

---

**From:** Cartledge, Wendy B <Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 7:28 PM  
**To:** Cushingberry, Robyn L  
**Cc:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L; Rowland, Gillian C  
**Subject:** Please email or provide a copy of the FOIA submitted by Ms. Mare Deckard - thanks

Thanks,  
Wendy

*Wendy B. Cartledge*  
General Counsel

**Beaufort County School District**  
**2900 Mink Point Blvd.**  
**Beaufort, SC 29901**  
**Direct Line: (843) 322.2414**  
**Fax Line: (843) 322.2330**  
**[Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us)**

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#### **Beaufort County School District Nondiscrimination Statement**

The BCSD is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students, parents/legal guardians, staff, visitors, applicants for admission and employment, personnel, and community members who participate or seek to participate in its educational programs or activities. Accordingly, the BCSD does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, color, physical or mental disability, age (40 or older), ancestry, genetic information, national origin, or any other applicable status protected by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX or any other local, state, or federal law.

---

**From:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L <Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2022 10:33 AM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E; Vernie L. Williams  
**Cc:** Cartledge, Wendy B; Rowland, Gillian C  
**Subject:** RE: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

Yes, was just sharing as an FYI.

Candace Bruder, Ed.D.  
Director of Communications  
Beaufort County School District  
843-322-2432 (office)  
843-941-9178 (cell)  
candace.bruder@beaufort.k12.sc.us



---

**From:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2022 10:26 AM  
**To:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L <Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us>; Vernie L. Williams <vwilliams@hmwlegal.com>  
**Cc:** Cartledge, Wendy B <Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us>; Rowland, Gillian C <Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

IT will have to respond.

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**From:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L <[Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2022 9:23:02 AM  
**To:** Vernie L. Williams <[vwilliams@hmwlegal.com](mailto:vwilliams@hmwlegal.com)>  
**Cc:** Cartledge, Wendy B <[Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>; Rowland, Gillian C <[Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>; Stratos, Mary E <[Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>  
**Subject:** FW: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

FYI

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**From:** Jotform <[noreply@jotform.com](mailto:noreply@jotform.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2022 8:54 AM  
**To:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L <[Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>; Cartledge, Wendy B <[Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>; Rowland, Gillian C <[Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

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## Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

Name: Mare Deckard

Address:



Work Phone Number:



E-mail Address:



Public Records  
Requested (Description  
of Documents or  
Information  
Requested):

Please provide the following:

1. Copies of each and every "Reconsideration Form" submitted by Elisabeth Ivey Szalai, and/or Joe Castignino, and/or any other individual, as it pertains to the 97 books removed by the district in toto, from October 1 - November 1, 2022.

Please confirm receipt of this request.

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.





---

**From:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2022 10:26 AM  
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IT will have to respond.

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**To:** Vernie L. Williams <vwilliams@hmwlegal.com>  
**Cc:** Cartledge, Wendy B <Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us>; Rowland, Gillian C <Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us>; Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** FW: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

FYI

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### Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

**Name:** Mare Deckard

**Address:**



**Work Phone Number:**



**E-mail Address:**



**Public Records Requested (Description of Documents or Information Requested):**

Please provide the following:

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Please confirm receipt of this request.

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FYI

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**To:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L <Candace.Bruder-Brasseur@beaufort.k12.sc.us>; Cartledge, Wendy B <Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us>; Rowland, Gillian C <Gillian.Rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

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Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

Name:	Mare Deckard
Address:	[REDACTED]
Work Phone Number:	[REDACTED]
E-mail Address:	[REDACTED]
Public Records Requested (Description of Documents or Information Requested):	<p>Please provide the following:</p> <p>1. Copies of each and every "Reconsideration Form" submitted by Elisabeth Ivey Szalai, and/or Joe Castignino, and/or any other individual, as it pertains to the 97 books removed by the district in toto, from October 1 - November 1, 2022.</p> <p>Please confirm receipt of this request.</p>

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

**From:** Jotform <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2022 8:54 AM  
**To:** candace.bruder@beaufort.k12.sc.us; wendy.cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us;  
gillian.rowland@beaufort.k12.sc.us  
**Subject:** Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form

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 **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form**

<b>Name:</b>	Mare Deckard
<b>Address:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Work Phone Number:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Public Records Requested (Description of Documents or Information Requested):</b>	<p>Please provide the following:</p> <p>1. Copies of each and every "Reconsideration Form" submitted by Elisabeth Ivey Szalai, and/or Joe Castignino, and/or any other individual, as it pertains to the 97 books removed by the district in toto, from October 1 - November 1, 2022.</p> <p>Please confirm receipt of this request.</p>

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

---

**From:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 7:00 PM  
**To:** Mare Baracco  
**Subject:** RE: Deckard - Appeal

Thank u

---

**From:** Mare Baracco [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 6:56 PM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** Re: Deckard - Appeal

Same! hope to chat again:)

On Nov 2, 2022, at 6:51 PM, Stratos, Mary E <[Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us)> wrote:

Mrs. Baracco thank you for sharing this. I have reviewed it and appreciate your work as well as our conversation.

