



49 Charles Avenue Middlebury, VT 05753 P. 802-382-1274 F.802-388-0024 Business Office 802-382-1274 Student Services 802-382-1287

December 11, 2024

Marina Brown
catskillmarina@gmail.com

Dear Marina,

Your public records request, received on 12/9/24, to view all documents pertaining to book challenges between 8/26/24 and the present has been compiled and is enclosed.

All student names have been redacted to comply with FERPA.

Please let us know if there is anything else you need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy K. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Wendy K. Baker, Ed.D
ACSD Superintendent

From: Wendy Baker <wbaker@acsdvt.org>
Sent: 12/9/2024 7:06:49 AM
To: "Marina Brown" <catskillmarina@gmail.com>
Cc: "Darcie Arensmeyer" <darensmeyer@acsdvt.org>
Subject: RE: PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST - Book Challenges

Good morning, Marina.

We are receipt of your request as of this morning. We have until end of day Wednesday, 12/11 and believe we will meet that timeline. The materials will be ready for pick up in our office after 2:00pm.

Darcie Arensmeyer will be in contact with you shortly.

-Wendy

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 6, 2024, at 10:45 PM, Marina Brown wrote:

Dear Superintendent Baker:

You can limit the scope of the request to all records between August 26 2024 and the present.

--- Marina Brown

On 12/6/24 22:43, Marina Brown wrote:

Under the Vermont Public Records Law, AS315 et seq., I am requesting an opportunity to inspect or obtain copies of records of the following:

All documents pertaining to book challenges including but not limited to:

They He She Me: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew

Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder

It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn

Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love

Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton

Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman

Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

If this document is redacted I am requesting a justification referring

to the public records law for each and every line that is redacted. If

you deny access to these materials the public needs to know this

and it deserves to know the specifics.

If there are any fees for searching or copying these records, please inform me if the cost will exceed

\$20. However, I would also like to request a waiver of all fees in that the disclosure of the requested

information is in the public interest and will contribute significantly to the public's understanding of

the advocacy of censorship in VT.

If this document is redacted I am requesting a justification referring

to the public records law for each and every line that is redacted. If

you deny access to these records or if you redact these records I request an enumeration and

explanation of all redactions. The public needs to know this and it deserves to know the specifics.

I am a citizen journalist who is gathering this information in the public interest. This information is

not being sought for commercial purposes however it may be shared with commercial media.

The law requires a response to this request within 2 days, or within 10 days for extraordinary

circumstances. If you expect a significant delay in fulfilling this request, please contact me with

information about when I might expect copies or the ability to inspect the requested records. If you deny

any or all of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release

the information and notify me of the appeal procedures available to me under the law. Thank you for

considering my request.

Marina Brown

An open group means anybody can join, and be openly roasted when they open their mouth and garbage comes out.

FaRied Munarsyah

From: Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com>
Sent: 12/9/2024 6:31:07 AM
To: "Baker, Wendy" <wbaker@acsdv.org>
Cc:
Subject: Re: Fw: Reconsideration Request Follow Up
Attachments: IMG_0510.jpeg

8:42



10:53



Re: Elias Inbox



Gould, Frances 10:44 AM



to me ▾

Hi Stacee,

So far we've read Bodies are Cool and They She He Me. In Bodies are Cool (on the page I showed you) there is an illustration of two nude babies. The kids named the body parts (essentially two little triangles). We talked about how naked babies are NOT the same as naked adults and you and your family are in charge of your clothing (what, when, where and with who.)

Here is the list of books I'll use for the next few weeks. There are more books centering on diversity throughout the rest of the year but these are the ones upcoming.

They He She Me Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thom
Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love
Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

Thank you for respectfully asking. I'm really happy to collaborate with you.

Franny

P.S. Our school library and the library have copies of Bodies are Cool (and most of these others) if you'd like to check them out. :)



Reply



99.



This is where she indicated she will be doing this all year, and my apologies this was not the mom that took her child out completely. But this is a mom that did take her child out for 2 plus weeks.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Monday, December 9, 2024, 4:27 AM, Paige Quessel <quesselpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:

As I appreciate this, I do not feel like this is a sure thing that this will not be taught the teacher told another mother who actually took her child completely out of school because of the way Ms. Franny is teaching, but she told that mother that she will be teaching this all year? My daughter has come home and said some weird things, like one telling me "mama we have to put she after so we know she's a girl" why is this being taught to my daughter in Kindergarten. Again I would like to have my daughter switched to another teacher immediately. In my opinion Franny should not be a teacher. She knows my feelings and my beliefs of this and is still teaching my daughter these things. I'm not sure when Mary Hogan changed so much. But I am very unhappy with Franny and don't feel like my child should be taught by her. Actually I don't feel any of those children should be taught by her?

I would like to take action on removing my daughter from her class.

Thank you.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Marina Brown <catskillmarina@gmail.com>
Sent: 12/6/2024 10:43:45 PM
To: wbaker@acsdt.org
Cc:
Subject: PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST - Book Challenges

Under the Vermont Public Records Law, AS315 et seq., I am requesting an opportunity to inspect or obtain copies of records of the following:

All documents pertaining to book challenges including but not limited to:

They Be She Men: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn
Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love
Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

If this document is redacted I am requesting a justification referring to the public records law for each and every line that is redacted. If the you deny access to these materials the public needs to know this and it deserves to know the specifics.

If there are any fees for searching or copying these records, please inform me if the cost will exceed \$20. However, I would also like to request a waiver of all fees if that the disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest and will contribute significantly to the public's understanding of the advocacy of censorship in VT.

If this document is redacted I am requesting a justification referring to the public records law for each and every line that is redacted. If the you deny access to these records or if you redact these records I request an enumeration and explanation of all redactions. The public needs to know this and it deserves to know the specifics.

I am a citizen journalist who is gathering this information in the public interest This information is not being sought for commercial purposes however it may be shared with commercial media.

The law requires a response to this request within 2 days, or within 10 days for extraordinary circumstances. If you expect a significant delay in fulfilling this request, please contact me with information about when I might expect copies or the ability to inspect the requested records. If you deny any or all of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release the information and notify me of the appeal procedures available to me under the law. Thank you for considering my request.

Marina Brown

On Friday, December 6, 2024, 6:33 PM, Baker, Wendy <wbaker@acsdvt.org> wrote:

Hi Paige,

I can assure you there is no longer a need to read the books aloud in class - the unit is over.

I look forward to meeting you before too long, and looking into the matter in the meantime.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions,

Wendy

On Thu, Dec 5, 2024 at 2:24 PM Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Reaching out as I understand that there is nothing that I can do to ensure that teacher is not reading these books to my daughter?

