



**Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS)
Reconsideration Committee**

Final Report for the
Nancy Allen, Cindy Rose, and Maria Vignola
Requests for Reconsideration
of 35 Books
in FCPS Libraries

Submitted on November 17, 2023

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I. Introduction

The Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Reconsideration Committee, composed of parents, students, community members, teachers, media specialists, curriculum specialists and school administrators, respectfully submits this final report to Dr. Michael Markoe, Deputy Superintendent, upon the completion of its work charged under FCPS Regulation 500-39: *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use* (Appendix 1). Members volunteered to be co-authors of the final report and were representative of the broader committee. The co-authors were:

Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Chief Academic Officer
Amanda Glenn, Parent, Middletown Feeder
Jessica McBroom, Teacher, Urbana High School
Sue Ann Nogle, Curriculum Specialist
Marsha Thompson, Media Specialist, Linganore High School
Kate Wright, Community Member
In addition, two students served as co-authors.

II. Committee's Statement of Work

The fifty-six members of the committee served in a variety of roles including high school students, parents, community members, teachers, media specialists, curriculum specialists, and administrators. Because Frederick County is large and geographically diverse, it was important to represent these communities; therefore, each feeder area was granted equal parent and student representation. The common characteristic among committee members was their genuine interest in making the best decisions for students and applying the legal tenets to the books under review.

Committee members should be commended for approaching the task of reconsideration with care and professionalism, realizing the impact of their work. Governing the committee's duty, FCPS Regulation 500-39 (Appendix 1) was strictly followed, including defining the scope of work, addressing the complainants' concerns, and applying the relevant legal tenets during the reconsideration process. Committee members were expected to manage their own personal opinions, perspectives, and predispositions, while monitoring their motivation for decisions and putting aside personal bias. All committee members engaged in the same thoughtful process of reading the entire book assigned to them and keeping in mind the complainants' concerns. Many members did additional research about the books and their authors to aid in contextualization of the books.

For each book, the subcommittees received a synopsis of the book, discussed the complainants' concerns, and applied the legal tenets in an environment of thoughtful and respectful discourse. During the discussions all voices were invited, heard, and valued. All points of view were sought and encouraged, including dissenting viewpoints. Purposeful listening to understand others was a guiding principle and a typical practice. The democratic process of voting was used to make recommendations for each book. In cases where consensus could not be reached, additional readers were assigned to that book and the same discussion process was followed. In several instances, there

were committee members who voted for removal of a book that was ultimately recommended to stay in circulation.

Recognizing the books under reconsideration had met the FCPS criteria for inclusion and were already in the FCPS library system, committee members focused on the balance between preserving student's rights and the need to ensure materials were appropriate for students. Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26. v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982) ("Pico").

III. Selection and Approval Process for Library Materials

To provide context to this report, it is important to note how books are selected and approved for use in school libraries. In Frederick County Public Schools, library materials are governed by FCPS Policy 501: *Selection and Review of Instructional Materials*. Policy 501 states:

In accordance with state law, the Board of Education of Frederick County is responsible for the selection and acquisition of instructional materials, including textbooks, teaching materials, and library media materials. Textbooks are used by students as primary sources of instruction in a course or unit within a course. Teaching materials are secondary sources that complement textbooks, and include, but are not limited to, manuals, resource books, videos, and magazine articles. Library media materials, housed primarily in the media center, are used to supplement instruction and for recreational reading. The board delegates to the superintendent the responsibility of selecting instructional materials that will help support and achieve the school system's goals as well as standards and indicators outlined in the essential curriculum. The superintendent is authorized to adopt regulations to administer the review and selection of instructional materials.

In addition, a "favorable review or listing of any title in one of the...reviewing journals or bibliography sources constitutes approval of the title for addition to media center [library] collections in Frederick County Public Schools" (Frederick County Board of Education, *Guidelines for the Selection and Approval of Instructional Materials*, 2007).

All books that the complainants identified for reconsideration were selected for use in school libraries in accordance with Board of Education policy and had favorable reviews as outlined in Board of Education approved guidelines.

IV. Requests for Reconsideration and Immediate Responses

Three separate Requests for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use forms, hereafter referred to as form(s), were submitted to FCPS to reconsider the use of the same 35 library books. The requests are outlined below and can be viewed in detail in Appendix 2.

- Ms. Cindy Rose submitted a form dated October 14, 2022 along with a list of books, authors, schools in which the books were located and what the complainant titled "reported issues". The header of the submitted stated "FCPSBooks that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant".

- Ms. Maria Vignola submitted a request dated October 18, 2022 along with a list of books, authors, schools in which the books were located and what the complainant titled “reported issues”. The header of the submitted document stated “FCPSBooks that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant”.
- Ms. Nancy Allen submitted a form dated October 21, 2022 along with a list of books, authors, schools in which the books were located and what the complainant titled “reported issues”. The header of the submitted document stated “FCPSBooks that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant”.

The Books

The books that were included in the Request for Reconsideration forms are listed below.

	<i>Title</i>	Author
1	<i>A Court of Frost and Starlight</i>	Sarah Maas
2	<i>A Court of Mist and Fury</i>	Sarah Maas
3	<i>A Court of Silver Flames</i>	Sarah Maas
4	<i>A Court of Thorns and Roses</i>	Sarah Maas
5	<i>A Court of Wings and Ruin</i>	Sarah Maas
6	<i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i>	George M. Johnson
7	<i>Breathless</i>	Jennifer Niven
8	<i>Confess</i>	Colleen Hoover
9	<i>Crank</i>	Ellen Hopkins
10	<i>Damsel</i>	Elana K. Arnold
11	<i>Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda</i>	J. P. Stassen
12	<i>Empire of Storms</i>	Sarah Maas
13	<i>Forever</i>	Judy Blume
14	<i>Forever For a Year</i>	B.T. Gottfred
15	<i>I Never</i>	Laura Hopper
16	<i>Identical</i>	Ellen Hopkins
17	<i>Infamous</i>	Elana Arnold

18	<i>It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health</i>	Robie Harris
19	<i>Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts)</i>	LC Rosen
20	<i>Jesus Land: A Memoir</i>	Julia Scheeres
21	<i>Kingdom of Ash</i>	Sarah Maas
22	<i>Lawn Boy</i>	Jonathan Evison
23	<i>Let's Talk About It</i>	Erika Moen
24	<i>Living Dead Girl</i>	Elizabeth Scott
25	<i>Lucky</i>	Alice Sebold
26	<i>Milk and Honey</i>	Rupi Kaur
27	<i>My Friend Dahmer</i>	Derf Backderf
28	<i>Normal People: A Novel</i>	Sally Rooney
29	<i>People Kill People</i>	Ellen Hopkins
30	<i>Push</i>	Sapphire
31	<i>S.E.X. The All-You-Need-To-Know Sexuality Guide to Get You Through Your Teens and Twenties</i>	Heather Corinna
32	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i>	Kurt Vonnegut
33	<i>Sold</i>	Patricia McCormick
34	<i>Triangles: A Novel</i>	Ellen Hopkins
35	<i>Tricks</i>	Ellen Hopkins

Acknowledgement of Requests for Reconsideration

In response to these submissions, Dr. Michael Markoe, Deputy Superintendent of FCPS, responded to each complainant by memo (Appendix 3) to confirm receipt of their form and, per FCPS Regulation 500-39, designate a FCPS staff member with whom they could meet to discuss their concerns. Dr. Markoe designated Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Innovation, to be that appropriate staff member, as he had direct oversight of the Library Media program in FCPS.

Initial Meeting with Complainants

Each complainant was invited to attend a meeting to discuss their concerns. Ms. Maria Vignola declined to attend a meeting. Ms. Cindy Rose and Ms. Nancy Allen agreed to attend a meeting

and requested to do so together. On November 28, 2022, Dr. Cuppett and Mr. Scott Murphy, Director of Curriculum, met with Ms. Rose and Ms. Allen at the FCPS Central Office to hear their concerns and attempt to resolve those concerns, per the regulation.

Following introductions and summarizing the purpose of the meeting, the group discussed FCPS Regulation 500-39 and why library books were subject to the formal reconsideration process.

The complainants expressed concern about library books being subject to the reconsideration process. They also expressed concerns about the process by which a book is reviewed and selected by the media specialist to be purchased and placed in circulation in a local school and the criteria and measures that are used.

Dr. Cuppett explained the current Board-approved process that states the selection of a library book must include at least one favorable review from approved external bibliographic sources. Dr. Cuppett explained the responsibility of FCPS in facilitating a process for reconsideration after books have been placed in circulation through the Board-approved process. Ultimately, the complainants stated they understood why the reconsideration process was necessary and understood the process as outlined in the regulation.

The complainants verified the accuracy of the list of books and documents submitted. The complainants reiterated their overall concerns with the books listed. They emphasized that these books were inappropriate for students and should not be in a public-school library. The complainants indicated that the books were pornographic, inappropriate, abusive, inflammatory, overly sexual or deviant. Dr. Cuppett shared that it would be helpful to the committee if the complainants defined these terms during the reconsideration process.

Dr. Cuppett requested specific details about what excerpts/pages of each text created the concerns outlined in the complainants' submitted documents. The complainants agreed to provide these details using a template document provided by Dr. Cuppett. Dr. Cuppett noted to the complainants that they categorized some books as "illegal". He asked if they were pursuing any legal options to have the books removed. They shared that they were not.

Dr. Cuppett asked Ms. Rose and Ms. Allen if their concerns about the books were resolved through this meeting. Ms. Rose and Ms. Allen stated that they were still seeking removal of the books. As a result, Dr. Cuppett reviewed the next steps in the process with complainants. He explained that the district would determine if any of the books had been ruled on "in principle" (further explanation below) before. If there were in principle decisions for some of the books, then a committee would not be formed for those books. If there was not an in-principle decision for a book, then a reconsideration committee would be formed, and the process outlined in the regulation would proceed.

Dr. Cuppett reviewed the membership of a reconsideration committee, as outlined by the regulation, with the complainants. He shared that because of the number of books involved, the committee would likely be larger (perhaps 3 to 4 times larger), but still of representative membership as outlined in the regulation. Dr. Cuppett reminded the complainants that they would have the opportunity to provide testimony to the committee at future meetings, that could be written, verbal or both.

V. "In Principle" Decisions and the Decision to Convene a Committee

FCPS Regulation 500-39 *Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use* states that the deputy superintendent can determine if the concern about a book or other instructional material was similar to a concern raised in the past. If so, a decision about a concern in the past can be applied to a new book or instructional material under review because a previous reconsideration had ruled on that concern “in principle”. If an “in principle” decision could be applied to a new request for reconsideration, then the deputy superintendent has the discretion to not convene a reconsideration committee.

Reviewing Previous Decisions

In reviewing the decisions of previous reconsideration committees, Dr. Cuppett identified several decisions that could have been applied to these complaints and could have served as “in principle” decisions for the books being challenged.

For example, complainants had concerns that profanity was present in 16 of the books. In a 1982 library book challenge on the use of profanity in *Fire Storm*, a previous Board supported the inclusion of varying levels of language in books ruling:

that [*Fire Storm*] remain in the library where children may read it but are not required to do so. Acceptance of the books is not an advocacy of swearing in the Committee's opinion. The author's use of language should be appropriate for setting, situation and character. Bad language should not be included for mere sensationalism, but words which might be offensive to some out of context may be appropriate in literary context.

This decision applied to the 16 books for which the complainant identified profanity as a concern, however there were still a significant number of other concerns beyond the use of profanity.

Complainants also identified a number of “reported issues” about ideas, viewpoints or topics that were in some of the books including gender ideology, drug use, alcohol use, violence, prostitution, racial commentary, controversial religious commentary, and self-harm (Appendix 2). Previous reconsideration decisions stated that a book could not be removed simply because a complainant did not value or agree with the viewpoint of the author, and that multiple points of view are important (*Grendel* decision, 1978, *The Crucible* decision, 1979, *The Story of Witches* decision, 1993, *Herschel and The Hanukkah* decision, 1994). In these previous decisions, the local board noted:

we should examine and hold to the light various points of view in an objective and decent manner. Done properly, study of this type helps build the basis for students to make intelligent decisions based on clear understanding. The representation of a point of view in no way implies that a teacher or the Board of Education endorses that point of view.

These previous decisions could have been used as “in principle” decisions for concerns about viewpoints or topics found in 22 of the books that were challenged.

However, the complainants' other concerns (i.e., claims of pornography or concerns about explicit sexual content) would still have remained for many of the books. Complainants identified multiple “reported issue[s]” with many of the books. For example, some books had as many as seven “reported issues”. Even if “in principle” decisions could be applied to some of the concerns for a book, there were likely other concerns for which “in principle” decisions did not exist (claims of pornography, obscenity).

As a result, Dr. Markoe determined that a committee would be formed to comprehensively review the 35 books being challenged because of the difficulty of applying “in principle” decisions for every “reported issue” in all 35 books being challenged.

Formation of the Committee

On December 1, 2022 Dr. Markoe charged Dr. Cuppett to form a Reconsideration Committee pursuant to Regulation 500-39: *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*. Due to the significant number of library books to be reviewed, he charged that the committee should be larger than outlined in the regulation to allow FCPS “to respond more quickly to the stated concerns” of the complainants (Appendix 4). Dr. Cuppett and Mr. Murphy served as committee facilitators.

Receipt of Additional Written Testimony

On December 12, 2022, complainants Nancy Allen and Cindy Rose provided additional written testimony with focus on specific pages in each book that caused concern. This testimony and the initial written concerns were added to the record for each book so that committee members would be fully aware of the complainants’ concerns (Appendix 5).

Solicitation of Committee Participants

Dr. Cuppett and Mr. Murphy then began the process of forming a committee that was consistent with Regulation 500-39. As directed by Dr. Markoe, the committee was created to be larger and was divided into four (4) subcommittees in order to review the large number of books that were being challenged. Using the district email communication system (FindOutFirst), email communications were sent to the entire school community asking for interested students, parents, teachers, media specialists, and community members to apply to be on the committee. Students were also notified using the district’s learning management system, Schoology. Across these groups, the district received nearly 1,000 applications via Google Forms.

Selection of Committee Members

Parent applicants were first sorted into their high school feeder groups to ensure geographic diversity in the committee. Two (2) parents from each high school feeder group were randomly selected by the FCPS research team. This process allowed for parent participation at a level higher than required under Regulation 500-39.

Student applicants were randomly selected from each high school with the goal of having one student participate from each of the ten high schools. By the time the committee convened its work, only nine students were able to participate.

Community Members (who may also be a parent) are required to be “knowledgeable in the subject area” of any books or materials that are being reviewed per FCPS Regulation 500-39. In this case, there were 35 books that complainants believed were inappropriate for use in public school libraries. The subject matter of the books varied. Community members were asked to share why they believed they would fit the criteria. A group of three FCPS staff members selected applicants in an attempt to include community members with a variety of backgrounds and qualifications. This

process allowed for community member participation at a level higher than required under Regulation 500-39.

Curriculum specialists, media specialists and school administrators were selected by central staff. In addition, one **teacher** applicant from each high school feeder was selected by central staff.

Notification of Acceptance to Committee

On January 10, 2023, applicants were notified by email that they had been selected to serve on the committee. If participants had a calendar conflict or were otherwise unable to serve, replacements were selected using the same processes outlined above. For various reasons, some selected committee members notified Dr. Cuppett that they were unable to participate. Once the first meeting was held, the committee was composed of the following:

- Eighteen (18) parents representing each high school feeder
- Five (5) community members
- Twelve (12) teachers (one teacher representative was also a media specialist as that school had a limited number of applicants)
- Four (4) administrators
- Four (4) media specialists
- Nine (9) students (one per high school)
- Four (4) curriculum specialists

VI. An Unexpected Delay

Prior to the committee's first meeting, *The Frederick News Post* filed a complaint to the Open Meetings Act Compliance (OMAC) Board against the Board of Education in which they asserted that the Reconsideration Committee meetings should be open to the public. Historically, reconsideration committees were not open to the public, although the findings of the committees were. As a result of the complaint, no committee meetings were held until a ruling had been made. Two of the originally scheduled meetings (January 19 and February 9, 2023) were rescheduled to allow time to receive a ruling from the Open Meetings Act Compliance Board. On February 13, 2023, the OMAC Board ruled that the Reconsideration Committee meetings are not required to be open to the public, similar to historical practice in FCPS (Appendix 6). The committee's work then proceeded.

VII. Committee Organization, Work Processes, Protocols, and Notes

In order to review the 35 books thoroughly and efficiently, committee members were organized to serve on one of four subcommittees. Each subcommittee included parents, students, community members, teachers, media specialists, and administrators in a manner consistent with Regulation 500-39.

Role of Committee Facilitators

Dr. Cuppett and Mr. Murphy served as facilitators of the Reconsideration Committee. Their primary role was to ensure that Regulation 500-39 *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already*

in Use (Appendix 1) was adhered to throughout the entire process. Neither Dr. Cuppett nor Mr. Murphy participated in discussions of books or voted on proposed recommendations. They served as process observers and when needed, reviewed the guiding legal tenets, clarified process questions, or noted regulation requirements when asked by subcommittees. They also facilitated discussions when impasse occurred at the subcommittee level. They were responsible for the logistics of meetings, workflow of the four subcommittees, documentation of discussions, and compilation of the final report with the co-authors from the committee. Of note, several support staff from FCPS assisted with notetaking and logistics.

Reconsideration Committee Meetings

The Reconsideration Committee met on five occasions to complete its work. Prior to meetings 2, 3, 4 and 5, complainants were notified of their opportunity to provide verbal testimony about the books being discussed at each meeting. Meeting agendas and notes are available in detail in Appendix 7.

As noted in the minutes of the initial meeting, committee members received a legal briefing from Jamie Cannon, Chief Legal Counsel, on prior court cases related to library books as well as information on the Miller Test for obscenity, found in the Supreme Court of the United States' decision in Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973) ("Miller"). (Appendix 8).

Additional Verbal and/or Written Testimony from Complainants

Per Regulation 500-39, complainants were offered the opportunity to provide verbal and/or written testimony in the four meetings where books were being discussed. Complainants were notified in advance of which books would be discussed at which meetings. Their submitted testimony is available in Appendix 9.

Facilitating Discussions of the Subcommittees

Because committee members represented a cross-section of stakeholders within Frederick County and came to the committee, as expected, with a variety of life experiences, personal beliefs and backgrounds, discussions about books were often spirited but respectful as differing opinions and perspectives arose.

The committee used a **Review and Deliberation Protocol** (Appendix 10) to guide the process and the **Subcommittee Discussion Guide and Key Questions** (Appendix 11) to ensure conversations and deliberations stayed grounded in the established legal tenets. Additionally, every committee member took care to remain focused on the community standard and to avoid making decisions based on political pressure, personal objections to content or ideas, or conflicts with their own personal values, personal concepts of morality or religious beliefs.

As a first step in the reading process, two committee members, or readers, were assigned to read each book in its entirety. The two readers also used the **Reading and Reporting Guide** (Appendix 12) to ensure they focused on both the concerns of the complainants and the legal tenets related to library books. A **Request for Reconsideration Record** was shared for each book (a sample can be found in Appendix 13). This record included detailed information on the complainants' concerns including specific page numbers that the complainants stated contained content that was

problematic. This record was used to capture the thoughts of readers for other subcommittee members to review.

In subcommittee meetings, the readers then reported back to the subcommittee their findings, including a brief summary of the book's plot, theme and context; what the complainant's concerns were; and how they thought the legal tenets applied. The findings of the two readers were discussed by all subcommittee members. Notes were taken during the discussions held by the four subcommittees. The subcommittee notes are not a verbatim record of the discussion, but rather a capture of the key discussion and deliberations for each book. These notes are available for review in the Request for Reconsideration Record for each book (in alphabetical order by title) found in Appendix 14.

In the event that a subcommittee was unable to reach consensus on a recommendation for a particular book, they either made a recommendation for resolving the impasse by assigning additional readers or brought the matter to the full committee for discussion. If additional readers were assigned, then more discussion and deliberation in the subcommittee occurred at a future meeting.

VIII. Discussing the Concerns of the Complainants and Relevant Legal Tenets

During deliberation, committee members were charged with weighing both the established legal tenets relevant to the review of challenged materials and the concerns of the complainants.

The Supreme Court in Pico established that, under the First Amendment, students have protected access to the discussions, debates, information, and ideas that prepare them for participation in society. When books are removed from libraries, those rights may be diminished. The Court considered that students select materials in the library through free choice rather than assigned reading in textbooks or as part of established curriculum.

While the First Amendment limits the discretion of a local board to remove books based on dislike of ideas expressed, the courts have determined that books may be removed if the content is pervasively vulgar or obscene. Specifically, the court decision Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School Board of Directors, 638 F.2d 438 (8th Cir. 1980) held that books can be removed if deemed vulgar.

The Miller Test for Obscenity

The Supreme Court ruling in Miller, affirmed that obscene materials are not protected by the First Amendment and informed how the Courts defined "obscene" through a three-pronged test:

- Whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
- Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, find the matter depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and
- Whether a reasonable person finds the matter [in this case, a book], taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The Miller Test became a critical frame of discussion and decision making for books when complainants claimed the books contained pornographic or obscene content.

Discussion of the Community Standard

As committee members read and discussed each book, particular consideration was given to the definition of “contemporary adult community standards.” Miller held that obscenity is not determined by a national standard; therefore, the committee’s definition of “community standard” was foundational to the deliberative process. Through discussion the committee agreed that community standards not only change and evolve over time, but also vary from one geographical location to another. Additionally, with the expansion of the global online community, the scope of community is not solely tied to a physical location. Ideas and information available online and through streaming can influence the standards within a community. For the purposes of the committee’s work, the community was generally defined as “Frederick County, Maryland” and was inclusive of what was appropriate for secondary (Grade 6-12) students.

Applying the Miller Test and the Community Standard

With the definition of “community standard” in mind, the committee’s deliberations and discussions about the concerns of the complainants focused on whether the content of the challenged books rose to the level of “obscene.” For example, as assigned readers evaluated a book that the complainants’ submitted for reconsideration based on profanity or sexual content, the readers considered whether the profane words or sexual content used in the book rose to the level of obscenity by applying the three-pronged Miller test. While committee members may have had a range of opinions about the presence of “curse” words or sexual content, discussion often focused on whether profanity or sexual content were appropriate within the context of a book’s narrative or were used to convey strong emotion for a literary purpose. By applying the community standard, committee members asked themselves how the words were regarded not just by themselves, but by the average secondary student in Frederick County.

Committee members also considered the books “as a whole” when evaluating whether the books met the definition of obscene material. When specific words, passages or content were isolated into a list or quoted out of context, it was difficult for committee members to evaluate whether the content would fail the Miller Test. Committee members read the works in their entirety to understand, for example, the author’s intent, a book’s themes and story arc, and a character’s development and perspective. It was only when read in its entirety that committee members could fully assess a book’s artistic, literary, political or scientific value.

Discussion of Erotica in Regard to the Miller Test

As part of their written complaints and testimony, complainants asserted (Appendix 9) that some of the books were erotica. Merriam-Webster defines erotica as “literary or artistic works having an erotic theme or quality”. The subcommittees discussed this idea that books would be written solely with the purpose of arousal and no other literary purpose. The committee often discussed this assertion in relation to the Miller Test. The Miller Test did not address the term “erotica,” but rather, asked whether material was intended to arouse the prurient interest. The Court has said that “prurient interest” is not “normal, healthy sexual desires”, but rather, “appeal to a shameful or

morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion" Brockett v. Spokane Arcades, Inc., 472 U.S. 491 (1985). Subcommittee discussion focused on the three prongs of the Miller Test, and within the context of the text, determined if a book was only written for the purpose of arousal, it would likely lead a subcommittee to conclude that the book had no or limited "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value." That would fail the final prong of the Miller Test. Regardless of the legal arguments, the subcommittee carefully considered the complainants' assertion that some books were erotica in their reading, review, and discussion.

Consideration of Restrictions on Approved Books

The committee also reviewed the United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas decision in Counts v. Cedarville School District, 295 F.Supp.2d 996 (U.S.D.C. W.D. Ark. 2003) ("Counts"), which considered how students' constitutional rights may be impacted when books are placed on a restricted shelf or require parental permission for check-out. The case reaffirmed that students have a protected right to receive information and ideas, and that even a minimal loss of First Amendment rights is injurious. Additionally, the decision found that putting restrictions on books, such as placing behind a counter or on a restricted shelf, has a stigmatizing effect on the book which "results in an actual concrete and particularized invasion of students' rights." As Reconsideration Committee members deliberated some works, they discussed the appropriateness of limiting access to some books by grade within a level (e.g., restrict to Grade 8 only) or age (e.g., restrict to age 16 and up) and ultimately decided that restriction would be inappropriate. In the end, the committee believed its decisions should be focused on keeping a book in circulation at a particular level (i.e., middle school or high school) or removing it with cause.

IX. Committee Work Extended

After the initial meeting of the committee (which oriented committee members to the process, key documents and legal tenets), the subcommittees discussed books at the April 20, May 11, and June 1, 2023 meetings. Subcommittees reached consensus on most books with some books requiring additional readers and additional discussion and deliberation. As of the last scheduled meeting of the committee on June 1, 2023, the committee reached consensus on 30 of the challenged books. However, there were impasses on four (4) books: *Triangles: A Novel*; *Let's Talk About It*; *A Court of Silver Flames*; and *Kingdom of Ash*.

The decision was made by the committee to create two additional subcommittees of existing members and assign additional readers to these books. The membership of the new subcommittees was consistent with the Regulation 500-39 and included school district personnel, parents, students, and community members. Every member of the new subcommittees read two (2) of the above books, which resulted in each of these four remaining books being read by at least 10 committee members. These books were discussed and reviewed at an additional meeting held on July 20, 2023.

X. Responding to Specific Claims Made in Complainants' Written and Oral Testimony

Before addressing the recommendations of the committee in regard to the 35 books that were reviewed, the committee felt some of the complainants' testimony should be addressed. A significant

amount of testimony was submitted by the complainants throughout the process. Some of that testimony was sourced from various websites and quoted specific excerpts from the books that the complainants found objectionable and/or reinforced the complainants' original concerns.

In addition, most testimony was not specific to the books under discussion at each meeting, but rather was offered as general concerns about all books, how books are approved for use in the library, matters of policy, or procedural concerns. The committee felt some of that testimony should be addressed.

Complainants Alleged that FCPS Was in Violation of United States Code

Complainants alleged in the written complaints that violations of the United States Code are occurring as a result of these books being available in school libraries. Assessing whether there has been a violation of law or whether an alleged crime has been committed is outside the scope of the purpose of the Reconsideration Committee. Accordingly, this report does not address that allegation.

Complainants Asserted that FCPS Should Use a Rating System for Books

Complainants shared a rating system they felt supported their assertions that the books being under review should not be in school libraries. The rating scale was available on the BookLooks website found at <http://booklooks.org> (Appendix 15). According to the website, BookLooks is a group of "concerned parents who have been frustrated by the lack of resource material for content-based information regarding books accessible to children and young adults." BookLooks noted that they "strive to be as objective and judicious in our reports as possible, but ultimately the ratings assigned are our opinions."

The committee discussed this testimony and noted that Reconsideration Committees serve a specific function as outlined in Regulation 500-39: *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use* (Appendix 1). The Reconsideration Committee was not charged with examining or creating policy or developing new practices related to book selection and approval. This was beyond the purpose, authority and scope of the committee's work.

Complainants Claimed that Some Books on the Reconsideration List Were Present in Elementary and Middle Schools

When complainants provided additional written testimony on December 16, 2022, (Appendix 9) they claimed that *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison was "available in elementary school [for] ages 5-11." FCPS central staff investigated and determined that there was a book in the elementary collection entitled *Lawn Boy*, however it was authored by Gary Paulsen. This is a different book than the complainants indicated.

In this subsequent testimony, complainants claimed that the book, *Breathless*, by Jennifer Niven was "available to children as young as 11." After a search of the middle school library collection, FCPS central staff did identify two other books titled *Breathless*, one by author Lurlene McDaniel and the other by Pam Withers. The books found in the middle school were different books than the complainants indicated. Niven's *Breathless* was not available in middle school as claimed.

Complainants Claimed that Elementary and Middle School Students Can Openly Access the Books in Circulation that Were Approved for Use Only at the High School Level

During Ms. Rose's verbal testimony on March 23, 2023, she stated that, "All FCPS books can be obtainable by any student at any school through a library transfer. FCPS has transferred books from high school to elementary school." Her assertion is that students in the elementary and middle school level could access any of the challenged books by requesting the books through the library circulation system.

Students from a lower level do not have unrestricted access to books from a higher level. Books have been transferred from one level to another, but only if the book was already approved for use by the lower level of students. In the 2022-23 school year, elementary media specialists requested three books from FCPS secondary schools for use with elementary students. Those books were *Airborne* by Kenneth Opal and *Restart* and *Unplugged* by Gordan Korman. All three titles had favorable reviews to be used by or with students at the elementary level.

Ms. Rose also asserted that "Dr. Dyson's [the school superintendent] office could not assure me that an elementary student could not get their hands on one of these books." The communication she received from Dr. Sarah Sirgo, the Chief of Staff, was as follows:

"From speaking with Dr. Cuppett [Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation] and his team, we do have elementary level books at all of our schools so there are times that we do send books from our high schools to our elementary schools when appropriate. However, the books that are in our secondary school media centers you mention would not likely be provided to any middle school or elementary student or sent for their use. So, while book transfers do occur, the school librarians are very careful about the purpose of the material. They check out the item to the intended borrower before it leaves their building so they know who the recipient is to ensure they are part of the intended audience" (email correspondence to Ms. Rose, October 17, 2022).

This email communication reiterated the current practice of ensuring that books can only be transferred to another school if they are approved for use at that level.

Complainants Believed the Standards for Student Publication Found in Board of Education Policy 436 Should Apply to Content in Library Books

In testimony submitted at the March 23, 2023 Reconsideration Meeting (and in testimony submitted at subsequent meetings), Ms. Allen believed that the standards by which student journalists are held in Frederick County Board of Education Policy 436 *School-Sponsored Publications and Media /Student Journalists* should apply to library books as well. Specifically, she noted that Policy 436 states that "School-Sponsored Publications and School-Sponsored Media...shall not be published or distributed...if found to be "[l]ewd, vulgar, obscene." According to the policy, school-sponsored media means any material that is:

- "Prepared, written, published or broadcast by a Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) student journalist;
- Distributed or generally made available to members of the student body; and
- Prepared under the direction of a student media advisor."

The committee then discussed the complainant's testimony and believed that different areas of the law could be applied to school sponsored media or publications and library books, and therefore one set of legal principles could not be easily applied to the other. Specifically, the main distinction

between a school-sponsored publication and books in the library is that speech contained within the school-sponsored publication may reasonably be perceived to bear the “imprimatur of the school.” Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

That being noted, the committee did believe that books found in the school library should not be obscene as evaluated using the Miller Test. Using the Miller Test as a basis of evaluation would be central to the work of the committee (discussed below).

Complainants Argued that the Books Under Review Do Not Need to be in School Libraries Because They Can be Accessed in the Public Library or Purchased by Students

Complainants indicated in written verbal testimony on March 23, 2023 (Appendix 9), that the books under review do not need to be in school libraries because students could get them at the public library or could purchase them. This was stated as part of the complainants’ assertion that they were not asking for a “ban” of these books, just a removal from school libraries. Ms. Rose stated:

I am asking the books in question be removed from FCPS shelves, not the universe. All of these books can be found at the local library or wherever you buy books. No one is calling for a book ban. (Cindy Rose testimony, March 23, 2023).

Ms. Allen made a similar statement in her March, 23, 2023 testimony: “Our goal is not to ban books. We are asking for these books to be removed from our public-school libraries. Banning a book would mean you are prohibiting possession and publication of a book.”

The committee noted that the Supreme Court has held that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gates” See Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969). The Court also held in Pico that “the First Amendment rights of students may be directly and sharply implicated by the removal of books from the shelves of a school library”. Students’ constitutional rights at school, although limited in some situations, are protected by the Supreme Court.

But to the complainants’ specific assertion, the Supreme Court has stated that “one is not to have the exercise of his liberty of expression in appropriate places abridged on the plea that it may be exercised in some other place” Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union, 521 U.S. 844 (1997), citing Schneider v. State of New Jersey (Town of Irvington), 308 U.S. 147 (1939). Lower courts have also recognized the constitutional right of students to access books at the school library, even if they would also have access in other forums. In Counts, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Arkansas noted that, “access in one forum is not a constitutional substitute for access in another.” According to court precedent, simply having access elsewhere to a book does not compensate for limiting a student’s access rights in the school library.

Even though the courts are clear on the matter, the committee also discussed and agreed that for many students in the school district, access to books outside of the school library may be challenging due to financial constraints, the inability to get reliable and regular transportation to public libraries, lack of access to wifi or steadfast internet service, inability to participate in extracurricular learning due to familial or financial situation, or a lack of understanding of resources available within the public domain. While the complainants suggested in their testimony to the committee that book availability in alternative locations made their removal from FCPS libraries tenable, the committee did not consider these avenues of access to be viable alternatives for the

aforementioned reasons. FCPS strives to provide equitable access to resources for all students, and thus the committee felt that the school library remains the best way for students to access and equitably utilize “discussion, debate and the dissemination of information and ideas” See Pico.

XI. Request for Reconsideration Records for Each Book

Complete Request for Reconsideration Records are available for each book (in alphabetical order by title) in Appendix 14. The committee felt that the Reconsideration Records, including the discussion notes, created a transparent public record of the discussions and deliberations for each book.

XII. Recommendations of the Committee

The Reconsideration Committee made the following recommendations for the 35 books that were challenged.

Note: One Book Removed for Factual Inaccuracy

One of the 35 books being challenged, *Lucky*, by Alice Sebold, was found to be factually inaccurate and removed from circulation. The man identified as the rapist in the book was later exonerated by DNA evidence. The publisher is no longer printing this book. FCPS regularly removes books found to be factually inaccurate or outdated as a matter of collection maintenance. This book was not reviewed by the committee. *Lucky* was removed from FCPS circulation on March 17, 2023. As a result of this decision, the remaining 34 books were reviewed by the committee.

Recommendation 1: Books that Should Remain in Circulation in FCPS Libraries

The Reconsideration Committee determined that 31 books should continue to remain in circulation at the high school level while others should remain in circulation at both the middle and high school levels. They are:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>
<i>A Court of Frost and Starlight</i>	Sarah Maas
<i>A Court of Mist and Fury</i>	Sarah Maas
<i>A Court of Silver Flames</i>	Sarah Maas
<i>A Court of Thorns and Roses</i>	Sarah Maas
<i>A Court of Wings and Ruin</i>	Sarah Maas
<i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i>	George M. Johnson
<i>Breathless</i>	Jennifer Niven
<i>Confess</i>	Colleen Hoover

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<i>Damsel</i>	Elana K. Arnold
<i>Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda</i>	J. P. Stassen
<i>Forever</i>	Judy Blume
<i>Forever For a Year</i>	B.T. Gottfred
<i>I Never</i>	Laura Hopper
<i>Identical</i>	Ellen Hopkins
<i>Infamous</i>	Elana Arnold
<i>It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health</i>	Robie Harris
<i>Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts)</i>	LC Rosen
<i>Jesus Land: A Memoir</i>	Julia Scheeres
<i>Kingdom of Ash</i>	Sarah Maas
<i>Lawn Boy</i>	Jonathan Evison
<i>Let's Talk About It</i>	Erika Moen
<i>Living Dead Girl</i>	Elizabeth Scott
<i>Milk and Honey</i>	Rupi Kaur
<i>My Friend Dahmer</i>	Derf Backderf
<i>Normal People: A Novel</i>	Sally Rooney
<i>People Kill People</i>	Ellen Hopkins
<i>Push</i>	Sapphire
<i>S.E.X. The All-You-Need-To-Know Sexuality Guide to Get You Through Your Teens and Twenties</i>	Heather Corinna
<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i>	Kurt Vonnegut
<i>Sold</i>	Patricia McCormick
<i>Tricks</i>	Ellen Hopkins

The Reconsideration Committee members were charged with discussing the books under review with two distinct lenses. The first lens was to review the book with the complainants' concerns in mind. Notes from the subcommittee discussions show that subcommittee members

discussed the specific concern from the complainants. The second lens through which they reviewed the books was that of the legal tenets. Subcommittee notes also show how members discussed the ideas being challenged in the books as well as claims of obscenity or pornography.

Discussion of Complainants' Assertions of Inappropriate or Problematic Ideas

As to the books that allegedly contained racially charged commentary, gender ideology, controversial religious commentary, "misleading information on gender" or contained topics related to drug use, alcohol use, or bullying, the committee was bound to consider the precedent set by the Supreme Court in *Pico*, where the Supreme Court held:

"[School boards] possess significant discretion to determine the content of their school libraries, but that discretion may not be exercised in a narrowly partisan or political manner. Whether [the school board's] removal of books from the libraries denied [students] their First Amendment rights depends upon the motivation behind [the board's] actions. Local school boards may not remove books from school libraries simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to 'prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'"

Additionally, committee members noted that the Court held: "Our Constitution does not permit the official suppression of *ideas*."

The committee then considered whether the challenged content promoted sexual assault, profanity, animal cruelty, drug use, or other negative behaviors. It was determined by the majority of the committee that these books did not promote any of these behaviors, but rather, the books supported consensual sex between partners in a relationship; demonstrated the horrors and consequences of substances abuse; taught readers about respecting their bodies and their boundaries; and showed how to recognize and report physical abuse.

Of note, previous reconsideration committee decisions stated that a book could not be removed simply because a complainant did not value or agree with the viewpoint of the author, and that multiple points of view are important (*Grendel* decision, 1978, *The Crucible* decision, 1979, *The Story of Witches* decision, 1993, and the *Herschel and The Hanukkah* decision, 1994). In these previous decisions, the local board noted:

we should examine and hold to the light various points of view in an objective and decent manner. Done properly, study of this type helps build the basis for students to make intelligent decisions based on clear understanding. The representation of a point of view in no way implies that a teacher or the Board of Education endorses that point of view".

Discussion of Complainants' Concerns About Use of Profanity

Additionally, the subcommittees determined that the use of profanity in the books was not done in a sensational manner, but rather the use of language served as a literary tool for the author and was appropriate to the settings, situations and characters. This is consistent with decisions of previous reconsideration committees.

For example, in a 1982 library book challenge on the use of profanity in *Fire Storm*, a previous Board supported the inclusion of varying levels of language in books, ruling:

that [*Fire Storm*] remain in the library where children may read it but are not required to do so. Acceptance of the books is not an advocacy of swearing in the Committee's opinion. The author's use of language should be appropriate for setting, situation and character. Bad language should not be included for mere sensationalism, but words which might be offensive to some out of context may be appropriate in literary context.

Discussion of Complainants' Assertions of Pornography or Obscenity

The committee determined that the books which were on the reconsideration list because of the ideas they contained (i.e., theories on race, religion, politics, gender) could not legally be removed from circulation on that basis alone. However, as the notes reflect, discussion by committee members then centered on the assertions that the books contained obscene or pornographic content.

The subcommittees' discussion about the complaints of individual books can be found in the Request for Reconsideration Records (Appendix 14) for each book. The committee approached each section of allegedly obscene or pornographic content by reading the flagged portions in context and by applying the following three-pronged Miller Test.

To reiterate, the Miller test is a three-pronged test and all three elements must be met - this means that in order to be unprotected, obscene material, the book (1) based on the community standard, must, as a whole, appeal to the prurient interest, (2) based on the community standard, it must depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way, and (3) it must, as a whole, lack serious artistic, educational, literary, political, or scientific value. All three elements must be present.

The Court has said that "prurient interest" is not "normal, healthy sexual desires", but rather, "appeal to a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion" Brockett v. Spokane Arcades, Inc., 472 U.S. 491 (1985).

The committee noted that many of the books contained sexual content, but that content was not prurient in nature and was not depicted in a patently offensive way when applying the community standard. The committee believed it was reasonable that some citizens in the community would find the presence of any sexual content offensive, as evidenced by the complainants' concerns. In addition, some Reconsideration Committee participants had concerns about some of the sexual content. This is evidenced in the voting that occurred on particular books.

However, the committee members noted that the presence of sexual content as a reason for removing a book would not be consistent with the community standard. The mere presence of sexual conduct would not be an automatic disqualifier of a book in FCPS libraries. Rather the committee felt there were many factors that would contextualize sexual content in a book, including the description of the sexual content, the significance of the sexual content to the character development and story arc, and the author's purpose. In some cases, the author described sexual content as a means of cautioning readers about the consequences of sexual behavior, emphasizing that any sex act should always be consensual, and framing sex as part of healthy relationships.

The committee concluded that none of the books being challenged met the definition of pornographic or obscene when the Miller Test was applied.

Discussion of Complainants' Assertions Related to Age Appropriateness

In addition to relevant Supreme Court case law and law governing students' rights to access books in school libraries, the committee considered whether the books under review were age appropriate. As with the issues concerning obscenity, the age appropriateness of each book is addressed in the individual Request for Reconsideration Record completed by the subcommittees. In general, however, the committee considered not only the content in question (i.e., sexual content, profanity, race, etc.), but the context in which the content was used in the book.

For example, for some books, there was an allegation by complainants that “rape” was included in the book. But in reading the entire book, the committee discovered that the only reference to “rape” was a character recalling or implying that she had been sexually abused in the past - there was no actual depiction of rape itself. There appeared to be a disconnect between the complainants’ concern about rape and the actual content of the book. There were many instances of this nature - a concern was voiced about obscene or traumatic material in the text, but a full reading of the book revealed that the reference was innuendo or simply a fact about a character’s past.

The committee felt it was critical to note that the complainants testified that they did not read any of the challenged books in their entirety, nor would they. Many of the complainants’ concerns centered on excerpts of the books identified by using resources from other organizations and did not include any context for the portions of the books that were flagged as problematic. This type of disconnect was noted by subcommittees for many of the books under review.

The committee also gave consideration to the other themes in the books which contained explicit sex scenes. For example, in many of the books by author Sarah Maas, there are prominent themes of having friendships, maintaining loyalty, benefiting from education, helping those less fortunate, and preserving freedom and democracy.

All of these aspects were considered by the committee weighing whether the books were age appropriate even though the books contained explicit sexual scenes, profanity, or violence. Thirty-one (31) books on the list which were reviewed by the committee were considered to be age appropriate.

Recommendation 2: Books That Should Be Removed from Middle Schools, But Should Remain in Circulation in High School Libraries

Crank, by Ellen Hopkins, was recommended for removal from middle school circulation. The subcommittee indicated that the book passed the three prongs of the Miller test, and therefore should remain in circulation at the high school level. However, there were concerns about the content not being age appropriate for younger middle school students. One positive review for the book recommended its use in grades 8 and up. Of note, the authors’ recommendation is for use with students 14 years old and above. These factors led to the conclusion to remove the book from circulation in middle schools.

Subcommittee members also agreed that *Empire of Storms* by Sarah Maas, did meet all three prongs of the Miller Test. However, they also felt that the content was not age appropriate for middle school students. Therefore, it was recommended for the book to remain only in high schools and be removed from middle school circulation.

Recommendation 3: Book that Should be Removed from Circulation in FCPS Libraries

The Reconsideration Committee identified one book out of 34 that were reviewed that they believed should be removed from circulation in FCPS libraries. That book was *Triangles: A Novel* by Ellen Hopkins.

Ellen Hopkins is a best-selling author of several young adult novels. She uses a distinct style of writing in poetic verse. However, this book was the author's first adult novel. It centered on three women and the current events in their lives including the trials of raising teenagers, seeing a marriage fall apart, infidelity, betrayal in a friendship, and struggles with body image. There were a number of explicit sex scenes, but the subcommittee that reviewed the book agreed that none of them were offensive or intended to arouse a prurient interest in sex, nor were they erotica. Rather, the discussion of the subcommittee was whether the book was age appropriate.

Although the experiences of the teenagers are addressed at times in this book, Ellen Hopkins actually wrote a "young adult" version of this book called, *Tilt*, which is essentially the same story, but told from the viewpoint of the teens. Both books can stand on their own (i.e., one does not need to read both to understand the story) and the young adult version would be more appropriate for high school aged students.

While the committee reviewed a number of books that contained explicit sex scenes, or themes that may be characterized as "adult" in nature, the committee determined that the other important or valuable themes in those books (i.e., strong female figures; the importance of equality in society; the dangers of drug abuse or violence, etc.) were not present in *Triangles: A Novel*. The committee ultimately determined that even in context, the sexual scenes or problems faced by the adults in the novel were not age appropriate for high school students.

As a result, the consensus was to remove this book from circulation.

XII. Dissenting Opinion(s)

No dissenting opinions were written and submitted by any committee members. However, it is important to note that some committee members did not agree with whether some books met all three prongs of the Miller test or were age appropriate. Decisions to keep books in circulation were not always unanimous.

XIII. Index of Appendices

- Appendix 1: Regulation 500-39 *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*
- Appendix 2: Requests for Reconsideration of Instructional Material forms submitted by Complainants
- Appendix 3: Deputy Superintendent's Memo to Complainants designating FCPS staff member for communication
- Appendix 4: Deputy Superintendent's Memo Directing the Formation a Reconsideration Committee
- Appendix 5: Addition testimony provided by complainants detailing specific pages of concern
- Appendix 6: Open Meeting Act Compliance Board Ruling

- Appendix 7: Reconsideration Committee Agendas and Meeting Minutes
- Appendix 8: Legal Briefing Presentation
- Appendix 9: Additional written/verbal testimony provided by complainants at reconsideration meetings
- Appendix 10: Review and Deliberation Protocol
- Appendix 11: Subcommittee Discussion Guide and Key Questions
- Appendix 12: Reading and Reporting Guide
- Appendix 13: Sample Request for Reconsideration Record
- Appendix 14: Request for Reconsideration Records for all books reviewed by the committee (in alphabetical order, by title)
- Appendix 15: Rating scale from BookLooks website (provided by complainants)

XIII. Certification of Committee's Work

We, the undersigned members of the Reconsideration Committee, conducted our work with diligence and with attention to not only the complainants' concerns, but also the legal tenets regarding library books. We support the recommendations made herein.

RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE SIGNATURE PAGE




Karin Abma
Parent

Student 1



Brandi Appleby
Parent



Victoria Benson
Teacher



Colleen Bernard
Curriculum Specialist



Megan Blakeslee
Parent



Kristine Bols
Parent



Rose Branzell
Teacher

Student 2



Jill Cameron
Principal



Carol Chucoski
Teacher



Janice Daffern
Community Member




Amy Diggs
Media Specialist



Mike Dillman
Administrator



Cynthia Doggett
Media Specialist



John Evans
Parent

RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE SIGNATURE PAGE


David Fish
Parent


Karen Kapust
Community Member


Amy Gahlitz
Media Specialist

Student 4


Amanda Glenn
Parent

Student 5

Student 3


Melanie Maguire
Parent


Timothy Greer
Parent

Student 6


Magin LaSov Gregg
Community Member

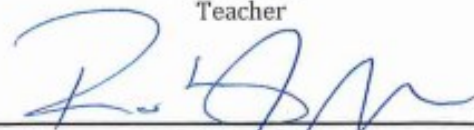

Jessica McBroom
Teacher


Jennifer Harris
Administrator


Ann Menard
Parent


Brian Heid
Teacher

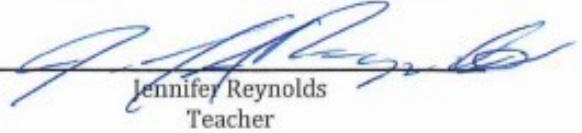
Student 7


Robin Hodge
Parent

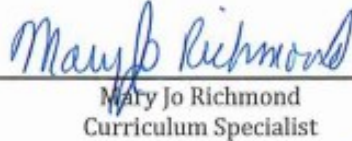

Denise Migliorini
Parent

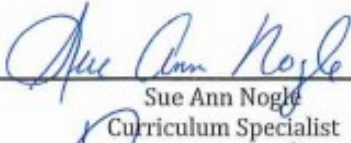
RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE SIGNATURE PAGE



Sheri Murphy
Administrator


Jennifer Reynolds
Teacher


Shelley Nasso
Parent


Mary Jo Richmond
Curriculum Specialist


Sue Ann Nogle
Curriculum Specialist


Guy Schmidt
Parent


Renate Owen
Media Specialist

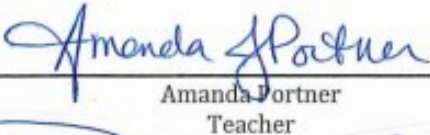

Ed Schoder
Teacher

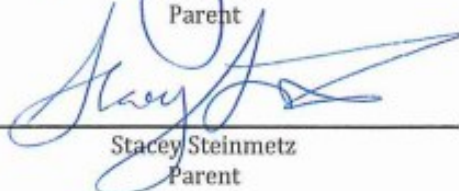

Angela Phillips
Teacher

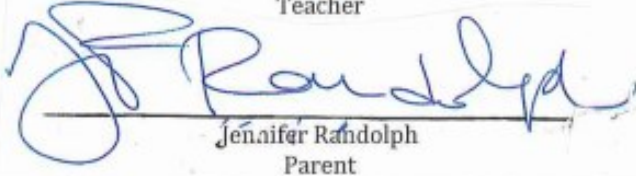

Joanna Sieger
Parent



Michelle Plumer
Teacher


Kara Smith
Parent


Amanda Portner
Teacher


Stacey Steinmetz
Parent

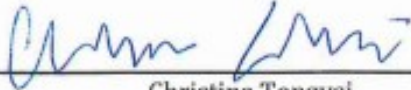

Jennifer Randolph
Parent


Diana Sung
Curriculum Specialist

Student 8


Marsha Thompson
Media Specialist

RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE SIGNATURE PAGE



Christina Tongyai
Teacher



Cristine Traugott
Community Member

Student 9



Kate Wright
Community Member

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Reg. No. 500-39
Subject: RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ALREADY IN USE	Issued: 9/1/93
Preparing Office: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT	Amended: 6/13/12

I. Policy 501

II. Procedures

A. Definitions – For the purpose of this regulation, the following definitions are provided:

Board -	Board of Education of Frederick County, Maryland
Complainant -	Community member of Frederick County, Maryland
Essential Curriculum -	Written curriculum prepared by Frederick County Public Schools staff and approved by the Board. Essential curriculum is reviewed by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee and approved by the Board.
Essential Curriculum Guides -	Prepared by Frederick County Public Schools staff to implement the adopted essential curriculum and may include activities, resources, etc.
Foundation Textbooks -	Narrowly construed to mean the primary text resources for teaching the essential curriculum. Accompanying student workbooks and electronic format texts (E-books, etc.) are included in this definition.
In Principle – (i.e., substantively evaluated)	Means that a complaint falls into a category that has been substantively addressed in a prior decision.
Materials Already in Use -	Includes library media materials and all materials used for instructional purposes or planning, except for textbooks under consideration.
Supplemental Textbooks -	Text resources, including electronic format texts (E-books, etc.) intended as supplements to the foundation text for teaching the essential curriculum.
Teaching Materials -	Includes items not contained in the definition of textbooks. They are a secondary source of information used by teachers to enrich and re-teach the essential curriculum. Teaching materials are used at the discretion of the individual teacher, and the decision is one of instructional strategy.

B. Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use

1. Upon receipt of a complaint, the deputy superintendent will initially determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences.

2. If the complainant maintains opposition to use of the material, the complainant may complete the attached "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" form. It is also available at www.fcps.org/forms. Contested material will remain in use during the reconsideration process. Parents may request that alternative material be provided to their child.
3. Upon receipt of the reconsideration form, the deputy superintendent will confer with staff and determine whether the issues were covered in principle by previous decisions.
4. Upon receipt of staff's recommendation and the "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material," the deputy superintendent will study the request to determine if the matter has been covered in principle by a previous decision. If it is determined that the matter has not been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent may appoint a reconsideration committee or, may refer it directly to the Superintendent as described in paragraph 5. If it is determined that the matter has been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent will typically not appoint a reconsideration committee and will refer the matter directly to the Superintendent with a recommendation.
5. If the deputy superintendent has recommended that a reconsideration committee not be formed, the Superintendent will review the deputy superintendent's recommendation and the request for reconsideration. The Superintendent will either: (1) request the deputy superintendent convene a reconsideration committee; or (2) render a written decision and notify all individuals who filed a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" accordingly.

C. The Committee and Its Deliberations

1. Composition of the Committee
 - a. Reconsideration committees will be appointed as needed by the deputy superintendent, who will request staff to convene a committee within 30 school days of receiving the complaint.
 - b. Each committee may be composed of at least nine members to include:
 - (1) Four to five staff members
 - One curriculum specialist
 - One administrator
 - Two teachers
 - One media specialist when the complaint involves a library media material
 - (2) Five community representatives
 - Four parents of students enrolled in Frederick County public schools
 - One citizen (who may also be a parent) knowledgeable in the subject area involved
 - (3) Two high school students (grades 9-12) when the matter deals with a secondary level instructional material
 - c. Alternate members may be selected by the deputy superintendent. In the event a member of a committee cannot serve for a particular review, an alternate may be selected for that review so that the representative balance of the group will be

maintained. However, the deputy superintendent may elect not to select an alternate if it would result in a significant delay to the process.

- d. The committee shall serve until the specific challenge has been resolved. If there are additional challenges to the material or challenges to supplementary, similar, or related materials, the original committee may be reconvened.

2. Deliberations

- a. The committee will meet and receive testimony from the complainant and staff concerning the contested material. Additionally, the committee may, at its discretion, receive oral or written testimony from proponents of the material. Barring extenuating circumstances, the committee will establish procedures governing the hearing and deliberations and will render its report within 45 school days after receiving final testimony.
- b. The committee will issue a written report in the following format:
 - (1) Response to specific complaint
 - (2) Evaluation of contested material
 - (a) Relationship to curriculum and to Board policy
 - (b) Relationship to established criteria for selection of instructional material
 - (3) Signatures of committee members affixed to majority and minority opinions
 - (4) Committee's report given to the deputy superintendent
3. The deputy superintendent will provide the report and a recommendation to the Superintendent within seven working days of receipt of the committee's report.
4. The Superintendent will render a decision within five working days of receipt of the committee's report and the recommendation of the deputy superintendent. The Superintendent will provide written notification of the decision to the complainant.
- D. The complainant may appeal the Superintendent's decision per Board Policy 105.
- E. No further re-evaluation will be made for at least two years after the Board has rendered a decision.

Approved:

Original signed by

Theresa R. Alban
Superintendent

Frederick County Public Schools
191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Complainant's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

Title of Instructional Material _____

Author _____ Type of Material _____

Publisher or Producer (if known) _____

Name of school where this material is in use _____

1. What are your general objections to the instructional material? _____

2. What are your specific objections to the instructional material? (Please cite concerns.) _____

Date

Signature of Complainant

Return completed form to:

Deputy Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools, 191 South East Street, Frederick, MD 21701

Frederick County Public Schools
191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Complainant's Name Nancy Allen
Mailing Address [REDACTED]
Email Address [REDACTED] Phone [REDACTED]
Title of Instructional Material Library Books - See Attached
Author Various / see Attached Type of Material FCPS Library Books
Publisher or Producer (if known) Various / see attached
Name of school where this material is in use Various / see attached

1. What are your general objections to the instructional material? Pornographic illustrations, content that contains explicit language including but not limited to sexual violence, obscene sexual descriptions vulgar language describing sexual acts, sexual abuse of sex w/ teachers, underage sex, sexual instructions and pedophilia.

2. What are your specific objections to the instructional material? (Please cite concerns.)
Violation of US Code, Title 18 Section 1466 in the books depicting visual, graphics, inappropriate and illegal material for children K-12. Illegal material that is sexually explicit made available thru FCPS libraries in person and online as a downloadable item.

10/21/2022
Date

Nancy Allen
Signature of Complainant

Return completed form to:
Deputy Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools, 191 South East Street, Frederick, MD 21701

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

Title	Where	Reported Issue
#7 Jack of Hearts (and other Parts) LC Rosen Book	Linganore HS	Sex – starts with a 4-way orgy Sex with teachers Anal Sex
#8 Lucky Alice Sebold Book	Tuscarora HS	Rape The author lied about who the rapist was. He went to Jail for 16 years before DNA proved his innocence
#9 Push Sapphire Book	Catoctin HS Linganore HS Tuscarora HS	Baby/Child rape/incest/abuse Basis for movie Precious
#10 S.E.X. – the all you need to know Progressive guide to get you Through high school and college Heather Corinna Book	Urbana HS	“How to” Sex guide for teens sexual images masturbation, anal sex BDSM: Bondage Dominance Submission Masochism Blood play: using blood, knives, cutting in sex
#11 Sold Patricia McCormick Book	Walkersville MS Brunswick HS Catoctin HS Gov. TJ HS Heather Ridge Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Aberrant sex acts Rape of a child, prostitution Explicit Violence
#12 Triangles: a novel Ellen Hopkins Book	Middletown HS	Sexually obscene Explicit sex acts Sadomasochism

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

Title	Where	Reported Issue
#13 Tricks Ellen Hopkins Book	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Explicit sex acts Child rape & abuse Adult & Child Prostitution
#14 A Court of Frost and Starlight Sarah J. Maas	Oakdale HS Urbana HS Catoclin HS Frederick HS Tuscarora HS Walkersville HS Downloadable	Profanity, explicit sexuality obscene references to sexual activities
#15 A Court of Mist and Fury Sara J. Maas	Brunswick HS Frederick HS Middletown HS Walkersville HS Oakdale HS Catoclin HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity
#16 A Court of Silver Flames Sara J. Maas	Catoclin HS Frederick HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity
#17 A Court of Thorns and Roses Sara J. Maas	Catoclin HS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS, Urbana HS Walkersville HS, Downloadable	Violence, sexual nudity, obscene sexual nudity, profanity

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

<p>#18 A Court of Wings and Ruin Sara J. Maas</p>	<p>Frederick HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Catocin HS Downloadable</p>	<p>Violence, sexual nudity, explicit sexual activity, profanity</p>
<p>#20 All Boys Aren't Blue George M. Johnson</p>	<p>Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Urbana HS</p>	<p>Inflammatory racial commentary, sexual nudity sexual assault, gender ideology, drug use, profanity</p>
<p>#26 Breathless Jennifer Niven</p>	<p>Crestwood MS Gov TJ HS Frederick HS Monocacy MS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS West Frederick MS Brunswick HS</p>	<p>Obscene sexual activity sexual nudity</p>
<p>#28 Confess Colleen Hoover</p>	<p>Gov. TJ HS</p>	<p>Molestation, sexual assault, explicit sex acts, profanity, gender ideology, drug abuse, controversial religious commentary</p>
<p>#29 Crank Ellen Hopkins</p>	<p>Heather Ridge Catocin HS Crestwood MS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Middletown MS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS</p>	<p>Explicit sexual activity, sexual assault, profanity, drug abuse, glorified drug use</p>

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

<p>#30 Damsel Elana Arnold</p>	<p>Catoctin HS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS</p>	<p>Sexual assault, sexual activity, sexual nudity, profanity</p>
<p>#31 Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda Jean-Philippe Stassen</p>	<p>Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS</p>	<p>Graphic novel with violent and sexual images; rape, vulgar language, violence</p>
<p>#32 Empire of Storms Sara J. Maas</p>	<p>Brunswick HS Catoctin HS Frederick HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS Walkersville MS Downloadable</p>	<p>Explicit sexual activities, sexual nudity, violence, profanity</p>
<p>#33 Forever for a Year B.T. Gottfred</p>	<p>Linganore HS</p>	<p>Gender ideology, violence, alcohol/drug use, suicide Commentary, controversial Racial commentary, sexual Activities</p>
<p>#34 Forever Judy Blume</p>	<p>Frederick HS Linganore HS Tuscarora HS Walkersville HS</p>	<p>Teen sex, explicit sex acts</p>
<p>#42 I Never Laura Hopper</p>	<p>Frederick HS Tuscarora HS</p>	<p>Explicit sex, profanity</p>

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

#43 Identical Ellen Hopkins	Catocin HS Gov TJ HS Heather Ridge Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Child Molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse
#44 Infamous Elana K. Arnold	Brunswick HS Downloadable	Explicit adult sex with minors, profanity, alcohol use
#45 It's Perfectly Normal Robie H. Harris	Urbana MS Tuscarora HS	Illustration images of sex, illustrations of masturbation Same sex sexual activity
#46 Jesus Land: A Memoir Julia Sheeres	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS	Incest, obscene sexual activity sexual nudity, vulgar language profanity, alcohol abuse
#47 Kingdom of Ash Sarah J. Maas	Catocin HS Frederick HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Urbana HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, explicit sex sexual nudity
#50 Let's Talk About It Erika Moen	Middletown HS	Graphic illustrations on sex and masturbation, sexual Activity, gender ideology
#51 Living Dead Girl Elizabeth Scott	Brunswick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Explicit violence & sex Child abuse
#55 Milk and Honey Rupi Kaur	Frederick HS Oakdale HS Walkersville HS	Non-sexual illustrations of nudity, sexual assault, sexual activities

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

<p>#56 My Friend Dahmer Graphic novel & book Derf Backderf</p>	<p>Frederick HS Heather Ridge Gov TJ HS Urbana HS</p>	<p>Disturbing illustrations, Sex with corpses sexual activity, cannibalism extreme violence, violence to animals Suicide, bullying, child abuse</p>
<p>#58 Normal People: a novel Sally Rooney</p>	<p>Frederick HS</p>	<p>Explicit sex Sadoomasochism</p>
<p>#61 People Kill People Ellen Hopkins Book</p>	<p>Catoctin HS Frederick HS Middletown HS</p>	<p>Sexual activity, language Sexual assault Inflammatory racial Commentary</p>
<p>#70 Slaughterhouse Five Kurt Vonnegut Book, eBook, CD Klinkowitz editions</p>	<p>Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Walkersville HS Windsor Knolls MS Catoctin HS Urbana HS Linganore HS Heather Ridge Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS</p>	<p>Explicit sex, violence Animal cruelty Bestiality Inflammatory religious commentary</p>
<p>#137 Lawn Boy Jonathan Evison</p>	<p>Linganore HS</p>	<p>Pedophilia, molestation profanity, vulgar language</p>
<p>#86 This Book Is Gay Juno Dawson</p>	<p>Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Downloadable</p>	<p>Illustrations of sexual activity Instruction on how to reach reach orgasm</p>

Frederick County Public Schools

191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Complainant's Name Cindy A Rose

Mailing Address [Redacted]

Email Address [Redacted] Phone [Redacted]

Title of Instructional Material See attached

Author See attached Type of Material See attached Library Books

Publisher or Producer (if known) See attached

Name of school where this material is in use See attached

1. What are your general objections to the instructional material? Pornographic, Sexual violence, obscene, vulgar, glorify sexual abuse, sex with teachers, pedophilia

2. What are your specific objections to the instructional material? (Please cite concerns.) See above
Inappropriate and illegal for children to read/see this books. Illegal to make sexually explicit material on the internet as well as be in libraries.

10/14/22
Date

Cindy A. Rose
Signature of Complainant

Return completed form to:
Deputy Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools, 191 South East Street, Frederick, MD 21701

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

Title	Where	Reported Issue
#7 Jack of Hearts (and other Parts) LC Rosen Book	Linganore HS	Sex – starts with a 4-way orgy Sex with teachers Anal Sex
#8 Lucky Alice Sebold Book	Tuscarora HS	Rape The author lied about who the rapist was. He went to Jail for 16 years before DNA proved his innocence
#9 Push Sapphire Book	Catoctin HS Linganore HS Tuscarora HS	Baby/Child rape/incest/abuse Basis for movie Precious
#10 S.E.X. – the all you need to know Progressive guide to get you Through high school and college Heather Corinna Book	Urbana HS	“How to” Sex guide for teens sexual images masturbation, anal sex BDSM: Bondage Dominance Submission Masochism Blood play: using blood, knives, cutting in sex
#11 Sold Patricia McCormick Book	Walkersville MS Brunswick HS Catoctin HS Gov. TJ HS Heather Ridge Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Aberrant sex acts Rape of a child, prostitution Explicit Violence
#12 Triangles: a novel Ellen Hopkins Book	Middletown HS	Sexually obscene Explicit sex acts Sadomasochism

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

Title	Where	Reported Issue
#13 Tricks Ellen Hopkins Book	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Explicit sex acts Child rape & abuse Adult & Child Prostitution
#14 A Court of Frost and Starlight Sarah J. Maas	Oakdale HS Urbana HS Catoctin HS Frederick HS Tuscarora HS Walkersville HS Downloadable	Profanity, explicit sexuality obscene references to sexual activities
#15 A Court of Mist and Fury Sara J. Maas	Brunswick HS Frederick HS Middletown HS Walkersville HS Oakdale HS Catoctin HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity
#16 A Court of Silver Flames Sara J. Maas	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity
#17 A Court of Thorns and Roses Sara J. Maas	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS, Urbana HS Walkersville HS, Downloadable	Violence, sexual nudity, obscene sexual nudity, profanity

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

<p>#18 A Court of Wings and Ruin Sara J. Maas</p>	<p>Frederick HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Catoctin HS Downloadable</p>	<p>Violence, sexual nudity, explicit sexual activity, profanity</p>
<p>#20 All Boys Aren't Blue George M. Johnson</p>	<p>Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Urbana HS</p>	<p>Inflammatory racial commentary, sexual nudity sexual assault, gender ideology, drug use, profanity</p>
<p>#26 Breathless Jennifer Niven</p>	<p>Crestwood MS Gov TJ HS Frederick HS Monocacy MS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS West Frederick MS Brunswick HS</p>	<p>Obscene sexual activity sexual nudity</p>
<p>#28 Confess Colleen Hoover</p>	<p>Gov. TJ HS</p>	<p>Molestation, sexual assault, explicit sex acts, profanity, gender ideology, drug abuse, controversial religious commentary</p>
<p>#29 Crank Ellen Hopkins</p>	<p>Heather Ridge Catocin HS Crestwood MS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Middletown MS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS</p>	<p>Explicit sexual activity, sexual assault, profanity, drug abuse, glorified drug use</p>

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

#30 Damsel Elana Arnold	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS	Sexual assault, sexual activity, sexual nudity, profanity
#31 Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda Jean-Philippe Stassen	Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS	Graphic novel with violent and sexual images; rape, vulgar language, violence
#32 Empire of Storms Sara J. Maas	Brunswick HS Catoctin HS Frederick HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS Walkersville MS Downloadable	Explicit sexual activities, sexual nudity, violence, profanity
#33 Forever for a Year B.T. Gottfred	Linganore HS	Gender ideology, violence, alcohol/drug use, suicide Commentary, controversial Racial commentary, sexual Activities
#34 Forever Judy Blume	Frederick HS Linganore HS Tuscarora HS Walkersville HS	Teen sex, explicit sex acts
#42 I Never Laura Hopper	Frederick HS Tuscarora HS	Explicit sex, profanity

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

#43 Identical Ellen Hopkins	Catoctin HS Gov TJ HS Heather Ridge Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Child Molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse
#44 Infamous Elana K. Arnold	Brunswick HS Downloadable	Explicit adult sex with minors, profanity, alcohol use
#45 It's Perfectly Normal Robie H. Harris	Urbana MS Tuscarora HS	Illustration images of sex, illustrations of masturbation Same sex sexual activity
#46 Jesus Land: A Memoir Julia Sheeres	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS	Incest, obscene sexual activity sexual nudity, vulgar language profanity, alcohol abuse
#47 Kingdom of Ash Sarah J. Maas	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Urbana HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, explicit sex sexual nudity
#50 Let's Talk About It Erika Moen	Middletown HS	Graphic illustrations on sex and masturbation, sexual Activity, gender ideology
#51 Living Dead Girl Elizabeth Scott	Brunswick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Explicit violence & sex Child abuse
#55 Milk and Honey Rupi Kaur	Frederick HS Oakdale HS Walkersville HS	Non-sexual illustrations of nudity, sexual assault, sexual activities

FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/deviant

<p>#56 My Friend Dahmer Graphic novel & book Dorf Backderf</p>	<p>Frederick HS Heather Ridge Gov TJ HS Urbana HS</p>	<p>Disturbing illustrations, Sex with corpses sexual activity, cannibalism extreme violence, violence to animals Suicide, bullying, child abuse</p>
<p>#58 Normal People: a novel Sally Rooney</p>	<p>Frederick HS</p>	<p>Explicit sex Sadomasochism</p>
<p>#61 People Kill People Ellen Hopkins Book</p>	<p>Catoctin HS Frederick HS Middletown HS</p>	<p>Sexual activity, language Sexual assault Inflammatory racial Commentary</p>
<p>#70 Slaughterhouse Five Kurt Vonnegut Book, eBook, CD Klinkowitz editions</p>	<p>Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Walkersville HS Windsor Knolls MS Catoctin HS Urbana HS Linganore HS Heather Ridge Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS</p>	<p>Explicit sex, violence Animal cruelty Bestiality Inflammatory religious commentary</p>
<p>#137 Lawn Boy Jonathan Evison</p>	<p>Linganore HS</p>	<p>Pedophilia, molestation profanity, vulgar language</p>

Frederick County Public Schools
191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

FCPS
RECEIVED
OCT 27 2022
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Complainant's Name Maria Vignola
Mailing Address [Redacted]
Email Address [Redacted] Phone [Redacted]
Title of Instructional Material See attached
Author See attached Type of Material see attached
Publisher or Producer (if known) _____
Name of school where this material is in use See attached

1. What are your general objections to the instructional material? The Board of Education has an obligation to educate children in reading, writing, math etc. The books in a school library should reflect those core principles, not perversion.

