WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS
SUBMITTED FOR THE MAY 13, 2025 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

1	From: Mark Harrison <kmharri4@gmail.com> Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 10:12 PM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Cc: kafoley <kafoley@gmail.com> Subject: Written Public Comments Submitted for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting Good evening, I am writing to you as I have heard a concerning rumor about a developing situation at Summerfield Elementary. This is in regards to removing a book (about 2 male penguins raising a child) from the multicultural bin. From what I understand, this is being spearheaded by a member of the staff whose responsibility is not to manage the curriculum or the media content of the school. Even more alarming, is that I'm hearing this is being done at the behest of a non-governmental organization ironically named "Moms for Liberty." My child has a classmate with same sex parents. Pulling this book would be tantamount to telling that child that people like them do not matter, or are not to be recognized or celebrated. This is unacceptable. The school has done too much work telling our children that their unique qualities make them special, not different. This member of the staff, and their various associates, have done enough to rile up the community and sow disharmony in other areas of Summerfield, I humbly request that you not allow them the opportunity to do that in our school as well. I will leave you with the words from the school motto. Something that my child was so proud to memorize, and has been repeating and living every day since they first started attending Summerfield Elementary: Stay safe Achieve excellence ***Insist on kindness**** Lead the way Thank you for your time, Mark Harrison
2	From: Dale Bodenheimer <kdpbodenheimer@gmail.com> Sent: Sunday, May 11, 2025 3:50 PM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Cc: Coates, David H <coatesd@gcsnc.com>; Superintendent <superintendent@gcsnc.com> Subject: Written Public Comments Submitted for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting To the Clerk of the Board,

	I'm submitting this public comment in case the issue of book removal or library content is raised at the upcoming meeting. I believe it's important to ensure all perspectives are represented. Dear Members of the School Board, I hope this message finds you well. I'm writing as a parent in the district who cares deeply about our children's education and the values we model for them as a community. Recently, I heard that certain books—such as *And Tango Makes Three*—are being considered for removal from the school library in Summerfield Elementary School. As a mother of two at SES, I understand the importance of being thoughtful about what our kids read. But I'm concerned that removing books from public school libraries, especially those that reflect the diversity of real families, is not in the best interest of our students. *And Tango Makes Three* tells the true story of two male penguins at the Central Park Zoo who form a family and raise a baby penguin together. It is gentle, age-appropriate, and affirming. Most importantly, it offers a window into the experiences of children who may have two moms or two dads, or who know someone who does. It also sends a quiet but powerful message: that love, family, and care take many forms. As a parent, I want my children to grow up knowing that they are part of a big, diverse world. I want them to see their own stories reflected in books—and to learn about the stories of others, too. That's how we raise curious, compassionate kids. Removing books like this one sends the message that some families are not appropriate to learn about, that some people should be hidden or ignored. I don't believe that's the message our school board wants to send. Book bans don't protect children—they limit them. And banning *one* book opens the door to banning many more. Who gets to decide what is "acceptable"? And where does it stop? I respectfully urge you to keep our libraries inclusive, diverse, and reflective of the real world our children are growing up in. Let parents continue to decide what's right for their own children—but let the library remain a place where *all* students can find themselves, and learn about others. Thank you for your time, and for your service to our schools. Warmly, Kathryn Dale Bodenheimer
3	From: Michael Goins <michael.ataraxia@gmail.com> Sent: Sunday, May 11, 2025 9:18 PM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS 5/13/2025 Good afternoon,