I'm hoping I am understanding incorrectly as this is my child and feels like this is against my parental rights.

I was informed by this particular teacher she will be teaching this all year.

If this is the case I would like to take action immediately on switching my daughter to a different teacher as those are my parental rights.

Thank you.

Sent From Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Thursday, December 5, 2024, 1:23 PM, Baker, Wendy <wbaker@acsdvt.org> wrote:

Good Afternoon, Paige +

The procedures outlined in Policy D23 outline the process of an appeal at the Superintendent's level as follows:

Your email lets me know that you would like to appeal the decision of the committee, and your request is within the 30 day timeframe.

I will begin by reviewing the materials themselves, the committee's explanation behind their recommendations, and relevant policy materials. A hearing with you will take place after I've had the opportunity to review all of the communication and materials related to this matter. I have copied Darci Arensmeyer, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent's Office, so that she can begin the process of scheduling an appeal hearing to take place either the week prior to holiday break or right after we return.

Although student access to challenged instructional materials is not limited during the appeal process, I understand the unit of which they were a part has come to a close.

Let us know if you have any other questions. I look forward to meeting you as soon as we can find time after I've had a chance to review the materials in the case so far.

-Wendy

On Thu, Dec 5, 2024 at 11:52 AM Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:

I would like this appealed and I would like to ensure that my daughter will not be exposed to these books. What are the steps I need to take?

Thank you

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Thursday, December 5, 2024, 11:50 AM, Kravitz, Jen <jkravitz@acsdvt.org> wrote:

--
Jen Kravitz (she/her)
Principal
Mary Hogan School
802.382.1414
jkravitz@acsdvt.org

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

09/26/2019

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

09/26/2019
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

From: Kravitz, Jan <jkravitz@acsdyt.org>
Sent: 12/5/2024 9:07:03 AM
To: "Frances Gould" <fgould@acsdyt.org>
Co:
Subject: Rept to Supt.

attachments: [Report to the Superintendent - 12_5_24 \(1\).pdf](#)

Hi Manny,

I am attaching the Reconsideration Committee's report to the superintendent, on which you are good. Please reach out to me if you have questions.

Best,

Jan

Jan Kravitz (she/hers)
Principal
Mary Hogan School
802.382.1414
jkravitz@acsdyt.org

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TO: Dr. Wendy Baker, Superintendent
FROM: Jen Kravitz, Principal on behalf of Reconsideration Committee (listed below)
RE: Instructional Materials Review - Committee Recommendation
DATE: December 5, 2024

CC: Frances Gould, Kindergarten Teacher

Request for Reconsideration

On 11/6/24, I received a [Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials](#) from Parent 1 following our [ACSD procedure](#). On 11/12/24, I received a [Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials](#) from Parent 2 following our [ACSD procedure](#). Both requests referenced 7 books:

- [They He She Me: Free to Be!](#) - Maya and Matthew
- [Bodies Are Cool](#) - Tyler Feder
- [It Feels Good to Be Yourself](#) - Theresa Thorn
- [Julián Is a Mermaid](#) - Jessica Love
- [Introducing Teddy](#) - Jessica Walton
- [Sparkle Boy](#) - Leslea Newman
- [Fred Gets Dressed](#) - Peter Brown

Parent 1's complaint spoke generally to these books being inappropriate to be taught in kindergarten. The parent's rationale included:

- The students are too young to understand these complex issues. They may be confused or be emotionally impacted.
- This should be taught at home.
- It goes against her values and beliefs
- It highlights differences and people who are transgender don't want to stand out.

Parent 2's complaint initially stated that the child was too young for the books. The parent later clarified concerns about specific books including:

- [They He She Me: Free to Be!](#) - The book does not align with the family's religious beliefs and causes the child to be confused. The book addresses topics that parents should address at home.
- [Bodies Are Cool](#) - The book includes 2 babies that do not have clothes on.
- [It Feels Good to Be Yourself](#) - The book does not align with the family's religious beliefs.
- [Julián Is a Mermaid](#) - The book shows "doing this stuff" is different when it is just normal imagination and that it is okay to follow in other people's shoes.
- [Introducing Teddy](#) - The book does not align with the family's religious beliefs.
- [Sparkle Boy](#) - The book shows children if they have an imagination they will be bullied.
- [Fred Gets Dressed](#) - This book is confusing to 5 year olds.

Committee Make-Up

According to ACSD procedure, I built a committee to review these and assembled context information below for the committee to review. Committee members include:

1. Principal:
 - o Jen Kravitz, Mary Hogan Principal
 2. Teacher:
 - o Elizabeth Thacker, 2nd Grade Teacher & parent of 2 Mary Hogan students (kindergarten and 3rd grade)
 3. Curriculum Leader or other educator:
 - o Heather Gebø - ACSD Literacy Coordinator
 - o Becky Harrell - Mary Hogan School Nurse
 4. Family member, student, and/or community representative:
 - o Meg Baker - community member and parent of 3 Mary Hogan alumni, former Addison County universal preschool coordinator
 - o Emily Lambert - parent of 2 Mary Hogan students (kindergarten and 3rd grade), former director of Bridge School Beginners Preschool
-

Lesson Content

The seven books were included as instructional materials within the Who We Are transdisciplinary unit of inquiry for kindergarten. This unit is "An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human." Learning goals from this unit include:

- Line of Inquiry 1:
 - o I can tell about my family and a community I belong to.
- Line of Inquiry 2:
 - o I can share my perspective with another person about my thoughts and feelings.
 - o I can actively listen to another person as they share their thoughts and feelings.
- Line of Inquiry 3:
 - o I can express beliefs and values about home, my neighborhood and/or community.
 - o I can respect differences and similarities among people.
- Line of Inquiry 4:
 - o I can manage my feelings in social situations and express how actions affect others.

The teacher groups read-alouds by author, concept, or other similar groupings. She reads the

books to the students after recess and before quiet time. After reading, the teacher will ask if there are any questions. When there are questions, the teacher often answers with a probing question or “Why do you think that?” The books are read along with other books, such as *Its Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr. [They He She Me: Free to be!](#) by Maya and Matthew is not read in its entirety, but only to the page that has “we” as the pronouns. The pages that contain information about pronouns are not read.

