered in a fashion ensuring a fair and constitutional outcome.

Richards articulated specific concerns he had that a younger sibling might read the book if a high school student were to check it out.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex



Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

On November 22, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) sent a letter to the school board rebuking Richards's actions and urging it to follow its own policies, act in accordance with their "ostensible commitment to academic freedom and intellectual inquiry," and return *Gender Queer* to the shelves until it has been "adjudicated in an unbiased manner and in accordance with District policies."

"*Gender Queer* likely does not appeal to every student. But if every library book is required to serve every student, the shelves would be bare. A library, including a school library, is meant to include a broad selection of books that provide value to students," wrote NCAC.

During the December 7 school board meeting, numerous parents voiced complaints that Richards had removed *Gender Queer* and not followed district policy in doing so.

Richards subsequently formed a committee to review *Gender Queer*.

The committee's recommendations and the ultimate disposition of the book within the district have not been announced at the time of this writing.

Reported in: *The Harrisonburg Citizen*, November 11, 2021; *Daily News-Record*, November 20, 2021; *National Coalition Against Censorship*, November 23, 2021.

Loudoun County, Virginia

On December 13, the Loudoun County School board voted unanimously to uphold Superintendent Scott A. Ziegler's prior decision to keep Jonathan Evison's *Lawn Boy* in high school libraries.

Amy Jahr had appealed the decision after her initial challenge to the book was unanimously rejected by a seven-member review committee. She viewed the unanimity of the committee as an indication of a conspiracy to provide reading materials to children against their parents' wishes.

"If you have a whole panel of parents, hey even get 20 parents on there," said Jahr, that would "make it fair, make it balanced."

Gender Queer: A Memoir by Maia Kobabe was also challenged at Loudoun County schools, but met with a different fate. The review committee voted to retain it, but on January 14 school spokesperson Wayde Byard announced that Ziegler overruled the committee and "decided to remove the book from circulation."

The decision was appealed to the school board and the school board voted 3-0 to uphold the superintendent's decision to withdraw the book.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

Both the superintendent and the board's issues with the book seem to lie with the fact that it is illustrated. Ziegler said "I am not generally in favor of removing books from the library. I believe our students need to see themselves reflected in the literature available to them." However Ziegler wrote that "the pictorial depictions in this book ran counter to what is appropriate in school."

Board member Ian Serotkin said that "the sexually explicit illustrations which have gotten significant media and public attention may only appear

on a handful of pages, but . . . the sexually explicit illustrations themselves cannot be ignored."

Kobabe said, "There are queer teens, I promise, in every single high school where this book is being challenged." People are "reacting because they know that they're on the losing side of the culture war, and this is sort of an angry effort because they know the tides are already turned against them. But it's still going on. It can still hurt people."

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.3: Success Stories: Loudoun County, Virginia).

Reported in: WSET, December 13, 2021; *The Washington Post*, November 23, 2021, and January 15, 2022; *Loudoun Times-Mirror*, January 19, 2022.

Spotsylvania, Virginia

During the public comments section of the November 8 meeting of the Spotsylvania County School Board, a parent said she was alarmed that the high school library's ebook app included LGBTQIA+ fiction.

The board then voted 6-0 that staff should remove all such materials from school libraries and submit a report on the number removed for a special meeting to be held on November 15.

Board member Rabih Abuismail said "I think we should throw those books in a fire."

Board president Kirk Twigg agreed, adding that he wanted to "see the books before we burn them so we can identify within our community that we are eradicating this bad stuff."

Only two books were mentioned by title during the meeting: *33 Snowfish* by Adam Rapp and *Call Me by Your Name* by Andre Aciman. District librarians were tasked with searching for specific terms in the online library catalog. As a result of their queries, a



list of 140 titles was submitted to the board.

At the board's special meeting on November 15, after four-and-a-half hours of passionate public comments from parents, students, teachers, and librarians opposed to censorship. Only two people spoke in favor of removing books from school libraries.

Twigg and Abuismail were accused of violating the school board's code of ethics. Numerous speakers requested Abuismail formally apologize to the district's 34 librarians who were reassigned from their regular duties to search for books that might meet the board's arbitrary banning criteria.

Following the public comments, member Baron Braswell made a motion to rescind the board's November 8 vote to remove library material and forgo discussion of the requested report of book titles.

Braswell said that the opinion provided by legal counsel was that the action the board had taken was unconstitutional. He apologized to Superintendent Scott Baker for the board's poor example of governance and failure to follow due process.

Braswell's motion to rescind the November 8 book banning action carried with a vote of 5-2. Abuismail and Twigg voted against.

Despite this, *Call Me by Your Name*, was removed from all district high school libraries without review and without a formal request for reconsideration having ever been submitted.

On the morning of November 17, Spotsylvania High School students held a protest against censorship. The protest was planned prior to the meeting at which the board rescinded the motion to ban library material. Many held rainbow and LGBTQIA+ affirming signs. Another held a

sign proclaiming "We trust our librarians."

On November 22, a local Facebook group called Spotsy 411 posted an event urging Spotsylvania parents to have their children check out books they'd like to see removed from their school library and bring them to the December 13 school board meeting where "we will burn every last one of them."

Spotsy 411 also posted the names and workplaces of all district employees who spoke in opposition to the book banning initiative during the November 15 special meeting.

The event was taken down from Facebook on November 25 and the Spotsy 411 group was removed on November 28.

The Fire Marshal's Office notified the school district that the proposed book burning would violate state and local fire codes.

Reported in: *The Washington Post*, November 10, 2021, and November 16, 2021; *NBC News* 4, November 11, 2021, and January 10, 2022; *Wonkette*, November 11, 2021; *National Coalition Against Censorship*, November 16, 2021; *Vanity Fair*, November 11, 2021; *LGBTQ Nation*, November 11, 2021; *Yahoo! News*, January 13, 2022; *Esquire*, November 10, 2021; *The Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, November 16, 2021, November 17, 2021, December 2, 2021, and January 12, 2022; *The Week*, November 17, 2021; *Patch*, November 10, 2021.

Bremerton, Washington

The Central Kitsap School District removed the Maia Kobabe's memoir *Gender Queer* from the shelves of the Olympic High School library on October 20.

The decision was made in response to an email complaint sent

by Steve Adams, a non-custodial parent of a child who does not attend Olympic High School, on October 19.

The decision to remove the book followed a meeting of District Director of Equity Jeni Zapatka, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction Amy Archuleta, and two librarians.

The cited reason for removal was "sexually-explicit illustrations." District spokesperson David Beil explained that the book had not been properly vetted by library staff.

Kobabe's graphic memoir is a 2020 American Library Association Alex Award winner and a Stonewall Award Honoree. School Library Journal called it "a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual, as well as for those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand."

Earlier this year, the Central Kitsap School District mandated the removal of a poster proclaiming that "Love Has No Gender" and "We Are Equal" from an elementary school classroom.

The poster had been displayed by a music teacher at Cougar Valley Elementary School and was provided by the Kitsap Safe Schools Network, which works "to protect every child from bullying at school, especially bullying based on perceived sexual orientation and gender identity."

At the Central Kitsap school board meeting on November 3, Superintendent Erin Prince acknowledged that they did not follow the approved procedure for handling challenges to library materials.

Believing the district didn't go far enough by violating their own policy to remove an award-winning book a day after it was challenged, Steve Adams sought criminal prosecution of a high school librarian,



the principal, the superintendent, and members of the school board. Adams reported to the police that they were distributing “pedophilic pornography.”

Kitsap County Prosecutor Chad Enright declined to file charges after reviewing the book. Enright determined the book did not violate either of the relevant state laws and furthermore was protected by the First Amendment.

Q Youth Resources, a county-based nonprofit serving LGBTQIA+ youth and their families, expressed concern that the district’s policies weren’t followed.

As a result of objections raised by Q Youth Resources board chair Eli Oldfield, district officials agreed to convene a review committee and review *Gender Queer* in accordance with their established policies and procedures.

On December 2, the Library Materials Review Committee met after having read *Gender Queer* in its entirety. The committee unanimously recommended that the book be retained in all high school libraries.

On December 8, the school board voted to endorse the review committee’s recommendation and return *Gender Queer* to school libraries.

Newly-elected board president Jennifer Schulze also said that the removal of the “Love Has No Gender” poster caused harm within the community.

Schulze said the board had evaluated guidance from Washington’s Superintendent of Public Instruction and the American Academy of Pediatrics, and consulted with LGBTQIA+ advocates. As a result of these activities, Schulze said the board would reverse course and permit the display of “Love Has No Gender” posters in K-5 classrooms. A joint

statement signed by the board and superintendent Prince affirmed this action.

A draft for an updated policy regarding staff expression and participation in political activities was also introduced at the meeting to help provide a consistent path forwards.

Oldfield praised this outcome and requested that district administration, staff, and board members undertake cultural competency training around LGBTQIA+ issues.

Parent Charlene Ocamp contended that by reversing its decision, the board was “promoting degeneracy” and making “pornography and sexual-grooming materials” available to students.

Adams requested that the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction investigate Prince for drafting “her own district policy to address a certain measure she wanted handled a certain way.”

Adams also submitted requests for reconsideration of the following titles:

- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Pérez
- *The Children and the Wolves* by Adam Rapp
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *Monday’s Not Coming* by Tiffany D. Jackson
- *Punkzilla* by Adam Rapp
- *Gilgamesh: A Graphic Novel* by Andrew Winegarner and April Rasmussen.

The outcome of these challenges was unknown at the time of writing.

Reported in: *Kitsap Sun*, November 1, 2021, November 18, 2021, December 9, 2021.

Mukilteo, Washington

On January 24, the Mukilteo School Board unanimously voted to remove Harper Lee’s classic novel *To Kill a*

Mockingbird from the ninth-grade English/Language Arts required reading list.

Mockingbird deals with themes of racial injustice, gender roles, and the loss of innocence. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1961.

Mukilteo received one request to remove the book from the district’s curriculum. The complaint stated the book has a “White savior” narrative and marginalizes characters of color. It also observed the book uses the “n-word” more than 50 times without providing context about its negative connotations.

This action was recommended by the Instructional Materials Committee, consisting of roughly 20 teachers, librarians, administrators, and parents. 63% voted to remove the book from the required reading list and 68% voted to retain the book on the approved novels list.

Mockingbird remains available to students from the library and teachers are still allowed to teach it, but it is no longer a required part of the curriculum.

This was the first time in 20 years that someone requested a book’s removal from the district’s required reading lists.

As of this writing, a replacement for *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the curriculum has not been announced.

Reported in: KING5, January 10, 2022, and January 24, 2022.

LIBRARIES Pella, Iowa

A formal request for reconsideration of Maia Kobabe’s memoir *Gender Queer* was received at the Pella Public Library. In accordance with their policies, the library board reviewed the book. They voted unanimously to retain it as part of the collection.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe



wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

More than fifty people attended the December 15 board meeting where the decision to retain the book was announced. Most spoke out against the book. One said the city council would be asked to draft an ordinance against the distribution of obscene material and wondered what other "objectionable" material might be in the library.

About a third in attendance spoke in defense of the book, stressing its literary merit and arguing that it would be a useful resource for teens struggling with their own gender identity. They also stressed the importance of representing all community members in the library's collection.

Parent Ali Thomas said, "My kids will not be hurt or scarred by this book, but someone could be hurt by changing how it's shelved or taking it out entirely."

Library Director Maria Strickler said the book doesn't violate Iowa law or library policy and said that the library's collection development policy was followed when the book was acquired for the adult section after a patron had requested the title.

"Public libraries need to meet the needs of the entire community, not just one portion of it," said Strickler.

Forty people attended the December 20 Pella City Council meeting to protest the library's decision to retain *Gender Queer*. One called it "cartoon pornography" and another called it "an attack on the traditional family."

Numerous people suggested that the library's collection development policy needed to change to prevent

titles like this from being acquired. Two people said they had spoken with Iowa state legislators about introducing a bill to address their concerns with books like *Gender Queer*.

Two people suggested withholding the library's funding until the book was removed from the shelves. Another proposed firing all members of the library board. One person said that having the book in the library was tantamount to distributing obscene materials to children, and was therefore criminal.

The Pella City Council reviewed the library's collection development policy and organizational structure for over an hour at their January 4 meeting. Council member Liz Sporrer was appointed to further review the library's collection development policy "as it relates to access of mature content by minors."

At the January 18 meeting, council members Mark De Jong, Calvin Bandstra, and Spencer Carlstone requested that the library board research how to restrict access to the book to prevent children from accessing it.

Council member Lynn Branderhorst said she felt the book constitutes pornography under Iowa Code.