	My name is Michael Goins and I am writing in advance of the Guilford County school board meeting. I understand that some people have concerns about certain books being in our schools. The book in question, as I understand it, is "And Tango Makes Three." While books like this have themes that may not be universal to everyone, I don't believe that we should remove them from schools. Quite the opposite! I would go so far as to suggest that books like this become required reading. There are families just like the one described in "And Tango Makes Three" in our community. And I believe it is beneficial to the children of those families to see themselves represented in a positive way. Beyond that, I also strongly believe that allowing other kids to see and read books like this - the kind that introduces them to family dynamics different from their own - is extremely important. Encountering other families, other cultures, and other human experiences are crucial to raising a future generation of people who are kind and accepting of their neighbors. Thank you for your time, Michael Goins
4	From: Katie Kirkpatrick <kkirkpatrick2965@gmail.com> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 7:24 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Public comments 5/12/25 I know most members of this BOE stand strong under pressure from Moms For Liberty and other groups wishing to strip students, faculty and staff of basic rights and dignities. I continue to support these efforts and encourage you to hold the line as you face pressure to ban certain books from our school libraries. Thank you for your strength and integrity. Kathy Kirkpatrick, Chair Democratic Party of Guilford County
5	From: Kristen King <kristenkking@yahoo.com> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 10:11 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS - May 12, 2025 To the Members of the School Board, I am writing to express my deep concern regarding efforts to ban books within our school district. While I understand the desire of some to ensure age-appropriate content, I believe that restricting access to books is a slippery slope that undermines education, personal growth, and the very values of critical thinking we aim to instill in our students. Books open doors. They allow young people to explore different perspectives, cultures, identities, and historical contexts. They offer the chance to question, to empathize, and

	to grow. Shielding students from complex topics does not protect them—it limits their ability to understand the world and develop into thoughtful, informed citizens. What concerns me most is the subjectivity involved in deciding which books are "appropriate." Without clear, consistent, and inclusive guidelines, we risk allowing personal biases to shape what is available to all. This creates a chilling effect on education and undermines trust in our schools as places of intellectual freedom. I urge the board to adopt policies that protect students' right to read, ensure parental choice without removing access for all, and support the professional judgment of educators and librarians. Let's empower families to make decisions for their own children without taking books away from everyone else. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the education and development of our children. Sincerely, Kristen King Greensboro, NC
6	From: Patricia Sterling <patsterling@hotmail.com> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 10:50 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Written Public Comments Submitted for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting To the Clerk of the Board, This is a public comment opposing any action to restrict or ban books in our District. I am submitting this in the event the issue of book removal or library content is raised at the upcoming meeting. Guilford County School District Dear Members of the Board of Education: I write to oppose efforts to remove or restrict student access to *And Tango Makes Three*, by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, in schools in Guilford County. I understand that this, and other inclusive story books currently cataloged in the library are being challenged by Mom's for Liberty. *And Tango Makes Three* is a highly acclaimed children's book based on a true story of two male penguins parenting a chick. The American Library Association honored it as a Notable Children's Book in 2006, and it was a finalist for the 2006 Lambda Literary Award. An excerpt from *School Library Journal* reads. "This joyful story about the meaning of family is a must for any library." Guilford County has an obligation to provide a well balanced collection of books for all children and see to it that books are only removed for pedagogical or legally sufficient reasons. Content should never be removed or restricted for ideological reasons. **School officials are bound by constitutional considerations, including a duty not to give in to pressure to suppress unpopular ideas or controversial lifestyles.**

	The Supreme Court has cautioned that school officials "may not remove books from library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to 'prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'" *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, 872 (1982)(plurality opinion). This constitutional duty applies with particular force in the school library, which has "a special role…as a place where students may freely and voluntarily explore diverse topics." *Campbell v. St. Tammany Parish School Board*, 64 F. 3d 184, 190 (5th Cir. 1995). The role of the library is to allow students and parents to make choices according to their own interests, experiences, and family values. **The practical effect of consenting to any request restricting access to materials will be to invite others to demand changes to reflect their beliefs and to leave school officials vulnerable to multiple, possibly conflicting, demands.** I respectfully, but strongly, urge you to keep *And Tango Makes Three* available to Guilford County schools. Any other decision threatens the principles that are essential to our children's freedom, democracy, and a good education: the right to read, inquire, question, and think for themselves. Thank you for your time. Mom of 4 students enrolled in Summerfield Elementary School, Pat Sterling
7	From: Brang Aung <btal10227@gmail.com> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 4:52 PM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Written Public Comments Submitted for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting My name is Brang Aung, and I'm a student at Southwest Guilford High School. I'm also a member of HOSA—Future Health Professionals—and a member of my student-led group, Breath of Hope. I'm submitting this public comment today because I believe our schools are missing a critical opportunity to protect the health of students. It feels like Guilford County Schools has quietly given up on truly tackling the vaping crisis. Yes, I know there are programs and policies in place to address this issue, but I can tell you from firsthand experience—and from talking with other students—that we aren't seeing them implemented. There's little to no real education happening in the classrooms about the dangers of vaping, and even less discussion about how it connects to serious conditions like lung cancer. The only classes where students learn about these topics are health science or other specialized electives, but those classes only reach a small percentage of the student body. That means the majority of our classmates go through high school without ever hearing a clear message about what vaping can do to their lungs, their hearts, or their futures.