Thank you,  
MS

---

**From:** Mare Baracco [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:48 PM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E <[Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us)>  
**Subject:** Deckard - Appeal

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Sent from my iPhone

---

**From:** Mare Baracco [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 6:56 PM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E  
**Subject:** Re: Deckard - Appeal

Same! hope to chat again:)

On Nov 2, 2022, at 6:51 PM, Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us> wrote:

Mrs. Baracco thank you for sharing this. I have reviewed it and appreciate your work as well as our conversation.

Thank you,  
MS

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**From:** Mare Baracco [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:48 PM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** Deckard - Appeal

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Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 6:51 PM  
**To:** Mare Baracco  
**Subject:** RE: Deckard - Appeal

Mrs. Baracco thank you for sharing this. I have reviewed it and appreciate your work as well as our conversation.  
Thank you,  
MS

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**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:48 PM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** Deckard - Appeal

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Sent from my iPhone

---

**From:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 6:51 PM  
**To:** Bruder-Brasseur, Candace L  
**Subject:** FW: Deckard - Appeal  
**Attachments:** Deckard - Appeal of BCSD 97 Book Ban.pdf

Candance you may want to share this with legal counsel. Today, I spoke with the document's author. She is very proficient at policy practices and legal language. Her profession is that of an investigator for law firms. During the conversation she shared that she was a plaintiff in a case to Beaufort County and she won subject to the county not following administrative protocols.

---


**From:** Mare Baracco [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:48 PM  
**To:** Stratos, Mary E <Mary.Stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** Deckard - Appeal

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Sent from my iPhone



Mare B. Deckard



November 1, 2022

TO: Beaufort County School Board  
RE: Challenge/Appeal to the Removal of 97 Books

Dear Board Members:

I believe the School District and School Board was misled regarding a recent complaint requesting the examination/removal of 97 books.

According to the District's Policy IS-38.1 – Procedures for Handling Questioned or Challenged School Library Materials (June 2022) - (**emphasis added**):

**Exhibit 1**

**I. Purpose.** This administrative regulation establishes the Superintendent's expectations regarding procedures for receiving and handling questioned or challenged school library materials in the Beaufort County School District (BCSD).

**II. Reconsideration of School Library Materials.**

- A. All BCSD employees are charged with the responsibility of upholding the principle of intellectual freedom rather than defending a selected educational resource.
- B. The BCSD shall be operated to promote academic freedom, the student's right to read, and the fair and reasonable competition of ideas and information. **School officials may not broadly remove books from a school library based on "narrowly partisan or political" grounds that may violate students' first amendment rights to receive information and ideas.**
- C. The reconsideration process should conserve limited staff resources, **discourage the monopolization of the challenge process by a few individuals, and require complainants to submit complete, substantive, and fully researched challenge requests.**

Evidence confirms this Complaint was initiated and implemented by a local political group (members of myscgop/beaufort chapter) whose *point of contact* (as she self-describes) stated in a series of public postings denoting the Complainant a group directive to **"get inappropriate, explicit books out of our public schools"**, and asked for volunteers to research our school's libraries for specific books. **Exhibit 2**

She also cited two organizations in particular upon which she based her conclusions and found the list of challenged books, which thus became the basis of the Complaint. One is **"booklooks.org"**. Booklooks.org is connected to a partisan political organization from Florida **"Moms for Liberty"**: **Exhibit 3**

**Filed for an LLC in Florida on April 5, 2022, BookLooks is spearheaded by Moms For Liberty member Emily Maikisch, per filings. The site uses the same rating system shared on the Moms For Liberty Brevard County public Facebook page, published in late March.**

A review of recently published articles from that state report **"Moms for Liberty"** created this extensive and controversial challenge list subsequently cited by the Complainant. The other organization mentioned by the "point of contact" is a conservative group called **"Palmetto State Watch"**, who publicized a similar complaint against an Aiken librarian in early October 2022. **Exhibit 4**

It is my position, based upon these exhibits:

- a. The Complainant is a "straw man";
- b. Pursuant to the School District's policies and procedures, this complaint is by a group that is "narrowly partisan or political";
- c. Neither the Complainant (nor his group) appear to have read any of these books;
- d. The Complainant never completed the required forms for which to properly challenge any book, and not even for the book "Tricks", he specifically objected.

All citizens must be "fed from the same spoon". What you do for one, you must do for all. Allowing this specious 97 book complaint to move forward, when evidence is overwhelming:

1. It violates IS 38.1 (A)(B)(C);
2. It will open the floodgates to group political challenges;
3. It will inspire a multitude of lawsuits against the District for violations of their policies and procedures, as well as the students first amendment rights.

I would also add that for anyone to publicly suggest a school employee, official, or Board Member (is) participating/participated in criminal activity is the very definition of character assassination of not only them, but the system put in place to protect everyone's rights.

Sincerely,





# **EXHIBIT 1**



## **Regulation IS - 38.1 Procedures for Handling Questioned or Challenged School Library Materials**

**June, 2022**

**I. Purpose.** This administrative regulation establishes the Superintendent's expectations regarding procedures for receiving and handling questioned or challenged school library materials in the Beaufort County School District (BCSD).

