

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

April 21, 2023

School Board
School District of Indian River County
6500 57th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32967

Dear Members of the School Board,

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 protest the removal of *Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation* from the Vero Beach High School Library.

As we understand it, the graphic novel was removed by the principal because it depicts Anne Frank walking in a garden that contains classical Greek and Roman statues of nude females. It seems problematic that a book about an important historical figure was removed because of a single illustration of classical sculpture. We understand that the principal acted on a complaint from a single individual.

This incident illustrates the problem with your recently amended policy, which allows principals to remove books without a formal challenge and without input from other education professionals or parents. Although it is possible that the value of a book is outweighed by other considerations, this is a decision that should be made only after all stakeholders have had a chance to review it.

When a decision is made by one person, it leaves the district open to suspicion that the individual has acted for improper reasons. The formation of a reevaluation committee helps ensure that book challenge decisions are made based on objective criteria which prioritize the needs of students and ensures that all parties viewpoints are recognized.

Therefore, we urge you to amend your policy to require that no book is removed without being formally reviewed. At that time, the decision to remove the graphic novel about Anne Frank, should be reconsidered.

NCAC has created a resource to help school officials address the problem of book challenges, *Material Review and Policy Guidelines and Examples*. It is attached.

Please contact us if we can be helpful.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Authors Guild
Children's and Young Adult Books Committee, PEN America
National Council of Teachers of English
PEN America

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