

**NATIONAL  
COALITION  
AGAINST  
CENSORSHIP**

**KIDS'  
RIGHT  
TO READ**

June 9, 2023

Board of Education  
Roxbury Public Schools  
42 N. Hillside Avenue,  
Succasunna, NJ 07876

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

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 have almost 50 years of experience advising school districts in developing best practices for adjudicating book challenges. We are writing to commend the board's recent decision to reject a motion to remove nine challenged books before they could be reviewed under your existing policy. We would also like to suggest two improvements in the policy.

During the recent wave of challenges to books in schools around the country, many school districts have abandoned their review policies and removed books before they were submitted to a reconsideration committee, depriving students of works that have been chosen for their educational value. We know the pressure that school districts face during these emotionally charged disputes. So we commend the board upholding a policy that protects the rights of students.

We also understand that there was public confusion whether the district had properly followed the review policy when two other books were recently challenged. We believe this can be avoided in the future by making two changes. Current policy requires a "statement of reasons" when a book is removed or limited, but not when it is retained. Also the policy requires that the review committee's report and the board's decision be given only to the complainant.

We recommend that you require a statement of reasons in all book challenge cases. We also suggest that the report and the board's actions be released to the public. Many districts post a spreadsheet of the status of all challenges on their website along with links to review committee documents. We believe these changes will underscore the district's commitment to an open review process, eliminating confusion and unnecessary controversy.

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 let us know if you have any questions or need any further support in this matter.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Finan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Christopher Finan  
Executive Director  
National Coalition Against Censorship

CC: Superintendent Dr. Loretta Radulic

A project of the National  
Coalition Against Censorship

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