### **II. Reconsideration of School Library Materials.**

- A. All BCSD employees are charged with the responsibility of upholding the principle of intellectual freedom rather than defending a selected educational resource.
- B. The BCSD shall be operated to promote academic freedom, the student's right to read, and the fair and reasonable competition of ideas and information. School officials may not broadly remove books from a school library based on "narrowly partisan or political" grounds that may violate students' first amendment rights to receive information and ideas.
- C. The reconsideration process should conserve limited staff resources, discourage the monopolization of the challenge process by a few individuals, and require complainants to submit complete, substantive, and fully researched challenge requests.

**III. Rights to Challenge.** Any BCSD student or employee, any parent/legal guardian of a BCSD student, and any person residing in a BCSD attendance zone may challenge specific materials found in school libraries.

- A. The BCSD recognizes the right of a parent/legal guardian to ask that particular school library materials not be made available to their own children, by completing the, "Request to Opt-Out of School Library Materials Form," attached to this administrative regulation. This form is also available on the BCSD website and at the school site.
- B. Complainants may request the addition of, removal of, restriction of, or expanded access to the school library materials by completing the, "Request For Reconsideration Of School Library Materials Form," attached to this administrative regulation. This form is also available on the BCSD website and at the school site.
- C. In reviewing challenges, priority will be given to:
  - 1. Challenges filed by BCSD students (or their parents/legal guardians) who are currently and directly affected by the use of specific materials.
  - 2. Challenges filed by BCSD teachers or administrators whose students are currently and directly affected by the use of specific materials.

**III. Reconsideration Procedure.** Upon receiving a complaint, the school administrator (or their designee) should schedule an informal conference with the complainant and the school librarian or teacher concerned. If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily during this informal conference, the following options are made available:

- A. If a student (or their parent/legal guardian) objects to specific materials located in a school or classroom library, they may request alternative instructional materials using the "Request to Opt-Out of School Library Materials Form." The school administrator or their designee shall communicate this request to the student's teachers, school librarian, and other staff as necessary.
- B. If the complainant would like to request any change that broadly affects access to the material in question, the following procedure shall be followed:
  - 1. The school administrator or their designee should explain the steps of the reconsideration process to the complainant. Without making any specific commitments which would affect general



## **EXHIBIT 2**



Sign Up

Email or phone

Password

Log In

Forgot account?



Elizabeth Ivie Szalai

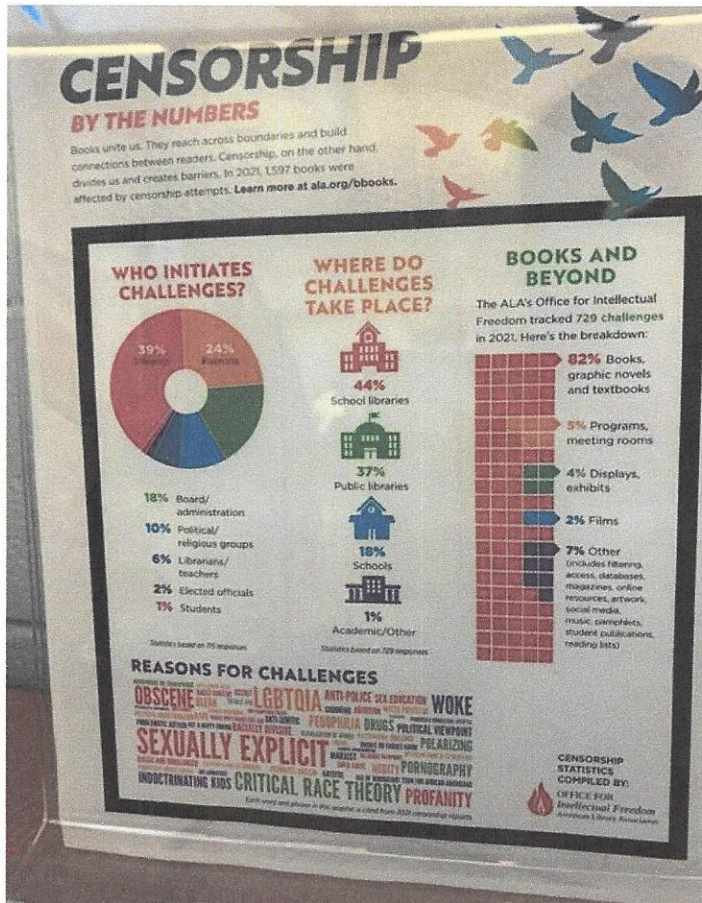
October 18 ·

Beaufort County School District, we are bringing this to you attention. Tomorrow our school board members and the Superintendent will receive a list of 96 book titles that are throughout our school district that contain one, more or all of the following: explicit content, aberrant sexual content, excessive drug use, pedophilia, rape, incest, abuse to name a few. My number one question is why any adult wants minors exposed to sexual content. We need to protect our children. I'm working with others on some very big things to get this addressed in our county, our state and hopefully our nation.

