Cherokee County School District

Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date	Agenda Item Number
December 15, 2022	E-2

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, Drama.

Summary Explanation and Background

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

Committee Summary: In this regard, The Superintendent's SY2022-23 Annual Media Advisory Committee met on November 15, 2022, to review the book Drama by Raina Telgemeier. The complainant, a CCSD parent, expressed concerns regarding content contained within the book, specific to violent "kissing, sexuality, and homosexuality." Committee members read the book 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 book's educational value. As it relates to the educational value of the book the committee believes the book has educational value. It was noted that while the book contained mature content, it did not detract from the novel's educational value. "I especially think that the kiss isn't romantic. He hopped on stage. It happened. Not romantic at all", noted a committee member.

Committee Recommendation: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board uphold the committee recommendation that the book remain available on 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
Dr. Nicole H. Holmes	770.479.1871
Barbara Jacoby	770.479.1871

Ad Hoc Committee Summary for SY2022-23

Name of Committee: **SUPERINTENDENT'S SY2022-23 ANNUAL MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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 upon a consensus of committee members.

Summary: The Superintendent's SY2022-23 Annual Media Advisory Committee met on November 15, 2022, to review the book, *Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier. The complainant, a CCSD parent, expressed concerns regarding content contained within the book, specific to violent "kissing, sexuality, and homosexuality." 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's concerns were addressed and reviewed against the educational value of the book.

Regarding the educational value of the book, the committee believes the book has educational value. Members noted that the text was engaging for multiple levels of learners. It is appealing and accessible to a variety of students. Several parents mentioned that their personal children read and enjoyed the book. A parent commented, "I appreciated the author's note. She spoke about bringing drama in theater to the forefront of schools. I don't think that's talked about enough. Many young kids don't even realize drama is a club that's available to them after elementary school. I hope that's what kids take from the book, not that two boys kissed."

Findings: In response to the complainant's claim of "kissing, sexuality, and homosexuality," the committee noted while there was a kiss on stage in the book, none of the scenes were of a romantic or sexual nature. The committee decided those topics did not detract from the educational value of the novel. "I especially think that the kiss isn't romantic. He hopped on stage. It happened. Not romantic at all," noted a committee member.

A student added, "I read this in elementary school and wasn't introduced to homosexuality until seventh grade. I literally never noticed the kiss when I read it in elementary school."

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 shelves for choice-based, student checkout in the Media Center and classroom libraries.