

Reconsideration Appeal: Teaching and Learning Services Advisory Committee

The Teaching and Learning Services Advisory Committee reviewed the building review committee decision along with the complainant's appeal information on Jan. 27, 2022. The Teaching and Learning Services Committee upheld the decision of the building review committee by a majority vote to retain the book as recommended by the Review Committee. 8 members voted to retain. 1 member voted to withdraw all or part of the material or and 1 member voted to limit the educational use of the challenged material.

1. Review and discuss the Review Committee's recommendation

- This was specific to VSW. There are other books being reviewed in other buildings.
- Just seeing the pictures is very different from reading the book. There is value for our LGBTQ students in having access to this book considering the challenges they are facing in addition to possibly not having support from their families.
- Looking at the images alone completely takes it out of context and the purpose of the book. Reading it cover to cover you understand that it is a coming of age story.
- This is a story that students can connect to, about adolescent development, a sense of belonging, connecting to others, healthy relationships, the topic of consent.
- Students need to be connected to school, and a book like this could help students feel that sense of belonging.
- Important to also consider the educational program around gender fluidity. What else is included within the curriculum about this topic. This book talks about biology, being an outsider, being excluded. It challenges us as a system to think differently. What might be other opportunities within health and SEL instruction for educational opportunities around these topics in addition to healthy relationships and consent.
- The book talks about consent. What kind of vocabulary do we have around consent? Experience someone feeling uncomfortable, stop at this place. These are conversations that we need to have at an early age.
- We have a lot of student clubs as well where kids can advocate and find connection

2. Review and discuss the appeal

- The first part of the appeal references the policy and is not part of the book recommendation. That is a policy committee decision and this will be one of the

policies that we will review at the committee level when it is time to review the 600 series.

- There are parents that do want their kids to have access to these types of books, if parents want to limit what their child checks out they can notify the school and the teacher librarian and limit what is available to their child.
- Iowa Code 728.1.5 talks about obscene material and defines that "...taking the material as a whole and applying contemporary community standards... would find appeals to the prurient interest and is patently offensive;" this text as a whole is autobiographical. It is a memoir and the purpose is not excessive interest in sexual matters.