Sporrer agreed with the library board's decision to retain the book and said it's important to ensure access to the book is not limited or censored. She felt the board's decision regarding the book should stand even if the council decides to change the library's collection development policy.

Mayor Don DeWaard appointed Branderhorst to serve as liaison to the library board and instructed them to further review the collection development policy regarding restricting access to mature content by minors.

Reported in: KNIA—KRLS, December 15, 2021, December

22, 2021, January 3, 2022; KTVZ, January 5, 2022.

Lafayette, Louisiana

At the Lafayette Parish public library, *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson was challenged by Michael Lunsford, executive director of Citizens for a New Louisiana, a conservative anti-tax group. Lunsford lives in St. Martin Parish, but works in Lafayette Parish.

This Book is Gay received numerous awards, a starred review in Booklist, and is currently on three separate Amazon bestseller lists. A review in The Guardian said "*This Book is Gay* makes you feel confident and comfortable with yourself, regardless of sexuality."

Lunsford said he filed a complaint about the book after finding it on a list of titles published by MassResistance, an anti-LGBTQIA+ organization which the Southern Poverty Law Center classifies as a hate group. He described the book as pornographic and said that "having it in the teen section bothers me."

Outgoing board president Douglas Palombo, board member Landon Boudreaux, and Lunsford met with library director Danny Gillane to jointly express their concerns about the book.

Gillane said he explained the library's reconsideration policy during the meeting and informed Lunsford of how to complete a request for reconsideration through the library's website.

This Book is Gay is the first title to be challenged at the library system since 2012.

Lunsford said he was also considering challenging *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg; *Dating and Sex: A Guide for the 21st Century Teen Boy* by Andrew Smiler; *Doing it Right: Making Smart, Safe, and Satisfying Choices About Sex* by Bronwen



Pardes; *Doing It! Let's Talk About Sex* by Hannah Witton, and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe.

Madison Manuel said the rates of sexually transmitted illness in Louisiana are some of the highest in the country and the availability of age-appropriate sex education materials to teens provides them with information they're not getting at home and which may save lives.

At the November 15 Lafayette Library Control meeting, roughly 30 residents showed up to support retaining *This Book is Gay*.

Many spoke of their experiences as LGBTQIA+ community members and the value of having access to resources like Dawson's book. "They show queer teenagers like myself and my friends that they are not alone. We are not invisible and we are valid" said Gabriel Juarez.

However, board new board president Robert Judge, who had, alongside board member Stephanie Armbruster, protested the 2018 Drag Queen Story Time event at the library, insisted the book was without merit.

In a motion that failed, Judge and Armbruster were the only two board members who voted to withdraw *This Book is Gay* from the collection. Ultimately, the board voted to relocate the book to the adult section of the library.

Lunsford filed a formal request to reconsider *The V-Word* by Amber Keyser.

At the February 21 Lafayette Library Control meeting, Judge made a motion to create a restricted library card for those 14 years of age and younger which could not be used to check out materials from the adult section of the library. Parents would be able to opt out of the restriction.

After heated discussion, including a reading from *The V-Word* by Lunsford, the motion was tabled.

A motion to change the reconsideration policy to state that the "the reconsideration committee is an ad hoc committee that conducts business in a closed meeting. It is composed of two library board members and one librarian appointed by the library director" passed by a vote of 4-3.

The prior make-up of the reconsideration committee was one board member and two library staff members appointed by the library director.

The outcome of the challenge to *The V-Word* is unknown at the time of this writing.

Reported in: *The Acadiana Advocate*, October 31, 2021, and December 17, 2021; *KFLY*, November 15, 2021; *Daily Advertiser*, November 16, 2021.

Ridgeland, Mississippi

On January 25, Mayor Gene McGee announced he was withholding \$110,000 of funding from the Madison County Library System (MCLS) until they purged their collection of books by or about LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Tonja Johnson, executive director for the Madison County Library System said she learned of this decision when she reached out to McGee after failing to receive the city of Ridgeland's first quarterly payment for 2022.

Johnson said no payment would be forthcoming so long as the library had "homosexual materials." McGee said that it went against his Christian beliefs to fund "homosexual materials."

Johnson explained that publicly-funded governmental entities are not religious institutions and that "we are a public library and we serve the entire community." According

to Johnson, McGee replied that "the library can serve whoever we wanted, but that he only serves the great Lord above."

At the January 25 library board meeting, Bob Sanders, legal counsel for the library board, was asked if the mayor had legal authority to override the contract with the library system and the decision of the aldermen. Sanders replied, "Uh, no."

McGee's unlawful attempts to withhold funding from the library seem to have been motivated by a library display of LGBTQIA+ material which he referred to in multiple interviews.

Titles included in the display were:

- *As a Woman: What I Learned About Power, Sex, and the Patriarch After I Transitioned* by Paula Williams
- *Grandad's Camper* by Harry Woodgate
- *The Name I Call Myself* by Hasan Namir
- *Outlove: A Queer Christian Survival Story* by Julie Rodgers
- *People of Pride: 25 Great LGBTQ Americans* by Chase Clemesha
- *The Queer Bible: Essays* by Jack Guinness

Johnson said, "I think it's important to understand that LGBTQ+ books and materials are not just for the LGBT community. Those books are for all of us, whether we can see ourselves reflected in those materials or so that we can develop understanding, empathy, and respect for someone else."

At the February 15 meeting of the Ridgeland Board of Aldermen, twenty speakers addressed the board during the public comments section, some condoning the censorship of library material, others defending the free and open access to information.



Alice O'Neal Gratenhuis said that demands to hide or remove LGBTQIA+ materials reminded her and her wife of a lifetime of cruelty. "I grew up terrified because of the blank smiles of those who would rather their child be dead than gay," said Gratenhuis.

In March, McGee and the Ridgeland Board of Aldermen said they would restore funding if the library signs a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

On April 12, the new MOU was signed by both parties. It states that "Ridgeland and its elected officials strongly support a diverse library collection that is consistent with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights," and that "this includes matters dealing with all sexual orientations or religious preferences."

However, the MOU also states that "the city is deeply concerned" that displays and materials are "age-appropriate."

The MOU also stipulates that MCLS will handle all challenges to displays and material in a manner consistent with their policies, but will "at the request of the mayor or board of aldermen, meet to discuss any concerns or complaints, including formal material challenges made to MCLS."

MCLS is shielded by the MOU from any efforts on the part of the mayor or board of aldermen to alter the outcome of any decisions regarding challenges.

Reported in: *Mississippi Free Press*, January 25, 2022, February 16, 2022; *LGBTQ Nation*, January 26, 2022; *WJTV*, March 25, 2022.

Wake County, North Carolina

On December 15, it was reported that the Wake County Public Library (WCPL) system received requests to

reconsider the titles *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe and *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison.

All seven copies of *Gender Queer* that were in the system were removed from circulation promptly after the complaint was received. More than 30 people were waiting on the hold list to read the book.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

Gender Queer was also one of the titles targeted by Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson in public comments harshly criticizing the availability through libraries of material he considered to be pornographic. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: North Carolina).

Robinson's comments drew national attention as he focused on books by and about members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

According to Wake County spokesperson Alice Avery, "WCPL determined that [*Gender Queer*] does contain explicit illustrations that do not align with WCPL's selection policy."

Avery said it was the first book to be removed from WCPL in response to a request for reconsideration since 2015.

The decision to remove it brought condemnation from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of North Carolina, Equality NC, and the LGBT Center of Raleigh. In a joint statement, they said that "The coordinated effort throughout the country to denigrate books that center

LGBTQIA+ issues and voices from libraries and schools is harmful and unconstitutional."

Dolph Goldenburg, interim executive director of the LGBT Center of Raleigh, said he was concerned about the impact removing the book would have on LGBTQIA+ residents.

"We believe that all libraries should offer easily-accessible LGBTQ+ affirming and supportive titles," said Goldenburg. "Since the library system has determined that *Gender Queer* isn't consistent with its selection policy, we are offering to provide WCPL 25 queer-affirming titles for every copy of *Gender Queer* that has been removed from circulation."

In response to the removal of *Gender Queer*, 55 Wake County librarians signed a letter protesting the decision and the process that resulted in it.

"We're a library. We're not supposed to be censoring other voices. That's antithetical to what we stand for," said one librarian signatory. "We give voice to everyone—whether we agree with them or not."

Lisa Behrens, chair of the Wake County Library Commission, said "We share concerns about the book removal process and we're actively listening to the public discussion on this." Behrens said the commission would be reviewing the library's selection and reconsideration policies at their January meeting.

Gender Queer was returned to circulation in January when WCPL initiated the process of revising their policies.

On March 25, WCPL approved a new reconsideration policy. According to director Mike Wasilick, "The updated process ensures we have opportunities to receive diverse input before making any decisions."

The new policy requires challenged material to be reviewed by a committee of nine librarians from a variety of



backgrounds. The county attorney's office will be consulted on all decisions made by review committees.

Reported in: *Raleigh News & Observer*, December 15, 2021, March 25, 2022; CBS17, December 15, 2022, and January 10, 2022.

Denton, Texas

On November 15 the Denton Public Library announced the cancellation of Rainbow StoryTime which was scheduled for November 20.

The November program would have included three titles focused on children accepting themselves and one another: *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall, *I'm a Girl* by Yasmeen Ismail, and *What Riley Wore* by Elana K. Arnold.

Denton's Rainbow StoryTimes occur three times a year and are typically scheduled on days focused on marginalized groups. While none of the books selected dealt included portrayals of transgender children, confusion as to the nature of the storytime seemingly stemmed from its scheduling on national Transgender Day of Remembrance.

The cancellation occurred after the library received disrespectful and hostile complaints from people who mistakenly believed the program would include books about transgender children.

Email and telephone complaints poured into the library from as far away as California and responding to them had completely inundated staff by November 10.

On November 12, Don Huffines, a Republican Texas gubernatorial candidate posted a news release on his website calling for Denton to "end taxpayer-funded transgender storytime" and "fire the library employees who approved the event."

Jennifer Bekker, director of Denton Public Library, said that while there were no direct threats, "We did see on some public social media posts some things that made us concerned for public safety. And it made us concerned about the safety of the staff."

The library had requested security and crowd control from the Denton Police Department before the complaints took a dark and menacing turn resulting in the decision to cancel the event.

The city released a statement regarding the cancellation which stated that "contrary to inaccurate information being spread, this event is not focused on teaching children about gender identity or anything relating to sex or sexual orientation. . . . The StoryTime features books about families, friendship, and being yourself."

Huffines took credit for the event's cancellation on his website, announcing he was "pleased that the pressure raised by our campaign and, more importantly, concerned patriots in Denton County, led to the appropriate cancellation of this event."

In response to the event's cancellation, Amber Briggie, mother of a transgender boy, worked with her church and Armadillo Ale Works to organize a Transgender StoryTime event at the brewery. Hundreds of people turned out. The books *Red: A Crayon's Story*, *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love, and *Calvin* by J. R. Ford were read aloud to attendees.

Reported in: *Denton Record-Chronicle*, November 15, 2021; *LGBTQ Nation*, November 18, 2021, and November 22, 2021; *NBC DFW*, November 16, 2021.

League City, Texas

At their November 15 board meeting, Clear Creek Independent School District (ISD) announced a change

to how students can access library books.

Prior to the change, students had access to books in the Harris County Public Library's (HCPL) ebook collection through the Sora app. At the October 26 board meeting, parents complained that students were able to access Corey Silverberg's *Sex is a Funny Word* through the app.

Sex Is a Funny Word is a critically acclaimed and award-winning children's book discussing sex, gender identity, privacy, safety, respect, and protecting yourself against unwanted sexual touch and abuse.

In response to the complaints, elementary school students' access to HCPL content was turned off. The district is working on a form to allow parents to opt their children into HCPL access. They're also reclassifying some of the materials to older age categories.

In response to the book challenges at the school, League City administrators focused on removing titles from the Helen Hall Public Library, a separate entity from HCPL.

City Manager John Baumgartner said of *Sex Is a Funny Word*, "This book is indoctrinating and smut."

Councilor Justin Hicks called for the withdrawal of *Sex is a Funny Word* along with seven other books for children. All disclosed titles portrayed characters who were members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The other titles challenged at Helen Hall Public Library which have been publicly disclosed:

- *Prince and Knight* by Daniel Haack
- *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love
- *Jacob's New Dress* by Sarah Hoffman

Reported in: *ABC 13*, November 17, 2021; *Galveston Daily News*, November 12, 2021.



Llano, Texas

On December 20 it was announced that the Llano County Library (LCL) would shut down all three of its locations for four days so that staff members could conduct a “thorough review” of every children’s book.

The review was undertaken at the behest of the Llano County Commissioners Court and was done to ensure that all reading material for younger readers was “age-appropriate.” Librarians were additionally tasked with moving books from the young adult section to the newly created “young adults plus” section for older teens.