	Punishments and policies are in place if someone gets caught with a vape, but those responses are mostly about discipline, not prevention. We need to shift the focus from punishment to awareness, because that's what truly makes an impact. I'm urging you to consider ways we can bring education about vaping and lung health into every student's experience, not just those who choose a certain pathway. Awareness shouldn't be optional. It should be part of how we care for every student in Guilford County. Thank you.
8	From: Laurie Steele <lcsteele0@gmail.com> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 10:25 PM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Public comments Dear Members of the School Board, I am writing to you as a concerned community member and a proud ally of the LGBTQ+ community. I want to respectfully urge the board not to move forward with any proposal to ban books from our school libraries or classrooms. Books play a vital role in helping students understand the world in which they live. They foster empathy, expand perspectives, and reflect diversity. Every family should have the freedom to decide what is appropriate for their OWN children, but no one family or organization should be able to make that decision for everyone else. Removing books from schools takes that choice away from many. Titles such as *And Tango Makes Three*, which tells the TRUE story of two male penguins raising a chick together, offer age-appropriate and meaningful ways to discuss family diversity. These stories help students from all backgrounds see themselves and others in the pages they read. What message are we sending to children who come from LGBTQ families, or who may be part of the LGBTQ community themselves, if we say their stories are not welcome in our schools? The reality is that children will encounter different family structures and identities among their classmates, neighbors, and friends. Shielding them from inclusive stories does not change that fact, it only increases the risk of shame, confusion, or exclusion for those who are different. Our goal as educators, parents, and community members should be to create environments where all students feel seen, respected, and safe. I believe our focus should be on promoting critical thinking, empathy, and a love of learning not on restricting access to books that some deem inappropriate or pushing agendas. There are many pressing challenges facing our schools that deserve attention such as supporting teachers, improving mental health resources, addressing learning gaps, and ensuring each child has access to quality education. Banning books distracts from these urgent priorities. Thank you for your time, and for your service to our schools.

	Sincerely, Laurie Steele PFLAG National member She/Her/Hers
9	From: Sara Passey <saracpassey@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 7:04 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT 5/13/25 I'm writing to express my strong support for keeping books that represent all families in our school libraries. Every student deserves to see their life, their family, and their identity reflected in the stories available to them. Our school libraries should be places of learning, curiosity, and inclusion—where children from all backgrounds, including LGBTQ+ families, single-parent homes, blended families, adoptive families, and more, feel seen and valued. I also want to speak to the concerns raised under the Parents' Bill of Rights. I fully support parents being involved in their children's education. That involvement is essential. But honoring parental rights should not mean erasing the stories of other children or limiting what all students can access. One family's values should not determine what *every* child is allowed to read. Providing books that reflect diverse families does not infringe on anyone's rights—it protects the right of every child to feel safe, included, and understood. Parents already have tools to guide their own child's reading choices. What we should not do is ban or restrict books that represent real people and real families who are part of our school communities. Let's uphold the spirit of the Parents' Bill of Rights while continuing to build inclusive libraries that serve and reflect *all* our students. Thank you. Sara Passey
10	From: Sabrina Tryka <sltryka@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 7:28 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS 5/12/2025 For 48 years Madison Elementary has been servicing a rural, underprivileged area. This school has created a safe, nurturing environment for our children who desperately need this step up in life to help them thrive. The educators and administrators in this building have dedicated their lives to this community and to our children, and to rip that away from them and our kids is cruel. Closing this school will harm the children in this community who have depended on this structure for decades. You are displacing incredible teachers, incredible administrative

