Cherokee County School District

Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date	Agenda Item Number
June 16, 2022	E-4

Title

Challenged Book Appeal

Requested Action

School Board Consideration of Superintendent's Recommendation for Approval to Uphold the Media Advisory Committee's Recommendation for the Challenged book, Crank (2004).

Summary Explanation and Background

The School Board acknowledges the right of parents and other citizens to raise questions through established procedures when materials are challenged as inappropriate for public school use. Though care is taken to select valuable materials for students and teachers, there may be objections by the public as to the selections that have been made.

Summary: In this regard, The Superintendent's SY2021-22 Annual Media Advisory Committee met on March 24, 2022, to review the book, Crank by Ellen Hopkins. The complainant, a CCSD parent, expressed concerns regarding content contained within the book, specific to passages containing "multiple euphoric drug highs," abortion, and sexual activity. Committee members read the book in its entirety and convened to discuss the specific concerns. Those unable to attend submitted an online survey expressing their thoughts for committee consideration. The parent concerns were addressed and reviewed against the educational value of the book. As it relates to the educational value of the book, the committee believes the book has both instructional and educational value. It was noted that while the book contained mature content, it clearly illustrated how the progression of drug use can quickly lead to devastating life consequences. "Oftentimes we think of educational value as having a positive experience at the end, but this is a story similar to dystopian novels we read. They serve as warnings. I feel that has value in a different way," stated a staff member.

Recommendation: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board uphold the committee recommendation that the book remain available on high school shelves (only) for choice-based, student checkout in the Media Center and classroom libraries.

Priority Area

Student Achievement: Access and Opportunity

Financial Impact

N/A

Exhibits: (List)

Media Advisory Committee Summary

Source of Additional Information

Dr. Brian V. Hightower	770.479.1871
Nicole H. Holmes	770.479.1871
Barbara Jacoby	770.479.1871

Ad Hoc Committee Summary for SY2021-22

Mission: The purpose of this review committee is to address system challenges of media center holdings, classroom library holdings and other supplemental resources within the framework of existing IFAB policy and procedures. The committee makes recommendations to the Superintendent based on a consensus of committee members.

Description of Book: The book *Crank* is about a teenage girl who is addicted to methamphetamine (Crank). Throughout the book she encounters, selling, taking, and sharing drugs which leads her down a path of destruction. The book provides a vivid picture of what it is like to be addicted to drugs.

Summary: The Superintendent's SY2021-22 Annual Media Advisory Committee met on March 24, 2022, to review the book, *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins. The complainant, a CCSD parent, expressed concerns regarding content contained within the book, specific to passages containing "multiple euphoric drug highs", abortion, and sexual activity. Committee members read the book in its entirety and convened to discuss the specific concerns. Those unable to attend submitted an online survey expressing their thoughts for committee consideration. The parent concerns were addressed and reviewed against the educational value of the book.

In regard to the educational value of the book, the committee believes the book has both instructional and educational value. It was noted that while the book contained mature content, it clearly illustrated how the progression of drug use can quickly lead to devastating life consequences. "Oftentimes we think of educational value as having a positive experience at the end, but this is a story similar to dystopian novels we read. They serve as warnings. I feel that has value in a different way," stated a staff member.

Findings: In response to the complainant's claim of "multiple euphoric drug highs", the committee noted that the book served more as a deterrent rather than a glorification of drug use. In fact, one student noted "as a student, it scared me. I hear about kids getting drugs.....I don't want to be them – I'm terrified." In response to the concern related to abortion, the committee felt it was an illustration of the reality of risky life choices.

They also noted the book did not glorify any of the sexual acts. A student stated, "I didn't pick up the 'theme of sex' - I didn't pick that up at all. She wasn't trying to get raped. It was a byproduct of the situation she put herself in." The committee believes the concerns did not supersede the educational value of the book.

Recommended Actions: The committee recommends that the book remain available on high school shelves (only) for choice-based, student checkout in the Media Center and classroom libraries.