

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

February 15, 2022

School Board
Siloam Springs School District
847 South Dogwood St
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Re: Removal of *Beyond Magenta*

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 to urge you to reconsider the Board's recent decision to remove Susan Kuklin's *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* from school libraries.

It is our understanding that the challenge to *Beyond Magenta* was initially referred to a review committee. Recognizing that book challenges are often highly contentious and emotional, the district's regulations require a formal review to ensure that all parties feel that they have been heard and respected. The regulations also ensure that decisions are made based on objective criteria which focus on the needs of students. Finally, the regulations state that review committees are composed of professional educators "with curriculum knowledge appropriate for the material being contested and representative of diverse viewpoints."

The review committee in this case examined *Beyond Magenta* and concluded that it should remain in the library. This is not surprising given the critical acclaim that it has received, including the 2014 Foreword INDIE for Young Adult Nonfiction, the 2015 Lambda Literary Award for LGBT Children's/Young Adult Literature, and the 2015 Bank Street College of Education's Flora Stieglitz Straus Award. It has been purchased by many school libraries.

The Board should be very hesitant to overrule the recommendations of a district review committee. Every book in a library is not right for every child, but the library as a whole should have books which appeal to each of the district's students. The district can certainly address the concerns of parents who oppose the book by allowing them to opt out of permitting their children to check out the book.

Therefore, we urge you to return *Beyond Magenta* to the shelves of your libraries.

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
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

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