

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

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American Booksellers for Free  
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Fund

April 24, 2019

Jeffrey Bender, Superintendent  
North Hunterdon-Voorhees School District  
1445 Route 31  
Annandale, NJ 08801

Sent via Electronic Mail to: [jbender@nhvweb.net](mailto:jbender@nhvweb.net)

Dear Superintendent Bender,

We write to express our concern that recent changes to Policy 2530, which govern the selection of instructional materials in classrooms and libraries, will heighten the risk of censorship in North Hunterdon-Voorhees district. This concern is aggravated by the fact that the policy changes were adopted shortly after the graphic novel *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* was returned to library shelves over your personal objections. We urge you to adopt policies designed to bolster rather than undermine free expression protections in your District. We are writing to offer you guidance in the design of such policies.

The original policy 2530 played a significant role in safeguarding NHV students' right to a broad and censorship-free education by entrusting trained librarians with book selection. This delegation of responsibility assured book selections were credibly rooted in sound pedagogical reasoning, rather than subjective opinion.

As worded, the current policy vests absolute authority in the sole person of the Superintendent to select and remove books without a review of their educational merits. This change may lead to a perception that decisions about instructional material will be made based on your subjecting opinion, rather than pedagogical goals. That perception is further supported by the fact that these amendments immediately followed your effort to remove *Fun Home* based on opinion about a single page, rather than a review of the book as a whole.

We strongly recommend that you restore credibility to the book selection process by delegating responsibility to librarians and teachers.

We also recommend that you reiterate your dedication to free expression. The new policy omits all references to free expression, including the Library Bill of Rights and NCTE Students Right to Read statements, which buttressed your district's commitment to intellectual freedom.

We hope you will consider the aforementioned points and our attached guidelines in rethinking the recent changes to Policy 2530.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further guidance. Thank you.

With warm regards,



Chris Finan, Executive Director  
National Coalition Against Censorship



Charles Brownstein, Executive Director  
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund



Millie Davis, Director  
Intellectual Freedom Center  
National Council of Teachers of English



Jeanne LoCicero, Legal Director  
American Civil Liberties Union  
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Fatima Shaikh, Co-Chair  
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