2. What are your specific objections to the instructional material? (Please cite concerns.) There is not a necessity to educate children in matters that are considered pornography and sexually orientated. Also there is setting children, many of which can be physically and psychologically affected in a very negative way that can damage their social life and function as a productive human being. Not to mention the Board of Education is officially attacking all core religious facts learned.
10-18-2022 Maria Vignola and attacking the family
Date Signature of Complainant

Return completed form to:
Deputy Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools, 191 South East Street, Frederick, MD 21701

Revised 06.13.12
FCPS Regulation 600-39

If parents want their children to access these books, they can do it on their own. All the other children should not have to be subjected to this in a school library

**FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/
deviant**

Title	Where	Reported Issue
#7 Jack of Hearts (and other Parts) orgy LC Rosen Book	Linganore HS	Sex - starts with a 4-way Sex with teachers Anal Sex
#8 Lucky Alice Sebold the Book for	Tuscarora HS	Rape The author lied about who rapist was. He went to Jail 16 years before DNA proved his innocence
#9 Push incest/abuse Sapphire Book	Catoctin HS Linganore HS Tuscarora HS	Baby/Child rape/ Basis for movie Precious
#10 S.E.X. - the all you need to know for teens Progressive guide to get you Through high school and college Heather Corinna Book knives,	Urbana HS	"How to" Sex guide sexual images masturbation, anal sex BDSM: Bondage Dominance Submission Masochism Blood play: using blood, cutting in sex
#11 Sold Patricia McCormick Book	Walkersville MS Brunswick HS Catoctin HS Gov. TJ HS Heather Ridge Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Aberrant sex acts Rape of a child, prostitution Explicit Violence
#12 Triangles: a novel obscene Ellen Hopkins Book	Middletown HS	Sexually Explicit sex acts Sadomasochism

**FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/
deviant**

Title	Where	Reported Issue
#13 Tricks Ellen Hopkins Book	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS	Explicit sex acts Child rape & abuse Adult & Child Prostitution
#14 A Court of Frost and Starlight Sarah J. Maas	Oakdale HS Urbana HS Catoclin HS Frederick HS Tuscarora HS Walkersville HS Downloadable	Profanity, explicit sexuality obscene references to sexual activities
#15 A Court of Mist and Fury sexual Sara J. Maas	Brunswick HS Frederick HS Middletown HS Walkersville HS Oakdale HS Catoclin HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, nudity, sexual activity
#16 A Court of Silver Flames sexual Sara J. Maas	Catoclin HS Frederick HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, nudity, sexual activity
#17 A Court of Thorns and Roses Sara J. Maas	Catoclin HS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS, Urbana HS Walkersville HS, Downloadable	Violence, sexual nudity, obscene sexual nudity, profanity

**FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/
deviant**

#18 A Court of Wings and Ruin nudity, Sara J. Maas activity,	Frederick HS	Violence, sexual
	Middletown HS	explicit sexual
	Oakdale HS	profanity
	Tuscarora HS	
	Urbana HS	
	Catoctin HS	
	Downloadable	
#20 All Boys Aren't Blue George M. Johnson gender ideology,	Frederick HS	Inflammatory racial
	Gov TJ HS	commentary, sexual nudity
	Middletown HS	sexual assault,
	Oakdale HS	drug use, profanity
	Urbana HS	
#26 Breathless activity Jennifer Niven	Crestwood MS	Obscene sexual
	Gov TJ HS	sexual nudity
	Frederick HS	
	Monocacy MS	
	Oakdale HS	
	Tuscarora HS	
	Urbana HS	
	West Frederick MS	
	Brunswick HS	
#28 Confess Colleen Hoover profanity,	Gov. TJ HS	Molestation, sexual assault, explicit sex acts,
		gender ideology, drug abuse, controversial religious commentary
#29 Crank activity, Ellen Hopkins	Heather Ridge	Explicit sexual
	Catoctin HS	sexual assault, profanity, drug abuse, glorified drug
use	Crestwood MS	
	Frederick HS	
	Gov TJ HS	
	Linganore HS	
	Middletown HS	
	Middletown MS	
	Oakdale HS	

Tuscarora HS
Urbana HS
Walkersville HS

**FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/Inflammatory/overly sexual/
deviant**

#30 Damsel activity, Elana Arnold	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS	Sexual assault, sexual sexual nudity, profanity
#31 Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda Jean-Philippe Stassen rape, vulgar	Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS	Graphic novel with violent and sexual images; language, violence
#32 Empire of Storms activities, Sara J. Maas	Brunswick HS Catoctin HS Frederick HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Walkersville HS Walkersville MS Downloadable	Explicit sexual sexual nudity, violence, profanity
#33 Forever for a Year violence, B.T. Gottfred	Linganore HS	Gender ideology, alcohol/drug use, suicide Commentary, controversial Racial commentary, sexual Activities
#34 Forever Judy Blume	Frederick HS Linganore HS Tuscarora HS Walkersville HS	Teen sex, explicit sex acts
#42 I Never Laura Hopper	Frederick HS Tuscarora HS	Explicit sex, profanity

**FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/
deviant**

#43 Identical Ellen Hopkins	Catoctin HS Gov TJ HS Heather Ridge Linganore HS Middletown HS Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS Urbana HS Warkersville HS	Child Molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse
#44 Infamous with minors, Elana K. Arnold	Brunswick HS Downloadable	Explicit adult sex profanity, alcohol use
#45 It's Perfectly Normal Robie H. Harris masturbation	Urbana MS Tuscarora HS	Illustration images of sex, illustrations of Same sex sexual activity
#46 Jesus Land: A Memoir activity Julia Sheeres language abuse	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS	Incest, obscene sexual sexual nudity, vulgar profanity, alcohol
#47 Kingdom of Ash sex Sarah J. Maas	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Linganore HS Middletown HS Urbana HS Downloadable	Violence, profanity, explicit sexual nudity
#50 Let's Talk About It illustrations on sex Erika Moen	Middletown HS	Graphic and masturbation, sexual Activity, gender ideology
#51 Living Dead Girl Elizabeth Scott	Brunswick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Tuscarora HS	Explicit violence & sex Child abuse

	Urbana HS Walkersville HS	
#55 Milk and Honey Rupi Kaur	Frederick HS Oakdale HS Walkersville HS	Non-sexual illustrations of nudity, sexual assault, sexual activities
FCPS Books that may be: inappropriate/pornographic/abusive/inflammatory/overly sexual/ deviant		
#56 My Friend Dahmer illustrations, Graphic novel & book corpses Derf Backderf	Frederick HS Heather Ridge Gov TJ HS Urbana HS	Disturbing Sex with sexual activity, cannibalism extreme violence, violence to animals Suicide, bullying, child abuse
#58 Normal People: a novel Sally Rooney	Frederick HS	Explicit sex Sadomasochism
#61 People Kill People language Ellen Hopkins Book	Catoctin HS Frederick HS Middletown HS	Sexual activity, Sexual assault Inflammatory racial Commentary
#70 Slaughterhouse Five Kurt Vonnegut Book, eBook, CD Klinkowitz editions religious	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Middletown HS Walkersville HS Windsor Knolls MS Catoctin HS Urbana HS Linganore HS Heather Ridge Oakdale HS Tuscarora HS	Explicit sex, violence Animal cruelty Bestiality Inflammatory commentary
#137 Lawn Boy molestation Jonathan Evison	Linganore HS	Pedophilia, profanity, vulgar language
#86 This Book Is Gay activity Juno Dawson	Frederick HS Gov TJ HS Linganore HS	Illustrations of sexual Instruction on how to reach reach orgasm

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Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
 Deputy Superintendent
 michael.markoe@fcps.org

Lisa Fowler
 Executive Assistant
 lisa.fowler@fcps.org

December 13, 2022

Via email: [REDACTED]

Nancy Allen
 [REDACTED]

Re: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Dear Ms. Allen:

I received the October 21, 2022 Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form you completed and the accompanying attachment.

Pursuant to FCPS Regulation 500-39 *Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*, upon receipt of a complaint, in my role of Deputy Superintendent I will determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant. I have asked Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation, to meet with you and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences. As of the date of this correspondence, it is my understanding that a meeting took place on November 28, 2022.

For your convenience and reference, an excerpt from the attached FCPS Regulation 500-39 outlining the process is included below:

B. Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use

1. *Upon receipt of a complaint, the deputy superintendent will initially determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences.*
2. *If the complainant maintains opposition to use of the material, the complainant may complete the attached "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" form. It is also available at www.fcps.org/forms Contested material will remain in use during the reconsideration process. Parents may request that alternative material be provided to their child.*
3. *Upon receipt of the reconsideration form, the deputy superintendent will confer with staff and determine whether the issues were covered in principle by previous decisions.*
4. *Upon receipt of staff's recommendation and the "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material," the deputy superintendent will study the request to determine if the matter has been covered in principle by a previous decision. If it is determined that the matter has not been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent may appoint a reconsideration committee or, may refer it directly to the Superintendent as described in paragraph 5. If it is determined that the matter has been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent will typically not appoint a reconsideration committee and will refer the matter directly to the Superintendent with a recommendation.*
5. *If the deputy superintendent has recommended that a reconsideration committee not be formed, the Superintendent will review the deputy superintendent's recommendation and the request for reconsideration. The Superintendent will either: (1) request the deputy superintendent convene a reconsideration committee; or (2) render a written decision and notify all individuals who filed a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" accordingly.*

Page 2
December 13, 2022
N. Allen

Please know we respect your right to challenge the instructional materials, and we will follow our process with fidelity to ensure your requests are thoroughly evaluated and any decision is supported by the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Markoe".

Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent

Attachment: FCPS Regulation 500-39
cc: Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation

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Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
 Deputy Superintendent
 michael.markoe@fcps.org

Lisa Fowler
 Executive Assistant
 lisa.fowler@fcps.org

October 24, 2022

Via email: [REDACTED]

Cindy A. Rose
 [REDACTED]

Re: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Dear Ms. Rose:

I received the October 14, 2022 Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form you completed and the accompanying attachment.

Pursuant to FCPS Regulation 500-39 *Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*, upon receipt of a complaint, in my role of Deputy Superintendent, I will determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant. I have asked Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation, to meet with you and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences. Dr. Cuppett's Executive Assistant, Linda Raines, will contact you to schedule time for you to meet with Dr. Cuppett.

For your convenience and reference, an excerpt from the attached FCPS Regulation 500-39 outlining the process is included below:

B. Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use

1. *Upon receipt of a complaint, the deputy superintendent will initially determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences.*
2. *If the complainant maintains opposition to use of the material, the complainant may complete the attached "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" form. It is also available at www.fcps.org/forms. Contested material will remain in use during the reconsideration process. Parents may request that alternative material be provided to their child.*
3. *Upon receipt of the reconsideration form, the deputy superintendent will confer with staff and determine whether the issues were covered in principle by previous decisions.*
4. *Upon receipt of staff's recommendation and the "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material," the deputy superintendent will study the request to determine if the matter has been covered in principle by a previous decision. If it is determined that the matter has not been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent may appoint a reconsideration committee or, may refer it directly to the Superintendent as described in paragraph 5. If it is determined that the matter has been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent will typically not appoint a reconsideration committee and will refer the matter directly to the Superintendent with a recommendation.*
5. *If the deputy superintendent has recommended that a reconsideration committee not be formed, the Superintendent will review the deputy superintendent's recommendation and the request for reconsideration. The Superintendent will either: (1) request the deputy superintendent convene a reconsideration committee; or (2) render a written decision and notify all individuals who filed a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" accordingly.*

Page 2
Rose, Cindy
October 21, 2022

Please know we respect your right to challenge the instructional materials, and we will follow our process with fidelity to ensure your requests are thoroughly evaluated and any decision is supported by the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Markoe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "M".

Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent

Attachment: FCPS Regulation 500-39
cc: Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation

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Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
 Deputy Superintendent
 michael.markoe@fcps.org

Lisa Fowler
 Executive Assistant
 lisa.fowler@fcps.org

October 31, 2022

Via email: [REDACTED]

Maria Vignola
 [REDACTED]

Re: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material

Dear Ms. Vignola:

I received the October 27, 2022 Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form you completed and the accompanying attachment.

Pursuant to FCPS Regulation 500-39 *Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*, upon receipt of a complaint, in my role of Deputy Superintendent I will determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant. I have asked Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation, to meet with you and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences. Dr. Cuppett's Executive Assistant, Linda Raines, will contact you to schedule time for you to meet with Dr. Cuppett.

For your convenience and reference, an excerpt from the attached FCPS Regulation 500-39 outlining the process is included below:

B. Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use

1. Upon receipt of a complaint, the deputy superintendent will initially determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences.
2. If the complainant maintains opposition to use of the material, the complainant may complete the attached "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" form. It is also available at www.fcps.org/forms. Contested material will remain in use during the reconsideration process. Parents may request that alternative material be provided to their child.
3. Upon receipt of the reconsideration form, the deputy superintendent will confer with staff and determine whether the issues were covered in principle by previous decisions.
4. Upon receipt of staff's recommendation and the "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material," the deputy superintendent will study the request to determine if the matter has been covered in principle by a previous decision. If it is determined that the matter has not been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent may appoint a reconsideration committee or, may refer it directly to the Superintendent as described in paragraph 5. If it is determined that the matter has been covered in principle, the deputy superintendent will typically not appoint a reconsideration committee and will refer the matter directly to the Superintendent with a recommendation.
5. If the deputy superintendent has recommended that a reconsideration committee not be formed, the Superintendent will review the deputy superintendent's recommendation and the request for reconsideration. The Superintendent will either: (1) request the deputy superintendent convene a reconsideration committee; or (2) render a written decision and notify all individuals who filed a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material" accordingly.

Page 2
October 31, 2022
M. Vignola

Please know we respect your right to challenge the instructional materials, and we will follow our process with fidelity to ensure your requests are thoroughly evaluated and any decision is supported by the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Markoe".

Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent

Attachment: FCPS Regulation 500-39

cc: Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation

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Mike Markoe, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent
michael.markoe@fcps.org

Lisa Fowler
Executive Assistant
lisa.fowler@fcps.org

TO: Dr. Kevin Cuppett, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation

FROM: Dr. Michael Markoe, Deputy Superintendent *MM*

DATE: December 1, 2022

SUBJECT: Convening Reconsideration Committee

The outcome of your November 28 meeting with Ms. Cindy Rose and Ms. Nancy Allen to discuss their Request for Reconsideration did not result in resolution of their concerns. Therefore, as outlined in *Regulation 500-39 Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*, Dr. Dyson has asked that a Reconsideration Committee be convened to review the books submitted for reconsideration.

Due to the significant number of books in the request (35), the committee should have a larger number of committee members so that the work of reviewing books can be shared across a broader membership. This will allow us to respond more quickly to the stated concerns. I will extend the deadline for presenting the final report to 120 days “after receiving the final testimony”, as the submission of 35 books constitutes an extenuating circumstance as noted in Section II, C. 2, a. of the regulation.

Please ensure that Ms. Rose and Ms. Allen have ample opportunity to offer testimony in the process. Verbal and written testimony are both acceptable.

Additional Written Testimony from Nancy Allen and Cindy Rose

#12 Jack of Hearts (and other Parts) by LC Rosen (erotica; minimizes the seriousness of deciding to have sex; anal sex; pedophilia and sex with a "teacher")

Page 1 - starts with a "four-way" - "All four of them were just going at it."

Page 2 - "How he gets all that D. A fourgy in Hannah Ling's hot tub? It's like his life is a porno." "Like when he got fucked b the coach from Highbrook in the locker room during the homecoming game."

Pages: 3,6, 17,24, 25, 57, 61

#5 Lucky by Alice Sebold (erotica, rated an "adult" book; rape, battery, drug use)

Page 5 - "I bit down on them when he grabbed me from behind and covered my mouth. He said these words: "I'll kill you if you scream." I remained motionless. "Do you understand? If you scream you're dead." I nodded my head." He pounded my skull into the brick. He cursed me. He turned me around and sat on my chest. I was babbling. I was begging. Here is where he wrapped his hands around my neck and began to squeeze. For a second, I lost consciousness."

Pages: 12, 13, 18,20,21,27,31, 55,60, 76,80, 99,100,119,157,171,174,185,218, 233,235,241

#15 Push by Sapphire (True story of a toddler being raped repeatedly by her father; extreme vulgarity and profanity, violence, self-harm, inflammatory racial comments, etc.)

Page 16 - "I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my father."

Page 17 - "He is skinny little white man about five feet four inches. A peckerwood as my mother would say."

Page 18 - "He look like a bitch just got a train pult on her."

Pages: 19,20,21,22,25,26,27,28,29, 32, 35,36, 37,44,45,46,47,48,49,50, 51, 53, 55,68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 81, 84, 85, 89, 90, 91, 93, 97, 99,101,102,103, 111,112,118,120,122,124,126,127,128,130,131,132,133,134,136,137,139, 142, 143, 145, 147, 150, 152, 163, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172, 173, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182,184,185,186,188,189,190,199,200,202,204,206,207,211,222,224,229, 230,235,

#17 S.E.X. -the all you need to know Progressive guide to get you through high school and college by Heather Corinna (instruction in deviant sex ; BDSM - bondage, fisting, dominance, submission, masochism; blood play during sex; self harm, using knives during sex acts)

Page 239 -Anal Sex/Intercourse - "AKA: Buttfucking, asslove, backdoor action.

Page 245- BDSM - "used to describe sexual dominance and submission play... "" ... the action may involve extending pleasure past the point of physical or emotional comfort; 'punishing' a partner via humiliation, sexual play, or withholding sexual activities..." "... S/M is an abbreviation for sadism and masochism, or sadomasochism, which means that one partner is giving pain (sado-), and the other is receiving is (-masochism). The B in BDSM usually refers to bondage.

Page 246 - Bondage/Restraint-"... the practice of having one partner (or less often, both partners) restrained in some way, usually with ropes, cords, other types of fabric ... during sexual activity Some people self-restrain during masturbation." "As with any other sexual activity, for this sort of play to be at all emotionally safe, it is vital everyone feels good about it and consents..." "Discussing bondage in advance of the activity is important..."

Page 24? - Body Fluid or Blood Play - Some people enjoy any number of body fluids sexually; ejaculate, vaginal fluids, menses, urine, or blood. They may simply enjoy lasing, feeling, or smelling them during sexual activities ... "golden showers" "So for the most part, this sort of play is quite risky, especially for younger couples, the majority of whom have no had sound or regular sexual health care."

Unknown page - "Deeper manual sex" "... manual sex is colloquially called fisting ... involves starting with one or two gloved fingers (and lube, added as you go) and slowly working up to more..."

#13 Sold by Patricia McCormick (aberrant sex acts, explicit violence, threats, rape of child, prostitution; available to children as young as 11)

Page 102 - "She grabs me by the hair and drags me across the room. She flings me onto the bed next to the old man. And then he is on top of me, holding me down ... ""His teeth dig into my lower lip. Underneath the weight of him, I cannot see or more or breathe. He fumbles with his pants, forces my legs apart, and I can feel him pushing himself between my thighs." Then he is on top of me, and something hot and insistent is between my legs. He grunts and struggles, trying to fit himself inside me." "With a sudden thrust I am torn I two."

Page 123 - "In between, men come. They crush my bones with their weight. They split me open. Then they disappear. I cannot tell which of the things they do are real, and which are nightmares. I decide to think it is all a nightmare. Because if what is happening is real, it is unbearable."

Pages: 106,107,109,110,111,115,116,120,125,127,128,129,132,133,135,141, 142,145,147,180,182,189,191,216,227,228,254,257,258,

#9 Triangles: a novel by Ellen Hopkins (erotica, sexually obscene [sex in public], explicit sex acts, submitting to sex to avoid conflict, sadomasochism, drug use, sex with strangers)

Page 3 - "Once upon a time, I might have slid a leg up over Jace, reveled in the way he stirred, hot and hard before the rest of him surfaced from dreams."

Page 8 - "... as advertised by the twitch of his hard-on." "I start to protest, to say something about having to change he sheets, but it's simpler just to give in for the ten whole minutes it will take to make him a satisfied man. And me a dutiful wife." "I close my eyes he slips two fingers inside me." "and when he pushes more than his fingers inside..."

Pages: 12, 15, 17,20,26, 30, 32, 34, 36,40, 53, 54, 56,57, 70, 71, 77, 79, 92,107, 112,118,119,120,121,122,128,133,135,140,148,156,159,160,161,162,168, 202,210,212,215,216,217,218,221,231,240,243,245,248,255,256,300,301, 304,308,311,317,323,324,332,346,358,364,366,367,368,394,395,400,424, 431,438,439,440,447,452,456,458,463,480,481,486,510,

#10 Tricks by Ellen Hopkins (erotica, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, explicit sex, child rape & abuse, adult and child prostitution)

Page 9 - "... why would God need a pecker anyway?"

Page 33 - "Swollen with desire." "... I even got hard, ... dropped onto her knees, lowered my zipper, started to do what I never suspected she knew how to do. Yes..."

Pages: 53, 55, 59,63, 80, 82, 84, 89,101,105,118,139,148,164,166,168,172,175, 176,177,179,196,203,224,225,235,250,251,263,266,277,280,292,299,300, 310,313,315,323,327,335,340,342,348,350,360,376,377,401,402,411,413, 414,415,416,418,419,420,422,424,442,444,449,451,458,471,483,488,497, 500,509,516,520,524,548,563,569,571,576,580,596,600,611,616,621,623, 640,652

#101 A Court of Frost and Starlight by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, profanity, explicit sexuality, public sex acts, obscene references to sexual activities.

Page 29 - "... I'd been so desperate for the feel and taste of her that I'd taken her during the flight down from..." "I was unfastening her pants. A moment later, I'd been inside her ... I'd climaxed at the husky sound of it."

Pages: 71, 80,140,199,206,230,261,265,273,277

#102 A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity)

Page 45 - "My attention went ... clever fingers that unfastened his pants. "... I bit my bottom lip as he removed his pants ... revealing the proud, thick length of him. My mouth went dry..." "Come here, 'he growled ... revealing my naked body..."

Pages: 148,157,159,173,181,194,314,323,364,390,395,465,485,520,534,562, 664,672,693,696,700,736,738,740,757,783,788,847,866,869,883,891, 895,902,903,904,953,959,960

#103 A Court of Silver Flames by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity)

Page 20 - "He took the invitation to survey her: long bare legs, an elegant sweep of hips, tapered waist - too damn thin - and full, inviting breasts ... "

Page 22 - "... recalling heated glances ... the wet hot meeting of their mouths, the sweat coating her as she rode him until pleasure and drink sent her into blessed oblivion..."

Pages:20, 22,23,26,29, 35,90, 96,142,190,248,251,253,254,255,256,258,277, 293,298,299,301,331,338,339,342,347,377,388,395,398,402,451,459,512, 530,532,537,573,584,613,679,682,722,747,799,803,806,826

#104 A Court of Thorns and Roses by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, profanity, violence, sexual nudity, obscene sexual nudity)

Page 172 - "His lips were smooth against my skin, his breath warm, and my knees buckled as he lifted my other hand to his mouth and kissed it, too. Kissed it carefully- in a way that made heat begin pounding in my core, between my legs."

Pages: 197,229,232,239,245,247,346,348,375,378,379,380,411

#105 A Court of Wings and Ruin by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, sexual nudity, explicit sexual activity, profanity)

Page 134 - "You had put your hands all over her. I had some my job too much with every instance I'd found ways to get Lucien to touch me in her presence, in Tamlin's presence."

Pages: 199,204,297,298,326,328,343,407,411,457,555,564,610,614,616, 620,675,750,851, 1002

#69 All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson (inflammatory racial commentary, sexual nudity, sexual assault, gender ideology, drug use, profanity)

Page vii - "This book will touch on sexual assault (including molestation) loss of virginity, homophobia, racism, and anti-blackness. These discussions at times may be a bit graphic, but nonetheless they are experiences that many reading this book will encounter or have already encountered. Within these pages, the word nigger or nigga appears, sometimes in full and sometimes abbreviated as n****. The same is true for fag and faggot, and their abbreviations."

Pages: 1,2, 3,4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13,20,22,23,28, 31,47,49, 50, 57, 58,63, 71, 75, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99,100,101,103,115,118,125,126,

127,132,140,148,159,160,164,165,168,169,170,172,175,177,182,184,201,202,203,207,208,209,210,225,228,233,237,244,245,247,257,262,263,266,269,270,271,272,292,296

#11 Breathless by Jennifer Niven (erotica, obscene sexual activity, sexual nudity, available to children as young as 11)

Page 18 - "Shane's hands are snaking their way down ... Suddenly there's something hard and damp against my thigh, and I shift a little so he can't slide in." "...I was never going to have sex with him. It always ends the same way - him coming into the air or onto his shirt or onto himself or against my leg."

Pages: 24,147,153,199,234

#35 Confess by Colleen Hoover (molestation, incest, sexual assault, explicit sex acts, profanity, gender ideology, drug abuse, controversial religious commentary)

Page 7 - "His smile briefly transforms him from a sixteen-year-old boy on his deathbed into a handsome, vibrant, full-of-life teen boy who is thinking about the first time he had sex."

Page 31 - "... I call You Don't Exist, God. And if You do, You Should Be Ashamed."

Page 67 - "My father has been having sex with me since I was eight years old. I'm thirty-three now and married with children of my own, but I'm still too scared to say no to him."

Pages: 8,22,43, 53, 56, 72, 82, 98,103,104,106,159,168,170,190,194,204,225,235,237,238,252,271,275,276,292

#29 Crank by Ellen Hopkins (explicit sexual activity, sexual assault, profanity, drug abuse; available to children as young as 11)

Page 67 - "Been smokin' pot since I was 13, couldn't quit if I tried..... The white stuff was a different story. He'd stay up all night eating zip, bowling and snorting line after line. Rent money, right up his nose."

Pages: 68, 69, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 92, 94, 95, 96, 99,101,102,104,113,114,129,138,161,163,264,265,266,268,269,274,278,305,308,310,312,315,337,339,340,341,344,344,352,378,379,401,402,403,404,412,437,439,485,490,502,503

#53 Damsel by Elana K. Arnold (erotica, sexual assault, sexual activity, sexual nudity, profanity)

Page 17 - "...he unbuttoned the front of his trousers, freed his yard, and pissed a steaming stream right there, at the top of the cliff, marking it as his own."

Pages: 56, 60,107,161,166,167,222,250,283,284,305

#156 Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda by Jean-Philippe Stassen (graphic novel involving minors with violent and sexual images, sex acts, rape, vulgar language)

Page 3 - "All those beauties who won't be sharing their soft little thighs with anyone anymore. All those sweet pieces of ass hacked to bits with machetes... What a waste!"

Pages:4,6, 10, 11, 19, 23, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39,40,45, 57, 58, 59, 62, 65,68, 71, 74,75, 76

#106 Empire of Storms by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, profanity, explicit sexuality, public sex acts, obscene references to sexual activities)

Page 24 - "It was an effort to keep from taking one of his hands and guiding it up to her breasts, to be him to touch, take, taste." "You know, I'm starting to think you're a sadist."

Pages: 25,230,292,316,349,358,360,374,397,420,427,428,480,491,492,511, 573,585,668

#27 Forever for a Year by B.T. Gottfred (erotica, relationship based on sex, alternate sexualities, violence, alcohol/drug use, suicide commentary, controversial racial commentary, sexual activity)

Page 7 - "She doesn't just let the vibrator through her slit like every day, but every day with a party, like the gay men. A guy now stare at her, want to talk to her, ask

Pages: 11, 12,22, 25,27,28, 30, 54, 90, 97,101,102,103,104,106,147,148,162, 167,168,169,170,177,178,183,186,192,194,201,207,208,209,212,213,214, 215,217,218,219,220,221,222,229,230,236,237,243,245,248,251,252,254, 55,256,257,258,261,265,267,268,270,277,282,284,287,289,291,299,300, 302,304,305,306,307,308,309,310,311,315,320,321,322,324,326,329,332, 335,338,343,344,350,354,359,370,371,377,380,383,389,390,408,414,415, 417,418,419

#80 Forever by Judy Blume (erotica, teen sex, explicit sex)

Page 1 - "Sybil Davison has a genius I.Q. and has been laid by at least six different guys."

Pages: 3, 11, 14, 21, 22, 26, 29, 31, 41, 50, 51, 56, 64, 77, 86, 89, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105,112,135,139,146,169,174,176,189,202,206

#87 I Never by Laura Hopper (erotica, explicit sex, nudity, profanity)

Page 7 - "Yes, I know plenty of seventeen-year-olds are dating, are having sex, and maybe even in love."

Pages: 8, 18, 22, 23, 25, 53, 83, 86, 87, 91, 105, 110, 118, 120, 125, 136, 137, 138, 141, 144, 147, 159, 161, 165, 168, 169, 170, 174, 175, 177, 199, 202, 211, 216, 217, 230, 231, 232, 233, 235, 238, 240, 241, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248, 249, 250, 254, 257, 259, 263, 277, 278, 283

#61 Identical by Ellen Hopkins (child molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm, suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse; available to troubled children at Heather Ridge)

Page 8 - "There's Daddy who comes home every day, dives straight into a tall amber bottle, falls into a stonewalled well of silence, a place where he can tread the suffocating loneliness."

Pages: 19, 26, 28, 41, 42, 57, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66, 80, 82, 90, 91, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 114, 121, 122, 123, 126, 152, 158, 167, 175, 179, 184, 202, 208, 210, 228, 232, 235, 236, 237, 238, 245, 259, 260, 262, 265, 267, 270, 271, 272, 280, 288, 301, 305, 315, 319, 320, 332, 336, 388, 393, 402, 407, 415, 418, 421, 441, 447, 459, 466, 467, 471, 472, 473, 476, 481, 486, 487, 488, 490, 501, 503, 506, 507, 516, 517, 519, 520, 523, 530, 536, 537, 542, 544, 552, 553, 555, 556, 563, 564

#55 Infamous by Elana K. Arnold (erotica, incest, emotionally disturbing end child raped by father; this book is written so you think it's a dark romance until you learn the girl was seduced and raped by her father)

Page 51 - "Eugene's penis was way bigger than a teen-sized tampon."

Pages: 52, 54, 73, 75, 76, 81, 83, 114, 115, 128, 145, 147, 148, 149

#199 It's Perfectly Normal (sexual instruction manual, inappropriate illustrations of masturbation, sexual activity, misleading information gender, i.e. "intersex"; available to children as young as 11)

Page 2 - "A label usually given at birth to humans.."

Page 3 - "If a person is born with a mixture, their sex is "intersex" [INCORRECT. ALL intersex people are either male or female. This subject is so complicated most adults don't understand it. It should NOT be a discussion for children.]

Pages:4,6, 8,9, 10, 11, 12, 13,14,20,21,22, 23, 24,25,26,27, 30, 31,
39,40,41,42, 43,44,45,46,49, 51, 52, 59,60,61,62, 65,68,69, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80,
81, 82, 83,84, 85, 89, 90, 92, 99

#84 Jesus Land: A Memoir by Julia Sheeres (incest, obscene sexual activity, nudity, vulgar language, profanity, alcohol abuse, anti-Christian)

Page 35 - "... can't help but notice when the big-chested girl next to me unhooks her bra and her boobs fall down like half-filled water balloons. My own boobs are still little-girl pointy..." 93,107,108,111,112,117,122,123,129,131,144,146,147,223,

Pages: 48, 75, 78,

#81 Kingdom of Ash by Sarah J. Maas (erotica, violence, torture, sexual nudity, explicit sex, profanity)

Page 472 - "... Rowan swept her into his arms, never tearing his mouth from hers as he carried her to the bed and set her down gently." "... worshipping her breasts as she arched up into each lick and suckle. Even when he knelt between her legs, his shoulders spreading her thighs wide, and tasted her, over and over, until she was writhing beneath him."

Pages: 586,717,719,744,760,762,968, 1095, 1102

#67 Let's Talk About It by Erika Moen (sex instruction manual, obscene sexual illustrations, masturbation, sexual activity, gender ideology)

Page 5 - "They're always telling us to just avoid sex. But maybe we should be getting help for the sex we might already be having."

Pages: 16, 18,22,23, 334, 35, 36, 37, 38,46, 47,48, 50, 64,65,66, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79,
80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 89, 90, 91,101,107, 11,112,113,114,115,117,118,119,120,
121,122,123,128,132,134,137,139,140,141,143,144,145,147,149,151,152,
153,154,155,157,158,159,160,162,164,165,166,168,171,172,174

#58 Living Dead Girl by Elizabeth Scott (explicit sex, sexual assault, violence, child abuse)

Page 4 - "You've pulled your skirt up to your waist, arms resting by your sides, palms up and open. Waiting. "Good," he says and lies on top of you. Heavy and pushing, always pushing. Good girl, Alice."

Pages: 20, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 36, 46, 48, 60, 68, 73, 98, 102, 139, 151, 167

#100 Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur (non-sexual illustrations of nudity, sexual assault, sexual activity)

Page 7 - "the first boy that kissed me held my shoulders down like the handlebars of the first bicycle he ever road, I was five he had the smell of starvation on his lips which he picked up from his father feasting on his mother at 4 a.m. He was the first boy to teach me my body was for giving to those that wanted that I should feel anything less than whole."

Pages 8, 13, 15, 19, 20, 29, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 45, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 58, 66, 67, 85, 92, 97, 99

#50 My Friend Dahmer by Derf Backderf (graphic novel with disturbing illustrations, sex with corpses, sexual activity, cannibalism, extreme violence, animal cruelty, suicide, bullying, child abuse; available to troubled children at Heather Ridge]

Page 51 – "Your average horny teenage boy, bubbling to brim with sexual frustration."

Page 54 – "In Dahmer's fantasies, his lovers ... were dead. Dead men. Corpses."

More pages not available for review.

#101 Normal People: a novel by Sally Rooney (erotica, explicit sex, sadomasochism, profanity)

Page 12 – "It occurred to Marianne how much she wanted to see him having sex with someone; it didn't have to be her, it could be anybody. It would be beautiful just to watch him."

Pages: 17, 22, 25, 27, 28, 37, 42, 43, 57, 62, 90, 100, 103, 107, 132, 135, 136, 138, 143

#64 People Kill People: a novel by Ellen Hopkins (gun violence, sexual assault, self-harm, inflammatory racial commentary, profanity, sexual activity)

Page 55 – "You just want to get laid." "... The gesture moves quickly from sweet to boner-worthy," and as your tongues collide, you lift her off the floor. Another time, you'd carry her into your bedroom."

Pages 75, 78, 80, 82, 84, 85, 137, 142, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152, 153, 160, 165, 169, 174, 176, 178, 184, 202, 219, 220, 243, 249, 271, 285, 336, 348, 362, 363, 388, 396, 400, 446, 448, 464

#87 Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut (explicit sex and violence, animal cruelty, bestiality, profanity, sexual nudity, inflammatory religious commentary)

{NOTE: I had requested this book be removed based on conversations with others who explained the educational value of this book. This book should not be available to middle school students. It should only be made available to students at Heather Ridge and in high school with parental consent.}

Page 15, 52, 55, 59, 111, 125, 139, 144, 150, 151, 153, 154, 156, 159, 163, 166, 168, 173, 175, 179, 191, 210, 244, 249, 250, 251, 254

#169 Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison (pedophilia, molestation, profanity, racially charged commentary, vulgar language; available in elementary school ages 5 - 11)

Page 22- "I guess I don't see the point of dating somebody just because. Sex doesn't seem like enough." "...He said I should "hit that shit," even if her face was "butter."

Pages: 25, 29, 30, 32, 36, 39, 54, 62, 66, 68, 71, 75, 94, 95, 106, 114, 119, 121, 122, 124, 132, 135, 141, 142, 170, 171, 181, 183, 188, 189, 204, 223, 224, 252, 259, 262, 263, 272, 278, 287

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor



LYNN MARSHALL, ESQ., CHAIR
JACOB ALTSHULER, ESQ.
VACANT

STATE OF MARYLAND
OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE BOARD

17 Official Opinions of the Compliance Board 13 (2023)

February 13, 2023

Frederick County Public Schools Reconsideration Committee

The Complainant alleges that a committee that will weigh in on whether to remove certain books from Frederick County Public Schools (the “School District”) is a “public body” subject to the Open Meetings Act (the “Act”). The School District responds that the committee does not meet the Act’s definition of “public body” and, thus, need not convene in meetings open to the public. For reasons we explain below, we conclude that the committee is not a public body subject to the Act.

Background

The Board of Education of Frederick County (the “Board”) “sets policy not otherwise controlled by state and federal laws.” Frederick County Public Schools, “Policies and Regulations,” <https://www.fcps.org/boe/policies> (last visited Feb. 13, 2023). “Regulations, set by the superintendent [of Frederick County Public Schools], define the procedures by which Board policy is carried out within the school system.” *Id.*

In 1993, the Board adopted a policy that “delegates to the superintendent the responsibility of selecting instructional materials.”¹ The policy provides in relevant part:

The superintendent is authorized to adopt regulations to administer the review and selection of instructional materials.

Instructional materials shall be selected after review and evaluation by appropriate staff following the criteria for selection of instructional materials. Textbooks for student use will be made available for public inspection and review. If, after public review, the textbooks are alleged to be inappropriate, the complainant(s) may request a review by following the regulations established by the superintendent.

¹ This policy was amended in 2007.

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If a Frederick County resident alleges that instructional materials already in use are inappropriate, that person may request a review. Regulations governing the reconsideration of materials currently in use are established by the superintendent.

Pursuant to this policy, the Frederick County Schools superintendent approved a regulation giving the deputy superintendent the option to appoint a “reconsideration committee” upon receipt of a complaint about instructional materials already in use. The regulation states that any such reconsideration committee “may be composed of at least nine members,” including four to five staff members, five community representatives, and two high school students (when the matter deals with a secondary level instructional material). A reconsideration committee established under this regulation “will meet and receive testimony from the complainant and staff concerning the contested material” and “may, at its discretion, receive oral or written testimony from proponents of the material.” The committee will, “[b]arring extenuating circumstances,” “render its report within 45 school days after receiving final testimony.” The deputy superintendent will provide the report and a recommendation to the superintendent, who will decide whether to remove the material. The decision is appealable to the Board of Education of Frederick County.

On December 1, 2022, the School District announced that it was forming a reconsideration committee in response to a parent’s complaint about thirty-five library books in circulation at Frederick County schools. The committee will have about sixty members—including parents, students, administrators, media specialists, and teachers—and the School District has indicated that the Committee will convene in meetings closed to the public.

Analysis

The Complainant alleges that the reconsideration committee’s meetings must, under the Act, be open to the public. The School District responds that the committee is not a “public body” as defined by the Act and, thus, is not subject to the Act’s openness requirements.

“As we have previously explained, an entity is subject to the Act only if it qualifies as a ‘public body’ as defined by the Act, which sets forth three separate tests.” 16 *OMCB Opinions* 101, 103 (2022). Under the first test, a multimember entity is a “public body” “if it was created by, among other legal instruments, ‘a rule, resolution, or bylaw.’” 13 *OMCB Opinions* 21, 22 (2019) (quoting § 3-101(h)(1)(ii)(6)).² The Complainant asserts that the reconsideration committee satisfies this test because it was created by what the Complainant characterizes as a “school system regulation.” To be sure, we have previously

² Unless otherwise noted, statutory references are to the General Provisions Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.

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said that “a ‘public body’ means an ‘entity’ that ‘is created’ by a legal instrument such as a charter, law, *regulation*, or bylaw.” 10 *OMCB Opinions* 101, 102 (2016) (emphasis added) (quoting § 3-101(h)(1)) (concluding that a city clerk and city staff did not collectively constitute a “public body”); *see also* 13 *OMCB Opinions* 16, 16 (2019) (recognizing that a committee created by a State regulation was a “public body”). But the School District points out that the regulation here, authorizing the creation of a “reconsideration committee,” was issued by the county *superintendent*, not the *Board of Education of Frederick County*, which itself is a public body subject to the Act. *See* Md. Code. Ann., Educ. § 3-103 (establishing a board of education for each county); § 3-5B-01 (specifying the composition of the Board of Education of Frederick County); Gen. Prov. § 3-101(h)(1)(ii)(2) (defining “public body” to include a multi-member entity established by statute). The School District argues that this distinction is critical when determining whether the reconsideration committee is also a public body.

As we explain below, we agree, based on the facts before us, that the school board’s policy did not establish the reconsideration committee. We also conclude that the superintendent’s regulation does not satisfy the “legal instrument” test in § 3-101(h).

In prior matters involving committees created by local school superintendents or their staff, we have looked to how involved the local school board was in establishing the committee to determine whether the entity is a public body for purposes of the Act. For example, in 7 *OMCB Opinions* 69 (2010), we found that a redistricting committee, established by the local superintendent, was not a public body, because “it was not established by formal action of the County Board [of Education].” 7 *OMCB Opinions* at 73. Although a policy of the local board “require[d] that the Superintendent develop procedures to implement the . . . Board’s redistricting policy,” *id.* at 70, the Board was not involved in “the creation, adoption, administration or interpretation of the Superintendent’s administrative procedures,” and there was no requirement that the Superintendent establish a redistricting committee to implement the Board’s policy, *id.* at 70-71. *See also* 16 *OMCB Opinions* 88, 88-89 (2021) (concluding that a Covid-19 operations advisory team, created by an interim local schools superintendent and not any formal action by the local school board, was not a public body subject to the Act); 12 *OMCB Opinions* 58, 58 (2018) (concluding that an enrollment task force was not a public body because the local schools chief executive officer “appointed the Task Force on her own volition”); 10 *OMCB Opinions* 51, 51 (2016) (concluding that a task force formed and appointed by the chief executive officer of a local school district was not a public body); 9 *OMCB Opinions* 81, 81 (2013) (concluding that a committee created by a local superintendent, under procedures adopted by the superintendent to carry out policies of the local school board, was not a public body subject to the Act).

We reached a contrary conclusion in 7 *OMCB Opinions* 21 (2010), which involved a different redistricting committee. Although the committee was appointed by a local

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assistant superintendent and the committee advised the assistant superintendent rather than the local school board, we determined that the committee was nonetheless a “public body” because a policy of the school board *required* the establishment of a redistricting committee. 7 *OMCB Opinions* at 27. The policy provided “little detail prescribing the committee’s governance,” but it *required* that an assistant superintendent establish a committee before the assistant superintendent could offer recommendations for presentation to the board. *Id.*

Here, the Board policy merely delegated to the superintendent the responsibility of selecting instructional materials. While that the policy authorized the superintendent to adopt “regulations” to administer the review and selection of instructional materials, and while the superintendent approved a regulation allowing for the creation of a reconsideration committee, the school board’s policy did not *require* the superintendent to establish such a committee. Our prior opinions suggest that, under these circumstances, the reconsideration committee is not a “public body” under the first test in § 3-101(h). See 7 *OMCB Opinions* at 70-71, 73.

That the superintendent approved what was referred to as a “*regulation*” allowing for the creation of the committee here—rather than “procedures,” as in 7 *OMCB Opinions* 69—does not change our conclusion. As noted above, we have previously said that a regulation may establish a public body subject to the Act. See 10 *OMCB Opinions* at 102; 13 *OMCB Opinions* at 16. But, as far as we know, the only time that we have recognized a public body established by regulation, the entity in question was the creature of a *State* regulation issued under the Administrative Procedure Act, specifically a regulation promulgated by the State Board of Education. 13 *OMCB Opinions* at 16 (referring to COMAR 13A.05.02.13(I)(1)). Although there may well be other circumstances under which something called a “regulation” qualifies as a “rule” within the meaning of the Open Meetings Act, we do not think that a policy or procedure approved solely by a local superintendent and “subject to change without notice,” Frederick County Public Schools, “Policies and Regulations,” <https://www.fcps.org/boe/policies> (last visited Feb. 9, 2023), constitutes a “rule” that may establish a “public body” under § 3-101(h)(1)(ii)(6), merely because the School District refers to it as a “regulation.”³ Rather, as we have explained in a prior opinion, “[t]he term “rule” connotes a binding requirement adopted through a formal process,” as opposed to the policy of an individual that “could presumably [be] change[d] at will” by the individual or their successor. 9 *OMCB Opinions* 314, 315 (2015) (concluding that a university president’s policy, establishing a committee, was not a “rule” under § 3-101(h)). We thus conclude that neither the school board policy nor the

³ A “rule” is the only possible legal instrument enumerated in § 3-101(h)(1) that could describe the superintendent’s regulation, which is plainly not a provision of the Constitution, a State statute, a county or municipal charter, a memorandum of understanding or master agreement among the State Department of Education and a majority of county boards of education, an ordinance, a resolution, a bylaw, or an executive order by the Governor or the chief executive authority of a political subdivision.

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superintendent's regulation is a legal instrument that could establish the reconsideration committee as a "public body" under the first test in § 3-101(h).

The committee also fails to satisfy the second test under § 3-101(h), which defines a "public body" as "any multimember board, commission, or committee" appointed by the Governor, the chief executive authority of a political subdivision, or an official subject to the policy direction of the Governor or chief executive authority of the political subdivision, "if the entity includes in its membership at least two individuals not employed by the State or the political subdivision." § 3-101(h)(2)(i). The committee's members were appointed by a deputy superintendent, who is neither the Governor nor the chief executive authority of a political subdivision nor someone subject to the policy direction of the Governor or chief executive authority of a political subdivision. *See 10 OMCB Opinions* at 52 (concluding that an entity created by the chief executive officer of the Prince George's County Public Schools did not satisfy the second test under § 3-101(h)).

Finally, we have no basis to conclude that the committee satisfies the third test, which encompasses "any multimember board, commission, or committee" that is appointed either by a public body in the executive branch, the members of which are appointed by the Governor, or by an official subject to such a public body's policy direction, provided that its membership includes at least two individuals who are neither members of the appointing entity nor employed by the State. § 3-101(h)(2)(ii). Even if the Board of Education of Frederick County had appointed the members of the reconsideration committee, the Board members themselves are not appointed by the Governor. *See Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 3-5B-01* (providing that members of the Board of Education of Frederick County are elected). And a deputy superintendent of the School District is not an official subject to the policy direction of a "gubernatorially-appointed public body that is 'in the Executive Branch of the State government.'" *10 OMCB Opinions* at 52-53 (quoting § 3-101(h)(2)(ii) and concluding that a committee established by the chief executive officer of Prince George's County Public Schools did not satisfy the third test); *see also 7 OMCB Opinion* at 26 (recognizing that neither a local board of education nor its staff is considered part of the executive branch of State government).

For all these reasons, we conclude that the reconsideration committee is not a public body subject to the Act.

Open Meetings Compliance Board

Lynn Marshall, Esq.

Jacob Altshuler, Esq.

Meeting 1: March 2, 2023

4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Central Office Board Room

191 South East Street

Frederick, MD 21701

Agenda and Notes

1. Meeting began at 4:30 p.m.
2. **Review of the Charge** - Kevin Cuppett

Dr. Cuppett reviewed the charge of the Reconsideration Committee, which is to review 35 library books currently in use in high schools and middle schools. The committee will review each book considering both the nature of the concerns and legal tenets surrounding the removal of library books.
3. **Communication Channels** - Scott Murphy

Communications about the committee's work should be directed to Dr. Cuppett and Mr. Murphy. Logistical matters related to meeting location, dates, times etc. should be directed to Linda Raines. The deliberative process should be kept confidential. All findings of the committee will be publicly available in the final report.
4. **Review Committee Norms** - Scott Murphy

Mr. Murphy reviewed the norms by which the committee would conduct its work.

 - There is no rank in the room when at the committee table. All participants are treated as peers.
 - Members will be engaged and contribute.
 - Members will challenge ideas, not people.
 - All members will be respectful and civil in their comments, responses, and body language.
 - Speakers will be heard one at a time and without interruption.
 - In consideration of hearing all feedback, members should be mindful of how often and how long they speak.
 - Equity in consensus building means including diverse perspectives.
 - Members should focus on criteria of review, not personal preferences.
5. **Legal Briefing** - Jamie Cannon, Chief Legal Counsel

Ms. Cannon provided a legal briefing to the committee on case law related to library books.
6. **Protocols for Review and Deliberations** - Kevin Cuppett

Dr. Cuppett shared the way that the committee would complete its work in the coming months. He shared relevant documents and protocols.
7. **Book Assignments and Receipt of Complainants Concerns** - Kevin Cuppett

Books were distributed to participants. Participants were provided detailed information about the complainants' concerns; this information was in each **Request for Reconsideration Record** for each book.
8. **Member Questions** - Kevin Cuppett

Dr. Cuppett fielded a number of questions from committee members. As a result of these questions, he clarified a few process items. When asked, Dr. Cuppett shared that none of

the complainants had read any of the books. The complainants gathered their information from websites.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Meeting 2: March 23, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Frederick High School
650 Carroll Parkway,
Frederick, MD 21701

Agenda and Notes

1. The meeting began at 4:30 p.m.
2. **Hearing of testimony:** Ms. Cindy Rose provided testimony at the meeting. Ms. Rose first read testimony provided in writing by Ms. Allen. Ms. Rose then provided her own verbal testimony. She also submitted those comments for the record. Ms. Rose answered several questions from the committee participants. She was asked whether she had read the books in question. She affirmed that she did not and would not. She explained that the objectionable content was all that should be needed for the books to be removed. Ms. Rose left the meeting at 4:48 p.m.
3. **Completing subcommittee work:** Committee members were reminded to discuss complainants' concerns and apply the legal tenets to their discussions. They were provided key questions that they should discuss in their subcommittees. They were then dismissed to their subcommittee sessions. Notes were taken in each subcommittee session. Each book was discussed by the readers. Readers provided a brief summary of the book, discussed the concerns of the complainants and then provided their analysis of the book based on the legal tenets. The subcommittee then discussed the book and made a recommendation.
4. **Reporting to the committee:** Subcommittees then reported their recommendation to the full committee. With each book, Dr. Cuppett asked the following questions:
 - a. Did the subcommittee address the concerns of the complainants?
 - b. Did the subcommittee apply the legal tenets to its analysis?
 - c. Did the subcommittee reach consensus on a recommendation to the full committee?
 - d. Were there any dissenting opinions?
 - i. If no, what was your recommendation?
 - ii. If yes, are you at an impasse?
5. **Responding to impasse:** In one case, a subcommittee was at an impasse on a recommendation. The full committee then agreed to assign two additional readers (parent, community member) not of the roles of the previous readers (student, administrator). This book will be discussed again at a later meeting.
6. **Question and answer:** Dr. Cuppett elicited questions from the committee. Discussion centered on process items. Suggestions were made for additional documents or document access to support the process.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Meeting 3: April 20, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Central Office Board Room

191 South East Street

Frederick, MD 21701

Agenda and Notes

1. The meeting began at 4:30 p.m.
2. **Hearing of testimony:** Ms. Nancy Allen provided testimony at the meeting. Ms. Allen first read testimony provided in writing by Ms. Rose. Ms. Allen then provided her own verbal testimony. She also submitted those comments for the record. Ms. Allen answered several questions from the committee participants. She was asked what she meant (in her request for reconsideration submission) by "gender identity." Ms. Allen left the meeting at 4:56 pm.
3. **Completing subcommittee work:** Committee members were reminded to discuss complainants' concerns and apply the legal tenets to their discussions. They were provided key questions that they should discuss in their subcommittees. They were then dismissed to their subcommittee sessions. Notes were taken in each subcommittee session. Each book was discussed by the readers. Readers provided a brief summary of the book, discussed the concerns of the complainants and then provided their analysis of the book based on the legal tenets. The subcommittee then discussed the book and made a recommendation.
4. **Reporting to the committee:** Subcommittee's then reported their recommendation to the full committee. With each book, Dr. Cuppett asked the following questions:
 - a. Did the subcommittee address the concerns of the complainants?
 - b. Did the subcommittee apply the legal tenets to its analysis?
 - c. Did the subcommittee reach consensus on a recommendation to the full committee?
 - d. Were there any dissenting opinions?
 - i. If no, what was your recommendation?
 - ii. If yes, are you at an impasse?
5. **Responding to impasse:** In several cases, subcommittees were at an impasse on a recommendation and assigned additional readers within the subcommittee. They ensured that additional readers were serving in different roles; this was done intentionally to expand the nature of the perspectives.
6. **Question and answer:** Dr. Cuppett elicited questions from the committee. Discussion centered on process items. Suggestions were made for additional documents or document access to support the process. The committee also agreed to extend future meetings by 15 minutes to ensure adequate time was available for complainant testimony.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Meeting 4: May 11, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Central Office Board Room

191 South East Street

Frederick , MD 21701

Agenda and Notes

1. The meeting began at 4:30 p.m.
2. **Hearing of testimony:** No verbal testimony was given as complainants were not present. Written testimony was submitted by Ms. Rose and Ms. Allen. Printed copies were given to all committee members with time allotted for committee members to read. Time was provided to committee members to review that testimony.
3. **Questions for complainants:** Dr. Cuppett shared that some committee members may have additional questions for the two complainants, who both indicated they would be present for the final committee meeting. Dr. Cuppett suggested that committee members could submit questions they had for the complainants in advance of the next meeting. The committee agreed. A Google form will be sent to the committee to gather questions.
4. **Completing subcommittee work:** Committee members were reminded to discuss complainants' concerns and apply the legal tenets to their discussions. They were provided key questions that they should discuss in their subcommittees. They were then dismissed to their subcommittee sessions. Notes were taken in each subcommittee session. Each book was discussed by the readers. Readers provided a brief summary of the book, discussed the concerns of the complainants and then provided their analysis of the book based on the legal tenets. The subcommittee then discussed the book and made a recommendation.
5. **Reporting to the committee:** Subcommittee members then reported their recommendation to the full committee. With each book, Dr. Cuppett asked the following questions:
 - a. Did the subcommittee address the concerns of the complainants?
 - b. Did the subcommittee apply the legal tenets to its analysis?
 - c. Did the subcommittee reach consensus on a recommendation to the full committee?
 - d. Were there any dissenting opinions?
 - i. If no, what was your recommendation?
 - ii. If yes, are you at an impasse?
6. **Responding to impasse:** In several cases, subcommittees were at an impasse on a recommendation and assigned additional readers within the subcommittee.
7. **Question and answer:** There were no questions.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Meeting 5: June 1, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Central Office Board Room

191 South East Street

Frederick , MD 21701

Agenda and Notes

1. The meeting began at 4:30 p.m.
2. **Hearing of testimony:** No verbal testimony was given as complainants were not present. Written testimony was submitted by Ms. Rose. Printed copies were given to all committee members to read. Time was provided to committee members to review that testimony.
3. **Completing subcommittee work:** Committee members were reminded to discuss complainants' concerns and apply the legal tenets to their discussions. They were provided key questions that they should discuss in their subcommittees. They were then dismissed to their subcommittee sessions. Notes were taken in each subcommittee session. Each book was discussed by the readers. Readers provided a brief summary of the book, discussed the concerns of the complainants and then provided their analysis of the book based on the legal tenets. The subcommittee then discussed each book and made a recommendation.
4. **Reporting to the committee:** Subcommittee's then reported their recommendation to the full committee. With each book, Dr. Cuppett asked the following questions:
 - a. Did the subcommittee address the concerns of the complainants?
 - b. Did the subcommittee apply the legal tenets to its analysis?
 - c. Did the subcommittee reach consensus on a recommendation to the full committee?
 - d. Were there any dissenting opinions?
 - i. If no, what was your recommendation?
 - ii. If yes, are you at an impasse?
5. **Responding to impasse:** In four cases, subcommittees were still at an impasse. After a discussion with the full committee, a suggestion was made to have a new subcommittee read the four books still in need of resolution. It was suggested that the subcommittee be composed of existing committee members as outlined in FCPS Regulation 500-39, and that all subcommittee members read the book. Dr. Cuppett confirmed with the full committee that this was the recommended path forward for the final four books.
6. **Question and answer:** There were no questions.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Meeting 6: July 20, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Central Office Board Room

191 South East Street

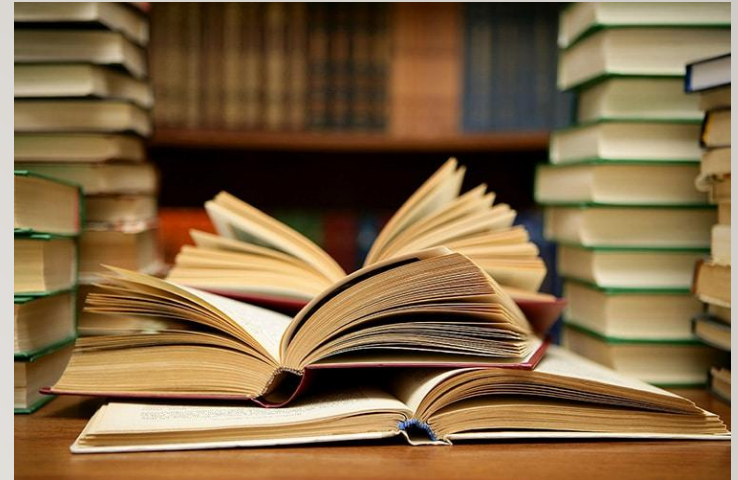
Frederick, MD 21701

Agenda and Notes

1. The meeting began at 4:30 p.m.
2. **Hearing of testimony:** No verbal testimony was given as complainants were not present. Written testimony was submitted by Ms. Rose. Printed copies were given to all committee members to read. Time was provided to committee members to review that testimony.
3. **Completing subcommittee work:** Committee members were reminded to discuss complainants' concerns and apply the legal tenets to their discussions. They were provided key questions that they should discuss in their subcommittees. They were then dismissed to their subcommittee sessions. Notes were taken in each subcommittee session. Each book was discussed by the readers. Subcommittee members discussed the concerns of the complainants and then discussed their analysis of the book based on the legal tenets. The subcommittee then made a recommendation for both books.
4. **Reporting to the committee:** Subcommittees then reported their recommendations. With each book, Dr. Cuppett asked the following questions:
 - a. Did the subcommittee address the concerns of the complainants?
 - b. Did the subcommittee apply the legal tenets to its analysis?
 - c. Did the subcommittee reach consensus on a recommendation to the full committee?
 - d. Were there any dissenting opinions?
 - i. If no, what was your recommendation?
 - ii. If yes, are you at an impasse?
5. **Question and answer:** There were no questions.
6. The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

BOOK REVIEW

Legal Briefing, Criteria and Constitutional Principles



Jamie R. Cannon, Esq., Frederick County Public Schools Chief Legal Counsel

March 2, 2023 – Presentation for the Reconsideration Committee

Guiding Supreme Court Principles

- *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico* (1982)
- *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)

Pico

Background: Society is best served by a public educational system that teaches through “wide exposure” to a “robust exchange of ideas” and that “no school can function as a marketplace of ideas unless students enjoy an atmosphere conducive to debate and scholarly inquiry.”

Issue before the Court: Does the First Amendment impose any limitations upon the discretion of a local board to remove library books?

Holding of the Court: Yes



Rationale of the Decision:

- 1) The First Amendment rights of students may be directly and sharply implicated by the removal of books from the shelves of a school library.
- 2) The First Amendment is to provide access to discussions, debate, and dissemination of information and ideas.
- 3) Access to information prepares students for active and effective participation in the pluralistic, often contentious society in which they will soon be adult members.
- 4) A library is a place dedicated to quietness, to knowledge, and to beauty; it is the principal locus of such freedom.



Rationale of the Decision:

- 5) The library is a matter of free choice.
- 6) Key to the decision to remove is based on the motivation.
- 7) If it is because the school board didn't like the ideas expressed, that reason would be unconstitutional.
- 8) However, if the removal was based on the educational suitability or that the content was pervasively vulgar or obscene, that may be a permissible rationale.

Miller

Issue before the Court: How have the Courts defined “obscene”?

Holding of the Court: The Miller test was developed in the 1973 case *Miller v. California*. The Miller test is three-pronged. Any material that satisfies this three-pronged test may be found obscene.

- 1) Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests (i.e., an erotic, lascivious, abnormal, unhealthy, degrading, shameful, or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion);
- 2) Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way (i.e., ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sado-masochistic sexual abuse); and
- 3) Whether a reasonable person finds that the matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

Key Lower Court Decision

Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School Board of Directors 638 F.2d 438 (1980)

Issue before the Court: Can books be removed from a library if deemed vulgar?

Holding of the Court: Yes

Rationale of the Decision:

Young students have no constitutionally protected right of access on school property to material that, whatever its literary merits, is fairly characterized as vulgar and indecent in the school context.* The objection of the parents was to the vulgarity and indecency of language in the books. The Board voted to remove *The Wanderers* from the library and to place *Dog Day Afternoon* on a restricted shelf. The Board acted in both instances because of the books' vulgar and indecent language.

Note: There is no suggestion that the books were complained about or removed because of their ideas, nor that the Board members acted because of political motivation.

*The books involved were *Dog Day Afternoon* by Patrick Mann and *The Wanderers* by Richard Price.



Counts v. Cedarville School District (2003) APPENDIX 8

Issue before the Court: Is it unconstitutional to restrict a student from checking out a *Harry Potter* book from the library by requiring parent permission?

Holding of the Court: Yes

Rationale of the Decision:

The Court held that the right to read a book is an aspect of the right to receive information and ideas, an inherent corollary of the rights of free speech explicitly guaranteed by the Constitution. There is no evidence *Harry Potter* books created disruption and to put a restriction to check out the books had a stigmatizing effect that a student had a “bad book.”

Note: The reconsideration of materials process was used, the committee was formed and voted unanimously not to restrict access to the book. The board rejected the committee’s recommendation.



Based on the Courts' analysis of the cases, criteria below may be used as you evaluate books as a Reconsideration Committee:

- 1) Focus your review on awareness of the Constitution and the protection to receive ideas and receive information conducive to debate and scholarly inquiry
- 2) Evaluate based on age suitability
- 3) Evaluate based on whether material is deemed pervasively vulgar or obscene
- 4) Evaluate pervasively vulgar or obscene under the Miller test
- 5) Evaluate motivation of the decision and consider if it is based on:
 - Political pressure
 - Personal dislike for content
 - Personal dislike for ideas
 - Based on it conflicting with personal values, personal concepts of morality, or religious beliefs

Complainant Testimony:

Shared verbally by Cindy Rose at March 23, 2023 Reconsideration Committee meeting

Written version submitted as a part of testimony.

FCPS policy 501 *Distribution Selection and Review of Instructional Materials* states that library materials, are used to supplement instruction or are for recreational reading.

FCPS libraries contain two types of material then, those for instruction or those for recreation.

Instructional material is supposed to be vetted by at least one member of Board of Education before adoption. FCPS policies are almost silent on how to vet and approve "recreational reading." It appears that the librarian at any given school has complete autonomy over what's there.

If the books up for reconsideration are purely "entertainment," I ask why does FCPS consider sexually explicit material entertainment for children? If they are part of FCPS lessons, we need to see those lessons.

I was concerned to find FCPS' library inventory disproportionately offers materials relating to sex over abstinence. Per the school catalog, there are over 1,300 titles about sex; over 310,000 when you add magazine articles. There are 25 titles on abstinence, 9,000 when you add magazine articles. FCPS is supposed to teach "abstinence plus." That means the focus is supposed to be on "abstinence" not the plus. I'll mention that although I've asked, I've yet to be shown a lesson on abstinence. The library catalog shows a lot of plus and very little abstinence.

During my time on the Family Life Advisory Committee I would hear "they can get this information on the internet" or "they're going to do it anyway, we might as well teach them to be responsible." I fail to see the logic in that statement. In regards to drugs is FCPS saying "they are going to get them anyway, we may as well teach them how to be safe and responsible? Why are we doing it for sex?"

FCPS shouldn't be normalizing, facilitating and glorifying behaviors that many adults have difficulty with.

Per the National Center of Victims of Crime 2 out of 3 children between the ages of 12 and 17 are sexually abused. In their flyer on the stages of grooming victims, one of the things groomers do is show sexually explicit materials to children to arouse them - to normalize children having sex. To make the child believe they are doing nothing wrong.

FCPS is normalizing sex for children. I have a higher standard than that. I hope you have a higher standard than that.

I am asking the books in question be removed from FCPS shelves, not the universe. All of these books can be found at the local library or wherever you buy books. No one is calling for a book ban. That's ridiculous.

One of the books before you - *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah Maas, is one of seven books by her on the list for reconsideration. It's erotica. Sex sells, so she writes erotica. Her books are written to stimulate and sexually arouse the reader. It's rated "Not for Minors" by the same system that rates movies. **[SHOW RATING SYSTEM] USA Today's review of this book – "Passionate, violent, sexy and daring." Kirkus Reviews said - "Hits the spot for fans of dark, lush, sexy fantasy."**

I'm going to ask you a very uncomfortable question, please answer in your head, where [sic] any of you sexually aroused when reading any of these books? Are you comfortable knowing these books are available to middle school children?