Background on Texts Reviewed by Committee

- They He She Me: Free to Be! - Maya and Matthew
 - [Reviews on Tidepool](#), platform used by Julie Altemose when purchasing library books
- *Bodies Are Cool* - Tyler Feder
 - [Common Sense Media Parents' Guide](#)
 - [Reviews on Tidepool](#), platform used by Julie Altemose when purchasing library books
- *It Feels Good to Be Yourself* - Theresa Thorn
 - [Common Sense Media Parents' Guide](#)
 - [Reviews on Tidepool](#), platform used by Julie Altemose when purchasing library books
- *Julián Is a Mermaid* - Jessica Love
 - [Common Sense Media Parents' Guide](#)
 - [Reviews on Tidepool](#), platform used by Julie Altemose when purchasing library books
 - [2019-2020 Vermont Red Clover Book Award Nominee](#)
 - [2019 - Stonewall Book Awards](#)
- *Introducing Teddy* - Jessica Walton
 - [Common Sense Media Parents' Guide](#)
 - [Reviews on Tidepool](#), platform used by Julie Altemose when purchasing library books
- *Sparkle Boy* - Lesléa Newman
 - [Common Sense Media Parents' Guide](#)
 - [Kirkus Review](#)
 - [Finalist, International School of Beijing Panda Book Awards, 2019-2020](#)
 - [Honor Book, Massachusetts Book Awards, 2018](#)
 - [Bank Street College of Education Best Books of the Year List, 2018](#)
 - [Honor Book, Bank Street Center for Children's Literature Irma Black Award, 2018](#)
 - [Storytelling World Resource Award Honors Title, 2018](#)
- *Fred Gets Dressed* - Peter Brown
 - [Reviews on Tidepool](#), platform used by Julie Altemose when purchasing library books

Relevant ACSD Policies, Procedures, Documents Reviewed by Committee

- ACSD Mission Statement
- ACSD Vision Statement
- ACSD Policy D23 - [Selection of Instructional Materials](#)
- [Procedure Related to and Supporting the ACSD Selection of Instructional Materials Policy](#)
- ACSD Policy C29 - [Equity Policy](#)
- [ACSD Strategic Plan](#)

Relevant District, State, National Standards/Guiding Documents Reviewed by Committee

- [Vermont Early Learning Standards \(VELS\)](#)
- [16 V.S.A. §131](#) defines Comprehensive Health Education in Vermont
- Education Quality Standards
 - [2017 Education Quality Standards](#) (starting on p. 7)
 - [2023 Education Quality Standards - going into effect in summer 2025](#) (starting on p. 12)
- [Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool](#) (2021)
- [Common Core State Standards](#) - Literacy standards for kindergarten

Relevant IB Documents Reviewed by Committee

- [IB Mission Statement](#)
- [IB Learner Profile](#)
- [Program Standards and Practices](#)
- ACSD Kindergarten [Who We Are unit description on Toddler](#)
- Who We Are Unit Descriptor

Research from other Organizations Reviewed by Committee

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - Various academic articles and books, including [Understanding and Supporting Gender Diversity and Identity in Preschool](#)
- Responsive Classroom - [Yardsticks](#)
- Book reviews from sources used by our librarian to determine book relevance and appropriateness
- Guidance from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) on gender identity and development

Recommendations by the Committee

The committee reviewed the books individually, as determined by ACSD Policy D23's associated

procedure. We considered each book in the context of all of the resources listed above and beyond this list. As we made decisions, we also considered the developmental appropriateness of the book, positive reviews, and links to the curriculum.

***They He She Me: Free to Be!* - Maya and Matthew**

The committee recommends that *They He She Me: Free to Be!* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards and early literacy development of sight words, the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Who We Are unit description, IB Program Standards and Practices, Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance.

***Bodies Are Cool* - Tyler Feder**

The committee recommends that *Bodies Are Cool* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards, Vermont Education Quality Standards (2017, 2023), Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT), the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Who We Are unit description, IB Program Standards and Practices, VELS, as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance.

***It Feels Good to Be Yourself* - Theresa Thorn**

The committee recommends that *It Feels Good to Be Yourself* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards, Vermont Education Quality Standards (2017, 2023), HECAT, the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Who We Are unit description, IB Program Standards and Practices, Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance.

***Julián Is a Mermaid* - Jessica Love**

The committee recommends that *Julián Is a Mermaid* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards, Vermont Education

Quality Standards (2017, 2023), the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Who We Are unit description, IB Program Standards and Practices, Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance. It has been recognized as a Red Clover Book and has been used as an all school read-aloud at Mary Hogan before.

***Introducing Teddy* - Jessica Walton**

The committee recommends that *Introducing Teddy* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards, Vermont Education Quality Standards (2017, 2023), the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Who We Are unit description, IB Program Standards and Practices, Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance.

***Sparkle Boy* - Lesléa Newman**

The committee recommends that *Sparkle Boy* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards, Vermont Education Quality Standards (2017, 2023), the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Who We Are unit description, IB Program Standards and Practices, Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance. This book has been nominated for and received literary awards.

***Fred Gets Dressed* - Peter Brown**

The committee recommends that *Fred Gets Dressed* remain in use as an instructional material with kindergarten students.

We believe this recommendation aligns with Common Core State Standards, Vermont Education Quality Standards (2017, 2023), the ACSD Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), as well as NAEYC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Responsive Classroom (*Yardsticks*) guidance.

Conclusion

The review committee recognizes that students enter kindergarten at a new school and with a new cohort. This is a year of community building and learning about members of their classroom community - and the wider community. This focus on community is present in each of the Who We Are units within ACSD - from preschool (ages 3-5) through 5th grade.

ACSD Policy D23 states it is the district's policy to "provide students with a broad variety of instructional materials to support individual student learning. As such, instructional practices will include a range of evidence-based instructional practices that most effectively improve student learning, as required by national and Vermont guidance and locally collected and analyzed student data." The policy also explains that the written and taught curriculum should be based on a number of factors, including: "aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education; b. coordinated across all grades... c. coordinated across the SU/SD... d. informed by ongoing review of new research and evidence, changing learning opportunities, and updates to the standards approved by the State Board of Education..."

The associated D23 procedure further explains that "Classroom teachers use the following non-exhaustive list of criteria to make informed choices when selecting, removing, or retaining instructional materials: Purpose and relevance to support and enrich the curriculum... Clarity, authority, and accuracy[;] Inclusion of differing viewpoints to allow students to evaluate information with a critical lens and make informed judgments... Diversity in literature that represents various races and ethnicities, religious and cultural beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities, socioeconomic statuses, and physical abilities[;] Accessibility/readability and appeal to personal and cultural needs and interests of individual students for recreational reading, to stimulate inquiry, or for literary appreciation[;] High standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality[;] Age; learning styles; and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected..."

