

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

April 6, 2022

School Board
Sioux City Community Schools
627 4th Street
Sioux City, IA 51101

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 your district's recent removal of Juno Dawson's *This Book is Gay* in violation of district regulations.

As we understand it, a social media post complained that *This Book is Gay* was available in the school library and "the district immediately removed the book," according to a district spokesperson. That action is in direct violation of the district's book challenge policies that state, "No duly selected material(s) whose appropriateness is challenged shall be removed from a library program except... upon the decision of a Reconsideration Committee."

Aside from violating board policy, this decision is unwise because challenges to educational materials are often highly contentious. 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. The district's current policy is well-crafted to address these concerns and ignoring it leaves the district open to suspicion that the district is acting improperly.

Finally, removing books without following the challenge procedures encourages others to file large-scale meritless challenges for the sole purpose of limiting students' access to ideas they dislike.

Therefore, we urge the Board to return the book to library shelves and to ensure that the proper reconsideration procedures are followed.

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

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