Joseph Cast David Louis Cook Alan Wright Michelle Luft Mandy G Collins Harrison Musselwhite Lauren Lee Martel Juliane Koeblich Angela Rose Beth Ann

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Português (Brasil) · Français (France) ·  
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Elizabeth Barnhardt for Lexington 5 School Board

October 18

This sign is located in the Chapin High School Library. Let's call what it is: "INDOCTRINATION." Challenging/Removing books is not "censorship," it is being responsible in making sure what minor children are being exposed to is within the law and age appropriate. Let's not even get into the fact that every tax paying citizen of Lexington-Richland Five funds this junk. By the American Library Association's own admission books are being challenged due to: Pornography, Sexually Explicit, Critical Race Theory and Pedophilia just to name a few. So what I am taking away from this is that the ALA has an issue with books of this nature being challenged. Citizens, we have a serious issue going on. This is an attempt to normalize PEDOPHILIA and PORNOGRAPHY.

Parents all over the country are standing up against exposing children to this nonsense. Children who can't even get into an "R" rated movie, yet are allowed read how to perform sexual acts on each other in our public school libraries?! Do we serve candy on our lunch menus? Do we allow Playboy magazines in our curriculums? Of course not! Because it's not good for

See more of Elizabeth Ivie Szalai on Facebook

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or

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Sign Up

Email or phone

Password

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Elizabeth Ivie Szalai

October 19 ·

SC Parents, We have something in the works to get inappropriate, explicit books out of our public schools. We are not book banners but we do not condone R or X rated literature being made available to students. It is against the law to disseminate, procure or promote obscenity to minors. Our public schools are doing just that. We need your help! We need 1 or more persons, working together, in each public school district in the state to research this list of books to see if one or more are available in your public school libraries. This list is extensive but not inclusive. It will take time but we owe it to our children to safeguard them. I, for now, will be your point of contact to compile the list for our entire state. I will need help, so I could use volunteers for regions within the state. I've made contact with a few of you and I hope I can count on your help. I am located in Beaufort County. Our district uses Destiny Discover for cataloging and book searches. It is a nationwide service; however, I am unsure if every district in SC uses this service. You will need to contact your district to find out. My resource for which books to look for is <http://booklooks.org/>. I searched for any book rated 3 and over. A rating of 3 is defined as minor restricted, under 18 requires guidance of parent or guardian. A rating of 4 is defined as no minors, adult content, no child under 18. A rating of 5 is defined as aberrant content, adult only. Would you believe we have quite a few books rated as 5 in my school district? To say I was shocked was an understatement. Booklooks gives a rating, a summary of concerns, and excerpts from the books to show why it was rated accordingly. It is an invaluable resource. Some of the books I will list are not found on Booklooks. I will put an asterisk beside those. Some were sourced from other concerned parents and this blog post by Palmetto State Watch. I will post a link that blog in the comments. Another great resource is <https://www.ratedbooks.org/>. I have not had a chance to cross-check this site with the previous one mentioned by will be doing so and adding books as necessary.

Books to look for:

A Lesson in Vengeance by Victoria Lee Rated 3  
All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson Rated 4  
All the Things We Do in the Dark by Sandra Mitchell Rated 3  
Almost Perfect by Brian Katcher Rated 3  
Ask the Passengers by A.S. King Rated 3  
Beautiful by Amy Reed Rated 4  
Boy Girl Boy by Ron Koertge Rated 3  
Burned by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3  
Breathless by Jennifer Niven Rated 4  
\*City of Heavenly Fire by Cassandra Clare  
Clockwork Princess by Cassandra Clare Rated 3  
Collateral by Ellen Hopkins Rated 4  
Confess: A Novel by Colleen Hoover Rated 4  
Cool for the Summer by Dahlia Adler Rated 3  
Court of Frost and Starlight by Sarah J. Maas Rated 4  
Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah J. Maas Rated 4  
Court of Thorns and Roses by Sarah J. Maas Rated 4  
Court of Wings and Ruin by Sarah J. Maas Rate 4  
Crank by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3  
Damsel by Elana Arnold Rated 4  
Eleanor and Park by Rainbow Rowell Rated 3  
Empire of Storms by Sarah J. Maas Rated 4  
Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer Rated 3  
Fade by Lisa McMann Rated 3  
Fallout by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3  
Felix Ever After by Kacen Callender Rated 3  
Flamer by Mike Curato Rated 3  
Forever for a Year by B.T. Gottfred Rated 4  
Foul is Fair by Hannah Capin Rated 3  
Gabi, A Girl in Pieces by Isabel Quintero Rated 3  
Glass by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3  
Go Ask Alice by Anonymous Rated 3

See more of Elizabeth Ivie Szalai on Facebook

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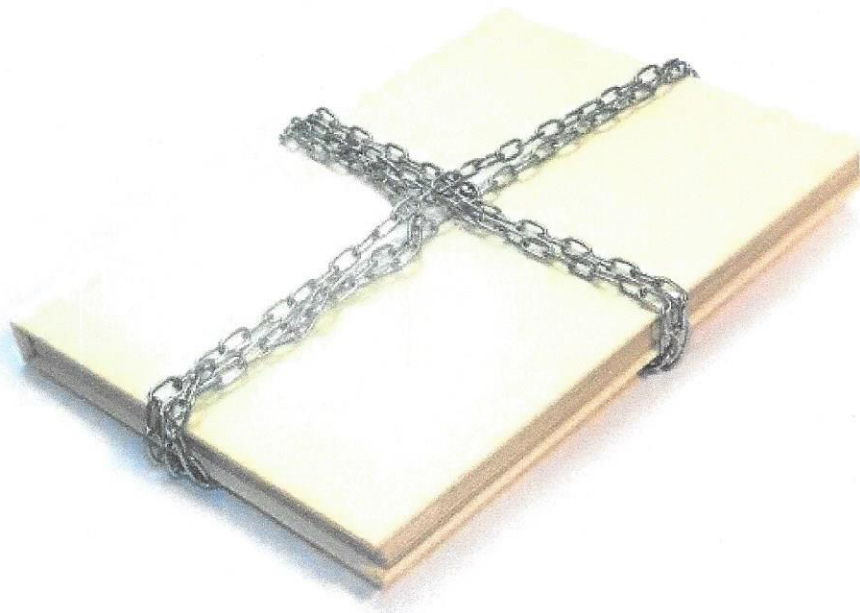
or

