

NATIONAL
COALITION
AGAINST
CENSORSHIP

KIDS'
RIGHT
TO READ

November 8, 2021

Board of Education Members
Canyons School District
9361 S. 300 East
Sandy, Utah 84070

Re: Book Challenges

Dear Board Members:

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 the District's response to challenges to several award-winning books, including *The Bluest Eye*, *Beyond Magenta*, *Monday's Not Coming*, *Out of Darkness*, and *The Opposite of Innocent*.

It is our understanding that librarians have been ordered to remove those books from library shelves pending the outcome of challenges filed against them, despite the fact that the district's regulations forbid that. Policy 600.06-4, which was adopted just last year, states: "The material in question will remain in use during the challenge process." It is obviously improper for the District to ignore duly adopted Board rules and regulations.

These books are not of interest to every student. But if every library book is required to serve every student, the shelves would be bare. A library, including a school library, is meant to include a broad selection of books that provide value to students. These books do just that. *The Opposite of Innocent* is by award-winning author Sonya Sones, and *The Bluest Eye* was the first novel published by Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison. *Beyond Magenta* received praise-worthy recognition, including the Lambda Literary's Lammy for LGBT Children's/Young Adult Literature; it was also a National Council on Social Studies' Notable Book and an International Reading Association Notable Book for a Global Society. *Monday's Not Coming* was awarded the Coretta Scott King-John Steptoe Award for New Talent.

We ask that the District return all of these books to school libraries until the challenges have been adjudicated, and to instruct all District personnel to comply with District policies in the future.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: The Authors Guild
National Council of Teachers of English
PEN America
The PEN America Children's and Young Adult Books Committee
The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

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