

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

February 22, 2022

Board of Education  
Yorktown Central School District  
2725 Crompond Road  
Yorktown Heights, NY 105981

Re: Book challenge procedures

Dear 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 to urge you to amend your district's book challenge procedures to ensure that challenged books remain in library circulation while challenges are being adjudicated.

As you know, the district is currently adjudicating challenges to several titles. At the Board's meeting on February 7, Superintendent Hattar stated that the challenged books have been removed from shelves so that committee members can read them. Because committee members must read every book, it is likely that a large number of books, perhaps all, will be removed from the shelves of your libraries for a considerable period of time. As a result, the district's students will lose access to the books, merely because someone finds them objectionable.

The district's current policy denies students access to materials which your professional educators have deemed valuable. These practices also encourage large-scale and even bad faith challenges, because challengers who don't like certain books know that they can effectively remove them, at least temporarily, by filing challenges.

It is for those very reasons that many districts have enacted policies which explicitly require that challenged books remain in use pending the adjudication of challenges. We encourage the district to enact similar policies as soon as possible. Moreover, the district should make clear that challenged books should not be removed for committee members to read them, because doing so is unnecessary. For example, multiple copies of each of the currently challenged books are available in the Westchester Library System.

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  
                          National Council of Teachers of English  
                          PEN America  
                          PEN Children's and Young Adult Books Committee

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