As a result of the search for “objectionable” children’s materials, the following titles were withdrawn from the system:

- *It’s Perfectly Normal* by Robie Harris
- *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak
- *I Need a New Butt* by Dawn McMillan
- *Freddie the Farting Snowman* by Jane Bexley

During the closure, Llano County Commissioners also required DVDs to get marked with color-coded stickers indicating age-appropriateness.

The commission also suspended the library’s only ebook platform, Overdrive. This action was taken following public complaints at the December 13 board meeting that the books *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe were available through it.

Lawn Boy and *Gender Queer* are prominent award-winning titles with content pertaining to the LGBTQIA+ community.

According to LCL staff, they were directed to segregate LGBTQIA+ content out from the rest of the collection.

Commissioner Mike Sandoval said that the commission was also dissolving their old advisory board and creating a new advisory board consisting of 13 members appointed by the commission and County Judge Ron Cunningham to watch over the county library and their online catalog.

On January 7, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) sent a letter to the Llano County Commissioners’ Court regarding concerns about their removal of books in a manner inconsistent with their book challenge procedures.

NCAC urged the return of the materials until a formal review was conducted and for the county to follow their book challenge policy in the future.

The commission’s actions to remove and limit access to materials followed roughly two months after Governor Abbott and state representative Matt Krause called for investigations into school library materials throughout the state. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

During the October 25 board meeting, held the evening of the day Krause’s letter and list of targeted books were made public, a group of county residents voiced outrage over library material they considered to be inappropriate.

Texas Library Association’s director of advocacy and communication said Krause’s call for an investigation of school library materials “definitely ramped it up” with regards to scrutiny and challenges of public library material, as well.

After the October meeting, Bonnie Wallace emailed Cunningham a list of 60 books she felt should be relocated to the adult section of the library. All but two of the books were on Krause’s list. Cunningham later appointed her vice-chair of the new Library Advisory Board.

On February 16, an email went out from LCL system director Amber Milum stating that “staff members are not to attend Advisory Board meetings” and “may not use your vacation time to attend.”

At their February 17 meeting, the LCL Advisory Board discontinued the practice of allowing public comments during meetings. During the meeting, they discussed switching the library’s ebook platform to Bibliotheca.

Rochelle Wells, a member of the board’s collections subcommittee, which oversees material acquisition for the county libraries, cited the fact that Bibliotheca was not part of the Central Texas Digital Consortium as an advantage, as it would give them local control over the titles included.

The board plans to restrict card holders under the age of 18 from accessing the ebook platform.

During the March 3 meeting of the LCL Advisory Board, the board voted to close its meetings to the public. The vote came after a presentation on the Texas Open Meeting Act from Matthew Rienstra, assistant attorney to the county.

Rienstra told the board that the act “does not apply to you. You’re not passing rules or exercising any authority.”

On March 9, Suzette Baker was fired from her job as head librarian for Llano County’s Kingsland branch. The reasons given for her dismissal



were insubordination and failure to follow instructions.

Baker said she was fired for asking for too much information regarding the switch from Overdrive to Bibliotheca and the decisions to withdraw and limit access to books.

According to Baker, when she asked human resources about the prohibition against attending board meetings, she was “told not to start any trouble.”

Reported in: *San Antonio Current*, December 20, 2021; KVUE,

December 20, 2021; *The Hill*, December 22, 2021; *National Coalition Against Censorship*, January 11, 2022; *Daily Trib*, February 21, March 4, 2022, March 7, 2022, and March 17, 2022.



SCHOOLS Brookfield, Connecticut

At their December 15 meeting, the Brookfield Public Schools Board of Education discussed a parent's formal complaint regarding a library book at the Huckleberry Hill Elementary School.

The book challenged is *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier.

Drama won a 2013 Stonewall Book Award in Children's and Young Adult Literature and a 2013 Harvey Award for excellence in comics. *Publishers Weekly* and *The Washington Post* ranked *Drama* as one of the Best Books of 2012.

Drama has a character who is openly gay and during one scene, there is an on-stage kiss between two boys. Scholastic, its publisher, says the book is appropriate for children ages 10 and up.

While the board has policies covering the reconsideration of books used in classroom instruction, this was the first time a library book has been challenged in the district.

After receiving the initial complaint, the school librarian reviewed the book and determined it should remain in the library.

The parent then appealed the decision to the school's principal, who formed a committee to review the book. The committee also determined the book was appropriate and should remain in the library.

The parent then appealed this decision to the superintendent, who turned the matter over to the Board of Education. The board elected to keep the book in circulation until a determination was made.

The board voted 6-1 to retain the book in the elementary school library at their March 2 meeting.

Reported in: *News Times*, December 23, 2021.

Urbandale, Iowa

At the November 22 board meeting of the Urbandale Community School District (UCSD), parent Dennis Murphy complained about five books that were available from school libraries and said that he believes them to be pornographic.

Murphy called for them to be removed from district libraries and had submitted formal requests for their reconsideration prior to the meeting. He claimed all of the books "violate Iowa Code 628 for obscene material."

Hailie Bonz, a sophomore at Urbandale High School, said that "Literacy is liberation. Limiting our access to certain resources like books is limiting students' ability to be educated, aware, and understanding of some of our students' lived experiences. Just because you don't want to . . . have your child read about some of these issues, doesn't mean those issues don't exist."

Jake Chapman, president of the Iowa Senate, attended the meeting and again said he would work to make it a felony for teachers or school staff to provide students access to books like the ones Murphy objected to.

Alissa Heasley, a therapist and parent of a student in the district, said that it's critical for youth's mental health to see themselves in literature, including youth with marginalized identities.

"The books in question have been called 'obscene' by those bringing complaints to the district," said Heasley. "To call these books obscene is to call the lived experience of our students obscene."

In a statement, UCSD indicated that per board policy, a review committee was established to review the requests for reconsideration. The review committee was comprised of teachers, students, community

members, a teacher, a librarian, and an administrator. UCSD policy also provides that challenged materials remain available for circulation while undergoing review.

On December 13, the review committee held a public meeting at which they voted to retain each of the five books on the shelves.

After the meeting, Murphy said he would be meeting with a lawyer on December 15 "to start proceedings for a lawsuit" against the district. He added that he and other concerned parents are working with Senator Chapman to draft legislation that would "punish educators."

House Minority Leader Jennifer Konfrst suggested Chapman was leading them into dangerous territory.

"We started saying it's going to be a felony to own and distribute a book when you're a teacher. First of all, pause and think about that sentence. And second of all, what is next?" asked Konfrst. "To imagine a world in which we're banning books is really the start of something I don't think we want to get into."

The books which were challenged by Murphy and retained by UCSD are:

- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe
- *Hey Kiddo* by Jarrett Krosoczka
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison

Reported in: KCCI, November 10, 2021, and November 22, 2021; Yahoo! News, November 23, 2021; We Are Iowa, December 14, 2021.

Goddard, Kansas

The Goddard School District removed 29 titles from circulation in the district's school libraries after a middle



school principal received multiple emailed complaints from a parent.

The parent's initial complaint came in September after his daughter brought home Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*.

The Hate U Give is a young adult novel narrated by a Black teenager who witnesses a White police officer shoot and kill an unarmed Black man during a traffic stop.

Thomas's book has also won numerous awards, including a 2018 Michael L. Printz Award, three Goodreads Choice Awards, the 2018 William C. Morris Award for best debut book for teens, the 2018 Indies Choice Award for Young Adult Book of the Year, and it was a 2018 Coretta Scott King Book Award honoree.

After being informed of the district's policy regarding challenges of books and instructional material, he sent a list of 28 additional titles he felt should be removed from district libraries.

The majority of the books on the list were written by people of color or members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

According to the Goddard School District, he then met with the middle school principal and filled out a "request for review" form. Instead of following their clearly delineated policy, the district then removed all 29 titles from circulation, drawing national news coverage and broad condemnation on social media.

The process spelled out in the district's policy stipulates that once a request for review is received, the superintendent or designee will meet with the complainant to discuss their concerns.

If the matter is not resolved at the meeting, the complaint is referred to the school board, which can establish a committee of the building principal, media specialist, two subject area

specialists, and two community members to review the material.

The policy states "Challenged materials shall not be removed from use during the review period."

Jonathan Friedman, director of free expression and education for PEN America, said this case was particularly concerning as the books were removed without review.

"The district says 'Sure, no problem. We won't let anyone read those books because one parent complained,'" said Friedman. "That's very concerning considering the importance of individual liberties and the importance of the freedom to read in a democratic society."

On November 10, the day after a story ran on NPR about the district's actions, they announced the books would be returned to circulation.

Officials from the Goddard School District sent an email to parents saying "all principals and librarians" met that afternoon to discuss the books and decided they should all be returned to circulation.

Ashley Hope Perez, author of *Out of Darkness*, one of the titles withdrawn and restored by the district, expressed concern over the chilling effect that events like this have on teachers and librarians.

"I've heard from librarians [that] folks are being quietly asked to pull materials preemptively, and I think that's even more alarming," Perez said. "It's much harder to respond to that kind of softer censorship that's occurring."

Books withdrawn from and then returned to circulation by the Goddard School District:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
 - *Anger is a Gift* by Mark Oshiro
 - *Black Girl Unlimited* by Echo Brown
 - *Blended* by Sharon Draper
 - *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins
 - *Fences by August Wilson*
 - *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
 - *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
 - *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon
 - *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
 - *Lily and Dunkin* by Donna Gephart
 - *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
 - *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson
 - *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Perez
 - *Satanism* by Tamara Roleff
 - *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 Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow
 - *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
 - *The Handmaid's Tale: The Graphic Novel* by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault
 - *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
 - *Testaments* by Margaret Atwood
 - *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson
 - *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki
 - *Trans Mission: My Quest to a Beard* by Alex Bertie
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
 - *They Called Themselves the KKK* by Susan C. Bartoletti
 - *#MurderTrending* by Gretchen McNeil

Reported in: KMUW 89.1, November 9, 2021; KCUR 89.3,



November 10, 2021; Mississippi Free Press, November 15, 2021.

York, Maine

On November 22, York Middle School received a request to remove Robie Harris' *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* from its library. The challenge was issued by 72-year-old Patsy Huntsman, who does not have a child in the school district.

Harris's book was written to inform pre-adolescent children about puberty so young individuals would understand aspects of sexual health. It received numerous accolades, including being *The New York Times* Best Book of the Year in 1995, a School Library Journal best book, and an American Literature Association Notable Children's Book. The book is currently in its 4th updated edition.

Booklist recommends Harris's book for grades four through seven and called it a "caring, conscientious, and well-crafted book [that] will be a fine library resource as well as a marvelous adjunct to the middle-school sex-education curriculum."

At the December 1 meeting of the York School Committee (YSC), around 20 parents and librarians spoke in opposition to the book's removal. No one spoke in favor of removing it.

"Like adults, children and teens have the right to find information they choose to look for," said York Public Library Director Michelle Sampson. "Libraries have a responsibility to provide information to a wide variety of users."

Evelyn, a fifth grader, said "I definitely do not want a person I don't know telling me what I can't read. I also think kids should learn from these kinds of books, so they're prepared for the world."

After the review committee voted to retain the book and school superintendent Lou Goscinsky upheld their decision, Huntsman appealed to YSC hoping to overturn it. She presented her case to YSC on January 19.

On February 2, YSC voted unanimously to uphold the decision to retain *It's Perfectly Normal* in the library.

Judith Rosenbaum, professor of communications and journalism at the University of Maine, said "When we ban books, we're not taking information away from children. We're just taking a specific story away from them because they can still find that information somewhere else."

Committee member Meridith Schmid agreed and shared concerns about what can happen in the absence of reliable information sources.

"My true hope is that students who have questions about their bodies or about sex will visit this book . . . instead of visiting Google, where they will no doubt be answered with pornographic pictures and video, false and unrealistic information, shaming of all kinds," said Schmid.

Reported in: *Portsmouth Herald*, December 1, 2021, December 3, 2021, January 17, 2022, January 18, 2022, and January 25, 2022; *News Center Maine*, February 2, 2022.

Osseo, Minnesota

On October 21 Celeste Rundquist submitted an official request to remove Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime* from the ninth grade curriculum of Osseo Senior High School.

Born a Crime is the autobiography of award-winning comedian and late-night talk show host Trevor Noah. It documents his life growing up mixed-race in apartheid-era South Africa. The book was named one of the best

books of 2016 by *The New York Times*, *Newsday*, *Esquire*, NPR, and *Booklist*.

Rundquist felt the book contained "inappropriate material" including "vulgar language, violence, sexual verbiage, and references to pornography."