ACSD Policy C29 "is committed to the success of every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or initial proficiencies." It explains that the district will use culturally responsive practices, which are defined as "The beliefs, methods, and practices that support and empower all students intellectually, socially, and emotionally by leveraging students' lived experiences to ensure learning." In order to implement this policy, the district will take a number of steps. Those most relevant to these reconsideration requests include: "Provide every student with equitable access to high-quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities, technology and other educational resources that respect individual identities, cultures, backgrounds, abilities and experiences... Incorporate the voice, culture and perspectives of students, staff, families, and communities that reflect student demographics and support and enhance student success; Identify and counteract biased practices that perpetuate achievement disparities and opportunity gaps."

and hearing diverse perspectives is a central component of this unit. Sharing read-alouds and holding conversations at morning meetings are central to exposing children to diverse perspectives within their classroom and the broader community. The unit is linked to the [IB Learner Profile](#) attributes of open-minded, knowledgeable, and communicators.

All the books that were used were reviewed by reputable sources such as CommonSense Media, Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, and the School Library Journal. At least three are award nominees or winners from prominent lists, including the American Library Association and Vermont Department of Libraries Red Clover lists. All are reviewed for age ranges that include 5 year olds in kindergarten. All were favorably reviewed and determined to be quality literature for children.

Given the ACSD policy and procedure, the Educational Quality Standards, Vermont Early Learning Standards, guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, NAEYC, and reviews of the books for age appropriateness and quality allowed us to make our recommendations.

The committee recommends that all books can continue to be used as instructional material with kindergarten students. In alignment with the D23 Procedure and a teacher's knowledge of their students, the teacher may choose to use one or more of the books in their teaching. They may choose to read them within the Who We Are unit. They may also choose to read them throughout the year.

The scope of the committee was specific to the use of the books as instructional materials in kindergarten. The recommendations should not be taken as limiting the books as instructional materials to kindergarten, as they may be appropriate to other grades. Teachers should use the D23 Policy and Procedure as well as their professional judgement to determine if the books are appropriate instructional materials for these other grades..

Communication with Parents

The following message will be sent to the parent who filed the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials.

Dear _____,

In November, I received your Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials. In that form, you shared your concerns about seven books read in your child's kindergarten class.

Following [ACSD procedure](#), I gathered a committee to review the seven books. The committee included a Mary Hogan teacher; a Mary Hogan school nurse; ACSD's Literacy Coordinator; and 2 community members, who have extensive knowledge of preschool and child development and are current or former Mary Hogan parents; and myself as building principal.

The committee reviewed these books in the context of the ACSD Policy D23 and procedure, ACSD Policy C29, ACSD Strategic Plan, Vermont Educational Quality Standards (2017, 2023), Vermont Early Learning Standards, Common Core State Standards, IB Program Standards and Practices, book reviews from reputable sources, as well as guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and other organizations.

Based on our review, we recommend that each book remain in the kindergarten curriculum.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this review, you may contact Superintendent Wendy Baker to appeal the decision. Based on our district policy, you have 30 days to request that appeal.

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns about these instructional materials. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Jen Kravitz
Principal, Mary Hogan School

From: Kravitz, Jen <jkravitz@acsdyt.org>
Sent: 12/3/2024 5:10:10 PM
To: "wendy baker" <wbaker@acsdyt.org>
Co: "rebecca harrell" <rharrell@acsdyt.org>, "Elizabeth Thacker" <ethacker@acsdyt.org>, "Emily Lambert" <emilylambert412@gmail.com>, "Meg Baker" <megabaker@gmail.com>, "Cece, Heather" <hgebo@acsdyt.org>
Subject: Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Report to superintendent

Attachments: [Report to the Superintendent - 12.5.24.pdf](#)

Dear Dr. Baker,

Attached you will find the report from the Committee that was put together based on a [Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials](#) that was shared with me on 11/6/2024. Please let me know if you are unable to open any of the links in the document so I can make them available.

The committee, based on the procedure for ACSD Policy D23, met, reviewed each book individually, and created this report. The final page of the report is our proposed communication with the families who have requested reconsideration. This communication will need to happen by 12/5. On 12/5, I will also share this report with the teacher who was using the materials.

Let me know if you have questions about the report as well as our process.

Best,
Jen

Jen Kravitz (she/her)
Principal
Mary Hogan School
802.382.1414
jkravitz@acsdyt.org

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From: Google Docs <comments-foreply@docus.google.com>
Sent: 12/2/2024 8:22:09 AM
To: jkravitz@acsdvt.org
Cc:
Subject: Report to the Superintendent - 12/5/24

New activity in the following document

 Report to the Superintendent - 12/5/24

 3 comments

Two



Meg Baker • 8:07 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

Feel free to fact check this. I think Bodies are Cool, Julian is a Mermaid were on these lists, but don't see the others?

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

within a kindergarten classroom



Meg Baker • 9:13 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

with kindergarten students? what about in the library and in other contexts (guidance, etc)?

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

within ACSD:



Meg Baker • 8:35 AM, Dec 2 (EST)

And JBZ



Heather Gebro • 9:10 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

No

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 12 suggestions



Heather Gebro • 8:57 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

Delete: "s"



Heather Gebro • 8:57 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)



Heather Gebro • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

Add: "s"



Heather Gebro • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) **New**

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Delete: "s"

 Heather Gebb • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Delete: "s"

 Heather Gebb • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 8:57 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Add: "remain"

 Heather Gebb • 8:57 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Meg Baker • 8:57 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Add: "such as: CommonSense Media, Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, and the School Li..."

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 8:58 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Replace: "evidenced-based" with "evidence-based"

 Heather Gebb • 8:58 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 8:59 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Replace: "is" with "are"

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Meg Baker • 9:00 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Add: "Two are award nominees or winners from prominent lists including the American Library Association an..."

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 9:00 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Delete space

Add: " "

[Reply](#)


[Open](#)

 Heather Gebb • 9:05 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Format: strikethrough

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

 Meg Baker • 9:18 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Made a suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

✓ 3 resolved

Suggestions



Heather Gebo • 8:55 AM, Dec 2 (EST)

Replace: "remain" with "remains"



Heather Gebo • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)



Heather Gebo • 8:55 AM, Dec 2 (EST)

Add: "s"



Heather Gebo • 8:56 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)



Heather Gebo • 8:55 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Delete: "remain"



Heather Gebo • 8:57 AM, Dec 2 (EST) New

Accepted suggestion

[Reply](#)

[Open](#)

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

You have received this email because you are a participant in the updated items or subscribed to notifications on [Report to the Superintendent - 12/6/24](#).
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Google

From: Kravitz, Jen <jkravitz@acsdv.org>
Sent: 11/25/2024 12:21:04 PM
To: "Wendy Baker" <wbaker@acsdv.org>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Reconsideration Committee question

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Paige Quesnel <paige@jardinesyahoe.com>
Date: Fri, Nov 22, 2024 at 8:46 AM
Subject: Re: Reconsideration Committee Question
To: Kravitz, Jen <jkravitz@acsdv.org>