Create new account



# **EXHIBIT 3**





CENSORSHIP

## **BOOKLOOKS, FRAMED AS "OBJECTIVE" BOOK RATING RESOURCE, A MOMS FOR LIBERTY JOINT**

Kelly Jensen May 16, 2022

Moms For Liberty has been at the forefront of book challenges throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Their challenges begin in Brevard County, Florida ([https://news.yahoo.com/next-moms-liberty-library-challenge-172707510.html?utm\\_source=pocket\\_mylist](https://news.yahoo.com/next-moms-liberty-library-challenge-172707510.html?utm_source=pocket_mylist)) , and their challenged titles become the targets of similar efforts to ban books across the country. Members of the group have called for the development of an “objective” rating system that would put an end to books that contain what they believe to be obscene and objectionable content being purchased for libraries. Across Moms For Liberty Facebook groups, as well similar “parents rights” groups across the country, a new resource has emerged heeding the call: BookLooks (<https://booklooks.org/>) .

But what appears to be an objective measure of a book’s content, mirrored after movie ratings, is anything but. It is a tool developed by Moms For Liberty being used to push their agendas even further under the guise of protecting children.

BookLooks, which launched in early 2022, says their mission is to “write and collect detailed and easy to understand book content reviews centered around objectionable content, including: profanity, nudity, and sexual content.” Their goal, “to make these reviews available to all parents so they can make informed decisions.”

Filed for an LLC in Florida on April 5, 2022, BookLooks is spearheaded by Moms For Liberty member Emily Maikisch, per filings. The site uses the same rating system shared on the Moms For Liberty Brevard County public Facebook page, published in late March.

Alongside the proposed rating systems, with examples of what would earn a book a more detrimental rating based on a passage or two within it, are definitions for what the raters

look for. Most notable: the cherry-picked definition of obscene:

Obscenity laws (<https://bookriot.com/book-censorship-news-march-18-2022/>) are much broader than what's cited.

The U.S. Supreme Court established the test that judges and juries use to determine whether matter is obscene in three major cases: *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15, 24-25 (1973); *Smith v. United States*, 431 U.S. 291, 300-02, 309 (1977); and *Pope v. Illinois*, 481 U.S. 497, 500-01 (1987). The three-pronged *Miller* test is as follows:

1. Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter, **taken as a whole**, appeals to prurient interests (*i.e.*, an erotic, lascivious, abnormal, unhealthy, degrading, shameful, or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion);
2. Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way (*i.e.*, ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sado-masochistic sexual abuse); and
3. Whether a reasonable person finds that the matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

Conveniently, the bold text above is precisely what the BookLooks definition—and the definition shared in the Moms For Liberty Brevard County group—choose to leave out.

The Brevard County Moms For Liberty group has recruited volunteers to contribute to their project. These volunteers, all aligned with the right-wing, Heritage-fund, Ron DeSantis affiliated Moms For Liberty, are using their pull to develop their book targets via BookLooks. Titles in BookLooks earning a rating of 4 or higher then go onto the list of titles which are formally challenged in Brevard.



Though “Emily Maikisch” is the name listed on the BookLooks registration, Emily is not the name she uses in her Moms For Liberty capacity. Instead, she goes by Penelope.



BookLooks has been the model for other book rating sites, including [RatedBooks](https://bwentzel6.wixsite.com/website-7/rated-boooks-org) (<https://bwentzel6.wixsite.com/website-7/rated-boooks-org>) , which is aligned with the Utah-based book challenge group [LaVerna in the Library](https://www.facebook.com/groups/353057099906284/) (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/353057099906284/>) . [LaVerna in the Library](https://www.facebook.com/Mary-in-the-Library-USA-105789061927355)—also known as [Mary in the Library](https://www.facebook.com/Mary-in-the-Library-USA-105789061927355) (<https://www.facebook.com/Mary-in-the-Library-USA-105789061927355>) —has groups scattered throughout the country at the state level.

On BookLooks, concerned parents are invited not only to view the ratings as determined by volunteer readers but also encouraged to download and view the passages and pages deemed inappropriate. These passages are what are shared across these groups and used in filing challenges and creating dramatic readings at [school board meetings](https://bookriot.com/hero-syndrome-in-book-banning-efforts/) (<https://bookriot.com/hero-syndrome-in-book-banning-efforts/>) .