My complaint is about the overly sexual content in these books and I question the academic value they bring to our classrooms. It's about immature minds having access to books with certain themes being made available to them without their parent's knowledge. Parents may not want their child reading what the FCPS librarian

finds acceptable. That's one person. One person's opinion got most of these books in our libraries. They were not properly vetted.

I believe FCPS has asked you to apply the Miller test to the materials you were asked to read. The key phrase throughout Miller is "community standards." It isn't so much what the law decides is "obscene" but we here in Frederick County find "obscene." What do we find appropriate for a child to have access to without parental guidance?

One of the prongs in the Miller test is whether the average person - "average" person, not your politically activist or ideolog [sic], but your average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds the materials show an excessive interest in sex, erotica, nudity, ejaculation, things like that. I think these books pass that test, especially when you become aware the FCPS library catalog has a 1 to 53 ratio regarding sex. For every one book on abstinence, there are 53 books on sex. Out of a TOTAL of 1,325 books, only 25 are on abstinence. That's a ratio of 25 to 1,325, or 1 to 53. That means that only 1.9% of the total number of books in this genre are about abstinence. 98.10% are about having sex or how to have sex. I think that's an excessive interest.

I had my math checked by retired FCPS teacher Nick Diaz so I'm confident in the numbers.

When you combine that with the fact that FCPS staff have found condoms in stairwells and bathrooms are locked because students have been caught engaging in sex – I believe there's an excessive focus on sex and sexuality not just in these books, but in FCPS.

One of my granddaughters attends an FCPS middle school. About a month ago she was threatened by a male classmate. He said he was going to rape her and cum in her mouth. Middle school children are notoriously hormonal and irrational. Do they really need to have access to these kinds of materials? Many of these books contain not just violence, but sexual violence.

U.S. Federal Law on Obscenity has a lower threshold than the *Miller* test.

~~Section 1466A of Title 18, United State Code,~~ **Matters involving minors can be deemed obscene if it shows an image of someone having sexual intercourse and if the image lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. You can get up to 10 years in jail if convicted.**

US Code 1470: ***Transfer of obscene material to minors*** *Whoever, using the mail or any facility or means of interstate or foreign commerce, knowingly transfers obscene matter to another individual who has not attained the age of 16 years ... or attempts to do so, shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.*

All FCPS books can be obtainable by any student at any school through a library transfer. FCPS has transferred books from high school to elementary school. Dr. Dyson's office could not assure me that an elementary student could not get their hands on one of these books.

In closing I ask again: What is the academic value in any of the books in question?

I believe FCPS takes the responsibility of being sexually active way to [sic] casually. Getting into a sexual relationship is serious business. I believe in preserving childhood and innocence by not rushing adulthood. You get to be young and innocent for a very short time. Let's let the parents decide when their children are ready for any one of these books.

END

Submitted by Nancy Allen as a part of testimony - Thursday, March 23, 2023

Hello, Nancy Allen is submitting the following testimony for the Review Committee:

My testimony comes before you today for the books under the reconsideration submission process (Policy 501 and Reg. 500-39). In our reconsideration submission, we identified the list of books before you today. You were asked to review 13 of the 35 books under review. A full list of the books with identified content was submitted as part of the reconsideration process. I will speak in general to the 13 books this committee was asked to review.

My position stands that the books before you today should be removed from the library shelves of FCPS. The FNP and other social media sites have written and posted positions that indicate we have asked for the banning of books in Frederick County. I would like to clarify our position. Our goal is not to ban books. We are asking for these books to be removed from our public school libraries. Banning a book would mean you are prohibiting possession and publication of a book. We are asking for the removal of the books as a corrective action NOT a punitive action.

The books that are available to students in the public school system deserve a greater level of scrutiny and oversight than those that are selected for loan at the public library or purchased through outside sources by students and parents. The selection criteria in which FCPS library books are approved and purchased is based on the book having one favorable review, and that alone is what determines the selection for public school library shelves. There is no other guidance or criteria in which a book is approved for purchase. I argue the main reason these books are now on the shelves in our schools is because the criteria under which books are selected is without adequate oversight.

The sexually explicit content in many of the books would be classified as child pornography under the U.S. Federal Law on Obscenity and Child Pornography. Sexually explicit content and graphic images depicting sexual acts and behaviors holds little to no educational value for the majority of students in a public school system and the public system is charged with serving the majority not the minority interests of specifically selected groups.

I would also like to bring to your attention to a policy that is currently in place for student publications. This policy 436 -- titled SCHOOL-SPONSORED PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA / STUDENT JOURNALISTS.

Policy 436 states the following:

1. Any school-sponsored publication or school-sponsored media which is deemed as follows, shall not be published or distributed:

- Lewd, vulgar, obscene;
- Libelous or slanderous;
- Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy or has the intent to harass, threaten or intimidate;
- Violates federal or state law; or
- Incites students to create a clear and present danger of the commission of an unlawful act, the violation of Board policies or FCPS regulations, or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the public school.

In comparison to the material under review, if we were to follow policy 436, the majority of the books would be in question under the lewd, vulgar and obscene guidance as well as violation of federal and state laws. How can a school system allow content prohibited in school publications to reside on their library shelves? Can we really try to parse out the differences in this situation? Policy 436 outlines the permissibility of content for students and student publications. Why the double standard for publications from various outside sources? I will close with this final question for you to consider.

If lewd, vulgar and obscene content is not acceptable for a student to write or publish, why is it acceptable for our library shelves?

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Points for Reconsideration:

Selection criteria for the books now residing on FCPS books shelves – The books that are available to students in the public school system deserve a greater level of scrutiny and oversight than those that are selected for loan at the public library or purchased through outside sources by students and parents.

The selection criteria in which FCPS library books are approved and purchased is based on the book having one favorable review, and that alone is what determines the selection for public school library shelves. There is no other guidance or criteria in which a book is approved for purchase. I argue the main reason these books are now on the shelves in our schools is because the criteria under which books are selected is without adequate oversight.

Sexually explicit content generally does not have any substantive educational value for the k-12 population – why are we so determine to place before our students content that is sexually explicit? There are so many other subjects that would assist our students in advancing knowledge in the core subject areas that would yield greater academic performance outcomes.

The sexually explicit content in many of the books would be classified as child pornography under the U.S. Federal Law on Obscenity and Child Pornography. Sexually explicit content and graphic images depicting sexual acts and behaviors holds little to no educational value for the majority of students in a public school system and the public system is charged with serving the majority not the minority interests of specifically selected groups.

Oversight and Guidance through Parental Consent – Parents are at a disadvantage when understanding the content of school libraries, many due to the lack of time they take to review books, and others because they are blindly trusting the schools to do the right thing. Until this process of reconsideration began, the majority of parents I would safely say, trusted the school media specialists to be making appropriate selections for their libraries. As stewards for their children during the hours they are in our care, we must make a more conservative and discerning effort in the selection of books.

I would also like to bring to your attention to a policy that is currently in place for student publications. This policy 436 – titled SCHOOL-SPONSORED PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA / STUDENT JOURNALISTS.

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If lewd, vulgar and obscene content is not acceptable for a student to write or publish, why is it acceptable for our library shelves?

Confess

by Colleen Hoover

His hands lower until he grips my thighs, and then he lifts me. He carries me across the room and lowers me down onto the bed. He slides on top of me, cradling my head between his forearms...His hands meet the button on my jeans, and he unbuttons them...He presses himself against me at the same time his tongue slips inside my mouth. I moan, and the room begins to spin, and the combination of his words and his touch and his body on mine are like gasoline on a fire. He begins to pull my shirt and bra over my head and I do nothing to help him or stop him...I feel his hands on my hips as he hooks his fingers beneath my panties and pulls them down. And it isn't until he's on top of me again that I find the strength to open my eyes...**He pushes into me, and I'm not sure which is louder- his groan or my sudden outburst of "Oh my God."**

He buries himself deep inside me and holds still. He looks down at me breathlessly and smiles. "I can't tell if you said that because this feels incredibly good to you or if you're making fun of my initials again." I smile between gasps. "Both." Our smiles fade when he begins moving again...**He moves in and out of me, slowly,** as his lips begin to feather soft kisses across mine...He pulls back again and pushes against me at the same time his lips meet my cheek. He begins to find a rhythm between each kiss, and he keeps his eyes focused on mine with every thrust...He pushes into me, hard, and I want to scream. I want to cry. I want to beg him to never stop, but what I want even more is this kiss. I want to remember every part of it. I want to engrave the taste of him onto my tongue. The next several minutes are a blur of moans, kisses, sweat, hands, and mouths. He's on top of me, and then I'm on top of him, and then he's on top of me again. When I feel the warmth of his mouth meet my breast, I completely lose myself. I let my

head fall back and my eyes fall shut and my heart falls straight into the palms of his hands. I'm so worked up, so dizzy, so grateful that I made the decision to stay, that I can't even tell when it's over. I'm still breathing so heavily, and my heart is pounding against my chest. I'm not sure that simply reaching a climax with Owen signifies the end of this experience.

- Page 238

He begins to kiss his way down my throat until the warmth of his breath teases my breast. He takes me in his mouth, and I moan softly...His hands slide down my waist, down my thighs, until his mouth begins to follow their direction...He catches my gasp with his mouth, and he picks me up, carrying me out of the shower and straight to the bed. ..I don't get lost in how it feels when he pushes himself inside me.

- Page 271

CONCERNS:

The book gives an exciting portrayal of meth use (crank), marijuana use, tobacco smoking, and underage alcohol use which gives a positive, electrifying spin on illegal drug use. There are also sexually explicit scripts including a rape and attempted rape. Additionally, there is a teen pregnancy and commentary on physical ease of and access to abortion without parental knowledge.

The New York Times bestseller

CRANK

Ellen Hopkins

CRANK

Page 341

BY ELLEN HOPKINS

It started with a kiss crank-revved, pistons firing full bore, passion firecrackered in tiny bursts from thigh to belly button.

Oh, baby. I want you so bad!

"B-b-bad to the bone?" We laughed, but it wasn't alright. Not for long.

My shirt tore open. "Wait."

I've waited for weeks. Put up and shut up. Kisses segued to bites. Bruises. Pain rippled through my body. "Brendan, please stop."

No. You promised, You damn little tease. Off came my shorts. Down went his zipper. I realized I was in serious trouble. "I'll scream."

Go ahead. No one can hear but skunks and coyotes.

Still, as I opened my mouth, his hand slapped down on it. Those sublime muscles hardened. Just relax. You'll love it. My brand-new Victoria's Secrets shredded, and I felt the worst of Brendan pause, savoring my terror. They all love it. Had he done it a different way, I might have responded with excitement. Instead, I froze as he pushed inside. There it is.

Oh, God. There it goes. It went, all right, with an audible tear. Pain mushroomed into agony and all I could do was go stiff.

You weren't lying, you bitch!

I laid there, sobbing, as he worked and sweated over me. Stoked by the monster, it took him a long time to finish.

Give me a line, I'll give you an encore.

He pulled away sticky and bloody. Throbbing inside and out, I didn't dare look him in the eye.

Page 96

Because it wasn't that it was gentle persuasion. I can't get enough of you. Sweetest coercion. Let me eat you up. Skin to skin, belly to shoulder. Sweet as puddin'. It was body rush after body rush, intensity building. Touch me there. Hot flush, raging blush, quick-start ignition. See how much I need you? Ice flash, instant crash, voices outside the door.

No! Don't stop now! ...I've got to have all of you. It was hands, exploring taboo places. Oh, God! You're perfect! Lips and tongue, not far behind.

Page 113-14

Yo, I think this bitch has been crankin'.

That was license enough. Bodies bumped, pushed me into a doorway, blocked. Ever done a three-fer? Hands covered my mouth, rough, held my arms, strong tore my clothes, vicious. Fear danced up my spine, jolted my brain, dripped onto the ground.

No! I screamed into dirty flesh. Not this way! Buttons burst, zippers opened, I closed my eyes, braced for pain.



Forever for a year

By B.T. Gottfred

Then we took off our shirts. And she reached down my pants. Which felt incredible, like always, but...I don't know. I wanted a new kind of incredible too. I said, "Can I take off your bra?"...Then we kissed with even more crazy passion than usual and eventually she touched me and I came. She put her bra back on, but we left our shirts off,...But only after I asked if she'd take her bra off again. When we woke up, I was excited again. So I kissed her and she kissed me. And then she grabbed me, but then I said, "Can I touch you?""I want to make you have an orgasm."..."I know," she said, then she grabbed my hand and pushed it toward the top of her jeans. And I reached down and felt her pubic hair and she gasped. ..."I promise," I said, and then I unzipped her jeans and slid them off. She was naked except for her underwear. Then she undid my jeans and pulled them off. I had to help at the end because I'm taller. So I was naked except for my underwear too. I looked at her whole body, up and down, and caressed it with my right hand...She reached again behind and both our hands undid the bra together. Then she slid it off and there she was, Carolina, and her naked boobs. They were small. She was right. They didn't look anything like what I saw on the internet..."Can I touch them?"..."You've touched them before."..."Yes, but never without your bra."..."Yes, silly, you can touch them."

So I did. And then I kissed her. And then I pulled her against my chest and I loved the feel of her cool nipples against mine..."This feels so good," I said when we took a break from making out. The we kissed with even more crazy passion than usual and eventually she touched me and I came.

-Page 236

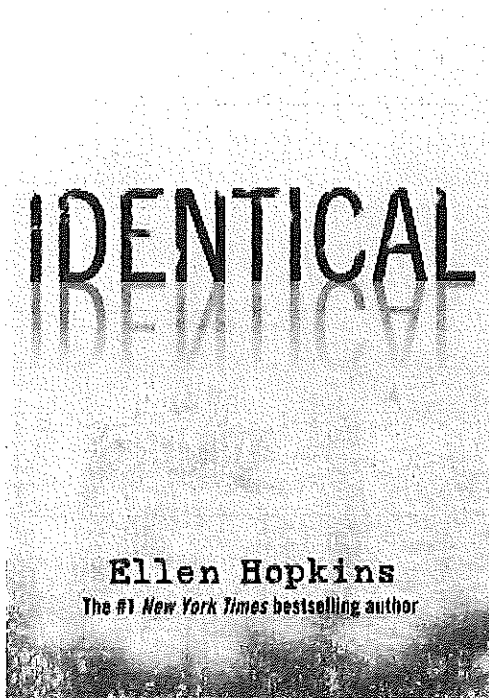
Trevor was naked and I could feel him, his penis, the tip, I could feel it on my, you know, and it kept rubbing against me and it felt so good. So tingling. ...I kept scrunching my butt lower so that I would be closer to him, so that he would know he could do it...We weren't wearing a condom. Oh my gosh. We didn't have a condom. But it was okay. You can't get pregnant on your first time. Obviously you can...I wanted to have sex..."I..." I started, but then I could feel my penis slip inside so I couldn't talk. More than just the tip. It was more than just more than the tip. It was like my whole body went inside her and she was this huge warm lake and I was swimming...Like this is exactly where my penis should be...I mean, I was having sex with her.

-Page 306

4
/5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

IDENTICAL



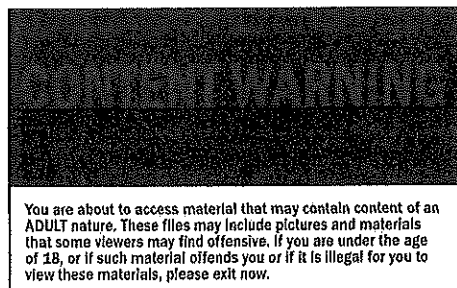
Young Adult

By Ellen Hopkins

ISBN: 978-1-4169-5005-9

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains explicit sexual activities including sexual assault and child molestation; violence including self-harm and suicidal ideations; profanity and derogatory terms; and drug and alcohol abuse.



4 / 5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
8	There's Daddy who comes home every day, dives straight into a tall amber bottle, falls into a stonewalled well of silence, a place where he can tread the suffocating loneliness.
19	Except for the egg/sperm thing. Would he fall on his knees in front of me, if I were more like Mom and less like him? Would he come, begging, to me, too, let me stay, if he realized I want to love him the way Mom used to?
26	<p>He likes what I give him. I like what he gives me, too, and I'm mostly talking about the bud. I pick up my pace because right under his front seat I know there's a fat, stinky joint with my name on it.</p> <p>...Of course, he expects compensation, and after smoking a big ol' doobie, I'm generally willing to cooperate.</p> <p>Life has gotten better- or at least more bearable- since I was introduced to my good friend, marijuana. You couldn't have a more decent friend. I love everything about it.</p> <p>I love the way it smells- good green bud, anyway, and that's the only kind Mick gets. I guess his brother knows a Humboldt grower. Okay, the post smells a lot like skunk juice. But somehow, there's a difference. A good one.</p> <p>I love the way the thick smoke tastes, curling across my tongue, snaking down my throat. I love holding it in. Coughing it out. I love head rushes, the creeping warmth that follows.</p> <p>And I love the distant place it takes me to. Everything feels right there. Mellow. Easy. Stress-free. I even love the munchies, the perfect excuse for devouring a pint of Haagen-Dazs. Of course, afterward I have to go stick my finger down my throat. Don't dare get fat. Daddy would not like that.</p>
28	<p>Mick and marijuana await me. I'm ready to pay Mick's going rate for the pot. (And I'm not talking money.) Some people would balk at the price tag.</p> <p>You might think, because of the things I've seen Daddy do, I'd be disgusted by sex. No way. I like how it feels physically, yes. Kisses, hot and prickly as August. Hands, tan and rough against my soft white skin. And the last, extreme punctuation.</p> <p>But getting off myself isn't the best part. I do everything in my power to make sure and that puts me indisputably in control. (He thinks otherwise, and I let him.) It's the only time I am in control. And I like how that feel most of all.</p>
41	Then I kissed him. Hard. Wet. Sharp stabs of tongue. My fingers drifted in between his thighs, finding exactly what they expected. Madison gave a little gasp. "Oh," I said. "Sorry, didn't mean to offend you." I laughed. Mick joined me, then said. That's my cue. See ya, Mad.
42	<p>He reached across the seat, grabbed hold of my arm. Pulled. When I resisted, he yanked harder. Hard enough to hurt. Hard enough to leave purple bruises. Someone smart would have screamed. Someone sane would have waited for a stop sign, thrown themselves free. Someone whole would have said no.</p> <p>Get the fuck over here and don't give me shit.</p> <p>I did as instructed. Worse, I liked that he told me what to do. It meant he cared, really cared. Right? Whatever. "Did you score some bud?" I asked, more to change the subject than anything.</p> <p>Under the seat. Twist one up, okay? We headed out Happy Canyon Road, only horses and cattle to mind our business. We could have gone home- no one there-</p>

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	<p>but I was still too made for sex. You know you want me. You'd take slimy seconds. Gross. "Yeah, right. Like your pimply butt is such a turn-on." It isn't too pimply, and it's kind of a turn-on, but that was beside the point. His hand brushed my left nipple. You love it. "Not while wondering who you're thinking about, Madison or me." I took a deep drag, held it. Took another without passing the joint, exhaling giant smoke puffs right in his face. Bogart. Pass that fucking thing over here. So I did, and once we were totally buzzed he pulled off onto a dirt ranch road, parked. No maid out here. Just birds and squirrels. Defenses lowered by excellent bud, I said okay to a quickie. Totally in control.</p>
57	<p>The bitter perfume of bourbon smacks me as I stumble in. It makes me thirsty. It's late, but never too late for one last shot. I tiptoe past Daddy's snoring, ease the Wild Turkey from the table. Can't really blame him for choosing redemption in a bottle. Two bottles, actually. One holds 750 ml of amber liquid. The other is small enough to fit in a pocket. Daddy has been sentenced to pain abatement a la OxyContin. The accident was eight years ago and his doctor keeps refilling, like he doesn't know about Daddy's dance with the devil. Like I care Truth is, I borrow a little Oxy every now and then too. Not often, though. It's expensive. Daddy would miss it, even if his dimwit doctor didn't. I have to admit it's tempting. It makes me feel like how you feel when you fall in a dream. Only you don't wake up. You just keep falling deeper and deeper into the darkest recesses of sleep. Especially when you help it out with a nip or two of Wild Turkey. Of course, I have to be very careful not to do it when Daddy's not trapped in the snare of sleep too. Wouldn't do to be lying there unaware if he came crawling to me. No, I'd want to be totally ready. But it won't be tonight. Fifth of whiskey beneath my arm, I slip noiselessly into the kitchen, pour two fingers, replace the bottle. Then I slither into Daddy's bathroom, help myself to a small green pill. Just one. Just enough for a free fall totally without a parachute.</p>
60	<p>I chance a sip of Turkey. Have to wet my tongue before letting the Oxy dissolve. Slowly. Nasty. Another sip. Jet fuel, hot and acrid against my taste buds. Another time, another place, I'd let myself cough. Not now. Not here. ...I lie flat, give myself up to the Oxy/Turkey merry-go-round. Eyes closed, I star the tumble. Round. Round. Down. Down. Outside, the wind rouses suddenly.</p>
62	<p>I'm frozen solid in place just like I was that night, the first time Daddy came. A night Kaeleigh can't (or won't) remember. But I do. It was a year or so after the accident. Kaeleigh and I were nine, give or take. Mom had gone in for another round of surgery. She was already lost to us. Lost. Long gone. ...Daddy smelled of Wild Turkey. Each night, we knew, he drank more and more. That night, he had drunk just enough. Kaeleigh, girl.</p>

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	<p>His voice was a soft hiss. Are you awake? Talk to me. Daddy ish-is-sh-so lonely. I'd never heard him sound like that. Like a stranger. A drunk, slurring stranger. Where was my daddy?</p> <p>Kaeleigh, all sweetness, wanted to comfort Daddy, who drew her onto his lap. Stroked her hair. Kissed her gently on the forehead. Cheeks. Eyes. Finally, on her lips, but not nasty or mean or with tongue or anything but misplaced love. Love meant for Mom.</p> <p>He just held her, kissed her. Breathed Wild Turkey all over her until they both fell asleep, woven together.</p>
64	<p>That one innocent joining was only the beginning, but neither realized it that night. And all I could do was linger in a dark corner, sharp jabs of envy tearing my eyes.</p>
65	<p>I guess I could have offered descriptions o Daddy's "privates" (his word), the way he wears his scars.</p> <p>...Instead, I stood by and watched father love turn to LUST.</p>
66	<p>I fell asleep, thinking about Daddy kissing Kaeleigh, craving his kiss, understanding its significance.</p>
80	<p>No doubt he'll be watching the sway of Kaeleigh's hips, craving her. And a drink. Not sure which one he craves more. But tonight he'll have to play the good (sober) husband and devoted father.</p>
82	<p>I can't imagine her actually getting close enough to someone- anyone- to invite them into her bed, let alone her pants.</p>
90	<p>I eat when I'm sad. I eat when I'm lonely. I eat when I hurt so much inside, it's either eat or find an easy way to die. The only time I can't eat to total contentment is when Daddy's around. No daughter or mine will wear double-digit clothes, he said once, and meant it.</p>
91	<p>What she doesn't look like is a girl, all narrow hips, straight waist, and teacup breasts. And if I have my way, I won't either.</p>
96	<p>We empty our glasses. Mom opens another bottle, pour for us both. I'm getting drunk with my mother, and neither of us can think of a thing to say.</p>
97	<p>In the living room, the TV is on, but Daddy has drunk himself into oblivion.</p>
98	<p>Out, where I should be. Where any self-respecting sixteen-year-old should be on Friday night. Out, getting drunk with friends or, better yet, a really fine guy, instead of tying one on at home with my marble-hearted mother, no less.</p>
99	<p>Sneaking out, getting drunk, getting high. What better way to spend Friday night? Especially after too many hours stuck at home listening to Mom's political bullshit. ...I plan to do a lot in the way of self-medication. Funny term for getting screwed up to the point of passing out. I need to be that messed up to get to sleep at all tonight. I'm totally wound.</p>
100	<p>Great place for a kegger, too. And that's our destination. Mick drives like a maniac, which would be all right except I really, really want to get high, and smoking dope and speeding don't exactly go hand in hand.</p> <p>..."If you slow down a little, I'll roll a nice big joint. And after we smoke it, just maybe I'll mess around with your nice big joint too." Okay, so it isn't eloquent, but</p>

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	<p>it works. He slows to right around the speed limit as I fumble under the seat, searching for his stash. This slow enough for you? ...Finally, pay dirt. I reach into the baggie, extract a big bud.</p>
101	<p>He reaches for my left boob.</p>
102	<p>"Give me your lighter." Delectable smoke fills the cab. ..."Shut the fuck up." I take a giant hit of pot.</p>
103	<p>Needless to say I don't feel much like messing around with Mick's "nice big joint," not even after killing off the nice big joint wrapped in a rolling paper. Maybe after a beer or ten. And hey, lucky me, looks like the beer's flowing up here on Figueroa Mountain.</p>
105	<p>He looks me up and down like he's shopping. I see. Any plans to come together tonight? "Nope." I part my lips bravely. "Not with him, anyway." He nods his head, stands. How's that beer? Need a refill? I shrug. "Sure. Don't suppose you happen to have anything stronger on you, though?" ...He reaches into his jeans pocket, digging for treasure. Maybe I'll dig in there later myself. Meanwhile, I'll content myself with the giant fatty he lights. The pot is the same as (or very similar to) Mick's. "So..." I cough out a big hit. "You and Mick share a connection, huh?" ...He draws in a long, deep lungful. I move a little closer, like I can't quite reach the joint. "Since we're sharing a hooter, can we, like, share names?"</p>
108	<p>He reaches across the short distance between us, pulls me right into him, kisses me with unexpected hunger. In the time it takes me to react to that, decide whether or not to invite more, he already has my top button unbuttoned. His hands want to go under the fabric, insist on it, in fact. I should say no. Need to say no. "W-wait," I try, but no little bit of me wants to stop and Ty intuits all of that. He doesn't stop, and I don't try to make him. And it isn't long before I throw every ounce of caution to the nonexistent wind. With only a fleeting thought of Mick, I give in to this insane desire to know this not-quite-stranger in the most intimate way. And so, I sacrifice my inner child, give myself away.</p>
114	<p>Memory strikes suddenly chokes me. Strangles me. It was dark in my room. Very dark. Someone had closed the curtain. I was small. Maybe nine. Mommy wasn't home. But Daddy was. He lurched through my door. That scared me. But why? He'd never hurt me before. Only touched me lovingly. Like any Daddy. ...Don't be afraid, little flower. It's only me.</p>
121	<p>Maybe that's why I got so ballsy, had sex with Ty where I knew Mick could find us. ...Anyway, most of Mick's brains reside in the general area of his groin. One thing for sure, sex will never be about love with Mick. I don't love him, and he definitely doesn't love me. Still, he semi-fills a gaping black hole inside me. That place wants love, maybe even needs love, but love is something I'm pretty sure doesn't exist.</p>

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122	Besides the easy sex thing, there's still the pot. I know they say marijuana isn't addictive, not like speed or heroin, which claw into you and won't let go. Pot is more of a sweet talker, and I'm all over that sexy voice. I went Saturday without it, but by yesterday afternoon, I was getting antsy.
123	Yeah, well, I could have screwed her Friday night too. I didn't, even though she wanted to.
126	Pinstripes, actually, on dark trousers, snug at the waist and across his hips, before falling loosely down over his thighs. And just as my disgusting brain gloms onto a sick image of what those thighs look like, his voice descends.
152	<p>...when Daddy finished, he burrowed his face into Kaeleigh's hair and wept. Confused at his tears, and at the sticky stuff icing her hands, still Kaeleigh pleaded, "Don't cry, Daddy. What's the matter? Didn't I love you good enough?"</p> <p>...Yes, you loved me good enough. So very good! But it's our secret, okay? Because if anyone knew how much you love me, they'd be jealous. Now Kaeleigh was really confused. "Can I tell Mama our secret?"</p> <p>No! Especially not Mama. She'd get mad because she doesn't love me like you. She might even go away. You don't want that, do you?</p> <p>She thought it over. Again and again. But she finally agreed, "I won't tell." Daddy pulled her against him. Good. That's very good. It's okay to have secrets between Daddy and his girl. Just remember. No one likes a tattletale. Especially not Daddy.</p>
158	Weird. I always thought cutters were sick. Sicker than me, even. But with a single swipe I understand why they do it. Why they like it, even though they hate it. I let the water runs over the cut, ratchet it hotter, watch the blood slow, stutter, almost halt. I like the way the exposed flesh looks, all pinkish white. It looks new, although I know that isn't right.
167	It takes all my willpower not to flinch, not to bloat his anger. His fingers catch my cheeks, pinch until my mouth opens. I'll decide what is or isn't trouble. You just follow orders. Understand? Drool dripping from my open mouth, all I can do is nod.
175	Once again we engage in easy sex, hardly a word exchanged between us. We are so not about conversation, and only body-to-body communication.
179	I noticed a definite odor of marijuana in your vehicle. Have you been smoking pot this afternoon?
184	I guess I'm pretty good at sex, but I don't think because the world needs more (even better) sex.
202	<p>I do know a few other people who might have some bud.</p> <p>...He gave me his number, for the next time you find your mouth watering for a red hot lollipop...</p>
208	<p>He pulls out a baggie, a quarter of some crumbly brown substance. When he cracks the bag, the perfume that escapes smells like heaven.</p> <p>Opiated hash. Ever tried it?</p> <p>I shake my head no, but Ty is quick to remedy that, filling a small pipe bowl with a miniature ball of opium-laced hashish. He takes the first toke, and now heaven's on fire, and smoking. Still holding his hit, Ty cautions around it, Little tokes, now. Don't want to cough this stuff out. Hold it as long as you can.</p>

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	<p>Slowly inhale a taste sweeter than any before. Greedy me wants more, but I remember his warning.</p>
210	<p>Drinking. Smoking. Feeling the creep of the poppy, all along my spine, skull to tailbone. I know the high is mostly hash, not so different from regular cannabis (though even tastier). But the opium topper provides a whole new set of rushes. Body rushes, like little shivers. Head rushes, like turning in circles, round and round, don't fall down.</p> <p>Shall we move the party into the bedroom? Ty reaches over, kisses me. Hard. Harder.</p> <p>...His teeth rake my bottom lip, move down over my chin, down my neck. Not too hard. Not really. But hard enough.</p> <p>Should I have worn garlic and a silver cross? I laugh out loud at the thought, and I realize how fucked up I am.</p> <p>...He picks me up, carries me into his bedroom, half throws me onto the bed. When he starts to undress me, I burst into a new fit of giggles. My jeans are so tight, he can't wiggle me out of them.</p> <p>"Want some help, my macho vampire?" I shed everything and he does too, but before we do another thing, he asks, How 'bout another bowl? Something to take you real, real low. He leers like a scary circus clown. Low as a girl can go.</p> <p>True to his word he drops me real, real low. I'm floating on a poppy sea. Naked. Mellow. But a sudden wind rouses the breaks and low tide builds to major swells. Ty kisses me, all fang, pure vampire.</p> <p>"Hey. Take it easy." But somehow my body responds to the pain. And Ty responds to that, clamping one hand around both my wrists, pulling them over my head and pinning me helpless. It is then I notice the nylon cord, one end tied tight to the headboard.</p> <p>Ty's voice is almost a snarl. This is one of my favorite games.</p> <p>He wraps the rope around my wrists, knots it tightly. Escape-proof.</p> <p>I shake my head. "Don't." But he does. Should I scream? Would anyone hear? Would anyone care? The obvious answer softens my plea. "Please?"</p> <p>Haven't you played this game before? I guess I'll have to teach you the rules. The proper response would be, "Please, sir." Say it.</p> <p>My heart yells, "No fucking way." But my brain, the part that understands my daddy, makes me acquiesce. "Please, sir."</p> <p>He flips me onto my belly, yanks my legs apart. I don't have to see the restraints to know they're there. The ankle knots do not surprise me. I am helpless.</p> <p>Exposed. And, strangely, somehow I feel at home this way.</p> <p>Say it, he demands, like I should know he means, Please, sir. Punish me.</p> <p>Deliberate, controlled, he punishes me. I whisper into the pillow, "I understand." I understand why Kaeleigh like the feel of slicing her flesh, releasing bottled-up hurt. Leather snaps against my skin, and I remain still as stagnant water, afraid I might not play by his rules. This is a new game, and the sick thing is, I see quickly that I like it, might ask to play it again. The pain is fuzzy at the edges, blurring toward pleasure. Maybe it's the hash, the gentle arms of opium. And now new leather- human, Ty- falls softly over the heated welts, a soothing balm of sweat-beaded skin. But then heightened pain, forced inside me, stuffed inside me.</p>

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	Seared, branded, likely marked, a moan escapes me and Ty surges. After, knots loosened, a rub of cool eucalyptus oil persuades me I do want to play again. Soon.
228	They're about the same as straight sex and gay sex- some similarities, but different in ways that really count.
232	<p>I slip into Daddy's bathroom, and this time when I "borrow" his Oxy, it's not for me. Okay, one is for me. The other three are for Daddy.</p> <p>I can't slip all three into a single drink or he'd taste it for sure. This will be a seduction. One I know he can't refuse. He finally roars in, and I've already mixed him a highball, long on Turkey, short on Oxy. That will change as the evening progresses. He gives me a look but takes the drink anyway. Thanks. I need this.</p> <p>...I hand Daddy the Oxy-tainted highball glass as Kaeleigh answers, I didn't mean to be late, Daddy.</p>
235	<p>I watch the two of them stuff their faces, fix Daddy one last drink. Between the rich food, stiff Turkey, and three Oxycontin, he'll be fast asleep in a few minutes. Most of the evening's drama behind us, I slip off to the bathroom. Kaeleigh's disgusting food binge made me want to purge. It's more than a habit. It's a need. Experts even call it a disease. However you classify it, though, it's not about body image. At least not for me. For me, it's all about maintaining a modicum of control, especially when everything goes completely ape-shit.</p>
236	<p>But I do like the cool of the porcelain on my face, the solid of tile beneath my butt. Most of all, I like my belly emptied, even temporarily, of food. Of fat. Of pain.</p>
237	<p>Now that I've evacuated my stomach, I can swallow the Oxy I borrowed for myself.</p> <p>Pop the pill, chase it with whiskey, crawl into bed. Pray such seduction brings dreamless sleep. Seems to take a long time for the sleep aid to kick in.</p> <p>...The gathering haze does not conceal memories of another night. Kaeleigh was ten.</p>
238	<p>Daddy had been back to Kaeleigh for "lollipop licking" (my term) a few times. She had a vague notion that it was "wrong," but she wasn't sure why, and didn't know who to ask. They'd probably just be jealous.</p> <p>That warm summer night, she slept in a thin white nightie, nothing more, nothing at all under. The moon, full, shimmered against the tan of her exposed skin, and her hair whispered over the pillow like a pale waterfall.</p> <p>As usual, the smell of Wild Turkey preceded Daddy. In the bright moonlight, you could see Kaeleigh cringe in shallow sleep. Daddy crept thought the door, to the side of the bed, stood looking down for a very long time before stirring her with a volley of kisses. Cheeks. Forehead. Lips. Oh, little girl. Do you know how beautiful you are? No one was ever as lovely as you, not even your mother when she was a child. I can't believe you're mine.</p> <p>Kaeleigh roused at his words, came into the moment, secure in the aura of Daddy's love. She tried to sit up, but Daddy pushed her gently back down against the mattress. Stay just like that for Daddy. I want to teach you something new. He lifted her nightgown, rolled it up over her belly, coaxed her Thoroughbred legs apart. She squirmed, a paltry protest.</p> <p>Don't move! Daddy's scarlet face underlined his command. I thought he might</p>

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	<p>smack her.</p> <p>But as quickly as his anger flared, it dissipated, smoke. Don't be afraid. This won't hurt. You'll like it. I promise. He kissed the length of her torso, down to the small, naked V.</p> <p>It was only his mouth that night. He didn't even ask her to touch him, prove how much she loved him. Afterward, she worried. Didn't he want her love anymore? What had she done wrong? And yet, he had taught her something new. Something awful.</p> <p>Worse, something wonderful. Something every girl should know the joy of, though, of course, she shouldn't learn it from Daddy.</p> <p>At ten, it isn't exactly easy to separate good touch from bad touch, proper love from improper love, doting daddy from perv.</p>
245	<p>Mom sat on an overstuffed sofa, vacant-eyed, silently sipping vodka on the rocks. Daddy gulped whiskey, and might have passed out quickly except...</p>
259	<p>More drugs. More men. More sex. Do you think there's really such a thing as "enough"?</p>
260	<p>"Let's sneak on outta here and do the dirty."</p>
262	<p>You'll like what I've got. I assume he's talking weed. It's been a couple of days and the truth is, I'm so wanting a buzz. I could call Ty, ask for a bit steeper high (low?). Oh yeah, how low can we go? Loaded question.</p>
265	<p>Truth is, more than missing Mick, I miss catching a lunchtime buzz. I wish I could just buy a personal stash, keep it around.</p>
267	<p>Thought you kind of liked the play. Was I wrong? He reaches up, strokes my cheek gently. No encore?</p> <p>Rough play, he means and I really did like it because I'm sicker than he is.</p> <p>..."An encore would be nice." I smile. "Maybe nice is not the right word, though." Nice works. So how about it? When can we get together again? He winds his fingers into my hair. Tugs gently, brings my face right down against his. Opens his mouth. We are tongue on tongue.</p>
270	<p>I triple promise I'll give him a call. Straight up, I will, because one guy will never be enough for the likes of me. Truth is, I can't believe one anything (guy, girl, whatever you happen to be into) could be enough for anyone.</p>
271	<p>I jump up into the Avalanche, scoot almost into his lap, give him an over-the-top kiss, hoping he doesn't taste guilt.</p> <p>Whatever he tastes, he likes it, wants another dose. I stop his tongue (not to mention his hands) with a single word. "No."</p>
272	<p>He starts to turn south but I stop him, with a hand on a spot too high on his thigh to qualify as "thigh." "Let's go to my house. It's empty."</p> <p>...So Mich and I will smoke up and make out in my bedroom.</p>
280	<p>Desire strikes like a cobra sinks its fangs between my legs, injects its venom. The heady creep wanders from groin to belly.</p> <p>I lift Ian's hands, urge them against the throb beneath my blouse. "Touch me. Please?"</p> <p>He want to, does, and I love his skin on mine. And then he moans, Oh, Kaeleigh...</p>

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	And suddenly a different snake strikes, with lightening ferocity. Not cobra, but python, threading itself around me, squeezing. Hissing. Oh, Kaeleigh. Oh yes, that's right, little flower.
288	I lean forward slightly, notice his eyes fall to what almost passes as cleavage, with a good Victoria's Secret push-up bra helping out. ...The entire time, my legs rest gently between his, knees touching the inside of his, and despite my "lunch" with Mick today, I'm starting to feel incredibly, um...aroused.
301	It's not like the two of them do much screwing, at least not with each other.
305	Now I feel the need for liquid fun. Tucked away in a low cabinet is my parent's liquor stash. ...The Chopin vodka, stashed in th freezer, is a different song, and I'm so ready to drink that slushy tune. I'll never sleep without it. ...I don't really like the taste of vodka, bt they say you can't smell it on the breath.
315	Open my skin. Right ankle. Left ankle. White flesh. Red polka dots. Ha! that's funny. Ouch. Stings. Behind right knee. Left knee. Oops. A little deep. Blood pumps. Check it out. Thump. Thump. Oh my God. Can I stop it? Who really cares? The drain runs red.
319	(Doing the dirty.) Shot one: missionary, Daddy on top. Shot two: doggie-style, Daddy on top. Shot three: can't even say it, let alone dwell on the picture, but Daddy's on top. (Always on top.)
320	Wonder who was on TOP when they did have sex. Sex, sex, sex I have really got to stop thinking about it so damn much, you know? Daddy and Hannah; Daddy and Mom; Daddy and Kaeleigh; Daddy and whoever; Mom and Daddy; Mom and whoever; Lawler and whoever; Mick and whoever; Ty... Sex, sex, sex. I have really got to stop wanting to have it, and mor and more of it. Clumsy sex (Mick); choreographed sex (Ty); imagined sex (Lawler, assorted others). I've been half thought about experimenting with a girl or two. Variety is the spice of life. Sex, sex, sex. And what goes with that? Drugs, more drugs, and alcohol, of course.
332	No Mick, no bud. No Ty, no better buzz, and he's much more difficult to manipulate. Dopeless sex? That could not feel good. Could it?
336	I'm kind of liking this blood thing. Fetish? Fixation? Not quite an obsession yet, but I can see it growing into that. Drip. Drip. Steady. Slow. Drip-drip. Quicker yet. Drip-drip-drip. Drip-drip-drip. Drip. Drip. Drip. I'd probably just let myself drip, but I did promise to show up at work and help out with the Halloween decorations.
388	Oxy dessert, to chase his Wild Turkey main course.

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393	<p>Kaeleigh was used to Daddy's visits, but that night she, too, felt something different in the air. Rage. Lust. Sorrow. Perversion. All mingled in Daddy's sweat. There was nothing gentle about how he threw back the covers. Already naked, he pushed Kaeleigh roughly to one side, flopped beside her.</p> <p>I could tell she was afraid. This wasn't her Daddy. This was a demon, his evil hard and sharp as steel blade, ready to slice into her. It did.</p> <p>His attack was brutal, bloody, wordless except for vicious Shut the fuck up at her pitiful scream, a plea to please, please no, Daddy, no. It hurts. Oh!</p> <p>I cowered, sick at the sight, but unable to divorce myself from the horror. I felt Kaeleigh's pain. And when Daddy was done and she cried, I cried too.</p>
402	<p>Safe in the far stall I wait for the bell to ring, picking at a scab or two. The one on my ankle is recent. I open it wide, encourage the flow. It's like milking venom from my veins. Wonder how long it would take to bleed out completely.</p>
407	<p>And, are- don't get mad- are you cutting?</p>
415	<p>"This should cover what I smoked. Please take me home now."</p> <p>Don't want your money. His zipper opens, and what escapes is eager. Then he pushes my head down. Haven't you missed me?</p> <p>I could just do it. Get it over with. Pretend it never happened. But I don't think so. It has to be my idea or not at all.</p> <p>"No, Mick. Goddammit, I said no!"</p> <p>But he's all over me and I may not have a choice. He outweighs me by a hundred pounds and he's got me pinned against the door. His fingers, clumsy, work at my own zipper. I try to push him off.</p> <p>What's wrong? You know you want to.</p> <p>"No. I really don't." But I can't stop his mouth from covering mine, leaving a wet trail of sobber all over my face.</p> <p>One hand tugs my shirt over my head, the other is inside my bra, twisting, pinching. I could just get it over with.</p> <p>See? Your nipples don't lie. You like it.</p> <p>He's too worked up to manage tight jeans, so he leans up over me, demanding I do him with my mouth. I could bite.</p> <p>But he'd probably kick my ass and finish his business anyway. I've never seen this side of Mick.</p> <p>Or maybe I have and ignored it. I can barely breathe, and the teeth of his zipper are biting into my chin.</p> <p>Atta girl. You can't say no to...</p> <p>Daddy. Daddy? Kaeleigh would just give in. The thought of her wide-eyed surrender gives me a sudden idea. But I have to play things right. First I go limp, pretend to acquiesce. I even give him a taste of what he wants.</p> <p>"Stop for a minute. You're hurting me."</p> <p>He hesitates, looks down into my eyes, which have teared up quite nicely. He draws back ever so slightly.</p> <p>I did down, beyond fear, fine Raeanne again. "If we're going to do this, you don't get to have all the fun. And can we pretty please take another hit first?"</p>
418	<p>I reach down, grab his tray, complete with maybe a half ounce of great bud. Pricey bud. I'm betting on greed.</p>

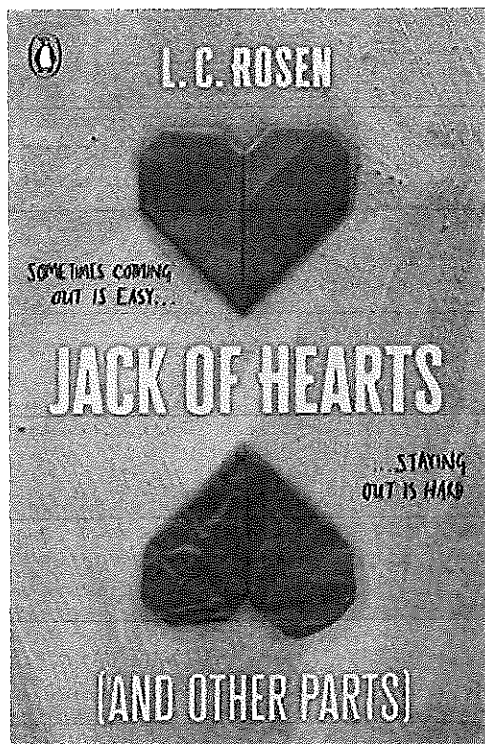
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	"Hang on. I need some light." I open the door wide, and send the tray sailing like a pot-covered Frisbee.
421	CONGRESSWOMAN'S DAUGHTER ARRESTED for theft of would-be rapist's truck. Says they were smoking pot after curfew when things got out of hand.
441	I'm celebrating pretty good right now, on two Oxy and enough bubbly to give me hiccups for days.
447	<p>The Bad Thing About Puking Regularly is how you come to rely on it.</p> <p>Hungover? Go puke.</p> <p>Feel a bit fat? Go puke.</p> <p>Confused? Go puke.</p> <p>Frightened? Go puke.</p> <p>Entire world falling apart? Hurry up and go puke.</p> <p>All of the above? Puke.</p> <p>Puke.</p> <p>Puke.</p> <p>Puke.</p> <p>And puke some more.</p> <p>Totally Puked Out esophagus acid-etched, I'm ready to face the day.</p> <p>Not.</p>
459	<p>I am your little girl. I am not your girlfriend. I am not your whore. I am not my fucking mother! But he is on top of me and my shout is silenced. He is inside of me and my scream stays there too. He is finished.</p> <p>And I don't cry out, but I do cry a bucket of silent tears. He slithers away and at last, I quietly sob no no no no no.</p>
466	<p>I want to know joyous sex.</p> <p>...I want sex laced with love, and not warped parental love, but the honest kind. I want sex that makes me feel right, not like some freak, some inbred monstrosity. I'm no, am I?</p>
467	Sex feels great with him, too. I guess it might be nice for sex to feel right, like the person you're with might even love you.
471	<p>More drugs. Better drugs. Maybe it's time to graduate from pot, hash, and pills to something stronger. That opiated stuff was great. Wonder what heroin is like. I hear it drops you way down, where pain can't find you.</p> <p>Any Drugs would be good right this moment. Heroin. Cocaine. Maybe ecstasy. Not too sure about psychedelics.</p> <p>They say acid and 'shrooms make you look inside your own head, help you learn about yourself.</p>
472	Not love to us, I'd still like to see Ty. It's been a long week with nothing to smoke.
473	<p>Share a doob?</p> <p>...A shitload of bud.</p>
476	I'm not even drunk, not stoned, not buzzed on pills. Perfectly straight, still I'm reeling.
481	I know how to swim, have practiced the dead man's float for years, but it's frightening how much I just want to drown in this undertow of booze and pills. I

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	drank a lot tonight, ingested an incomprehensible amount of painkillers, some borrowed from Daddy, the rest pilfered from old Sam, who seems to be suffering a lot from his arthritis. His nightstand is a pharmacy. I doubt he even noticed I lifted a handful of Percodans.
486	My lungs fill with water. Silt. Mud. Now it hurts to breathe. So I won't. I'll settle deep into darkness. And I won't say good-bye.
487	Oh my God. Her face is blue. ...I lean over the side of my bed, jet a big stream of opiate-laced Wild Turkey.
488	What did you take, Kaeleigh? Tell? Don't tell? Who cares? "Percodan." No need to mention Daddy's Oxycontin. The Wild Turkey, they can smell. Hannah sighs. How many? Her voice, sugared, irritates me now. If heaven's host sounds like her multiplied, I'll stay home. "N-not sure. A dozen?"
490	A dozen painkillers, washed down with whiskey. That wasn't an accidental overdose, Ray.
501	...extract eighty bucks from my private stash, pop a single Oxy to steady my nerves,...
503	I swallow one more pill for good measure, steel up courage.
506	Charlotte shared most of her time with a whiskey bottle, and so devoted little to your father or me.
507	I found your father, on a swing with a young girl, about his age. They were naked, playing with each other. Miranda was directing them, and her boyfriend was taking pictures. ...Your father gained his manhood, if you could call it that, at the age of ten. His photographs appeared in magazines, for the pleasure of pedophiles.
516	He comes back with a party in a box. You want to get buzzed, right? I nod and next thing I know, we're smoking black African bud. It's not really black, but it's definitely purple, the buds big around my fist. And it tastes like absolute heaven. Almost immediately, my eyes grow heavy and my tongue thick. "Incredible," I manage, sounding more like "incredible." ...The other part tells the first to shut up, quit trying to fuck my high.
517	How far will you go with me? He kisses my mouth. My throat. Will you let me draw blood? He bites my neck, and a moan escapes my mouth, unbidden. How high will you let me take you? For once, I want to relinquish control. For once, I want to completely let go. "You decide." His grin is pure evil. That's my girl. He yanks my blouse over my head, spills me from my bra. He kisses, bites. I'm already lost, but hungry for more. He pulls me to my feet, hands all over me...

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519	I'm right here, and I'm...too fucking stoned to deal with this now.
520	Too much fucking good bud.
523	They tell me it's withdrawal from OxyContin.
530	I told her, "Where Daddy touched me." She looked and her face grew red.
536	Speaking of drugs, I could use a big fatty right about now. How will I ever score after I get out of here? And which one of me is the loadie, anyway? I'm sure getting high isn't good for my "condition," but how can I not, if I have to go home?
537	Fuck that. All he did was have sex with Mom. Probably just one time. ...That, I'm pretty sure, I got from you. "That, and a great sex education." Sex is disgusting.
542	Turns out the electrolyte imbalance is real, the result of not only puking from Oxy withdrawal, but also the binge-and-purge cycle that my alter and I seem to have shared. ..."You eat. I'll throw it up. You'd be a regular oinker if not for me." ..."...And I need to get high." ...Drug abuse. Alcohol. Bulimia... "Don't forget that lovely bit about shaving until you slice yourself open." And that's the easy stuff. Promiscuity. ...And the granddaddy of all- fucking Daddy. "More accurately, letting Daddy fuck you and keeping it to yourself." Even if I tell her every bit of it, there's no guarantee she can fix me. Suicide sounds better and better. "Yeah, but you'd have to get it right. Or maybe, just leave that to me."
544	What do I have to live for? Can't think of a single thing.
552	And when he couldn't give me the life I was used to, I fell into addictions. Whiskey. Cigarettes. And, to fight my depression, Prozac.
553	Alcoholism is not a pretty things, and I was an ugly alcoholic. I moved in with a string of men.
555	I was drunk but not too drunk to take in what was going on. Your mother was gone, and your father was washing you. Only the way he was washing you was all wrong. He was touching you in a sexual way. Kaeleigh. I confronted him, but he just laughed in my face.
556	Instead I drank even more to forget. I drank until one day I looked in the mirror and saw death.
563	But I have to admit, I've smoked a little bud. Not that much. I'd probably do more, but it's expensive. And now it's cash-and-carry. I still use food for comfort. I still purge when I get too comfortable. And once in a while, when memory intrudes, I still enjoy a good, deep shave.
564	When I do those things when I use or purge or cut, I'm still not myself.

Profanity	Count
Ass	12
Bitch	9
Faggot	1
Fuck	36
Piss	8
Prick	1
Shit	17

JACK OF HEARTS (AND OTHER PARTS)



Book Summary:

A promiscuous high school student gives sex advice to other teenagers.

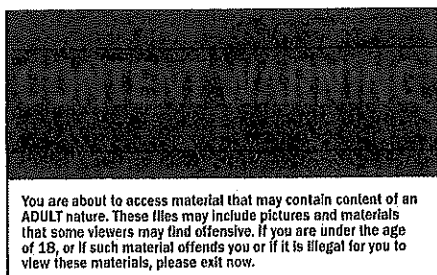
Summary of Concerns:

This book contains alternate sexualities; alternate gender ideologies; controversial social commentary; profanity; sexual activities; sexual nudity; and alcohol and drug use by minors.

Young Adult

By L.C. Rosen

ISBN: 9780316480529



5 /5

Aberrant Content
BookLooks Review Rating

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i	<p>My first time getting it in the butt was kind of weird. I think it's going to be weird for everyone's first time though.</p> <p>Jack Rothman is seventeen. A solid student with a talent for art, he likes partying, makeup and boys. Sometimes all at the same time. His active, unashamed sex life makes him a red hot topic for the high school gossip machine, but Jack doesn't really care too much about what the crowd is saying about him. His mantra is: 'It could be worse.'</p> <p>And then it is.</p> <p>When Jack starts writing a teen sex advice column for his best friend's website, he begins to receive creepy and threatening love letters. His 'admirer' is obsessed with Jack- they know who he's hanging out with, who he's sleeping with, who his mum is dating. And while they say they love Jack, they don't love his lifestyle. They want him to curb his sexuality and personality.</p>
1	<p>"ALL FOUR OF THEM WERE JUST GOING AT IT."</p> <p>"I thought there were three."</p> <p>"No, four. That's what Tori said. All hard, and I think the guy from St. Jude's was going down on the other one, what's his name, Zack from Riverton Prep."</p> <p>"I thought Jessica Lauter was there with Zack."</p> <p>"She was."</p> <p>"No she wasn't."</p> <p>"I don't know, but if she was, she probably didn't leave with him, after that."</p> <p>"Who was the other one?"</p> <p>"I don't know. But Zack was, like, orchestrating the whole thing. He totally seduced them all in there and started the fourgy."</p> <p>"What did Tori do?"</p> <p>"What?"</p> <p>"When she walked in on them?"</p> <p>"Oh. I don't know. I guess she just closed the door."</p> <p>"I would have watched."</p> <p>"No. You wouldn't have. Ava?"</p> <p>"You wouldn't."</p> <p>"I would."</p> <p>Laughter</p> <p>"I wonder how he does it."</p> <p>"Who?"</p> <p>"Jack. How he gets all that D. A fourgy in Hannah Ling's hot tub? It's like his life is a porno. Is it like that for all gay guys?"</p> <p>"Like when he got fucked by the coach from Highbrook in the locker room during the homecoming game."</p> <p>"Home wasn't the only thing that was coming!"</p> <p>"...Did Tori see his..."</p> <p>"You can say 'cock,' Emily."</p> <p>"Yeah. Well, did she?"</p>

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	<p>"She said it was huge. Like this big. I bet he was bottoming because the other boys were afraid of it."</p> <p>"Well, and he's so queeny."</p> <p>"Ava, you can't say that."</p> <p>"Why not? Isn't he? I mean, he wears tank tops cut so low you can see his nipples. And makeup."</p> <p>..."Fine...he's just totally a bottom. You can tell."</p> <p>"Oh man, I wish I was a gay boy. I could fuck that ass of his, and we could go have orgies all the time."</p> <p>"Kaitlyn! That's so pervy."</p> <p>"No it isn't. He does it."</p> <p>"Yeah, but he's a gay boy."</p>
3	<p>MY REPUTATION FOR SLUTTINESS IS ONLY PARTIALLY deserved. Yeah, I was kissing that guy from St. Jude's, sure, and then I kissed that guy Zack,...</p> <p>...I don't love being called queeny but I do have some fantastic tank tops and a love of eyeliner and black nail polish. I also have some great button-downs with mesh insets and tight jeans with tears so high up you have to go commando in them.</p>
4	<p>They think I'm hot and want to lady-jack-off to the idea of me getting pounded by three guys.</p> <p>...I mean, I do wonder what it is about my sex life, even active as it is, that attracts their attention. Other people have sex without becoming the stuff of legend and gossip.</p>
6	<p>But on Mondays, I like to come in here for my second-period break, smoke a cigarette (the only time I do, mostly), and hear about what I did over the weekend. It's scandalous.</p> <p>So, true story: Yes, we were in the downstairs bathroom at Hannah Ling's party, and yes, I maybe kissed both of them, one after the other. Yeah, with tongue. And it was pretty hot. They were going to kiss each other next. But we had all our clothes on, and we weren't going to strip down and have a threesome right there. I mean, we would have gone back to my place, or someone's place or something. But then Tori walked in and gasped, really dramatically, and the guy from St. Jude's blushed and took off and Zack started laughing. We made out a little more after that, but then he had to go home and study or something. I think he wasn't so into me as he was into the idea of the threesome, which is fine, because the feeling was mutual.</p> <p>So, I didn't even get laid, much less have my first three-or-foursome, but somehow, it seems I had a hot tub orgy.</p> <p>...I bet rumor-me doesn't have a history quiz next period. Or if he does, he already has an A on it for giving Mr. Davidson a blow job.</p>
8	<p>Ben is one of my closest friends and I am not his type. He likes bears- big hairy guys- usually older. I'm definitely not in that particular gay subsect of wildlife (on Grindr, I unhappily checked the twink box, because I'm seventeen and hairless and slim- but muscled from running track- why isn't that a box?). And Jeremy Diaz thinks I'm a whore who gives queers a bad name.</p>

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9	<p>"Well, I did hear you found a guy on Grindr who looks like Tom Blackwell's dad and you invited him to the tennis match last week and made out with him in the stands opposite Tom so he'd play a lousy game."</p>
10	<p>I think my boyfriend just broke up with me because he didn't like the blowjob I gave him. We've been going out for a while, like three weeks, and I really like him. ...I'm a virgin. But I was feeling like I was ready, and so, the other night, since his parents weren't home, and it was after our sixth date, I thought I could move things forward a little. I didn't want him to think I was a prude, and I know guys need sex. So, we were making out on the sofa, and I could feel his erection, and I said, "Pull it out," and he smiled at me, and he did, and I sucked it. I mean, I'd never done it before- which he knew! I think I did okay. I got it all in my mouth. I sucked and licked and stuff. But he didn't come, and after a while he started to go soft, and so I sucked more, but he told me to stop. Then he zipped up and we watched a movie. When it was over, he kissed me good night. And since then, he hasn't responded to texts or emails. Did he really break up with me because I don't give good head? How can I convince him I'll do better next time? And...how do I do better next time?</p> <p>-Bad BJ Breakup</p> <p>I wake up Sunday afternoon in my own bed, makeup still smeared across my face, but feeling wonderful and relaxed. No hangover- the cucumbers worked. I grab my phone and see I have a text from an unknown number, but it's a photo of a familiar cock, sent this morning, so I know whose it is.</p>
16	<p>Dear Jack of Hearts,</p> <p>My boyfriend really wants to do anal. We've been together for a few months, and I totally love him, and it's not like we're virgins. But I'm nervous about the buttsex. Does it hurt? Is it even fun for girls? Should I do it just to make him happy?</p> <p>-His Anaconda Want</p> <p>...Ben isn't a big slut like me. For one, there aren't many large hairy men willing to have sex with a teenage high schooler, and though I pass for barely legal, Ben's round baby face makes him look like serious jailbait.</p>
17	<p>Just 'cause I like sex and have a decent amount of it doesn't mean everyone should. Everyone gets to use their naughty parts however and as often as they'd like. And Ben is saving his for his dream daddy. Except for those blowjobs he traded with that guy from The Mount Oaken School.</p> <p>...I'm not sure what constitutes a "special blow job."</p> <p>..."I can do this one," I say, showing her the email from Anaconda Want. "Tell her how to prep, clean up beforehand, use lots of lube, make sure he uses a condom, that kind of thing."</p> <p>Jenna frowns slightly.</p> <p>"What? I thought you wanted me to talk about anal."</p> <p>..."It would be stronger if it were more narrative. The safer sex stuff is great- it's important and I think it should be in there. But can it be more personal? This isn't Dr. Jack's What They Don't Teach You in Sex Ed."</p> <p>"Beyond condoms on bananas," I say, making a headline in the air like Jenna does.</p> <p>..."...Tell her about your first time."</p> <p>"My first time?"</p>

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	<p>"With anal, yeah." Jenna takes a spoonful of yogurt. "Is that okay? I mean, everyone knows all about your various exploits, right? You're not telling them anything they don't know."</p>
22	<p>There's an old cannon on the roof that I supposedly got fucked on once. ..."I thought proms were patriarchal bullshit and we were too progressive for that." ..."Will there be alcohol besides beer?" I ask. "Def." "Then I'll be there."</p>
24	<p>Dear His Anaconda Want, My first time getting it in the butt was kind of weird. ...I was a freshman, and it was winter break, right before everyone left for vacation- a big holiday blowout party. There was this senior from another school, and we were drinking and flirting, and eventually we took off together. His parents were home, and my mom was home, so he got us a room at a hotel nearby. Ordered up champagne to be fancy. Now, before this, I'd sucked my share of dicks and had gotten plenty of blowjobs, handjob, every kind of job, but the only buttsex I'd had was with this junior who was totally in love with my cock and he'd just hopped aboard. And he'd taken control then. Total bossy bottom. I'd pretty much just laid back and enjoyed. So, as far as I knew, anal was pretty easy- like porn easy. Anyway, so this senior (I'm not naming names) and I are having fun, kissing and sucking, and 69ing and what have you, and then he says to me, "I want to fuck that pretty little ass of yours." And I was like, "I don't know, I've never done that before." And he smirked and said, "Sure, right." And I said, "No, really." "Well, I paid for the hotel room," he said, "so let's use it. I'll take it easy on you." But it was pretty clear he didn't believe I was an anal virgin. So he bends me over the bed and drizzles some lube on my ass. I made him wear a condom, of course. And he starts pushing it in. And WOW, that hurts. I tell him to stop, it hurts, and he says he'll go slower. I say okay because he's already in, and I'm thinking, I'm gay, so this is something I have to learn how to do, right? So he slows down and pushes in, and eventually it starts to feel good- like, really good. He's hitting the right spot, nerve endings are all aglow. Eventually he finishes and pulls out, and the condom, or course, is covered in shit. And he gets mad at me, like it's my fault. I didn't know about how to clean up down there. He makes me take the crap-covered condom off him and flush it, and then he showers alone. ...Anyway, here's my advice to you: Make sure you want to do it, 'cause it's going to be uncomfortable at first, for sure. But it can be fun, too-even if you don't have a prostate, there are nerve endings and pressure. Just make sure you've taken a shit beforehand and cleaned after- preferably with soap and water in the shower. 'Cause if you've gotta go while he's inside you, it's going to come out gross. When you're ready to get fucked, use lots of lube. A finger first. Go slow. Make sure he's still focused on keeping you turned on, too. It helps if you start out riding him, facing forward- then you have more control over how deep he goes, and you can still communicate what you need. Once he's in you, tell him to just stay there for a</p>

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	<p>while so you can get used to it, then when you give the okay, he can slowly start fucking you. If you don't like it, tell him to stop. If you decide to switch holes, use a fresh condom. And be prepared- sometimes shit just happens. But if you take it slow, it can be really great.</p>
35	<p>Everyone has to get fucked sometime, right? ...But then I think about not having sex for the past three years, of not kissing cute boys, and of masturbating alone in my room every night.</p>
57	<p>Like I said, I've slept with two guys who called themselves straight. The first came out of the closet the moment he saw my dick. He went to town on me and, when he came up for air, said, "Yeah, I'm gay," and that was that, until we were done and he said I was a good boyfriend. ...The other guy, when we were done, immediately went into the shower and cried, loudly. ...So I'm a little worried when Caleb and I are done. His place was nearby and no one was home, so I'm lying in a bed with gray sheets and staring at shelves covered in sports trophies. I pull off my condom and tie it off, then sit up. Caleb is breathing heavily next to me. "That was fun," he says, sitting up.</p>
79	<p>Dear Bd BJ Breakup, You gave him a blowjob on the couch, he got soft, and now he's not speaking to you. ...Yeah, I can give you some great blowjob tips, but let's talk about everything else first. So point one: Guys don't "need sex." Yeah, a lot of guys like and enjoy sex. I do. But some guys aren't into it the way I am, and some are shy and inexperienced and unsure what to do. You don't mention if your BF is also a virgin, but that may have been his first blowjob. That's a lot of pressure for him too. Is he supposed to hold your head or not touch you? ...I'm just saying he could have been anxious as well, and that could be why he lost the erection. ...What you need to be doing during sex to make sex good is communicate. Any kind of sex- handjob, blowjob, full-on penetration, dry humping, whatever. This runs from the most basic, "Can I suck your cock?" to the less basic, "What do you want me to do?"</p>
81	<p>So, he's kind of sitting up, but the ceiling is low, so he's also curved over, and I have my face in his lap, but the bed is against a wall, too, so I have to bend my knees, but I'm a little too tall so my knees are pushing into the wall, my feet are on the ceiling, and I'm trying to bob my head up and down...it was like a Cirque du Soleil torture chamber. So after a few minutes of this, and him banging his head as he tries to enjoy himself, I stop and say, "Is this working for you?" And he says, "You are, but this position is all wrong," and we laugh and we figure out how to fix it. We ended up throwing a blanket on the floor and 69ing, which worked so much better and we were able to enjoy ourselves. But I'm sure if I hadn't asked that, he would have lost his erection, I would have lost mine, and no one would have been happy. ...Some are very specific- "I love having my neck licked while you take me from</p>

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	<p>behind"- but some are much more vague, like, "I like you." Everybody is different. Figure out what someone likes by trying things. Sex isn't something where you just fall into it and it's amazing and easy. It takes practice. If you're both having fun practicing, though, it should be okay.</p>
82	<p>Tell them what you want them to do to you that doesn't involve their hard cock. Once they get their heads off their flagging hard-ons, they usually return, in my experience. When I lose my erection- and it's even happened to me- I just focus on pleasuring the other guy. It usually comes back after a bit.</p> <p>And now, since you've made it through talking and erections, finally, some blowjob tips: (1) Use your lungs to suck, not your lips to pull. You're not trying to yank the dick off with your mouth, you're trying to make it feel good. (2) Use your tongue. Lots of different ways. Ask him what works as you're trying them. (3) Use your hands- stroke the shaft if it's too big to swallow, or grip his balls, or touch his taint, or finger his ass. Don't forget you have hands. (4) Each dick is different, and sometimes the same dick is different day to day. So always try new things- suck the head, lick the shaft, or vice versa. Listen for his moans and breathing, juggling what parts of your mouth you're using and what parts of him you're using them on.</p> <p>...Oh, and use a condom- flavored are fun. I know most people don't think you need them for blowjobs, but you can get STIs from precum in small cuts on your gums left after brushing your teeth.</p>
102	<p>So, what do you do when there are two bottoms- gay guys- who want to have sex? Do you take turns? Like, during that night, or maybe you just switch every time you hook up?</p> <p>-Bottom Curious</p>
110	<p>Dear Bottom Curious,</p> <p>First, for our readers who don't know: "Bottom" is when you receive anal sex, and "top" is when you give it- penetrate.</p> <p>...Specifically, you wrote: "What do you do when there are two bottoms- gay guys- who want to have sex?" Not "What do we do?" Not even, "I'm a total bottom but so is this boy I really like, any sex tips?"- which leads me to believe you're not a queer dude. I'm guessing you're probably not even a guy. You're a straight girl and you're fetishizing gay men. So let me explain a few things to you: First, not all gay men have anal sex. A lot of them try it now and then, but it's with about the same frequency as straight couples. There are plenty of other things two (or more) guys can do without putting the P in the B. And many of them are very satisfying. So don't assume all gay guys you see are just having nonstop anal sex. Some are, sure. But not all.</p> <p>Secondly, not all gay guys are strictly tops or bottoms.</p>
112	<p>And why the fuck do you care so much about gay sex anyway?</p> <p>...Maybe you just get off on two dudes going at it, which is cool, too, but that doesn't mean we're here to perform for you.</p>
113	<p>Oh, but if on the off-chance, a gay boy is reading this and wants a real answer- if you and the guy you want to get naked with are both really craving some cock in your ass, either take turns or grab a double-headed dildo. Or even just one dildo if</p>