Good morning,

With all respect I would have appreciated more time to prepare a response as I do not find it respectful to email me on 11/21/24 and expect to have to justify why my 5-year-old daughter should not be taught confusion and deception regarding her gender or sexual orientation. I want to start off by saying that we are a Christian family, and Mary Hogan school is teaching things that go against our beliefs. Currently, our religious rights are not respected, and my daughter is being confused. Scripture is clear, it says that evil teaches deception and confusion to destroy. When I asked the teacher in our meeting on 11/12/24 "If my daughter asked you what her gender was" you replied, "I'd say it is in your head." Let me be very clear in Genesis 1:27 states, "so God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." So that teaching is not of God but of Satan. The books I do not want my daughter to be exposed is the book "They She He Me: Free To Be" which deceives my daughter and confuses her that she can be considered a "tree" or "zee". Once again, my daughter was created by God and is a female. This book causes confusion and creates a narrative that you are born a question mark and can choose whatever they want to be. She is a creation of God, and he made no mistake. Once again this is the teaching of Satan and causes deception and confusion. I feel this topic is something that I as a parent would discuss with her when and if this topic comes up. In the book "Bodles are Cool" I feel it is completely inappropriate to have two naked babies with body parts that are being opening discussed during class. I teach my daughter that being naked is to be done in private and this is another aspect that confuses her as to what we believe.

I want to know that our religious beliefs are being respected and my daughter is not being taught anything that is not of God. I would also like to know what the next steps would be to ensure my daughter is not being taught confusion regarding her gender or sexuality. I feel very strongly that this should be a topic that is taught to the child when they are ready. I believe this should need a permission slip to speak about to children. Especially children who are 5 years old and don't understand the difference between male and female. Please let me know what the next steps will be to move forward and make sure my family's religious rights are respected.

[Sent from my iPhone](#)

On Thursday, November 21, 2024, 5:40 PM, Kravitz, Jen <jkravitz@acsdv.org> wrote:

Dear Ms. Quesnel,

The Review Committee will be meeting on Friday to review the materials you listed in your request for reconsideration of instructional materials form, submitted to me on 11/12/2024.

The committee members note that you did not give a lot of detail about what in the books you find objectionable and wondered if you wanted to state this for each book, since we have to consider each separately. We wanted to give you a chance to share this information with the committee.

Regards,

Jen Kravitz

Jen Kravitz (she/her)
Principal
Mary Hogan School
802.382.1414
jkraivitz@acsdyt.org

7/17/14

7/17/14 10:00 AM

Jen Kravitz (she/her)
Principal
Mary Hogan School
802.382.1414
jkraivitz@acsdyt.org

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Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form

ACSD has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of instructional resources to the classroom teacher and grade-level teaching team or department, and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in reconsideration procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of an instructional resource, please return the completed form to the School Principal.

Today's date:	11/12/24				
Name:	Paige Quesnel - Paige Quesnel				
Address:	[REDACTED]				
City:	Middlebury	State:	VT	Zip Code:	05753
Phone #:	802-349-6462				
Email:	Quesnelpaige@yahoo.com				

Resource on which you are commenting:

- Book
- Magazine
- Textbook
- Display
- Video Recording
- Library Program
- Audio Recording
- Newspaper
- Electronic information/network (please specify)
- Other

Title of Instructional Resource: "They He She Me: Free to be", "Bodies are cool"
"It Feels good to be yourself", Julian is Mermaid, Introducing Teddy
Author/Producer: "Sparkle boy", "Fred gets dressed"

What brought this resource to your attention?

Ms. Franny emailed me

To what extent have you examined, watched, or read the resource?

All books I have read

What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)

My daughter is too young!!!

Are there resource(s) you might suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

Should not be in School.

From: Wendy Baker <wbaker@acsdvt.org>
Sent: 11/12/2024 10:49:34 AM
To: "Emily Blistein" <eblistein@acsdvt.org>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf - signed using Adobe Fill & Sign.

Attachments: [Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf](#)

Wendy K Baker, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Addison Central School District
Middlebury, VT
802-382-1274

Begin forwarded message:

From: kimberly richards <kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com>
Date: November 6, 2024 at 10:07:59 PM EST
To: Frances Gould <fgould@acsdvt.org>, Wendy Baker <wbaker@acsdvt.org>
Subject: Fw: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf - signed using Adobe Fill & Sign.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Begin forwarded message:

On Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 9:52 PM, kimberly richards <kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com> wrote:

Beyond the pdf, I ran out of room to explain myself.

But wanted to say why are we pointing out these differences to children and saying look how different they are when everyone should be treated equally? Instead of teaching my kindergartner to label people into groups and treat them accordingly because of their skin color or what's in their pants, I would like you to allow them to be who they are and make their own decisions about who other people are without bias labels that you feel fit. I want my child to decide how to treat people based on their own unique character and not by what they look like or what gender or sexual preferences they have. I'm appalled by how inappropriate this lesson is for this age and how you tried to incorporate it without any parental consent prior to exposure. I'm disappointed by you as educators that you left no room for discussion on this topic prior to it happening especially knowing it would cause controversy in the entire community and beyond. I am dissatisfied that you offered to make no other learning accommodations for my child after learning that this coincides with our personal thoughts and beliefs. This has affected us financially bc I had to stay home from work with my child. I am seeing a lesson that was supposed to teach inclusivity, actually doing the opposite because parents do not even feel like they can send their children to school. I am seeing you disregard the feelings and values of parents and children in your school and community. You've not made a good first impression for a child entering a new school. I'm losing trust in the education system all together here. Let's fix this now!

Thank you,
kimberly richards

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf - signed using Adobe Fill & Sign.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

WARNING: This message may contain information that is confidential and/or protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act or other lawfully recognized privilege. If you receive this message in error or through inappropriate means, please reply to this message to notify the Sender that the message was received by you in error, and then permanently delete this message from all storage media without forwarding or retaining a copy.

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Today's date:	11/06/2024				
Name:	Kimberly Richards				
Address:	[REDACTED]				
City:	Middlebury	State:	VT	Zip Code:	05753
Phone #:	802-236-4086				
Email:	Kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com				

Resource on which you are commenting:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Textbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Display |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video Recording | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recording | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic information/network (please specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

They He She Me: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn
Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love
Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

Title of Instructional Resource:

Author/Producer:

What brought this resource to your attention?

This lesson is not appropriate for kindergarten age children

To what extent have you examined, watched, or read the resource?