Moms For Liberty's Brevard chapter is its headquarters chapter and Brevard County School District is the first to see the organization's challenges. Last week, the chapter submitted its [fourth round of formal challenges](https://bookriot.com/hero-syndrome-in-book-banning-efforts/) (<https://bookriot.com/hero-syndrome-in-book-banning-efforts/>) to the school district. Each title on the list earned a rating of 4 or higher by BookLooks. Here's how they're doing it:

Amy Reed's award-winning YA book *The Nowhere Girls* was rated by BookLooks/Moms For Liberty as a 4. This triggered the book to be formally challenged at Brevard County School District, using the pages linked in the Facebook post (those are all [included in the](#)

BookLooks listing (<https://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/N/The%20Nowhere%20Girls.pdf>) for the book). The group blasted the schools in the district with the title on their page and encouraged others to look for and challenge the book in their districts based on their “objective” ratings.

While there is a direct link between Moms For Liberty and BookLooks, as well as a clear path in what the development is between a review and a formal challenge from the group, what is far less clear is where the books these volunteers are being sourced. Several books included in the still-tiny BookLooks database are titles that would never be purchased or included in a school library collection, such as *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Tantric Sex*. That book is reviewed alongside Ruth Forman’s *Curls* (rated 0, with no objectionable content what so ever). It makes no sense for anyone with familiarity of how librarians read professional reviews and purchase materials to serve their school communities.

What does make sense, though, is how creating such a database under the guise of objectivity could evoke knee-jerk reactions from parents who may believe books about tantric sex reside alongside developmentally-appropriate titles like Reed’s in the library.

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# Runner, Slaughterhouse-Five

Parents group submit fourth list of books it wants banned from schools

Bailey Gallion, Florida Today

Published: May 11, 2022 at 4:16 PM

Tags: Education, Schools, Moms For Liberty, Brevard County



Michelle Beavers, chair of the Brevard Moms for Liberty library committee, suggested pulling the books while they get reviewed. (Malcom Denmark/Florida Today)



**BREVARD COUNTY, Fla.** – The Brevard chapter of **Moms for Liberty** has submitted a fourth list of library books deemed inappropriate for minors, this time calling out instances of “racially divisive” rhetoric, LGBTQ themes, references to abortion and criticism of Christianity in addition to the explicit sex scenes that dominated the first lists.

The latest list includes a book that sometimes appears in late high school reading lists — *Slaughterhouse-Five*, a satirical blend of anti-war literature and science fiction by Kurt Vonnegut. The book is the first classic novel Moms for Liberty in Brevard has disputed, according to **News 6 partner Florida Today**.

*Slaughterhouse-Five* contains graphic violence (including animal abuse), explicit sexual content and a passage Moms for Liberty termed “inflammatory religious commentary” that mocked the New Testament in a satirical manner.

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Online summer reading lists from West Shore Jr./Sr. High School and Viera High School list the novel as an option for rising high school seniors to read. A Brevard Public Schools spokesman could not immediately comment on what the book’s challenge could mean for teachers who would like to use the book in the classroom.

Moms for Liberty has now disputed 41 books that members say violate state pornography statutes. It sent seven book reviews to the district in March, and included 17 in a list sent to Brevard Public Schools on Monday. The challenges prompted BPS to form a process to



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Another book, *Not All Boys Are Blue*, was flagged for what Moms for Liberty described as “racially charged commentary” and “alternate gender ideologies” as well as sexually explicit passages, alcohol and drug use and profanity.

The organization also challenged *The Kite Runner*, a novel about two boys growing up in Afghanistan that includes an account of homosexual rape.

The Indian River chapter of Moms for Liberty also pushed for the book to be removed from school library shelves, along with 150 other titles, including *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. That school district opted to keep *The Kite Runner*, as well as all but five challenged books, available to students. T

The Brevard Chapter of Moms for Liberty also included all books from Sarah J. Maas’ popular adult fantasy series, *A Court of Thorns and Roses*.

### **Moms for Liberty List Three**

- *A Court of Silver Flames* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Breathless* by Jennifer Niven
- *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo
- *The Infinite Moment of Us* by Lauren Myracle
- *YOU: A Novel* by Caroline Kepnes

### **Moms for Liberty List Four**

- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Wings and Ruin* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Perez
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *Jesus Land* by Julia Scheeres
- *People Kill People* by Ellen Hopkins
- *Beautiful* by Amy Reed
- *Empire of Storms* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott
- *House of Earth and Blood* by Sarah J. Maas
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky



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- Slaughternhouse-Five by Kurt vonnegut
- Normal People by Sally Rooney
- House of Sky and Breath by Sarah J. Maas

**Lists One and Two**

- Damsel by Elana K. Arnold
- Forever by Judy Blume
- Lucky by Alice Sebold
- Monday's Not Coming by Tiffany D. Jackson
- Not My Problem by Ciara Smyth
- Red Hood by Elana K. Arnold
- Sold by Patricia McCormick
- This Book is Gay by Juno Dawson
- This One Summer by Mariko Tamaki
- What Girls are Made of by Elana K. Arnold
- A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah J. Maas
- Crank by Ellen Hopkins
- Infandous by Elana K. Arnold
- Push by Sapphire
- The Haters by Jesse Andrews
- The Nowhere Girls by Amy Reed
- Tilt by Ellen Hopkins
- Triangles by Ellen Hopkins
- Tricks by Ellen Hopkins

The School Board voted Tuesday night on a policy that will allow the district to review challenged books on a district-wide level instead of forming committees at each school. So far, some school libraries have opted to remove some of the challenged books during an informal review, but many remain on shelves.