	staff, incredible nurturers, just to save a little money at the expense of our children who already are disadvantaged in life. Our entire community is devastated. As you sit here re drawing district lines, leaving parents up in the air as to their child's futures, adding kids to a busing system that is already over maxed and understaffed that used to be car riders, adding time spent on busses moving more kids for more miles, forcing amazing educators into chaos and some into early retirement, adding kids to already maxed out classrooms with higher student to teacher ratios, I hope you consider the lives you are impacting today with this decision. Sincerely, a very concerned mother, Sabrina Tryka
11	From: Sean Farrell <sean.farrell@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 8:03 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Public Comments 5/13/25 I wish to respond to expected comments from [redacted] regarding the proposed banning of certain books from the Summerfield school library that promote inclusive values. As a resident of Guilford County and father of a high school student, I want to state that I am categorically against banning books that are deemed 'unsuitable' by a minority of individuals attempting to spread intolerant values that result in the devaluation of human beings that are frequently and consistently subject to violence and hate for no reason other than existing. These books are not harmful and should not be removed. *Sean Farrell*
12	From: Anne Beatty <jayanepal@yahoo.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 8:16 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS 5/13/2025 Dear Guilford County Board of Education members, Thank you for all you are doing to lead our school district this year, especially given the challenging budget decisions that must be made, both at the county and district level. I realize these decisions about what to fund, and how, are complicated, and you will have to make difficult choices between multiple worthy agendas. I would like to encourage you to continue to prioritize equity and the need to redress historical injustices as you make these difficult decisions. We have a responsibility as a county to do the best we can by *all* children, not just those coming from communities with the most resources and--sometimes-- the loudest voices. I would also like to commend you for your past commitment to supporting the freedom of our students to read a wide variety of books that reflect a wide variety of experiences. Some members of our community would like to restrict the books available to children in GCS. While of course any parent has the right to determine the books their own child reads (and at what age), no parent should have the right to

	determine the books that every child reads. Such decisions should be left to the professionals in our classrooms and media centers, with every parent a part of the conversation for their own child. As a parent of children in GCS, and a GCS teacher myself, I can vouch for the wide array of viewpoints in this district. We need age-appropriate books available to children that reflect these varied perspectives for many reasons, but one of the most important is that such books foster less fear and more understanding of people whose lives might be very different from our own. Sincerely, Anne Beatty
13	From: Beth Farrell <bfarrell326@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 8:16 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Public Comments 5/13/25 My daughter is graduating from Guilford County schools this year. The summer before she started middle school we moved so that she could attend school in Guilford County. The first criteria we had for our home purchase was the school district. We wanted her to have the expanded opportunities that Guilford County schools could offer. We wanted her to be part of a diverse student body that would expand her views and prepare her for the world she will live in and hoped she would get the tools to thrive. We have been nothing but pleased with the education she has received both academically and socially. The last thing Guilford County schools should entertain is removing book's from students, teachers or school libraries. This harms our children and lessens their preparation for the world they are entering. When individuals or groups with personal and political agendas are allowed to limit our children's resources they are not exercising their rights but trampling the rights of our children. Beth Farrell
14	From: Heather McKay <hlmckay2003@yahoo.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 8:35 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Public Comments 5/13/25 I implore the Board to resist efforts to ban books in our schools. Many of the titles in question have stories and characters that our students can relate to, and represent the diverse population in the GCS community. I trust that our librarians, media center staff, and teachers strive to make selections that appeal to a broad range of interests, experiences, and backgrounds while simultaneously being age appropriate. Let them do what they are trained to do, and let them choose books that represent our community. Thank you, Heather McKay
15	From: Bradley Davis-Rogozinski <bradleyjdrogo@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 10:16 AM To: Nolen, Lisa <nolenl@gcsnc.com> Subject: Re: Speaker May 13 Meeting

"Reimagining School Commutes: Creating Safe Routes for All Students"

- Greetings from *Bradley J Rogozinski* parent of a Freshman @ Grimsley
- Spoke @ November 12 meeting during Public Comments addressing the concerns listed below:

The Problem

- Key statistic: Only 700 (guesstimate) out of 70,000 students walk or bike to school. That's just 1%.
- Comparison: National average is closer to 10-15%
- Impacts: traffic congestion, health risks, lost independence, equity gaps

Why This Matters

- Health: Physical activity boosts academic performance and reduces obesity
- Safety: Safer streets benefit everyone, not just students
- Environment: Less traffic, less pollution
- Equity: Many families lack access to private transportation

What's Preventing Students from Walking or Biking?