On November 3, three high school students and nine members of the school's Instructional Materials Reevaluation Committee met with Rundquist to discuss the book. The committee voted unanimously to keep the book in the curriculum.

"*Born a Crime* provides an opportunity for students to learn about the lived experience of an adolescent boy during apartheid, is a narrative non-fiction text . . . and meets the standards," said committee member Jill Kind. "The book is appropriate for ninth grade."

Other committee members argued that the occasional use of vulgar language in the book was no worse than that in other books in the curriculum, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*, and that kids heard far worse everyday in the school hallways.

The Osseo School Board voted 4-2 to uphold the committee's decision at their December 14 meeting.

Parents of Osseo High School students are allowed to opt their children out of a required text in favor of studying an alternate text instead. Rundquist had exempted her son from reading Noah's book prior to challenging its inclusion in the curriculum.

Reported in: *Sun Post*, December 30, 2021.

Billings, Montana

On January 24, the board of the Billings School District voted unanimously to retain Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer: A Memoir* and Jonahan



Evison's *Lawn Boy* in the high school library.

The challenge to the books began in October when district parent Nathan Mathews called the school librarian and threatened to pursue the matter with the sheriff if the two books were not immediately removed.

Mathews said he decided to challenge the books after hearing about efforts to ban them in another state.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

Lawn Boy explores themes of poverty, racism and sexual identity. It won a 2019 Alex Award, given by the Young Adult Library Services Association to adult books that have special appeal to young adults.

The books were initially reviewed by a four-member committee that included high school librarian Alice Asleson and high school English teacher Kathryn Pfaffinger in November. The committee recommended retaining both titles.

Mathews then appealed this decision to the school board, insisting that the books were child pornography.

The board was tasked with considering each book as a whole, instead of looking exclusively at the controversial sections. The educational value of the materials and district policies also factored into their decision.

"I don't like those images," said board member Russell Hall, referring to one page of *Gender Queer*. "But then I saw the rest of the book. I saw enough to recognize someone in a really tough situation."

Hall recognized how the book could be a resource for students in the district. "All I can imagine is that there are youth in our schools and they don't know where to turn."

One resident who wrote to the board encouraging them to retain the titles agreed. "As the mother of two gay children, I encourage you to keep this book available to students who are seeking answers in their life. I wish this had been available when my children were in high school."

During the meeting, the board's discussion emphasized a need for the school to support LGBTQIA+ students.

Jeff Weldon, legal counsel for the board, cited a 1982 Supreme Court decision that public schools can remove books that are "pervasively vulgar" but cannot remove books "simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books," as doing so would be a First Amendment violation.

On January 18, a panel of the board recommended 4-1 that they retain *Lawn Boy* but 3-2 that they withdraw *Gender Queer* from district libraries.

During the meeting, head of the committee Scott McCulloch said he was "handcuffed" to the recommendation that *Gender Queer* be withdrawn, despite strongly disagreeing with it.

"I am desperately wishing some other member of the board of trustees would move a substitute motion to reject the recommendation," McCulloch said.

Resident Dane Spencer told the board he feared "banning the books would send the message to all students (but specifically queer students) that there is something wrong or grossly inappropriate about queer sexual identities."

Mike Leo, who also served on the committee, said high schoolers have

easy access to pornography on their cell phones, and doubted that any students were turning to the library as a source of pornography.

"This is a solution in search of a problem and there's not a problem here," said Leo. "The problem is that there's an out-of-state agenda that's being pushed forward, probably for some entity or individual's gain, and we've got some people who have taken it up here."

Panel members Hall and Janna Hafer said they no longer supported removing *Gender Queer* from district libraries.

After the board unanimously voted to retain *Lawn Boy*, Jennifer Hoffman moved that district libraries retain *Gender Queer*. The board unanimously voted to do so.

Reported in: *Daily Montanan*, January 23, 2022; *Montana Public Radio*, January 25, 2022; *Billings Gazette*, January 24, 2022.

Hunterdon, New Jersey

On January 25, the North Hunterdon-Voorhees Regional High School District Board of Education voted to retain five books that had been challenged by parents due to their inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters.

The initial challenge to the books was made during banned books week by a group of parents who characterized them as "obscene" and violated "state and criminal laws."

The National Coalition Against Censorship sent a letter to the board on October 22, reminding them that New Jersey has a statute requiring every district to "include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of . . . lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people," and removing large numbers of LGBTQIA+ titles from school libraries would be inconsistent with that law.



At the October 26 board meeting, Cynthia Reyes read a prepared statement from the group of parents attempting to remove the books from the district's school libraries. She accused school officials of characterizing it as an LGBTQIA+ issue "to gain support to defend their illegal actions."

Reyes said they were only challenging LGBTQIA+ books because, "after extensive research by several parents, we have not found a single book with extreme obscene heterosexual content."

At the November 30 board meeting, members of the parent group said they had reported "the issue of pornography being peddled to minors via books" to the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office.

Sgt. Andrew McClusky said the issue of allegedly obscene books was "being handled at the school level at this time" and they were not actively investigating the matter.

At the January 25 board meeting, the committee which had been tasked to read and review all five books recommended the removal of *This Book is Gay* and the retention of the other four titles.

Max Moore, a transgender student in the district, said he read *This Book is Gay* and did not understand the committee's recommendation.

"It does an amazing job filling in the gaps that the school's curriculum fails to in sex ed. We talked candidly and openly about wet dreams and masturbation with the language always centered around heterosexual students," said Moore. "If the board was willing to make a committee to remove this book, I challenge the board to convene a committee to write a sex education curriculum for queer students."

Moore told the board that "time and time again, the history and stories

of minorities and marginalized communities have been erased with similar excuses of them being too inappropriate or obscene."

The board of education voted to retain all five challenged titles.

The books challenged and retained were:

- *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe
- *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison
- *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson

Reported in: *National Coalition Against Censorship*, October 28, 2021; *MyCentralJersey.com*, October 28, 2021, and December 1, 2021; *NJ.com*, January 26, 2022.

Wayne, New Jersey

During the October 7 board meeting for Wayne Township Public Schools, a group of parents raucously raised objections to several books with LGBTQIA+ content.

Jill Carbone said "I vehemently oppose introducing the concept of gender identity to children as young as five and making borderline-pedophilic books available in the school library funded by my tax dollars."

Superintendent Mark Toback said, "The goal is to have books where all children can see themselves, so they can feel included and to help [them] realize that not everyone is the same."

At the time of the meeting, no formal challenge had been made for any of the books. Board member Stacey Scher said there is a process for expressing complaints and concerns and "screaming" at board members is not part of that process.

The board meeting ended abruptly when Mark Faber charged towards Board of Education president Cathy

Kazan, ripped his mask off, and shouted "We'll have to burn your fucking house!"

Immediately following the meeting, Kazan pressed charges against Faber.

Over the course of the next month and a half, requests for reconsideration were filed for seven titles.

At the November 18 board meeting, Toback announced that in accordance with the district's policy, a review committee was formed and tasked with reading the books and making a recommendation to the board about whether or not they belonged in the collection.

The district's policy states that "no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some."

Several parents spoke out about the importance of LGBTQIA+ representation in books that are available to youth.

"Books sitting on shelves in libraries aren't being taught in classrooms. They're in a place where they can be sought out by those that need them," said parent Jacob Van Lunen. "When some of the kids in a community feel that an attack on a book is an attack on who they are as people, I think we should listen to them."

At their December 16 meeting, the board voted to retain all seven titles.

Books challenged:

- *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* by Kai Cheng Thom
- *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
- *Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship* by Jessica Walton
- *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis
- *Sparkle Boy* by Leslea Newman
- *When Kayla was Kyle* by Amy Fabrikant



- *Who are You? The Kid's Guide to Gender Identity* by Brook Pessin-Whedbee

Reported in: *NorthJersey.com*, November 22, 2021; *Tap into Wayne*, October 8, 2021, and October 10, 2021; *New Jersey 101.5*, November 23, 2021.

Pitt County, North Carolina

At their December 6 board meeting, the Pitt County Schools Board of Education announced they would remove two books by Sharon Draper from the middle school curriculum after receiving complaints from a parent.

Taylor Keith, who wore a Moms for Liberty shirt to the board meeting, appealed the selection committee's decision that the books were aligned with district policy and appropriate for students.

Their review of the material culminating in this decision was prompted by an earlier challenge to the books by Keith. The appeal resulted in their suspension from the curriculum pending further review.

The last book challenge the district had received was during the 2015-2016 school year. District Media Specialist Meredith Hill said this was the first time she was aware of a selection committee decision being appealed to the board.

The district released a statement affirming that "In alignment with board policy, teachers are very responsive to families who may request alternative assignments and undertake extra work to accommodate these requests."

The books Keith challenged, *Forged by Fire* and *Darkness Before Dawn*, focus on the lives of teens who have been sexually abused or raped.

Keith said, "The problem here is the people that manage our Pitt

County Schools system, you all have degraded the baseline of morals."

At the meeting, Keith also requested reconsideration of *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds.

All American Boys tells the story of two teenage boys and how they handle racism and police brutality in their community. The plot revolves around a White police officer assaulting 16-year-old Rashad after mistaking him for a thief. It received numerous accolades including the Walter Dean Myers Award, Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award, and Coretta Scott King Author Honor.

During the public comments section of the January 3 meeting of the board, numerous attendees cautioned the board against action that would censor material or limit students' access to information.

John Stokes, whose grandchildren attend district schools, said "Parents should have the right to decide what their children can read and hear, but they don't have the right to decide what other parent's children have."

Despite these admonitions, board member Worth Forbes seemed eager to remove books, particularly *All American Boys*.

"There's no way this book needs to be on any Pitt County School's shelf," said Forbes. He said that the board needed to look carefully at who would be appointed to the selection committee tasked with reviewing it.

The board held a special meeting on January 24 to discuss the book challenges. The board voted to retain *All American Boys*.

In a separate vote, the board also voted to keep *Forged by Fire* and *Darkness Before Dawn* in the curriculum. A motion to require parental permission for them to be taught or read failed.

The board then voted to revise their Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Material

policy. The revision requires that letters be sent to parents informing them of every book that will be taught.

Reported in: WITN, January 24, 2022; *The Daily Reflector*, December 11, 2021, January 4, 2022, and January 24, 2022.

Kutztown, Pennsylvania

On November 1, a candidate for the Kutztown school board sent out a robocall to the school community stating that the high school library held pornographic titles. The call listed *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe as examples.

Both books are coming-of-age memoirs by members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

At the night's school board meeting, Dan Wismer commented on two books he said were in the library. He did not provide the titles, but said they had "adult content," "critical race theory," and one quoted Karl Marx.

Jeri Sievert also complained of a book she would not name, claiming it contained incest and was "pornography."

Board President Karl Nolte said he was alerted about those books earlier that evening, ostensibly referring to the robocall.

Superintendent Christian Temchatin confirmed the library had both books and explained the district's policy governing reconsideration of material. "There's a procedure where we take the book off the shelf or out of the classroom situation for 10 days and there's a process we follow to evaluate it."

The books came up again during the Kutztown Area School District's Policy and Curriculum meeting on November 8. After opposing the Educational Equity Policy's section on culturally responsive teaching on the grounds that it was "critical race



theory,” Sievert asked who would be on the review committee for “the pornography books.”

Temchatin said the committee had not been formed as they had just received the form requesting reconsideration of *Gender Queer*.

Sievert said the police chief should serve on the committee due to the allegations of pornography.

In response to both local and national efforts to limit students’ access to books, eighth grader Joslyn Diffenbaugh started a banned book club for Kutztown students. Over a dozen students have been attending.

“We’re focusing on the newer banned books, especially books dealing with race and LGBTQ+ issues,” said Diffenbaugh. “But we’re also reading historically banned books, because we want to see why books have been banned in the past compared to why these books are being banned today.”

During their January 18 meeting, the school board voted to affirm the review committee’s recommendation to keep *Gender Queer* in circulation at the high school library.

A motion to require parental consent to access the book was voted down as was a vote to censor images from it.

“I don’t want to get into the habit of analyzing every book that we have and then as a board voting what we do and don’t want to censor from those books,” said board member Michael Hess. “That defeats the purpose of having books at all.”

Reported in: *The Mercury*, November 10, 2021; *Reading Eagle*, November 4, 2021, and January 28, 2022.

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

During the November 9 board meeting for the Lancaster School District, a

masked man who introduced himself as “My name is, uh, Dan Matthews. Park Street,” before reading a line from *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews.

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl is a coming-of-age novel about two high school friends who make films together and a classmate with leukemia. It explores themes of friendship, jealousy, and loss. It was selected as one of the Young Adult Library Services Association “2013 Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults” titles.