As of Wednesday morning, Moms for Liberty had not made a request for a formal district-wide review under the policy adopted Tuesday. District officials have warned it may take a year or more to complete such a process.

If committees formed by the district — which will each include BPS teachers, media specialists and one parent selected by each school





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## **EXHIBIT 4**





## PALMETTO STATE WATCH

*South Carolina's Premiere Watchdog Group*

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Aiken Librarian Embraces Distributing Obscenity to Minors

Date: [October 6, 2022](#) Author: [janispsw](#)

[4 Comments](#)

**WARNING: Mature content is discussed in this article.**

### SC Code 16-15-385

1. A person commits the offense of disseminating harmful materials to minors if, knowing the character or content of the material, he:
  1. Sells, furnishes, presents, or distributes to a minor material that is harmful to minors; or
  2. Allows a minor to review or peruse material that is harmful to minors.

A person does not commit an offense under this subsection when he employs a minor to work in a theater if the minor's parent or guardian consents to the employment and if the minor is not allowed in the viewing area when material harmful to minors is shown.

2. A person commits the offense of exhibiting a harmful performance to a minor if, with or without consideration and knowing the character or content of the performance, he allows a minor to view a live performance which is harmful to minors.

3. Except as provided in item (3) of this subsection, mistake of age is not a defense to a prosecution under this section. **It is an affirmative defense under this section that:**

1. The defendant was a parent or legal guardian of a minor, but this item does not apply when the parent or legal guardian exhibits or disseminates the harmful material for the sexual gratification of the parent, guardian, or minor.

2. **the defendant was a school, church, museum, public, school, college, or university library, government agency, medical clinic, or hospital *carrying out its legitimate function, or an employee or agent of such an organization acting in that capacity and carrying out a legitimate duty of his employment.*** (emphasis added)

3. before disseminating or exhibiting the harmful material or performance, the defendant requested and received a driver's license, student identification card, or other official governmental or educational identification card or paper indicating that the minor to whom the material or performance was disseminated or exhibited was at least eighteen years old, and the defendant reasonably believed the minor was at least eighteen years old.

4. A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than ten years or fined not

more than five thousand dollars, or both.

Effective April 26, 2004.

**In 2004, our legislators in SC Code, Title 16, Article 3 (16-15-305 et. seq.) went to great extents to make it a punishable criminal act to distribute obscene materials to minors, yet they exempted schools, churches, etc. while carrying out their legitimate function.**

**As you're reading this article, ask yourself, is it the legitimate function of a school or public library to proffer obscene materials in areas where minors have unrestricted access? For the entire law, see [Code of Laws – Title 16 – Chapter 15 – Offenses Against Morality And Decency \(scstatehouse.gov\)](#)**

I've been hearing rumblings about obscene books in high school libraries for several months now. Then one day, screen shots posted by [The Overton Report | Corey Allen | Substack](#) showed images of a **facts of life children's book written for 4-7 year-olds that very descriptively explained extramarital sexual intercourse along with a drawing of a naked couple in bed together** (My Body is Growing by Dagmar Geisler, which apparently even now Amazon has removed). On a whim, I checked our local library, and sure enough, **a digital copy was available through their digital book service, Hoopla**. I called the library and the person that answered the phone brushed me off, saying that nothing could be done about it and she wasn't concerned because a) she didn't have kids and b) she didn't use Hoopla. I asked for a call back from the librarian the next day.



After being brushed off, and from what I was hearing around the country about the way these issues were being handled, I made copies of the inappropriate pages in the book and went to the Aiken County Council meeting and raised awareness as to the type of books that are being made available for children in our small conservative town's library.

Before we go too far, I want to address the fact that some of you will accuse me of **censoring or banning books**. Maybe so, but oughtn't we take care when it comes to the future of our posterity? When we think of eating a **healthy diet**, we think of consuming a variety of fresh vegetables, fruit, meats, and consumption of **pre-processed junk food** ought to be kept to a minimum, if eaten at all, especially when a child is young and their appetite is being formed. Likewise with books. There are many books out there for young people that would constitute a 'healthy' reading diet, even newly published books, yet I contend that our public libraries are filling themselves not only with the equivalent of pre-processed junk food, but also with things we have long sought to limit exposure of at a young age: **erotic sex, prolific use of profanity, and other topics such as illicit drug use and rape**.

While I am aware that desiring a public library to carry books that will challenge our youth mentally may be a lofty idea (and why I am an advocate of building home libraries as much as possible, I think it is time for us to advocate for **material that would normally carry an R- or X- rating in movies not to be shelved in the Juvenile (age 6-12) or Young Adult (age 12-18) section of the library, where minors have unrestricted access..**

As such, some parents may consent to their kids reading such materials, so if the library has them, I am of the opinion that they ought to be placed in the adult section. Many parents send their children to the library for summer reading programs and the librarians act in loco parentis, and as such and should have the

peace of mind that the librarians are recommending materials that are age-appropriate, and wouldn't carry an X- or R-rating if they were a movie.