I've read them and examined them all

What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)

This is not an age appropriate lesson and goes against our beliefs and values as a community as far as what should be taught in kindergarten. It is a complex and difficult to grasp concept that is beyond this age group. It opens up conversations that we are not ready to have at home with our children. It disregards these children's developmental stage and threatens their emotional and intellectual well being by trying to understand a concept that is beyond what they are ready to learn. You are pointing out differences in these books and putting children into groups with labels on them and saying look at them they are different so you must be empathetic and treat them differently. Most of the people in the books are dark skinned and you are pointing out how different that is

Are there resource(s) you might suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

From: Julie Altemose <jaltemose@acsdvt.org>
Sent: 11/11/2024 10:04:31 AM
To: "Julie Altemose" <jaltemose@acsdvt.org>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Chat with Jen Kravitz "Is there a way to get a few copies of these boo..."

Forwarded chat with [Jen Kravitz](#)



Jen Kravitz
Can you relay to Mike that I need BL's computer turned off? I am stuck at the main office covering



Julie Altemose
Yep, will do! In 5th grade?



Jen Kravitz
yes thank you



Julie Altemose
No problem!



Jen Kravitz
Is there a way to get a few copies of these books:

- *They He/She Me: Free to be!* - Maya and Matthew
- *Bodies Are Cool* - Tyler Feder
- *It Feels Good to Be Yourself* - Theresa Thorn
- *Jultan Is a Mermaid* - Jessica Love
- *Introducing Teddy* - Jessica Walton
- *Sparkle Boy* - Leslea Newman
- *Fred Gets Dressed* - Peter Brown

Ideally for about a month.

[Open in Google Chat](#)

From: Kravitz, Jen <jkravitz@acsadv.org>
Sent: 11/16/2024 12:17:47 PM
To: "kimberly richards" <kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com>
Cc:
Subject: Your Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Dear Ms. Richards,

On Wednesday 11/6/2024, I received your request for reconsideration of instructional materials for the books listed below:

- *They He She Me: Free to be!* - Maya and Matthew
- *Bodies Are Cool* - Tyler Feder
- *It Feels Good to Be Yourself* - Theresa Thorn
- *Julian Is a Mermaid* - Jessica Love
- *Introducing Teddy* - Jessica Walton
- *Sparkle Boy* - Leslea Newman
- *Fred Gets Dressed* - Peter Brown

The procedure states that these should be listed on separate forms; however, since the books were shared with you as a group by the classroom teacher as a unit, one form is sufficient to this end.

The procedure asks for your signature on the request for reconsideration form. I do not have that. For now, I am considering your name on the email you sent with the form to be your signature. However, please resend the form with your signature, or come in and sign the version I printed. Ideally, this would happen by 11/13/24. Thank you for your help with this detail; it is important that the full procedure is followed by all.

The next step in the procedure is for the committee to review the materials. This committee will make a decision with recommendations by 12/5/2024 and be in touch with you by that date.

Please let me know if you have questions regarding the procedure or policy.

Regards,

Jen Kravitz

Jen Kravitz (she/her)
Principal
Mary Hogan School
802, 382, 1414
jkravitz@acsadv.org

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form

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Today's date: 11/06/2024	
Name: Kimberly Richards	
Address: [REDACTED]	
City: Middlebury State: VT	Zip Code: 05753
Phone #: 802-236-4086	
Email: Kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com	

Resource on which you are commenting:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Textbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Display |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video Recording | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recording | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic information/network (please specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

They He She Me: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
 Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
 It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn
 Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love
 Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
 Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
 Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

Title of Instructional Resource:

Author/Producer:

What brought this resource to your attention?

This lesson is not appropriate for kindergarten age children

To what extent have you examined, watched, or read the resource?

I've read them and examined them all

What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)

This is not an age appropriate lesson and goes against our beliefs and values as a community as far as what should be taught in kindergarten. It is a complex and difficult to grasp concept that is beyond this age group. It opens up conversations that we are not ready to have at home with our children. It disregards these children's developmental stage and threatens their emotional and intellectual well being by trying to understand a concept that is beyond what they are ready to learn. You are pointing out differences in these books and putting children into groups with labels on them and saying look at them they are different so you must be empathetic and treat them differently. Most of the people in the books are dark skinned and you are pointing out how different that is.

From: kimberly richards <kimberly_j7_99@yahoo.com>
Sent: 11/6/2024 8:53:25 PM
To: "Jen Kravitz" <jkravitz@csdsvt.org>
Cc:
Subject: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf - signed using Adobe Fill & Sign.

Attachments: [Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf](#)

Beyond the pdf, I ran out of room to explain myself.

But wanted to say why are we pointing out these differences to children and saying look how different they are when everyone should be treated equally? Instead of teaching my kindergartner to label people into groups and treat them accordingly because of their skin color or what's in their pants, I would like you to allow them to be who they are and make their own decisions about who other people are without bias labels that you feel fit. I want my child to decide how to treat people based on their own unique character and not by what they look like or what gender or sexual preferences they have. I'm appalled by how inappropriate this lesson is for this age and how you tried to incorporate it without any parental consent prior to exposure. I'm disappointed by you as educators that you left no room for discussion on this topic prior to it happening especially knowing it would cause controversy in the entire community and beyond. I am dissatisfied that you offered to make no other learning accommodations for my child after learning that this coincides with our personal thoughts and beliefs. This has effected us financially bc I had to stay home from work with my child. I am seeing a lesson that was supposed to teach inclusivity, actually doing the opposite because parents do not even feel like they can send their children to school. I am seeing you disregard the feelings and values of parents and children in your school and community. You've not made a good first impression for a child entering a new school. I'm losing trust in the education system all together here. Let's fix this now!

Thank you,
Kimberly Richards

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form, 2023.pdf - signed using Adobe Fill & Sign.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

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Today's date: 11/06/2024		
Name: Kimberly Richards		
Address: [REDACTED]		
City: Middlebury	State: VT	Zip Code: 05753
Phone #: 802-236-4086		
Email: Kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com		

Resource on which you are commenting:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Textbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Display |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video Recording | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recording | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic information/network (please specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Title of Instructional Resource: They He She Me: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn
Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love
Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
Author/Producer: Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

What brought this resource to your attention?
This lesson is not appropriate for kindergarten age children
To what extent have you examined, watched, or read the resource?
I've read them and examined them all

What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)
This is is not an age appropriate lesson and goes against our beliefs and values as a community as far as what should be taught in kindergarten. It is a complex and difficult to grasp concept that is beyond this age group. It opens up conversations that we are not ready to have at home with our children. It disregards these children's developmental stage and threatens their emotional and intellectual well being by trying to understand a concept that is beyond what they are ready to learn. You are pointing out differences in these books and putting children into groups with labels on them and saying look at them they are different so you must be empathetic and treat them differently. Most of the people in the books are dark skinned and you are pointing out how different that is.