“Matthews” said his daughter checked the “absolutely disgusting” book out of the middle school library. He called for the superintendent’s resignation.

Superintendent Michele Balliet apologized to “Matthews” and said the book would be pulled from the library for review.

After looking into matters after the meeting, Elizabethtown Area School District spokesperson Troy Portser said the book has not been checked out from the middle school library in the past year and they do not believe the man has any children enrolled in the school district.

Portser said they believe “Dan Matthews of Park Street” to be a fake name and address.

The man claiming to be “Matthews” has previously been seen with board members Stephen and Danielle Lindemuth. The Lindemuths are known to have attended the “Stop the Steal” rally in Washington, D.C., which turned into a violent insurrection. The Lindemuths refused to speak to reporters when asked about “Matthews.”

The book was returned to the school library and a presentation was given at the December 7 board meeting about the district’s opt-out process which allows parents to prevent their

children from checking out library books with mature themes.

At the March 8 Elizabethtown Area school board workshop meeting, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* came up again. Board member Caroline Lalvani said charges that the book constituted child pornography and the school was violating the law by making it available had been filed with the district solicitor. The solicitor determined the book did not constitute child pornography.

Board member Danielle Lindemuth moved to change the parental opt-out process for books with mature themes to an opt-in process. Assistant Superintendent Karen Nell said that would potentially violate students’ First Amendment right to seek information. The motion failed 5-4.

A motion to expand the size of the ad hoc committee that is formed to review challenged books so that it would include citizens and board members also failed 5-4.

Reported in: *Lancaster Online*, January 18, 2022, February 28, 2022, March 12, 2022.

Canutillo, Texas

On November 15, a group of parents attending the Canutillo Independent School District (ISD) board meeting demanded that *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe be removed from the high school library.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association’s 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

Kobabe said students need “good, accurate, safe information about these topics [instead of] wildly having to



search online” where they might find misinformation. “To people who are challenging the book, please read the whole book and judge it based on its entire contents, not just a tiny snippet.”

The district pulled the book from circulation while reviewing it to determine if it should be retained in the collection based on its educational value and age-appropriateness. The committee is made up of parents and school faculty.

On December 17, Canutillo ISD released the report from the review committee announcing that they had voted 8-1 to retain *Gender Queer*.

“The book is graphic and explicit at times, [it] is meant for mature and specific audiences,” said superintendent Pedro Galaviz. “The book addresses many educational topics [and] provides us with information that can guide our LGBTQ students to develop confidence in who they are.”

After the publication of the report, angry parents began threatening and harassing staff. “Our high school librarian has been threatened, harassed. People are calling up saying, ‘you’re a pedophile. This is porn. You should go to hell,’ we are receiving all that,” said Galaviz.

Galaviz asked for an opinion from the Texas Attorney General to keep the members of the review panel anonymous for their safety.

Reported in: KVIA, December 17, 2021, and November 15, 2021.

Bedford, Virginia

At the November 11 board meeting for Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS), the local chapter of Moms for Liberty challenged a list of 12 held by their school libraries. Amy Snead, addressing the board on behalf of Moms for Liberty, requested that the books be removed “immediately.”

Most of the books challenged had LGBTQIA+ characters or authors. This cannot be dismissed as coincidental, as Moms for Liberty listed depictions of transgender or homosexual characters as the reasons they considered the books inappropriate.

In addition to the list of titles, Snead shared excerpts from the books objected to with the board, but did not provide context for the quotes nor summaries of the books.

Board member Marcus Hill agreed with Snead and recommended that the books be removed straight away. Board member Susan Mele objected and said that she wanted to read the books before making any decision on the matter. Board member Georgina Hairston recommended that the board follow BCPS policy governing the reconsideration of library material.

Committees were designated to review the challenged materials, though one of the titles challenged, *Two Boys Kissing*, was not reviewed as no library in the district actually owned it. The committees all unanimously recommended retaining the challenged titles.

During the March 10 BCPS board meeting, the committee’s recommendations were upheld, though Hill objected, claiming that the review committees were biased because they included school administrators, teachers, and librarians.

Books challenged:

- *#MurderTrending* by Gretchen McNeil
- *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson
- *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children* by Kristin Cronn-Mills
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *Freakboy* by Kristin Elizabeth Clark
- *Love Drugged* by James Klise
- *Rick* by Alex Gino

- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan
- *What My Mother Doesn’t Know* by Sonya Sones

Reported in: *The News & Advance*, December 11, 2021, March 12, 2022.

Williamson County, Tennessee

The Tennessee Department of Education (DOE) declined to investigate the first complaint that was filed under the newly enacted anti-critical race theory (CRT) law.

The 11-page complaint was filed by Robin Steenman, chair of the Williamson County chapter of Moms for Liberty. In the complaint, Steenman alleged that the Wit and Wisdom curriculum used by Williamson County Schools has a “heavily biased agenda” to make children “hate their country, each other and/or themselves.”

The complaint targeted four books in the curriculum:

- *Ruby Bridges Goes to School* by Ruby Bridges
- *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles
- *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington* by Frances E. Ruffin
- *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh

Steenman does not have any children who attend public schools. The complaint she filed cites “photographs of White firemen blasting Black children to the point of ‘bruising their bodies and ripping off their clothes’”



as well as photos of “White and colored drinking fountains.”

Steenman’s complaint does not contest that the events depicted in the books’ accounts and photographs occurred. Rather, she alleges it is “unamerican” to teach children about them.

Williamson County Schools denied that the civil rights material violates state law. School board member Eliot Mitchell told Reuters that Moms for Liberty’s complaint was “misguided,” and that teaching about racism in America’s past does not equate to teaching “that one particular race is intrinsically racist.”

The DOE declined to investigate because the allegations occurred during the 2020–21 school year, before the law was in effect. The complaint was also filed more than 45 days after the alleged incident, placing it outside of the timeframe established by the DOE.

Reported in: *Tennessean*, November 29, 2021; *BET*, December 1, 2021; *Los Angeles Blade*, November 29, 2021; *Reuters*, September 21, 2021.

Virginia Beach, Virginia

The six books challenged and removed from Virginia Beach school libraries for review on October 5 were all returned to the shelves on January 28.

The books were *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe, *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens* by Susan Kuklin, *Good Trouble: Lessons from the Civil Rights Playbook* by Christopher Noxon, *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison, and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

Committees that reviewed books consisted of parents, students, teachers, library media specialists, and administrators and were tasked with

reading the book in its entirety and discussing six questions. Every committee voted unanimously to retain the title they reviewed.

A Lesson Before Dying can be taught in 11th grade courses as supplementary instructional material and *The Bluest Eye* is approved as instructional material for seniors in Advanced Placement Literature.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Censorship Dateline: Schools: Virginia Beach, Virginia).

Reported in: *WAVY*, December 9, 2021; *The Virginian-Pilot*, February 12, 2022.

Walla Walla, Washington

Walla Walla schools received four formal requests for reconsideration, including one for a book that was still in the box it was shipped to the library in.

A group calling itself “For Our Kids WW” posted a video to social media in which they complained that the book *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe was available from the high school library.

According to superintendent Wade Smith, the book had not yet made it to the shelves. “We had to open a box just to find it,” said Smith.

Regardless, attention from the video inspired numerous speakers during the public comments section of the December 14 board meeting. Most spoke out against censorship, but some spoke out against books. In addition to *Gender Queer*, complaints were received about *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, and *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas.

The books all have authors and characters who are Black and/or members of the LGBTQIA+ community. They focus primarily on issues of race, racism, and challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The books, aside from *Gender Queer*, remained in circulation while undergoing review. Review committees consist of faculty members, librarians, principals, members of the district’s equity department, and high school students.

The committees recommended that all four books be retained. The decisions were appealed on January 17 and a prayer vigil was held to protest the decision during the January 18 school board meeting.

The district allows parents to flag books they do not want their children to check out of the library. In response to the protests, Walla Walla Public Schools opened an online portal allowing parents to monitor their children’s library use in real time.

On February 9, the board upheld the review committee’s recommendations to retain all four books.

At the February 15 board meeting, members of the public were almost evenly divided, with some speaking out in support of the board’s decision and some speaking out against it.

Smith said that per district policy, the books cannot be subjected to reconsideration again for three years.

Reported in: *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, December 15, 2021, January 19, 2022, February 16, 2022.

Burlington, Wisconsin

At the January 10 meeting of the Burlington Area School Board, discussion about approving an elective course for Juniors and Seniors became hotly contested due to its proposed use of an excerpt from Trevor Noah’s memoir.

Born a Crime is the autobiography of award-winning comedian and late-night talk show host Trevor Noah. It documents his life growing up mixed-race in apartheid-era South Africa. The book was named one of the best



books of 2016 by the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, *Esquire*, NPR, and *Booklist*.

Board members Taylor Wishau and Marlo Brown objected to the book being part of the curriculum due to their perception of Trevor Noah's politics. They repeatedly questioned teacher Julie Verhagen on her decision to include his account of life under Apartheid without providing a counter-narrative.

Brown urged Verhagen to find "some other author that could also be presented as reading material to counter that, who can offer another point of view."

Wishau insisted it was important to include a voice that didn't focus on the "negative" side of Apartheid. "There's a lot of positives, though, too," said Wishau.

Members of the public all spoke in favor of the book's inclusion in the course curriculum. The board then voted unanimously to approve the course.

Reported in: *Kenosha News*, January 31, 2022.

Holmen, Wisconsin

At their December 14 meeting, the Holmen School Board voted unanimously to retain Robie Harris's book *It's Perfectly Normal* on the shelves of the middle school library, where it has been in circulation for 13 years.

Parent Mary Kulmacezewski was the parent who filed the initial request for the book to be reconsidered. The December 14 vote came in response to her second appeal of decisions to retain the title.

Harris's book was written to inform pre-adolescent children about puberty so young individuals would understand aspects of sexual health. It received numerous accolades, including being The New York Times Best Book of the Year in 1995, a School Library Journal best book, and an

American Literature Association Notable Children's Book. The book is currently in its 4th updated edition.

Booklist recommends Harris's book for grades four through seven and called it a "caring, conscientious, and well-crafted book [that] will be a fine library resource as well as a marvelous adjunct to the middle-school sex-education curriculum."

Kulmacezewski said *It's Perfectly Normal* is "far too mature for 6th graders, especially, to handle," adding that "it can never be unseen."

Author Harris had a different perspective on the role his time-honored children's book plays in the lives of children. "It just respects their right to know about their bodies," he said.

The board also rejected a proposal to restrict access to the book out of concern that doing so would render the book less accessible to those who need it most.

Reported in: WKBT-TV, December 14, 2021.

Manawa, Wisconsin

On November 16, Stacey Trinrud filed a written complaint to the Manawa School District regarding the book *Looking for Alaska* by John Green which is shelved in the combined middle and high school library.

Trinrud argued that because the library now serves students from ages 11 through 18, it should not have material that is appropriate solely for high school students on the shelves.

"This is no longer just a high school library," said Trinrud. "When the dynamics of this building changed, this district needed to make changes to ensure the safety of the new younger children that are now entering this library."

Looking for Alaska is a coming-of-age novel exploring themes of loss, grief, hope, and first love. Among other accolades, it won the

2006 Michael L. Printz Award and was a 2006 "Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers."

On November 29, a review committee tasked with reading the book and determining if it should remain in circulation voted 9-0 in favor of retaining it on library shelves.

"I don't think we are protecting our community by denying them the ability to have a conversation with our children about the real world things that the kids in this book are exposed to," said Committee member Jeremy Bennett. "Suicide is a reality. Death is a reality. Sexuality is a reality. The book is aimed at the people who need to have those conversations."

Reported in: *Waupaca County News*, December 1, 2021, and December 7, 2021.

Natrona, Wyoming

During the public comments section of the December 13, 2021, meeting of the Natrona County School District Board of Trustees, parents from around the county confronted the board over books in school libraries that they felt were inappropriate for students.

The three titles targeted during the meeting were *Traffick* by Ellen Hopkins, *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany Jackson, and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe. Parents contended the topics of abuse, bullying, addiction, prostitution, and domestic violence were unsuitable for school library books.

At the following meeting on January 10, dozens of parents and students came to speak regarding censoring library material. The majority who spoke opposed the removal of books from district libraries.

Zachary Schneider, a theater teacher at Natrona County High School, said that none of the books that were brought up at the previous



meeting met the legal definition of obscenity.

The recently graduated R J Schoen said that books like *Gender Queer* are important as the allow student members of the LGBTQIA+ to see themselves represented in a positive way.

“I was also a transgender student, a queer student, a student who when to school every day scared of how I felt, who I was, and most importantly how other students would treat me if I came out,” Schoen said.

