

**NATIONAL
COALITION
AGAINST
CENSORSHIP** **KIDS'
RIGHT
TO READ**

August 18, 2022

Board of Trustees
Keller Independent School District
350 Keller Parkway
Keller, TX 76248

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

The National Coalition Against Censorship is an alliance of national nonprofit groups dedicated to protecting freedom of expression, including the rights of K-12 students, teachers and staff. We are writing in regard to reports that Keller ISD has ordered the removal of previously challenged books from school libraries and classrooms. This sudden decision, issued the day before the new school year begins, will adversely affect students' access to information. We call upon the school district to return the books to shelves immediately. If the books are subsequently challenged, they should remain available pending the outcome of a formal review.

As we understand it, the District has removed and is reconsidering any library book that has been challenged within the last year. This is concerning because those books have already been reviewed and approved by a reconsideration committee in accordance with Board Policy. Both the former policy, Policy EF(Local), and the current policy, Policy EFB(Local), state: "The major criterion for the final decision on challenged [resources] is the appropriateness of the resource for its intended educational use." The second reconsideration of these challenged materials raises suspicion that the books have been targeted due to the ideas expressed therein, in violation of both your policy and the First Amendment.

Removing these books also raises serious pedagogical concerns. The list of books being removed includes all versions of the Bible, classic works of literature like *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, and modern books like *Anne Frank's Diary (The Graphic Adaptation)*, *George* by Alex Gino, *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George Johnson, and *Weird Girl and What's His Name* by Meagen Brothers. Some students in your district may see themselves reflected in these characters and stories in ways that they do not often see in books. Other students may be exposed to lives and experiences they would not otherwise encounter. Hence, these books further the District's policy (AE Local), to instill "Respect for the diversity of our school community through a culture of understanding and personalized learning opportunities."

Therefore, we strongly urge you to reverse this decision and return all the books that were removed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Finan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Author's Guild
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
National Council of Teachers of English
Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators

A project of the National
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