- Unsafe intersections or lack of sidewalks
- Long distances with limited Greenways combined with Traffic volume near schools
- No encouragement or organized programs-initiated district-wide

Proposed Solution

- Form a districtwide "Safe Routes to School" Task Force
- Fund a feasibility study to:
    - Map school walk zones
    - Identify infrastructure needs
    - Prioritize improvements
- Pilot "Walking School Bus" or "Bike Train" programs in 2–3 schools
- Host annual "Walk to School Day" with incentives and tracking

Success Stories from Other Cities

- Portland, OR: Walking rates doubled after Safe Routes program
- Charlotte, NC: Walking school bus led to permanent infrastructure upgrades
- Chapel Hill, NC: District/City collaboration led to new sidewalks and signage

How This Helps the District

- Improved student health and performance
- Reduced drop-off and pick-up traffic chaos
- Safer, more connected communities and Stronger school-community relationships

Funding Opportunities

- NC DOT Safe Routes to School grants
- Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Local public health or MPO funding opportunities

Call to Action

- Form a working group with district staff, families, and planners

	• Approve a Safe Routes pilot initiative for 2025–26 school year • Direct facilities staff to identify 3 schools for safe infrastructure review
16	From: Cathleen Kruska <kruskac@sandhills.edu> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:48 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Comments for Board of Education Members - May 13, 2025 To our Superintendent of Schools and to ALL Guilford County Board of Education members: Good morning. My name is Cathy Kruska, and thank you for the opportunity to send my thoughts to you today. I recently learned that you may receive comments at the Board of Education meeting tonight from a group of people wanting you to ban the book, “and Tango makes three” in our elementary schools in Guilford County. I cannot express strongly enough how the very idea of banning this book, or any book, is abhorrent. This special children’s book is an adorable story with a beautiful message of inclusiveness for children living in all kinds of families! It should not be banned. In fact, it should be promoted as valuable children’s literature and read in the classrooms to spark discussions among the children themselves for empathy and understanding. I have two grandchildren in our schools, a BA in English and an MA in Communication, so I want to stand up for the right for ALL children to have access to books – of all kinds – that are age appropriate as identified by our HIGHLY qualified school librarians and teachers. Banning one book leads to a *slippery slope* for banning more books. Please, remain strong. You know that banning a book is wrong. Thank you, Cathleen C. Kruska
17	From: Sarah Blackwood <saraheblackwood1016@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 10:01 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Written Public Comments Submitted for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting My name is Sarah Blackwood, and I have two children in the GCS system. At this time I would simply like to express my support of the criteria for selection of educational resources. I would also like to express support for the process for the statement of concern about educational resources. I do not think that there is any situation whatsoever that merits evading that process. I do not think that any parent should be permitted to personally have any control over the removal of books from a school library, with the exception of being able to submit the statement of concern form. I trust GCS to provide appropriate material for my child, and I would be highly concerned if any parent was granted preferential treatment in terms of participating in the decision making in that area.