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	you can take that position where the one getting fucked can reach around and really push and pull that dildo out of the "top's" ass.
147	On the other hand, the entire concept is essentially playing into straight society's game that anything but strict heterosexuality is something that needs to be announced, warned about. The closet exists because straight people shoved us in it, and because if we try to leave it, they're often angry and/or violent.
148	Hell, you can just start by telling your friend you think Bobby has a hot ass or something. That's pretty much what I did. Eighth grade, my best friend asked me who I thought got hot over the summer, and I told her...well, I won't name names (spoiler: I fucked him last year).
149	Because straight people assume other people's sexualities based on stereotypes and bullshit like that, people might be shocked- "But you like sports" (or whatever).
151	Now, as for the rest of it- asking people out, wanting to fuck, all the fun parts- just be clear about what you want: "Hey, I'm into you, want to go out for coffee?" or "Hey, I'm into you, want to come back to my place and gag me with your cock?" (That one is only appropriate if you really know the person would like it or you're at a leather bar, though.) ...If you're not somewhere like that- if you're somewhere where there is no crowd to protect you, try to find queer-only spaces. Clubs or online. Places where violent straight people can't get to you.
152	And yeah, telling a guy you want to fuck is forward. Just inviting them back to your place to "hang out" is pretty good code, though.
181	The thing is, I want to be the kind of guy that maybe gets made fun of on TV. But like, that bro-guy, who drinks beer, and has lots of one-night stands, and knows how to party, and joins a frat. I am that guy, I think. I mean, I drink lots of beer, party, have lots of sex, and I like that. I think that's how high school and college should be. But the problem is...I'm bad at sleeping around. Like, I want to have no-strings sex, but after I fuck a girl, I get weird. ...But I get attached. I really care about a girl after we fuck. And I don't want to, because then I spend like a month moping over her and not feeling like myself, or sometimes we end up dating for a bit, but she expects me to change everything else about myself to be her boyfriend or something, and it's just not me. Easy sex with no feelings is me. But I can't seem to do it. How do you do it? How do you fuck someone and not care about them after? -Fucking in Love
210	Dear Fucking in Love, It's always nice when someone want to be more like me, and yes, I take letters from straight guys hoping to have more casual sex without feeling romantic feelings. Hormones are powerful things. But first off, I want to make sure you want to be this guy you describe- the guy who sleeps around and doesn't get attached- because you genuinely think it'll make you happy, not because TV told you that's what being a teenaged dude is all about.
211	But, if you really don't want to get attached, you don't have to. Sex and love aren't as connected as everyone says they are. You just need to be like, "Great

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	<p>orgasm, but these feelings- they're about the orgasm, not about the person who gave me the orgasm." We release a whole party of hormones or chemicals when we fuck, and those make us really like the person who gives us an orgasm.</p> <p>...The first guy who gave me an orgasm? I plopped down next to him when we were done and I looked over at him, and all the little flaws I'd seen before and had decided weren't quite deal breakers- the weird mole on his neck, the cowlick, the braces- those went from things I was putting up with to things I actively thought were cute. And when he started to snore, I thought that was cute, too. We all get swoony after we come. Now, how did I not curl and spoon him and then tell him he was special the next day? I remembered the hormones. And then I told myself- I'm grateful he gave me that orgasm, and I enjoyed it, but I should appreciate it, and his technique in giving it, not him as a person I want to spend time with now. I still get that feeling when I look at a guy I just came with. It happened last week- a one-night stand who told me he wasn't interested in a repeat, but he was cute and funny and I was high off orgasm hormones, and so I developed a little crush for a day or two.</p> <p>...It also really helps if you're up front with the person you're about to hook up with that there are no expectations of a relationship.</p> <p>...But if that's not doing the job, here are my techniques- first, recognize that the orgasm is making you feel what you feel, and thank the person for giving it to you, but don't focus on how cute they are. Focus on how good you feel. Then, don't ask them out.</p> <p>...I think it's about how society is always like, "Sex = love + these chemicals." But any other emotion, they'd tells you, "Just walk it off." Some bitch says something nasty, but was trying to be funny? Just walk it off. Why should it be any different with sex? It's not an easy task, but in the end it's about restraint, and selfishness. And it's okay to be selfish about stuff, as long as you're clear from the get-go that you're not a relationship guy.</p> <p>-Jack of Hearts</p>
232	<p>But anyway, I've been seeing this guy. And, girl, he's cute, and I like him, and now it's like everything I worried about is gone- he's into me. And I'm into him, and we kissed! And it was special. But now I'm worried about other firsts. I...once gave a blowjob to some rando, but it was for like ten seconds, so it doesn't count.</p> <p>...I don't want him to think I'm a prude and I won't put out- I totally will- but I'm not going to strip down and give him the orgasm of his life any time soon, either. Do I not tell him and play coy? Do I just put out the moment he makes a move? How do I do this without losing this guy? 'Cause I really like him.</p> <p>Sincerely, Virgin Territory</p>
241	<p>Your sexual history- whether a blank page or a rap sheet forty pages long, like mine- is not for anyone else to know unless you want it to be. Not even potential naked buddies. The only exception is if you have something contagious- then you need to tell them beforehand and use condoms and whatever else will make sure you don't infect them.</p> <p>...If you want to go slow, you just tell him you want to go slow.</p> <p>...You can tell him so he knows you might be a little clumsy the first time (though</p>

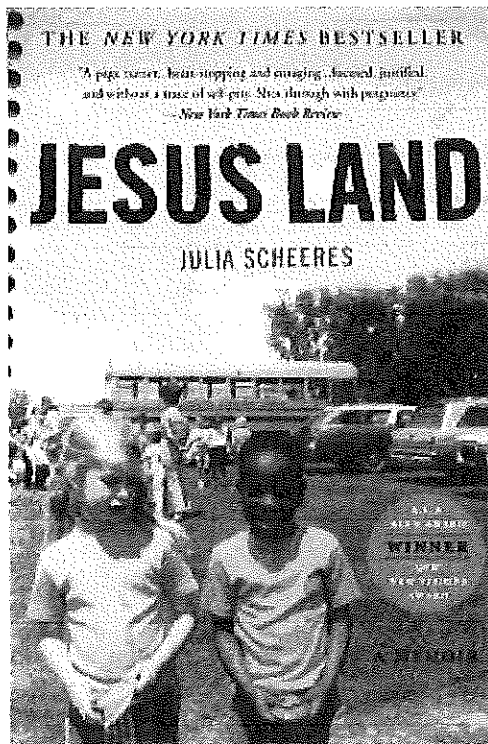
Page	Content
	<p>maybe not- you could be a natural), or maybe you're worried you'll come too fast, or not at all, or some other thing, or you just want to tell him because you feel close to him and want him to know about you.</p>
242	<p>The first time I was naked with a boy, I told him- but I told him right then. We were down to our underwear making out and his hand was pulling my briefs down and I said, "Just so you know, I've never been naked with another guy," and he said, "Do you want to be?" and I said, "Fuck yeah," and then we were, and I sucked my first cock and got mine sucked for the first time (and then we did both at the same time) and it was a lot of fun and he was extra careful when he heard my breathing speed up- he would stop and give me a minute so I didn't come too quick. But, that's me, and I've never had much interest in going slow..</p>
286	<p>If someone hit me during sex, I would push them off and go to the police. But I want to do those things. Is this, like, the patriarchy inside my head?</p>
315	<p>Dear Bad Feminist,</p> <p>Okay, so the first thing you need to ask yourself is- do you want to smack women during sex who consent, or not? Because if you're turned on by the idea of someone genuinely saying, "Please don't hurt me" and you hurting them, then you should probably go talk to a shrink about that. But if you want to role-play with a partner who says, "Please don't hurt me" but has told you beforehand exactly what they're into- and has a safe word for when you go too far, then that's perfectly fine. Kinky, BDSM sex can be fun. I've never gone quite as far as you want to, but I've used handcuffs, blindfolds, engaged in some light spanking, and "Oh, no please don't hurt me" role-play.</p> <p>The most intense I got with a guy I met on Grindr. He was a bit older, but I didn't ask how much older. Before we met up, we talked about what he wanted to do, and what I liked and didn't- we set boundaries. Then, when we met up, he tied me to the bed and blindfolded me, and I pretended I had woken up like that and didn't know what was happening- that was his fantasy, and I was pretty into it. He told me beforehand to use the traffic light system, which I didn't know about- but green means you're enjoying yourself, yellow means you're becoming uncomfortable and should dial it back, and red means stop immediately. I was supposed to say those words depending on how I felt. So I, of course, did an Oscar-winning performance of "young man waking up tied to bed and blindfolded" by asking where I was, what was going on. He told me I was his now, and I was going to be his slave. It was pretty hot. He straddled my chest, made me suck him off, then flipped me and spanked me a little. Then he said he was going to paddle me. I said "yellow" to that- the spanking was fun, but bringing a paddle into it sounded too intense. But yellow means slow down, not stop, so he went back to spanking me, to which I said "green," and then he fucked me.</p> <p>But then he put his hands around me neck. I said "red" to that real quick- choking is scary and we'd never talked about what to do if I couldn't say "red"- and he immediately stopped, and untied me. He apologized and said he should have checked beforehand if that was something I was into. I told him it was okay, and we relaxed for a bit, then went back to fuckin, and then we even cuddled, and it was great sex. He never called me or anything- I think I was too tame for him- but I always felt in control. Dominated, used, a sext toy, but still able to stop</p>

Page	Content
	<p>everything if it went beyond what I wanted.</p> <p>You want to be the dom, not the sub, and that's okay. You just need to find yourself a sub. Talk about what you want to do beforehand- with hard limits- work out a system for stopping or slowing down, lay ground rules about what you're into and if you can leave marks (and what kind of marks, and how long they last) and all that.</p> <p>Then have fun. And don't worry about it being un-feminist. You are two women exploring your desires and both of you are consenting. That's pretty fucking feminist. So go find a sub (which, admittedly, might be hard in high school, but ask around, you never know) and have some good, kinky fun.</p> <p>-Jack of Hearts</p>
336	<p>Dear Jack of Hearts,</p> <p>So, you seem to have a lot of experience with sex- lots of men, lots of positions, lots of...stuff. But is there anything you haven't done that you really want to? How do you make stuff like that happen? How do you ask someone to fulfill a fantasy?</p> <p>-Can't Make It Happen</p>
339	<p>Dear Jack of Hearts,</p> <p>The other day, some friends and I were hanging out, just sharing a joint and talking about shit, and we got onto hot girls we're thinking of going after.</p> <p>...Turns out, the girl I'm into is trans. I didn't know. And I tell them, and they laugh and call me a cocksucker and stuff, and then we move on.</p>
341	<p>They jerk off to "hole pics," where you can't see the person's face. If you're one of those guys, then maybe getting naked with her will be an issue, I don't know. But most of us are into other stuff than just genitalia- eyes, mouth, face, shoulders, butt, chest, or- more likely- the combination of everything. The sum of the parts, so to speak. If you think her lady parts not being your idealized lady parts are going to be a problem, though, don't ask her out. You don't want to put her in a situation where you're getting naked and you run out of the room because her parts aren't to your exact standards. But if you already think she's hot, it sounds like you don't care about her individual parts, 'cause the sum of her parts is making your parts stand on end (I mean she gives you an erection). In that case, go for it. But be honest- you're into her, but you've never been with a trans girl before and you might need some guidance. Guidance can be fun. But if you do want all that, remember to talk to your friends beforehand, and get them to realize they were being assholes.</p> <p>...You're into a girl- which is the definition of straight, and anyone who tells you otherwise needs to go, and the ashes of that friendship get tossed in the ocean.</p>

Profanity	Count
Ass	8
Bitch	2
Cock	9
Dick	5
Fuck	22
Shit	6



JESUS LAND: A MEMOIR



Summary of Concerns:

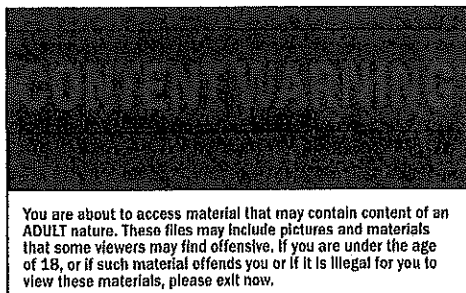
This book contains explicit sexual nudity; obscene sexual activities including incest; underage alcohol abuse; and profanity

Adult

By Julia Scheeres

ISBN:1-58243-338-0

978-1-58243-338-7



4 / 5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
24	I saw him by the pool, frenching a twenty-two-year-old who'd just arrived that morning.
35	but can't help but notice when the big-chested girl next to me unhooks her bra and her boobs fall down like half-filled water balloons. My own boobs are still little-girl pointy...
48	"Woah, nice udders!" one of them shouts to a girl strolling by them.
75	<p>Jerome thrust a mildewed picture of a woman with blond hair over my book. She was naked, gagged, and tied to a chair. Straps were wound tightly around the base of her breasts, making them stick out like fleshy missiles, and her blue eyes were wide with pain or fear.</p> <p>..."She looks like you," Jerome said. "Except you don't have these yet." He touched the woman's strangled breasts and then my flat chest.</p> <p>...As I reached for it, I noticed his penis spilling from the slit of his pajama pants like a rotten banana.</p> <p>...We played like that, him with his dick hanging out, me averting my eyes, until the television show ended and it was time to go to bed.</p> <p>But it kept happening. I'd be peeling potatoes or practicing piano and he'd walk by with his penis poking out. I didn't understand why he did it, and pretended not to notice.</p> <p>A few days after my twelfth birthday, he tried to kiss me.</p> <p>..."You're not really my sister," he said when I stood up. At thirteen, he was already a good six inches taller than me, and a whole lot stronger. He grabbed my shoulders and tried to smash his mouth onto mine, but I averted my face and his chapped lips grazed my forehead instead.</p>
78	<p>I hear him lock the door and creep toward my bed. The mattress tilts under his weight. By the time he touches me, I'm far away.</p> <p>I breathe deeply, pretending to be asleep, falling through layers of numbness, sensation draining from my body like dirty bath water.</p> <p>...Only when I pull my nightgown over my head do I notice the dried blood on my breast and remember Jerome. The tan circle around my left nipple is broken and raw; it's happened before. In my faraway place, I don't feel pain.</p>
93	<p>He knew I'd be here alone. He lied about Mother wanting me home. She doesn't. Brad keeps tugging at the cord; in my rush, I tied it in a knot and it won't budge. Thank you, Lord. Scott unclamps my mouth and snakes a hand down my top, groping my breasts through my bathing suit.</p> <p>"Not quite ripe, but tasty all the same," he says. Scott, who stood in my driveway and shook my hand.</p> <p>"Fuck you!" I scream up at him, craning my neck to look into his eyes.</p> <p>...Brad and Todd are now both yanking on the waistband of my sweatpants, trying to force it over my hips, and Scott is reaching under my swimsuit. I flail my arms and legs like a possessed rag doll, trying to twist from their grasp. Todd grabs my crotch and I spit at him, but the saliva falls on my chest. They whoop with laughter.</p> <p>Brad steps forward, loosening his grip on my ankle, and feeling this, I yank back my leg and slam my tennis shoe into his balls. He crumples, shrieking, to the</p>

Page	Content
	ground, his hands clamped between his legs. Half a second later, I'm sprinting down the hallway toward the exit.
107	He's wearing the same Big Boy T-shirt he wore the day he tried to stick his hands down my pants.
108	Brad's eyes graze my body top to bottom, as if I were the centerfold in a dirty magazine.
111	<p>"What kind of things?" he asks, still caressing my back.</p> <p>"He picks the lock on my door at night and he...he.." I stop because these are things I cannot pronounce, and bury my face in his neck.</p>
112	<p>I open my eyes, and in a boozy blur, see his penis jutting from his shorts. He grabs it by the root.</p> <p>"Lick it," he says in his thick voice, pressing my head toward it.</p> <p>I've heard of girls giggle about blow jobs at school; it's something a boyfriend requires of you.</p> <p>I stare at Scott's penis. There's a pearl balanced on the tan tip. It smells like liverwurst.</p> <p>"Like a lollipop," he's begging now, breathing hard. He wags the penis with his hand to get my attention.</p> <p>I close my eyes and stick out my tongue and it touches the side of it.</p> <p>"Open your mouth," Scott says, and I do. He puts it between my lips and grabs my hair and pulls my head up and down on it. A moment later he groans and something slimy spurts into my mouth that tastes like pool water. Scott collapses onto his back on the mattress and I spit the slime onto my parents' white bedspread and roll onto my back beside him.</p>
117	<p>He leans into me, one hand resting on the locker behind me, the other lifting my chin. His lips are full and soft on mine, and his tongue swishes into my mouth, thick and wet and salty. I pull my head away; I don't know what to do with a tongue and don't much like it.</p> <p>Scott frowns.</p> <p>"You sure could use some practice kissing," he says, before smashing his mouth onto mine.</p>
122	<p>We were in a stall in the basement girls' bathroom, practicing kissing, and he kept trying to put his hand down my jeans, and I kept shoving it away. He was getting peeved.</p> <p>"I won't be your boyfriend unless we do it," he said, his hard-on pressing against my leg. "I'll find someone else. There are lots of fish in the sea."</p> <p>We'd spent the final fifteen minutes of every lunch hour last week locked in that stall, hoping no one would walk in as we wrestled in silence, Scott trying to stick his hands different places and me slapping them away. I wanted to take it slow, so our first time would be special, so it would be making love, not just sex.</p> <p>Scott scoffed when I told him this.</p> <p>"Sex is sex," he said. He narrowed his eyes. "Besides, I didn't think this would be such a big deal for you, considering..."</p> <p>I grabbed his head and stuffed my tongue in his mouth to shut him up.</p> <p>"Fine, I'll do it," I said after coming up for air.</p>

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123	<p>"You must have unholy thoughts to masturbate! You must not sin!"</p> <p>He pauses weightily. "I'm here to tell you today that you can't jack off with Jesus!"</p> <p>He pounds the bookcase to emphasize each word, unaware of the obscene gesture he's making. You. Can't. Jack. Off. With. Jesus.</p>
129	<p>I know that as a young Christian woman, my virginity is supposed to be my most prized possession, but Jerome stole it away from a long time ago. Sometimes in my coma state, he does something that startles me to consciousness and an image- his hand groping my breast, his head descending my belly- burns itself into my mind before numbness again saves me. These images sicken me, and I want to replace them with others of my choosing.</p> <p>...Today's a good day for sex;...</p>
131	<p>"You coming to bed or what?" he asks.</p> <p>...I walk to the venetian blinds and close them, then stand on the other side of the darkened room to strip to my bra and panties and rush to the bed before Scott has the time to inventory my imperfections. He throws back the covers and I collide against his solid heat. I put my arm across his chest and press my face into his musk as Sting serenades us. If we could just do this, only this, I'd be happy. Scott puts his arms around me and unhooks my bra.</p> <p>"Roll over," he says. "I want to see you."</p> <p>He pulls my hands from his neck and I cover myself with the sheet as I turn. He flings it off.</p> <p>"But it's cold!" I protest.</p> <p>He pulls off my underwear, then retrieves a sliver square from the nightstand and kneels between my legs and rips it open. It contains a flesh-colored circle, which he rolls over his penis like pantyhose. So that's a condom.</p> <p>"Ready?" he asks. I nod. He pushes my thighs apart with his knees and spits into his hand and wipes it between my legs before lowering himself onto me and prodding my inner thigh with his dick. I bite my bottom lip and look up into his eyes, but his face is turned to the alarm clock next to the bed.</p> <p>...as Scott pokes and prods at me...</p> <p>..."Stop fighting me," he says as I scoot away from his fumbling. "You'll only make it worse."</p> <p>...and inhale deeply, letting my legs fall flat on the bed. I know from the groaning noises he makes that he's inside me, and I try to feel something, to stay focused on the moment- this is Scott, my boyfriend- but it's numb there. I wonder if I'll ever be normal.</p> <p>...Scott's eyes are closed as he moves inside me.</p> <p>...It's over quickly.</p> <p>"Did you like it?" Scott asks as he pulls off the condom. White liquid bulges at the tip of it. Sperm.</p> <p>"It was fine," I say, wrapping the sheet around me.</p> <p>"Want to do it again?" he asks.</p> <p>I glance down at his penis, now deflated and pitiful, and he laughs.</p> <p>"I mean later tonight," he says. "I'll come to your window."</p> <p>...I shrug. I've sunk into my numbness as if it were a soft cocoon and don't care one way or another. He can do what he wants.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...He takes the Police tape from the cassette player and pulls his clothes on, then goes to the bathroom, and when he comes back he kisses me, gently this time, without groping.</p> <p>"You're a bitchin' girlfriend," he whispers in my ear.</p>
144	<p>I notice, for the first time, the weird bend in the middle of his forearm.</p> <p>"What's happened?" I ask him.</p> <p>...A 2x4 lays on the floor, one of the pieces from the pile beside the woodstove.</p> <p>"Dad hit you with that?"</p> <p>He nods.</p>
146	<p>What I don't tell her is that these things are happening because I'm up all night having sex while she and Dad sleep two doors down the hallway.</p> <p>I wait for Scott each night dressed in a summer teddy, perfumed and painted and shivering under the blankets...</p> <p>...He walks forty minutes from his house to mine...</p> <p>...As I wait for him, I imagine myself his prize, one he must battle cold, dark and distance to claim.</p> <p>When I hear the shuffle of his boots on the roof ledge, I open my window and he steps into my bedroom, tracking in cold as he peels off his layers, one by one, until he's standing there naked and brown and grinning and already hard.</p> <p>We listen to The Police while we do it, and if the tape ends, Scott stops whatever we're doing to flip it over, and afterward he drums his fingers on my back to the music as we fade into sleep.</p>
147	<p>After a few weeks of practicing sex, I'm starting to feel something. Not the eyeballs-rolled-toward-heaven-suck-in-your-breath immensity that Scott gets out of it, but a swelling pleasure that builds as he seesaws on top of me and ends all too quickly when he suddenly stops and says "fuck" in a small voice before rolling off me.</p> <p>But it's enough of a something to make Scott clamp his hand over my mouth so I don't make noise and enough of a something to make me want to practice alone, rubbing the swelling place with a nail polish bottle and pretending it's Scott until my body trembles and a brightness like heat lightning flashes through me and I whisper "fuck" as well.</p>
223	<p>"I drank alcohol," ...</p> <p>... "You were an alcoholic."</p> <p>I jolt my head. A drink now and then before school is not alcoholism.</p>
238	<p>Like when a boy tongues the space between your fingers and you can feel it down between your legs.</p> <p>Janet's boyfriend rises stiffly from the picnic table, a bulge tenting the front of his Sunday slacks.</p> <p>"My Lord, look at that woodie!" Susan whispers as he walks to the boys' bathroom. "Do you think he's going in there to abuse himself?"</p> <p>We laugh, and I remember Reverend Dykstra telling our Young Calvinist group that "you can't jack off with Jesus" and laugh even harder.</p>
242	<p>His callused palms smoothing it shut, the same callused palm that skimmed my back as we laid in bed after sex.</p>

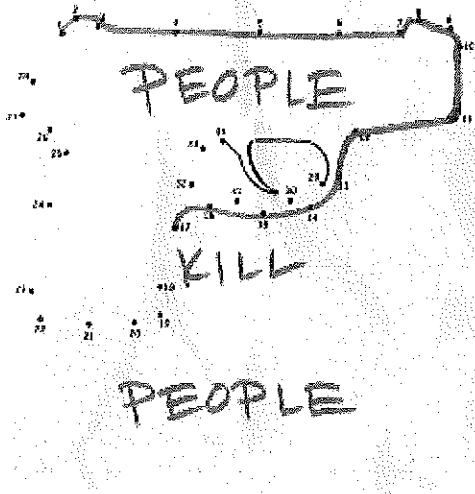
Page	Content
253	"Stay out of our pool, Niggers!" the yelled. "You're polluting it!"
256	I'm still learning not to gag; it's like learning to give a blow job.
272	I pull back my shoulders and thrust out my breasts the way Susan did that night after Vespers, and his eyes slide over this small offering on my nipples, which poke out like the eraser tips on No. 2 pencils.
276	We regard each other for a moment, and then he sticks out his tongue and flutters he tip up and down in a perverted gesture. I turn my head in shame, and he laughs. I will think about his tongue later, when I'm alone with my nail polish bottle.
318	It is of Scott, stripped naked and walking toward me as I lie in my bed at home, his stiff penis wagging back and forth like a chiding finger. ...I close my eyes again, and Scott kneels between my legs, then lowers himself into me. His hot tongue swishes into my mouth and I grab his butt and pull him deeper. His curved brown shoulders dip and rise in the slanted lamp light, his eager skin bumps mine. His salt taste and beef bullion smell, they envelope me. His heat and his desire, they comfort me. I shall not want. A spark flares in me and swells into a flame, and I sweat and sway and whisper, "Yes, Jesus."
319	Later, when I'm lying in my bunk surrounded by the mute shapes of sleeping girls, I reach under the sheet with a bottle of nail polish, spread my legs, and slide the fat glass bottom over my panties. Over the place where, earlier, the flame grew, then flickered out. I think of Scott and his musk and his meat and how I'd shudder with pleasure when he sank into me. Slow, soft. Fast, hard. When the wave of fire crashes through me, I bite one hand and clamp the other over my swollen flesh, trying to keep it in. Sweet Jesus.

Profanity	Count
Ass	10
Bitch	2
Cunt	1
Dick	4
Faggot	2
Fuck	24
Nigger	7
Piss	6
Pussy	1
Shit	11

PEOPLE KILL PEOPLE

#1 New York Times bestselling author

**ELLEN
HOPKINS**

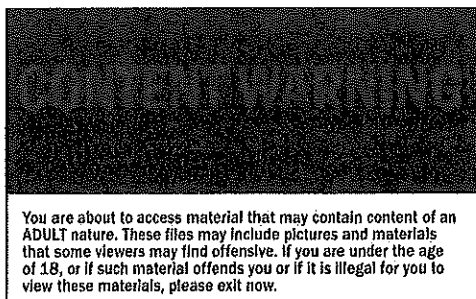


Young Adult

By Ellen Hopkins

ISBN: 9781481442954

9781481442930



Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities including sexual assault and battery; sexual nudity; drug use; profanity; inflammatory racial commentary; and derogatory terms.

4
/5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
55	"You just want to get laid." ...The gesture moves quickly from "sweet" to "boner-worthy," and as your tongues collide, you lift her off the floor. Another time, you'd carry her into your bedroom.
75	Her food is good, great in fact, but the idea of doing a brown-skinned bitch sickens you. That might be the way things are, but it's not how they should be. Unnatural, that's what it is. And God forbid the two of them ever make half-breed babies. You'd never live that down. Maybe you should have the talk with your dad, remind him to always use a condom.
78	The part-time QuickTrip gig pays minimum wage and you splurged your last check on a little weed, hoping to lower a certain redhead's inhibitions, finally finesse your way into her pants.
80	The evening is young and you've got plans involving beer and weed and a different girl.
82	...and the bitch behind the register was wearing a scarf around her head. That and her dark olive skin told you more than you wanted to know. "Fuck off back to Sharia-land, bitch." ...Not like you're the only Muslim-hating dude in Tucson.
84	A jew could not be your family
85	Still, you're white, and that's what matters. Your first hint that America was turning too brown was back in fifth grade...
137	You underline the promise with a longer, deeper kiss, one to make him believe his effort to take you out tonight will be justly rewarded at its end. That's so much fun that you go a little farther, dipping your tongue lightly into his ear before dropping your lips to his neck, where you lock them in place and suck gently at first, then a little harder. Hard enough to raise a telltale bruise. "Stop already." He steers your hand into his lap, where it's happy to admire the impressive bulge behind his button fly. "I won't be able to walk, let alone dance. Jesus, what you do to me!" "Hey. Jesus didn't do that. I did, and don't you forget it." Hedging his bets, he invites, "Want to do more?" The offer is tempting. Parking-lot sex might be a kick, with or without people walking by. ...They say the only way to keep married sex interesting is experimentation. You'll have to play researcher soon.
142	Throughout those ten years of spiraling abuse, you witnessed her subtle manipulations, designed to divert his rage. Often that meant submitting to him, like a mare to a stallion. More than once it happened within your direct line of sight. That was your sex education. You knew the mechanics by age six.
146	The worst part now is the two images of her that appear when you let yourself remember: Damian fucking her and Damian killing her.
146	"...she's a spic."

Page	Content
147	Which is how he almost- too damn close to success- convinced you to have sex the last time you met up. ...Sex has proven to be a useful tool. And beyond that, you like it.
148	The monkey was bartered, sex as commodity. There have been many times when you needed something expensive that you straight-out traded sex for cash.
150	The point isn't 'rising up against tyranny.' It's embracing white identity. Safeguarding our race by keeping it pure.
151	He lights a joint, already rolled; you pass it back and forth. It's decent weed and between that and the beer, which you drink to fight the dope-inspired dry mouth, a warm fog writhes inside your skull and words thicken your tongue.
152	This will be sex as reward. Violence as aphrodisiac. You are totally turned on right now.
153	The mere suggestion of violence serves as intoxicant. Aphrodisiac. Wish more people felt that way. Get down. Get high. Get off.
160	And you didn't get laid. Not last night. Not this morning.
165	"Has anyone ever showed you how to feel good?" "What do you mean?" You really didn't know. "Has anyone ever touched you like this?" He pulled you into his lap. One arm remained possessively in control, while his spare hand dropped to stroke the crotch of your jeans. That part didn't hurt and, in fact, you were surprised that your wiener responded positively. Still, you knew it was wrong, so wrong, and you tried to get away. "Oh, no. Not yet." The hand holding you gripped tighter while the other unzipped your pants and yanked them off in one swift, well-practiced motion. You struggled, but couldn't come near to matching his physical strength. He unbuttoned his own fly, freeing his sorry erection to worm its way between your butt cheeks. He slapped a hand over your mouth. "This might hurt a little it's really your first time. Let's see if it is." If there was one small saving grace, it was that he possessed a pencil dick. Still, when he drove it inside you, the pain was exquisite and you screamed into his filthy palm. But your pleas carried no weight. The wind blew cinder-heavy ashes into your face, and he grunted like a hungry pig, over and over, until he was finished. When he shriveled out of you, he let you go and you crawled away, bare knees and hands through the dirt.
169	She's dressed like a slut.
174	Ashlyn and you hung out at the meet-up, smoked weed, drank beer,...
176	After you spread the sleeping bag, Ashlyn and you stripped down to skin, and you found yourself grateful the air wasn't colder. February in Tucson usually brings chilly nights, but it didn't seem so bad, especially once she kicked things into high gear. In fact, by the end of the rodeo, you were sweating.

Page	Content
	<p>There is nothing shy about Ashlyn, nothing tentative. She knows what she likes, and exactly how to get you to comply. She showed you where to touch her, how to touch her, and wouldn't let you deviate. Yet she was willing to accommodate your demands, too.</p> <p>"I want to make you feel great," she said, and oh brother, did she!</p> <p>Your previous sexual encounters were clumsy, directed by instinct, not practice. Ashlyn took you way beyond fumbling, past the limitations of missionary, into the realm of weirdness. It took extreme force of will to hang on, but you managed, and you're anxious for an encore. Maybe even today.</p>
178	<p>Logistically, it's a challenge because after tacos at your dad's, you'll want Ashlyn for dessert, and a couple of guys would make that problematic.</p>
184	<p>"White people have to stick together because before you know it, we're going to be the minority race in America," you finish.</p>
202	<p>"...Skinheads are radical lays. I just couldn't help myself. He made me all hot and horny for his hard, Aryan six-pack."</p> <p>...Not only that, but now you want to know if she actually had sex with him, and if she did, if it approached what the two of you shared last night.</p> <p>...Some hint of affection that makes you think sex came secondary to love.</p>
219	<p>Grace is the only person in the world who knows for sure you're queer.</p>
220	<p>It was all about competition, and mostly they competed for the attention of guys. The word "lesbian," if uttered at all, was hissed as an insult, along with the abbreviated "lez" or highly favored "dyke."</p> <p>...You tried to fit in, tried flirting with boys. But on those rare occasions you were successful, somehow kissing them wasn't a huge turn-on and their hungry fingers fumbling unbutton your blouse or touch you there only made you feel dirty, rather than desired.</p>
243	<p>Waylon had just turned two, and while he showed off his sliding ability to his new buddy, Lara and you passed a joint.</p>
249	<p>One night of sex, even after a few weeks of demonstrated interest on Silas's part, doesn't exactly mean a dedicated relationship was formed.</p>
271	<p>The drowsy husk of her voice is sexy as hell and coupled with the heat of her skin, she is a total turn-on. And, for probably the millionth time, you think how incredibly lucky you are that she's all yours. "So I can get laid before work?"</p> <p>..."Yeah. Like, sex lessons. You keep getting better and better."</p> <p>..."No lessons. Just lots of practice."</p> <p>..."We have done it a time or five hundred, huh?"</p> <p>"At least." She runs her hand down the length of your torso, and you might take that as an invitation to be accepted, but the alarm blares.</p>
285	<p>There you were, Silas, lying on a thick bed of jungle leaves, with a redhead on either side. Grace kissed you sweetly while Ashlyn went down on you, and there was nothing sweet about that. It was downright nasty. The kind of nasty that would keep a guy going back for more.</p>
336	<p>Not only that, but now you're in debt to one of Tucson's most connected marijuana traffickers, something you have to work your way out of today.</p> <p>...You woke to Rand's request for lovemaking, and after the hot-hot-hot dream he</p>

Page	Content
	<p>pulled you from, you were happy to oblige. At nineteen, your sex drive is maturing, changing from passive acceptance to true desire. You've read that hunger will continue to grow, maybe all the way into your thirties.</p> <p>But sometimes you worry that Rand can't keep pace. He's pretty damn vanilla. If he had his way, it would mostly be straightforward missionary. Experimentation? Depends on the day. For sure he dislikes when you play the aggressor. Sometimes he even recoils.</p> <p>...But you wouldn't mind more variety, no matter who initiates it. Which is why you got clever this morning, simply offering yourself unusual ways, assuming positions and allowing him to say yea or nay. He didn't disagree even once. So maybe there's hope for the two of you.</p>
348	<p>"Let's see what you've got."</p> <p>You offer the premeasured twelve-plus grams. Yeah, it should be fourteen, but you always scam a little for personal stash. Not like he's going to weight it. "It's awesome sativa."</p> <p>"Sample?"</p> <p>"Of course. Here?"</p> <p>"My mom's gone until dinner, but we can step out in back. Doesn't hurt to be cautious."</p>
362	<p>You were a high school sophomore, and you'd gone to a post-football-game party. The guy who was supposed to take you home- you couldn't rightfully call him your boyfriend, more like an acquaintance with a car- wasn't ready to call it a night. Despite your protest, he drove to a construction site, of course deserted at the time.</p> <p>"Take me home, please" you tried.</p> <p>"Sure. After we have some fun."</p> <p>"Look, I don't give sex away, and you've got nothing I need."</p> <p>"I've got this."</p> <p>He unzipped his pants, freeing his erection, then pushed you down on the seat, forcing himself between your legs. You were wearing a skirt, putting nothing between him and you but thin panties.</p>
363	<p>He reeks of weed and his eyes are bloodshot. Bet you can guess what he and that girl were just smoking. "Smells like good shit."</p> <p>"It is."</p>
388	<p>"Question. Did you know Cami smokes weed?"</p>
396	<p>"He's a jew and he's fucking you..."</p>
400	<p>She does not argue, not even when your hand drops to stroke the ample rounds of her breasts.</p>
446	<p>"How long have you been smoking weed?"</p> <p>"Since the eighth grade. I used to get high every day, but not anymore. Now it's just once in a while."</p> <p>..."I had an ounce in my purse."</p> <p>His cheeks puff scarlet. "That's an awful lot for smoking once in a while."</p> <p>"You're right. I've been dealing a little. Not much, just to a select few, and just enough to earn a little extra cash."</p>

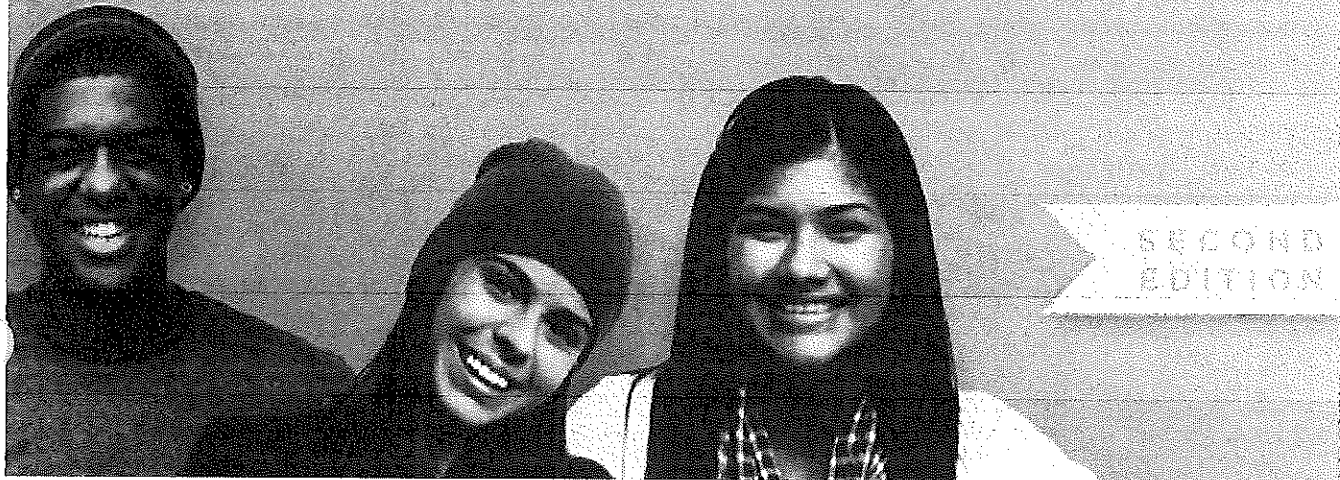


Page	Content
448	"What are you saying? You want a divorce, and that's why you're selling dope?"
464	"White America is the only America!"

Profanity	Count
Ass	5
Bitch	13
Dick	2
Fuck	28
Piss	14
Prick	1
Pussy	1
Shit	17
Spic	2
Wetback	1

*S.E.X. the all-you-need-to-know
sexuality guide to get you through
your teens and twenties*

HEATHER CORINNA



isn't healthy (and that goes for our sexual roles even when we aren't role-playing).

STI risk: Risk levels depend on what sexual activities are engaged in during role-play.

Pregnancy risk: Risk levels depend on what sexual activities are engaged in during role-play.

Bondage/Restraint



What is it, and how do I do it? Bondage or restraint is the practice of having one partner (or less often, both partners) restrained in some way, usually with ropes, cords, other types of fabric or cuffs, and other restraints, during sexual activity for the purpose of increasing pleasure. Some people self-restrain during masturbation. Others use rope or cord to create intricate and creative patterns of knot-tying on the body.

It's really important to understand that tying up or restraining a partner against their will is an absolute **Big No**. **That is assault and kidnapping, and it is both criminal and abusive.** As with any other sexual activity, for this sort of play to be at all emotionally safe, it's vital that *everyone* feels good about it and consents to it, that everyone is clear on their limits, and that the intent isn't malicious or punitive but about pleasure and intimacy.

Like sensation play, sometimes bondage and restraint are incorporated into BDSM or role-play, but just as often, they aren't. Bondage can be used to allow a partner to be selfish in terms of being given all the pleasure, being unable to reciprocate during a given sexual activity, because they can't use their hands or mouths. Some people enjoy being bound or

restrained in certain ways that keep them from engaging in behaviors that may be habitual for them, as a way to seek out other avenues of pleasure; for instance, a person who typically masturbates during intercourse may enjoy having their hands bound and then having to seek out other forms of extra stimulation.

Discussing bondage in advance of the activity is important, as is establishing some code or means of communication so that if the bound partner begins to feel uncomfortable or unsafe, it's easy for them to clearly express that and halt the action.

If you're going to be tying or restraining a partner, remember that circulation is a good thing, and cutting it off isn't. To assess healthy circulation, especially in limbs, doctors and nurses use the code **CSM: color, sensation, and movement**. *Color* should be normal, a person should be able to feel the same *sensations* on that limb as anywhere else, and they should be able to *move* extremities easily. Make sure whatever restraints you're using are comfortable for your partner and that they still have at least some mobility. If they are tied to something, make sure that it's stable and safe and that they are not left alone. Although some people like the feeling of some restraint on their neck during sexual activities, restricting the airway, for a partner or yourself, is incredibly dangerous.

Not everybody wants to engage in activities like bondage. For plenty, it may ring of servitude, slavery, or imprisonment, conditions that many people don't find erotic or pleasant at all. For others, consent and care being present erase those negative associations. As with anything

as much additional lubrication as needed; more people than not need more than their body makes all by itself, and most receptive partners also find it makes things feel better for them, even when they already feel mighty nice.

If both of those things are under control, you may need to adjust your angle. Experiment.

► **When to take a break:** If intercourse is uncomfortable or painful (or just a big yawner) for either party, at any point, just stop. It's never a good idea for anyone to keep going with anything when they're in pain. Some people try a different position, add more lubricant, slow down, or add other sexual activity, like clitoral stimulation with manual sex, masturbation, or a vibrator. If a partner is having a hard time maintaining erection, give it a rest. Engage in other sexual activities that don't require an erection and that are enjoyable for both of you, or just talk, make out, or cuddle for a while. If you've been going at intercourse for a while and one or both partners isn't reaching orgasm or is starting to feel less aroused, stop for now. You can engage in other sexual activities or just halt sex altogether until another day; sometimes we just hit peak capacity for sex and feel finished, even if orgasm hasn't taken place, and that's perfectly okay.

[ANAL SEX/INTERCOURSE]



AKA: Buttfucking, asslove, back-door action.

What is it, and how do I do it?
Anal sex is entering the anus and rectum for sexual satisfaction of both partners.

Butt B.S.

- Men who enjoy anal sex—whatever their orientation or their body parts—may enjoy being the person doing the entering, the person whose body is being entered, or both. The idea that it's only masculine to put yourself into someone else's body parts, but not to allow sexual partners into any of yours, is just gender stereotyping and other kinds of silliness.
- If you're using toys or dildos for anal sex, be sure the object has a flared base that is a good deal larger than the anus. Although things can't get "lost" inside the vagina, they can inside the rectum. As with use of sex toys for anything else, be sure you are either covering toys with a condom or only using toys that can be sanitized; otherwise, bacteria from the rectum can make a toy a vector for infections.
- Anal sex is not "safe sex"; it's not a less risky alternative to vaginal intercourse, nor, like vaginal intercourse, an activity that's wise to engage in unprotected, especially with new, untested, or nonexclusive partners. Both kinds of intercourse have high levels of physical risks, including nearly identical levels of STI risks.

Some young people engage in anal sex, though it's less common than many might think. Data drawn from the National Survey of Family Growth show that for teens fifteen to nineteen years of age, 50 percent had ever engaged in vaginal intercourse; 55 percent had ever engaged in oral sex; and only 11 percent had ever engaged in anal sex. Some young people choose anal sex because they believe it is less risky than vaginal intercourse. This isn't true. From

BDSM

D/S is a term usually used to describe sexual dominance and submission play, in which one partner "tops" and another "bottoms" and/or one partner is dominating and another submitting. The top or bottom may be of any gender, and the action may involve extending pleasure past a point of physical or emotional comfort; "punishing" a partner via humiliation, sexual play, or withholding of sexual activities; and utilizing bondage, sensation play, or verbal enactments. *SM* or *S/M* is an abbreviation for sadism and masochism, or sadomasochism, which means that one partner is giving pain (*sado-*), and the other is receiving it (*-masochism*). The *B* in *BDSM* usually refers to bondage.

BDSM educators recommend what's often known as the *SSC rule*: safe, sane, and consensual. In other words, whatever is being done is agreed upon by both partners and is performed in ways that are both physically and emotionally safe and sane—the same sort of guidelines advised for any kind of sex. Safe and sane include partners truly being able to consent (including legally) and fully understanding what they're agreeing to, both in the short term and the long term (that is, how these sexual choices may affect the individuals, their relationship, and the other areas of their lives). Any sort of sex or role that is forced, coerced, or malicious through the use of power roles or sex is *not* safe, sane, or consensual.

D/S play may involve sex acts most people are familiar with, such as oral sex and intercourse.

D/S may also incorporate sensation play, bondage, or other "kinky" sexual activities. Many people engaging in D/S play incorporate *safewords* into their play: phrases or gestures understood by both to express thresholds, limits, and boundaries. Saying a safeword stops the role-play or sexual activity at any time, immediately and without question. Like polyamory, D/S or BDSM play often requires more discussion and negotiation than other sexual activities might. D/S roles shouldn't be dictated by sex or gender: people of any gender can be tops, bottoms, or "switches," people who enjoy both roles. What role someone should choose is the role that they want.



Stay self-aware if you're considering or involved with D/S play. Some people do use D/S as a way of making an abusive relationship seem acceptable or sexy or to employ it as a means to extend self-injury or controlling behavior, even unconsciously. If your partner is in any way physically abusive in the whole of your relationship or you're not having deep discussions negotiating sexual roles; if your partner verbally abuses or humiliates you outside a "scene" or as a general practice; if you feel that there's a required, implied, or given—rather than agreed upon and optional—power dynamic or imbalance, then it's entirely possible that D/S or S/M play is merely an extension of abuse. With relationship abuse as prevalent as it is, it's not sensible to entertain the delusion that somehow BDSM relationships or communities are immune.


else, if you're interested in an activity and your partner just really isn't, don't push.

STI risk: No risk (as long as skin is not broken and items used or shared are clean).

Pregnancy risk: No risk.

Body Fluid or Blood Play

What is it, and how do I do it?

 Some people enjoy any number of body fluids sexually: ejaculate, vaginal fluids, menses, urine, or blood. They may simply enjoy tasting, feeling, or smelling them during sexual activities, or they may engage in activities specific to enjoying those fluids, such as "golden showers" (being urinated on) or having a partner ejaculate on them. Some enjoy this because it feels taboo, or naughty, to have intimate contact with body fluids. For others, fluid play may be enjoyable because a certain intimacy or sacredness is experienced in fluid bonding.

But from an infection and disease perspective, fluid play can be dangerous, especially when body fluids have contact with incredibly sensitive sites like the eyes. Whereas urine itself is sterile, it does pass through the urethra, where an infection may be present. Ejaculate can carry several different infections. Contact with blood, or cutting or piercing partners in any way, opens the door to some of the deadlier diseases and infections out there, like hepatitis B and HIV.

So, for the most part, this sort of play is quite risky, especially for younger couples, the majority of whom have not had sound or regular sexual health care. Most younger people have not had safer sex with a monogamous partner long enough to be safely "fluid-bonded."

STI risk: Very high risk.

Pregnancy risk: No risk, unless semen comes into contact with a vulva.

Sex Toys



What is it, and how do I do it?

Sex toys come in many varieties. From vibrators—electric and battery-operated, big and small, swanky and silly—to silicone dildos, anal plugs to masturbation sleeves, cock rings to clitoral suction devices, toys and tools run the gamut. People use them for masturbation as well as for partnered sex, by themselves or in conjunction with other activities.

Generally, sex toys aren't available for purchase by minors and are sold in sex toy shops, through catalogs, and on Internet sites. Some people also make their own sex toys or use household objects as sexual toys or aids: electric toothbrushes, plastic bottles, socks, pillows, and all sorts of other objects.

So long as simple directions are followed for items sold as sex toys, they're usually safe for use. For instance, using something electrical in a bathtub isn't safe or smart, and using an item not designed for anal use—and without a flared base—in the anus is a bad idea. Anything with sharp edges should generally not be used on or in the genitals. You must be able to cover with a latex barrier anything that is being used as a sex toy, especially if it is shared, or be able to boil it; otherwise, you could brew and pass around infections and bacteria. Shared (and uncovered) toys are often a very common route for infections to be spread between female partners, something lesbian women often aren't

Submitted by Cindy Rose - 4/20/23

During the last hearing I was asked if the organization that reviewed these books read them in their entirety.

I sent Dr. Cuppett a link to that organization, BookLooks.org, and asked him to share it with you. On their website it says: "*Rest assured, we do read the books we review in their entirety and factor the work as a whole into our rating.*"

For purposes of this committee, I argue that should not be necessary. If I bake a pie and toss in a chunk of cow manure, is the entirety of the pie still worth consuming? How much of the pie has to be tainted before you won't allow your child to eat it?

To restate, we aren't asking for a book ban. We are asking these books be removed from public school libraries where parents don't have the opportunity to vet them before their child picks one up and reads it. My goal is to prevent damaging a child and to preserve childhood innocence. Once offensive and upsetting material is read the damage cannot be undone.

The legal definition of "ban" is a public prohibition that forbids anyone to possess something. These books are still available at your favorite bookstore and public library.

Of the 11 books before us today, four (4) were rated "adult only," six (6) were rated "adult content, no child under 18," and one (1) was "under 18 requires guidance of parent or guardian." Not one was rated suitable for teenagers under 13.

Per the FCPS library tool, seven (7) were checked out less than a dozen times over a several year period. One (1), *Tricks*, has never been checked out.

Tricks, *Identical*, *People Kill People* and *Crank* are all written by Ellen Hopkins. Every book written by Ms. Hopkins in the FCPS catalog needs to be reviewed and removed if necessary.

Identical has been checked out 222 times and *Crank* 77 times. Even though these books contain social messages against drug use, they are still erotica and have no educational purpose withing FCPS. Do we keep the book because of the social message and ignore the erotica and violence? Is arousing sexual desire a goal of FCPS?

Push, *Breathless*, *Crank*, are in our middle schools where children as young as 10 years old have access. *Identical* is in Heather Ridge where not only young people have access, but children with social and emotional problems as well.

We have to put more thought into who is reading these books. Only the parents and guardians truly know if they are ready.

Would your average person find these books inappropriate for young, impressionable, or troubled minds?

Hello, Nancy Allen is submitting the following testimony for the Review Committee:

My testimony comes before you today for the books under the reconsideration submission process (Policy 501 and Reg. 500-39). In our reconsideration submission, we identified the list of books before you today. For today's meeting you were asked to review 10 of the 35 books under review. A full list of the books with identified content was submitted as part of the reconsideration process. I will speak in general to the 10 books this committee was asked to review.

As I continue to hear the term banning of books in news reports it is disturbing. Once again, I would like to clarify our position. For a journalist to use the term banning of books or to ban a book is dishonest and disingenuous. Banning a book would mean you are prohibiting possession and publication of a book. We have asked FCPS to reconsider these books and we would like to see them removed from the public school library shelves. We did not ask them to ban the books. This is a request for FCPS to take corrective action.

I made three main point in my testimony on April 20th.

1. **The selection criteria for the books now residing on FCPS books shelves deserves a greater level of scrutiny and oversight.**
2. **Sexually graphic and explicit content does not have any educational value for the k-12 population.**

AND

3. **Rebuilding trust with parents and the community**

Point #3 is one that I wish to state again.

Until this process of reconsideration began, the majority of parents I would safely say, trusted the school media specialists to make appropriate selections for their libraries. As stewards for their children during school hours, the media specialist must make better decisions in the purchases made for our school libraries.

I also mentioned last testimony about a conflict between the content of books students are allowed to access through the school's libraries and the policy in place for student publications. The conflict between the two is stark. There is a policy in place that prohibits students from using lewd, vulgar and obscene language in a publication that is either sponsored or printed by FCPS, yet this same language and graphic content is allowable for student's to digest through our school's libraries.

In comparison to the material under review, if we were to follow policy 436, the majority of the books would be in question under the lewd, vulgar and obscene guidance as well as violation of federal and state laws. Policy 436 outlines the permissibility of content for students and student publications. Why the double standard for publications from various outside sources? I will close with this final question for you to consider.

If lewd, vulgar and obscene content is not acceptable for a student to write or publish, why is it acceptable for our library shelves?

I wanted to thank everyone on the Reconsideration Committee for volunteering for this very difficult task.

Regardless of whether you are for or against moving these books out of the school libraries, at least half of the public is going to disagree with you. Some may disagree with you with anger and hostility. I apologize for that.

This should never have become a political issue. I know some of you are here because of your political leanings. I hope you have or will put those aside and think of this from a parental perspective instead of a political one. Take off her political activist hat and put on your mama/papa hat.

Now that you have all had a chance to read or discuss the books, you have very important decisions to make. Decisions that will affect you briefly but may affect a child for a lifetime. You cannot un-ring a bell. Neither can you un-remember trauma or un-see something sexually graphic.

The Miller test asks whether the "average" member of our "community" would find these books offensive and inappropriate." Would you read them aloud to your children or parents without embarrassment? Would you be able to stand on a street corner and comfortably read these materials aloud or show the pictures found within the pages? Would the average person on the street be offended by your doing so?

Miller sides with traditional American values. Values I thought I shared with my friends and neighbors here in Frederick. Values that said we protect children from violence and adult themes. As much as we may be divided over politics I thought we were unified in our devotion to the protection of our children.

Corrie ten Boom and her family saved nearly 800 lives during the Holocaust. She sums up my thinking on this matter with the below quote from her book *"The Hiding Place."*

"And so seated next to my father in the train compartment, I suddenly asked, "Father, what is sex sin?"

He turned to look at me, as he always did when answering a question, but to my surprise he said nothing. At last he stood up, lifted his traveling case off the floor and set it on the floor.

"Will you carry it off the train, Corrie?" he said.

I stood up and tugged at it. It was crammed with the watches and spare parts he had purchased that morning.

It's too heavy," I said.

Yes," he said, "and it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It's the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger, you can bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you."

Thank you,
Cindy Rose

Reconsideration Committee Review and Deliberation Protocol

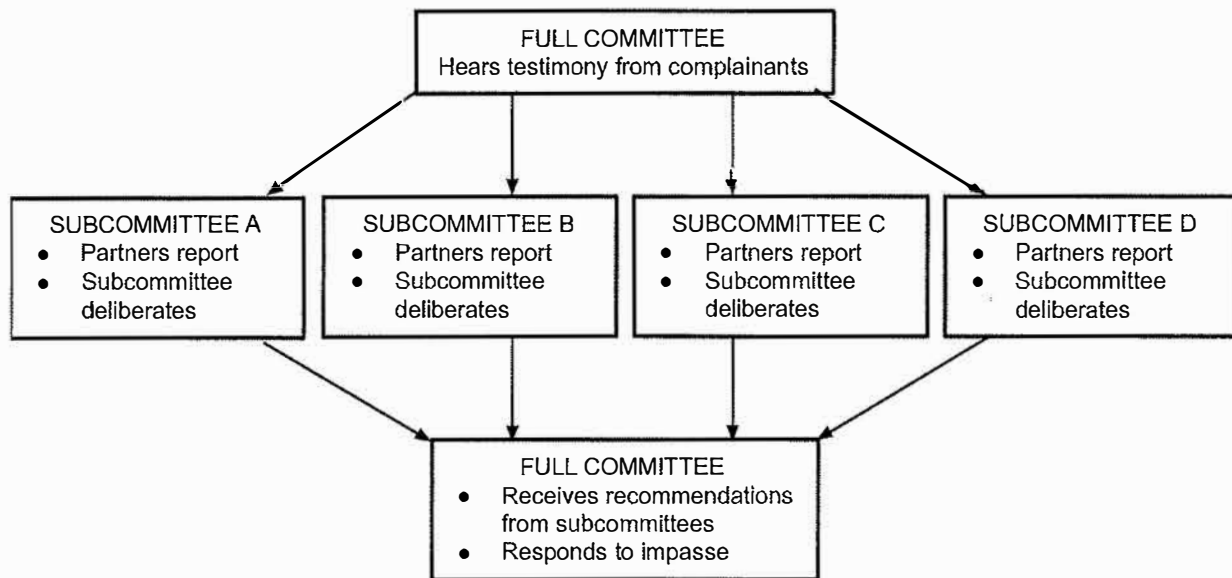
Complainant Testimony:

The full committee will hear testimony from complainants on books on the agenda for each meeting. Upon completion of testimony, complainant(s) will be dismissed from the meeting.

Discussion and Deliberations:

1. Members will divide into their assigned subcommittees. Subcommittees are representative of the membership outlined in FCPS Regulation 500-39.
2. Partners will share the findings related to their book with the subcommittee. See **Reading and Reporting Guide**.
3. Deliberation will occur in the subcommittee.
4. Subcommittees will develop recommendations for all books reviewed at the meeting.
5. The full committee will reconvene to hear recommendations from each subcommittee.

Diagram 1: Review and Deliberation Protocol



Response to Impasse: In the event that a subcommittee is unable to reach consensus on a recommendation for a particular book, the subcommittee (or the full committee) will make a recommendation for resolving the impasse which could include discussion as a full committee or assignment of additional reviewers, followed by additional reporting and deliberation at a future meeting.

Reconsideration Subcommittee Discussion Guide and Key Questions

Provide a brief summary of the book (1 minute)

Highlight the concerns of complainants (1-2 minutes)

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets (3-5 minutes)

Key Questions for Discussion:

- Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?
- Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?
- Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?
- Is the book age appropriate?

Evaluate motivation of your decision and consider if it is based on:

- Political pressure
- Personal dislike for content
- Personal dislike for ideas
- Conflicting with personal values, personal concepts of morality, or religious beliefs

Reconsideration Committee Reading and Reporting Guide

Read the Entire Book: Our work will need to be informed by the full text.

Read with Complainants Concerns in Mind: One goal of the committee is to thoughtfully and thoroughly consider the concerns of the complainants while reading each book. The concerns that complainants shared are found in your **Request for Reconsideration Record**. Please note the “overall concerns” and be attentive to the “specific excerpts and pages” that created concerns for the complainants.

Read with Legal Tenets in Mind: In the first meeting you received information on the legal tenets related to removal of books from school libraries. This information should also be thoughtfully and thoroughly considered while reading the book.

1. Focus your review on awareness of the Constitution and the protection to receive ideas and receive information conducive to debate and scholarly inquiry
2. Evaluate based on age suitability
3. Evaluate based on whether material is deemed pervasively vulgar or obscene
4. Evaluate pervasively vulgar or obscene under the Miller test
5. Evaluate motivation of the decision and consider if it is based on:
 - Political pressure
 - Personal dislike for content
 - Personal dislike for ideas
 - Based on it conflicting with personal values, personal concepts of morality, or religious beliefs

Notes: You can take notes related to the book you are reading in the **Request for Reconsideration Record**. This will be a document included in the final report. The notes can assist you when you report your findings to the subcommittee.

Discussion Record: The discussion of the subcommittee and the full committee will also be documented on the **Request for Reconsideration Record** and will be part of the final report.

Verbal Testimony: Finally, please consider the verbal testimony that will be provided by the complainants prior to the discussion of the subcommittee.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	
Author	
School Level	
Complainant's overall concerns:	
Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern:	
Complainants Verbal Testimony:	
Positive Review:	
Readers Notes:	
Sub-committee Discussion:	
Provide a brief summary of the book	
Highlight the concerns of the complainants	
Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets	
Key questions	
Sub-Committee Recommendation:	
Full Committee Discussion	

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>A Court of Frost and Starlight</i>
Author	Sarah Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about erotica, profanity, explicit sexuality, public sex acts, obscene references to sexual activities.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 29 – "... I'd been so desperate for the feel and taste of her that I'd taken her during the flight down from..." "I was unfastening her pants. A moment later, I'd been inside her ... I'd climaxed at the husky sound of it."</p> <p>Pages: 71, 80, 140, 199, 206, 230, 261, 265, 273, 277</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Horn Book Guide May 19, 2019</p> <p>Still reeling from the recent war and the wall between the mortal and faerie realms falling (A Court of Wings and Ruin), Feyre, Rhysand, and their fellow Fae work tirelessly to restore order and celebrate the cheery Winter Solstice. After the massive battles and intense action sequences of the previous books, fans will welcome this more intimate visit with the familiar characters. (c) Copyright 2019. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews May 31, 2018</p> <p>A glimpse of the characters dealing with rebuilding and fallout after A Court of Wings and Ruin (2017). In a change of pace from the usual epic struggle against powerful forces, this slimmer-than-usual volume follows the cast during the festive Winter Solstice holiday. Nods to trouble on the horizon (dissent in the Illyrian ranks, Fae courts eyeing for expansion, and a politically fraught situation among humans) remain distant, the lack of progress at times resulting in frustrating repetition. Cassian's and Mor's backstories are explored, and prickly Amren's low-key relationship storyline is supplemented by her High Fae adjustments (including bodily humor). While Elain is becoming more comfortable, she still wants nothing to do with Lucien (who feels like an outsider nearly everywhere and has his hands full with a self-destructive Tamlin). Severely struggling Nesta self-medicates through alcohol, meaningless sex, pushing everyone away, and finding every last seedy corner of the otherwise utopian Velaris. While Rhys handles politics, Feyre's storyline revolves around Solstice shopping and art's potential for healing trauma when the lovers aren't telepathically sexting or craving each other. Aside from occasional minor characters, most of the inhuman cast seem white. Several plotlines are predictably resolved. With introspection replacing battles, this extended epilogue gives breathing room between dramatic arcs but is best for readers who'd prefer downtime with the characters over high stakes. (map, preview of next title) (Fantasy. 16-adult) Copyright Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.</p>	

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Readers' Notes

The complainants are using the website ratedbooks.org to select books to challenge, and that website pulled the review for this book from BookLooks.org

Reviewing the complainant's concerns about specific excerpts/pages:

Note: The pages do not align between our copies and the Book Looks review used by the complainants. I have input the correct pages and referenced those passages in my notes.

Page 29: (pgs. 14-15)

This excerpt was a memory of a sexual encounter between the two main characters who are "mated", which is what they call committed couples in the fantasy world created by this author. It was not graphic.

Page 71: (pgs. 46-47)

The passage being challenged here was one where Rhys, the male main character, made a sexual reference about "eating" Feyre, the female main character and his mate. This is a joke many high school students have heard, or may say themselves. After all, every time the number 69 appears for anything, the giggles are numerous in all classes.

"Considering that you brought the entire damn kitchen."

The "profanity" here reflects what a high schooler typically hears in the community, at school, and perhaps even at home.

"You were thrashing on the bed as if someone had gutted you."

Feyre is expressing pain she's experiencing during her biannual menstrual cycle (unique to the fantasy world).

Page 80: (pgs. 53-56)

This scene is between Rhys and Feyre, an unconsummated romantic and sexual encounter. It is meant to enhance the story and refers to the deep emotional connection between the characters, and does not fit the definition of pornography.

Page 140: (pg. 100)

Feyre sticks her tongue out at Rhys, and he says "Save that tongue for later. I have ideas for it." Not fitting the definition of pornography.

Page 199: (pg. 148)

Rhys is admiring Feyre's backside. No big deal, nothing prurient here.

Page 206: (pgs. 153-154)

Rhys gifts Feyre three thoughtful presents for her birthday: a sketchbook, a wool scarf, and a satchel to carry her art supplies in.

The main characters kiss, Feyre says she wants to draw Rhys, he suggests she draw him naked, and that is the end of this scene. Not pornography.

Page 230: (pg. 173)

Feyre described a memory of a sexual encounter with her mate, but not in detail, in very vague terms, and the memory served a purpose in the story. Not pornography.

Page 261: (pg. 198)

Feyre, sitting on the arm of the couch Rhys is on, told Rhys that she loved the dress he gave her (made by his dead mother), and Rhys slid his hand down her thigh and said, "I'm glad." This was on the complaint list. This...? Not pornography.

"He ran his hand down my thigh"

This quote is stated within a touching scene where Rhys discloses to Feyre that all of the gowns he's gifted her were sewn by his late mother. Rhys recalls childhood memories of his mother creating luxurious, one-of-a-kind gowns: *"Long ago, when I was a boy, she made them—all your gowns. A trousseau for my future bride. Every piece...every piece I have ever given you to wear, she made them. For you."*

Page 265: (pgs. 201-206)

This is a pretty explicit romantic and sexual scene between the two main characters, the most such scene in the whole book. I agree it is written with detail to the sex, but the sex is used to enhance the story and illustrate the bond between the two main characters, not just for prurient interest. I do not deem this pornography.

Consensual sex scene between the two main characters in the book. The scene details a passionate episode of sexual intercourse, references of penetration (*"Rhys spilled into me with a roar"*, *"he remained buried in me"*, *"his body still moving inside my own"*) and sexual pleasure (*"he panted against my neck FeyreFeyreFeyre"*), and the shared desire to procreate. Though graphic, the author successfully illustrates the physical and emotional connection the main characters have for one another. The scene concludes with Feyre hoping she and Rhys will soon become parents.

Page 273: (pg. 207)

This is just a continuation of the sex scene that started on pages 201-206.

Page 277: (pg. 210)

The line in dispute is "The sex had destroyed me." Read in context, Rhys was referring to how the recent sex with his mate (described on pages 201-207) had utterly and irrevocably bonded him body and soul to Feyre. It was a brief comment, and a lovely moment in the story when he realizes how much he cares for Feyre. Not pornography.

Readers' Thoughts

- When we exclusively focus on a few excerpts in the book, we fail to reflect on the book itself—its absorbing storyline, its multifaceted characters, and relatable dialogue. This book prompts conversations about the concept of "home", healing after loss, and healthy/unhealthy relationships. What the complainants seem to have done with this book is cherry-picked sexual encounters and subsequently deemed the entire book as obscene and perverse.
- Banning a book that details sexual activity, particularly at the high school level, will not erase the topic of sex among adolescents. Adolescents confront this topic as part of their typical physical, emotional, and psychosocial development. Why deny literature that might encourage adolescents to become comfortable with their changing bodies? Why deny literature that provides a safe outlet for adolescents to explore which sexual activities, if any, they wish to engage in?
- The sex scenes are used throughout the book to highlight the deep connection between a mated (married) couple in the book. It advances the story, creates tension, and serves a purpose. It is not used just for prurient interest.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Note: Pages did not match up with the complainants.