“It’s not often that we have the opportunity to read positive LGBTQ experiences,” said Schoen. “If we ban this book, we are showing every transgedner and nonbinary student that they do not belong in our district. We tell them that their stories must be removed in order to protect other students from knowledge of their very existence”

Superintendent Mike Jennings delineated the district’s policy for reconsideration of materials and said that books would only be subject to review if the process is followed and formal requests are submitted.

Reported in: KTWO, January 10, 2022; Oil City News, January 10, 2022, January 13, 2022; Wyoming News Now, December 14, 2021.

LIBRARIES Citrus County, Florida

After Pride month displays were challenged at two Citrus County public libraries, the county commission placed possible revision to the library display policy on the agenda for their January 4 board meeting.

Three options were under consideration: eliminating displays from their public libraries entirely, to only have displays that are vetted in advance by the library advisory board, or to continue with the policy and practices currently in place.

There were around four hours of public comments from people both arguing to prohibit displays of books celebrating the lives of LGBTQIA+ community members, and those that were accepting of all and supportive of the free and democratic exercise of librarian judgement.

John Woods urged the county commission to “save our children from the deviant indoctrination.”

Janet Genova, vice president of the Friends of the Citrus County Library System, said public libraries exist to stamp out misinformation and provide “equal access and intellectual freedom for all.”

Judith Rose said she had a gay son and he was born that way. She said people don’t become gay by reading books.

Two county commissioners, Chairman Ron Kitchen, Jr., and Scott Carnahan, were in favor of barring any future LGBTQIA+ pride displays at the library. Three commissioners, however, voted for county libraries to continue unfettered.

Commissioner Holly Davis said, “I know these people and I know they are in our community and they need a resource to go to. [A] library without displays is sterile.”

Reported in: Citrus County Chronicle, January 2, 2022, and January 4, 2022.

Kalispell, Montana

Fallout from the ImagineIF Library board’s handling of two book challenges led to the resignations of interim director Martha Furman, ImagineIF Library Foundation executive director Charlotte Housel, and Montana State Library Commission member Bruce Newell.

The actions of three board members also resulted in the loss of the library’s certification and eligibility for state aid funding. Through a

series of Freedom of Information Act requests, the Flathead Beacon exposed a pattern of disregard for open meeting laws and the board’s by-laws, as well as discussions on how to bring about Furman’s resignation and disqualified candidates from applying for the vacant library director position.

On September 27, board member David Ingram sent an email to other trustees and the Flathead County Commissioners that included a link to video from a Virginia school board meeting in which the banning of two LGBTQIA+ books was discussed.

Ingram warned that the ImagineIF Library held both titles—Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer* and Jonathan Evison’s *Lawn Boy*—and that he intended to review the library’s collection development policy in light of this.

Commissioner Randy Brodehl wrote back that he supported the board taking action to “fix this.”

“It’s my sincere hope that someone files a complaint about these two books,” board member Doug Adams wrote to Ingram and board chair Heidi Roedel. “If those books get removed, and I believe they will, it’s really gonna tick Martha off. I think we’d be wise to play ‘what if.’ What if Martha resigns before we have a new director, who would we put in charge?”

Ingram responded, “Regarding the possible resignation, that may be the opportunity to ‘temporarily’ have a manager with straight business experience hold things together as we had discussed.”

Adams replied, “I think we need to get rid of those two books. It’ll stoke the . . . fire.”

During the library board’s October 28 meeting, Furman said the library had received its first formal request for reconsideration of a book since 2019 and that the board and staff would



follow the Collection Management Policy to handle the challenge.

Furman explained that the library's policy calls for the formation of a review committee to investigate the complaint and make a recommendation to the board. Board member Doug Adams said the full board would read the book before making a decision.

Furman said the philosophy of the collection development team is to make additions to the collection and not to exclude. The choice to check out and read materials is the patron's. Furman reminded the board that it's their job to set policy and that the professional staff of the library are responsible for collection management.

In November, the library received a written request for reconsideration of *Lawn Boy*.

Ingram, Adams, and Roedel exchanged emails about how to handle the book challenges, including by removing all graphic novels. Adams and Ingram brainstormed means of avoiding a lawsuit if they removed the titles.

At one point, Adams suggested voting to retain the books "as long as we make a big deal that 'intellectual freedom' has made us slaves to ALA [the American Library Association] philosophy and that we've been neutered [as] that would give us justification for changing the policy."

Adams and Ingram also discussed supplanting resources on collection development from the Montana State Library with "Christian" guidance. The board manual provided by the Montana State Library states that trustees "should officially adopt and support the ALA Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement."

Adams told the other board members he had rewritten the collection policy, removing all mentions of

ALA, censorship, and the Library Bill of Rights.

At the December 2 board meeting, Furman resigned, citing interference by the board that devalued the library by slashing salaries and entertaining motions to censor books and materials, particularly those portraying LGBTQIA+ characters.

"It's been difficult because this board has really been trying to get its hands on the materials and the staff," said Furman. "It reached a point where I thought no one would want to do this job."

Furman served with the library system for 15 years and had been acting as interim director for four months. The previous director, Connie Behe, cited hostility from the board and from county commissioners, as well as their disrespect for professional librarians, as her reasons for resigning.

"In the 15 years I was there, worked in library leadership, and attended board meetings, I've never seen a board behave like that," said Furman. "In every circumstance their plan was to go around me in ways that were intimidating and felt harassing. To be interim director and be faced with such blatant disregard for public library philosophy and board protocol was unreasonably stressful and a hostile environment."

Ingram asked for clarification on how the board was overstepping its authority. Furman cited the board's involvement with the hiring of personnel, including the youth services librarian. The board's bylaws grant them authority over the director position, but clearly delineate that the director is responsible for the hiring of all other library personnel.

"My concern, and it is a significant concern, is in the last six months I've seen the actions of this board drive out two directors from this position," said senior librarian Sean Anerson.

"And they've been driven out not because of the job being difficult . . . but self-inflicted chaos that's come from this board."

The board determined not to replace Furman with another interim director, opting instead to leave the position vacant until a new director is hired.

At the meeting, Adams publicly stated that the board needed to revise their policies and remove any reference to ALA or the Library Bill of Rights, citing "a radical leftist agenda."

"Regardless of any board members' opinion of [ALA], the board is responsible for upholding people's rights and not violating the law," Furman responded to Adams.

"ALA aside, you still have the First Amendment to answer to," said Furman. "I recommend you not set this library up in a way that violates the First Amendment because it would present a legal challenge and extreme liability issue for you."

Adams then moved for the library to stop selecting and adding material until the collection policies were changed and a new director was hired.

Furman characterized Adams' motion as an impediment to the free flow of information.

Adams rescinded the motion.

In addition to efforts to influence the collection and facilitate censorship through policy changes, the three board members also made intentional efforts to lower staff morale and discourage effective leadership by freezing budgets and reducing salaries. Email communications indicated this was part of a strategy to deter qualified applicants from applying for the library director position.

The board cut the starting salary of the director position by \$10,000 or more than 12%. County human



resources director Tammy Skramovsky told the Flathead Beacon that this was the first time she could recall a director-level salary being lowered against the recommendation of the county's Human Resources Department.

The board also cut the salary of the vacated children's librarian salary by 11%.

The board's efforts to discourage qualified applicants was successful. All applicants who held an MLS or equivalent degree withdrew or were eliminated from consideration. One potential candidate told the hiring firm to "keep me in mind if you come across any other director vacancies at libraries where boards value their employees."

Hiring committee member Susan Burch wrote "This is a failed search. To conduct interviews with four individuals that we already decided were not qualified is a mistake. Scraping through rejected applicants is not the kind of director search our award-winning libraries deserve."

At their January 6 meeting on hiring a new director, Adams, Ingram, and Roedel denied senior librarian Anderson and Foundation Director Housel a seat at the table with the board members, defying years of standard meeting procedure.

Montana State Librarian Jennie Stapp informed the board that hiring a director who does not hold an MLS or equivalent degree would result in loss of certification. The library would subsequently lose more than \$35,000 a year in state aid to public libraries funding.

The board ultimately voted 3-2 to hire Ashley Cummins, despite the reservations of senior staff, the foundation director, and the majority of public comments.

Cummins is currently working to finish a bachelor's degree. Due

to Cummins not holding an MLS, ImagineIF lost its library certification under the Administrative Rules of Montana.

ImagineIF is the only non-certified public library in Montana serving a community larger than 4,000 residents.

Both book challenges were on the agenda for the January 13 board meeting.

While a majority of the public comments supported retaining both titles, Constance Neumann suggested library staff could face criminal charges for making the books available.

"How much do you have in your legal defense fund to defend the library against criminal prosecution under the law?" asked Neumann.

The board voted unanimously to retain Lawn Boy.

Trustees Connie Leistiko and Marsha Sultz voted to retain *Gender Queer* but Adams, Ingram, and Roedel abstained, causing the vote to fail.

In a follow-up motion, the board voted 3-2 along the same lines to indefinitely suspend the reconsideration of *Gender Queer* so they could vote on it after changing the library's policies.

On January 24, the board's policy committee met to discuss revisions. Adams again encouraged the removal of any mention of ALA or the Library Bill of Rights. He also argued that the two lines mentioning censorship should be stricken from the policy.

The lines in question read: "ImagineIF Libraries believes in freedom of information for all and does not practice censorship" and "ImagineIF Libraries holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to personally reject materials of which he or she does not approve, he or she may

not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others."

"To remove that line would be dangerous," Anderson said. "Just to be frank, you're not going to convince me of this. Everywhere that our policy can have a full-throated defiance of censorship, it should."

Adams suggested that the library engages in censorship routinely by making decisions about which books to buy.

Anderson explained that adding materials to the collection was an act of inclusion, not exclusion.

"Selection is not the same as censorship. We don't have the space to buy every book that's published," said Anderson. "So we have a group of professionals here and [at] the state library and a group of partners who make good judgments on what is being selected."

On February 2, ImagineIF Library Foundation Executive Director Charlotte Housel announced her resignation, citing burnout and a strained relationship with the library board.

On February 2, the Flathead Beacon also published an expose featuring emails between Ingram, Adams, Roedel, and Brodehl which illustrated a clear disregard for open meetings law, a scheme to bring about Furman's resignation, and intentions to ban both *Gender Queer* and Lawn Boy before either had been challenged.

In addition to the revelations detailed above, communications unearthed by the Flathead Beacon demonstrated ulterior motives shared by county commissioners and the three most recently appointed board members to alter the library's governing policies rather than serve as trustees of a community resource.

On February 9, the former chair and longest serving member of the Montana State Library Commission resigned over the "alarming and



heartbreaking events” transpiring at the ImagineIF library system. He announced his support for the newly formed Flathead County Library Alliance (FCLA).

FCLA’s stated mission is “to hold library trustees to their fiduciary responsibilities and ensure that county commissioners appoint qualified individuals to this position of trust, enabling Flathead County public libraries to prosper and meet the standards of a 21st century library.”

Reported in: Flathead Beacon, November 16, 2021, December 2, 2021, January 6, 2022, January 13, 2022, January 24, 2022, February 2, 2022, February 11, 2022.

Victoria, Texas

At their November 17 board meeting, a group inspired by Governor Greg Abbott’s call to purge materials about LGBTQIA+ individuals; race relations; and sex education from school libraries, demanded the removal of LGBTQIA+ materials from the Victoria Public Library.

Twelve members of a prayer group from Faith Family Church submitted a packet of 21 requests for the reconsideration of LGBTQIA+ books at the meeting. One complained that promoting acceptance of homosexuality and transgender people would cause a “strain on conservative families.”

Approximately two dozen additional titles were challenged informally during the board meeting and one person stated there were 126 additional titles of concern.

The Victoria Public Library Advisory Board held a special meeting on December 15 to consider the 21 reconsideration requests which had been submitted, most of which were from the children and young adult sections of the library.

The board voted to retain all challenged titles, most unanimously, but

some with objections from Crystal Thronton, who felt that certain titles had not circulated enough times in the past year to warrant retention.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Texas).