	On a more specific note, I am also fully supportive of any materials that portray gay or transgender characters. Thank you, Sarah Blackwood
18	From: nathanael markham <nathanaelmarkham1@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 10:15 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS 5/13 My name is Nathanael Markham, I am a full-time dad of an amazing 15-year-old. I also happen to be gay. I am directing this message to [redacted] No one has a monopoly on decency or what constitutes a family. The book you are angry about, *And Tango Makes Three,* Is not only scientifically accurate in that a same sex penguin couple will raise a chick together, it's also a cute book. In the name of family values we must ask, whose family? All of our families are equally important and deserving of respect, even if we don't fit the narrow view held by [redacted]. - Nathanael Markham
19	From: DeAnne Snider <deannesnider@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:37 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Protecting knowledge and individuality To whom it may concern, Every human that makes up our society (locally and globally) has a value. They offer individual contributions that insure the authentic expressions of the beautiful diversity of our community. I am writing this to urge you to protect and support LGBTQ teachers and kids. They are loving, creative, capable and EQUAL contributors to every aspect of our lives. Awareness, knowledge, and protection of authentic self expression is a necessary thing in any society and banning books just encourages closed minded thinking. Hate and forced conformity have no place in our schools. The banning of a children's book is negative messaging to our children. Conservative, religious judgements do not have a place in our education system. Religious beliefs and traditions that reflect those ideologies belong in churches, not schools. PLEASE DO NOT LIMIT access to the knowledge of what makes our diverse humanity so wonderful! Taking away the rights of some, in small parts and pieces, will certainly hurt the whole. PLEASE CHOOSE TO PROTECT AND PROVIDE FOR ALL OF HUMAN BEINGS... NOT JUST SOME OF THEM. Respectfully, De Snider
20	From: Sarah S. <hens.smith@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:47 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Written Public Comments Submitted for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting

	Sarah Smith 7904 Winterbourne Drive Summerfield, NC 27358 May 13, 2025 Dear Board Members, I have two children at Summerfield Elementary School. I am writing as a concerned parent and community member to express my deep concern over rumors that the "Moms for Liberty" want to exclude books from our school's new multicultural book collection, as well as, possibly, the library. Books are essential to building children's understanding of the world and helping them develop empathy and critical thinking skills. Removing access to diverse books deprives children of the opportunity to engage with ideas beyond their immediate experience. When we limit what children can read, we also limit their ability to develop empathy for other people and impede their intellectual and emotional growth. I take a lot of pride in the emphasis that Summerfield Elementary places on encouraging its students to have a strong sense of community and to practice kindness. Allowing a vocal minority of community members to censor books at our school is antithetical to our school's core identity as a public school that welcomes everyone and wants all children to know they belong. While I understand that not every book is appropriate for every age group, I believe that professional educators and librarians are best suited to guide those decisions—not small, strongly partisan outside groups. Parents already have the right to guide their own child's reading choices, but that right should not extend to making decisions for all students, many of whom may benefit greatly from seeing their own life experiences reflected in literature. Thank you for your time and for your continued dedication to providing a high-quality education to all students. I respectfully ask that you consider this perspective in any discussions or policies involving book access at Summerfield Elementary School or in Guilford County more generally. Sincerely, Sarah H. Smith
21	From: Lizzie Biddle <esbiddle@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:49 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Public Comments - 5/13/25 For public comments, Board of Education Members - stay the course for equity! While you make difficult decisions, on the budget, on staffing, on school construction, on implementing new policies, stay the course for equity.

	A friend recently shared this quote from Pope Francis: “Dare to create something new, reject a strain of selfishness fed by a distorted ideology of personal freedom.” May you continue to work for the common good and continue to reject racism, classism, and homophobia disguised as personal freedom. Thank you for all that you do for our students, our staff, and our broader community. Lizzie Biddle
22	From: Briana Miller <bmiller43@elon.edu> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:57 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS Good Morning, As a concerned parent of two GCS students, I strongly oppose the efforts to ban LGBTQ-themed books from our classrooms and libraries. These censorship campaigns are not about protecting children—they are about erasing the experiences and identities of LGBTQ students and families. In 2024, nearly 40% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide. Representation matters. When students see diverse identities reflected in literature, it fosters empathy, self-understanding, and a more inclusive school environment. Removing these books sends a dangerous message: that LGBTQ lives are inappropriate or shameful. This is not only harmful—it’s discriminatory. Our public schools should be places of learning, inclusion, and support for *all* students. That includes those who are LGBTQ and those who come from LGBTQ families. Silencing these stories undermines educational freedom and disrespects the professional judgment of teachers and librarians. We must stand against ideologically driven book bans and affirm that all students deserve to see themselves in the curriculum. I urge our district to reject these efforts and uphold policies that support diversity, equity, and academic freedom. Thank you very much, Briana Miller
23	From: Olivia Hughes <ohughes3@elon.edu> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:57 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS Dear GCS School Board, I’m writing as a concerned parent and former GCS teacher to express my strong opposition to any efforts to ban books from our school libraries, especially those that reflect LGBTQ+ lives and experiences.

