

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

April 17, 2023

Board of Directors
Maine School Administrative District #6
94 Main Street
Buxton, ME 04093

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

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 School Board's decision to temporarily remove eight books from the school library pending adjudication.

The District's current policy IJJ states that "No changes in access to, or removal of, educational materials will be made until the [challenge] procedure is completed." As we understand it, the board voted to suspend this policy in order to remove these books immediately.

The District's policy is very sound and suspending the policy for any specific book is unwise. A policy that requires books to remain on the shelf pending adjudication of challenges discourages people from filing meritless challenges for the sole purpose of limiting students' access to ideas they dislike. In addition to preserving students' rights to access information, your policy helps prevent District staff from spending exorbitant amounts of time adjudicating baseless claims. Therefore, it was inadvisable to suspend this policy.

Finally, as you know, challenges to educational materials are often emotionally charged. As a result, it is important that districts adjudicate challenges in a manner which ensures that all parties feel that their views have been considered and that decisions about educational material are made in an objective, nonpolitical manner. Making exceptions to district policy for specific books undermines that goal.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need any further support.

Thank you for your attention and consideration to this matter.

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

A project of the National
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