Challenged books:

- *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* by Jill Twiss
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
- *Beyond Magenta :Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin
- *Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope* by Jodie Patterson
- *Coping with Gender Dysphoria* by Ellen McGrody
- *Flocks* by L. Nichols
- *Frannie and Tru* by Karen Hatrup
- *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Lesléa Newman
- *If I Was Your Girl* by Meredith Russo
- *I’m Not a Girl: A Transgender Story* by Maddox Lyons
- *In the Role of Brie Hutchens...* by Nicole Melleby
- *Jack (Not Jackie)* by Erica Silverman
- *Jacob’s Room to Choose* by Sarah Hoffman
- *Jo: An Adaptation of Little Women (Sort Of)* by Kathleen Gros
- *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love
- *Look Past* by Eric Devine
- *Magic Misfits: The Second Story* by Neil Patrick Harris
- *Maiden And Princess* by Daniel Haack
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *My Family, Your Family!* by Kathryn Cole
- *My Two Dads* by Claudia Harrington
- *My Two Dads and Me* by Michael Joosten
- *My Two Moms* by Claudia Harrington

- *Neither* by Airlie Anderson
- *No Way, They Were Gay?: Hidden Lives and Secret Loves* by Lee Wind
- *Queer: The Ultimate LGBTQ Guide for Teens* by Kathy Belge
- *Rainbow: A First Book of Pride* by Michael Genhart
- *Red: A Crayon’s Story* by Michael Hall
- *Rick* by Alex Gino
- *Rise Up!: The Art of Protest* by Jo Rippon
- *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg
- *Stonewall: A Building. An Uprising. A Revolution* by Rob Sanders
- *Teens and LGBT Issues* by Christine Wilcox
- *The ABC’s of LGBT+* by Ashley Mardell
- *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta
- *The Fourth Suit* by Neil Patrick Harris
- *The List of Things That Will Not Change* by Rebecca Stead
- *The Magic Misfits* by Neil Patrick Harris
- *The Minor Third* by Neil Patrick Harris
- *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar
- *The Only Black Girls in Town* by Brandy Colbert
- *The Rainbow Flag: Bright, Bold, and Beautiful* by Michelle Millar Fisher
- *The Ship We Built* by Lexie Bean
- *Trans Teen Survival Guide* by Fox Fisher and Owl
- *Transgender Lives: Complex Stories, Complex Voices* by Kirstin Cronn-Mills
- *Uncle Bobby’s Wedding* by Sarah S. Brannen
- *Worm Loves Worm* by J. J. Austrian, Mike Curato

Reported in: Crossroads Today, November 15, 2021; Victoria Advocate, November 16, 2021, December 3, 2021, and December 15, 2021.



ACADEMIC FREEDOM Florida

On October 29, a federal court filing revealed that University of Florida (UF) officials barred three professors from assisting plaintiffs in a lawsuit to overturn SB 90, a recently passed law restricting voting rights.

Officials said that since UF was a state institution, their participation in a lawsuit against the state was “adverse to UF’s interests” and not allowable. The professors barred from testifying were Daniel Smith, chair of the university’s political science department; Michael McDonald, an elections scholar; and Sharon Wright Austin, who studies African American political behavior.

Robert Post, a professor at Yale Law School, said he knew of no other case in which a university had imposed prior restraint on a professor’s ability to speak. “The university does not exist to protect the governor,” said Post. “It is an independent institution to serve the public good.”

The lawsuit contends that Florida’s newly-enacted election law “creates major obstacles to vote-by-mail, curtails access to drop boxes, and criminalizes line warming activities such as providing water to voters” and that these provisions unconstitutionally discriminate against Black, hispanic, and elderly voters.

SB 90 also created a requirement to present a state-approved ID including a person’s gender and photograph when voting in person, adversely impacting the voting rights of transgender individuals and those without the ability to obtain an approved ID.

University spokesperson Hessy Fernandez said “The university did not deny the [professors’] First Amendment rights or academic freedom. Rather, the university denied requests . . . to undertake outside paid work that is adverse to the

university’s interests as a state of Florida institution.”

Smith had previously testified in two other voting rights lawsuits against Florida’s Republican led government while employed by UF. One of those suits forced the state to provide Spanish-language ballots; the other overturned a ban on early-voting polling places on UF campuses.

Earlier this year, Governor Ron DeSantis signed a law mandating the annual assessment of university professors’ political views. (See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: Is it Legal: Universities: Florida). As governor, DeSantis also appoints 6 of the 13 UF trustees. The board’s chairman, Morteza Hosseini, is a prominent Republican donor and DeSantis advisor.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Florida (ACLU-F) wrote that the university “should not be looking to Governor DeSantis to decide which speech activities it will engage in. That is precisely the opposite of the values that universities are thought to stand for.”

On November 3, it was reported that UF had prevented an additional five professors from testifying: Jeffrey Goldhagen, Kenneth Nunn, Sarah Wolking, Teresa Jean Reid, and Mark Fenster. Two professors were barred from contesting the DeSantis administration’s ban on school mask mandates.

UF President Ken Fuchs sent a university-wide email on November 5 announcing that he had “asked UF’s Conflicts of Interest Office to reverse the decisions on recent requests by UF employees to serve as expert witnesses in litigation in which the state of Florida is a party.”

On January 21, Chief US District Judge Mark Walker granted a preliminary injunction, ordering that “defendants must take no steps to enforce

its conflict-of-interests policy with respect to faculty and staff requests to engage as expert witnesses or provide legal consulting in litigation involving the State of Florida until otherwise ordered.”

In the 74-page order, Walker said that “UF has bowed to perceived political pressure from Florida’s political leaders and has sanctioned the unconstitutional suppression of ideas out of favor with Florida’s ruling party.”

Reported in: *The Gainesville Sun*, January 21, 2022; *The New York Times*, October 29, 2021, and November 4, 2021; *Tampa Bay Times*, October 30, 2021; *News 4 JAX*, November 1, 2021; *The Independent Florida Alligator*, November 3, 2021; *Forbes*, November 7, 2021.

SCHOOLS Indianapolis, Indiana

On December 22, US District Judge James Sweeney granted a preliminary injunction allowing Pendleton Heights High School’s Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) group to advertise, raise funds, and be listed in the school handbook as lawsuit filed by students and the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana (ACLU-I) proceeds.

GSA groups exist to allow LGBTQIA+ students and allies to meet and provide social, emotional, and educational support to one another.

According to the lawsuit, Pendleton Heights’ GSA was forbidden from advertising its existence on school bulletin boards, the school radio station, or anywhere else on school property. No other student group is bound by such restrictions.

The lawsuit argues that placing this restriction on the GSA violates students’ First Amendment rights. “By creating additional hurdles for Pendleton Heights Gay-Straight Alliance,



such as censoring the group's promotions and prohibiting fundraising, the school is infringing on these students' rights," said Ken Falk, legal director for ACLU-I.

According to ACLU-I, prohibiting the GSA from advertising, recruiting members, and fundraising on school property like other student groups are allowed to have "severely hindered [it] in its purpose as a place of shelter, support, and education."

This is not the only discriminatory action Pendleton High School has taken against the LGBTQIA+ community. On May 18, teachers were ordered to remove Pride flags from their classrooms, arguing that they were "political paraphernalia."

Reported in: *Los Angeles Blade*, December 23, 2021; *Indianapolis Star*, December 22, 2021; *The Herald Bulletin* May 19, 2021.

Loudoun, Virginia

On January 19, a federal judge Anthony Trenga for the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia dismissed a lawsuit against the Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS).

Menders v. Loudoun County School Board (1:21-cv-00669) was filed by a group of parents claiming the district's racial equity framework violated students' First Amendment rights.

The suit focused on two provisions from the district's "Action Plans to Combat Systemic Racism."

The first was the mechanism allowing school officials to investigate reports of racism and discrimination. The second was the creation of the student equity ambassador program, which would collect student complaints related to experiences of racism and inequity and anonymously share them with school staff.

The action plan was published in June 2020 to address an attorney general's office audit of the district which found a "hostile learning environment" for students of color and called for extensive reforms.

A study by The Equity Collaborative which the district commissioned informed the plan.

The Liberty Justice Center, which represented the parents in the case, claimed that the equity plan was tied to critical race theory (CRT). Governor Glenn Youngkin issued an executive order banning CRT in schools on January 15. (See: this issue: For the Record: Virginia).

Trenga wrote that the "plaintiffs have failed to allege facts that make plausible that the Bias Incident Reporting System will harm them in any way. Plaintiffs have not alleged that there have been any disciplinary

incidents initiated as a result of the reporting forms; or that any alleged incidents have even passed beyond the Equity Office for an investigation."

Trenga stated that the parents' problems with the framework cannot be litigated, but rather should be taken up with the school board. This course of action is not unproblematic. Loudoun's board is under siege and facing six recall campaigns led by Fight for Schools, a political action committee led by former Trump senior official Ian Prior.

Fight for Schools' campaigns have already resulted in one board member's resignation. On January 18, the NAACP released a statement that they would be joining the cases to help defend two of the school board members facing recall.

On January 15, Youngkin also issued an executive order directing the Attorney General to "initiate and coordinate investigative and prosecutorial efforts" of the Loudoun County School Board and administration regarding two cases of sexual assault at high schools.

Reported in: *DCist*, July 15, 2021, and January 21, 2022; *Loudoun Times-Mirror*, January 18, 2022.



SCHOOLS New Hampshire

On December 13, the American Federation of Teachers New Hampshire (AFT-NH) filed a federal lawsuit over New Hampshire's Right to Freedom from Discrimination in Public Workplaces and Education Law.

On December 20, a second lawsuit was filed over the law, this one by the National Education Association New Hampshire (NEA-NH), the state's largest teacher's union; two school diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) administrators; the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU-NH); the Disability Rights Center New Hampshire; GLBTQ Legal Advocates; and others.

The Freedom from Discrimination law was passed in June through a rider bill to the state budget. It prohibits teaching "divisive concepts" such as that groups of people are inherently superior, oppressive, or racist because of immutable characteristics such as race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Critics have said that due to the law's ambiguities, it chills speech and restricts teachers' ability to discuss the historical impacts of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination with students.

"Ambiguities, coupled with the law's very severe penalties, create an

environment where educators now feel compelled to self-censor, including on important topics that frankly are critical to the diversity, equity, and inclusion work that's being done in this state," said ACLU-NH legal director Gilles Bissonnette.

Both suits argue the law restricts how public school educators can teach about racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. They also claim that the law is unconstitutionally vague under the Fourteenth Amendment for failing to specify what topics and materials can and cannot be included in lessons, inviting "arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement."

The AFT-NH suit contends that the law violates the First Amendment as well as New Hampshire's state Constitution, which guarantees an "adequate education" for all students.

Plaintiff Andres Mejia, director of DEI for the Exeter Region Cooperative School District, said that the law fundamentally prevents him from doing his job, which includes training staff on concepts like implicit and institutional bias, racism, and inclusiveness.

Mejia also stated that the vagueness of the law prevents him from advising teachers as to whether they're permitted to use certain books or materials.

NEA-NH president Megan Tuttle said that their requests for specific guidance on the law from the Department of Education and the Attorney General's Office have gone unanswered.

"Instead of trying to help educators comply with the new law, Commissioner [Frank] Edelblut publicly installed mechanisms for reporting educator non-compliance and procedures that would lead to taking away teaching credentials," said Tuttle. "That lack of guidance leaves teachers feeling confused, unsupported, and fearful of running afoul of the law.

A related yet even more restrictive bill has also been introduced for the 2022 legislative session. HB 1255 "an act relative to teachers' loyalty" would prohibit advocating communism, socialism, or Marxism or "any doctrine or theory promoting a negative account or representation of the founding and history of the United States of America."

Lawsuits on First Amendment grounds are likely to follow should this bill pass and be signed into law.

Reported in: *Concord Monitor*, December 3, 2021, and December 20, 2021.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Some cases of censorship are only reported briefly via social media or board meeting minutes. When substantive media reporting regarding a challenge is lacking, the case will be reported here.

Hillsborough County, Florida

During the public comments section of the May 18, 2021, school board meeting of the Hillsborough County Public Schools, a parent complained that providing access to “the graphic explicit cesspools of sexual perversity” that is Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* exposed students “to the sexual fantasies of a pedophile.” She demanded that the book be removed from the extended reading list.

Pecola Breedlove, a character in Morrison’s novel, is the victim of incestuous sexual violence. The title refers to Pecola’s belief that she would be free from abuse and racism if she had blue eyes.

Morrison won the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature and *The Bluest Eye* was part of the reason she received this accolade. Morrison also won a Pulitzer Prize for her novel *Beloved*.

The Bluest Eye was one of 13 books donated to the district by Chelsea’s One World One Family Task Force. The books were selected from a list vetted by the district’s Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Committee. Their work is evaluated by the Board of Education’s Diversity, Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion (DBEI) committee.

Reported in: Hillsborough County Public School Board Meeting Minutes, May 18, 2021.

Bremen, Indiana

On March 12, 2021, Purple for Parents Indiana posted a notice to Facebook informing parents of Bremen Public School students that they had

identified two books “containing obscenity in your high school library.”

Purple for Parents said they’d notified the librarian and superintendent regarding *All the Rage* by Courtney Summers and *Looking for Alaska* by John Green, however no formal request for reconsideration ever seems to have been submitted.