	Books are not threats; they are mirrors and windows. For some students, a book might be the first time they see themselves represented. For others, it might be their first real opportunity to understand someone else's life. Removing those stories sends a clear and harmful message: that certain students, identities, or families don't belong in our schools. That message contradicts the values of inclusion, empathy, and critical thinking that public education should uphold. We need to protect spaces where stories can be shared, especially those that some might try to silence. I urge the board to affirm its support for LGBTQ+ students, teachers, and families by rejecting censorship and protecting access to diverse, age-appropriate literature. Our schools should be places where all students feel seen, valued, and free to explore the full range of human experiences. Sincerely, Olivia Hughes Parent
24	From: Ryan A <rymras@gmail.com> Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:57 AM To: GCS Board Clerk <boardclerk@gcsnc.com> Subject: Written Public Comments for the 5/13/2025 BOE Meeting My son is a student at Summerfield Elementary. When I came to this community I was pleasantly surprised with the amount of diversity within in the school and the celebration of different cultures during school events. However, some disturbing things have happened that make me question the professionalism of some of its teachers. Last year, his first grade teacher told him she didn't believe in dinosaurs. Later, she told him that she didn't want to teach about the Greek gods because there is only one god. So in first grade, it became evident that I needed to teach my son about ignorance, because it was now a part of his life. I explained in this case, ignorance wasn't a lack of knowledge, but the belief that your knowledge is absolute, and nothing else can be true. And sometimes it can be from one's interpretation of their religion. I just found out that Moms of Liberty would like to remove a book, "Tango Makes Three," from the library. The treasurer of this group is one of my son's teachers, [redacted]. So, I explained to my son yesterday, that there are different types of ignorance. The teacher who wanted to teach you about her god and that dinosaurs didn't exist, was a kind of ignorance that may not necessarily hurt people. However, I explained that [redacted] group is involved in a type of ignorance that leads to intolerance. And intolerance leads to hate, and hate to violence. I told him that children learn about dinosaurs from books, movies, and teachers because they are extinct and you can't be exposed to them. However, there are

families in Summerfield, that have two fathers or two mothers. Children are exposed to these types of families at school events, birthday parties, and little league. So, book or no book, kids are learning through exposure, and we can assist them with teaching acceptance, tolerance, and love. Tango Makes Three, sends the message that families which are set up a little differently are ok.

And when you don't teach tolerance, then you welcome intolerance, then hate, then violence.

I don't know if this group and Summerfield teacher [redacted] are upset that tolerance is being taught, or something ridiculous, like a book can turn children into something that they don't find acceptable in society.

Summerfield elementary has forced my hand to teach my son about ignorance, intolerance, and hate at a young age. This week he lost a trusted adult at his school, but gained a valuable lesson.

So, the next time [redacted] opens the car door for my son at pick up, he will not look angrily at a bully, but pity the person who lacks wisdom and tolerance.

The attempt to remove this book from a public school library is an attempt to remove the acceptance of this group from the public.

The story of Tango is based on a true story, about two male penguins at a zoo that take care of an egg. If acceptance and tolerance is obscene or pornographic, then I am in the wrong, and yet a bit confused.

Mom's of Liberty has publicly quoted Hitler, and then defended their use of it. To paraphrase, who ever controls the youth, controls the future.

So, I'm going to quote Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

Mom's of Liberty is classified as an extremist antigovernment group. The single video on the homepage highlights testimonials. The first is an elementary teacher/member who says the group is "an advocate for truth." Nazis are also an extremist antigovernment group, yet I would not find it acceptable for a member to be a teacher and trusted adult at my son's school teaching him right from wrong.