After that initial county council meeting, I received a phone call from the head librarian, informing me that there was a form that the library has available called a **'Request for Reconsideration'** that patrons can submit if they have an issue with library materials. It would appear the library would like to hold the existence of this form close to the chest and make it available only to the squeakiest of wheels. It's not listed on their website anywhere, even 2 months after I requested they put it on their website at a monthly board meeting. Additionally, do you remember what I said happened the first time I called the library? I was brushed off. I was NOT offered the opportunity to fill out a form. Interestingly enough, after talking to friends who have voiced concerns about materials at the same library, they also were not given the option of filling out any forms. I wonder how many others would have done so had they known of its existence? The form, which is 2 pages long, is a deterrent in and of itself, since it requests the person filling out the form (requesting materials either to be removed from the library's collection entirely or moved to a different section of the library) not only to make recommendations of books to replace the one in question, but also to justify why the recommended replacement would be superior! For what it's worth, I was told I didn't need to fill out the entire form in order for them to look at the books, so that could ease the process then.

Over the course of the next few days I was introduced to others who are ahead of me on this journey. I learned that **there are A LOT of books that have highly questionable content that are being labeled as appropriate for Young Adults by 'reputable' book reviewers.** My next step was to search out some of those books. I went to the library and checked out as many as I could carry – over 15 books! Over the course of the next 2 months I proceeded to read all of the books and create a document for each, detailing obscene content in each of the books.



I then requested an opportunity to speak at the next library board meeting and was granted permission.

Just prior to the meeting, I attended the county council meeting one more time and invited the board members to attend the library meeting as well. A handful attended. Prior to my time slot, the head librarian gave a lengthy presentation detailing how the library procures books for their collection, along with a number of details, including the 4 resources the library holds as the authority for book reviews: Booklist (published by the left-leaning American Library Association), Library Journal, School Library Journal, and The Horn Book, Inc.

**Sidebar:** After the meeting, I was browsing a couple of the above websites and discovered that they had a very similar feel to them. A quick scroll down to the bottom of the page confirmed for me that not only do the **Library Journal, School Library Journal, and The Horn Book, Inc. share the same phone number, but they are all under one parent organization: The Vistria Group.** Upon further investigation, I found that the Senior Partner, Co-Chairman & Co-CEO Marty Nesbitt is **not only the Chair of the Obama Foundation, but he also happens to be a close friend of Obama.** I ask, are these journals in fact providing independent reviews? Or are they pushing books that fit an agenda that serve to further divide families and promote moral decay?

After the meeting, I submitted 15 'Requests for Reconsideration' to the library for the following books. Click on the hyperlink to read excerpted passages, all of which I personally read, with the exception of number 14, which was an audio CD at our library so I relied on an outside review:

1. *The 57 Bus* by Dashka Slater (Juvenile Non-Fiction, moved to Adult Non-Fiction) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O2MbAtOqT8leO5kyTliQtMFRp81sGa4l/view?usp=sharing>

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**From:** Mare Baracco [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:48 PM  
**To:** mary.stratos@beaufort.k12.sc.us  
**Subject:** Deckard - Appeal  
**Attachments:** Deckard - Appeal of BCSD 97 Book Ban.pdf; attachment.txt

**\*\* WARNING:** This email originated from outside of Beaufort County School District's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\***

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**From:** Cartledge, Wendy B <Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:13 PM  
**To:** Fidrych, Patricia  
**Subject:** RE: re: removal of books from district's libraries

Calling you now.

---

**From:** Fidrych, Patricia <Patricia.Fidrych@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:11 PM  
**To:** Cartledge, Wendy B <Wendy.Cartledge@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Subject:** re: removal of books from district's libraries

Dear Wendy,

Today I received a text message on my personal phone from a constituent, Mare Deckard, who spoke at last evening's board meeting about the removal of the books from our schools' libraries. Ms. Deckard and I have communicated a couple of times regarding this issue. I deemed it important for you to be aware of this. In today's text she wrote, " As you probably know, I unfortunately experienced what happens when a governmental entity fails to follow their policies and procedures (and ultimately received a substantial check because of it). And I'm sure you'll take note that I did not opine last night on the efforts to ban these books. My appeal was based solely on the district's lack of adherence to their own guidelines. I'm particularly disappointed in you; I voted for you because I was certain that you, of all people, understood that government must always be neutral, and always adhere to their policies and procedures, to avoid accusations they favor one side over another. If the district refuses to see where they have obviously erred, and restore these 97 titles until a proper non politically aligned complaint is completed for each one, I'm left with no choice but to proceed in a way I see fit."

Sincerely,  
Tricia

Tricia Fidrych  
Beaufort County School District  
Board of Education  
District 4 Representative

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**From:** Fidrych, Patricia <Patricia.Fidrych@beaufort.k12.sc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:11 PM  
**To:** Cartledge, Wendy B  
**Subject:** re: removal of books from district's libraries

Dear Wendy,

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Sincerely,  
Tricia

Tricia Fidrych  
Beaufort County School District  
Board of Education  
District 4 Representative