Purple for Parents promised to post notifications for parents regarding additional “obscene material” they find in school libraries going forwards.

(See: *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, v.6 iss.4: For the Record: Carmel, Indiana).

Reported in: Facebook, Purple for Parents Indiana, March 12, 2021, at 10:09 AM.

North Scott, Iowa

Books purchased for every elementary school in the North Scott Community School District as part of a teacher-written Scott Regional Authority grant were pulled by superintendent Joe Stutting for review, following a complaint about critical race theory posted by the United Parents of North Scott Facebook group.

The books were for grades K-6 and included selections from Book Source’s contemporary multicultural perspectives and Black lives matter collections.

According to Stutting, the books would be reviewed by building principals and the curriculum director and a list of approved titles would be presented to the school board.

Stutting said that if a parent wants to challenge any book that the administration chooses not to add to school libraries, they can do so using the district’s reconsideration policy, which he said has “been around for decades.”

Sadly, Stutting seems to have understood the decades-old challenge process exactly backwards. It allows parents to request reconsideration of

materials which were added to the collection in order to potentially have them removed, not to consider titles from an unpublished list that were excluded from school libraries by administrators.

According to a youth services librarian, the policy has never previously been used in this way, nor has the superintendent previously injected himself in the process of approving book acquisitions at the title-level.

The school board does not publicly post their minutes and the full title list is not known. According to news coverage and social media posts, it included:

- *The ABCs of Black History* by Rio Cortez
- *Bedtime Bonnet* by Nancy Amanda Redd
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Drawn Together* by Minh Lê
- *I am Every Good Thing* by Derrick Barnes
- *One Shadow on the Wall* by Leah Henderson
- *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtehaj Muhammad
- *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell
- *Woke: A Young Poet’s Call to Justice* by Mahogany Browne

Reported in: Quad-City Times, June 7, 2021.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

My Footprints by Bao Phi, a picture book about a Vietnamese American girl who’s bullied because of her ethnicity and same-sex parents, was being considered for a schoolwide read aloud at Pine Ridge Elementary in the Forest Hills Public School District.

“Books are being read in the schools that are normalizing and



celebrating homosexuality, transgender, LGBTQ+,” proclaimed a December 6 post on the Facebook page of a group trying to recall Forest Hills school board members. The post went on to encourage parents to email the principal and ask him to pick a different title.

The book was put on hold and a different title was selected. Superintendent Dan Behm said the decision had nothing to do with the main character having two moms.

Reported in: WOODTV, December 10, 2021.

Muskegon, Michigan

After receiving a complaint from a parent on November 21, the Reeths-Puffer School District removed Alex Gino’s *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) from elementary school libraries.

Alex Gino’s children’s novel is about a young transgender girl struggling to be herself while the world sees her as a boy. Among numerous accolades, it won a Stonewall Book Award, a California Book Award, and a Lambda Literary Award.

The parent wrote on Facebook that his 11-year-old daughter “chose a transgender book, not truly understanding what she chose” and was “having a hard time understanding/relating” to it.

Superintendent Steve Edwards said that after a parent expressed concern regarding its content, the district decided *George* “should not be an optional book for the primary or elementary grade” and removed it from all libraries serving K-6 children.

Reported in: WOODTV, December 10, 2021.

Novi, Michigan

A petition started by Parents4Novi-Together which objected to topics such as “race” and “gender identity,

sexuality, and ideological activist behavior(s)” in the curriculum.

Thirteen books as well as the short story “Super Human” by Nicola Yoon and the poems “The Cost of Being a Girl” by Denise Frohman and “If a Princess Tries to Kidnap Your Daughter” by Carlos Andres Gomez were cited by the petition as being inappropriate for use in schools.

Challenges to the books spilled into the public comments sections of the March 18, 2021, and April 8, 2021, meetings of the Novi Community School Board.

Students and alumni organized to protest the actions called for in the petition and speak out in defense of diverse and inclusive reading materials and lessons.

The books targeted were:

- *A is for Activist* by Innosanto Nagara
- *Alan Cole is not a Coward* by Eric Bell
- *All are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold
- *Antonio’s Card/ La Tarjeta de Antonio* by Rigoberto Gonzalez
- *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* by Jill Twiss
- *The Family Book* by Todd Parr
- *I am Perfectly Designed* by Karamo Brown
- *Love is Love* by Marc Andreyko
- *Melissa* (previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino
- *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo
- *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders
- *Sparkle Boy* by Lesléa Newsman
- *Red: A Crayon’s Story* by Michael Hall

Reported in: *The Wildcat Roar*, March 19, 2021; Novi Community School Board Minutes, March 18, 2021 and April 8, 2021.

Edgerton, Minnesota

At the March 23 meeting of the Edgerton Public School District board, parents complained about Angie Thomas’s *The Hate U Give*, which is part of the 9th grade curriculum.

The Hate U Give is a young adult novel narrated by a Black teenager who witnesses a White police officer shoot and kill an unarmed Black man during a traffic stop.

Thomas’s book has also won numerous awards, including a 2018 Michael L. Printz Award, three Goodreads Choice Awards, the 2018 William C. Morris Award for best debut book for teens, the 2018 Indies Choice Award for Young Adult Book of the Year, and it was a 2018 Coretta Scott King Book Award honoree.

The curriculum committee voted to retain the book. The school board voted unanimously at their June 22 meeting to go against their recommendation and remove the book from the freshman curriculum, citing its inclusion of profanity and its omission of the viewpoint of the police officer as justification.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report; Edgerton Public School District board meeting minutes, March 23, 2021, and June 22, 2021.

Wayzata, Minnesota

The principal of Wayzata High School withdrew Jonathan Evison’s *Lawn Boy* from the school library based on his personal dislike of it and without following the district’s policy for reconsidering instructional material.

Evison’s semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novel explores themes of poverty, racism and sexual identity. It won a 2019 Alex Award, given by the Young Adult Library Services Association to adult books that have special appeal to young adults.



District policy requires that a committee of educational professionals and community members review any challenged material and stipulates that the person challenging the book cannot serve on the committee.

The policy also states that educational suitability should be the primary concern while reviewing material and that the committee's decision can only be overturned by a vote of the school board.

Reported in: *National Coalition Against Censorship*, January 18, 2022.

Binghamton, New York

The Binghamton Police Benevolent Association demanded an apology from the Binghamton City School District (BCSD) after *Something Happened in Our Town* was read to elementary school students.

In a written response, BCSD said the book is appropriate for ages 4 to 8 and stated that “the book includes conversations around racial bias and injustice against African Americans, [and] the concepts are focused on the importance of treating everyone fairly. As the book shares, ‘there are many cops, Black and White, who make good choices.’”

The district ultimately apologized to the police union, stating “In no way does this book represent our thinking or beliefs about our police.” They also stated, however, that the book has not been removed from the curriculum.

Reported in: *WICZ*, April 19, 2021.

Hastings, New York

Teaching of Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* in eighth grade English classes in the Hastings-on-Hudson school district was suspended when a student

objected after a teacher read a racist joke from the book.

The narrator of the book responds to the joke with “That was the most racist thing I'd ever heard in my life.”

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is a semi-autobiographical novel about Junior's life on the Spokane Indian Reservation and attending a nearly all-White public high school. It explores themes of poverty, racism, alcoholism, and bullying.

Alexie's book won numerous awards including the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and the Odyssey Award for the best audiobook for children or young adults.

The parents of the student said the book has educational value, but they felt the material wasn't presented appropriately and their child, who was the only Black student in the class, felt isolated and marginalized.

A letter signed by 10 English teachers protested the district's censorship of the book and said “The book's frank presentation of bigotry, discrimination, substance abuse, and other ‘adult issues’ can make teaching it challenging, but we continue to teach the novel precisely because of these challenges.”

A letter signed by district department chairs said the district's decision to remove the book from the curriculum without conferring with teachers “is insulting and the precedent it establishes is very, very dangerous.”

The board of the Hastings Public Library also issued a statement condemning the district's actions.

Adrian Forman, another middle school English teacher, resigned in protest of the district's handling of the situation on February 17. “Free speech is in my blood; it's part of who I am,” said Forman. “You don't just jerk the

book away half way through. That doesn't resolve anything.”

Reported in: *Rockland/ Westchester Journal News*, March 4, 2021.

Hudson, Ohio

Members of the local chapter of Moms for Liberty challenged four books held by the Hudson High School Library.

At the January 24 meeting of the Hudson Board of Education, Superintendent Phil Herman announced that *A Girl on the Shore* by Inio Asan would be withdrawn from the collection due to its high volume of sexual content and the fact that the ordinary acquisition process was not followed when it was added to the collection.

Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison would be retained because of its educational and literary value and for shedding “positive light” on members of marginalized groups.

Gender Queer: A Memoir by Maia Kobabe was still undergoing committee review, though Herman recommended that it be retained for its educational value and because “it provides all students with valuable insight and unique perspective into issues faced by members of the LGBTQ community.”

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl by Jesse Andrews was also challenged, though at a later date than the other titles and no update was provided during the meeting.

Reported in: *Akron Beacon Journal*, January 27, 2022.

Proctorville, Ohio

On November 15, Fairland Local Schools held a meeting for parents and students to voice their concerns about the removal of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* from the curriculum.

Students said teachers were no longer allowed to distribute copies



of the book and argued that the topics of racism, classism, and mental health discussed throughout it were more important than the one sexually explicit passage it contains.

School board president Gary Sowards said that the book was still available, but students would need parental permission to check it out from the library.

Reported in: WSAZ, November 16, 2021.

West Chester, Pennsylvania

A parent at the November 22 board meeting of the West Chester Area School District alleged that the school board was distributing pornography to minors because *Gender Queer: A Memoir* was in two of the high school libraries.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

The superintendent removed the book from circulation before a formal review of it began.

On March 12, 2022, Jennifer MacFarland, the parent who challenged *Gender Queer*, submitted a "right to know" application to the board requesting data on the number of LGBTQIA+ students in the district and the number of times LGBTQIA+ students had been referred to guidance counselors in the past 20 years. Both requests were denied.

MacFarland also requested circulation records for the book. This request was granted in part and MacFarland was provided with the raw

number of times the book had been checked out from high school libraries. Further details were withheld to protect students' privacy.

On March 28, the board voted 8-1 to follow the review committee's recommendation and retain *Gender Queer* in their high school libraries.

Reported in: West Chester Area School District board meeting minutes, November 21, 2022; Daily Local, March 13, 2022; The Philadelphia Inquirer, March 29, 2022.

El Paso, Texas

Parents of students in the Socorro Independent School District (ISD) recently complained that *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky was "pornographic" and should be removed from the curriculum.

Elda Marmolejos said the book contained themes which were inappropriate for high school. "It talks about sex, drugs, alcohol, [and] minor abuse," said Marmolejos. She also objected that it contained a scene "where two boys are having sex."

Marmolejos also complained that she was not required to sign a parental consent form before the book was assigned to her child.

Socorro ISD policy allows parents to submit a formal request for reconsideration of instructional material. No such request has been received at this time. However, the district announced they would be reviewing parent notification procedures for when books with mature content are used in class.

Reported in: WANE, December 15, 2021.

Loudoun Virginia

On October 29, 2021, a parent submitted a formal request for the reconsideration of *The Black Flamingo* by

Dean Atta from Loudoun county middle school libraries.

The book had been recommended to her child by another student and she was concerned it "might encourage drug use," and that reading it in middle school presented a "premature introduction to gender dysphoria."

The Black Flamingo is the coming-of-age story of a mixed-race gay man, written in verse. It one the 2020 Stonewall Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature and was one of Kirkus's "Best YA Books of 2020."

A review committee was formed to decide if the book will remain in the district's middle school libraries.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report.

Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin

On October 18, the Sheboygan Falls Memorial Library received an email request to reconsider *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe from the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium's Overdrive ebook collection.

Gender Queer is a nonbinary coming-of-age graphic novel. Kobabe wrote and illustrated it in part to explain what it means to be nonbinary and asexual. It received an Alex Award, a Stonewall Book Award, was nominated for an Ignatz Award, and was included on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2020 list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

The complaint stated that library materials "affirm or glorify LGBT behavior" and that "of the 157 books in Libby [the library's ebook platform] under the subject LGBTQIA+ nonfiction, only one appears to caution against LGBT behavior."

On October 31, the individual again complained about *Gender Queer*



and added a request to reconsider a second ebook title, *365 Sex Positions: A New Way Every Day for a Steamy, Erotic Year* by Lisa Sweet.

At the library's November 9 board meeting, the patron presented their case for reconsideration and after discussion, the board voted to retain both titles.

Reported in: Office for Intellectual Freedom challenge report.



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