Provide a brief summary of the book

- It is a fantasy novel.
- The main character died at the end of the 1st book, saving many fairies and then received magic from the fairies to come back and live as a fairy.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, profanity, explicit sexuality, public sex acts, obscene references to sexual activities.
- The characters mate, that is their form of marriage.
- The sex in the book reflects the relationship of the two main characters and their connection.
- Ms. Rose spoke to child pornography and the committee member was not sure what her complaint was for this book since it does not include children.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- The question was asked, "could reading this be a danger in exposing a student to wanting to do this? You could argue that that would be the case for anything, such as someone drinking in a book, would it cause a student to want to drink?"

Key questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes, for high school only - 14 and older

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>A Court of Mist and Fury</i>
Author	Sara Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity, erotica.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 45 – “My attention went ... clever fingers that unfastened his pants. “... I bit my bottom lip as he removed his pants ... revealing the proud, thick length of him. My mouth went dry...” “Come here, ‘he growled ... revealing my naked body...”</p> <p>Pages: 148, 157, 159, 173, 181, 194, 314, 323,364, 390, 395, 465, 485, 520, 534, 562, 664,672, 693, 696, 700, 736, 738, 740, 757, 783, 788, 847, 866, 869, 883, 891, 895,902, 903, 904, 953, 959, 960</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist May 1, 2016</p> <p>Once-human Feyre and her faerie lover Tamlin bested the wicked Amarantha in <i>A Court of Thorns and Roses</i> (2015), but a happy ending this is not. Feyre, traumatized and guilt-ridden over all she experienced, struggles to regain her sense of self, while Tamlin grows both more protective and more constricting. Making matters worse is the bargain Feyre made with enigmatic Rhysand, High Lord of the feared Night Court: one week every month, Feyre must go to Rhysand's home, where, in a Hades-and-Persephone variation, she finds that the Night Court might not be such a place of nightmares. But a greater threat is looming one that may affect even the human family Feyre left behind. At times, this straddles the line between YA fantasy and adult romance Feyre is almost 20, and her sexual encounters are many and detailed. But the world is exquisitely crafted, the large cast of secondary characters fleshed out, the action intense, and the twist ending surprising, heartrending, and, as always, sure to guarantee readers' return. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: When has Maas not churned out a best-seller? Her ongoing <i>Throne of Glass</i> series is enormously popular, and this sequel in an equally devoured new series is primed for similar success.--Reagan, Maggie Copyright 2016 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide April 13, 2017</p> <p>Feyre (<i>A Court of Thorns and Roses</i>) has become immortal, but her heart remains human. After fleeing Tamlin's oppressive Spring Court for Rhysand's Night Court, she heals, hones her Fae powers, and prepares for war. The love-interest shift (Tamlin to Rhysand) is satisfyingly slow and subtle. Maas includes plenty of sass, sexual tension, and female empowerment in this high fantasy's massive second volume. (c) Copyright 2017. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

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Readers Notes:

Summary: Feyre is a human that has been turned immortal in the prior book of the series. She is “coming of age” in the novel in that she is learning her new magical powers— quickly teleporting between spaces instantly, manipulating water, shields, use of fire/shadows, etc. She begins the story in the home of Tamlin, a high lord faerie that she is about to marry. She feels trapped in this environment, and through a bargain made in the previous book, goes with another high lord faerie, Rhysand, where she begins to train and develop her powers. A romance develops between Feyre and Rhysand as they train and go on various quests to try to prepare against war with another realm. Feyre finds a sense of home and self with Rhysand, his friends, and the people in his court. She starts the novel as a very fragile individual and the novel ends with her as a high lady/warrior/spy of sorts that has developed strength and courage. It is alluded to that Feyre has more powers than what was revealed in this portion of the series, and that she will play a large part in determining how the future war will resolve.

Complainants areas of concerns:

- P.148: no inappropriate content. Does contain “thighs burning” but this is in reference to the main character feeling out of shape because she is walking a lot in the city.
- P.157: Innuendo, not graphic. “We don’t bite unless you ask us to”
- P.159: Also not sure what is problematic with this page. One of the characters is called a “bastard” but he is in the strict definition of the word. Doesn’t seem inappropriate.
- P.173: The same character is referred to as a bastard again. Also a prick. Doesn’t seem inappropriate.
- P.181: “she stared at my chest” the context of this is not sexual. The main character is describing the other individual contemplating the heart beating inside of her
- P.194: I could not find any issue with the content on this page
- P.314: characters are drinking wine casually with a meal. They are not intoxicated.
- P.323: I could not find any issue with the content on this page.
- P.364: I could not find any issue with the content on this page.
- P.390: I could not find any issue with the content on this page.
- P.395: I think the word “sadist” may have been picked up in a scan of the book’s content. The context is that the warrior doesn’t want to be considered a warmongering sadist. This is not inappropriate.
- P.465: “we’ll have to keep each other warm”. Innuendo but nothing graphic.
- P.485: Rhysand has been struck by arrows and is bleeding. There is blood but it is not too graphic and makes sense in the context of the event.
- P.520: Use of the word “fuck.” Rhysand is talking about how he pleased another woman. It isn’t a graphic description.
- P.534: this page concludes about 2 prior pages of Feyre and Rhysand engaged in sexual activity. It is fairly graphic and includes a description of thrusting and both characters orgasming. Both characters are then described as naked bathing together while talking about being “mated”
- P.562: violent scene, a princess has been scalped and her eyes removed, she was left as a message of war
- P.664 and remaining 23 cited pages of concern: this book only has 624 pages. There are 24 pages of concern that do not exist for this novel.

Reader’s notated areas of concern: There is definitely quite a bit of sexual innuendo in the book, specifically there is a running joke about some of the male characters in the book, they have wings and there is some innuendo that the size of the wings corresponds to the size of their genitals. This isn’t graphic in nature. There are about 4 scenes in the book that should be reviewed with the group:

1. Towards the beginning of the book Feyre and Tamlin engage in sexual activity. She describes wanting him inside of her and also describes him touching her genital area. The word “thrusting” is used and both characters orgasm and make sexual noises.

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2. Towards the later half of the book, there is a scene where Rhysand touches Feyre very sexually in front of his court and has her sit on his lap. Feyre describes Rhysand as feeling “hard” against her. The scene isn’t particularly graphic, the emotions are described more than the actions.
3. Also towards the later half of the book, Rhysand and Feyre stay in a small inn and there is only one bed in their room. They share it “for body heat” since the room is cold. Feyre thinks about wanting to have sex with him. They kiss and Rhysand touches her nipples and strokes her genital area until she orgasms.
4. At the end of the book Rhysand and Feyre are now “mated” partners. According to the world’s description of this relationship, when this first happens both partners are extremely lustful. There are several scenes where both characters engage in fairly graphic sexual activity, are described as being nude on multiple occasions, and bathe together.

Miller Test: (1) the book, as a whole, does not appeal to prurient interests. Most sexuality in the book is innuendo. (2) I think that the average reader would find the 4 scenes I described in the notes above as graphic in nature— orgasms are described, the act of thrusting is described, characters are described as being “wet” and “releasing”. (3) does this have literary/artistic/political or scientific value? I think there are some definite feminist values being written into the narrative, especially with a woman learning to become powerful in what looks to be a male dominated world. This is not a literary classic— there are a lot of fantasy novels that follow similar structures and do it much better, and honestly a good portion of the writing is quite poor— it sounds like un-edited speech to text. But I do think that this does have literary value and could see how someone would find the plot interesting and the characters as well developed.

I will add that as the parent of a 9th grade student (the youngest age group that would have access to this book in a high school library), I feel no restriction is necessary.

I feel the passages that describe sexual activity, while detailed, have the added purpose of showing the bond between the characters. The two scenes which describe sexual intercourse differ greatly in tone, highlighting the difference in connection between the characters involved. Context matters, and in the context of the book I feel the intent is not merely arousal.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Sara Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- 2nd book in series; Farro killed/brought back to life; coming of age story; develops power/how to control; goes through relationships to develop herself; warrior, strong
- Book #1 - captive and escapes

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity, erotica.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Difference in tone of the scenes
- 4 sex scenes - 2 descriptive intercourse - 10 to 15 pages total out of 600+ book; continuation of the writer’s style - clothing and location
- Innuendos; sexy/action pact

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Literacy - yes; Feminism; strong female character

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?



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- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No; it's descriptive but not offensive

Is the book age appropriate?

- No problems with high school students

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>A Court of Silver Flames</i>
Author	Sara Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about erotica, violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 20 – “He took the invitation to survey her: long bare legs, an elegant sweep of hips, tapered waist – too damn thin – and full, inviting breasts ...”</p> <p>Page 22 – “... recalling heated glances ... the wet hot meeting of their mouths, the sweat coating her as she rode him until pleasure and drink sent her into blessed oblivion...”</p> <p>Pages: 20, 22, 23, 26, 29, 35, 90, 96, 142, 190, 248, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 258, 277, 293, 298, 299, 301, 331, 338, 339, 342, 347, 377, 388, 395, 398, 402, 451, 459, 512, 530, 532, 537, 573, 584, 613, 679, 682, 722, 747, 799, 803, 806, 826</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist April 9, 2021</p> <p>Formerly supporting players Nesta and Cassian take center stage in the latest installment of Maas' Court of Thorns and Roses series (after <i>A Court of Wings and Ruin</i>, 2017). Nesta, who will be familiar to readers as series heroine Feyre's prickly sister, is in a dark place. She's angry at having been turned from human to high fae during the war with Hybern, guilt-ridden at her inability to save her father's life, and drowning her self-loathing in wine and casual sex. Feyre and Rhysand, fed up with her antics, offer an ultimatum: either she is exiled back to the human world, or she agrees to a training regimen with Cassian, Rhys' best friend, a warrior with a troubled past whom Nesta has never hesitated to verbally spar with. Nesta reluctantly agrees, and readers follow her physical and mental journey of healing, even as she faces her growing feelings for Cassian, her own untapped powers, and looming threats to the fragile, hard-won peace. Maas' many fans will no doubt be thrilled with this latest offering, which is a fast-paced, sexy, and at times surprisingly emotional ode to female empowerment. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Maas' Court of Thorns and Roses has a devoted following, so much so that this installment was kept under tight wraps until the release date—so expect fans to be all over this one.</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/53138095 (4.45 out of 5)</p> <p>Nesta Archeron has always been prickly-proud, swift to anger, and slow to forgive. And ever since being forced into the Cauldron and becoming High Fae against her will, she's struggled to find a place for herself within the strange, deadly world she inhabits. Worse, she can't seem to move past the horrors of the war with Hybern and all she lost in it.</p> <p>The one person who ignites her temper more than any other is Cassian, the battle-scarred warrior whose position in Rhysand and Feyre's Night Court keeps him constantly in Nesta's orbit. But her temper isn't the only</p>	

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thing Cassian ignites. The fire between them is undeniable, and only burns hotter as they are forced into close quarters with each other.

Meanwhile, the treacherous human queens who returned to the Continent during the last war have forged a dangerous new alliance, threatening the fragile peace that has settled over the realms. And the key to halting them might very well rely on Cassian and Nesta facing their haunting pasts.

Against the sweeping backdrop of a world seared by war and plagued with uncertainty, Nesta and Cassian battle monsters from within and without as they search for acceptance-and healing-in each other's arms.

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/a-court-of-silver-flames-sarah-j-maas/1137236764>

Readers Notes:

I read this book as part of the extended re-read for the meeting on July 20, 2023. I also read the third book in this series, Court of Wings and Ruin. Court of Silver Flames is the fifth book in this series. The Sub-committee has already voted to keep Court of Wings and Ruin in the high school library. We are now considering whether the last book in the series should be removed. All of the books in this series have some measure of violence, sexuality, and some limited profanity. This book - Court of Silver Flames - arguably has the most sexual scenes which are more explicit. However, the scenes are still "sex-positive" - they are consensual, between two adults in a "relationship" (they admit their love for one another at the end), and show sex as enjoyable and with a measure of romance.

But the main theme in this book is Nesta's transformation from a woman who is broken by her father's death, has many men in her bed (none of those sex scenes are ever described), is drinking too much, and has lost all hope. Her friends and family come together to save her, but ultimately she saves herself. She gathers other broken women (some of whom have been abused by men), trains them as warriors, and they work together to save lives. Nesta is able to love at the end because she overcame her fears and past trauma. It is a very inspiring book.

Some of the previous readers have described the sex scenes as "pornography" - the Supreme Court has applied the "obscenity" test to determine if something constitutes pornography. We are following the same obscenity test in our discussions.

From Miller v. California:

"Obscene materials are defined as those that the average person, applying contemporary community standards, find, taken as a whole, appeal to the prurient interest; that depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct or excretory functions specifically defined by applicable state law; and that the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

The phrase - "intended to arouse" - became a big topic of discussion for our group on other books. I tried to find other case law to define it. However, I cannot find this standard - "intended to arouse" in the case law. The phrase "intended to arouse" isn't actually one of the Miller standards. The Court in Pinkus v. U.S., 436 U.S. 293 (1978) asked whether material was intended to arouse the prurient interest. The Court has said that "**prurient interest**" is not "**normal, healthy sexual desires**", but rather, "**appeal to a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion**" Brockett v. Spokane Arcades, Inc., 472 U.S. 491 (1985).

I do not think this book constitutes pornography. The sex scenes are not appealing to a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion. I think they depict normal, healthy sexual desires, which is not appealing to the "prurient" interest.

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As to whether the book is age-appropriate, it's important - I think - to remember that these books are self-selected by the students. Students who are not comfortable or ready to consume sexual materials are not likely to choose this book - especially if they have not read the first four in the series.

Students who have read the first four have already seen sexual depictions and will be invested in the characters' stories and ultimate outcome of the book.

The sexual content must be balanced against the other messages in the book - a strong, intelligent, powerful female lead who ultimately saves herself and works to save and empower other women. The male leads in the book are respectful of the females and value their opinions and efforts equally. To remove such a book from the library deprives students from seeing and experiencing these encouraging stories. I would not remove it.

The previous reviewer has provided a comprehensive and accurate summary of the content, aligned to my reading experience. In response to the relevant legal tenets and the Reconsideration questions we are asked to consider:

1. Artistic Value - Yes, the novel has artistic value as a science fiction/fantasy novel with skillful character and plot development and the compelling combination of medieval (chivalry, role and responsibilities of monarchy) and modern (female independence, female sexual control and empowerment) themes.
2. Obscene Materials/Prurient interest/Intended to Arouse/Patently offensive - I do not believe that the sexual content of this novel is obscene or presented in a patently offensive way. The sexual content is pervasive, graphic, specific and includes detailed descriptions of masturbation, oral sex, ejaculation, and sexual intercourse (gentle, romantic, rough, and erotic). I do believe that the sexual content is intended to arouse, but I agree with reviewer that, "The sex scenes are not appealing to a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion." All sex is consensual and presents balanced and equitable depiction of both male and female sexual desire.
3. Age Appropriate - Reviewer has suggested that we should consider that these books are self-selected and assumes that students who are not ready to consume the content are not likely to choose this book. This is not the assessment we are asked to undertake. We have been asked to consider if the content is age appropriate and should be available for student self selection. While the sexual content is pervasive, detailed, and graphic I do believe that "taken as a whole" the novel is age appropriate for most high school students.

I would not remove it.

I appreciate the commentary written by other members of the group. I also read another book by this author during the first meetings and recommended that it remained in the library. I was the 2nd read on this book, and I recommended its removal at that time. It should be of note that two other readers in our group, that were students, both thought that it was inappropriate for high school aged students and recommended that it be removed from the library.

One item that we reviewed in the first group is that this book, last in the series, is the only one that has an "M" (for mature) categorization, as opposed to the others in the series that are categorized as "YA." The author intended for her readers to grow in maturity and therefore no longer be reading "YA" at this point after reading the others. I think this is important for us to consider— the author expected a more mature audience for this book than the previous ones.

I do believe that this book has literary value— there are some very beautiful descriptions, the character development is interesting, and overall I am of the opinion that it is well written. However, I am in agreement that the scenes involving sexual activity are intended to arouse. I believe that they are descriptive to the point that they are not age appropriate. If this book were a movie, and these scenes were kept as is, it would not have a

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"R" rating— and I don't think that having a book beyond this rating in a school library is appropriate. I am recommending that this book is removed.

I recommend to keep this book in high school libraries. I believe it passes the Miller test, even though some of the sex scenes are quite graphic. Though they are graphic, they only are a small portion of the almost 800 page book that is fifth in the series, and this book is only going to be read by students who have read the other four, so not a wide audience. I do not feel the sex scenes were written to appeal to prurient interests.

Sub-committee Discussion: May 11, 2023

Sara Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- 5th book in series
- Nesta traumatized in her experience
- Sister is High Lady of Night court
- New power/make friends and overcome her trauma
- She becomes who she wants to be
- Finds lover
- Romance
- Saves her family
- 2 friends - traumatic experiences; overcome trauma; forgiving/redeeming oneself - has merit

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity
- Erotica - Yes (book cover)
- Gratuitous sex scenes - consensual
- 2 readers thought it was pornographic

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Literacy - Yes; Book still has merit without the sex scenes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Not necessarily; talk about rape but no depictions; experience from past

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes for Jr/Sr High school students; too much for a 9th grader

Recommendation on May 11, 2023: 2 readers - Remove from library; 2 readers - leave in library
Assign additional readers; have further discussion

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-committee Discussion: June 1, 2023

Sara Maas
High School

1. Character physically changes herself/body to be with the man. Fantasy story; trauma prior to the 5th book. Healing, struggles; embracing herself. Yes - this book prurient and tended to arouse - more sexual activity; more graphic and descriptive; keep in the library
2. Character development; has literacy merit - progresses to adult conduct by Book 5. worried about if this book (#5 in the series) is removed it becoming a slippery slope; looked at the pros and cons; what is considered "community standard"; doesn't damage the kid in reading this book; keep book on shelf with caution to the Media Specialist to make the final decision due to the strong warning on the book cover.

Group Discussion: This is a series of 5 books. The author followed the reader's age over the next 5 years through Books 1 to 3 (ages 14 to adult, Book 4 (age 17) and Book 5 written in 2021 (Adult); Booklist: YA/M; the series progresses to mature content. The book cover states what is in the book. Sends a mixed message to the student if the library has the first 4 books available but not the 5th one. They will find a way to read the 5th one if they've been following this series.

Recommendation on June 1, 2023: After further discussion on this book and dissenting decision; another vote was taken with 4 No's and 8 Yes's; recommended a full committee review the book

Sub-committee Discussion: July 20, 2023

Sarah Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- This is the 5th book in a fantasy series where characters are mated for life.
- One of the main characters was angry that she was changed from human form to a fairy. She came out with horrible powers that she doesn't know how to control. Due to her anger she lashes out by having sex with several strangers (not explicit) and turns to drinking. Given an ultimatum to train and or be kicked out she started to work on her anger, trusting her body, became physically strong and her relationship with her partner strengthened.
- It is a story of female empowerment and the sex scenes are minimal/limited and consensual.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, violence, profanity, sexual nudity, sexual activity
- Erotica - Yes (book cover)
- Gratuitous sex scenes - consensual
- 2 readers thought it was pornographic
- This is a "coming of age" story for this woman character and was not alarmed by the sex scenes.
- It was nice to see women in the story encouraging each other. Less interested in the sex scenes than the characters and their journey.
- One member mentioned they felt it was an erotic novel and a next level up from the other books in the series.
- Slim chance it would be checked out as a stand-alone. particularly with it having 757 pages.
- Sex language is more age appropriate.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, a fantasy series that centers a strong female character.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- Majority felt it did not.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Majority felt it was.

Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Vote:

Keep in high schools: 9

Remove: 2

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>A Court of Thorns and Roses</i>
Author	Sara Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about violence, sexual nudity, obscene sexual nudity, profanity, erotica, violence.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 172 – “His lips were smooth against my skin, his breath warm, and my knees buckled as he lifted my other hand to his mouth and kissed it, too. Kissed it carefully- in a way that made heat begin pounding in my core, between my legs.”</p> <p>Pages: 197, 229, 232, 239, 245, 247, 346, 348, 375, 378, 379, 380, 411</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist May 1, 2015</p> <p>*Starred Review* Faeries and humans live apart, separated by a wall and generations-old hostility, and resourceful Feyre struggles to keep her poor family alive. She kills a wolf one winter day, and a monstrous creature arrives at her home, demanding her life as punishment. What follows is a Beauty and the Beast-style retelling as Feyre is spirited away to the grand lands of this creature, who turns out to be Tamlin, High Fae, under a mysterious curse. Feyre's feelings for him and his world morph slowly from an angry combativeness into a strange affection, but a mysterious disease is ravaging his home, and at risk of losing everything she has begun to hold dear, Feyre begins a journey that takes her Under the Mountain, the dangerous home of the faerie queen. The ensemble is exquisitely developed, as is the sultry romance between Feyre and Tamlin. The end result is a story that, despite its hefty page count and ambitious scope, simply dazzles. Refreshingly, there are no cliff-hangers here, but enough open-endings ensure that the clamor for a sequel will be deafening. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Maas' Throne of Glass series has been a smash hit, and with a six-figure marketing campaign, this new series is primed to follow.--Reagan, Maggie Copyright 2015 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide October 13, 2015</p> <p>An evil fairy queen has controlled the seven fairy courts for forty-nine years. Nineteen-year-old human Feyre finds herself among the fairies, and she must outsmart the queen to save herself; the fairies; and her true love, Tamlin. Maas weaves folk- and fairy tales from multiple origins, fairy lore, adventure, and romance into an exciting new YA fantasy series. (c) Copyright 2015. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

Readers Notes:

- Sex is mentioned multiple times throughout the book, but the sexual encounters themselves are very short and not very graphic
- Substance abuse is an issue later in the novel, but the female main character realizes that she is not handling herself well and attempts to come to terms with her situation
- Themes dealing with identity and trauma make this a high-interest book for teenagers
- When read as a whole series, readers could identify possible red flags for abusive/manipulative relationships
- I would recommend keeping this text with no content warnings, high school only

Sub-committee Discussion:

Sara Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

It's a love story, has fairies, fantasy in a unique way, (kind of like Harry Potter). Eventually the character finds herself having feelings with someone else. She shot a fairy that was in the form of a wolf.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, sexual nudity, obscene sexual nudity, profanity, erotica, violence.
- Not sure of the concern.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>A Court of Wings and Ruin</i>
Author	Sara Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about violence, explicit sex, profanity, sexual nudity, erotica.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 134 – “You had put your hands all over her. I had done my job too well with every instance I’d found ways to get Lucien to touch me in her presence, in Tamlin’s presence.”</p> <p>Pages: 199, 204, 297, 298, 326, 328, 343, 407, 411, 457, 555, 564, 610, 614, 616, 620, 675, 750, 851, 1002</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist July 1, 2017</p> <p>It's the end of a trilogy, if not an era: Feyre and Rhysand's story comes to a thunderous close, even as Maas promises more novels from their world. In the Spring Court where she resides after the events of <i>A Court of Mist and Fury</i> (2016), planted to spy on Tamlin, her former lover Feyre must hide her true self. War is coming, and the seven faerie courts form tense, uneasy alliances. Feyre longs to return to her true love, Rhysand, and the rest of her family in the Night Court, but as long as Tamlin remains inscrutable, she must keep up a subterfuge that grows more dangerous by the day. Though it would have been better served by another round of copyediting, this fast-paced and explosively action-packed finale will certainly grab audiences. There's more gore than sex this time although there's plenty of both and Maas ventures farther into the world of Prythian than ever before. Die-hard fans will eagerly follow the conclusion to Feyre's story while looking forward to the next crop of stories from Prythian.--Reagan, Maggie Copyright 2017 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide May 9, 2018</p> <p>Immortal Fae Feyre's dangerous journey across Prythian leads her back to lover Rysand and their friends. They must ally themselves with other High Lords in order to defeat the tyrant King of Hybern's invasion. This third installment (following <i>A Court of Mist and Fury</i>) celebrates love and chosen family. Quick wit, well-rounded characters, and detailed action scenes move the lengthy book along. (c) Copyright 2018. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

Readers Notes:

Summary:

A Court of Wings and Ruin is a continuance in the story of Feyre (main character) and her life events and changes during a war with the surrounding kingdoms. The novel starts around 3 weeks after the end of the last book in the series, A Court of Mist and Fury. Feyre returns as a spy and secretly married to Rhysand (The most powerful ruler in history) but she is pretending to be in love with another ruler (Tamlin) in order to create the ultimate betrayal. Tamlin had previously kept her locked up against her will telling her he was “keeping her safe”. This is where she met and fell in love with her now husband Rhysand (he rescued her from Tamlin’s). She assumes the role of High Lady of the Night Court (known to be deceptive and powerful). During this time characters gain immortality and find themselves in the midst of the start of a full out war. Very vivid scenes of sex, violence (of war), and mild profanity do occur. The book ends with Feyre, Rhysand, and other characters returning to Velaris(the home of the night court).

Legal Tenets:

- No Graphic or Content Warning
According to Picco “Removal of Library books based on the fact that they are “pervasively vulgar” may be permissible”

Key Topics For Discussion:

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

The book does have artistic value. Throughout the book a strong theme of ‘the power of love’ is kept. Feyre empowers how a great ruler should love. Love for her family, love for innocents, and love for her “people”.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse?

The book is divided, the scenes of war and domestic abuse are certainly not intended to arouse. In fact they leave a more negative picture in the readers head but do serve a purpose in explaining the story. There are specific sex scenes that are written to arouse. Which is why this book may not be for everyone (move to age appropriateness)

Is the book age appropriate?

I would recommend the book be for upperclassmen only. The graphic sexual content level would best suit older teens.

Main Concerns:

Sexual Scenes, Drinking, Vulgar Language

The complainant cites concerns of Violence, sexual nudity, explicit sexual activity, and profanity.

Violence: Pages 92, 93, 122, 354, 357, 415, 649, 653-655

Sexual Nudity: Pages 136-138, 401, 516, 558,

explicit sexual activity Pages 135-142, 198, 218, 219, 261, 311, 312, 379, 380, 387, 439, 450, 451, 463, 516, 588-591

Complainant cites Profanity: There is profanity found on pages 18, 24, 92, 101,109, 145, 146, 192, 193, 194, 201, 219, 232, 276, 279, 281, 305, 314, 319, 330, 332, 417, 422, 438, 451, 456, 510, 522

One of the key questions for discussion is, “Based on the community standards, is the book prurient (having or encouraging an excessive interest in sexual matters) and intended to arouse?”

Request for Reconsideration Record

Based on my understanding of the community standards and in consideration of the explicit sexual activity in the book (particularly pages 135-142) this book does have an excessive interest in sexual matters and is certainly intended arouse.

My recommendation is to remove the book from the high school libraries.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Sara Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- The publisher of this book is more associated with Young Adult novels, however this book appears to be intended to move from the Young Adult audience to the New Adult audience.
- This book falls in the middle of a continuing storyline over the course of multiple books.
- It is a fantasy genre book
- The main character is young woman named Farrah
- She lives in a fictional kingdom that is at war with other surrounding kingdoms
- She is secretly married to a powerful ruler of the Night Court, making her the Lady of the Night Court
- At the same time she is pretending to be in love with a powerful ruler of the rival Spring Court
- The ruler of the Spring Court had previously betrayal and locked up Farrah

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, explicit sex, profanity, sexual nudity, erotica.
- There are two incidences of violent scenes described in gross detail- but not enough to warrant removal from libraries
- Profanity is not excessive
- The page numbers cited in the complaints do not line up with page numbers in the book- there is some confusion as to whether specific complaints are in reference to this book or other books in the same series by the same author.
- This book contains explicit sexual activity that is bad for kids

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- The book is prurient with the intent to arouse

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- The book has artistic value- the main character has a strong sense of non-sexual love.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- This book is prurient and is intended to arouse.
- Sex scenes are very vivid and excessive.
- Descriptions of war and domestic abuse are not intended to arouse-paints a negative picture of war and abuse.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- The content in the book is arousing but not offensive

Is the book age appropriate?

- The book is not age appropriate.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-Committee Recommendation:

- Recommendation by reader to remove from high school libraries
- Split vote: 4 remove, 3 unsure
- Warrants additional readers

Readers Notes:

Kirkus Reviews (June 1, 2017)

Feyre and her friends must stop the evil Hybern king's conquering schemes. Following *A Court of Mist and Fury* (2016), pale-skinned Feyre has been returned to the Spring Court in the wake of an alliance between Tamlin and Hybern. She deceives them, actually serving as a spy and saboteur for Rhysand and his court. But right before she can sneak back to the Night Court (and her loving, quite physical relationship with Rhys), her careful plan is torpedoed. She and Lucien make a far more dangerous than expected voyage back to Velaris and to Feyre's friends and family, her two sisters suffering from their forcible Fae transformations. To counter Hybern's machinations, Feyre and Rhys must rally their own allies, but the Fae courts are still fractured and reeling from Amarantha's cruelties, and they distrust Night for its reputation. To repair the rifts, the heroes must weigh the pros and cons of dropping their protective masks and showing their true selves, part of the recurring themes of self-acceptance and forgiveness. But some alliances are still dangerous—recruiting monsters to fight the monstrous is always a dicey proposition—and double agents abound. Side characters' romantic storylines are interwoven with the strategizing and even the war, pairing the expanded world with extended action sequences and character revelations, and the conclusion's ramifications will be felt in the next installments. Nifty romantic escapism enhanced by expansion of worldbuilding and development of secondary characters. (Fantasy. 14-adult)

First page of the book: Praise for Sarah J. Maas's Court of Thorns and Roses Series: *A Court of Wings and Ruin* - "Fast-paced and explosively action-packed." - Booklist; "The plot manages to seduce you with its alluring characters, irresistible world and never-ending action, leaving you craving more." - RT Book Reviews.

Summary: I think the prior readers provided a good summary. This is the third book in the series, so the reader either must read the first two books, or find good summaries online, otherwise they will be completely lost in the plot.

Legal tenets: In the case of Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973), the Court created a test for whether sexually explicit material is protected by the First Amendment. (See Case Summary provided in addenda materials).

The Court in Miller said,

"This much has been categorically settled by the Court, that obscene material is unprotected by the First Amendment. [Citations omitted]. We acknowledge, however, the inherent dangers of undertaking to regulate any form of expression. State statutes designed to regulate obscene materials must be carefully limited. As a result, we now confine the permissible scope of such regulation to works which depict or describe sexual conduct. That conduct must be specifically defined by the applicable state law, as written or authoritatively construed."

"The basic guidelines for the trier of fact must be: (a) whether 'the average person, applying contemporary community standards' would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest, (b) whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law; **and** (c) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

Request for Reconsideration Record

"We emphasize that it is not our function to propose regulatory schemes for the States. That must await their concrete legislative efforts. It is possible, however, to give a few plain examples of what a state statute could define for regulation under part (b) of the standard announced in this opinion:

(a) Patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated.

(b) Patently offensive representation or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, and lewd exhibition of the genitals." [End of quotations from Miller opinion]

Reader notes continue:

Maryland statutes have applied the test formulated in Miller to define obscenity. Under Maryland Code Ann., Criminal Law, Title 11 - Indecency and Obscenity, Subtitle 2 - Obscene Matter, Section 11-203 - Sale or display of obscene item to minor, the statute reads:

"(a)(1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(5) "Obscene" means:

(i) that the average adult applying contemporary community standards would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;

(ii) that the work depicts sexual conduct specified in subsection (b) of this section in a way that is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material;
and

(iii) that the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious artistic, educational, literary, political, or scientific value."

On the document the Committee members received entitled, "Subcommittee Discussion Guide and Key Questions", under Key Questions, it says, "Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse?"

This phrase - "intended to arouse" - became a big topic of discussion for our group. I tried to find other case law to define it. However, I cannot find this standard - "intended to arouse" in the case law. It is not in the Miller case, nor Pico.

The only place in case law that I found the phrase "intended to arouse" was in Pinkus v. U.S., 436 U.S. 293 (1978). The Court uses this phrase, but it is not part of its application of the Miller test. The Court simply says, "Examination of some of the materials could lead to the reasonable conclusion that their prurient appeal would be more acute to persons of deviant persuasions, but it is equally clear they were intended to arouse the prurient interest of any reader or observer."

The phrase "intended to arouse" isn't actually one of the Miller standards. The Court in Pinkus asked whether material was intended to arouse the prurient interest.

The Court has said that "prurient interest" is not "normal, healthy sexual desires", but rather, "appeal to a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion" Brockett v. Spokane Arcades, Inc., 472 U.S. 491 (1985).

I am wondering if the Miller standard - "Does the material appeal to the prurient interest" turned into "is the book prurient and intended to arouse?"

In notes written by the previous readers in our group, the Oxford Dictionary definition of "prurient" is used - "having or encouraging an excessive interest in sexual matters". However, I think we must employ the definition

Request for Reconsideration Record

handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in Brockett because the Court was applying the Miller test for obscenity of materials under the First Amendment.

As such, the test is not whether the sexually explicit sections of the book deal with normal, healthy interest in sex, or even an excessive interest in sex, but whether they appeal to a “shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion”.

Also, the Miller test is a three-pronged test and all three elements must be met - this means that in order to be unprotected, obscene material, the book (1) must, as a whole, appeal to the prurient interest, (2) it must depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way, and (3) it must, as a whole, lack serious artistic, educational, literary, political, or scientific value. All three elements must be present.

Complainant's overall concerns:

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, explicit sex, profanity, sexual nudity, erotica.

Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern:

Page 134 – “You had put your hands all over her. I had done my job too well with every instance I’d found ways to get Lucien to touch me in her presence, in Tamlin’s presence.”

Pages: 199, 204, 297, 298, 326, 328, 343, 407, 411, 457, 555, 564, 610, 614, 616, 620, 675, 750, 851, 1002

Reader Notes:

The book is 699 pages in the edition we were given to read. Approximately 20 pages were flagged by the Complainants as relating to their identified concerns. But we, as a Committee, agreed that we would consider the entire book as a whole, and not just those pages identified by the Complainants. I will identify the pages that contain arguably the most sexual narratives:

Page 138-142: (“The sex scene” - the longest sexual encounter in the book, all others are more brief) Excerpts: “I clenched my thighs together. He noted the movement, that dark smile growing. And just before his finger reached the tip of my breast...” “But Rhys withdrew his finger with a soft groan, making a downward path. Along my neck. Chest. Straight over a nipple. He paused there, flicking it once, then smoothed his thumb over the small hurt.” “I dragged my tongue over his teeth, swallowing his groan of pleasure as his hips rolled in gentle thrusts and he pushed in, and in, and in.”

Page 198: I rolled my eyes, even as I tried to shut out the image of Rhys and laying me on my stomach, then kissing his way down my spine, Lower. Tried to shut out the feeling of his strong hands gripping my hips and lifting them up, up, until he lay beneath them and feasted on me, until I was quietly begging him and he rose behind me and I had to bite my pillow to keep from waking the whole house with my moaning.

Page 218: His hand began a lethal, taunting exploration up my thigh, his fingers grazing along the sensitive inside. Higher, higher. He leaned in to drag a book toward himself, but whispered in my ear, “Or maybe I’ll spread you out on this desk and lick you until you scream long enough to wake whatever is at the bottom of the library.”

Page 219: My breasts tightened beneath my shirt and his gaze dropped - watching, “I would have thought,” he mused, “that our bout this morning would be enough to tide you over until tonight.” His hand slid down between my legs, brazenly cupping me, his thumb pushing down on an aching spot. A low groan slipped from me, and my cheeks heated in its wake...”Let’s see what names you call me when my head is between your legs, Feyre darling.” And then he was gone. [Rhys leaves the room]

Recommendation: This book is incredibly complex - the plot is complicated and the vocabulary is extensive. A student reader would truly need to be dedicated to this book, author, or series to even check it out of the library.

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Additionally, while the sex scenes do read like mild romance novels, I would consider them the lowest level of “racy” - there is no slang used for body parts or sexual acts, there is no profanity spoken by the characters during sex, the scenes are between two people who really love each other, and all sexual acts are consensual. Moreover, I would say 90-95% of the book is completely unrelated to sex. There are “desiring glances” exchanged between characters; some suggestions that one characters might be attracted to another, but in denial; and some discussion of past sexual history. The rest is just battle scenes, arguments, trainings, meetings, adventures, etc.

I just do not think this book meets the standard for obscene and I would recommend the book stay in high schools with no restrictions.

Sub-committee Discussion

Sara Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Similar to previous book discussed by group.
- No element of torture in this book.
- Only complaint is to the sexual content and profanity.
- Some violence, swords and blood appropriate to the time period.
- The book is about making hard choices for those you love and a country that you love and living with regrets and the consequences of the decisions.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, explicit sex, profanity, sexual nudity, erotica.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Literary and artistic value - the scenes are descriptive. There are elements of politics and well used high level vocabulary.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- It is a romance but does not rise to the level of prurient interest.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Did not find it patently offensive. 10% or less of the book had content with sex. As a romance intended to arouse, but not prurient as these would be normal sexual desires.
- Readers determined it was not a violation of the Miller test.

Is the book age appropriate?

- Discussion of age appropriateness - readers determined it as appropriate.
- Some committee members expressed concern about the sexual content not being age appropriate.
- One reader expressed she was looking for words of slang but felt it read more like a romance novel than pornography.

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School Only.

- 13 members voted to keep book in circulation
- 1 voted for removal

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i>
Author	George Johnson
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about gender ideology, sexual nudity, sexual assault, profanity, drug use, inflammatory racial commentary.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page vii – “This book will touch on sexual assault (including molestation) loss of virginity, homophobia, racism, and anti-blackness. These discussions at times may be a bit graphic, but nonetheless they are experiences that many reading this book will encounter or have already encountered. Within these pages, the n***** word or slang variation appears sometimes in full written form and sometimes abbreviated as n*****. The same is true for fag and faggot, and their abbreviations.”</p> <p>Pages: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 20, 22, 23, 28, 31, 47, 49, 50, 57, 58, 63, 71, 75, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 115, 118, 125, 126, 127, 132, 140, 148, 159, 160, 164, 165, 168, 169, 170, 172, 175, 177, 182, 184, 201, 202, 203, 207, 208, 209, 210, 225, 228, 233, 237, 244, 245, 247, 257, 262, 263, 266, 269, 270, 271, 272, 292, 296</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist February 7, 2020</p> <p>With this title, Johnson offers his memoir-manifesto of growing up queer before he had the language to know exactly what that meant. Split into three parts, Johnson's book shares intimate stories of his childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood as he navigates family, friends, and the performance of masculinity. Discussion of his stories includes theory and statistical information that tie his ideas and struggles in with a larger intersectional identity. Johnson struggles with finding his YA voice. Though it's clear that his stories and experiences are formative to his identity as a Black queer boy (now man), they pour out with an intensity that may lead readers to feelings of confusion about the main point of the book. The severe lack of #OwnVoices books from Black queer men makes this title an absolute necessity, but it may fall to the wayside for cultural outsiders. Nevertheless, the personal stories and the healing and reconciliation of self in this title are all undeniably honest and relatable—a reminder of our shared imperfection and humanity.</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews April 28, 2020</p> <p>Centers the experiences, desires, and agency of a queer black boy navigating his evolving selfhood and the challenges of society's conditional love for his truthful existence. Queer black existence has been here forever, and yet rarely has that experience been spotlighted within literature aimed at black boyhood. This is the context in which this "memoir-manifesto" begins, as Johnson, a still relatively young 33-year-old journalist and activist, debuts his unfolding life story within a vacuum of representation. These stories wrestle with "joy and pain...triumph and tragedy" across many heavy topics—gender policing, sexual abuse, institutional violence—but</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

with a view to freedom on the horizon. Through the witnessing of Johnson's intimate accounts, beginning with his middle-class New Jersey childhood and continuing through his attendance at a historically black university in Virginia, readers are invited on their own paths to healing, self-care, and living one's truth. Those who see themselves outside the standpoint of being black and queer are called in toward accountability, clarifying an understanding of the history, language, and actions needed to transform the world—not in pity for the oppressed but in the liberation of themselves. This title opens new doors, as the author insists that we don't have to anchor stories such as his to tragic ends: "Many of us are still here. Still living and waiting for our stories to be told—to tell them ourselves." A critical, captivating, merciful mirror for growing up black and queer today. (Memoir. 14-adult) Copyright © Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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"An exuberant, unapologetic memoir infused with a deep but cleareyed love for its subjects." —The New York Times

"This title opens new doors, as the author insists that we don't have to anchor stories such as his to tragic ends: 'Many of us are still here. Still living and waiting for our stories to be told—to tell them ourselves.' A critical, captivating, merciful mirror for growing up black and queer today."
—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

"An absolute necessity . . . the personal stories and the healing and reconciliation of self in this title are all undeniably honest and relatable—a reminder of our shared imperfection and humanity." —Booklist

"The conversational tone will leave readers feeling like they are sitting with an insightful friend . . . This young adult memoir is a contemporary hallmark of the blossoming genre. Johnson anchors the text with encouragement and realistic guidance for queer Black youth." —School Library Journal

"Johnson's debut is a collection of heartfelt personal essays revolving around themes of identity and family . . . 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." —Publishers Weekly

"In a series of personal essays, prominent journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years in New Jersey and Virginia. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies at age five, to flea marketing with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, this young-adult memoir weaves together the trials and triumphs faced by Black queer boys.

Both a primer for teens eager to be allies as well as a reassuring testimony for young queer men of color, *All Boys Aren't Blue* covers topics such as gender identity, toxic masculinity, brotherhood, family, structural marginalization, consent, and Black joy. Johnson's emotionally frank style of writing will appeal directly to young adults." - Goodreads (4.23 stars out of 5 possible)

From Johnson's official biography (<https://iamgmjohnson.com/gmj-media-kit-new/>):

"As a former journalist, George has written for major outlets including Teen Vogue, Entertainment Tonight, NBC, and BuzzFeed. In 2019 was awarded the Salute to Excellence Award by the National Association of Black Journalists for their article "When Racism Anchors Your Health" in Vice Magazine.

George was listed on The Root 100 Most Influential African Americans in 2020. The Out 100 Most Influential LGBTQ People in 2021. And in 2022 was honored as one of the TIME100 Next Most Influential People in the World."

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Currently, Johnson (they) is a LGBTQIA+ activist. *All Boys Aren't Blue* is a self-described memoir/manifesto about growing up "Black and queer" in America. Broken into 4 sections (acts): A Different Kid, Family, Teenagers, and Friends, they use heartfelt, candid, authentic word choices to reinforce credibility with their intended audience of young adults, particularly Black and questioning or non-binary young men.

Readers Notes:

The book is a series of essays about defining moments in a life full of questions about gender identity (being bullied, not meeting typical boy expectations, encountering racism, being molested, learning about sexuality) along with two letters to important people in Johnson's life (his little brother and mother).

Each chapter concludes with a positive, instructional statement, offering advice to both those who identify with Johnson and those who want to support them.

The Pico decision and *Bicknell v. Vergennes* cases point to the motivation of the complainant as a deciding factor in whether it is permissible to remove books. With 85 pages listed in the complaint, it's hard to know what content is of concern, leading me to believe a Black, non-binary person writing about their experience is being challenged. For example, page 1 has the word "Queer" on it, in the title, but relates Johnson's birth and their aunt initially thinking their large head of hair meant the child was a girl.

Miller v. California protects free speech when, taken as a whole, the work has serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. The positive reviews would indicate such.

If the author's intentions are to be considered as part of the Supreme Court test, these quotes offer insight. From page 10 "As a child, I always knew I was different. I didn't know what that meant at the time, but I now know it was okay to be that different kid. That being different didn't mean something was wrong with me, but that something was wrong with my cultural environment, which forced me to live my life as something I wasn't. The fact that I couldn't see my full self in Black heroes or the history books was more about the changing of history to spare white guilt than it ever was about me knowing the whole truth.

I learned that kids who saw me as different didn't have an issue until society taught them to see my differences as a threat. Those differences, like being effeminate and sassy, were constantly under attack my entire childhood from kids who didn't even know why I needed to be shamed for those differences. It wasn't them shaming me as much as it was those raising them who taught them to shame others with those qualities. Most kids aren't inherently mean. Their parents, however, can make them mean."

And from page 75: "Navigating in a space that questions your humanity isn't really living at all. It's existing. We all deserve more than just the ability to exist."

The text does contain a description of Johnson's first sexual experience (oral sex) which was with their cousin and not by consent. The same cousin also teaches they how to masterbate. Additionally, a description of they losing their virginity by giving and receiving anal sex is included. In both cases, the sex is not glorified or presented in a way to encourage sexual behavior; it is incorporated as part of Johnson's maturing and navigating/discerning their authentic self.

I do not believe the book meets the requirements of the Supreme Court test to remove for "pervasively vulgar" or "prurient interest in sex". Further, I find the book to have significant literary value and offers a perspective narrowly represented in current young adult literature.

The author has given interviews about his objectives in writing this book [part of the Supreme Court test is (1) "Whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards would find that the work taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest"] The author's intentions must be considered.

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<https://time.com/6120915/george-m-johnson-all-boys-arent-blue-book-bans/>

“The part that’s also being left out is that I am talking about sexual education. I am talking about consent. I am talking about agency. And I am using my story to teach kids about the mistakes that I made the first time that I was having sex, so they don’t make those same mistakes. I am teaching kids about not feeling guilty when sexual abuse happens, and how to recognize sexual abuse—most teens don’t even recognize they’ve been abused. And how to fight back against those traumas that you can hold on to for so very long. So they’re leaving very, very important context out, intentionally of course, to try and say my book is pornographic.” - George M. Johnson

<https://www.npr.org/2020/05/02/848764750/give-them-the-damn-information-questions-for-george-m-johnson>

Question: “What do you want readers to take away from this book?”

Answer: “For some readers, I want them to feel seen. I want them to feel like there is someone in this world fighting for them and fighting for their story and right to safety and be who they are. For other readers, I want them to reflect. Reflect on the times you were the enemy in someone else’s truth. The times when you may have harmed LGBTQ people or black people or whatever group you had more power than. And then start to do the work to change your actions.” - George M. Johnson

The other parts of the Supreme Court test are: (2) “whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law”; and [3] whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The Complainants have identified 85 pages of concern in the book that allegedly portray: “Inflammatory racial commentary, sexual nudity, sexual assault, gender ideology, drug use, profanity.” The Complaint does not identify which portions of these pages are cause for concern. I looked at each page identified for an overall idea of what topics were discussed on those pages:

Pages: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 → Gender identities, “Black queer male”, “N-word” (not written out), references police violence against Black people, “Blackness”, “Queerness”

Pages 20-23: References to history of Black middle class families, violence in families, references drug use in community; author gravitated towards traditionally “girl” items; would daydream as a girl; suppressed feelings

Pages 28, 31: “Effeminate”, author was kicked in the mouth as a child, bullying of Black queer boys, their system assimilated to whiteness; he and others were “masking”

Pages 47, 49-50: “Fuck”; children have the right to change their name; author wore headband to school - not conforming to standards of heterosexual or opposite gender norms; discussions of “agency”; it’s okay to question/change your name as you learn about sex and gender; push back against society and those in your home; respect people’s pronouns

Pages 57-58: “Code-switching” by Black people, queer people; “honey-child” sass - gay lingo that straight people use without consequence; lingo derived from “Black femmes” including “cishet” Black women

Pages 63, 71, 75: Author’s parents did not “beat the gay” out of him; author juggled identities; “Boys are supposed to ____”; concept of opting out of gender norm activities

Pages 83-91: White history glosses over the problems with white historical figures; Black History Month - 1 month of attention then back to white history; Black children need to see themselves in positions of power;

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actual history of Thanksgiving is not addressed in school; "American history is the greatest fable ever written"; White people say "Look how far you've come" instead of "Look how long we've stopped you";

Pages 95-103: Quoting Abraham Lincoln and disparaging remarks he made about Black people; references to Black people and their interaction with police; (p. 99 - "N-word" spelled out in its entirety); description of "microaggressions"; White people say "slavery was just the norm" to absolve themselves; author's white teacher said, "I probably would have had slaves too"; when Black children speak up, it is handled differently than White children; "alt-history"

Pages 115, 118: White kids do things as a given, while Black children struggle (i.e. learning to swim); suppression of Black queer people

Pages 125-127: Brother never "called me out of my name"; Black children are born into oppression; "gay"

Pages 132, 140: Concept of using education as a tool of division; White people can always achieve no matter what (i.e. Trump); different standards; description of houses within ballroom culture (places for LGTBQIA+ people to go)

Pages 148: Grandma says "White people taught you to be afraid of ghosts"; White people dressed up in sheets; author's Grandma thought White people are the devil, grew up in Jim Crow South

Pages 159-160: Social conditioning - taught to hate our own because of sex and gender - this can be broken; references "transphobia", "misgendering"

Pages 164-165: Transgender people - story about cousin who wore dresses, had a feminine voice, transitioned from male to female

Pages 168-172: Story about cousin, Jermaine, who transitioned to Hope; Nanny started to call her Hope

Pages 175, 177: Author is not transgender (he liked "girl" things, attracted to boys; thought he should be a girl, but did not understand the concept of "queer" yet); White society wants to destroy us all; no breaks given to Black women; people wanted to "mess around" with cousin in secret; Transgender runs in author's family; no one has the right to try to change another person's queerness

Pages 182, 184: Reference to "critical race theory"; discusses puberty - pubic hair, drinking as teens

Pages 201-203: Incident with cousin, Thomas - sexual assault; discusses "erect" penis, touching penis

[Pages 204-206 are not included in Complainants' list, but there is discussion of oral sex "taste it"; author's euphoria and confusion; "humping" back and forth; "stroking self", "ejaculation", "Fucking"]

Pages 207-210: Masturbation, orgasm reference; incident in school bathroom - sexual assault; use of word "fuck"; "genitals"; victim of cycle of assault

Pages 225, 228: Graduation valedictorian (White male) said, "We did this for Tupac and Biggie" - microaggression, "culture vultures" - anti-Blackness; double marginalization (Black and queer); author's Blackness in a sea of Whiteness; addressing coming out stories of gay people

Pages 244-247: Author in college - smoking weed, drinking liquor

Page 257: College fraternity testing procedure - National intake process

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Pages 262-263, 266: Author pictured sex as if he was a girl named Dominique having sex with boys; author did not learn about sex between two men; reference to masturbation

Pages 269-272: Discussion of gay sex between two men - "top" versus "bottom", concept of being submissive; reference to mutual masturbation; author describes sex as a "bottom" with a man who was "large"; author describes pain ("ass"), "insertion", "lube"; joke about being in gay Boy Scouts; fraternity brothers said it would get better

Page 292: Discussion of living authentic self, different names

Page 296: What "blue" means in the title - blue assigned as color to boys; reference to "thin blue line" of police, living with no regrets, "Moonlight" movie

Sub-committee Discussion:

George M. Johnson

(3/23/23 mtg full review and consensus on recommendation)

Provide a brief summary of book

- 38 y ol black queer man- about his child, teen
- Describe relationships with family members, grandmother, close relationship
- Friendships
- Joining a fraternity
- Memoir of growing up as black queer person
- To reach teens who can identify with similar experiences and show a way forward for teens to overcome difficult sexual situations and to teach teens what the author wishes they knew about when they were young
- Story is directed at teens
- Diverse point of view
- Overall positive and affirming book

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about gender ideology, sexual nudity, sexual assault, profanity, drug use, inflammatory racial commentary.
- Sex sells
- Not exactly told what was specific complaints were (85 pages listed in complaints)
- Concerns of
 - Gender identity
 - Nudity
 - Racial bias
 - Transphobia
 - Sex
- There are 2 websites to get objectionable passages in books only (moms for liberty)

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Pico case: constitution does not hold up restriction of ideas
- The book is not pervasively vulgar
- School boards cannot eliminate books because they don't like idea
- Counts case: stigmatization of people's choice to read book- asking for permission to read book is an

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infringement of rights

- Miller case: distribution of obscene material through mail. Need to look at work as a whole, not cherry pick a section. Show it does not have artistic, political, literary value
- Bicknel case: This book is not pervasively vulgar
- Author's note in the beginning- if you are not in to this at the beginning you might not want to read this- fair warning at the beginning
- Education: intro words that will be used, not for everyone to use
- Sections ends with affirming message to motivate teens to move forward

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Educational value highlighting
 - Developing personal agency over one's own body
 - Recognizing signs of sexual abuse
 - How to address sexual abuse
 - Understand what is consent
- A diverse point of view that reflects the under-represented LGBTQ community
- Author's note in the beginning- if you are not in to this at the beginning you might not want to read this- fair warning at the beginning
- Education: author introduces words that will be used later in the book and indicates that the particular words are not for everyone to use
- Sections ends with affirming message to motivate teens to move forward
- Positive and affirming book

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No intent to arouse
- Educational-not emotional telling of stories with the focus of educated young people on how to handle sexual situations and the importance of personal agency, consent, recognizing sexual abuse and how to address it, and consent
- There are 3 sexual scenarios in the book
 - 1 consensual sex, 2 sexual abuse
- Sex scenes not glorified, not sex for sex sake
- Instances of the following are in the book- but are not pervasive
 - Gender identity
 - Anal sex
 - Mutual masturbation
 - Ejaculation
 - Sexual assault

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Instances of sex listed above, but are not pervasive and no intent to arouse

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School Only. No restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Breathless</i>
Author	Jennifer Niven
School Level	Middle and High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about obscene sexual activity, sexual nudity, erotica, available to children as young as 11</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 18 – “Shane’s hands are snaking their way down ... Suddenly there’s something hard and damp against my thigh, and I shift a little so he can’t slide in.” “...I was never going to have sex with him. It always ends the same way – him coming into the air or onto his shirt or onto himself or against my leg.”</p> <p>Pages: 24, 147, 153, 199, 234</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist February 12, 2021</p> <p>Days away from high-school graduation, the questions around Claude's future—college, guys, the fate of her unfinished novel—don't seem too daunting when she knows her home will be waiting for her when she returns for Thanksgiving break. That sense of safety disappears when her dad announces he and her mother are separating, and she leaves with her mother to a small island off the coast of Georgia. As Claude struggles to regain her footing, Jeremiah Crew pulls her out of the ocean even though she wasn't asking to be saved. This is a love story as well as a moving account of a young writer finding her voice. Claude's struggle to put her pain on the page is a unique and effective way of approaching the story of a family fracture. This will speak to those who know what it's like to be searching for a new point of view but aren't sure what to make of it when they finally find it.</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews September 29, 2020</p> <p>An 18-year-old girl experiences a summer of self-discovery. At the end of her senior year of high school, Claudine “Claude” Henry is ready to lose her virginity to Wyatt Jones (who’s unaware of this plan)—and then hopes to go on a road trip before college with her best friend, Suzanne “Saz” Bakshi. But when her parents reveal they’re separating, Claude is devastated by her father’s statement that he can’t cope anymore with his life. So Claude goes with her mother for the summer to a small island off the coast of Georgia, where she befriends some of the locals. She’s drawn to Jeremiah “Miah” Crew, a summer resident, and they agree that since they’re both leaving the island in a month, they won’t take their fling for anything serious. Claude and her friends share smart, candid thoughts about safe sex, consent, and pleasure, woven seamlessly into the emotional first-person narrative along with touching meditations on friendship and family. A storyline exploring Claude’s great-aunt’s history on the island ends up convoluted and uninspired, but overall Claude’s journey is intriguing. Claude and Miah are White, Wyatt is biracial (White/Black), and brown-skinned Saz is a lesbian. A sex-positive summer romance that’s worth reading. (Romance. 14-18) Copyright © Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

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Readers Notes: The book certainly had substance and could be very relatable to teens - sex scenes are not pervasive. Positive talk about consent and safe sex. I think our big question is keeping this in middle schools- per sex scenes outlined above.

Also, book deals well with issues of identity, self-awareness, grief, and processing a divorce. Sex scenes are minimal, not gratuitous, and there is great reflection before and after about making choices, the element of consent, and choice.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Jennifer Nevin
Middle and High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Coming of age story; 18 year-old girl graduates from high school, parents are divorcing; family secrets
- Identity - perfect parents / perfect daughter - still a virgin
- Loses her virginity during the summer - not descriptive

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about obscene sexual activity, sexual nudity, erotica, available to children as young as 11
- Clinical
- **Note:** It appears to Group B the book is not in FCPS middle school libraries. There are 5 copies in FCPS high school libraries. There are 3 other books by different authors with the same book title.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes - Artistic
- Yes - Literary - searching for identity

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes, at High School level



Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Confess</i>
Author	Colleen Hoover
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about molestation, sexual assault, explicit sex acts, profanity, gender ideology, drug abuse, controversial religious commentary, incest.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 7 – “His smile briefly transforms him from a sixteen-year-old boy on his deathbed into a handsome, vibrant, full-of-life teen boy who is thinking about the first time he had sex.”</p> <p>Page 32 – “... I call You Don't Exist, God. And if You do, You Should Be Ashamed.”</p> <p>Page 67 – “My father has been having sex with me since I was eight years old. I'm thirty-three now and married with children of my own, but I'm still too scared to say no to him.”</p> <p>Pages: 8, 22, 43, 53, 56, 72, 82, 98, 103, 104, 106, 159, 168, 170, 190, 194, 204, 225, 235, 237, 238, 252, 271, 275, 276, 292</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist March 15, 2015</p> <p>Rising new-adult star Hoover (<i>Ugly Love</i>, 2014) will pull heartstrings in this second-chance love story. At 15, Auburn fell deeply in love with a young man who died after a long illness. His family sent her away thinking it wasn't real love, but there is living proof of just how serious it was. On the trail of her child, Auburn ends up in Dallas, finds work at an art gallery, and the talented artist, Owen. He paints pictures based on the often painful confessions people send him anonymously. In a curious twist, Owen recognizes Auburn from the hospital where he heard her say goodbye to her boyfriend five years ago. Owen's problems with his father almost cause him to lose his chance with Auburn, while her difficult situation forces her into a life she doesn't want. But their connection is strong and compels the edgy, sexy story forward. The source of the novel's authenticity is a surprise: Hoover reveals that the confessions Owen received were actually sent to her by readers.--Alessio, Amy Copyright 2015 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p>	

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Readers Notes:

Colleen Hoover is a 43 year old former social worker. She wrote her first novel in 2011; her books are categorized as being for young adults. Hoover has published 23 novels, including 11 New York Times Best Sellers. Confess is a New York Times Best Seller, reaching #4 on the list. While this information is readily available on Wikipedia, I will interject that it is most notable that she is the only author to have four New York Times Best Sellers that were originally self-published. Confess was published in 2015.

Confess has two main characters, who also serve as the narrators of alternating chapters. At the start, Auburn is a twenty year old hairdresser who has moved from Portland, Oregon to Dallas, Texas to be closer to her three year old son, AJ. She conceived her son in an act of loving, premarital sex with a sixteen year old boy (Adam) who was dying of cancer. AJ's paternal grandmother, Lydia, has custody of AJ and uses AJ as a weapon in their relationship. AJ also has a paternal uncle, Trey, who is a Dallas police officer and uses his relationship with AJ as a tool to manipulate Auburn. He also abuses his police powers to frame Owen, Auburn's new love interest.

Owen Gentry is the other main character and narrator. He is the same age as Auburn. People leave their "confessions" on slips of paper outside his art studio; he selects "confessions" to paint and then sells his work at a monthly auction. At the end of the novel, Owen reveals to the readers that he had eavesdropped on Adam and Auburn while Adam was dying. His own father was in a room across the hall in a coma from an accident that killed his wife and oldest son. While Owen was driving, he was not at fault; a drunk driver had run a red traffic light. Since coming out of his coma, Owen's father...who is a successful attorney... has been an alcoholic and addicted to painkillers... both legal and illegal.

Now for the objections:

Page 7: Yes, Adam and Auburn had premarital sex. And that sentence is it.

Page 32: "I Call You Don't Exist, God. And if You do, You Should Be Ashamed." is the name of a painting in the Confess series. Nothing more is said about "controversial religious ideas."

Page 67: "My father has been having sex with me since I was eight years old. I'm thirty-three now and married with children of my own, but I'm still too scared to say no to him." is the title of another painting. Nothing more is said about incest.

Page 8: Our sex life would have been phenomenal. Simply Auburn thinking about what life would have been like with Adam.

Page 22: Nothing found

Page 43: "You don't exist God" Painting title

Page 53: underage drinking; Auburn is two weeks shy of her 21st birthday

Page 56: Auburn and Owen: "It's a lot like sex. I have as much experience with sex as I do with dancing." referring to dancing.

Page 72: "Texas is turning me into a whore." Auburn's thoughts after Owen comes in to use her bathroom.

Page 82: "I have to stop myself from unlocking the door so I can beg him to do to the rest of me what he's doing to my hand." Auburn commented on Owen touching her hand through the door held closed by a chain. She doesn't want him to leave.

Page 98: "Bitch, Bitch, Bitch!" Auburn commenting on Lydia standing her up on her 21st birthday.

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Page 103: Auburn drinking on her 21st birthday being stood up by Lydia.

Page 104: "I have nothing against lesbians, but please don't be one" Owen's thought when he finds out Auburn was stood up by Lydia. [Not knowing Auburn's relationship with Lydia.]

Page 106: Auburn and Owen drinking.

Pages 159, 160, 161 Auburn and Owen, kissing and French kissing. Interrupted by Trey.

Page 168: "You're going to jail for possession." Auburn's statement to Owen. Yet Owen is protecting his father.

Page 170: Regular kissing. Not going beyond kissing.

Page 190: Cal Gentry driving drunk; calls Owen to help him. Owen arrives to drive him home. Trey pulls him over for DUI and find's Cal's pills. Owen claims they are his.

Page 194. Trey finds pills in the car.

Page 204: Auburn reflecting on Trey's qualities. Also includes that his brother, Adam, is the only person "I've ever had sex with."

No objection: Page 224: "Did he ever fuck you." Trey questioned Auburn.

Page 225: Trey questioning Auburn about Owen, "Has he ever been inside you?"

Pages 235, 237, 238: There's a lot of heavy kissing and foreplay.

Note: No objection to pages 239-241 which incorporate the actual coitus. This is a caring, consensual act between adults.

Page 252: Trey is on top of Auburn. He is being aggressive in a non-consensual sex act, potential rape.

No objection pages 253-257: Trey tries to rape Auburn. Is only stopped by Auburn's roommate, Emory, who holds Trey's service weapon on him.

Page 271. Kissing

Page 275: Trey runs his hand between Auburn's legs; Owen can't stop him. Auburn feels sickened.

Page 276: Trey plants drugs in Owen's studio.

Page 292: Kissing.

Comments: It appears that the complaint was driven by a Google Word Search for "pills", "drinking", and "kissing". Accusations of molestation, profanity, gender ideology, and controversial religious commentary are entirely out of context and mere fishing expeditions by ones who have not read the book. These themes are often the titles/subjects of Owen's paintings, and receive no more mention than that. [Ironically, the complainants appear to accept attempted rape by police officers... or they are unfamiliar with the text in its entirety.]

Simply put, Pico appears to offer a clear decision:

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“Local boards may not remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion.”

There is no reason to remove the book from Frederick County Public School libraries as the author and work have achieved a mainstream acceptance on the New York Times Best Sellers list.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Colleen Hoover
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Author is a former social worker, published 24 novels, 11 New York Time best sellers
- There are two alternate narrators in the story; a girl named Auburn and a boy named Owen
- Auburn becomes pregnant after having sex with Owen
- She is living with an uncle who is jealous of her relationship with Owen and actively bullies Owen
- Owen was in a car accident in which both of his parents died
- Owen is an artist who creates art based on anonymous confessions that he finds. Each piece of art is titled after a particular confession.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about molestation, sexual assault, explicit sex acts, profanity, gender ideology, drug abuse, controversial religious commentary, incest.
- Highlighted concerns are not talked about in the book. They are the titles of the painting which are derived from the anonymous confessions that Owen finds.
- Sex between the main characters is consensual. Both characters are of legal age
- A character in the book uses illegal opioids after an accident- but later goes to rehab
- No excessive profanity
- There is a scene where a rape is attempted, but does not occur. The scene contains an assault.
- There is no explicit sex- description of foreplay- no intent to arouse.
- There are illustrations of the art based on confessions, but the art is impressionistic in nature, not sexual.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- This book should be continued to be available in high school libraries based on the Pico case

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- The book has artistic, and literary value
- The book has social value from the point of highlighting how the uncle abuses his position of power to bully Owen

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- This book is not prurient and is not written with the intent to arouse

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- This book does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way.

Is the book age appropriate?

- The book is age appropriate.

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School Only. No restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Crank</i>
Author	Ellen Hopkins
School Level	Middle and High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about explicit sexual activity, sexual assault, profanity, drug abuse, glorified drug use, available to children as young as 11.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 67 – “Been smokin’ pot since I was 13, couldn’t quit if I tried. ... The white stuff was a different story. He’d stay up all night eating zip, bowling and snorting line after line. Rent money, right up his nose.”</p> <p>Pages: 68, 69, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 92, 94, 95, 96, 99, 101, 102, 104, 113, 114, 129, 138, 161, 163, 264, 265, 266, 268, 269, 274, 278, 305, 308, 310, 312, 315, 337, 339, 340, 341, 344, 344, 352, 378, 379, 401, 402, 403, 404, 412, 437, 439, 485, 490, 502, 503</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist November 15, 2004</p> <p>Gr. 8-12. Like the teenage crack user in the film <i>Traffic</i>, the young addict in this wrenching, cautionary debut lives in a comfortable, advantaged home with caring parents. Sixteen-year-old Kristina first tries crank, or crystal meth, while visiting her long-estranged father, a crank junkie. Bree is Kristina's imagined, bolder self, who flirts outrageously and gets high without remorse, and when Kristina returns to her mother and family in Reno, it's Bree who makes connections with edgy guys and other crank users that escalate into full-blown addiction and heartrending consequences. Hopkins tells Kristina's story in experimental verse. A few overreaching lines seem out of step with character voices: a boyfriend, for example, tells Kristina that he'd like to wait for sex until she is free from dreams of yesterday. But Hopkins uses the spare, fragmented style to powerful effect, heightening the emotional impact of dialogues, inner monologues, and devastating scenes, including a brutal date rape. Readers won't soon forget smart, sardonic Kristina; her chilling descent into addiction; or the author's note, which references her own daughter's struggle with the monster. --Gillian Engberg Copyright 2004 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>Hypnotic and jagged free verse wrenchingly chronicles 16-year-old Kristina's addiction to crank. Kristina's daring alter ego, Bree, emerges when "gentle clouds of monotony" smother Kristina's life—when there's nothing to do and no one to connect with. Visiting her neglectful and druggie father for the first time in years, Bree meets a boy and snorts crank (methamphetamine). The rush is irresistible and she's hooked, despite a horrible crank-related incident with the boy's other girlfriend. Back home with her mother, Kristina feels both ignored and smothered, needing more drugs and more boys—in that order. One boy is wonderful and one's a rapist, but it's crank holding Bree up at this point. The author's sharp verse plays with spacing on the page, sometimes providing two alternate readings. In a too brief wrap-up, Kristina keeps her baby (a product of rape) while Hopkins—realistically—offers no real conclusion. Powerful and unsettling. (author's note) (Fiction. YA) Copyright ©Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

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Readers Notes:

Overall, I did not find evidence to support the Complaints against the book. There is drug use and sexual activity but I did not find it to be glorified or explicit or “pervasively vulgar”. There is a sexual assault that happens so maybe a trigger warning to warn readers that is a part of the story.