Are there resource(s) you might suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

Please see additional emails sent to and from Frances Gould, and Jen Kravitz for further explanation on why I object.

Thank you,

Kimberly Richards

From: Frances Gould <fgould@sasdot.org>
Sent: 11/10/2024 8:38:17 AM
To: "Jen Kravitz" <jkravitz@sasdot.org>
Cc:
Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Jen,

I'm swaying between feeling confident and knowing what's right and experiencing real fear that I'll say the wrong thing. Can you do me a favor and look over this email draft in response to the one below that I plan to send to Stacey?

I'm sorry to add more to you plate, and I feel like I need lots of backup because of all of the politics involved here. Uncharted territory.

Thank you!

Franny

Hi Stacey,

I can tell you're really upset and I am sorry to know that. I'm understanding this is more than you want [REDACTED] to know. You are absolutely correct that there are people of different races and skin tones in these books. This is true for many of the children's books that we select for curriculum. Diverse characters are a key part of quality children's literature.

I again feel I need to be clear that I was in no way trying to sneak these books into my curriculum. I sent an email to be forthcoming with families who are not comfortable with the content so that they could feel welcome to begin dialogue with me about it. I also want to be clear that all kindergarten classes will or have read some or all of the books used during this unit, and books like these are sometimes used in library lessons. I choose to read them all in a cluster as a themed collection and others choose to sprinkle them across the year. The entire school is expected to read one of these titles specifically, in the spring as a part of our diversity read alouds.

I also really feel the need to clear this up. I in absolutely no way meant or said that you shouldn't talk to other parents. I am an outward processor and often talk things through with friends and community members. I simply meant that your feelings and instincts are valid regardless of others and I would and will openly listen to them no matter what. I'm sorry this wasn't clear.

I do worry about you wanting to keep [REDACTED] clear of these books and others with similar topics or representation because he has access to the school library where all of these books and many others with diverse characters are available. I think this might be something important to discuss with Jen.

I also think that if you would like to make requests to view materials Jen is the person to talk to about this as I'm not sure how the procedure works.

Please feel free to reach out to Jen if you'd like. I've cc'd her here.

Kindly,

Franny

On Nov 6, 2024, at 12:26 PM, Stacey Earle <saal72331@gmail.com> wrote:

Hey, so I went online and I looked at a couple more books that I don't think I saw when I was in your classroom I'm not quite sure if you had them all out or not I was able to read some of them online this goes far beyond what I'm interested in telling [REDACTED] about. So he won't need to be in the classroom while it's being read. Melissa was kind of gracious enough to have him sit with her during these times.

When I look at these books a little closely I began to notice that a lot of the children in the books are brown and tan and I find that a bit strange while my son is already showing signs of noticing that he looks different from others and feels different sometimes I'm trying to figure out why we're trying to spotlight on how a child who may be of color like himself who suddenly transgendered or gay or what have you it's very strange to me that these books would be deemed appropriate for them.

In my heart there's still a disrespect that I feel that not only was I not given the curriculum ahead of time I also wasn't asked I know that you said that you were giving us a courtesy nobody gives me a courtesy about my son and what they plan on teaching them whether I agree with it or not. The courtesy would have been given parents the heads up and asking permission you have to ask my permission to teach [REDACTED] certain things and if you don't I'm just going to take it to the school board and I'm probably going to do that now with this information that I know now it shouldn't be

taught in schools they're too young the other classes aren't doing it why is it okay for your class to do it but not the others feel like I'm a part of some weird social experiment that's based on race class and gender.

At first I thought maybe this is just me overreacting but I'm talking to other parents and I'm hearing them say the same the very things that I'm thinking and it's a bit daunting so it's not just me and I know that you told me if I had something going on not to talk to other parents I don't know who told you you could tell me stuff like that but it's not me talking to other parents is how I connect with other people within the community and I'm able to share My views and find out what's going on we're not allowed in the school most time so we don't know what our kids are being taught and learning and now that I actually got to read some of the material for myself I need to know everything that [REDACTED] is going to be read I want to know all the materials I don't want him picking up this book and reading it on his own or even looking through it. It shouldn't be available to him because I have not agreed for him to see it. And that's why it's been kept so hush hush about the material because if it was on the up and up it would have been gladly submitted to the parents but it wasn't and there's a sneaking it's about it that makes me uncomfortable and there's a big disrespect that I don't think I can tolerate no one gets to tell me what my kid will learn via courtesy that's only for me to decide and I have decided that that's not for him.

-Stacey

On Wed, Nov 6, 2024, 12:14 PM Frances Gould <fgould@acsdyt.org> wrote:
Hi,

sounds like you had a stressful morning. Can we talk again?

Franny

On Nov 6, 2024, at 10:53 AM, Stacey Earle <sae172331@gmail.com> wrote:

When we talked about it over dinner I actually didn't get into it with him because I didn't know exactly what the book said if I knew what they say and I can come in and sit down and read them that's going to be a better choice for me it's already Wednesday he's already been read books I just need to be able to converse with him properly and effectively as he's asking me these questions as we go along is there a time that I can come in this afternoon and read them.

On Wed, Nov 6, 2024, 10:44 AM Gould, Frances <fgould@acsdyt.org> wrote:
Hi Stacey,

So far we've read Bodies are Cool and They She He Me. In Bodies are Cool (on the page I showed you) there is an illustration of two nude babies. The kids named the body parts (essentially two little triangles). We talked about how naked babies are NOT the same as naked adults and you and your family are in charge of your clothing (what, when, where and with who.)

Here is the list of books I'll use for the next few weeks. There are more books centering on diversity throughout the rest of the year but these are the ones upcoming.

They He She Me: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn
Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love
Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

Thank you for respectfully asking. I'm really happy to collaborate with you.

Franny

P.S. Our school library and the Illsley have copies of Bodies are Cool (and most of these others) if you'd like to check them out. :)

On Wed, Nov 6, 2024 at 9:58AM Stacey Earle <sae172331@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning Franny! I'm just reaching out because I had a couple more questions about the material that you guys were working on [REDACTED] was asking me some questions at dinner last night and then he had let me know that he's seen a penis and a vagina and one of the books that you were reading to him I'm not sure how much of this is true or if maybe they were blurred out pictures. I just want to make sure we're still in the same safe zone as we had originally talked about I know you did tell me and show me the books and we looked through them I personally didn't see that but I think I would feel comfortable with having a list of all the material that is being read this week so that I can go reference it so when a question comes up I can probably answer it to him as it was read to him or taught I should say.

I don't want there to be any gray areas and he seems to be wondering things that I'm not sure I really want him to wonder.

