



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 Leistikio 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.