I believe the book gives an excellent warning to drug use as the main character of the book had her life completely change when she began to use drugs. The book gives a realistic description on how drugs can ruin your life in a short amount of time.

Initial Observations/Notes:

(Okay, I can make this shorter, but I wanted a place to put my head notes too.)

I’ve tagged the pages of the book where there seems to be issues, and I am making notes about each page that is tagged based upon the complainants comments above. This is estimated at best what their exact complaints on these pages are. I have found that nothing in this book is explicit in terms of sex or drugs. The main character refers to the drug crank/meth as the ‘monster’ throughout the book clearly indicating that she knows it is bad for her. That she knows it will not end well for her, but still she continues to use it. The book highlights the reasons why someone might get addicted to drugs.

An example of the metaphoric tem usage is on page 266. The protagonist is questioning her own dependency/desire for the drug. The use of the term “monster” to refer to meth seems to say that the protagonist of the story knows meth or “crank” is bad for a person, but still has a mind altering effect that makes it appealing to the person using it, which is how it can be so addictive. By using the term “monster”, Ellen Hopkins establishes the antagonist of the story is not necessarily the people the protagonist surrounds herself with, but that it is meth/drugs. My rationale for mentioning the usage of the term “monster” is to elaborate on my justification towards the complaints’ original claim that the book mentioned glorification of drugs. I am not seeing a glorification of drug use, but a reasoning/rationale as to why someone might become addicted to drugs.

On page 67, the section that is highlighted by the complaint above is a character description about the protagonist’s father and how she managed to get introduced to drugs.

Several of the pages are marked on here having nothing wrong with them. No sex, drugs, or language issues examples pages 315, 337, 344, and 352 are just some of the pages marked that I’ve noticed don’t have any wrong with them even out of context. Most of the pages labeled are catharsis points in the narrative. Out of context some of these passages are a bit jarring, but once read in context they are nothing but releasing points for built up tension and nothing overly explicit.

I do question the idea that one of the scenes on pages 341-342 which is a scene that details the protagonist’s rape is marked “inappropriate”. Just because reading about something that is an uncomfortable conversation to have for many people, does not mean that it should be deemed “inappropriate” to read or discuss. The author does not use sexual assault as a selling point for her book, instead she uses it to bring about awareness of the issue and to show the spiraling effect drugs have had on the protagonist’s choices and life. Even the sexual content that is deemed ‘consensual’ in the novel is done in a tasteful way that does not go into details. If nothing else this book would be a good warning about how drugs can control a person’s life and act not like themselves.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Overall, I think this book is fine at the high school level. I do believe that consideration should be given to the middle school level, but even then I believe that each reader is independent and can make the decision for themselves if this book is too much for them or not.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Ellen Hopkins
Middle and High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Protagonist is a high school senior girl who starts out as an honor-roll student who is introduced to drugs by her estranged father and subsequently her life continues to spiral downward.
- Her addiction to meth constantly deteriorated her life and she reflects on how drugs can very quickly ruin your life and burn bridges with important people in your life.
- Her drug addiction is tied to an experience when she is raped and becomes pregnant.
- She is responsible for raising her child on her own
- The book ends as a tragedy- note: this is one book in a trilogy
- Structure- The book is written in verse

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit sexual activity, sexual assault, profanity, drug abuse, glorified drug use, available to children as young as 11.
- Rape scene- not explicit, no intent for arousal, not inappropriate, gave a sense of uncomfortableness, not glorified
- Another insistence of sex the protagonist refers to as “love making”- expresses enjoyment but not glorification
- Talks about sexual desire- not inappropriate
- Drug abuse- main character constantly refers to drugs as “monster” and describes how the monster is in control. The drugs are the antagonist of the story. Drug use is mentioned in verse when talking about the estranged father, not glorified.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Sex is not pervasive
- Drug abuse and its negative consequences are the main theme.
- Explains why people get addicted to drugs- does not glorify drug use

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- This book has artistic and literary value. It is written in verse not prose. The author’s daughter had similar experiences and the sense of realness comes across in the story, which could help readers see themselves in the story and perhaps helps people identify the need to seek help.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No intent to arouse (erotica).

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Not appropriate for circulation middle schools; noted that the author recommended book for 14 and above.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. Remove from Middle School.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Damsel</i>
Author	Elana Arnold
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about sexual assault, sexual activity, sexual nudity, profanity, erotica</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 17 – "... he unbuttoned the front of his trousers, freed his yard, and pissed a steaming stream right there, at the top of the cliff, marking it as his own."</p> <p>Pages: 56, 60, 107, 161, 166, 167, 222, 250, 283, 284, 305</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews:</p> <p>Booklist August 1, 2018</p> <p><i>*Starred Review*</i> A prince ventures into the wilderness to slay a dragon and save a damsel. When he returns home with his rescued bride, he becomes king. That is how it has been in the kingdom of Harding, and how it will always be. Sound familiar? Perhaps, but it's not how this story ends. The first thing Ama knows is waking up in Prince Emory's arms as they ride toward his home. I saved you, he tells her, and though she has no memory of the thing he saved her from, she believes him. In his castle, as their wedding approaches, she learns to become the perfect queen: calm, obedient, gentle. Ama works at becoming small, but flashes of memory are starting to return to her, and there is more in this castle and in her heart than can be contained. Arnold's (<i>What Girls Are Made Of</i>, 2017) pitch-black fairy tale is not subtle in its delivery, but, as its volcanic ending attests, this is not a tale that requires subtlety. It's not an easy read: physical, sexual, and psychological violence all come into play, and adults may want to be on hand for discussions. But for teens, especially girls, learning to transform sadness and fear into active, productive fury, it's an essential allegory. Eat your heart out, <i>Sleeping Beauty</i>: this brutal, devastating, powerful novel won't soon be forgotten.--Maggie Reagan Copyright 2018 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Magazine October 20, 2018</p> <p>This original fairy tale begins with Prince Emory on the dangerous quest required to prove himself worthy of his fathers recently vacated throne: saving a damsel from a dragon. But following the successful (off-page) rescue, it quickly becomes clear that our protagonist is the damsel herself, who has no memory of how she got to the dragons lair or of her life before it. Emory names her Ama and whisks her away to his walled kingdom to await their wedding day. Initially obliging, Ama soon begins to despair of her captivity and exploitation and the cruel sense of ownership underlying Emorys actions. Thematically supporting subplots include the lynx kitten Ama adopts after it is orphaned by Emory; the hawks blinded and tamed by the castles falconer; and the servants and villagers entirely at the new kings whim. Eventually, after meeting the kingdoms famed glassblower, Ama discovers an unusual aptitude for the craft and much-sought clues to her past. Hints along the way suggest Amas true origin and the nature of her rescue well before they are revealed, but the conclusion of her tale is nevertheless both surprising and satisfying. Though somewhat reminiscent in plot of Beagles <i>The Last Unicorn</i>,</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

Arnolds wrenching tale is more akin in theme and tone to Lanagans Tender Morsels (rev. 9/08) or The Brides of Rollrock Island (rev. 9/12) lyrical, brutal, and unapologetically feminist. katie bircher (c) Copyright 2018. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

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Readers Notes:

Does the book have artistic, political, literary, or scientific value?

Medieval fantasy

It contains literary value and political commentary.

Based on community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse?

The text provides a fantasy world approach using familiar medieval, mythological, Nobility/Servant stories structure. There are specific passages in the book that approach and may go beyond the necessary detail for a public school setting. Much of the text is innuendo however, there are specific passages that provide specific detail of intercourse (pgs. 106,107) that may go into detail questionable for younger audiences.

“His hand squeezed her flesh as if he would try to make something from it, and the calluses of his palm rubbed across her nipple, causing it to harden... Running his hand first across the downy nest of hair between her legs and then pushing his fingers inside of her, opening her in a way she had not known she could be opened,”

Pg. 166: “To be measured by the king’s yard is a pleasure and a privilege” followed by innuendo describing male arousal

Pgs. 283-285: description of male stimulation

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way? This could be described as unnecessary detail for certain ages.

Is the book age appropriate?

A warning or limit on age would be appropriate.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Elana Arnold

High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Fantasy approach, medieval

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about sexual assault, sexual activity, sexual nudity, profanity, erotica
- Based on the presentation of the books - discussed specific scenes
 - Carriage Ride - detailed description
 - King + Bride-to-Be re: pleasure measured by the king’s yard - innuendos; inappropriate?; intercourse - no to younger students; figurative language - not appropriate for younger students.
 - Male stimulation - warming hands

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Scenes - necessary, man control woman; woman rises above the man

Request for Reconsideration Record

- Struggles of women and how they overcame them

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Purely fictional; Medieval fantasy; imagery
- Underlying Political - feminism; male power

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- Not persuasive throughout the book

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Yes, take pause to several of the passages (graphic)

Is the book age appropriate?

- Add a warning label or limiting age to high school students
- At high school level - age range + maturity level? For example: 16 year old vs 15 ½ year old?
- What is the harm? Some kids might skip over those sections
- Figurative language not appropriate for younger students
- Attractive book cover - might entice younger children



Sub-Committee Recommendation:

- Place a trigger warning on the book vs pulling the book:
 - Sexual Assault
 - Rape Scenes

Discussion:

- Nature content - question about the rating scale (handout) group received.
- Students may be intrigued or drawn to the book's cover.
- Description on the book cover - no mention of sexual threats; alludes to it.
- Library books are choices; this particular book was not checked out much.
- Use book reviews to help
- Sex/Violence - book warnings for Book Club
- If grouped by age group vs trigger warning labels on books (subjective); could end up with thousands of books with trigger labels on them.

Update: April 20, 2023 Discussion

- Age restriction? Book not for middle school.
- Slippery Slope / setting precedence with trigger warnings on books
- If trigger warnings become policy - what happens if a label is missed; Would FCPS be liable? False sense of security?
- After conferring with Dr. Cuppett and Mr. Murphy - the group is changing their initial recommendation to do the following before finalizing their recommendation:
 - Another individual from Group B will read the book and come back to the group on May 11, 2023 with their analysis.

Update: June 1, 2023: Book should remain in circulation with no trigger warning. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda</i>
Author	Jean-Phillppe Stassen
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about graphic novel involving minors with violent and sexual images, sex acts, rape, vulgar language, violence.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 3 – “All those beauties who won’t be sharing their soft little thighs with anyone anymore. All those sweet pieces of ass hacked to bits with machetes... What a waste!”</p> <p>Pages: 4, 6, 10, 11, 19, 23, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 45, 57, 58, 59, 62, 65, 68, 71, 74,75, 76</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews:</p> <p>Booklist March 15, 2006</p> <p>Gr. 11-12. The tragedy and international shame of the Rwandan genocide that took place in the 1990s is realized in this fictional and symbolism-studded parable. The title character, a dehumanized, Hutu man, crawls through many of these clear-line, full-color pages, often hallucinating and in need of drink in a fruitless effort to drown his memories of the rapes, pillages, and massacres visited upon the Tutsi minority. European responsibility for the ethnic war is presented cogently and without reluctance through the actions and dialogue of several Belgian characters. Stassen, a Belgian who lives in Rwanda, depicts the horror and violence (including brutal rape and the starvation of children) in small, compact panels and uses moody colorings and expressive characterizations to convey much of the human tragedy. Several pages of background on the genocide will help ease readers unfamiliar with the history into the story. For the same mature teen audience that reads Joe Sacco's <i>Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia, 1992-19950</i> (2002), this book vividly shows the power of fiction to introduce fact. For adult readers as well as YAs. --Francisca Goldsmith Copyright 2006 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission. (read less)</p> <p>Horn Book Guide May 19, 2019</p> <p>First published in Belgium in 2000, this harrowing, heartbreaking graphic novel depicts the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Darkly luminous, woodcut-like illustrations show Deogratias, a destroyed Rwandan Hutu man turned beast, navigating a terrible present, while flashbacks show a worse past, including horrific scenes of atrocities. The new introduction by Rwandan author Beata Umubyeyi Mairesse provides historical and academic context. (c) Copyright 2019. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

Readers Notes:

Good that the author chose to include a foreword about the Rwandan genocide for contextual purposes. The students do need to have the intellectual maturity to understand the travesty of the Hutus struggles in Rwanda. I believe that it has literary and historical value, even though it is fictional. It looks at one subset of things that happened in Rwanda in some of their worst years. It gives the view from the eyes of a teenager who was directly affected. There is heavy foul language and description of sexual acts, though I do not think it is written in a way to arouse sexual desire. Much of it is implication and not a direct portrayal of what happened.

Charged themes of violence, racism, and lewd sexual relations lead many to immediately discount the book as “too political,” but I feel that the savage topics are necessary to fully understand the story of the Rwandan genocide. Stassen was able to tell this hard story while perfectly toeing the line between historical accuracy and overly salacious content. I feel that Deogratias’ struggle between his human and dog side is a really valuable perspective on the effects of PTSD as well as his alcohol addiction. However, the literary value is lacking as the story feels slightly lackluster and needs to expand more on what really happened in Rwanda to maximize its educational value. Even though the introduction at the beginning of the book does a good job at introducing many to the story of the Rwandans, it just barely scratches the surface of what really happened there. But, I feel that the way violence is not directly depicted here and the subject matter make this suitable for older teenagers for more world knowledge.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Jean-Phillppe Stassen

Provide a brief summary of book

- Graphic novel on the 1990s genocide through the eyes of a teenage boy and the how it impacted his life. The story takes place before, during, and after the genocide with the main character having flashbacks of the war. He abuses alcohol to manage his PTSD. Historical fiction through the eyes of a teenager.
- It has heavy foul language and descriptions of sexual acts, though it did not arouse sexual desire.

Group Discussion

- Discussion around the idea of students needing to have historical context regarding the genocide in Rwanda first within the curriculum (11th grade) prior to reading the novel. The readers felt they needed this context to fully understand the truths. Several members of the group disagreed, sharing that students learn about the Holocaust in 9th grade and do have context of other historical events. “Outside of the curriculum, why does it matter if students have context first? Even if it talks about rape it is not vulgar. Is it age suitable - that is the question.”
- “Rape/abuse - these are heavy topics and they indirectly teach sex with violence and there should be parent consent.”
- One member pointed out that parent signatures are forged to gain access and that when a book is restricted to “parent permission only” students become more curious and find ways to access the book.
- One member shared that when students read content they are not 100% ready for that their brain ignores this specific content and they would probably miss the rape part since it is not explicit.
- Reminder - none of these texts are required reading for students.
- Overall the group agreed that the sexual content is not pervasively vulgar (sex is implied). The focus of the book is not sexual but graphic images of violence.

Bring it back to what we need to discuss

- Agreement there is historical merit

Request for Reconsideration Record

- Still discussing age appropriate
- Not pervasively vulgar in its entirety
- Does it arouse - or appeal to sexual desire - no, as a whole not patently sexually violent

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about graphic novel involving minors with violent and sexual images, sex acts, rape, vulgar language, violence.

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No, but noted the violent sex acts

Is the book age appropriate?

- Committee was at an impasse due to the violent nature of the book

Sub-Committee Recommendation

- The readers recommend a restriction of 16 years or older with parent permission. Students under 16 years old due to the violent nature.

Vote Taken

- Approve for all high school students: 8
- Approve for students 16 years and older: 4
- Parent Permission for all students: 1
- *New readers assigned.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Jean-Phillppe Stassen

Provide a brief summary of book

- Additional readers were assigned.
- Does talk about the genocide and prostitution, not by choice but to support her family.
- Concerns with rape scenes, murder.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about graphic novel involving minors with violent and sexual images, sex acts, rape, vulgar language, violence.

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Request for Reconsideration Record

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No, but it was noted that rape in itself is offensive.

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Vote Taken

- 12 - Keep in high schools with no restrictions
- 2 - Restrictions - Age 16 and up
- *After further discussion, the committee agreed and were comfortable to keep it in high schools with no restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Empire of Storms</i>
Author	Sarah J. Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about explicit sexual activities, sexual nudity, violence, profanity, erotica, public sex acts, obscene references to sexual activities</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 24 – “It was an effort to keep from taking one of his hands and guiding it up to her breasts, to be him to touch, take, taste.” “You know, I’m starting to think you’re a sadist.”</p> <p>Pages: 25, 230, 292, 316, 349, 358, 360, 374, 397, 420, 427, 428, 480, 491, 492, 511, 573, 585, 668</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist November 1, 2016</p> <p>Aelin successfully freed Dorian and dramatically announced her powerful presence at the conclusion of <i>Queen of Shadows</i> (2015), and that act has reverberated throughout the kingdom. Though whispers among the continent that Aelin, the true queen of Terrasen, has returned suggest the people are rallying behind her, uniting powerful lords in the fight to free her homeland is harder than she thought. More important, her show of strength when defeating Dorian's captors caught the attention of an even wickeder fiend, now intent on capturing her and wielding her awesome power for his own nefarious ends. Recruiting her usual allies, along with Manon Blackbeak, Aelin sets out to imprison the dark forces that plague her kingdom. Though Maas' breathy narrative occasionally feels overwrought, and a few out-of-character pairings among series favorites seem more like an excuse to include lengthy, detailed sex scenes than meaningful plot contributions, fans devoted to the series (and there are many) will be eager for this installment's cinematic action, twisty schemes, and intense revelations of secrets and legacies.--Hunter, Sarah Copyright 2016 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide April 13, 2017</p> <p>Aelin hones her power now that magic has been restored; meanwhile, the demon Erawan prepares to conquer Erilea's kingdoms. When Aelin's countrymen reject her as Queen of Terrasen, she seeks unlikely allies and a lock to bind the demon in another realm. More adventure and romance await fans of Maas's high-fantasy series in this enjoyable fifth installment of Aelin's epic journey to save humanity. (c) Copyright 2017. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews October 1, 2016</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

In the penultimate Throne of Glass book, Aelin meets unexpected obstacles as her enemies move against her and her allies. Aelin may have put her role as assassin Celaena behind her, but that doesn't mean Terrasen's nobles are willing to hand the kingdom over to a young woman with her kind of past. Knowing the Valg king Erawan is a true threat to the entire world, Aelin must form alliances for the imminent war while uncovering the price once paid to halt Erawan—the price to stop him for good, because he's moving fast and striking hard. This plot expands the world, introducing new delights such as a pirate haven (and—of course—naval battles) and swampy ruins in Eyllwe, as the cast also expands, with nods to the novellas collected in *The Assassin's Blade*. (That said, with the number of characters presented and minimal recap, readers will wish there were a *dramatis personae*.) Much of Aelin's scheming occurs off-page, as secondary characters' viewpoints take on narrative weight—despite the occasional redundancy, this adds richness, as such characters as Manon enjoy deeper development, and Lysandra anchors the best action sequence. Romance runs rife (the main cast is mostly straight, with nods to queer minor characters) and this everyone-is-breathtakingly-beautiful-(and-also-mostly-white) world. Readers of Maas' other series will spot her touch, especially in descriptions of lovemaking and the cliffhanger ending. Tightly plotted, delightful escapism. (Fantasy. 14 & up)

Readers Notes:

This is book six of a series. It is a fantastical story with humans, faes, witches, magical creatures, etc. in which the protagonist, Aelin, is around 20 years old and is part fae. She seeks alliances with different factions throughout the story to battle the demon represented as the evil lord Erawan. In part, the story touches on Aelin's relationship with Rowan who is her mate and carranam; the couple is connected on a soul level.

Overall, the sexuality described in this book is not pervasively vulgar or obscene and does not appeal to prurient interests. Any of the consensual sexual activity described is age-appropriate for a high school audience. Therein, the focus of the story is on relationships and character development.

Page 24: Rowan is thinking about Aelin's breasts

Page 25: Ealin and Rowan are kissing with tongue. No sex or reference to sex.

Page 230: There is a creature that appears in front of Manon, the witch. The creature is described as naked, with long hair covering her nakedness.

Page 292: Rowan and Aelin are lying down together in bed, naked, and they fall asleep. Rowan begins waking up Aelin with kisses and strokes her body. No further details.

Page 316: To control Aelin's power, she cuts her palm and touches it to Rowan's own. Quote: "And as his lips met her, he joined their bleeding palms. Magic jolted through her, ancient and wicked and cunning..."

Page 349 -358: This scene captures Aelin and Rowan tenderly making love for the first time. It is consensual, non-violent, and neither obscene nor vulgar.

Page 360: Rowan remembers intimate relations with Aelin.

Page 374: Quote 1: "But what he lacked in charm he made up for with his shirtless, oiled body. And holy gods..."

Quote 2: "Elide wondered if he was contemplating the murder of everyone drooling over him like dogs around a bone. She couldn't blame him."

Page 397: Quote: "Witch, woman ... as long as the parts that matter are there, what difference does it make?"

Request for Reconsideration Record

Page 420 - 423: On page 420, Aelin puts her hand on Rowan's heart. In the subsequent pages, they talk about their relationship and marriage. Aelin tells Rowan all she needs in life is him. On page 423, Aelin and Rowan make love. It is consensual, non-violent, and neither obscene nor vulgar.

Quote: "I love you. Rowan breathed onto her skin, and flicked his tongue over the spot where his canines had scratched.

Page 427: The witch, Manon, is captured and her loyalty is tested. She interacts with Prince Dorian with whom she has a history and past connection. They are physically attracted to each other and flirt/tease each other with sexual undertones.

Page 428: Manon and Prince Dorian kiss.

Page 480: Rowan kisses Aelin, they talk about having children and there is a reference to her not being pregnant. Aelin is thinking about having children with Rowan, and there is a reference to her not being pregnant after they had sex.

Page: 491: Elide and Lorcan kiss each other.

Quote: "If you do what you need to do, and need somewhere to go ... You would have a place there. With me."

Page 492: Elide and Lorcan kiss each other and may be about to have sex, but then an army of ilken arrives which disrupts their connection.

Page 511: Aelin and Rowan are kissing, dreaming about their future together after the war, and teasing each other with sexual undertones.

Page 573: Scene between Manon and prince Dorian. Manon invites Dorian to finish what he started. He undresses her and they have sex. It is consensual, non-violent, and neither obscene nor vulgar in its description.

Page 585: Dorian walks into Manon's room, and her shirt is unlaced.

Quote: "He ignored her unlaced shirt, the swell of those lush breasts he'd tasted only yesterday, as he said, 'Put your clothes on and follow me.'"

Page 668: The fae queen Maeve strips Lorcan of his blood oath and exiles him.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Sara Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

A mystical world with faes and witches, mystical and magical creatures. The main character is trying to put together alliances. She is involved in a relationship with Rowan.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit sexual activities, sexual nudity, violence, profanity, erotica, public sex acts, obscene references to sexual activities
- Touches on the relationship between the main character (some sex scenes) with consent and tenderness, but the focus of the book is on the battles.
- The main characters are deeply bonded, and want a life together after the war. Not obscene or violent.

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A few other couples appear in the text, nothing graphic.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Forever a Year</i>
Author	B.T. Gottfred
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about gender ideology, violence, alcohol/drug use, suicide commentary, controversial racial commentary, sexual activities, erotica, relationship based on sex, alternate sexualities.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 7 – “She doesn’t quite get it even though I’ve told her, like, everyday, but every dude with a penis, even the gay ones, are gonna stare at her, want to talk to her, ask her out, and kiss her just so they can reach up her shirt. ... So I’m thinking you should learn to talk dirty. Like they do in porn. Guys love it.”</p> <p>Pages: 11, 12, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30, 54, 90, 97, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 147, 148, 162, 167, 168, 169, 170,177, 178, 183, 186, 192, 194, 201, 207, 208, 209, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 229, 230, 236, 237, 243, 245, 248, 251, 252, 254, 55, 256, 257, 258, 261, 265, 267, 268, 270, 277, 282, 284, 287, 289, 291, 299, 300, 302, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 315, 320, 321, 322, 324, 326, 329, 332, 335, 338, 343, 344, 350, 354, 359, 370, 371, 377, 380, 383, 389, 390, 408, 414, 415, 417, 418, 419</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist May 1, 2015</p> <p>In this debut novel, two high-school freshmen experience their first emotional and sexual relationship. For Carolina, high school is a time to reinvent herself and leave behind her reputation as a babyish nerd. Trevor thinks school is pointless after moving from L.A. to small-town Riverbend, Illinois. They notice each other on the first day and, after confronting gossip-fueled misunderstandings, start dating and gradually begin having sex. Both have problems at home a philandering dad, a suicidal mom that color their relationship. Through it all, Carolina and Trevor idolize and idealize each other until they can't anymore. Gottfred authentically depicts the intensity of first love and candidly portrays these teens' sex lives, from their first exploratory touching to a pregnancy scare, in scenes that range from sweet to rote to troubling. Structured in alternating first-person narratives, the confessional style of the interior monologues needs tightening, and the minutia of daily life makes for an overlong, shapeless story. Despite uneven writing and an ending that is pure saccharine, the overall journey is believable.--Hutley, Krista Copyright 2015 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Magazine August 1, 2015</p> <p>Its like I used to be Carrie, this awkward eighth grader, but now I was going to be Carolina, this amazing freshman. Nerdy and immature in junior high, Carolina and her best friend, Peggy (sorry, Marguerite), hit the ground running on their first day of high school; Carolina is ready to grow up -- right now. Trevor, new to town, has been rendered cynical and depressed by his mothers recent suicide attempt and is dreading starting school. Carolina and Trevor meet in first period, and the rest is history, chronicled in alternating first-person narratives characterized by insecurities and excitement and near-hysterical inner monologues: I MUST KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS OR I WILL DIE. Debut author Gottfreds accomplishments here are the truly realistic teen</p>	

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voices and the believable trajectory and fate of the relationship; readers won't be surprised when the soulmates hit rough patches (though some of the subplots do contain surprises). Carolina does grow up, as does Trevor -- perhaps too quickly thanks to their intense relationship and respective family troubles, but teen readers will appreciate the couples' newfound wisdom about high school friendships, parents, sexuality, and first love. A touching, relatable, and highly appealing coming-of-age romance like *Eleanor Park* (rev. 5/13) but with lots of sex. Katrina Hedeen (c) Copyright 2015. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

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Readers Notes:

Two teens, Carolina and Trevor meet in their freshman year and experience an intense year of first love. Trevor's family has just moved to town to be closer to extended family following his mother's suicide attempt and this is his second try at 9th grade. Carolina, an A student, and competitive athlete is determined to shed her younger self. Her entrance to high school is complicated by her parent's separation following her dad's affair.

The author, B. T. Gottfred structured the novel using alternating chapters in two voices. Trevor and Carolina are revealed to be intelligent, emotionally attuned, and immediately drawn to each other. The narration honestly portrays the insecurities, excitement, and angst of first love while these two also navigate the truth of their parents' troubles, the influence of friends and older high school peers, their studies, and athletic commitments.

Trevor and Carolina, despite their above average smarts and psychological awareness, make impulsive decisions typical for their age. Each in his/her own way struggles to sort out the complexity of an exclusive relationship that involves secret sexual exploration and the resulting messy emotional enmeshment that builds between them. While they idealize each other, they also come up against the limits of their pledge to be completely honest. Distrust and jealousy develop, along with their own occasional realization that they are too young for all of this and the clarifying fear of a pregnancy.

The four parents in this narrative are loving and well-meaning but overwhelmed with their own crises. Each in his/her own way, makes efforts to connect, guide and intervene with their offspring but are either blocked from deeper influence by their own flaws and preoccupations or the resistance of the teens.

Ultimately, Trevor and Carolina's relationship falls apart under the weight of the consequences of some poor decisions and their individual desires to break out of the emotionally conflicting quagmire that their "forever love" has become.

The complainants flagged 107 pages of this 420-page novel citing concerns above. I could find no evidence of any of the concerns on 15 or so of the pages listed. Another twenty contain material such as: references to Trevor's mother suicide attempt (there are no details), Carolina's older gay brother coming out to the family, Trevor's father's Mexican heritage, a schoolyard fight between Trevor and a boy who pursues Carolina, two occasions where there is underage drinking, Trevor's mother's revelation that she had an abortion in high school and use of the F word. The rest of the pages flagged contain material related to sexual thoughts in the stream of consciousness reflections of the characters or actual sexual activity, including several occasions that involve sexual intercourse.

It is my recommendation that *Forever for a Year* remain in high school libraries. The sexual content is portrayed in an authentic manner and is reflective of the realities of the characters' age and gender. I do not find the content 1) to appeal to prurient interests, 2) to describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and 3) taken as a whole, the novel does have some literary, artistic, and scientific value for high school readers. *Forever for a Year* has been judged by several reputable reviewers to be appropriate for readers 14-17. I concur.

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The sexual material presented in this novel includes realistic portrayals of consequences, both emotional and social. While the novel does not sermonize against teen sex, it also does not glorify their decisions or divorce them from real world effects. As a work of literary interest and entertainment, I concur that this novel belongs in high school libraries. References to suicide and drinking are similarly presented without glorification and with realism.

Taken as a whole, this work does not appeal to prurient interests, and has literary and artistic value.

Sub-committee Discussion:

B. T. Gottfred
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

Two high school students. Bright, attractive to each other and fall deeply in love. Usual teen situations in basements. There are setups where poor decisions are made.

Did not notice gender ideology.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about gender ideology, violence, alcohol/drug use, suicide commentary, controversial racial commentary, sexual activities, erotica, relationship based on sex, alternate sexualities.
- Reference to a suicide attempt - no details.
- A boy comes out.
- Trevor's mother had an abortion in high school.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

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Book Title	<i>Forever</i>
Author	Judy Blume
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about erotica, teen sex, explicit sex acts.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 1 – "Sybil Davison has a genius I.Q. and has been laid by at least six different guys." Pages: 3, 11, 14, 21, 22, 26, 29, 31, 41, 50, 51, 56, 64, 77, 86, 89, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 112, 135, 139, 146, 169, 174, 176, 189, 202, 206</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist October 15, 1988</p> <p>Katherine and Michael's romance progresses rapidly from kissing to sexual intercourse after Katherine gets the Pill-- but will their love last forever?</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>Increasingly Judy Blume's books center on single topics and the topic here, as pronounced in the first sentence, is getting laid. Cath and Michael fall in love when both are high school seniors, and Blume leads up to It date by date and almost inch by inch (hand over sweater, hand under skirt. . .) and then, after the breakthrough, describes each session until the kinks in timing and such are straightened out. (There's also a word for word transcript of her Planned Parenthood interview and a letter from Grandma, who's heard she is ""going steady,"" advising birth control.) For Cath though forever lasts only until her parents send her off to a summer camp job and she finds herself unwillingly attracted to the tennis counselor she's assisting; Michael takes it without much grace but Cath will never regret one single thing because it was all very special. ""I think it's just that I'm not ready for forever."" As usual with this immensely popular author, Forever has a lot of easy, empathic verity and very little heft. Cath like Blume's other heroines is deliberately ordinary, which means here (despite friends, nice family, etc.) that outside of the love affair she's pretty much a blank. In fact this could be a real magnet for all those girls who took to Are You There God It's Me Margaret just a few years ago and haven't changed all that much since. Another way of looking at Forever is as an updated Seventeenth Summer. Copyright ©Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.</p> <p>Copyright © Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.</p>	

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Readers Notes:

Page 1 – “Sybil Davison has a genius I.Q. and has been laid by at least six different guys.”

Sybil is having sex before she is emotionally ready. Her immaturity leads to irresponsibility. Ultimately, the novel treats Sybil as a cautionary tale who suffers severe consequences for her actions; she conceives a child for whom she makes an adoption plan at the end of the book. Sybil grieves the loss of her child, as she pursues higher education at a highly selective university, evidencing that IQ and EQ are not the same. Sybil portrays the complexities of the sexual liberation movement in the 1970s, and its human costs. In this way, she maintains historical, cultural, and educational value. Her story is tangential to the story of Michael and Kathy, the focal point of the book, and Sybil’s sexual choices do not pervade *Forever*, even if they are noted by the book’s first sentence.

Page 3: This page includes a passage that describes consensual kissing.

Page 11: This page includes passages that describe consensual kissing.

Page 14: This page describes how Kathy is discarded by a former boyfriend after she sets boundaries with him, which includes not having sex. This page also sets up an important component of *Forever’s* treatment of sex, which is one that connects sex to love and committed relationships.

Pages 21-22: These pages describe consensual kissing as well as an attempt between Michael and Kathy to discuss her sexual history and Kathy’s status as a “virgin.” She is unclear about how she feels about having sex with Michael, and is trying to make a thoughtful and ethical choice.

Pages 26-27: These pages depict Kathy and Michael kissing and having some sexual contact; they are modeling sexual respect and consent, open communication and checking-in with each other before proceeding.

Page 29: Two female characters (Erica and Kathy) banter about Kathy’s new relationship with Michael; she is not clear whether she loves him, which is something they discuss, as well as pressure they both feel around having sex before leaving for college.

Page 31: This page depicts an important conflict of *Forever*, that is the tension between sex and love and different points of view on this topic. Erica sees sex as a physical imperative, whereas Kathy sees sex as “an expression of love.” Kathy’s point of view creates the focal theme of *Forever*. Readers can infer that Kathy, should she choose to have sex with Michael, will make that choice because they truly love each other. Their sexual relationship becomes one way that they express their love for each other.

Page 41: This page contains multiple references to Kathy’s bra, and Michael touches her breasts. She asks him to stop; this passage centers Kathy’s assertion of her sexual boundaries and her right to consent to how she is touched and/or the contexts in which she is comfortable engaging in sexual behaviors. In this instance, she’s not comfortable because she and Michael are babysitting for her little sister. In addition to setting boundaries around sexual touch in her relationship, Kathy is setting expectations around appropriate locations for sexual activity, and she establishes that privacy is important to her.

Pages 50-51: In these pages, Michael touches Kathy’s vulva -- she isn’t ready for genital touch, and she pushes his hand away, while also letting him know she isn’t “mentally ready” for sex. Readers can see the tension between emotional and physical readiness, as well as Kathy’s confidence in making decisions that honor her values, despite being pressured by Michael.

Page 56: This page discusses a father’s refusal to see his daughter as having her own sexuality.

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Pages 64-66: Michael and Kathy engage in more kissing and sexual touching during a ski-weekend; Kathy sets further boundaries because she isn't able to have sex with him. Michael tells her that he loves her, and she questions whether it's possible to "love someone you've seen just nineteen times in your life." They fall asleep together, which symbolizes the emotional bond/intimacy that's developing between them, and their potential to love each other.

Page 77: Kathy has her first orgasm with Michael; she is empowered in her decision making, and she enjoys their sexual intimacy without having intercourse. At this point in the novel, Kathy is 18, and they are both consenting adults with clear communication and a developing emotional bond.

Page 86: This page discusses Erica and Artie's confusing sexual relationship -- Artie is most likely gay and both he and Erica are in denial about his sexuality, a point that will become terribly painful later in the novel, after Artie attempts suicide. His and Erica's story is tangential to that of Michael and Kathy's. Artie is a sympathetic character who bears the serious mental health impacts of anti-gay bias, which will ultimately escalate to a crisis.

Page 89: Michael and Kathy discuss Artie's depression. Artie is having serious mental health struggles, but his friends are not able to help him. In 1975, when *Forever* was published, teenage homosexuality was highly stigmatized, and there was no awareness about the mental health risks LGBTQ+ teens face. Artie's story is educationally valuable today and raises awareness of this history, while also creating opportunities for conversations that can remove stigma in the present day.

Pages 100-101: Kathy and Michael engage in more consensual sexual touching, and Kathy also touches Michael's penis, famously named "Ralph." They both have orgasms. These passages treat sex as broadly defined, not limited to penetration and/or vaginal intercourse. Sex is treated as a mutually enjoyable and emotionally intimate activity between consenting, committed partners.

Pages 102-103, p. 105: Kathy and Michael make the mutual decision to have vaginal intercourse; Kathy asserts boundaries around space, her body, and the need for protection. Michael accommodates her in all cases and wears a condom. Intercourse is consensual and responsible, but less enjoyable for Kathy because Michael has a premature ejaculation.

Pages 111-112: Kathy's mother gives her an article about sexual liberation and the "right to say 'no.'" The article is written by a Yale University director of medical clinics and provides four key points for adolescents considering sex. One of the points asks, "What you should expect from sexual intercourse," and further notes that "enjoyable love-making, culminating in orgasm, isn't easy. It usually requires mutual education. It takes time, effort, and patience to learn to make love." Kathy is comforted by this guidance, and it normalizes her inability to have an orgasm. The article also asks her to consider how the relationship will end, implying that her relationship with Michael will not last forever.

Page 135: Kathy makes the responsible choice to take oral contraceptives as pregnancy prevention, and she shares this decision with Michael, who has had VD.

Page 139: Kathy and Michael are in the bathroom going through his aftershave, and he jokingly tells her she can put it on his penis, which she examines closely. This passage describes body awareness, body positivity, and mutual exploration of bodies within a consensual, committed relationship and private space.

Page 146: Kathy and Erica discuss Sybil's pregnancy. Sybil wants to carry the pregnancy to term for the experience, and she is also making an adoption plan for her child. Teen pregnancy is a consequence of unprotected sex, and Sybil serves as a cautionary tale for *Forever* readers in the mid-1970s. However, the current edition includes a Reader's Note that warns of STIs, including HIV, and directs readers to resources for taking "responsibility for your own actions and your own life."

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Page 169: Kathy and Erica visit Sybil in the hospital after she gives birth; they discuss Sybil's choice to deliver her child, and Sybil is bereft but also recognizes that adoption is the best choice for her and her child. It's clear that Sybil is making a responsible choice and wants "a good life" for her daughter, but also grieves her loss.

Pages 174-76: Kathy and Michael have sex. Kathy is more directive and aware of her body, and she finds "the right angle" that enables her to have two orgasms. These are the first orgasms Kathy has while having intercourse with Michael. The scene portrays the couple lovingly; before they have sex, Kathy reflects on the "special" relationship she has with Michael. They have intercourse again and watch the sunrise. Sex is treated as an expression of love during a time of important transitions and difficult farewells. Both are preparing to leave for college, and will be separated for the entire summer because of summer jobs.

Page 189: Kathy is separated from Michael and working at a tennis camp. She develops a crush on another counselor named Theo. She dreams about having sex with Michael, but Michael transforms into Theo, with whom Kathy has sex. Kathy is conflicted by her desires for Theo and feels ashamed by them. She is also realizing that she may want to have sex with more than one person and not commit fully to Michael. The turmoil she feels also evidences her love for Michael, and her need to be ethical in carrying out her commitment to him. It emphasizes Kathy's preference for monogamous relationships.

Page 202: Michael attempts to have sex with Kathy but she is unable to reciprocate due to her conflict with Theo; she can't "feel anything" and realizes that she needs to stop Michael and tell him the truth. Kathy makes a difficult but ethical decision to be honest with her partner, even though he reacts punitively.

Page 206: Michael and Kathy break up, and Michael behaves immaturely. He is cruel to her, and their parting is tense. Even though Kathy has loved Michael, it's clear that he's not the right "forever" partner for her, but he is an important part of her life.

Summary:

As a foundational work of young adult literature, *Forever* by Judy Blume was ground-breaking at its time of publication in 1975, due to its revolutionary treatment of a young woman's decision to have responsible and ethical sex within a loving relationship. Blume dedicated the book to her daughter, Randy, and [wrote](#) *Forever* after Randy asked for a "a story about two nice kids who have sex without either of them having to die." Blume has [written](#), "I wanted to present another kind of story -- one in which two seniors in high school fall in love, decide to have sex, and act responsibly."

Forever offers significant lessons to young adult readers; those lessons include the following themes:

- Sexual intercourse should be a consensual act between committed partners.
- Open communication and respect between sexual partners are important parts of sexual experiences.
- Emotional readiness for sex is as important as physical readiness.
- Discernment and assertion of sexual boundaries are an important part of emotional readiness.
- Sexual partners need to take responsibility and use precautions to safeguard health and avoid consequences they are not ready to handle, such as a pregnancy.
- Parents, other caregivers, and clinicians can support young adults in making ethical, responsible, and healthy sexual decisions.
- Sex can be an expression of love between consenting partners.

Forever won the 1996 A.L.A. Margaret A. Edwards Award for Outstanding Literature for Young Adults, cementing its status as literary art. As a work of art, *Forever* continues to withstand the test of time. Now, nearly a quarter into the twenty-first century, this novel reflects and refracts American cultural attitudes about sex and relationships. As such, *Forever* remains an important record of culture in a nation where more than 50 percent of teenagers have had sexual intercourse by the age of 18, as Kathy does ([CDC](#)). Whereas premarital sex was more

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stigmatized in the 1970s when *Forever* was published, a majority of American adults now view premarital sex as acceptable ([Pew Research Center](#)).

Explicit sexual content is not pervasive in the book. The 31 pages summarized above constitute 14 percent of the book's total content. The book's sexual content is directly connected to the novel's prevailing themes and characterization -- major artistic components of the work. For these reasons, sexual content does not appear to be pervasively vulgar or obscene under the Miller test. However, [Blume](#) has been clear with readers that they should exercise responsibility and maturity when reading, and she does not recommend making the book available to children -- readers under the age of 12.

Beyond *Forever's* treatment of love, relationships, and sex, the novel retains value in other areas. First, it destigmatizes anti-gay bias and centers the mental health struggles of a gay teenager decades before [researchers](#) began studying these risk factors for suicide. In turn, *Forever*, creates opportunities for conversation around mental health and sexuality. By raising awareness and reducing stigma, *Forever* could additionally be a part of suicide prevention conversations in schools.

Secondly, we are living at a time of exponentially [increased antisemitism](#) in the United States, and a violent anti-Jewish attack occurred recently in [Gaithersburg](#). Blume is a Jewish author, and *Forever* contains positive depictions of Jewish characters and Jewish culture. Such representations are important to giving students access to diverse depictions of individuals and cultures that may be different from their own. *Forever* treats Jewish people as valuable contributors to American society and culture.

Forever and its author remain a culturally vibrant work that continues to inspire conversation and critical discourse, nearly 50 years after its publication. For example, the novel serves as the title to a forthcoming documentary focused on Blume's work that premiered this year at the [Sundance Film Festival](#). *Forever* has been favorably reviewed in publications of record, including *The New York Times*, and Blume continues to inspire articles at such publications as [The Atlantic](#), with a deeply influential history in *American Arts and Letters*, and that has declared Blume "the poet laureate of puberty." A recent search of JSTOR's database for "Judy Blume" and "Forever" yielded more than 100 results, evidencing that the novel continues to inspire debate and scholarly inquiry.

Reviewer 2 summary

I agree with reviewer 1's assessment of the book.

The book provides positive sexual education in story form. Most importantly it portrays a young adult approaching sex with caution and responsibility. Having open communication with her partner, seeking adult and medical professional's assistance with questions and safety precautions, all while showing the possible pitfalls of sexual intercourse through the experience of other characters. While also exploring the intense emotional feelings of the young adults as their relationship progresses.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Judy Blume

Provide a brief summary of book

- The readers described the book as "a fictional sex education class." It is the story of a young teenage girl's relationship and her first sexual encounter. Scenes were not graphic but matter-of-fact. It included open communication in relationships, emotional respect, physical readiness, boundaries, responsibility, human consequences and love between consenting partners.
- The book was published in 1975 and is still relevant today. Most in the group have read the book.

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Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, teen sex, explicit sex acts.

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions:

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. No restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>I Never</i>
Author	Laura Hopper
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about explicit sex, profanity, erotica, nudity.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 7 – “Yes, I know plenty of seventeen-year-olds are dating, are having sex, and maybe even in love.”</p> <p>Pages: 8, 18, 22, 23, 25, 53, 83, 86, 87, 91, 105, 110, 118, 120, 125, 136, 137, 138, 141, 144, 147, 159, 161, 165, 168, 169, 170, 174, 175, 177, 199, 202, 211, 216, 217, 230, 231, 232, 233, 235, 238, 240, 241, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248, 249, 250, 254, 257, 259, 263, 277, 278, 283</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist November 1, 2017</p> <p>When Janey King bumps into Luke Hallstrom on a plane, she doesn't expect anything to come from it. After all, Luke's a senior at her high school and a popular athlete, while Janey is more of an under-the-radar kind of girl who's never even kissed a boy. But a few encounters at track practice later, and they're on their way to becoming an exclusive couple. As they grow more physically intimate, Janey can't deny her attraction to Luke, both physically and emotionally, and she starts to wonder is she ready for the real deal? Though it falls prey to a few clichés (Luke is quick to tell Janey that she's not like other girls), and there are clear shades of Judy Blume's <i>Forever</i> (1975), this debut is a clear, matter-of-fact look at one girl's first time. Both the choice to have sex and the choice not to are discussed without stigma, and the fact that Luke is just as concerned with Janey's pleasure as he is with his own adds valuable perspective.--Reagan, Maggie Copyright 2017 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide February 22, 2018</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old junior Janey is romantically inexperienced, but when Luke--a sexy, popular senior--falls for her, she makes up for lost time. From first date to first sexual encounters, Jenny remains bland, starry-eyed, and persistently naive, while Luke is a nearly flawless (and strangely mature) partner. What this romance lacks in chemistry it makes up for in its approachably frank, sex-positive tone. (c) Copyright 2018. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

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Readers Notes:

Brief Summary: *I Never* is the story of the second half of Janey's junior year of high school. She is a track and debate team star, but doesn't consider herself to be popular. Her parents are getting divorced, but it's amicable and they are attempting to do it in a way that's healthy for Janey. She has three close and supportive friends that she's known most of her life. The book starts with her catching the eye of a popular boy at school, Luke, an outgoing senior who is also on the track team. They begin dating and falling in love. Janey and Luke discuss having sex openly and maturely. Janey says she isn't ready and Luke is ok with waiting. There are some small disagreements between Janey and her parents, her friends, and with Luke that Janey tackles over the course of the book. The reader can see her emotional growth and the widening of her worldview through these struggles. Janey talks about sex with her friends and her parents while her physical relationship with Luke ramps up. She decides she is ready and wants Luke to be her first sexual experience. Luke and Janey have sex after prom night. Although their relationship is strong, it ends with Luke going away to college on the opposite coast.

Concerns of the complainants: explicit sex, profanity, erotica, nudity - some of the specific pages contain words like "boobs," "sexy," "hot," "hook up," "boner," and describe kissing. All innocuous in context.

Analysis based on legal tenants:

-Does the book appeal to prurient interests? No, I believe the average person applying adult community standards would find that *I Never* supports healthy ideas about teens in love and sexual desires.

-Is sexual conduct described in a patently offensive way? No. In fact, applying adult community standards, the book describes sexual conduct in a way that is loving, patient, generous, safe, and enthusiastically consensual.

-Does the book lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value? This book would/does widely appeal to teen girls. The themes are relatable and the modern messages/examples of consent are important for teens ("Is this okay?" "Are you sure?" "Was that a yes?" "Can I kiss you?" "Should we stop?" "his hands don't feel scary or threatening or uninvited" "I don't feel forced or pressured.") Physiological responses (especially Janey's) are described in ways that are overlooked in sex education programs, but not vulgar or obscene. The sexual conduct is described in modern and appropriate terms. The book is not prurient and is arguably intended to educate as opposed to arouse.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Laura Hopper
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Main character is a girl who is a junior in highschool, who lives with her mother and father
- The story takes place in the middle of the school year.
- She is a healthy young woman who is a straight A student, participates in track and debate club
- On family vacation her parents have a healthy conversation with the main character to explain that they are getting divorced.
- While on vacation she meets a popular boy from school and they start dating
- As the relationship progresses the boy wants to have sex, the girl wants to wait and he respects her position and does not push the issue.
- Her parents start dating other people which creates complicated feelings for the main character.
- The main character has two good friends who she confides in-one of them is in a committed relationship and is sexually active
- 2/3 through the book the main character decides that she is ready to have sex with her boyfriend
- She has conversations with her parents and boyfriend about her decision
- Her boyfriend will be going away to college after graduation and they have realistic conversations about how that impacts their relationship
- There are many examples of a healthy, loving, trustworthy and consensual relationship.

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Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit sex, profanity, erotica, nudity.
- The sex scene is details but not vulgar
- Sex is not pervasive in the book
- Sex is a part of a bigger relationship
- There is more of a focus on intimacy and emotion
- There is a scene where the main character shops for condoms, but is not offensive

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Based on the Miller test the book is not prurient

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- The book has literary value
- The book is a depiction of thoughtful engagement of introducing sex in an already healthy relationship
- The main character gathers information and speaks with her parents regarding sex before making a decision to engage in sex

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- The book is not prurient and does not intend to arouse
- Some scene might be arousing to someone who has not experienced sex
- Sex is not pervasive
- The main character describes her physiological response to being intimate with her boyfriend, but there is no intent to arouse (erotica), the intent appears to be more empowering for females to highlight that females are allowed to feel pleasure during intimacy.
- The intent of the author is to show how a healthy and responsible approach to sex can be an emotionally and physically positive experience.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- The book does not describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way
- The book highlights elements of a healthy relationship including patience, feeling safe, trust, informative decision making, enthusiastic consent and confirmation and clarification of consent
- The book highlights empowerment of female choice, equal balance of power and mutual respect between the main character and her boyfriend.

Is the book age appropriate?

- The book is age appropriate.

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. No restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Identical</i>
Author	Ellen Hopkins
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about child molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm, suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse, available to troubled children at Heather Ridge.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 8 – “There’s Daddy who comes home every day, dives straight into a tall amber bottle, falls into a stonewalled well of silence, a place where he can tread the suffocating loneliness.”</p> <p>Pages: 19, 26, 28, 41, 42, 57, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66, 80, 82, 90, 91, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 114, 121, 122, 123, 126, 152, 158, 167, 175, 179, 184, 202, 208, 210, 228, 232, 235, 236, 237, 238, 245, 259, 260, 262, 265, 267, 270, 271, 272, 280, 288, 301, 305, 315, 319, 320, 332, 336, 388, 393, 402, 407, 415, 418, 421, 441, 447, 459, 466, 467, 471, 472, 473, 476, 481, 486, 487, 488, 490, 501, 503, 506, 507, 516, 517, 519, 520, 523, 530, 536, 537, 542, 544, 552, 553, 555, 556, 563, 564</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist</p> <p>September 1, 2008</p> <p>Since the car accident eight years earlier, identical twins Kaeleigh and Raeanne have struggled with dark secrets. Their politician mother is both physically and emotionally absent, and their father, a district court judge, sexually abuses Kaeleigh. The girls struggle with an encyclopedic array of problems that include promiscuity, alcohol and drug abuse, bingeing, purging, and cutting. Hopkins' trademark free verse carries the sometimes explicit narrative in the girls' alternating, authentic voices as their self-destructive behaviors accelerate. Especially effective are the poems positioned on facing pages that build on identical phrases in mirror imagery. Unfortunately, the book is overly long, stalling the pace in the last third and lessening the impact before powering through to the climax. Adult characters are undeveloped, but the legion of Hopkins' teen fans will be mesmerized by the emotional portrayal of the twins. A plot twist at the end will send readers immediately back to the beginning to track the clues.--Rutan, Lynn Copyright 2008 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>Hopkins's gift with free verse reaches new heights in this portrait of splintered identical twins. Sexual abuse, a fatal car accident and violent alcoholism have wrecked their family. Mom disappears by running for Congress. Daddy drinks Wild Turkey and pops painkillers—and molests Kaeleigh. Raeanne acts out with bulimia and rough sex, willingly trading sex for drugs. Kaeleigh shuts down, throws up and withdraws from everyone, even steady Ian, her best friend, who's in love with her. Ian offers the first healthy love Kaeleigh's ever known, but too many secrets lurk under her surface. Masterful shards of verse convey the fragmented emotions: Falling for Ian, Kaeleigh feels, "Fire. Ice. Honey. Salt. Eiderdown. / Iron. Every fiber of me twitches / confusion." Some facing pages reveal additional mirror-poems along the gutter, each identical poem holding a very different</p>	

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meaning for each sister. Kaeleigh and Raeanne maintain distinct voices throughout as they wrestle with psychic damage and an astonishing, devastating realization. Sharp and stunning, with a brilliant final page. (Fiction. YA) Copyright ©Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

Provide a brief summary of the book

Identical tells the story of twin, teen aged- sisters over the course of several months. The book is told almost entirely through inner dialogue and exclusively from their point of view as they navigate through serious trauma- most seriously, the molestation by a parent and other forms of abuse. Throughout the book, one sister engages regularly in harmful and dangerous behaviors, including drug use, exchanging sex for drugs, inappropriate or abusive partner relationships, bulimia and cutting. The other sister lives in fear of her abusive father while craving the attention of her largely absent mother and, despite the outward veneer of a “good life,” struggles with bulimia and suicidal ideation. Both sisters have little to no healthy friendships or relationships as they struggle with maintaining outward appearances of their politically-connected family. While the sisters are presented as “opposites” in terms of both their feelings about their parents and their behaviors (one is in the school play while the other regularly cuts classes to hook up & get high with a man in his 20s, for example), the book’s plot twist reveals that the two sisters are actually one in the same; one main character who struggles with Dissociative Identity Disorder as the result of the sexual abuse she’s endured throughout childhood and adolescence.

Nearly all bad things that could happen to a teen and every bad decision a teen could make are included- and often presented in stereotypical way.

Highlights of concerns by complainants

Child molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm, suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse, available to troubled children at Heather Ridge.

While it was at times difficult to discern the exact nature of the complainants' concerns based on the list of page numbers (specific passages on the pages; at times page numbers listed did not appear to correlate to the paperback copy of the book), the themes highlighted above do appear repeatedly throughout the book. It is clear to the reader that the twins’ engagement in risky and very troubling behaviors is the result of the trauma of sexual abuse and the attempt to exert control and autonomy in their own lives. Additionally, the book clearly shows the patterns of abuse—both sexual and alcohol abuse- over generations.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions for Discussion

- Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value? Its free-verse style is likely appealing to some readers. Additionally, there is potential value for other victims of abuse to see these themes presented.
- Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse? Based on the Miller standard that the book be “taken as a whole”- no. Specific passages candidly discuss sex

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and sexual acts in way that is sometimes shocking, but not to the standard of salaciousness. It's hard to anticipate the reaction of a teen reader.

- Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way? There is attempted rape, sexual assault, and sexual child abuse and the exchange of sex for drugs... but the way it is described is not offensive.
- Is the book age appropriate? Yes, for high school

Recommends that the book be only for high school and that it should have a trigger warning for self harm, suicide ideation, sexual abuse.

Recommends the book for only high school, but without a trigger warning as there is no FCPS policy for trigger warnings.

Provide a brief summary of book

- A story of twin teenage girls who navigate through serious topics such as molestation from parents, drug use, inappropriate relationship, bulimia and cutting.
- The teens do not have healthy friendships and try to hold on to their "outward appearance."
- The plot twist is that they are one in the same; a teenager who is dealing with an associated identity disorder due to the abuse.
- This reader added that there were twin girls but one died in a car accident due to their father's drinking.
- The story is very much like a soap opera; pretty stereotyped.
- If looking at the book just by the specific pages referenced for concern it was alarming, but when reading the entire book it has value and can see how helpful it could be to those abused.
- There was some healing and resolution in the book. The teen did end up with some healthy relationships and the story closes with the character being removed from the home and was in a hospital. This demonstrates growth and seeking help.
- The author stated she doesn't want to end with a "fix" because there is no cut/dry way to deal with trauma/abuse.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about child molestation, sexual assault, violence, self-harm, suicidal ideation, profanity, drug/alcohol abuse, available to troubled children at Heather Ridge.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, and value for those who have been abused.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No, it is an example of dangers with exchanging drugs with sex, and the importance of healthy, committed relationships.

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes, high school.

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Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. No restrictions.

- Both readers recommend to keep in high schools only with no restrictions.

Vote Taken:

- 9 - High Schools with no restrictions
- 3 - Content Warning
- 2 - Parental Permission
- *After further discussion, the committee agreed and were comfortable to keep it in high schools with no restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Infandous</i>
Author	Elana Arnold
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about explicit adult sex with minor, profanity, alcohol use.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 51 – "Eugene's penis was way bigger than a teen-sized tampon."</p> <p>Pages: 52, 54, 73, 75, 76, 81, 83, 114, 115, 128, 145, 147, 148, 149</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews:</p> <p>Booklist January 1, 2015</p> <p>*Starred Review* Sephora Golding is the daughter of a beauty, and this mother-daughter relationship has informed most of her life. Throughout Sephora's childhood in Venice Beach, it's been just the two of them, and as she struggles now with the growing pains of new adulthood, a steadily shrinking future, and a strange, dark sexual secret, it is to that relationship that she continues to turn. It's the secret, though, that influences her artwork, an ongoing project she calls <i>Infandous</i>: something so horrible it cannot be expressed aloud. Inspired by various fairy tales, Sephora crafts circles around what is hidden, always shying away from acknowledging the thing itself. Clocking in at just 200 pages, this is a story that packs no less of a punch for its brevity. Sephora's grim reimaginations of fairy tales are anti-Disney in the extreme (making this best suited for more mature readers). The strands are worked so surely into the narrative that they feel powerful instead of tired. Sephora herself is a narrator who defies convention, and her story, harsh and spare, is unforgettable.--Reagan, Maggie Copyright 2015 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide October 13, 2015</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old Sephora lives with her mother in gritty Venice Beach, California, and spends her free time making art from found objects. Uncomfortable in her own skin and tortured by a secret, Sephora struggles to find her place in the world. Interspersed with stories from mythology and classic fairy tales, Arnold's novel feels authentic; teens will relate to Sephora's brutally honest, well-rendered voice. (c) Copyright 2015. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

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Readers Notes:

- Sex scenes within the narrative and outside of the literature pieces included were alluding to the act and did not describe the sex act.
- The excerpt cited was an off hand comment and not part of a larger descriptive narrative about sex
- The “Dark Romance” seems absent - the story comes across as a cautionary tale of being careful with whom you entrust your body. The characters did not know of their relationship until after the act. The reveal of the incest occurred at the end of the text to explain why the protagonist refused to engage with the individual again. The book in no way endorses incest - both characters are stunned and disgusted when they find out they are father/daughter.
- Using the Miller test:
 - Violates community standards - the message of the book does not in any way support incest. The work taken as a whole centers on the main character working through her trauma and using art as an outlet to do so, the sexual content is secondary to the main story and does not rise to the level of prurient interest. Sexual content is disturbing but not explicit. As a whole the work is one of literature and not one of obscenity.
 - The characterization of the book as a dark romance is inaccurate, she meets a much older man while they are surfing, she never knew her father and did not know this man was her father, the book alludes to her engaging in a consensual act with this man, she is 16 - depending on the state laws this may be an age of consent, or this could be considered statutory rape. In MD the age of consent is 16, in California where the book is set the age of consent is 18.

Summary:

The book follows the story of a 16 year old girl who has experienced a trauma and is using art to work through her difficulties. She lives with her mother who she has a close relationship, but does not know her father. Her mother got pregnant young and was shunned by her well off family, and struggled to provide for her child. It is clear that the lead character in the story suffered a traumatic event, there is allusion to this through the use of literary pieces - Sleeping Beauty, the Rape of Leucetia, Oedipus. The main character discusses the trauma through by looking back on her actions - she was surfing, met an older man, lied about her age - saying she was 19 and attending college - her friend verifies this information to the man. She and this old man go on a date, wind up back at his hotel room and have sex. This sex scene again is alluding to through the literary pieces, and some reference to her being in that room with him, consenting to the act, him moving over her, etc. She then finds a box in her mothers closet and discovers this man is her father. Neither had any idea at the time of the sex act. He calls her, she refuses to take the calls, ultimately they cross paths again while she works in a surf shop he comes into, after asking why she isn't interested, she tells him her name, her mother's name. He is revolted and leaves the shop and she is now relieved of the dark secret she has held.

Response to Cited Concern:

Explicitly adult sex with minors, profanity, alcohol use - the explicit nature of adult sex is contained in the literature pieces that are integrated into the prose of the text and not in the prose discussing the act between the father and daughter - neither knew they were related at the time of the act and the main character lied about her age. There is some profanity and alcohol use in the text, neither is excessive and both important to portraying the angst of the main character as she works through the situation.

(erotica, incest, emotionally disturbing end child raped by father; this book is written so you think it's a dark romance until you learn the girls was seduced and raped by her father)

The actual sexual act is not described in a way that could be construed as “Erotica” - that it is intended to arouse (erotica) sexual desire - it is just the opposite. Incest did occur between father and daughter, neither knew of their relation at the time, the act was consensual, though legally statutory rape. In California where the book is set, the age of consent is 18 however a reasonable defense can be mounted under that state's laws if the act was consensual and at the time both parties believed the others were of age. It is important to note that the age of

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consent in Maryland is 16, but there are restrictions in age between parties. Neither reviewer believed that any type of romance was portrayed, and not a “dark romance.” Neither party engaged with one another more than once, there was no ongoing romance. It is clear throughout the text that something bad happened, that she was working through it, but she was not at all romantically enamored once she found out who this man was.

There was no seduction. The young woman decides she wants to have sex with the older man she’s met almost immediately after meeting him. She doesn’t describe any doubts or any persuasions used by the man. The title negates the concern of a “romance;” the act is viewed throughout the book as being extremely odious/unspeakable. The entire book takes place after she finds out the man is her father. All descriptions of him and their (lack of) relationship are written through the main character’s anguish over what happened.

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

Yes - the book has artistic and literary value. The book follows the journey of this young woman to free herself from her feelings of guilt and anguish through her own art and in the end empowering her to confront her father and bring her some closure. The takeaways reinforce being careful about decisions, that incest is not in any way ok (both characters are repulsed by what happened).

The book has literary merit: the main character is deep/complex while also being relatable to any teen in distress. The plot is unique, the symbolism is artful, and both allow for diverse interpretation and discussion.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

No - this is not a book that is written for the purpose of arousal, it actually serves the opposite because the consequences of the decisions are traumatic in so many ways - that is the story, not the sex act itself.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

No the book is not “patently offensive” - the state law does not define the description of these acts as patently offensive though incest could be construed as such, mitigating this is the lack of knowledge. MD statute states “a person may not knowingly engage in vaginal intercourse with anyone the person may not marry [under other MD title].”

Is the book age appropriate?

Yes - this is a book about a 16 year old and her journey to overcome a traumatic event and a powerful story that does not encourage engagement in sex or alcohol consumption.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Provide a brief summary of book

- Protagonist is a young girl struggling to find where she fits into society.
- She lives at home with her single mother, she has never known who her father is
- Her mother became pregnant at a young age and was thrown out of her family home as a result.
- Setting: California, Venice Beach
- Structure: the book is written in prose.
- Story is from the perspective of the young girl protagonist
- Structure is prose with excerpts of classic literature such as fairytales and mythology interspersed throughout the book.
- The protagonist experiences sexual trauma that is alluded to throughout the book, but is not identified until the end, but not explicitly
- The classic literature is used to frame concepts in the book
- The protagonist uses art to express her emotions and work through her trauma on her own.
- The young girl has sex with an older man whom she does not know. She tells him that she is of age so he believes he is having sex with a legally appropriate woman

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- The young girl is disturbed by the experience and cuts off any contact with the man, but unexpectedly, and unplanned comes into contact with him later in the story, and she is disturbed by the experience
- She later finds out that the name is her father
- The father is repulsed when he discovers that the girl who he had sex with was his daughter.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit adult sex with minor, profanity, alcohol use.

Discussion

- Dark romance- There is no sense of seduction. The protagonist is traumatized by sexual experience and the father is repulsed when he discovers the identity of his daughter
- Rape- the father believes that the girl is of legal age when they have sex
- Explicit sex with minors- the girl tells the man that she is of age, and she is taking college-level courses. He assumes she is of age
- Profanity- no more than every day in schools
- Alcohol use- tangential to story, not glorified, used as a coping mechanism, very minimal
- Erotica- not at all
- Incest - both the girl and the man are unaware of their familial connection at the time of their sexual encounter

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

In the state of California there would be sufficient evidence to provide a reasonable defense that the sexual encounter was not rape, due to belief that the girl was of legal age

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- The book has artistic and literary value- The story is of a young woman struggling with a traumatic event, how she uses art to cope with the trauma, and in the end takes back her power.
- Classic literature such as Grimm's fairytales and ancient mythology are used. The classic literature is used to frame concepts in the book such as women's power being taken by men and how historically women have not had power.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No. The focus is on the protagonist's struggle with her trauma.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No. The sexual encounter is not explicitly described. Sex is more explicitly evident in the literary content of Grimm's fairytales and ancient mythology than the author's prose, but is not patently offensive. The protagonist uses the literature to process her pain. It is meant for symbolism not intent to arouse (erotica).

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>It's Perfectly Normal</i>
Author	Robie Harris
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about illustration images of sex, inappropriate illustrations of masturbation, same sex sexual activity, sexual instruction manual, sexual activity, misleading information gender, i.e. "intersex", available to children as young as 11.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 2 – "A label usually given at birth to humans..."</p> <p>Page 3 – "If a person is born with a mixture, their sex is "intersex" [INCORRECT. ALL intersex people are either male or female. This subject is so complicated most adults don't understand it. It should NOT be a discussion for children.]</p> <p>Pages: 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43,44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, 68, 69, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 89, 90, 92, 99</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist September 15, 1994</p> <p>Gr. 4-7. This caring, conscientious, and well-crafted book will be a fine library resource as well as a marvelous adjunct to the middle-school sex-education curriculum. There's no doubt, however, that some libraries and schools will have problems with Emberley's plentiful pictures, which, besides being warm and unaffected, are eyepoppers--especially in a book for this age group. The bold color cartoon drawings are very candid: a double-page spread of nudes, which beautifully demonstrates the varied shapes and sizes humans come in; a picture of a couple making love; one of a boy masturbating as he sits on his bed; another of a girl examining her genitals with a mirror. Less controversial will be Emberley's helpful diagrams and the running cartoon commentary he supplies on the main text, which is delivered by an embarrassed bee and a curious bird (modern kids may miss the allusion, and the device eventually wears thin). Harris' text, as forthright as Emberley's art, encompasses all the supposedly "age appropriate" issues (the structure of the reproductive system and puberty, for example), as well as a good deal more--from the terms we use when we talk about sex to intercourse, birth, abortion, sexual health, abuse, and issues of responsibility and respect. Readers won't find answers to their burning questions quite as easily here as they will in the at-a-glance question-answer overview <i>Asking about Sex and Growing Up</i> (1988), by Joanna Cole. Harris' coverage, however, is much broader and a good deal more detailed. With illustrations scattered liberally across the pages, the format occasionally seems crowded, but the candor of the artwork will help kids view sex as a natural part of life. Such openness will also help them grasp the main message of the text: that sex comprises many things, not just one. Children will find this a comforting, informative precursor to Lynda Madaras' books on puberty; librarians will find it well worth fighting for if, by some chance, the need arises. ~--Stephanie Zvirin</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Magazine</p>	

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An unassuming, coherent, comprehensive explanation of sex in all its complicated glory. The text is freely and profusely illustrated with explicit drawings done in a friendly style. All of the people pictured look wonderfully happy with themselves, whether they are kissing, or copulating. Certainly some critics will take issue with the frank talk and anatomically correct drawings, but for sheer information, this does the job. From HORN BOOK 1994, (c) Copyright 2010. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

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Readers Notes: Page 2: “A label usually given at birth to humans...” this is a dictionary definition the author is referencing. I found several examples of dictionaries with very similar wording.