If you could shoot me a list of the material that would be great.

Thank you,

.St.acee

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From: Gould, Frances <fgould@acsdvf.org>
Sent: 11/6/2024 7:59:00 AM
To: "Paige Quesnel" <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com>, "Jen Kravitz" <jkravitz@acsdvf.org>
Cc:
Subject: Re: A note from Franny

Hi Paige,

The two books we've read so far are
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Keder and They, She He, Me Free to Be! by Matthew and Maya.

To my knowledge students do not have an option to opt out of curriculum but I'm cc'ing Jen because she'll know for sure.

Best,

Franny

On Tue, Nov 5, 2024 at 8:29PM Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:
Just wondering if I could see the book list of the books that she has read if you don't mind. Also is there an option for her to still attend school but not participate in those activities?

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 4:36 PM, Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:

Good afternoon!

I am sorry to say but [REDACTED] will be out the rest of this week and will return on Monday!
I hope you have a wonderful week!
Thank you

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 12:49 PM, Gould, Frances <fgould@acsdvf.org> wrote:

Hi Paige,

stories that include diverse characters who are non binary, transgender and cis gender. I highlight that all people should be accepted and it's okay to be yourself.

If you are able to make time to talk about this it would probably be more efficient and bring more clarity so let me know if you change your mind.

Best,

Franny

On Tue, Nov 5, 2024 at 9:11AM Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:
I won't have time to chat unfortunately but can you just kinda tell me what it involves?

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Monday, November 4, 2024, 1:56 PM, Gould, Frances <fgould@acsdvf.org> wrote:

Hi Paige,

We should talk and I can give you some more information. I have time to chat tomorrow at 12:30 or on Wednesday at 11.

Let me know if either of those work for you.

Franny

On Mon, Nov 4, 2024 at 1:41PM Paige Quesnel <quesnelpaige@yahoo.com> wrote:
This has me concerned I personally feel Taelyn is too young for this. Is this a must have at school?

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Thursday, October 31, 2024, 3:16 PM, Gould, Frances <fgould@acsadvl.org> wrote:

Dear Kindergarten Families,

It was so lovely meeting with you for parent teacher conferences this week, I look forward to meeting with you if we have not yet!

Starting next week our class will engage in a curriculum focusing on identity, pronouns and the gender binary. This curriculum will serve as a way to deepen our conversations within our IB Unit Who We Are. This content is, of course, age appropriate and will be largely guided through read-alouds.

I welcome your collaboration in continuing these conversations to your comfort level with your child at home. As always, please let me know if you have any questions or thoughts.

Most kindly,

Franny

==
Franny Gould she/her
Kindergarten Teacher
Mary Hogan School

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From: kimberly richards <kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com>
Sent: 11/6/2024 5:49:57 AM
To: "Gould, Frances" <fgould@acsdsvt.org>, "Jen Kravitz" <jkravitz@acsdsvt.org>, "Wendy Baker" <wbaker@acsdsvt.org>
Cc:
Subject: Re: Book List

Great, CC whoever you would like, and I will do the same here. This is really too bad because I know that my daughter loves school and loves learning. It is never a goal in this household to opt out of any sort of valuable education but unfortunately you have forced a lesson upon these children that is crossing a boundary and coinciding with our personal beliefs and values as a family and as a community. You have made no other accommodations for my child when asked so you are refusing her an education at this point. These are not topics that we teach to five- and six-year-old children. I know at least for my daughter, that this is beyond what she can comprehend at this time. Your choice of what to teach my daughter and how you went about it in such a conning way without my permission is extremely concerning to me. I have lost trust in you as an educator, and I've lost trust in the school system for allowing this content to be part of kindergarten education. While I appreciate the school's values of supporting diversity, respect, inclusivity, and empathy, I feel that by bringing in such an intricate topic at such a young age, you have totally disregarded these children's developmental stage, which could impact their emotional well-being by presenting these ideas that they are not prepared to fully understand. You are completely bias in this situation to assume that every child and parent would feel at ease and prepared to talk about gender identity at such an early age. If your lesson plans continue to expose my daughter to inappropriate, unnecessary, bias, or controversial content, then I want to opt my daughter out of being in your classroom altogether because you do not have my daughter's best interest in mind here. In fact, I would like a copy of all the literature you will be using ahead of time so I can read it and decide if it is appropriate for my child.

You are teaching a lesson this week called who we are. One of the main points you are trying to prove in your lesson is that everyone should be included, right? But my daughter has not been in school all week because you have chosen to teach a lesson that goes against what we stand for. Let me tell you that I have nothing against transgender people. I strongly support that people should be who they are. I worked at a transgender clinic for many years and worked alongside people at all stages of their transition. I know what a personal and delicate journey this can be. I am all for supporting anyone going through any difficult situations in their lives. I don't think you are going about this in an appropriate way though. I don't think transgender people want it highlighted that they are different than anyone else and that is what you are doing here. You are highlighting the fact that they are different in some way shape or form and because of this they should be treated differently. I think this concept is wrong. The goal is equality here. No one should be different from anybody else, and you should not be highlighting that anyone is different for any reason. I am against this way of thought and this way of teaching. I feel it is discriminatory and threatens the emotional and intellectual well-being of these children in your classroom. I am curious to know how the other parents are feeling about your lesson this week. I would love to hear any feedback that you have received from other parents because recognizing bias in the education system really helps us as parents in advocating for a balanced approach that respects the developmental stages of children while also promoting inclusivity and understanding. I am happy to collaborate with other parents that may feel the same way that I do, or if anyone that wants support in discussing this topic more. Let me know.

Thank you,
Kim

On Tuesday, November 5, 2024 at 12:46:52 PM EST, Gould, Frances <fgould@acsdsvt.org> wrote:

Hi Kim,

This is a good question. To my knowledge students do not have an option to opt out of curriculum but I'm doing Jen because she'll know for sure.

Thank you,

Franny

On Tue, Nov 5, 2024 at 6:05 AM kimberly richards <kimberly_17_99@yahoo.com> wrote:

Can Arrow sit out of the class or do another project with earphones on while you do these lessons? This goes against our values and beliefs. I don't want my child exposed to this at her age as we spoke about.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Monday, November 4, 2024, 1:12 PM, Gould, Frances <fgould@acsdsvt.org> wrote:

Hi Kim,

For your reference:

They He She Me: Free to be! by Maya and Matthew
Bodies are Cool by Tyler Feder
It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thom
Julian is A Mermaid by Jessica Love
Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton
Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman
Fred Gets Dressed by Peter Brown

Kindly,

Franny

—
Franny Gould she/her
Kindergarten Teacher
Mary Hogan School

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