Page 3: “If a person is born with a mixture, their sex is “intersex”. Research indicates that intersexuality is as frequent as Cystic Fibrosis. The complainant suggests that because the author defines intersex that there is discussion around it. This is a library book, not a textbook.

The complainants allege that the illustrations throughout the book are inappropriate. However, it is my opinion that the illustrations are appropriate to the theme of the book: human sexual health. The illustrations are factual and accurate while depicting the bodies in different stages of growth, shape, gender, and skin color.

The complainants list practically every page in the book as being of concern. I found every page to be full of factual information. I also saw plenty of places in this book where the reader was told to speak to your parents, another trusted adult, a teacher, your doctor, your minister, etc. if you needed to speak to a trusted adult about a topic and/or something in your life that was troubling you. Often this advice changed slightly depending on what the chapter was discussing. But, throughout the book, that advice permeated the text.

Overall the book seems to be a good resource for students covering a wide range of topics about sexual health. Some of the content may not align with a person’s political or religious views, but the information is factually accurate and up-to-date. I really appreciated the way the book encouraged students to communicate their concerns or questions to trusted adults as well as the inclusion of online safety as a topic within sexual health because students need to understand the dangers there in what they might not consider a dangerous space in this way.

The illustrations are inclusive of body types, ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. Some of the illustrations may have been unnecessary, but their cartoon-ish nature helps make the material more engaging for students and they help to normalize what are often uncomfortable topics.

Sub-committee Discussion: 2004: 96 pps; 2014: 112 pps; 2021: 128 pps.

Robie Harris
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

The book explains all of the things that children want to know about sex. It is a factual book with realistic pictures. Speaks to the dangers of the internet. It talks about sexual abuse. It tells students to seek information from parents, doctors, etc.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about illustration images of sex, inappropriate illustrations of masturbation, same sex sexual activity, sexual instruction manual, sexual activity, misleading information gender, i.e. “intersex”, available to children as young as 11.

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- Intersex is described exactly as the definition.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School and Middle School.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts)</i>
Author	LC Rosen
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about sex- starts with a 4-way orgy, sex with teachers, anal sex, erotica, minimizes the seriousness of deciding to have sex, pedophilia</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 1 - starts with a "four-way" - "All four of them were just going at it." Page 2 - "How he gets all that D. A fourgy in Hannah Ling's hot tub? It's like his life is a porno." "Like when he got fucked b the coach from Highbrook in the locker room during the homecoming game." Pages: 3, 6, 17, 24, 25, 57, 61</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist September 15, 2018</p> <p>*Starred Review* Tales get bigger in the retelling, but generally what people say about Jack is true: he gets laid a lot. His private New York high school is pretty liberal, but out gay kids are still the minority, and Jack is often the subject of his classmates' gossip and, occasionally, vitriol. When his friend convinces him to write a sex-advice column for her website, Jack reluctantly starts to get into it. But then the letters arrive. Initially, they're just creepy-ish fan notes, but soon they get threatening, demanding he change his lifestyle and tone down his persona. With the school unwilling to help (the principal suggests Jack was asking for something like this), it's up to Jack and his friends to find the blackmailer or give in. This is a bold, inclusive exploration of teen sexuality that, propelled by Jack's brazen voice, never feels preachy. Jack doles out sex tips to teens of all orientations, but he also advises those who aren't sure about sex at all and checks a group of girls more interested in gay men as props than as people. Most sex happens off-page, although language and the prep-school party scene make this best suited for older readers. The mystery adds truly compelling drama, and if things wrap up too neatly, it hardly matters next to all that Rosen gets right. Fresh, sex-positive, and unabashedly entertaining.--Maggie Reagan Copyright 2018 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Guide May 19, 2019</p> <p>Jack, an out-and-proud queer seventeen-year-old, receives anonymous love notes from an obsessive admirer, who then blackmails Jack after he starts writing an online teen-sex-advice column. This sex-positive, unapologetic celebration of the gay community strikes a good balance between an intriguing mystery and inspiring, no-holds-barred social commentary about sex education, homophobia, consent, and integrity. (c) Copyright 2019. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

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Readers Notes:

Throughout the entirety of the book, sexual acts were spoken about in a matter of fact manner, never in a way to cause arousal by the reader. The excerpts cited on Pages 1 and 2 were in reference to rumors spread throughout a high school, not in relation to events described in the book. The cited quotes play into the overall theme the dangers of rumors about others' sexuality. On page 25, sexual acts were described in detail. However, these acts were in relation to a discussion of consent, safe sex and regret. A range of sexual experiences and options, including asexuality, were addressed throughout the book with the underlying theme of empowering individuals to make choices for themselves.

Students in the private school depicted in this novel have lots of ideas about the sex life of the main character, Jack and feel free to speak and misspeak about it. Jack is talked into writing an advice column for an online newspaper to answer other high school student's questions about sex. Every time that sexual experiences were described through this newspaper column the reader heard factual information along with words about communicating with your partner, you always have the right to stop, consent is really important, and safe sex must be practiced. These themes are emphasized throughout the book. Relationships with his friends, his mom and his art teacher are important to Jack and are developed well in this book. The message that you still need to trust adults as you begin to navigate the adult world is evident in this story.

Sub-committee Discussion:

LC Rosen
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

This is about a gay high school student who is asked to write a sex advice column. He begins to be harrassed. It is his journey through this. His advice is accurate and it emphasizes to communicate, stop at any time, use protection. He gives the advice that it is okay if you are not ready to have sex. The parent of the student is aware.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about sex- starts with a 4-way orgy, sex with teachers, anal sex, erotica, minimizes the seriousness of deciding to have sex, pedophilia
- *Spoken too in a third party.*

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Jesus Land: A Memoir</i>
Author	Julie Sheeres
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about incest, obscene sexual activity, sexual nudity, vulgar language profanity, alcohol abuse, anti-Christian.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 35 – "... can't help but notice when the big-chested girl next to me unhooks her bra and her boobs fall down like half-filled water balloons. My own boobs are still little-girl pointy..."</p> <p>Pages: 48, 75, 78, 93, 107, 108, 111, 112, 117, 122, 123, 129, 131, 144, 146, 147, 223, 238, 242, 253, 256, 272, 276, 318, 319</p> <p>Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Reviews Booklist September 1, 2005</p> <p>In the name of religion, Scheeres and her adopted black brother, David, suffer cruel abuse, first in their Calvinist home in Indiana in the 1970s and then when their surgeon father and missionary-minded mother send the teens to a fundamentalist Dominican Republic reform school that is run like boot camp. The self-righteous sermonizing would be hilarious if it were not the justification for vicious punishment. The racism is open, from the other kids and from authority. Scheeres tries to find comfort in drink and in sex with a classmate (His heat and his desire they comfort me. I shall not want). What is unforgettable is the tenderness between sister and brother, as uplifting as any sermon. Their relationship is never sentimentalized: She is ashamed of the times she turns her back on him, tired of being called nigger-lover . . . the black boy's sister, but they help each other through the worst with horseplay, humor, and courage. The writing is Dickensian in its blend of the tender, the brutal, and the absurd. --Hazel Rochman Copyright 2005 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>The road out of an intolerant small town leads straight to a faith-based reform school in journalist Scheeres's scarifying memoir. When she was 16, her fundamentalist Christian parents moved the author and her two adopted, African-American brothers to a Midwest farming community that they immediately discovered was a little patch of racist attitudes. Seventeen-year-old Jerome stole the family car and made his escape, but not for long. After his return, he repeatedly raped Scheeres, noting that he wasn't really her brother. Jerome was himself abused by their parents: Mother had enthusiasm only for God's works, not for children; Dad was a sadist who once broke the arm of son David with a two-by-four. When David tried to commit suicide, Mother's response was, "Why can't I just have one day of peace?" Pretty soon Scheeres was finding that a splash of Southern Comfort in the morning went a long way toward making bearable a day that began with the house-wide intercom system blaring Christian radio and typically ended with some motherly snideness (on a good day) or a fatherly beating (on a bad day). The only bright spot was the affection between the author and David, her best friend and angel. It helped the two endure after they were shipped off to reform school in the Dominican Republic. Run by members</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

of their parents' faith, Escuela Caribe was a place of petty cruelty, but at least the tribulations of being a new kid in a close-knit school was better than the torments of life at home. Forget redemption: Think survival, and marvel at how Scheeres kept sadness and fear at bay while battling hormones and small-mindedness so small it's hard for the reader to detect anything in her mother or father that might be considered a mind at all. A bristly summoning of unpretty events, conveyed with remarkable placidity. Copyright ©Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

Summary: Jesus Land is a memoir written by Julia Scheeres published in 2005. This book is set in the 1970s and is purposely written in the perspective of a 17 year old girl growing up in a strict Christian Household. The first half of the book relates her childhood as the daughter of Calvinist missionaries in Indiana, and as the sister of two adopted African-American boys, named David and Jerome. The second half of the book is a depiction of Julia and David's experience when sent away to a Christian Reform School in the Dominican Republic.

- The Concern of Incest - Throughout the book, the author describes how she was sexually assaulted by one of her adopted brothers. Even though they are not related by blood, they are still siblings. The author describes and implies that this is happening but doesn't include graphic details.
- The Concern of Obscene Sexual Activity - On page 24 the author wrote, "When I slipped out to our designated meeting place, Alex held beer cans to my thirteen-year old face until I passed out. When I came to, he was lying on top of me, his tongue rammed down my throat. I pushed him off and ran". Although the author briefly describes sexual actions taking place in this part of the book, she does not include an unnecessary amount of detail. Nor does she portray this moment in a positive light.
 - As the book continues on the author describes other sexual relationships throughout her teenage years but doesn't reveal explicit details. Most of her writing is matter of fact.
- The Concern of Nudity - On page 35 the main character is trying out for the girl's swim team at her school. The author describes the girls changing into their swimsuits, and the main character makes an observation about the girl changing next to her. Although these details about the girl's body may be unwanted, they are simply comments about a female human body. When deciding if this book should be unshelved from FCPS libraries, I think we should consider the fact that all High School students have taken school required health classes before and are aware of people's body parts. Also the author does not include any more in depth descriptions about this particular girl.
 - Whenever nudity is present in the book, the author uses medical terms to describe body parts.
- The Concern of Vulgar Language and Profanity - The level of vulgar language and profanity in this book is high. Racial and homophobic slurs are used throughout the book by different characters.
- The Concern of Alcohol Abuse - Alcohol Abuse is a recurring problem throughout the book. Although the main character and her brothers do end up relying on alcohol as a temporary solution, each time the author finds a way to show how this is a problem.
- The Concern of Anti-Christian - This book is not anti-christian in fact it is the opposite. The author describes how much her family values their religion and were raised in a strict christian household. Also Julia and her brother were sent to a Christian reform school to "turn their lives around".

The book Jesus Land is a memoir from Julia Scheeres about her experiences growing up in a small rural town in Indiana. Julia has two adopted African American brothers, David and Jerome. Julia's parents are fundamentalist

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Christians who are portrayed as cold and harsh parents, beating and emotionally abusing their children. Julia is the victim of incest from her oldest brother Jerome, and deals with her trauma by drinking Southern Comfort before going to high school each day. She finds a boyfriend who pressures her into having sex earlier than she wants to. One day at high school she is sexually assaulted, set up by her oldest brother Jerome who tells the boys she is “easy”. Julia runs away from home, eventually getting arrested and is sent to the Escuela Caribe in Dominican Republic where her brother David is, having been sent there by their parents after his suicide attempt. The second half of the book details her experiences at the reform school. The book is primarily about her emotional survival from these traumas and how her special love and connection with her younger David gives her the strength to survive.

Complainants’ concerns:

There are pages that contain nudity, foul language and alcohol consumption as the author tries to cope with the trauma in her life.

There are descriptions of incest beginning at age 11: “I noticed his penis spilling out like a rotten banana”,

Included are descriptions of pornography in magazines “ she was naked, gagged and tied to a chair. Straps were wound tightly around the base of her breasts, making them stand out like fleshy missiles. Her eyes were wide with pain or fear.”

There is a description of an attempted gang rape “ He jerks on the bottom of my sweatpants and I kick my legs.....Scott unclamps my mouth and snakes a hand down my top, groping my breasts.”

There is a very graphic description of fellatio “ I open my eyes, in a boozy blur, and see his penis jutting from his shorts. Lick it.....He puts it between my lips and grabs my hair and pulls my head up and down on it. ...A moment later he groans and something slimy spurts into my mouth.”

There is a very graphic description of her first sexual encounter. “ He pushes my thighs apart with his knees and spits into his hand and wipes it between his legs before lowering himself onto me and prodding my inner thigh with his dick.”

Additionally, there is another very graphic description of a sexual encounter.” Scott kneels between my legs, then lowers himself into me. His hot tongue swishes into my mouth and I grab his butt and pull him deeper.”

There are discussions of orgasm. “A swelling pleasure that builds as he seesaws on top of me and ends all too quickly when he suddenly stops and says fuck...”.

There is a description of masturbation as well. “Enough of a something to make me want to practice alone, rubbing the swelling place with a nail polish bottle and pretending it’s Scott.”

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

No, I would argue. It is a very sad story of a young woman who has experienced a lot of trauma. It does not teach or clarify any body of knowledge and does not significantly add to the body of literature in society. It does not state or prove any political or scientific point. It is a memoir, and serves much as a biography does, to tell the story about someone’s life. It does not provide examples of healthy coping mechanisms nor was it intended to.

Based on community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

I do not believe that this is the purpose of the author. The sexual descriptions provided I believe were included to describe in detail the level of trauma she experienced and to make the point

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that she has survived these terrible experiences due to her own strength and the support of her brother David. It is a “love story” as the author herself puts it and explores the transcendence of sibling bonds.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

I would argue yes. Not only is it extremely graphic, but violent and trauma inducing. All of the examples cited above portray sexual encounters in a negative light, harmful and abusive.

Is the book age appropriate?

No, it should not be read by those under 18. This book is written from a teen’s point of view. The author’s own words in the interview at the back of the book show an adult’s processing of her childhood and a sense of perspective that the book doesn’t portray as a 17 year old. She does give a few words of advice on the last page of the interview, but I believe by then most of the images, emotions and words will have formed an impression that I don’t believe 14-18 year olds are able to process. The level of trauma and how it is depicted without perspective will not provide an example to teens during this turbulent time in their development. If a parent chooses to read this book with his or her child, I believe lots of explanation would be needed to help teens make sense of the author’s actions, feelings and thoughts.

“Although the brain stops growing in size by early adolescence, the teen years are all about fine-tuning how the brain works. The brain finishes developing and maturing in the mid-to-late 20s. The part of the brain behind the forehead, called the prefrontal cortex, is one of the last parts to mature. This area is responsible for skills like planning, prioritizing, and making good decisions.”

Additionally, the book portrays Christianity as abusive, hypocritical and dangerous. Again, without explanation and commentary from an adult to process the apparent similarities in the book between a Christian and a child abuser, the message sent to teens might be in opposition to parents’ belief systems.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Julie Sheeres
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- This is a memoir about a 17 year old teen girl who grew up in the 1970s in a strict Christian household. She had two adopted African American brothers and the story shares the boy's experience as well. She was sexually molested regularly by one of the brothers. She wrote this memoir from a teens view. She was close to her other adopted brother who died in a car accident at age 20. This was a tribute to him.
- Does not have an excessive amount of graphic details and didn’t find it anti-Christian.
- A group member asked the student if they were offended by this book and would they read it out loud to their parents? Student: No, nothing shocking or traumatizing and yes, would read it to their parents.
- Found that the book did have graphic description, gang rape, porn, masturbation. Examples from the book were given. Parts are violent and examples show sex in a negative light. Wish the book discussed how she processed through the abuse as she grew into an adult.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about incest, obscene sexual activity, sexual nudity, vulgar language profanity, alcohol abuse, anti-Christian.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

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- Yes.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No, it was a memoir telling her story.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- The group continues to come to a consensus on what the community standard is.

Is the book age appropriate?

- All but one felt it was appropriate for high school.

Sub-Committee Recommendation:

Reader one felt it should stay in high schools. Reader two felt it should be removed.

Vote Taken:

- 1 - Reconsideration
- 2 - Age Restriction
- 10 - Keep in high schools with no restrictions
- *New readers assigned.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Julie Sheeres
High School

Provide a brief summary of the book: Additional readers were assigned.

- Written by an adult who tells her story through her 17 year old self.
- Raised in a strict Christian household with two black adopted brothers that the father abuses throughout their life.
- One brother rapes the daughter. When the boys are gone from the home, she is abused by her father.
- She is sent off to a reform camp where she is abused and raped by the camp director.
- The one brother she is close with is killed in a car accident as he travels to visit her at camp.
- Rape is not graphic, it is applied.
- Racism within the family and the community.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about incest, obscene sexual activity, sexual nudity, vulgar language profanity, alcohol abuse, anti-Christian.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, literary merit. Written well and tells her story.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Depicts rape, which is offensive, but the book is not patently offensive.

Is the book age appropriate?

- The readers agreed it is acceptable for high school.

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Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. No restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Kingdom of Ash</i>
Author	Sarah J. Maas
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about violence, profanity, explicit sex, sexual nudity, erotica, torture.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 472 – "... Rowan swept her into his arms, never tearing his mouth from hers as he carried her to the bed and set her down gently." "... worshipping her breasts as she arched up into each lick and suckle. Even when he knelt between her legs, his shoulders spreading her thighs wide, and tasted her, over and over, until she was writhing beneath him."</p> <p>Pages: 586, 717, 719, 744, 760, 762, 968, 1095, 1102</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: "Throne of Glass" series by Sarah J. Maas</p> <p>MASS, Sarah J. Throne of Glass. 404p. Bloomsbury. 2012. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-1-59990-695-9; ebook \$17.99. ISBN 978-1-59990-939-4. LC 2012011229.</p> <p>Gr 9 Up—Celaena Sardothien may be young in years, but she has seen more than most men twice her age. She was raised to be an assassin and until her capture and imprisonment in the salt mines of Endovier, she was known as the Assassin of Adarlan and feared the world over. No one lasts long in the mines, and when she is offered the possibility of release in exchange for a mandatory, four-year conscription as a hired assassin to the king who conquered and enslaved her people, she has no choice but to comply and play a brutal game to win back the chance at freedom. In order to succeed she needs to outfight, outplay, and outlast 23 men in a competition that many would not survive. There are other forces at work as well: an ancient and outlawed magic that she doesn't understand; fellow competitors turning up murdered; and the three very different men who are attracted to her and frightened by her. Maas has created a strong and sympathetic character in Celaena, who is able to best men in a fight but is laid low by the return of her monthly cycle. The world-building is complex, as is the political intrigue. Fans of Tamora Pierce will find a lot to love here and will wait eagerly for the next installment.</p>	
<p>Readers Notes:</p> <p>Provide a brief summary of book This is the final novel of the <u>Throne of Glass</u> series. This novel tells the story of Aelin's capture, torture, and fight to save her people and kingdom from her arch enemies, Maeve and Erawan. Aelin is locked in an iron coffin by Maeve and endures many months of torture as her partner Rowan desperately searches for her and allies Aedion and Lysandra gather forces to defend and protect the Terrasen kingdom. There are fantastic magical powers, epic treks, momentous battles, shifting alliances, and grand rescues. In the end Aelin and her allies successfully defeat Maeve and Erawan and bring peace to the kingdom.</p> <p>Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets</p>	

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Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

This book has artistic value in form as fantasy and romance novel and narrative value completing the character development and culminating events of the entire Throne of Glass series.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

This novel is 984 pages long with the majority of the text devoted to the building alliances, efforts to find Aelin, and the battles to save Therassen from Maeve and Erawan. There are scenes that include sexual innuendo, describe sexual acts, and physical cruelty and torture. If I had to estimate the total page count of these scenes, I would estimate it at 25 of the 984 pages. This question raises the “community standard” and community value of the Fantasy and Romance novel forms. Romance novels are intended to arouse (erotica). So, taken as a whole, I believe that an average person, applying community standards, would not assess the novel as prurient. However, there is content and multiple sexual encounters that are sensual and intended to arouse (erotica). There is also the use of profanity, but it is not excessive.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

Applying community standards, the depictions of sexual conduct are not patently offensive. Multiple scenes are graphic, sensual and seductive.

Several of the torture scenes do feel sadistic, specifically Cairns actions and descriptions of torture sessions as entertaining, eagerness for more, and caresses followed by violence. Example from page 36 - 37: “The male before her, a trained warrior in everything but honor and spirit, surveyed her body. ‘How shall we play tonight, Aelin?’ . . . Fast as an asp, Cairn gripped her throat hard enough to bruise. . .Cairn’s fingers dug into her throat, and she couldn’t stop the choking noise that gasped from her. ‘This can all be over with a few little words, Princess,’ he purred, dropping low enough that his breath brushed her mouth.’

Is the book age appropriate?

No, this book is not appropriate for high schoolers.

Sub-committee Discussion: June 1, 2023

Sarah Maas
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

Fantasy novel, most characters have magical powers, epic treks across great lands, lots of battles, shifting alliances and grand rescues. There is an incarceration of the main character.

Discussion of prurient interest - an appeal to shameful or morbid; erotic, lascivious, morbid interest.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, profanity, explicit sex, sexual nudity, erotica, torture.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Artistic value in terms of form, it is a fantasy/romance novel, does complete the series within the greater narrative of the series.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- The book is 984 pages, the majority of the book is devoted to the search for alynn and rowan’s search to find her. There are scenes that include sexual innuendo, conduct, engagement, explicit

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description, physical cruelty and torture.

- Estimated that approx 1/5th of the book contains this content.
- There is text and content intended to arouse (erotica). A lot of the torture is very sadistic. Very graphic sex, not found offensive, but some of the torture is concerning.
- Based on further discussion about “prurient interest” - degree of explicitness and extent of the violence assessed as not healthy or normal. Sometimes seemed unnecessary to the story.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- The torture is offensive. Sex scenes are separate but there is sexual innuendo with the torture scenes. The scenes start as “foreplay like.” The explicit sex scenes are always consensual. It is the torture that is the issue.
- Question asked about educational/literary value to the torture scenes.

Is the book age appropriate?

- No not age appropriate, second reader was unsure about the age appropriateness, it is graphic and difficult to say.

Sub-Committee Recommendation:

- 6 no
- 4 yes
- 2 not sure
- 2 abstentions
- A committee member shared an excerpt from the author about her perspectives of the book.
- Committee later discussed a content warning for 18 and up, but no consensus
- Full subcommittee of readers were recommended to gather more perspectives

Sub-committee Discussion: July 20, 2023

Sara Maas
High School

Committee members feedback:

Loved this book, voted to remove it from the original discussion (had not read it yet), but then changed their mind after reading the book. Did not go into the explicit detail that they thought it would. Some torture was psychological. Did not find sexual torture.

A lot to keep track of all the characters. Relationships between the couples made sense to her. Thinks it should be kept in.

Agrees with everything everyone has said - gave definition of erotica. Thinks it should stay.

Tagged all the areas that she thought it could be explicit and did not feel that it was explicit. No problem with this book.

The main character is 20 years old in this book. When the series started the main character was about 15. Did not see anything that was a concern.

Read into about page 380 and did not see anything related to the concerns of the book.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Saw nothing that should warrant it to be removed. Appreciated the themes of friendship, loyalty, a strong female character. Did not find the sex scenes erotic, but more tender.

Loving relationships.

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

- 9 Yes

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Lawn Boy</i>
Author	Jonathan Evison
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about pedophilia, molestation, profanity, vulgar language, racially charged commentary, available in elementary school ages 5 - 11</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 22 – “I guess I don’t see the point of dating somebody just because. Sex doesn’t seem like enough.” “... He said I should “hit that shit,” even if her face was “butter.” <i>(NOTE: these quotes occur on p. 15 and not on p. 22, as stated by complainant)</i></p> <p>Pages: 25, 29, 30, 32, 36, 39, 54, 62, 66, 68, 71, 75, 94, 95, 106, 114, 119, 121, 122, 124, 132, 135, 141, 142, 170, 171, 181, 183, 188, 189, 204, 223, 224, 252, 259, 262, 263, 272, 278, 287</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist March 16, 2018</p> <p>*Starred Review* Meet Mike Muñoz, a 22-year-old landscaper who spends his days mowing lawns and edging flower beds, his evenings taking care of his disabled brother, and his nights dreaming about elaborate topiary and writing the great American novel. When Mike is fired for refusing to pick up rain-sodden St. Bernard feces, he embarks on a path of self-discovery that introduces an eccentric cast of characters, including a shrewd entrepreneur with questionable business practices, an ambitious but unscrupulous realtor, an eccentric housemate who provides bass guitar accompaniment while watching classic porn, a group of hipster bearded baristas who favor artisanal sandwiches, and Andrew, a philosophical librarian with an activist streak. Evison (<i>This Is Your Life, Harriet Chance!</i> 2015) excels at finding the humanity in his characters, and even the most loathsome are given redeeming qualities. This tender bildungsroman follows Mike from one setback to another, each interaction involving slyly observant and brilliantly witty dialogue that also poignantly conveys vulnerability. Evison skillfully weaves the American Dream into a subtle social novel to illustrate how race and class can thwart aspiration. In his bighearted portrayal of Mike Muñoz, Evison has created an indelible human spirit content to live authentically, which just might prove to be the true American dream. For readers of Sam Lipsyte and Jonathan Tropper.--Kelly, Bill Copyright 2018 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews April 3, 2018</p> <p>An aimless young man decides to get his life together, but life has other plans. Mike Muñoz doesn't quite know what he wants out of life, but he knows he deserves better than what he's got now: a terrible job cutting lawns, a truck that barely runs, and a tiny house packed with a disabled brother, an exhausted mother, and his mother's broke boyfriend who likes to watch porn in the living room while jamming on his bass guitar. Soon enough, however, he doesn't even have the job or the truck, and, in an ill-fated attempt to guilt-trip his mom into kicking out her boyfriend, Mike takes up residence in a shed in the backyard. Despite the steady stream of bad luck and</p>	

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worse decisions, Evison (This Is Your Life Harriet Chance, 2015, etc.) brings genuine humor to Mike's trials and tribulations. The writing is razor-sharp, and Evison has an unerring eye for the small details that snap a scene or a character into focus. The first-person narration turns Mike into a living, breathing person, and the reader can't help but get pulled into his worldview. "After all, most of us are mowing someone else's lawn, one way or another, and most of us can't afford to travel the world or live in New York City. Most of us feel like the world is giving us a big fat middle finger when it's not kicking us in the face with a steel-toed boot. And most of us feel powerless. Motivated but powerless." The novel has a light tone and is laugh-out-loud funny at times, but at a certain point, Mike's trials and tribulations move from comically frustrating to just frustrating. With so much going wrong for him, the reader can expect that the universe will smile on Mike eventually, but there's only so many sick family members, unpaid bills, bad jobs, awkward situations, and thwarted plans a character can suffer through. We root for Mike while also wishing we didn't have to root so hard. A book about triumphing over obstacles, and obstacles, and obstacles, and more obstacles.

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Regarding complainants' overall concerns:

Available in elementary schools - Jonathan Evison's *Lawn Boy* is not available in FCPS elementary schools, nor is it available in FCPS middle schools. As of this writing, it is available in one FCPS high school. However, there are more than a dozen copies of Gary Paulsen's *Lawn Boy* available on the elementary level, along with several digital copies of Paulsen's *Lawn Boy Returns*.

Pedophilia - According to the [Merck Manual](#), "Whether sexual interest or involvement between two people is considered pedophilic disorder depends on the age of the people involved. In Western societies, a diagnosis of a pedophilic disorder requires that the person be 16 years old or older and at least 5 years older than the child who is the object of the sexual fantasies or activity." In *Lawn Boy*, there are no instances in which this scenario exists; rather, there is a scene (p. 91) that involves a man (protagonist, Mike Munoz) recalling a sexual encounter he had with another fourth-grader when he was in fourth grade.

Molestation - According to *Google Dictionary*, molestation is 1. sexual assault or abuse of a person, especially a child. 2. the action of pestering or harassing someone in an aggressive or persistent manner. In *Lawn Boy*, there are no instances of sexual assault or sexual abuse of a person or child. However, there are instances of children being pestered or harassed in an aggressive manner by their abusive fathers (pp.1-4, when Mike is 5-years old, his dad says he's taking him to Disneyland and drives him to a naval boatyard instead; p. 95 - Nick's dad roughed him up regularly).

Profanity - Yes, there is a lot of profanity throughout the book, but it makes sense within the context of the story and it's appropriate in the dialog of the characters presented. Why? Because it is authentic, raw, and gritty; life is messy and humans say and do things that are inappropriate and ugly at times. Most young adult readers tend to gravitate towards authenticity when they see it on the page and in real life. Young adult author Lila Riesen succinctly explains this in a recent [School Library Journal](#) article: "If your book paints some teenage utopia where everyone gets along and the characters face zero adversity, young adults who read it will likely chuck the book across the room, and not in a good way. In a DNF sort of way. In a world where their favorite books are being banned, their rights are being stripped, their school hallways ring with gunfire—and for some—simply living their truths and existing is seen as an abomination, they don't live in utopia. Far from it."

Racially charged commentary - This is a story, among other themes, about race and class differences: the protagonist, Mike Munoz, is a "10th-generation peasant with a Mexican last name, raised by a single mom on an Indian reservation." So, yes, in the name of authenticity there is going to be racially charged commentary (p. 171 - "...at least angry white men weren't calling for my deportation."; p. 229 - "I'll hire a Mexican with a leaf blower for ten bucks an hour.")

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Vulgar language - How is this different from “profanity”? According to *Google Dictionary*, the definition of vulgar is “lacking sophistication or good taste; unrefined; making explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions; coarse and rude.” Yes, there is an abundance of this in the text, however, once again, it’s authentic language for the characters involved; sometimes it’s meant to be humorous (p. 122 - Mike taunting lifelong friend, Nick, about his homophobia), to show anger (p. 36 - Mike swearing when picking up dog feces in the rain with a paper bag), or to illustrate the different voices in Mike’s life and how he uses or discards them to weigh and make decisions going forward (p. 141 - Mike deciding whether to kiss Remy for the first time). Most importantly, the vulgar language and profanity serves to illustrate the stark contrast between the protagonist’s (Mike) reality and his overall gentle and more contemplative nature within.

Readers’ Notes (Part I):

There were beautiful life lessons in this book about seeing the strengths and weaknesses in people, self-awareness, self-respect and courage. The main character struggles to earn money while he evaluates his relationships with family, friends, potential romantic partners and the working world. Is there foul language, along with plot points that delve into racism, classism, and misogyny – yes, just like in the real world. All of it seems purposeful to the story. There is no pedophilia or molestation, but there is sexual exploration discussed between minors. There is also sex between adults, but to quote the author “I’m not writing about erotica here (p 283).”

While there were many quotes from the book I would like to share, I will settle on this one:

“[[I]t seemed like the more lists we made, the bigger my life felt by extension and the more possibilities that seemed to be out there for old Mike Munoz, if he was only willing to think beyond the confines of his experience, if he could only summon the courage and the wherewithal to break the patterns that defined him, raze the walls that imprisoned him. If only he could believe in himself. And I was beginning to (p 284).”

I see no reason to remove this book from a high school library. If the language or the sexual self-discovery or the themes are too much, the reader can simply put the book down.

This form cites the book level as High School, while the complainant claims this book is available in elementary school. I suspect this is a case of mistaken identity, as there is a book called *Lawn Boy* by a different author that is appropriate for elementary school readers.

Readers’ Notes (part II):

Upon finishing this book, I had tears in my eyes and tingling sensations all over, because it moved me in a very positive way. I immediately thought how well this book would connect with so many of our high school students who have experienced similar struggles in society, within their families, and—most importantly—within themselves. In its most simplistic form, this book is about a boy who grows into himself, a coming of age story. Mike Munoz has real struggles about timely issues: he’s fatherless, his single mother barely makes enough money to support him and his mentally disabled brother, he’s of Mexican descent and lives on an Indian reservation next to a mostly white upper middle class community, and he wants to find a romantic partner and a career that means something to him. The cast of characters in this book provide a colorful portrait of Mike’s world and, despite all of their faults and missteps, Mike chooses to see the (mostly) good in all of them. While the dialog can be crude, harsh, and full of anger at times, this novel is also full of humor, honesty, and insightful reflections on class, relationships, work, and being true to oneself. In the end, it’s Mike’s mom, who knows best: “If we’re lucky, Michael, we grow into ourselves. . . that makes you lucky” (p. 284). VERDICT: I’d say we’re lucky to have a book so well written for the ages and we should keep it on the high school library shelves for students to enjoy.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-committee Discussion:

Jonathan Evison
High School

Update: April 20, 2023 Discussion

Provide a brief summary of book

- Coming of age story of a 20-year-old male living on an Indian reservation with his mom in NW part of Washington; dad not in the picture; poor and trying to make a living. A moving story that can connect with high school students with similar backgrounds.
- Well-written; amazing writer, deep

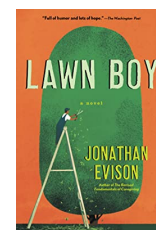
Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about pedophilia, molestation, profanity, vulgar language, racially charged commentary, available in elementary school ages 5 - 11

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- No pedophilia
- No molestation - sexuality/sodomy - 2 4th-grade boys; interlude between 2 grown men and a boy + girl in high school
- Not erotica
- Yes - profanity (makes sense in context of the book); crude/harsh language

Note: This book is not available in elementary schools; there is another book with the same book title



Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes - Artistic value
- Yes - Literacy value

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- 3 scenes - 2 4th-grade boys; interlude with 2 grown men and a boy + girl in high school

Is the book age appropriate?

- High School only

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Group did not have enough time to discuss this book on March 23, 2023.

Recommendation on April 20, 2023: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Let's Talk About It</i>
Author	Erika Moen
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about graphic illustrations on sex and masturbation, sexual activity, gender ideology, sex instruction manual, masturbation</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 5 – “They’re always telling us to just avoid sex. But maybe we should be getting help for the sex we might already be having.”</p> <p>Pages: 16, 18, 22, 23, 334, 35, 36, 37, 38, 46, 47, 48, 50, 64, 65, 66, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 89, 90, 91, 101, 107, 11, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 128, 132, 134, 137, 139, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 147, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 164, 165, 166, 168, 171, 172, 174</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist December 4, 2020</p> <p>While its title may sound coy, <i>Let's Talk about It</i> isn't euphemistic; instead, it's a frank and open-minded look at sex, relationships, and self-understanding. Chapters cover topics ranging from puberty and masturbation to gender identity and pronoun usage, all narrated by a varied cast of teenage characters. It may seem odd to imagine two kids having a nuanced discussion about consent during a game of seven minutes in heaven, but it's that sense of fun that keeps this book from feeling too preachy or academic. The expressive art will come as no surprise to fans of Moen and Nolan's previous work on <i>Drawn to Sex</i> (v.1, 2018) or <i>Oh Joy, Sex Toy</i> (v.1, 2014). Figures are alive and active, even in conversation, shown stretching, hugging, and making faces. With back matter including helpful resources, this book is recommended for teens who want an easy-to-follow guide that won't talk down to them, health educators wanting an engaging addition to their curriculum, and all those not afraid of seeing cartoon nudity while learning to love and express themselves.</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews March 9, 2021</p> <p>An illustrated sexuality and relationship education resource for teens. A multiethnic set of realistic teen cartoon characters representing a wide diversity of body types (sizes, abilities, genders) have illuminating and honest conversations in this informative guide. The first chapter focuses on what sex is, how varied sexual expression can be, and what consent means. The second chapter nonjudgmentally explores various kinds of relationships, including monogamous, polyamorous, open, and companionate. Subsequent chapters discuss gender and sexuality (with joyful and varied illustrations), body image (featuring loving representations of many body types), anatomy (including outstanding drawings that are inclusive of trans and intersex people), masturbation (with how-to ideas presented), and thorough coverage of birth control and STI prevention. The book is rounded out with chapters on what to think about before having sex; orgasms; ground rules for sexting; kinks, fantasies, and porn; jealousy and rejection (including guidance on recognizing abusive patterns); potential impacts on</p>	

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friendship; and more. The tone throughout this colorful, visually appealing, and easy-to-read volume is honest, normalizing, and sex positive as it offers readers excellent and reassuring information. The married co-authors are known for their sex-education-related comic collaborations. While the dialogue can occasionally feel stilted as it conveys comprehensive content, the work is still crisp, breezy, effective, and noteworthy in a crowded field for its holistic emphasis on human, emotional aspects of sexuality. Puts the graphic in the graphic-novel format, in the best and most educational way. (further reading, authors' note, index) (Nonfiction. 13-18) Copyright © Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

According to NIH is between ages 8 and 13 for girls and ages 9 and 14 for boys. During this time, a person becomes sexually mature, since the audience in the library is 14-21, it's reasonable that they would have questions and being addressed by the book.

By the Miller Test

- Whether "the average person, applying contemporary [community standards](#)", would find that the [work](#), taken as a whole, appeals to the [prurient](#) interest,
 - No, the book is educational, and while the book shows the body parts it is not done in a sexual way. The book does discuss pleasure but it is not an obscene way. In speaking to community standards, community is [diverse community](#) where [less than ½ the population](#) identifies with a faith.
- Whether the work depicts or describes, in a [patently offensive](#) way, sexual conduct or excretory functions^[4] specifically defined by applicable state law,
 - The book describes sexual conduct but not in an offensive way.
- Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.^[note 1]
 - No the book is educational. Also if the purpose of the library is to provide a wide or range of thought, this book is necessary since it provides an education beyond cis/heterosexual topics. (A little over 10% of the population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning in the county.)

Sub-committee Discussion: March 23, 2023

Erika Moen

Provide a brief summary of book

- Graphic novel which the readers described as "teaching sex education through a conversation between teenagers." The book covered topics such as sexuality, abstinence, safe sex, body image, open communication in relationships, pleasure, STDs, masturbation, gender identity including LGBTQ issues and proper pronouns.
- The readers felt it was well written and had literary value. It did not create arousal nor does it give instructions on any topic but is educational. It also shares resources and has a chart for those who could identify if they have been abused or are an abuser.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about graphic illustrations on sex and masturbation, sexual activity, gender ideology, sex instruction manual, masturbation

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

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Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?
 Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?
 Is the book age appropriate?

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Readers recommend this book for both middle and high school students. Group was not ready to vote due to lack of time for further discussion. Additional discussion will take place on April 20, 2023.

Sub-committee Discussion: April 20, 2023:

Erika Moen

Provide a brief summary of book

- The readers provided another brief description. The book answers questions that teens have in a more conversational format. It is “casual in tone” and “approachable.” Each chapter is a short story. The one chapter about masturbation is explicit but “not out of line due to discovery.” There are no graphic illustrations.
- Some members of the group asked why we just don’t stick to the health curriculum. Others felt this book was more in line with how teenagers would relate.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about graphic illustrations on sex and masturbation, sexual activity, gender ideology, sex instruction manual, masturbation

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, a blend of literacy and science.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- The group tried to come to a consensus on “patently offensive.” They agreed that it may be parts that “shock me” but the majority is not patently offensive.

Is the book age appropriate?

- Two members were unsure.

Sub-Committee Recommendation: The readers both agreed it should be kept with no restrictions; high schools only.

Vote Taken:

1 - Removal

1 - Parent permission

12 to keep in high school.

Subcommittee decided to assign two more readers .

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-committee Discussion: June 1, 2023:

Erika Moen
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

A graphic novel that answers questions about sexuality, body and relationships. A teens guide. Important things were covered in the book. Some things that may make it inappropriate was that it addressed porn. More of what is legal and what is not in porn. Also states that if viewed too often, to stop. Drawings were graphic. Specific information about where to put your hands. Communicates the idea of what do you want in sexuality, something that seems more of an adult rather than teen. Leaves nothing to the imagination. May be offensive to many parents. Feels that we have classes in health that are appropriate and address sexuality. If we are going to have an educational discussion there are other resources that may be better.

Graphic reference book - felt it was not appropriate for middle school. Written by a husband and wife team with a lot of research, but one point of view. Would be a good resource if you are asking students to do research. Abstinence is discussed.

Graphic representation is uncomfortable.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about graphic illustrations on sex and masturbation, sexual activity, gender ideology, sex instruction manual, masturbation

Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern:

Page 5 – “They’re always telling us to just avoid sex. But maybe we should be getting help for the sex we might already be having.”

Pages: 16, 18, 22, 23, 334, 35, 36, 37, 38, 46, 47, 48, 50, 64, 65, 66, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 89, 90, 91, 101, 107, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 128, 132, 134, 137, 139, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 147, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 164, 165, 166, 168, 171, 172, 174

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Some yes, some no

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Yes

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation:

8 keep book in circulation, 5 to remove

Subcommittee recommended a full committee read and review the book

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-committee Discussion: July 20, 2023:

Erika Moen
High School

Committee members feedback:

Found it informative, did not find anything offensive, factual information good, a few illustrations were cringy but not in a violation of anything for the Miller test.

Author is a graphic novelist, pro-sex, pro-pornography. The fact that she adds in there how you can teach your partner how to bring you pleasure, does not think that this is appropriate for students of this age. Feels it should be removed from the library.

Appreciated that the author talked about consent throughout the book and that not all students look the same. Felt it is appropriate to stay.

Felt it is a great book, students are living in a sex saturated culture. In our culture, there is a lot of talk but not a lot of straightforward information. Appreciated the openness to varieties of all shapes, sizes. Shared with a gay man, who felt that this book could have saved him a lot of pain. We are protecting children by giving them information. Stresses consent.

Liked the communication piece and relationship pieces, the parts about how to communicate and give examples of how you would ask for certain things. Speaks to the fact that sexting is illegal. Wishes she had had this when she was young.

Liked the book. Felt it was filled with factual information. Feels this is good information for our young students becoming adults. Appreciated the light humor. Spoke to the laws of sexting in each state.

Liked how it emphasized that you can say no at any time. If you are on board one minute, but then decide you do not want to continue you can say no.

Felt that some of the content tries to put you in a box.

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, 1 No

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No, 1 Yes

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes, 1 No

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High Schools only. No restrictions.

Vote:

- 8 Yes
- 1 No

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Living Dead Girl</i>
Author	Elizabeth Scott
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about explicit violence and sex, child abuse, sexual assault, violence.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 4 – “You’ve pulled your skirt up to your waist, arms resting by your sides, palms up and open. Waiting. “Good,” he says and lies on top of you. Heavy and pushing, always pushing. Good girl, Alice.”</p> <p>Pages: 20, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 36, 46, 48, 60, 68, 73, 98, 102, 139, 151, 167 Pages: 20, 26, 27, 29, 33, 36-37, 46-47, 48-50, 58, 59, 60, 68, 70, 71, 73, 102, 103, 138-140, 149, 151-152, 167</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Horn Book Magazine</p> <p>(High School) This horror story goes far beyond the familiar YA subgenre of the sexual abuse novel. Alice used to have a real name -- Kyla -- and she used to live in a real home with loving parents. But when she was ten, a man named Ray offered her a ride home and took her instead to the forest, where he raped and beat her and subjugated her body and mind. She doesn't dare leave or ask for help, because Ray has told her that he will kill her parents if she does; and indeed, that is what appears to have happened to the parents of Ray's previous victim after she grew past Ray's desire and was found dead in the river. Now Alice is fifteen -- and Ray likes little girls. Like the pretty child Alice has chosen, at his bidding, to be her successor. Alice tells her story in a flat, curt voice that reflects her emptiness and despair, and the lurid details of Ray's sexual and physical abuse are suggested obliquely in a matter-of-fact style that is more horrifying than actual graphic description ("'You'll hold her,' he says, and everything I own is easily pushed down, away, clothes falling off me like water. 'You'll hold her and I'll love her.'"). A thoroughly unpleasant but magnetic read, Scott's novel is repellent in exact proportion to the brilliance of its execution. From HORN BOOK, (c) Copyright 2010. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>(c) Copyright The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>Scott, best known for such chick-lit pleasers as Bloom (2008), breaks the mold with this harrowing tale of abuse leavened only by lyric writing à la Adam Rapp (33 Snowfish, 2003, etc.). When Alice was ten, Ray kidnapped her; five years later, Alice wishes only to escape by dying, as the last Alice did. But her freedom comes at a price—a new girl for Ray. Bit by bit, Alice reveals the depths of psychological and physical terror that hold her captive. Her voice is convincingly naïve yet prematurely aged; vivid but never graphic, details of the sexual abuse perfectly capture the way in which she has normalized her situation while still recognizing the truth. Ray is a complex abuser, perhaps a bit too psychotic but terrifying nevertheless; he himself was abused, and the logic of how his own past has shaped his present and his treatment of Alice never falters. Choosing Ray's next victim does not provide a re-entry into empathy, a bold but believable choice. Scott</p>	

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provides neither easy answers nor a happy resolution, although the ending provides a grim sense of release. (Fiction. 16 & up) Copyright ©Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes: Young adults (teens) should be made aware of this sad and disturbing topic. Reading this book can lead to open discussion of the dangers, and the need to be alert and aware. Through a fictional narrative one can feel Alice's loneliness, pain, and inner turmoil.

Whereas this book cannot be deemed pervasively vulgar or obscene, the child abuse scenes are very graphic and could be disturbing to some readers of the book, especially younger students. Perhaps restricting this book to older teens aged 16 and up should be a consideration.

Highlight the concerns of complainants (1-2 minutes) - According to the complainants, Living Dead Girl contains explicit violence and sex, child abuse. Sex is not explicitly described but the reader knows when an act of sex is happening in the book. Child abuse and the physical as well as psychological results of this abuse are vividly described throughout the course of the book - p.20, 26, 27, 29, 33, 36-37, 46-47, 48-50, 58, 59, 60, 68, 70, 71, 73, 102, 103, 138-140, 149, 151-152, 167

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets using Key Questions (3-5 minutes)-

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

Living Dead Girl has artistic/literary value. It is well written, gut wrenching, and connects emotionally.

The book is gut wrenching and connects emotionally. The stream of conscious narrative creatively weaves a story that garners extreme sympathy for Alice while building strong repulsion for Ray. The author's use of "suggestive detail" to describe sex acts in the novel is compelling. I constantly wrestled with identifying the message the author was trying to get across to the reader, however.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse?

Both readers believe the book has no sexual prurience and is not intended to arouse. If anything, the depiction of sex is off putting or even repulsive at times.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

The sexual conduct is not patently offensive. Instead the reader feels Alice's victimization and her desire for Ray's abuse to end.

Sex between the adult male predator and his 15 year old captive is depicted as being sadistic. Explicit details of each violent sex act are absent, but enough information is given so the reader knows what is happening. Likewise, the reader is constantly reminded that this teenager has been held captive for 5 years meaning that these violent sex acts began when she was 10 years old. Coupled with sex between the narrator and Ray, Alice also performs oral sex on 2 boys and has intercourse with another in his car. Again, the author's use of "suggestive detail" allows the reader to know what is happening without explicit details.

Is the book age appropriate?

This book depicts child abuse that could be disturbing to younger teens. Perhaps it can be considered for younger high school students with parental permission only; and with restricted access for ages 16 and above.

I would suggest it for older high school students-juniors or seniors, ages 16 and older.

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Sub-committee Discussion:

Elizabeth Scott
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Alice kidnapped when she was 10 yrs old; Alice is now 15 yrs old and becoming a young woman; regularly raped; doesn't go to school
- Kidnapper wants Alice to help him find another young girl to replace her. Alice agrees to help him; her chance of running away or killing herself

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit violence and sex, child abuse, sexual assault, violence.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Sexual, physical and emotional abuse
- Subjective understanding of what's happening; not obscene or specific

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Literary - connect w/Alice; book is descriptive and real

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- Not explicit sex but explicit violence; book not meant to arouse.
- Therapeutic in Alice telling her story

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Not a book for classroom use



Sub-Committee Recommendation

- No final recommendation made yet.
- Trigger Warning
 - Extreme child abuse
 - Kidnapping and rape

Discussion

- Hidden message - educational awareness of people out there do terrible things; be careful
- Trusting the librarian who knows the books and students
- Placing trigger warnings on all books; size and depth of school collection? Warning is clear on the book cover
- Books are mirrors vs windows
- Book cover + reviews inform reader of the book's storyline

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Milk and Honey</i>
Author	Rupi Kaur
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about non-sexual illustrations of nudity, sexual assault, sexual activities.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 7 – “the first boy that kissed me held my shoulders down like the handlebars of the first bicycle he ever road, I was five he had the smell of starvation on his lips which he picked up from his father feasting on his mother at 4 a.m. He was the first boy to teach me my body was for giving to those that wanted that I should feel anything less than whole.”</p> <p>Pages 8, 13, 15, 19, 20, 29, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 45, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 58, 66, 67, 85, 92, 97, 99</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Entertainment * 21st August 2017</p> <p>Poetry review: ‘milk and honey’ by Rupi Kaur OxStu Arts</p> <p>‘milk and honey’, Kaur’s debut poetry collection, is one of few commercially popular works of poetry in recent years. This is not to say that no other significant or impressive collections of contemporary poetry have been published, but rather that no other has achieved such global popularity. Upon publication, ‘milk and honey’ sold over 1.5 million copies, defying expectations of modern poetry’s popularity. In an age favouring easily digested thriller novels and celebrity biographies far above verse, this collection of poetry is certainly the exception to the rule.</p> <p>Yet ‘milk and honey’ is looked down upon as unchallenging ‘Instapoetry’ by some critics, popular largely due to following modern poetry’s expected aesthetic. With its use of lower-case letters, abstract sketches, and free verse, I can understand the initial skepticism. However, this form of intellectual elitism disregards entirely the hugely widespread popularity of ‘milk and honey’. Kaur’s second work (‘the sun and her flowers’) is due to be published in October this year, and defiantly continues to be publicised on Instagram rather than more traditional channels of media. It remains unclear, however, whether Kaur’s work signals a genuine revival of reading poetry, or, as critics imply, is simply an anomaly prized only by Instagram users.</p> <p>Whether long-term or not, ‘milk and honey’ is undeniably popular. Perhaps this is due to Kaur undercutting the impersonality of a modernist aesthetic with accessible, simplistic language. Kaur does not subscribe to the belief that poetry must be difficult to be meaningful, championing a direct and inclusive register that unites her personal experiences with the reader. Combining a first person perspective with the repeated second person pronoun ‘you’, Kaur further bridges the gap between her poetry and her audience. She forges a link that causes the reader to imagine themselves not only as</p>	

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author, but as muse. Pointing beyond the page at 'you', Kaur rejects the division of the reader from the writer, assimilating her own experiences, memories, and subjects with her audience.

“This work rejects the stifling, mausoleum-like canon of literature, embracing a sense of flux and uncertainty.”

This is not a collection of works that attempts to be impersonal or 'above' the common reader. Even its form disregards conventional titles that show division or separation. Aside from its four chapters – 'the hurting', 'the loving', 'the breaking', 'the healing' – there are no other distinct divisions between works, just as there is no division between author and reader. Instead, the poems may be read as the reader chooses, be that individual works, linked installments, or long form poems. A fluidity that perhaps imitates the original form of Kaur's work – Instagram – permeates this collection and gestures towards the future of modern poetry's publication. In a modern era of movement and connection, this work rejects the stifling, mausoleum-like canon of literature, embracing a sense of flux and uncertainty.

Kaur's work, then, is one that rejects traditional structures and customs of poetry. Yet its content and subject has a timeless resonance. Perhaps this is surprising for a writer who has such a twenty-first-century background and perspective: a migrant to Canada from India, initially publishing her writing on Tumblr and Instagram, actively raising awareness of taboos on menstruation and sexual abuse. However, its themes of love, femininity, anger, hopelessness and survival prevent 'milk and honey' from being categorized into a single time period of writing. Instead, expressing herself through fluidity and simplicity, Kaur communicates what seems like battle cries, universal truths, and ancient charms. Her writing rings with core phrases that have a timeless sense: 'you were so afraid/of my voice/i decided to be/afraid of it too'. Yet it is evident throughout 'milk and honey' that Kaur has learnt to be unafraid of her own expression, of mixing her culture's classical traditions with her twenty-first-century upbringing.

'milk and honey', from a distance, is easy to criticise as simplistic, or trying too hard to attain modernist obscurity. Yet becoming closer to the text – digesting its meaning, comprehending its contours and patterns, understanding its nuances – reveals its far more significant purpose. Kaur adapts to the fluidity of the modern age whilst retaining a sense of heritage, culture, and power. This is not poetry to become half-remembered on a dusty shelf as a 'modern classic', but to be read out loud, written in texts to loved ones, and learnt by heart. In order to understand poetry's future engagement with a modern audience, Kaur's work must be read and appreciated.

Poet Rupi Kaur's Milk and Honey sells more than half a million copies

This article is more than 7 years old

Instapoet's originally self-published collection now into 16th printing after themes of violence, abuse and femininity gained her fans online

Alison Flood

Tue 13 Sep 2016 06.44 EDT

The "Instapoet" Rupi Kaur's originally self-published collection Milk and Honey has sold more than half a million copies in the US and is into its 16th printing, according to its publisher.

Known as an Instapoet for the traction she gains online with her poetry that deals with violence, abuse and femininity, the collection was first self-published almost two years ago, in November 2014. It went

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on to top charts in North America and was snapped up by Andrews McMeel Publishing, which released its own edition in October that year.

“We thought it would sell well, but the momentum of sales that took off in March this year was very exciting, especially when the book hit the New York Times bestseller list,” said publisher and president Kirsty Melville. “We have sold over half a million copies and are currently in our 16th printing.” Melville added that on average, a strong-selling poetry book would sell less than 30,000 copies a year.

Topping Amazon US’s poetry book charts ahead of works including Claudia Rankine’s award-winning *Citizen* and Seamus Heaney’s translation of *Beowulf*, Kaur says that *Milk and Honey* “takes readers through a journey of the most bitter moments in life and finds sweetness in them because there is sweetness everywhere if you are just willing to look”.

“this is the journey of surviving through poetry this is the blood sweat tears of twenty-one years this is my heart in your hands this is the hurting the loving the breaking the healing,” she writes in one.

Kaur, who is based in Toronto, hit the headlines in 2015 when a self-portrait she posted on Instagram was removed by the site for showing a small amount of menstrual blood. Her followers swelled as she refused to remain silent, writing that “I will not apologise for not feeding the ego and pride of misogynist society that will have my body in underwear but not be okay with a small leak.”

Described as one of the emerging Instapoets, alongside writers including Lang Leav – also published by Andrews McMeel – and Tyler Knott Gregson, Kaur told the *Guardian* in August that when she started to publish her poems online following her Instagram stand-off, it was “really scary”. “But they did. They stayed for the poetry and that was such a beautiful gift in disguise.”

Melville said the publisher had been looking to acquire North American writers who “spoke to a similar audience of young adult readers” following its success with New Zealand author Leav’s collections, *Love & Misadventure* and *Lullabies*, when it came across Kaur.

“The emotional intensity of Rupi’s message of self-empowerment and affirmation, combined with her passionate audience really resonated and we could see through sales of her self-published edition that her readers were really responding to her message,” she said. “Rupi’s honest, authentic voice speaks to young people who relate to her depiction of pain and struggle but ultimate sense of hope. Rupi is not afraid to challenge taboos, and this brave form of expression inspires her readers.”

Melville believes that Kaur’s collection has also been boosted by the author’s readings of her work. “Rupi is a spoken word performer as well as a poet and her dramatic and powerful performances have helped build awareness and propel her message,” said the publisher. “People love powerful storytelling and writing and if it is in the form of poetry, yes, they will buy it. I also think poetry, as short form writing, fits with how people are reading today.”

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Readers Notes:

8: There is no page 8 in my book.

13: Nude sketch with poem about the dangers of patriarchy.

15: Poem describes identifying sexual abuse to a therapist.

19: Poem describes intergenerational impacts of abuse.

20: Poem describes tension between sex and “making love,” implies difference and longing to understand.

29: Poem asserting power and “right to take up space.”

35: Poem describes emotional violence inflicted on women by men in a family, and generational impact of abuse.

37: Poem describes communication difficulties between a father and daughter, and a father’s difficulty expressing love.

38: Poem describes a potential sexual assault; i.e. painful, potentially non-consensual sexual encounter.

40: Poem describes abusive marriage where “terror and love” look the same.

41: Poem describes emotional impacts of violence that can carry into other relationships, and depicts a trauma response.

45: Poem celebrates generativity/creativity of women.

47: Poem describes positive attributes of selecting a spouse.

48: Poem describes the “revolutionary” power of a healthy relationship.

52: Letter to “future lover” describes “faint line between faith and blindly waiting” – love can be a spiritual experience, akin to faith and have other parallels with mystery and uncertainty.

54: Poem about appropriate touch between partners; touch has physical and emotional qualities.

55: Nude drawing depicting self-touch, potentially sexual. The poem contextualizes the art and emphasizes the importance of self love in healthy relationships.

58: Poem describes a consensual sexual encounter; juxtaposed against earlier poems, this poem presents the book’s narrative arc -- poetic persona’s movement from abuse to healthy love.

66: The poem depicts a healthier relationship; its controlling symbol is honey, which represents “no pain” and connotes the redemptive metaphor of “milk and honey.”

67: Poem depicts tension between elation/joy and longing in a relationship.

85: Poem emphasizes that partners who want to be together will be together and emphasizes the importance of respect.

92: Poem depicts irony – how fear of abandonment/being alone can masquerade as false love.

97: Poem uses a drawing and metaphor of a city to clarify one partner’s expectations for commitment in a relationship.

99: The poem uses irony to emphasize that a healthy man will not abuse a woman, and that a man’s demonstrated respect for women is an important measure of his readiness/appropriateness for a romantic relationship.

Readers Notes:

milk and honey portrays experiences of sexual violence, trauma, and recovery. These experiences are rendered through imagery, metaphor, and figure drawings. Kaur’s central metaphor, emphasized by the title, *milk and honey*, renders her recovery from abuse as a spiritual journey on par with the journey of the biblical Israelites to the land of Canaan, or the “land of milk and honey.” In the Tanakh, as in *milk and honey*, redemption awaits those who suffer abuse. Survivors can be agents of their own recovery, but the wilderness is also a place of learning and growth. Twenty-four pages out of a total 204 have been

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flagged for concern by the complainants; this is not a pervasive level, and it represents less than 11 percent of the book's total content.

Does the book have artistic, political, literary, or scientific value? Yes, there is clear literary and artistic value for the reasons noted above.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)? No, it is not prurient, nor intended to arouse (erotica). It's a poetry collection about abuse, abuse recovery, and a journey toward healthy love. This is a work of art and does not meet the definition of lewd content.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way? No. This poetry collection's depiction of limited sexual content is not patently offensive. This book and its sibling *the sun and her flowers* have sold more than [11 million copies and been translated into 43 languages](#). In a literary marketplace where poetry typically doesn't sell, Kaur is an immensely popular poet.

Is the book age appropriate: Kaur began writing *milk and honey* at the age of 18, but the events she describes took place in her life during her childhood and teenage years. The book is not recommended for those under 13, but it is appropriate for 13 and up.

My recommendation is for *milk and honey* to remain unrestricted.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Rupi Kaur

Provide a brief summary of book

- This is an autobiography, written at the age of 18 and was published at the age of 21. It is a story that starts in middle school and goes through her college years.
- Sections a journey through pain, trauma, love, healing and self acceptance from her experience of abuse. You see the character mature and look at relationships differently through the story.
- It is a collection of poetry that offers an elevated metaphor of milk/honey. It is a spiritual journey on par with the journey of the biblical Israelites to the land of Canaan, or the "land of milk and honey."
- It is a book about deliverance and softened into beauty. Many teens connect with this book and are now drawn to poetry.
- Twenty-four of the 204 pages were flagged for concern by the complainants; this is not a pervasive level, and represents less than 11 percent of the book's total content.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about non-sexual illustrations of nudity, sexual assault, sexual activities.

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

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- Yes.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No, it is a poetry collection about abuse, abuse recovery, and a journey toward healthy love.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No.

Is the book age appropriate?

- It is appropriate for 13 and up.

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. No restrictions.

Vote Taken:

- Unanimous to keep unrestricted

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>My Friend Dahmer</i>
Author	Derf Backderf
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about graphic novel with disturbing illustrations, sex with corpses, sexual activity, cannibalism, extreme violence, violence to animals, suicide, bullying, child abuse, available to troubled children at Heather Ridge.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 51 – “Your average horny teenage boy, bubbling to brim with sexual frustration.” Page 54 – “In Dahmer’s fantasies, his lovers ... were dead. Dead men. Corpses.” More pages not available for review.</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist March 15, 2012</p> <p>The smartass snark of Backderf's comic strip, <i>The City</i>, which he's been drawing for alternative newspapers for two decades, does little to prepare his fans for this ambitious autobiographical graphic novel about attending school with Jeffrey Dahmer, who would soon commit a string of sex-driven murders that would make him one of history's most infamous serial killers. Backderf recounts how Dahmer's behavior grew progressively strange, from quietly odd in junior high to genuinely bizarre in high school, where he'd fake epileptic fits and adopt spastic behavior to gain attention; meanwhile, he'd butcher small animals in the woods. Backderf tellingly depicts adolescent ennui in the 1970s as well as the uncaring obliviousness of the adults in Dahmer's life. The blunt, ungainly drawings, with their robotically stiff figures, effectively convey the drab suburban milieu. The hard times that have befallen alt-weeklies have led to the disappearance of cartoonists from their pages; Backderf's transition from sardonic gagman to accomplished full-length storyteller, like Lynda Barry's second act as a creativity guru, shows that the loss has some positive repercussions.--Flagg, Gordon Copyright 2010 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews March 2, 2012</p> <p>Punk Rock and Trailer Parks, 2008) was once an Ohio classmate of the notorious Jeffrey Dahmer, he doesn't try to elicit sympathy for "Jeff." Yet he walks an emotional tightrope here, for he recognizes that someone--maybe the other kids who laughed at and with him, certainly the adults who should have recognized aberration well beyond tortured adolescence--should have done something. "To you Dahmer was a depraved fiend but to me he was a kid I sat next to in study hall and hung out with in the band room," writes the author, whose dark narrative proceeds to show how Dahmer's behavior degenerated from fascination with roadkill and torture of animals to repressed homosexuality and high-school alcoholism to mass murder. It also shows how he was shaken by his parents' troubled marriage and tempestuous divorce, by his emotionally disturbed mother's decision to move</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

away and leave her son alone, and by the encouragement of the Jeffrey Dahmer Fan Club (with the author a charter member and ringleader) to turn the outcast into a freak show. The more that Dahmer drank to numb his life, the more oblivious adults seemed to be, letting him disappear between the cracks. "It's my belief that Dahmer didn't have to wind up a monster, that all those people didn't have to die horribly, if only the adults in his life hadn't been so inexplicably, unforgivably, incomprehensibly clueless and/or indifferent," writes Backderf. "Once Dahmer kills, however--and I can't stress this enough--my sympathy for him ends." An exemplary demonstration of the transformative possibilities of graphic narrative.]] Copyright Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

- Most graphic drawing was of a fish that Dahmer cuts to pieces with a pocket knife. The friend he is with immediately reacts negatively and the reader understands that this is not acceptable behavior. Some dead animals are shown, but those animals were roadkill found by Dahmer, not animals that he killed.
- Dahmer's fantasies of having control over unconscious men by being able to fondle them is mentioned, but nothing is shown other than an imaginary unconscious man. The narrator is clear that Dahmer himself was so upset by these fantasies that he used alcohol to numb himself. Notes in the back of the book also reference quotes where Dahmer explains his own disgust with himself.
- The mention of suicide in the main novel is a student considering how awful it was that another student killed themselves. However, the author does mention in both the introduction and in the afterword that he feels Dahmer should have killed himself.
- The neglect that Dahmer suffered is one of the more upsetting parts of the novel. The author is clear that this is not an excuse but should instead be a warning to caregivers and teachers to pay close attention to the children in their care.
- No cannibalism was mentioned that I can remember, nor was any sexual activity shown.
- Students at HRS may find this novel interesting in the way that learning about a figure like Hitler is interesting - what makes someone become who they are and do what they do? This book in no way glorifies Dahmer or would encourage a student to recreate any of Dahmer's crimes. If anything it removes some of the glamour that shows like *Dahmer* on Netflix have been accused of creating around Dahmer because it shows how unliked he was as a teen.

This graphic novel is a depiction of the adolescence of Jeffrey Dahmer. While there are some graphic images, the author is not glorifying the images but rather using them to tell a story. The author is telling the story of the events and circumstances that led Jeffrey Dahmer to become who he ended up becoming. It is more of a cautionary tale about the importance of adults and others paying attention to kids who are clearly suffering. The neglect he suffered, the mistreatment by his peers, his drinking and isolation were parts of the story but not told in an inflammatory way. The only mention of cannibalism is on the last page where the author's friend called him to tell him that "This guy in Wisconsin killed a bunch of people! His apartment was full of corpses. He had sex with the corpses..and ate some of them." He was relaying a news story and there were no images about this. The picture with this dialogue was of a newsroom.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-committee Discussion:

Derf Backderf
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

The story is about a close acquaintance, someone using Dahmer as entertainment not as a friend.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Graphic novel with disturbing illustrations, sex with corpses, sexual activity, cannibalism, extreme violence, violence to animals, suicide, bullying, child abuse, available to troubled children at Heather Ridge.
- Did not see the things above in the book.
- The most graphic thing was him using a pocket knife on a fish.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets**Key Questions**

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. Middle and High Schools.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Normal People: A Novel</i>
Author	Sally Rooney
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about explicit sex, sadomasochism, erotica, profanity</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 12 – “It occurred to Marianne how much she wanted to see him having sex with someone; it didn’t have to be her, it could be anybody. It would be beautiful just to watch him.”</p> <p>Pages: 17, 22, 25, 27, 28, 37, 42, 43, 57, 62, 90, 100, 103, 107, 132, 135, 136, 138, 143</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist February 15, 2019</p> <p>When Connell picks his mom up from her job as his classmate Marianne's family's housekeeper, he and Marianne discover an unusual connection. Though Connell is a well-liked athlete and Marianne is seen as an antisocial outsider, they're both known as their high school's brightest: their first, and lasting, bond. The secrecy of their relationship creates a shelter in which to explore their intense chemistry, both intellectual and sexual, before Connell blithely betrays Marianne, and they both leave their small town for Dublin's Trinity College. Advancing months or minutes at a time along the next four years, chapters ripple through the subsequent reunions and rifts of their college years. Connell knows that Marianne is fragile, but it's a long time before he fully understands why and that he is, too. Long-listed for the 2018 Man Booker Prize, this superb book more than lives up to the high expectations set for it by Rooney's lauded first novel, <i>Conversations with Friends</i> (2017). Showcasing Rooney's focus and ability in building character relationships that are as subtle and infinite as real-life ones, and her perceptive portrayal of class, <i>Normal People</i> gets at the hard work of becoming a person and the near impossibility of knowing if a first love is a true one.--Annie Bostrom Copyright 2010 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews March 2, 2019</p> <p>A young Irish couple gets together, splits up, gets together, splits up sorry, can't tell you how it ends! Irish writer Rooney has made a trans-Atlantic splash since publishing her first novel, <i>Conversations With Friends</i>, in 2017. Her second has already won the Costa Novel Award, among other honors, since it was published in Ireland and Britain last year. In outline it's a simple story, but Rooney tells it with bravura intelligence, wit, and delicacy. Connell Waldron and Marianne Sheridan are classmates in the small Irish town of Carricklea, where his mother works for her family as a cleaner. It's 2011, after the financial crisis, which hovers around the edges of the book like a ghost. Connell is popular in school, good at soccer, and nice; Marianne is strange and friendless. They're the smartest kids in their class, and they forge an intimacy when Connell picks his mother up from Marianne's house. Soon they're having sex, but Connell doesn't want anyone to know and Marianne doesn't mind; either she really doesn't care, or it's all she thinks she deserves. Or both. Though one time when she's forced into a social situation with some of their classmates, she briefly fantasizes about what would happen if she revealed their connection:</p>	

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"How much terrifying and bewildering status would accrue to her in this one moment, how destabilising it would be, how destructive." When they both move to Dublin for Trinity College, their positions are swapped: Marianne now seems electric and in-demand while Connell feels adrift in this unfamiliar environment. Rooney's genius lies in her ability to track her characters' subtle shifts in power, both within themselves and in relation to each other, and the ways they do and don't know each other; they both feel most like themselves when they're together, but they still have disastrous failures of communication. "Sorry about last night," Marianne says to Connell in February 2012. Then Rooney elaborates: "She tries to pronounce this in a way that communicates several things: apology, painful embarrassment, some additional pained embarrassment that serves to ironise and dilute the painful kind, a sense that she knows she will be forgiven or is already, a desire not to 'make a big deal.' " Then: "Forget about it, he says." Rooney precisely articulates everything that's going on below the surface; there's humor and insight here as well as the pleasure of getting to know two prickly, complicated people as they try to figure out who they are and who they want to become. Absolutely enthralling. Read it. Copyright Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

I would not consider this novel to be "erotica," or obscene/vulgar. This is a story of love and friendship, and this relationship is also a sexual one at times. Connell and Marianne are navigating growing up, and some difficult social, emotional, societal, and sexual circumstances associated with that. It has literary and artistic merit.

I also agree that the story depicted in this novel does not constitute erotica or obscene/vulgar. The development of characters and their friendships/relationships was the focus of this book. This is a coming of age story that follows the characters from high school to college and navigating or discussing sex with peers aligns with societal norms.

Is it pervasively vulgar?

In my opinion, it is not.

Many of the page numbers listed as containing items of concern, I had to read closely to find the thing that could be seen as concerning. It is true that the book refers to sex as "fucking" several times. Many times it's in the character's dialogue, so it is the way that young people are talking to each other. The novel is also set in Ireland, where potentially the word "fuck" is used a bit more freely, or at least cultural norms around the word are slightly different.

References to sadomasochism were just that - references. There were no explicit descriptions of a violent sex scene, and this was included mostly to explain the mentality of Marianne, and what was going on psychologically for her.

I also do not feel it is pervasively vulgar. The references to sex are found on 19 pages of a 287 page book. On those 19 pages the reference is typically one or two sentences without details. At times, it was difficult to discern what the concerning content was on the pages listed. Many times the references to sex were the characters thoughts about sex not a description of them engaged in explicit sex. The use of the word, "fuck" is often the reason the page was listed.

Age suitability

This is not a book for young children. Yes, it has mature themes and content. Considering the access to information that high school students generally have already, I consider reading a book that walks through the thoughts and feelings of a character to provide context to their actions and decisions to be hugely beneficial.

This book is suitable for high school aged students. The mature themes and content are not out of the norm of societal experiences for many students of this age.

Request for Reconsideration Record

This book, "Normal People," has some sexual content, that is true. But should all sexual content be banned from high school libraries? Applying contemporary adult community standards, my answer to that is no. Learning about sex, sexual health, and relationships is part of a high school education and growing up as a teenager, and this book's content falls within the range of educationally suitable material. I agree with this statement as well. Providing high school students with books that can mirror what may be happening in their lives helps students to connect with literature as well as learning ways to navigate through their own development and experiences.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Sally Rooney
High School

Provide a brief summary of the book

- Location Ireland - cultural differences
- Speaking to the page numbers, the focus of the story was about the characters and the relationships they were building, not the sex itself. They are seniors in high school and are brought together and then move apart and come together again. One of the characters in the book gets into a situation at one point where she is speaking to someone about sadomasochism? The "F" word is used throughout the book.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit sex, sadomasochism, erotica, profanity
- It is about relationships and how they are hard, difficult and sometimes messy.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>People Kill People</i>
Author	Ellen Hopkins
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about sexual activity, language, sexual assault, inflammatory racial commentary, gun violence, self-harm, profanity.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 55 – “You just want to get laid.” “... The gesture moves quickly from sweet to boner-worthy,” and as your tongues collide, you lift her off the floor. Another time, you’d carry her into your bedroom.”</p> <p>Pages: 75, 78, 80, 82, 84, 85, 137, 142, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152, 153, 160, 165, 169, 174, 176, 178, 184, 202, 219, 220, 243, 249, 271, 285, 336, 348, 362, 363, 388, 396, 400, 446, 448, 464</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist June 1, 2018</p> <p>The perennially popular Hopkins returns with another timely novel about an urgent issue; this time it's the violence that threatens the lives of her ensemble cast of six young adults. Indeed, it is Violence itself that tells their stories in a combination of Hopkins' signature verse and straightforward, unornamented prose. There is Rand, filled with rage at the man who abused him as a child; Cami, his wife, a small-time drug dealer; Silas, a white supremacist; Noelle, brain damaged in a car accident and secretly in love with beautiful Grace; Daniel, a homeless boy who also loves Grace; and Ashlyn, whose father stabbed her mother to death. The lives of all of the teens are interconnected, sharing the common potential that violence might change or even end their lives. Hopkins does a fine job of avoiding the didactic while creating a compelling, page-turning story. Yes, there are guns, but it is made obvious that death can come in other ways, for violence never takes a vacation. Librarians should expect a large demand for this one.--Cart, Michael Copyright 2010 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews July 4, 2018</p> <p>Violence narrates a tale of intersecting lives. A gun used in an accidental domestic shooting ends up in the hands of one of six Tucson teens whose feelings about guns and violence, immigration and racial superiority, love and sex are explored. Their urges for power over their own lives or others' tempt them to consider violent acts. As the day of a pro-immigration rally and counterprotest nears, readers are left guessing which character will kill and which will die, as Violence promises. Violence alternates between free verse omniscient third-person narration and switching to second-person present tense to invite readers into the mind of each major character. Silas finds a sense of belonging in a white supremacist group and is disgusted by his mother's Jewish boyfriend and father's Mexican girlfriend; Daniel is left feeling bitter when his Honduran mother is deported and his white father dies, leaving him to live with the white wife and son who were not aware of his existence; and Noelle is a depressed, white, closeted teen, suffering seizures following a tragic brush with gun violence. This structure effectively illustrates how otherwise normal people can become killers. The book avoids glamorizing gun violence and</p>	

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bigotry as the characters are difficult to empathize with. The final revelation, though surprising on a plot level, lacks the emotional impact that the subject matter deserves. An interesting thought experiment. (Prose/fiction hybrid. 16-18) Copyright Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

The book begins with the premise that “Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.” It is dedicated to the victims of gun violence and clearly is intended to illustrate the societal problem of gun violence. The narrator is Violence personified, and it attempts to illustrate why people are prone to violence. It follows several high school students, each with a motive for violence and access to a gun. Rand was molested as a young boy by a scout leader and wants revenge against his abuser; at 19 he is married to Cami and has a 2-year-old son. They struggle to make ends meet and be teen parents. Cami sells marijuana to make extra money, unbeknownst to her husband. Silas is a football player who joined a white nationalist youth group; he is upset that his father’s girlfriend is Mexican and his mother’s fiancé is Jewish, and he likes to go “hunting” in the desert to look for migrants. Ashlyn witnessed her alcoholic father fatally stab her mother, and now she lives with an aunt and uncle who barely care for her; she has found solace in a white nationalist youth group. Daniel is a homeless runaway whose mother was deported to Honduras and whose father died; he has been beaten by his half brother Tim and Silas, and wants to protect himself. He also struggles with mental illness. Noelle was injured in a road rage incident and has a brain injury that causes debilitating seizures and has ruined her future plans; she contemplates suicide.

The story occurs over a few days leading up to a large immigration rally, with some characters planning to attend in support of immigrants, while others plan to attend as counter-protesters with their white nationalist group.

The page numbers referred to in the complaint do not line up with the page numbers in our version of the book, so we can’t comment on each specific concern. Below are some specific instances of sexual content and violence, and our assessment of them.

- The sex scene specified in the complaint is between the two married teenagers, age 19 and 18, so, it is natural that they would have sexual relations; this is a sweet physical moment between a husband and a wife. The scene was no more explicit than what is in the quote in the complaint.
- Grace explains to her boyfriend, Daniel, what happened to her father and her best friend, Noelle, when someone driving by got enraged and decided to use violence to resolve the issue. This continues when Noelle is introduced to the story, her background and the involvement she has in the car crash and the impact it has had on her is highlighted in the prose. In the story they share, Grace’s father was shot and, thus, murdered, so there is reference to a murder, but it is not explicitly described for the sake of gore. After the incident, Noelle developed insecurities and anxieties stemming from the effects of the event, developing her reasoning for suicide, which a gun would make feasible in an instant.
- There is inflammatory language against Jews, Muslims, and Latinos, as two characters belong to the white nationalist youth group. The language is intended to expose racism and bigotry, rather than glorify it.
- There are several instances of gun violence. The book starts with the story of an older man who develops fears and suspicions about people in the community and keeps a gun at all times for protection. When his wife comes home unexpectedly while he is sleeping, he believes someone is breaking into his house, and shoots and kills his wife. He is cleared of any wrongdoing since it was accidental, and he wants to get rid of the gun, so he sells it to Rand. Cami is at a restaurant with her 2-year-old son when it was the target of an armed robbery. Silas is at work at a convenience store when it is robbed and one employee is fatally shot. These scenes illustrate the central point about the pervasiveness of gun violence.
- Violence is personified and takes the narrator’s voice in the poems in between the stories, but there are no gory moments. Instead, these poems aim to provide an understanding of why individuals choose violence and how guns make the execution of their violent responses possible and more feasible. With this comes an artistic element since literary devices are used to convey the latter message in addition to

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other literary elements, such as mock seriousness or verbal irony that creates a mocking tone. The violence itself is not explicit and does not intend to be entertainingly gory, just representing a little voice or feeling in one's head that encourages someone to pick up a gun and use it as a response, which supports the central idea that "Guns don't kill people. People kill people."

- Rand was sexually molested as a child, and page 137 is where the author goes into that story. The description of the event does not use offensive language, but rather diction that aims to "soften the blow" of the scene, which can especially be seen by the use of "crotch", "weiner", and "fly". I did not expect the book to discuss the scene where Rand is sexually molested and the author does not forewarn the reader about that scene at the beginning of the book. Therefore, I would recommend that a trigger warning be put in place just in case there is anyone in the audience that may be heavily impacted by this scene. Even so, this scene is incorporated into the story with the purpose of providing an understanding of why Rand is so upset when he sees Dean walking in public and why Rand feels the urge to kill Dean. Furthermore, the scene provides an example that reveals red flags associated with child molesters, serving as a warning to the audience that child molesters may be those you least expect or suspect.
- Page 142: A coworker of Rand disrespects Cami, Rand's wife, and their marriage, which rightly vexed Rand. The coworker was disrespectful, but the language he uses is not uncommon in society today, even at the high school level. To put his coworker in his place, Rand physically fights him, and, although violence should not be the answer, it is understandable.
- The author incorporates characters that hold a variety of values and morals, which is seen by the way they are described and by the voice they use to narrate their side of the story. Not only does this add artistic value to the story, but it also provides information that contributes to a better understanding of how individuals themselves are the reason for murders and that guns are the devices through which they satisfy their intent. Silas is a complex character where his insecurities and strong opinions are revealed through the environment he is in and the way he acts in it. Even so, the descriptions allude to strong scenes that may be vulgar, but they are not described in detail and present the idea of the events to reveal the characters' traits. The environment around Silas also stimulates racial violence, raising awareness about hate crime, which is a current issue that should be addressed.

Addressing the key questions for review:

- **Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?**
 - Yes, the book has artistic and political value - it illustrates the societal issue of gun violence; challenges teens face in dealing with mental health, sexual assault, and domestic violence; explains how some teens can be attracted to white nationalism; and shows the challenges of teen parenting.
- **Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?**
 - Several characters have sex, but the scenes are referred to but not described in detail. We do not consider the scenes prurient or intended to arouse (erotica). The sexual component of the book is not the central idea of the story, but rather adds to its main political focus.
- **Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?**
 - No
- **Is the book age appropriate?**
 - Yes, high school students would be able to handle the content in this book.

We recommend a trigger warning, since the book describes the scene of a sexual assault. The scene is not in great detail, but we think a trigger warning would be appropriate.

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Sub-committee Discussion:

Ellen Hopkins
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Main theme is gun violence
- Structure: book is written in prose and partially in verse
- The story focuses on the intersecting stories of 6 teens who have been prone to violence
- There is a contemplation of suicide in the book
- 2 students are White Nationalists, but their involvement in the group is not glorified. Guns are used to hunt for migrants
- 2 of the teens are married and become pregnant at a young age- book describes struggles of teen parenting and how they sell drugs to earn money to take care of their family. The husband was sexually assaulted as a child.
- One teen is a Latino, homeless boy who obtains a gun for protection from being assaulted.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about sexual activity, language, sexual assault, inflammatory racial commentary, gun violence, self-harm, profanity.
- Not sexually explicit
- Lots of profane language
- Quote identified in the complaint focusing on sex was between the married couple teens.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Does not glorify gun violence

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- The book has artistic and political value. It discusses the dangers of gun violence.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- Sex is not central to the story. It is referred to, but not detailed.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No
- The gun violence is not in a ton of detail
- There are 4 separate shootings in the book, but the description is no more than what you would see in the news on television.

Is the book age appropriate?

- Book reviewers discussed use of a trigger warning for the sexual assault of one of the teen boys by a scout leader, when he was a child.

Sub-Committee Recommendation: No consensus whether or not there is a need for a content warning. Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

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Book Title	<i>Push</i>
Author	Sapphire
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about baby/child rape/incest/abuse, true story of a toddler being raped repeatedly by her father, extreme vulgarity and profanity, violence, self-harm, inflammatory racial comments, etc., basis for movie precious.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 16 – “I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my father.”</p> <p>Page 17 – “He is skinny little white man about five feet four inches. A peckerwood as my mother would say.”</p> <p>Page 18 – “He look like a bitch just got a train pult on her.”</p> <p>Pages: 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 35, 36, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 55, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 81, 84, 85, 89, 90, 91, 93, 97, 99, 101, 102, 103, 111, 112, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 137, 139, 142, 143, 145, 147, 150, 152, 163, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172, 173, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 190, 199, 200, 202, 204, 206, 207, 211, 222, 224, 229, 230, 235,</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Full-Text Reviews</p> <p>Booklist (Vol. 92, No. 17 (May 1, 1996)) Sapphire returns to the themes of incest and child abuse that were a part of her daring American Dreams (1984) but with a starkness that is truly horrifying and unforgettable, perhaps because of the horror. Precious Jones lives in a world worse than the one inhabited by the character Celie in <i>The Color Purple</i>. She, too, is a victim of abuse. At 16, Precious finds herself pregnant again by her father, untrained, uneducated, and unable to care for herself or her baby. She is astute enough to know that there is a better way to live but is clueless as to how to get there. Fortunately for Precious, she meets a black teacher, Ms. Blue Rain, who pushes her to change with encouragement and inspiration. Ms. Rain challenges Precious to learn to read and write and improve her way of life. In her literacy class, Miss Rain instructs all of her students to maintain a journal; readers experience Precious' transformation in her journal entries. Her development and growth are astonishing in the short period of time we share her writings. <i>Push</i> is an intense work, both heartbreaking and frightening. The work is slated for a 150,000-copy first printing, excerpted in the <i>New Yorker</i>, and will also be published in England, France, Germany, and other countries. Taken from the Hardcover.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews (1996) Poet Sapphire's slim first novel draws on her experience as a performance artist and literacy teacher: She tells her sad but sentimentally uplifting story in the voice of a 17-year-old illiterate from Harlem, and the result is more sociological (in the Ricki Lake mold) than literary. Clareece Precious Jones is a study in abuse. Continually raped by her father since the age of five, she's now pregnant for the second time with his baby, the first having been born with Down's syndrome when Precious was 12. Meantime, her mother is no help, calling the overweight girl a "fat cunt bucket slut," beating her at will, and satisfying her own bizarre sexual needs from her</p>	

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daughter. Schools have also all failed her; teachers find her "uncooperative," and she considers her last a "retarded hoe." Finally, Precious enrolls in a Harlem alternative school where she begins the tough climb out of illiteracy. No longer dreaming impossible ideas about rappers and movie star fame, she joins six others in a basic-skills class run by Blue Rain, a self-proclaimed lesbian who isn't afraid to editorialize in class. In short order, Precious discovers the joys of the alphabet and journal-writing, the pleasures of owning books and composing poetry. Although she raises herself to a seventh-grade level by narrative's end, she also finds out she's HIV positive. All of this is transcribed in a phonetic spelling that's supposed to reflect Precious's actual abilities, but seems condescending--and woefully unauthentic--since Sapphire often loses control of the voice. The homage to *The Color Purple* ("One thing I say about Farrakhan and Alice Walker they help me like being black") highlights Sapphire's commercial aspirations, as well as, by contrast, her technical inadequacies. A maudlin (at times pornographic) advertisement for the power of literacy and the value of recovery groups.

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

Library Journal (February 1, 1996)

A first novel by a highly touted African American poet will have an ambitious 150,000-copy first printing.

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

Library Journal (June 1, 1996)

Performance poet Sapphire unflinchingly probes the consciousness of an all-too-real teenager from a severely abusive household. Push opens to find Precious--fat, unloved, illiterate, deeply confused, routinely raped by her father, and physically and emotionally molested by her mother--enduring her second incestuous pregnancy. Crawling from self-hatred and violent loneliness to determination and, occasionally, hope, Precious enters a pre-GED program, learns to read, bears her second child, and breaks from her parents, all under the inspiration of Blue Rain, her steadfastly encouraging and apparently tireless new teacher. Precious's name loses its irony but soon takes on a dark new meaning as she learns the extent of her father's abuse. Written as an internal monolog and journal entries by Precious, with her rudimentary spelling skills and abrupt transitions, Push is compelling, graphic, and occasionally facile but disturbing and not soon forgotten. Recommended. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 2/1/96.]--Janet Ingraham, Worthington P.L., Ohio

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

Publishers Weekly (April 22, 1996)

With this much anticipated first novel, told from the point of view of an illiterate, brutalized Harlem teenager, Sapphire (*American Dreams*), a writer affiliated with the Nuyorican poets, charts the psychic damage of the most ghettoized of inner-city inhabitants. Obese, dark-skinned, HIV-positive, bullied by her sexually abusive mother, Clareece, Precious Jones is, at the novel's outset, pregnant for the second time with her father's child. (Precious had her first daughter at 12, named Little Mongo, "short for Mongoloid Down Sinder, which is what she is; sometimes what I feel I is. I feel so stupid sometimes. So ugly, worth nuffin.") Referred to a pilot program by an unusually solicitous principal, Precious comes under the experimental pedagogy of a lesbian miracle worker named, implausibly enough, Blue Rain. Under her angelic mentorship, Precious, who has never before experienced real nurturing, learns to voice her long suppressed feelings in a journal. As her language skills improve, she finds sustenance in writing poetry, in friendships and in support groups--one for "insect" survivors and one for HIV-positive teens. It is here that Sapphire falters, as her slim and harrowing novel, with its references to Harriet Tubman, Langston Hughes and *The Color Purple* (a parallel the author hints at again and again), becomes a conventional, albeit dark and unresolved, allegory about redemption. The ending, composed of excerpts from the journals of Precious's classmates, lends heightened realism and a wider scope to the narrative, but also gives it a quality of incompleteness. Sapphire has created a remarkable heroine in Precious, whose first-person street talk is by turns blisteringly savvy, rawly lyrical, hilariously pig-headed and wrenchingly vulnerable. Yet that voice begs to be heard in a larger novel of more depth and complexity. 150,000 first printing; first serial to the *New Yorker*; audio rights to Random; foreign rights sold to England, France, Germany, Holland, Portugal and Brazil. (June)

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Readers Notes:

It is difficult to match the page numbers mentioned above to the edition of the book I have. However, cross-referencing is unnecessary as there is strong language and graphic sexual content throughout the book, including incestual rape. While this might be the main reason for the complaint, we should not overlook that this is a powerful book that provides insight into a life of abuse, neglect, and poverty that many of us are unfamiliar with. Without exposure to a work like this, it is difficult to empathize with the main character's experiences. We may sympathize, but we cannot begin to understand. A line in the preface stayed with me throughout the book: "We must feel it to be changed by it." Yes, the book is graphic at times, but I believe it is necessary.

Based on the Miller test, I believe the book breaches one standard, #2.

The first standard asks whether the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest of the average person applying contemporary community standards. **I think, as a whole, it does not.**

The second standard asks whether the work depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way, as defined by applicable state law. **The book does, depending upon Maryland law.**

Finally, the third standard asks whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. **I think it does not lack literary, artistic, or political value. It contains all three, as well as meaningful insights into socio-economic issues.**

Given that most high schoolers have been exposed to content and ideas presented in this book, I suggest limiting its availability to that specific age group, not younger.

This is not an easy book to read, but it is a powerful story about a life unimaginable by most living anywhere in our country. The book hits you hard, but turns into a story with hope as the main character works to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds.

The complaint focuses on child rape and abuse, extreme vulgarity and profanity, self-harm, and racial comments. In considering the three prongs of the Miller Test, I have no concerns regarding the third prong - the work certainly does not lack literary value. The graphic nature of the rape and abuse is, however, concerning. There were many times the details of sexual encounters seemed necessary to highlight the traumas the main character endured, but there were some instances where I'm not sure it served a purpose other than to shock the reader. The scenes are certainly not written in a way to excite lust or otherwise come into conflict with the other aspects of the first prong of the Miller Test. I do, however, believe it runs afoul of the second prong of the Miller Test.

In reading through the reviews, while Library Journal recommended the book in general, it did label it as graphic and I am concerned that the Kirkus review is not positive and does label the book as "at times pornographic" which I feel makes it more difficult to defend.

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Sub-committee Discussion:

Sapphire
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- Story of a 16 year girl and her journey. She has been raped repeatedly by her father numerous times. She gets pregnant twice. She is ousted at their regular school. A friend helps her get into an alternative program. She is diagnosed with HIV as her father had Aids. SHE is abused by both mother and father. She is illiterate.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about baby/child rape/incest/abuse, true story of a toddler being raped repeatedly by her father, extreme vulgarity and profanity, violence, self-harm, inflammatory racial comments, etc., basis for movie precious.
- The story gets descriptive as far as the rape.
- Profanity.
- While it is graphic, it may have needed to be graphic to feel her pain.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- His take on the title of the book is that she pushes through all of the things she has experienced. There is a lot of support at the alternative school she attended. She receives support from other staff members at the school.
- It is a story of hope. She recognizes that she needs to make changes unless she pushes through and overcomes these obstacles.
- You obtain empathy for the situation. There was not one thought of suicide with all she experiences.
- No self harm for the main character.
- This is a book of horror and hope. The author based this story on someone she knew.
- One of the reviews calls this book pornographic, however pornography is intended to arouse and the readers did not believe that this content conveyed that. Because one of the reviews called the book pornographic the reader/reviewer had trouble defending the book. This prompted additional readers.

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- There was discussion. The question came up was this offensive or disturbing?

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Impasse. We will ask for additional readers. It was suggested to possibly add a content warning on this book.

Sub-committee Discussion: Continued from April 20 meeting

- Understood what the responses were at the last meeting. It reminded her of Identical and wished that book had been read first to set a standard. Feels it should stay in the libraries. Meant to be factual and educational.

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- Feels it should be kept in the libraries, feels the word pornography was misused in this instance. It is not arousing.
- Second clause is where we got hung up at the last meeting. If this happened to a person in this room and they were telling their story, it would not be appropriate for me to say to them that I find your life disturbing. Touched on racism and homophobia. The character grows throughout the book.
- Book has educational value. Students are going to be exposed to life that they are not familiar with. It is stark, graphic and horrifying. Struck that the character in the book felt the EMT helping her deliver her first child was one of the kindest people she has known. Nothing in the book was set to arouse.

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

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Book Title	<i>S.E.X. the all you need to know progressive guide to get you through high school and college</i>
Author	Heather Corinna
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about "How to" sex guide for teens, sexual images, masturbation, anal sex, BDSM: Bondage dominance, submission masochism. Blood Play: using blood, knives, cutting in sex; instruction in deviant sex, fisting, self harm.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 239 – Anal Sex/Intercourse – “AKA: Buttfucking, asslove, backdoor action.</p> <p>Page 245 – BDSM – “used to describe sexual dominance and submission play...” “... the action may involve extending pleasure past the point of physical or emotional comfort; ‘punishing’ a partner via humiliation, sexual play, or withholding sexual activities...” “...S/M is an abbreviation for sadism and masochism, or sadomasochism, which means that one partner is giving pain (sado-), and the other is receiving is (-masochism). The B in BDSM usually refers to bondage.</p> <p>Page 246 – Bondage/Restraint- “... the practice of having one partner (or less often, both partners) restrained in some way, usually with ropes, cords, other types of fabric ... during sexual activity ... Some people self-restrain during masturbation.” “As with any other sexual activity, for this sort of play to be at all emotionally safe, it is vital everyone feels good about it and consents...” “Discussing bondage in advance of the activity is important...”</p> <p>Page 24? – Body Fluid or Blood Play - Some people enjoy any number of body fluids sexually; ejaculate, vaginal fluids, menses, urine, or blood. They may simply enjoy tasting, feeling, or smelling them during sexual activities ... “golden showers” “So for the most part, this sort of play is quite risky, especially for younger couples, the majority of whom have no had sound or regular sexual health care.”</p> <p>Unknown page – “Deeper manual sex” “...manual sex is colloquially called fisting ... involves starting with one or two gloved fingers (and lube, added as you go) and slowly working up to more...”</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Library Journal July 1, 2007</p> <p>Activist and web site originator of scarleteen.com ("Sex ed for the real world"), Corinna has put together a blockbuster of a book for young people dealing with sex and relationships. Much like the authors of Our Bodies, Ourselves and its spinoffs, Corinna answers every possible question teens and young adults could have about virginity, puberty, pregnancy, body image, masturbation, sexual identity, the variety of relationships, and the mechanics of partnered sex. She also addresses topics that are often overlooked, e.g., transgender and intergender identities, realistic teen relationship management skills, and pornography. An excellent resource for preteens, teens, young adults, and people working with these populations; highly recommended for most libraries. (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.</p>	

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Readers Notes:

Author's introductory comments about purpose and age range:

p. 3 "Ultimately this book aims to provide information to help lay a solid foundation for clear, usable, informative, and healthy sex education to benefit individual readers and their support networks." "Read this book for yourself before you set it out for young people."

From the intro, the author states the book intended for ages 15-25, but will not harm younger students.

14 Chapters:

1. I Pledge Allegiance... to Myself and the United State of My Sexuality
2. Your Sexuality and Your Body: An Owner's Manual
3. The Problem with Perfect: Body Image: Or, Why Appearance Isn't All It Appears
4. Sex Starts with You: Arousal, Orgasm, Masturbation, and Fantasy
5. So Much More than Either/Or: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
6. You, Me, and Everyone Else: Big Outside Influences on Your Sexuality
7. On Board the Relationship
8. To Be or Not to Be... Sexually Active
9. Popular Mechanics: The Ins and Outs of Sex with Partners
10. Safe and Sound: Safer Sex for Your Body, Heart, and Mind
11. Harm's Way: Abuse and Assault (And What You Can Do About Them)
12. To Be or Not to Be... Pregnant: Contraception
13. Oh Baby (Or Not)! Reproduction and Reproductive Options
14. How to Change the World (Without Even Getting Out of Bed)

Overall, the punchy titles indicate the general down-to-earth tone of the book. However, although clear and personable in the writing, the book is full of specific information about sexual health, grounded in the most recent, research-informed frameworks about sexuality, identity, safety, puberty, relationships, and more. The theoretical framework for this text is individual choice and understanding the self and the context of sexual health to empower positive choices, while encouraging a position that questions judgements and interrogates bias (both towards others and towards the self). The author asks readers to "boldly choose to create a healthy, happy, and fulfilling sexual life that is fantastic for you and for everyone else in it" and provides young adults with the information to do just that. In other words, it is a "how to" guide for creating a healthy life grounded in individual choice and autonomy.

All the cited objection pages are contained in Chapter 9, describing (as noted) the mechanics of partnered sexual interactions. The majority of the chapter is written in glossary style, providing definitions, common slang terms, and basic descriptions of different sexual acts. Three of the five specific objections are contained within a 4-page subsection titled "Kinky Sex." None of the concerning passages have illustrations associated with them. Quite frankly, a young person who hears about "anal sex" and wants to know more would learn about it in a much more scientific and clear way by looking it up in this book than they would on the internet. These subjects, while seemingly titillating, are treated with the same matter-of-fact informational tone as all of the other content in the text, serving primarily to inform rather than to excite sexual arousal.

Miller Test:

The book has scientific and informational value.

The book is not prurient or intended to arouse (erotica).

The book does not depict or describe sexual content in a patently offensive way.

Request for Reconsideration Record

The book is age appropriate for high school students (and would be too dense and uninteresting to middle schoolers, but not inappropriate).

This book is 427 pages long. Sandwiched in the middle are 24 pages that describe matter-of-factly sexual acts. What they are called, how to do them safely, what the chance of pregnancy and getting an STI are from performing each. The pages preceding this are 200 pages of how to feel comfortable in your own skin, dispelling myths about bodies and development, consent, and how if you're uncomfortable with someone for any reason it's best to just walk away. The remaining pages educate about pregnancy, choice and STIs in detail, while still sticking with if you're uncomfortable or cannot handle what's being described, it's best not to do the thing that could cause it. Additionally, this book educates about abuse.

The pages the complainants take issue with are delivered matter of factly; they are not intended to arouse (erotica), nor are they patently offensive, however slang terms are used. This book does have value. It would be an excellent addition to any health curriculum. It teaches our youth that they don't have to conform or be pressured into doing something they aren't comfortable doing and that they shouldn't do anything they can't handle the consequences of. The book also offers resources, should they be needed.

This book is a teacher and counselor wrapped into one and even encourages the reader to find a trusted adult if they need one.

I feel this book is age appropriate for high school students.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Heather Corinna
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- A book with 427 pages; 24 pages of sexual acts described matter-of-factly and how to perform them safely, remaining pages how to feel comfortable in your own skin, consent, education about choice, pregnancy, STDs, etc.
- Emphasizes if you are not comfortable with someone it is best to talk about it. Slang terms are used.
- The book has value and would be a wonderful addition to any health curriculum. It is a teacher and counselor wrapped into one.
- Intended to lay a solid foundation for clear, usable information. It is grounded in the most recent, research-informed frameworks about sexuality, identity, puberty, relationships and more. It talks about abuse, what it looks like and what to do if you have been abused or you are an abuser.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about "How to" sex guide for teens, sexual images, masturbation, anal sex, BDSM: Bondage dominance, submission masochism. Blood Play: using blood, knives, cutting in sex; instruction in deviant sex, fisting, self harm.
- All the cited objections are in Chapter 9, describing the mechanics of sexual interactions. It is written in glossary style, providing definitions and slang. There are no illustrations.
- Three of the five objections are contained in four pages.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, scientific.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No. It may have controversial topics but its intention is not arousal.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No, it is not patently offensive but they are shocking topics - most shocking in the slang.

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only. No restrictions.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Slaughterhouse Five</i>
Author	Kurt Vonnegut
School Level	Middle and High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about violence, explicit sex, animal cruelty, bestiality, profanity, sexual nudity, inflammatory religious commentary.</p> <p><i>{NOTE: I had requested this book be removed based on conversations with others who explained the educational value of this book. This book should not be available to middle school students. It should only be made available to students at Heather Ridge and in high school with parental consent.}</i></p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 15, 52, 55, 59, 111, 125, 139, 144, 150, 151, 153, 154, 156, 159, 163, 166, 168, 173, 175, 179, 191, 210, 244, 249, 250, 251, 254</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Reviews NOTE: The Positive Reviews referenced here are not reviews for the novel in question. They are reviews for a graphic novel adaption by Ryan North and Albert Monteys based on the novel Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut.</p> <p>Booklist November 20, 2020</p> <p>Slaughterhouse-Five is an iconic, widely beloved novel, so undertaking a graphic adaptation is no easy task. Happily, North and Monteys have done an excellent job, both in staying true to Billy Pilgrim's story and in maintaining the character of Vonnegut's wry, self-referential writing style in an entirely new format. Small changes help this considerably—Kilgore Trout, for instance, is a comics writer in this iteration, and Vonnegut is more vividly present in the frame narrative—but it's the bold artwork and playful use of comics narrative styles that really make this a success. North and Monteys skillfully slip among eras, handily indicating temporal changes with visual cues: Trout's stories appear in pulpy benday dots; Ronald Weary's daydream of future glory, which never comes to fruition, appears in non-photo-blue drafting pencil; conversations between Vonnegut and Billy Pilgrim appear on crisp, white, panel-less spreads, as if they're happening out of time. A particular highlight is Monteys' masterful character design, especially of Billy, who ages realistically from decade to decade without losing his lanky, angular frame and recognizable nose. Slaughterhouse-Five is of course a deeply affecting novel, which is part of its perennial appeal, and this adaptation, which movingly and quietly focuses on body language, facial expression, and gesture, not only honors that aspect of its source material but powerfully amplifies it. This is the best kind of adaptation, where the story is transformed by the change in medium.</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Library Journal August 1, 2020</p> <p>After becoming unstuck in time, Billy Pilgrim begins to experience all of the major moments in his life nonlinearly. One minute he's a middle-aged optometrist, the next he might find himself recuperating after</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

surviving a plane crash, or laboring in a prisoner of war camp in Germany toward the end of World War II or luxuriating with his lover and child in a zoo on the planet Tralfamadore. Throughout his life, Billy constantly encounters cruelty, hypocrisy, and pain; as the Tralfamadorian's say, "So it goes." In this brilliant adaptation of Vonnegut's classic antiwar novel, *North (How To Invent Everything)* and *Monteys (Solid State)* retain Vonnegut's playfully mordant and deeply compassionate voice and take full advantage of the opportunity to convey the novel's fractured narrative visually. Minor characters' backgrounds are depicted in short, three-panel comic strips, while sf stories written by Billy's favorite author, Kilgore Trout, are rendered in the style of pulpy E.C. Comics tales of terror, the bustling majesty of Dresden, Germany's pre-firebombing presented in a gorgeously detailed spread. VERDICT With this work, *North* and *Monteys* have created the best, and most effective, graphic novel adaptation of a literary novel in recent memory.

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Readers Notes: Provide a brief summary of book

This book is told through the perspective of Billy Pilgrim. Throughout the book, Billy travels through time (forward and backward) sharing his life experiences including marriage, children, his WWII experiences as a soldier (POW in Nazi Germany), life as an optometrist, the death of his wife, and his travels to the planet Tralfamadore.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

Explicit sex, violence, animal cruelty, bestiality, inflammatory religious commentary, profanity, sexual nudity. Complainants request that the book should not be available to middle school students; It should only be made available to students at Heather Ridge and in high school with parental consent.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

This book shares the hardships of war, specifically focusing on Billy's experience in Dresden where over 25,000 civilians were killed. He and others survive because they are sheltered in a slaughterhouse. At the end of the book, he describes the "hundreds of corpse mines" where soldiers were buried. His writing is easy to follow even though he is "unstuck" in time, moving forward and backward. It combines science fiction and the realities of war and its impact on soldiers (PTSD). The message of the book focuses on the destruction and death of war and how it impacts survivors.

The book has significant political and artistic value in form and theme, exploring anti-war sentiment through science fiction, historical fiction, and comedy.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

No- refer to page 51, 139, 177

It is my assessment that an average person, applying community standards, would NOT find that the work taken as a whole is prurient and intended to arouse (erotica). There are very few descriptions of sexual conduct, and these are very brief, sometimes glaring, often detached descriptions using blunt language. One scene describing sexual conduct between the main character and his wife is one of the few tender moments in the novel, describing the consummation of their marriage as affirming, pleasant and affectionate - a rare example of genuine connection between any two characters in the novel .

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

Request for Reconsideration Record

Not really. A postcard of a woman and a pony is described twice in the book, and a sexual experience on the planet Tralfamadore.

See comment above.

Is the book age appropriate?

Yes

There are mature themes of anti-war, governmental control and manipulation, political alliance, and the futility and absurdity of human existence, but these ideas and information that middle and high school students should be free to explore and debate, particularly given that the majority of active duty, Armed Forces personnel in the US tend to be young adults under the age of 30.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Provide a brief summary of book

- Main character travels through time of his life as a soldier in WW2, a POW, the death of wife, and space travel.
- A mix of genres including Fiction, science fiction, historical fiction, & humor
- Anti war perspective
- Pervasive theme was war related
- Humans as zoo animals when on other planet

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about violence, explicit sex, animal cruelty, bestiality, profanity, sexual nudity, inflammatory religious commentary.
- Sex
- Cruelty
- Foul language (one instinct)
- Animal cruelty
- Bestiality- insinuated- never described

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

- Not pervasively vulgar
- Sex is not pervasive
- Bestiality is insinuated- never described
- In incidences related to complaints: no explicit, no intent to arouse (erotica), glaring language used that is straightforward

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Has value as form and content perspective, historical and science fiction and humor
- People who fight in wars are often young people- so young people should be able to debate that point of view
- Absurdity of human experience
- Description of war
- Mention of Nazi and holocaust
- Description of war

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- Sex not pervasive
- Sex conduct very briefly mentioned, glaring language, without intent to arouse (erotica), definitely

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- One instance of consummate marriage, describes as a tender moment, this is the most specific instance of sex in book
- Sex content (4) instances found in book
- photo of woman with legs open and animal and insinuation of wanting sex (bestiality suggested) never described or elaborated

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- Sex not pervasive
- Sex conduct very briefly mentioned, glaring language, without intent to arouse (erotica), definitely

Is the book age appropriate?

- Would be appropriate for middle school- yes.
- No graphic material inappropriate for middle school, description of body parts, not sexual experiences, not sexually explicit
- Complaints: list of pages that are complaints- nothing vulgar nothing middle school adverse
- F-bomb not pervasive- one character, one instance- not the main character
- Student would really have to be motivated to get past structure of the book before encountering any sexual content

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School and Middle School.

- Keep the book without restriction including in middle school
- Consensus: unanimous book remains
- With justification provided
- Agree, not limited by high school only

NOTE: positive reviews were based on the graphic novel version, not the original novel. Verification by Scott Murphy that the complaints were directed at the original novel, not the graphic novel version.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Sold</i>
Author	Patricia McCormick
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about aberrant sex acts, rape of a child, prostitution, explicit violence, threats, available to children as young as 11</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 102 – “She grabs me by the hair and drags me across the room. She flings me onto the bed next to the old man. And then he is on top of me, holding me down ...” “His teeth dig into my lower lip. Underneath the weight of him, I cannot see or move or breathe. He fumbles with his pants, forces my legs apart, and I can feel him pushing himself between my thighs.” Then he is on top of me, and something hot and insistent is between my legs. He grunts and struggles, trying to fit himself inside me.” “With a sudden thrust I am torn in two.”</p> <p>Page 123 – “In between, men come. They crush my bones with their weight. They split me open. Then they disappear. I cannot tell which of the things they do are real, and which are nightmares. I decide to think it is all a nightmare. Because if what is happening is real, it is unbearable.”</p> <p>Pages: 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 115, 116, 120,125, 127, 128, 129, 132, 133, 135, 141, 142,145, 147, 180, 182, 189, 191, 216, 227, 228, 254, 257, 258,</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Review: Booklist September 15, 2006</p> <p>Lakshmi, 13, knows nothing about the world beyond her village shack in the Himalayas of Nepal, and when her family loses the little it has in a monsoon, she grabs a chance to work as a maid in the city so she can send money back home. What she doesn't know is that her stepfather has sold her into prostitution. She ends up in a brothel far across the border in the slums of Calcutta, locked up, beaten, starved, drugged, raped, "torn and bleeding," until she submits. In beautiful clear prose and free verse that remains true to the child's viewpoint, first-person, present-tense vignettes fill in Lakshmi's story. The brutality and cruelty are ever present ("I have been beaten here, / locked away, / violated a hundred times / and a hundred times more"), but not sensationalized. An unexpected act of kindness is heartbreaking ("I do not know a word / big enough to hold my sadness"). One haunting chapter brings home the truth of "Two Worlds": the workers love watching <i>The Bold and the Beautiful</i> on TV though in the real world, the world they know, a desperate prostitute may be approached to sell her own child. An unforgettable account of sexual slavery as it exists now. --Hazel Rochman Copyright 2006 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Horn Book Magazine September 1, 2006</p> <p>(Middle School, High School) McCormick's searing novel, told in a series of poetic vignettes, gives voice to a child forced into prostitution in India. Lakshmi, a thirteen-year-old girl from a poor mountain village in Nepal, thinks she is being hired as a maid when her stepfather ""trades"" her to a woman for eight hundred rupees. Thus</p>	

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begins a journey to the city, during which Lakshmi's naivet+ becomes heartbreakingly apparent. At one point her new ""auntie"" seems to sell her to a man who says she must call him her husband. As the payment changes hands, she thinks, ""I do not know what they have agreed to. / But I do know this: / he gives her nearly enough money to buy a water buffalo."" But Uncle Husband turns out to be just a middleman shepherding Lakshmi to Happiness House, where the colorful dresses, jewelry, and makeup worn by the girls there lead her to wonder if ""Happiness House is where the movie stars live."" Of course she soon learns the folly of this first impression. Lakshmi's education into prostitution at the hands of Happiness House's cruel madam, Mumtaz, is brutal. Readers will admire Lakshmi's bravery and be enormously relieved when she risks trusting the American man with ""the pink skin of a pig"" who promises to take her to a ""clean,"" safe place. (c) Copyright 2010. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. All rights reserved.

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Readers Notes:

The sexual and violent acts in the novel are kept to the minimal amount needed to demonstrate the horror that the character is experiencing. These instances lack vivid detail on the act, and instead focus on the pain being inflicted on the character. Far more time is spent musing on the character's attempts to maintain her humanity, hope, and dignity than is spent on the details of the assaults. **Taken as a whole, the novel does not appeal to prurient interests, is not patently offensive, and has serious artistic and political value.**

The author's motivation is to inform the reader of real events. The author maintains focus on the character's humanity and struggle for freedom and dignity.

The novel lacks any type of fetishization, demented appeal, or gruesome detail. Subjects are touched on in a sensitive way, and not written to cause severe discomfort within the reader or sick appeal to anyone who may be interested in such. The author actually writes disdain into the book, when talking about the old men who want the 12/13 year old narrator to be younger. As a global society I think we focus too much on the perpetrators and not the victims. Possibly due to morbid curiosity, possibly due to desensitization, with a mix of other factors. However I believe the author's goal in writing the novel was to make the reader aware of the issue of child sex trafficking, and that she chose to do so through the eyes of a victim in order to humanize the victim and bring the issue closer to come. I believe that the author fulfilled her purpose in writing the novel, and the novel is functional within its purpose. However, I suggest that the book, available at Walkersville Middle School, be restricted to students age 13 and above due to the fact that some content may not be known about or suitable for some younger readers.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Patricia McCormick
High School

This book has been Board approved to be used in Social Studies classes in high school and middle school. Requires parental permission when used for the curriculum.

Provide a brief summary of the book

- It is the story of a young girl sold into sexual slavery in Calcutta.
- There were three graphic scenes for impact, not meant to entice, arouse or excite in any way.
- Has very high social, literacy value.
- This book was written to combat human sex trafficking.

Highlight the concerns of the complainant

- Complainants stated concerns about aberrant sex acts, rape of a child, prostitution, explicit violence, threats, available to children as young as 11
- The sexual scenes are kept limited to provide emphasis. The story stays in the characters mind, not in the

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rapists mind.

- The author notates In the back of the book that she went to Nepal and India and spoke to children in these situations and then created a charity to help these children.
- This book was written to combat human sex trafficking.

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

- This character is trying to cope and recover. It is focused on her.
- The focus is on trying to be kind - not the focus of rape.
- This book was made into a movie and is rated PG-13.

Key questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School and Middle School.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Triangles: A Novel</i>
Author	Ellen Hopkins
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Complainants stated concerns about erotica, sexually obscene (sex in public), explicit sex acts, submitting to sex to avoid conflict, sadomasochism, drug use, sex with strangers.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 3 – “Once upon a time, I might have slid a leg up over Jace, reveled in the way he stirred, hot and hard before the rest of him surfaced from dreams.”</p> <p>Page 8 – “... as advertised by the twitch of his hard-on.” “I start to protest, to say something about having to change the sheets, but it's simpler just to give in for the ten whole minutes it will take to make him a satisfied man. And me a dutiful wife.” “I close my eyes he slips two fingers inside me.” “and when he pushes more than his fingers inside...”</p> <p>Pages: 12, 15, 17, 20, 26, 30, 32, 34, 36, 40, 53, 54, 56, 57, 70, 71, 77, 79, 92, 107, 112, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 128, 133, 135, 140, 148, 156, 159, 160, 161, 162, 168, 202, 210, 212, 215, 216, 217, 218, 221, 231, 240, 243, 245, 248, 255, 256, 300, 301, 304, 308, 311, 317, 323, 324, 332, 346, 358, 364, 366, 367, 368, 394, 395, 400, 424, 431, 438, 439, 440, 447, 452, 456, 458, 463, 480, 481, 486, 510,</p>	
<p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist September 15, 2011</p> <p>Young-adult novelist Hopkins (Crank, 2004) graduates to the grown-up leagues with her latest effort. She turns her gaze on the interwoven stories of three women approaching middle age, and though the book is notable for Hopkins' verse style of writing, it's actually a conventional read. Hopkins seems most intrigued with her least sympathetic character, Holly, a stay-at-home mom who's recently dropped 60 pounds and become overly enamored of the attention her new figure receives. She takes up erotic writing and research that includes dubious extramarital sexual encounters (allowing Hopkins to stretch her R-rated powers). Rounding out the titular triangle: Andrea, Holly's best friend, and Marissa, a pair of sad-sack sisters. Andrea is a single mother navigating the dating waters with limited success. Marissa is dealing with a gay son, a young daughter dying of a rare disease, and an emotionally and physically distant husband. It's a lot of plot to juggle, and in choosing to go wide, Hopkins doesn't go as deep as she might have. Any of the women Marissa, in particular could have carried her own novel.--Wetli, Patty Copyright 2010 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Library Journal March 1, 2012</p> <p>Holly, Andrea, and Marissa-intertwined and separated by blood, friendship, children, and husbands-take turns narrating their lives during one pivotal year. Marissa's daughter slowly dies while a child forms in the womb of Holly's daughter. Holly searches for personal fulfillment that leads her to an unknown world of erotic affairs. Meanwhile, best friend Andrea begins an affair with Holly's devoted husband. Over the course of the year, each</p>	

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woman matures and learns more about her own goals and capabilities. Short, anonymous meditations between each chapter may provide insight (or annoy) the listener. VERDICT The paper-doll characters are too self-absorbed to be likable, and the story is too predictable. The verse format used in the print version is lost in the oral reading. The narrators-January LaVoy, Jan Maxwell, Janel Maloney, and Michele Pawk-give well-measured, seamless performances. Sadly, their attractive voices do not make the book absorbing. For large fiction collections only. ["For popular collections, because there will be an audience," read the review of the Atria: S. & S. hc, LJ 9/1/11; the pb, also by Atria, will publish in June 2012.-Ed.]-Juleigh Muirhead Clark, Colonial Williamsburg Fdn. Lib., VA (c) Copyright 2012. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

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Readers Notes:

Summary: Three female friends are questioning their roles in their families and stations at a critical time in their lives, almost like a mid-life crisis. One woman's life is falling apart, one woman's is stagnant, and another is finding a new beginning. There are issues with children, husbands, and parents. All three women are becoming disconnected and reconnected with family and friends as they navigate the ups and downs of each other and where they find themselves. One thing they all will find separately is their meaning of friendship, betrayal and forgiveness that will bring them back to where they need to be.

All three characters in this story are great portrayals of real frustrations that some people may have in life and yes, some of the seemingly inappropriate ways that some people deal with their frustrations.

Ellen Hopkins is a bestselling author of several young adult novels. This is her first book targeted for the adult genre. She continues using her distinct writing style of poetic verse.

This is a story about three women who are connected through friendship and family. They are all mothers who are reaching middle age and are struggling with the internal and external conflicts that many face at this time in their lives. This is typically referred to as a mid-life crisis. One woman, Holly, has been in a loving marriage for almost 20 years. She is restless to find her own identity outside of the marriage and family. She wants to express herself and escape from her plain, vanilla life. She sheds 60 pounds, begins to receive outside validation for her new look; and finds herself seeking more and more of it. Due to this new admiration from men outside of her marriage, she decides she wants to become a writer of erotica and goes on a sexual journey through extra-marital affairs. The second woman, Andrea, is Holly's best friend. Andrea has been divorced for about 10 years from a selfish man, with whom she tries to co-parent her daughter. She works full time at a very boring job to make ends meet. She would love to have what Holly is trying to escape, devoted love from a hardworking and kind man. She can't understand why Holly would turn her back on her faithful husband to pursue such "lasciviousness." Andrea feels conflicted about with whom her loyalties should lie (Holly or Jace, Holly's husband). Marissa is Andrea's sister. She appears to be in a loveless marriage with a man who seems more enamored with his work than his family. She is being crushed under the stress of trying to care for their terminally ill daughter and navigate the challenges of having a gay, and very rebellious, teen son who is also trying to figure out his place in the world.

This is a story of connections and disconnections. The reader will feel immersed as these women experience friendship, love, loss, betrayal and forgiveness.

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value? Yes, the book is written in poetic verse and each of the main characters tells their story with the help of a narrator. This format keeps the reader engaged.

As with her previous works, Hopkins writes the entire novel in poetic verse. If this was her first novel writing in this style, it would have more artistic and literary value. There is nothing groundbreaking.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)? No, the book tells the story of several characters in a very raw manner in some instances. The storyline does not focus on the sexual activities of the characters but what occurs to drive them to do things they have never done before.

Yes. Although the erotica in this book is not randomly gratuitous, it is very prurient and sexy. It, as the reviews and author state, is intended to be her first novel out of the “young adult” genre and into the “adult” genre.

Based on the community standards, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way? No, I do not believe so. Reading the book would not lead the reader to engage in such activities. Some scenes are more vivid than others, but the story is not about the author trying to arouse her readers.

I believe the author attempts to keep the acts sexy without being blatantly shocking. This could be seen as a double-edged sword. It is written in such a way that could lead young readers to feel that some of the more sexually daring scenarios Holly engages in (e.g. group sex in a sex club) are simply sexy, healthy, and fun. No downside (other than the guilt she starts to feel after getting caught).

Is the book age appropriate? The book should remain on the shelves at a high school level. The many stories in the book are stories that a large number of kids may be dealing with. On page 506, Harley, a young lady getting ready to begin her freshman year in high school says to her mother, “. . . Why didn't you tell me? I had the right to say goodbye. God, Mom. I'm not a baby. I understand that people die. Why do adults try to hide the ugly stuff from their kids? People die. People fall out of love and get divorced. Or they fall out of love and stay together when it's obvious they shouldn't, like Bri's mom and dad. All they do is fight. It's stupid. . .”

Perhaps through Ellen Hopkins writing, one can find solace in that they are not alone. This is a fictitious piece of writing. Ellen Hopkins writes with real emotion and a lot of what she writes is based on real experiences she has dealt with.

No. The author clearly states that this book is a step away from “young adult” to “adult” genre. “Young adult” genre is typically written for audiences of 13-18. This book is clearly geared toward a mature audience, specifically middle-aged women (though not exclusively). Although there are some moments of contribution from experiences of the teens in this book, the subject matter is what mature adults face further into their lifespans. Hopkins has actually written a “young adult” version of this book called, Tilt, which is basically this same story, but told from the viewpoint of the teens. Both books can stand on their own (i.e. one doesn't need to read both to complete the story) and would be more appropriate for high school aged students. The sexual content is graphic enough that I would put this on par with Fifty Shades of Gray (which should also not be in a school libraries with minor children.

I think the prior readers did a great job of summarizing the book, the themes, the plot, and the artistic style. I will add some context about the legal tenets.

When considering the sexual content, the Supreme Court has applied the “obscenity” test to determine if something constitutes pornography. We are following the same obscenity test in our discussions.

From Miller v. California:

“Obscene materials are defined as those that the average person, applying contemporary community standards, find, taken as a whole, appeal to the prurient interest; that depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct or excretory functions specifically defined by applicable state law; and that the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.”

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I do not think this book constitutes obscene material/pornography. The sex scenes are not appealing to a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion. I think they depict normal, healthy sexual desires, which is not appealing to the “prurient” interest.

As to whether the book is age-appropriate, it’s important - I think - to remember that these books are self-selected by the students. Students who are not comfortable or ready to consume sexual materials are not likely to choose this book.

The sexual content must be balanced against the other messages in the book - the difficulty of relationships, having children, being a good friend, respecting people with disabilities, etc. To remove such a book (written in poetic form) from the library deprives students from seeing and experiencing these encouraging, sometimes challenging, stories. I would not remove it.

The previous reviewers have provided a comprehensive and accurate summary of the content, aligned to my reading experience. In response to the relevant legal tenets and the Reconsideration questions we are asked to consider:

1. Artistic Value - Yes, the novel has a compelling structure, impressive use of poetic devices to advance the narrative, and fascinating character development
2. Obscene Materials/Prurient interest/Intended to Arouse (Erotica)/Patently offensive - I do not believe that the sexual content of this novel is obscene, presented in a patently offensive way, or appealing to the prurient interest. I do believe that the sexual content is intended to arouse (erotica).
3. Age Appropriate - I do not believe that the novel is age appropriate. Reviewer has suggested that we should consider that these books are self-selected and assumes that students who are not ready to consume the content are not likely to choose this book. This is not the assessment we are asked to undertake. We have been asked to consider if the content is age appropriate and should be available for student self selection. The primary characters are adults, the plotline and primary themes of marriage/adultery/parenthood, loss of a child and professional and personal happiness at midlife are adult themes. These elements in combination with the sexual content and mature sexual themes lead me to the determination that it is not age appropriate.

I continue to struggle with the question: Is age inappropriateness reason enough to remove the novel/remove access to the content from the school library? If not, then the novel should remain.

This book clearly has literary value— the writing is beautiful and well thought out. The characters are compelling and interesting and the relationships between them are complex. However, I’m not sure that this makes sense to be in a high school library; it is clearly written for an adult, and has themes and content that adults would relate to including marriage & divorce, raising children, co-parenting, and work/life balance. That being said, there is nothing necessarily in it that would be problematic for a high school aged student to read— I don’t think the sex scenes are particularly graphic, for instance. But I really don’t imagine that a high school aged person would *want* to read this book, it isn’t very relatable. I don’t think this book needs to be removed from the library, but I’m honestly not sure why it’s there in the first place.

While I believe this book passes the Miller test, and is not too graphic or appealing to prurient interests, I don’t think it belongs in high school libraries because the characters are not relatable to high school students. The story is told from the perspectives of three 40-somethings, and no high school student wants to know what the world looks like according to their mothers. I like Ellen Hopkins books a lot, and have many of them in my library, but this book was written for an adult audience. Only one of our high schools has this book, so it would not be a big deal to remove it, and I would make it clear in this report if it IS removed that it was because the interest level is adult, not high school, and NOT because of the sex scenes.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Sub-committee Discussion: May 11, 2023

Provide a brief summary of book

- Writes in poet verse, her 1st targeted book for young adults.
- A story about three women meeting middle age and the struggles they face; mid-life crisis, seeking men outside of their marriage.
- One woman becomes an erotica writing, one seeks to have what her friend has, which is a faithful loving husband and the third is in a loveless marriage and crushed under stress of a terminal child.
- They experience love, loss, betrayal and forgiveness.
- Agreed with the summary and added that the book overall depicts inappropriate ways to deal with life's struggles.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, sexually obscene (sex in public), explicit sex acts, submitting to sex to avoid conflict, sadomasochism, drug use, sex with strangers.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets (3-5 minutes)

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, writes in poet verse and keeps writers engaged.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- One reader felt it did, the other did not.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- Yes, many kids deal with in their families but it was noted that another book by the author titled "Tilt" is written through the eyes of teens and more appropriate

Sub-Committee Recommendation: The two readers were split.

Vote Taken:

- 8 - Keep in high schools with no restrictions
- 6 - Remove
- *New Readers Assigned; further discussion recommended

Sub-committee Discussion: June 1, 2023

Ellen Hopkins
High School

Provide a brief summary of the book: Additional readers were assigned.

- First adult novel for this author.
- A story of three female friends dealing with conflicts (mid-life crisis.) Topics include absent husband as one character deals with a terminally ill child and a son who just came out as gay, another lost 60 lbs. and decides to become an erotica author and has several affairs and attends sex parlors, and the third character is a single mom looking for true love while taking care of a teenage daughter.
- The erotica author scenes are just one small piece of the story not the main focus.
- The writing of the characters was well done.
- The terminally ill daughter dies at the end. These are all real life issues that kids are dealing with . Beautiful human stories.

Request for Reconsideration Record

- Sexually explicit scenes.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, sexually obscene (sex in public), explicit sex acts, submitting to sex to avoid conflict, sadomasochism, drug use, sex with strangers.

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- Two readers felt yes, one reader did not and one is feeling mixed.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No, the author keeps it sexy but not shocking.

Is the book age appropriate?

- One reader felt yes, two no, one undecided (one reading joined the group late for the conversation but did add input and vote)

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Readers: One keep, three remove. Taken back to the full committee.

Vote to Remove:

- 4 - yes
- 8 - no
- 1 - abstain

Have this book reviewed by a full subcommittee of 11 readers.

Sub-committee Discussion: July 20, 2023

Ellen Hopkins
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- The story is written in a poetic manner from the perspective of 3 middle-aged women going through a midlife crisis; relationships with husbands, children, and career are at the center of the story. The book contains a number of sex scenes within the context of the lives of each of the three main characters.

Highlight the concerns of the complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about erotica, sexually obscene (sex in public), explicit sex acts, submitting to sex to avoid conflict, sadomasochism, drug use, sex with strangers.
- Written for adults, students want to read about teens/young adults and their experiences not adult contents and not interested in reading from an adult's perspective
- There is a student version and an adult version of this book. This is from an adult's point of view.
- Some committee members felt it had positive story lines, such as people with disabilities, and death and the grieving process.
- Our task is not to decide if they are interested or not, but do we believe we should have it available or removed
- Sexual scenes were intense.

Request for Reconsideration Record

Provide your analysis of the book in regard to the legal tenants

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes, the writing alone is unique and artistic. It shows how relationships intersect with a poetic voice.

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- It is intended to arouse but not in a prurient manner.

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

- No. A majority felt the narrative content addressed adult themes that were pervasive throughout the book.

Recommendation: Remove from circulation for age appropriateness of content and interest level.

Vote:

- Keep in high schools: 2
- Remove for age appropriateness of content and interest level: 9

Request for Reconsideration Record

Book Title	<i>Tricks</i>
Author	Ellen Hopkins
School Level	High School
<p>Complainant's overall concerns: Explicit sex acts, child rape and abuse, adult and child prostitution, erotica, drug abuse, alcohol abuse.</p> <p>Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern: Page 9 – "... why would God need a pecker anyway?"</p> <p>Page 33 – "Swollen with desire." "... I even got hard, ... dropped onto her knees, lowered my zipper, started to do what I never suspected she knew how to do. Yes..."</p> <p>Pages: 53, 55, 59, 63, 80, 82, 84, 89, 101, 105, 118, 139, 148, 164, 166, 168, 172, 175, 176, 177, 179, 196, 203, 224, 225, 235, 250, 251, 263, 266, 277, 280, 292, 299, 300, 310, 313, 315, 323, 327, 335, 340, 342, 348, 350, 360, 376, 377, 401, 402, 411, 413, 414, 415, 416, 418, 419, 420, 422, 424, 442, 444, 449, 451, 458, 471, 483, 488 or 489, 497, 500, 509, 516, 520, 524, 548, 563, 569, 571, 576, 580, 596, 600, 611, 616, 621, 623, 640, 652</p> <p>Complainants Verbal Testimony: No verbal testimony was offered specific to this book.</p>	
<p>Positive Reviews: Booklist August 1, 2009</p> <p>Five teenagers from all over the U.S. three girls, two boys, some straight, some gay end up as prostitutes in Las Vegas in this multiple-voiced novel in verse. Among the different stories are a preacher's daughter breaking free from abuse, a closeted gay young man who hides his love life from his widowed and homophobic father, and the lesbian daughter of a prostitute. Hopkins has never shied away from tough subjects; descriptions of sex, while not overly graphic, are realistic and will likely provoke controversy. A master of storytelling through free verse, she uses multiple poetic devices to construct well-defined, distinctive voices for the five teens. Like E. R. Frank's <i>Life Is Funny</i> (2000), the multiple protagonists are easy to identify and their stories compelling, especially when they begin to intersect. Teens will queue up for this one some, admittedly, for the sensational subject matter and find Hopkins' trademark empathy for teens in rough situations.--Carton, Debbie Copyright 2009 Booklist</p> <p>From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. Used with permission.</p> <p>Kirkus Reviews</p> <p>Hopkins sharply portrays extreme adolescent turbulence with her biggest cast yet, as five disparate, desperate teens are sucked into the Las Vegas world of selling sex. Indiana farm boy Seth is kicked off his family's farm for being gay; optionless, he follows a controlling sugar daddy to Vegas. In Boise, Eden's first romantic relationship spurs her "hellfire-and-brimstone-preaching" Pentecostal parents to declare, "You are obviously possessed by demons," and send her to Tears of Zion reform camp, where unwilling sex is her only hope for escape. In California, Whitney craves male attention, while Ginger realizes that the rapes she's endured throughout childhood were orchestrated by her mother for cash. Cody's in Vegas, already drugging and gambling but crushed when his stepfather dies. All five are "spinning. Spiraling. Clinging to / the eye of the tornado." Hopkins's pithy free verse reveals shards of emotion and quick glimpses of physical detail. It doesn't matter that the first-person voices blur, because the stories are distinct and unmistakable. Graphic sex, rape, drugs, bitter loneliness,</p>	

Request for Reconsideration Record

despair and eventually, blessedly, glimmers of hope. (Fiction. YA) Copyright Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

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Readers Notes:

- Heartbreaking assault, rape, using sex as a transaction- sometimes graphic.
- Las Vegas life.
- Main Characters all ages 14-18
- I would not classify it as erotica ... it is opposite.

Sub-committee Discussion:

Ellen Hopkins
High School

Provide a brief summary of book

- The book contains all of the things mentioned below. It is a heart breaking book. It is often graphic. Las Vegas lifestyles, using the body for sex, characters are between 14 and 18. Was troublesome to read. Her opinion is appropriate for high school, this is a sad book.
- Engrossing story about five different teenagers coming from different situations. One student realizes he is gay, one student's parents are extremely religious, one becomes addicted to drugs. They all end up in the same situation in a prostitution ring.
- The author writes about real issues that children are dealing with.
- It is a warning for students.

Highlight the concerns of complainants

- Complainants stated concerns about explicit sex acts, child rape and abuse, adult and child prostitution, erotica, drug abuse, alcohol abuse.

Specific excerpts/pages of book that created concern:

Page 9 – "... why would God need a pecker anyway?"

Page 33 – "Swollen with desire." "... I even got hard, ... dropped onto her knees, lowered my zipper, started to do what I never suspected she knew how to do. Yes..."

Pages: 53, 55, 59, 63, 80, 82, 84, 89, 101, 105, 118, 139, 148, 164, 166, 168, 172, 175, 176, 177, 179, 196, 203, 224, 225, 235, 250, 251, 263, 266, 277, 280, 292, 299, 300, 310, 313, 315, 323, 327, 335, 340, 342, 348, 350, 360, 376, 377, 401, 402, 411, 413, 414, 415, 416, 418, 419, 420, 422, 424, 442, 444, 449, 451, 458, 471, 483, 488 or 489, 497, 500, 509, 516, 520, 524, 548, 563, 569, 571, 576, 580, 596, 600, 611, 616, 621, 623, 640, 652

Provide your analysis on the book in regard to the legal tenets

Key Questions

Does the book have artistic, political, literary or scientific value?

- Yes

Based on the community standards, is the book prurient and intended to arouse (erotica)?

- No

Based on the community standard, does the book depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way?

- No

Is the book age appropriate?

Request for Reconsideration Record

- Yes

Sub-Committee Recommendation: Book should remain in circulation. High School only.

Submitted by Cindy Rose as a part of testimony - Thursday, March 23, 2023

CONTENT BASED RATING



0

For Everyone

Content is appropriate for all ages

- Mild Inexplicit Violence
- No Hate
- No Nudity
- No Profanity
- No References to Sexuality, Gender Ideologies, nor Sexual Activities
- No Drug or Alcohol Use

1

Child Guidance

Some Content may not be appropriate for very young children

- Mild Violence
- Mild/Infrequent Profanity
- Mild/Infrequent Hate
- Non-Sexual Nudity
- No References to Sexual Activities
- No Drug or Alcohol Use
- Inexplicit Sexuality
- Inexplicit Gender Ideologies

2

Teen Guidance

Some content may not be appropriate for children under 13.

- Moderate Violence
- Moderate Hate
- Moderate Profanity
- Inexplicit Sexual Nudity/Sexual Activities
- Drug or Alcohol Use
- Explicit Sexuality
- Explicit Gender Ideologies

3

Minor Restricted

Under 18 requires guidance of parent or guardian

- Excessive/Explicit Violence
- Extreme/Frequent Hate
- Excessive/Frequent Profanity
- Sexual Nudity
- References to Sexual Activities (NOT involving penetration, cunnilingus, fellatio, or ejaculation)
- Drug or Alcohol Abuse

4

No Minors

Adult content. No child under 18.

- Explicit Sexual Nudity (depictions of sexual organs in a state of arousal)
- Obscene References to Sexual Activities (involving anal, oral, or vaginal intercourse; fingering, anilingus, or ejaculation)

5

Aberrant Content

Adult only.

- Explicit References to Aberrant Sexual Activities (sexual assault/battery, bestiality, or sadomasochistic abuse)