Dear Beaufort County School Board,

Please consider this a formal appeal to the Review Committee's recommendation to the Board for book numbers:

- **62- *Skin*** by Donna Jo Napoli **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **64- *Court of Frost and Starlight*** by Sarah J. Maas **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **65- *Court of Wings and Ruin*** by Sarah J. Maas **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **66- *Felix Ever After*** by Kacen Callender **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **67- *The Fixer*** by Bernard Malamud **— returned to grades 9-12**

Again, I will ask that all pertinent material concerning the Review Committees be made available to the complainants upon notification of decisions by the Committees. As it is now, a Freedom of Information Act request is required. This has yet to be addressed. I do not feel that I can fully complete my appeals without this information being provided in a timely manner.

In the last month or so, I have heard two people during public comment quote the definition of pornography, likely from Merium-Webster.

pornography
noun
por·nog·ra·phy pȯr-ˈnä-grə-fē
1 : the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement

They tried to say that the worst books are not pornographic by that definition. Maybe they are correct in their thinking for themselves, but their logic is off. The rape or incest scenes in the books may not cause sexual arousal for them, but for some, it does. Just because it does not cause sexual arousal for them does not negate the meaning of the definition when applied to the books. An author may not write it to elicit sexual arousal, but that does not mean that it cannot be. Some of the books contain horrific scenes that would repulse most people but to some no matter how hard they may be repulsed, it still creates arousal. Sometimes our bodies do things that we have no physical power over, like a man or a woman climaxing during rape. According to an article in Popular Science, by Jenny Morber, "*Rape is not always violent. Some survivors surrender to protect themselves or their loved ones. Some are intoxicated, drugged, physically or mentally incapacitated, or in a position without power. Some (doubly horribly) are children. Rape does not always include penile penetration. Some rapists are married to their victims. Some rapists are women. Some women rape men. And sometimes, in*

the middle of an act that is always a violation, a rape survivor will experience increasingly intense physical sensations leading to climax – an orgasm. Yes, it really happens. Of those who report their rapes, around 4–5% also describe experiencing orgasm. But the true numbers are likely much higher. In a 2004 review paper, a clinician reports, "I (have) met quite a lot of victims (males) who had the full sexual response during sexual abuse…I (have) met several female victims of incest and rape who had lubrication and orgasm."[1]

So for these people to say that the books do not qualify to be pornography, they are simply misinformed. There is not much research on this and it is probably underreported because of embarrassment. And then there is always the chance a perpetrator will try to say it had to be consensual if the victim was aroused or climaxed. Perhaps we should be looking into a broader definition of pornography as noted by Robert Jensen in a paper published by the National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women. He noted that "*In many laboratory studies of pornography's effects, three categories of pornography are created: overtly violent; non-violent but degrading; and sexually explicit but neither violent nor degrading.*"[2]

In Brief: *There are limits to what research can tell us about the complex interactions of mass media and human behavior. But from both laboratory research and the narratives of men and women, it is not controversial to argue that pornography can: (1) be an important factor in shaping a male-dominant view of sexuality; (2) be used to initiate victims and break down their resistance to unwanted sexual activity; (3) contribute to a user's difficulty in separating sexual fantasy and reality; and (4) provide a training manual for abusers.*[3]

As a Board, do you want to be responsible for even just one student falling into any of the categories above? By putting many of these books back on the shelves, you could be. We may never know but are you willing to take that chance? Is it not better to protect than just hope for the best? What do you have to lose by being overly cautious? According to an opinion sought and established by the South Carolina Attorney General's office on September 24, 1999, upon the request of The Honorable Harry C. Stille, House of Representative Member, "*The First Amendment protects against censorship of the school library, but does not prohibit removal of indecent or offensive material from the school library. If the motivation of school officials is not to suppress ideas, but to remove a "pervasively vulgar" book or a book which is deemed "educationally unsuitable," then the removal is constitutionally valid. School officials*

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[1]Morber, Jenny. "What Science Says about Arousal during Rape." Popular Science, 26 Apr. 2021, www.popsci.com/science/article/2013-05/science-arousal-during-rape/.

[2] Jensen, Robert, and Debbie Okrina. "Pornography and Sexual Violence." *Applied Research Forum*, July 2004, vawnet.org/sites/default/files/materials/files/2016-09/AR_PornAndSV.pdf.

[3] Jensen, Robert, and Debbie Okrina. "Pornography and Sexual Violence." *Applied Research Forum*, July 2004, vawnet.org/sites/default/files/materials/files/2016-09/AR_PornAndSV.pdf.

have a duty under the law to protect school children from indecency and lewdness. The fact that a student may be exposed or have access to the very same book or offensive material outside of school cannot justify school officials abdicating their responsibilities".[4]
You have the right, you have the backing from the AG opinion, and you have the responsibility to do the right thing- protect our children.

Skin by Donna Jo Napoli **Rated 4**
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Book Summary:
A teenage girl has vitiligo resulting in lowered self-esteem. She learns more about herself and her body after having a romantic relationship with a teenage boy.
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; profanity; suicide commentary

Profanity	**Count**
Bitch	**1**
Fuck	**6**
Piss	**1**
Shit	**7**

Court of Frost and Starlight by Sarah J. Maas **Rated 4**
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Hilton Head Island High School
Book Summary:
A winter celebration brings insight into the casualties of war and deepens relationships between friends and family.

[4] "Concerning the Limits Which the First Amendment Imposes upon School Officials and/or a Local School Board in Determining That a Book in Question Should Be Removed from the High School Library." *Concerning the Limits Which the First Amendment Imposes upon School Officials and/or a Local School Board in Determining That a Book in Question Should Be Removed from the High School Library. - South Carolina Attorney General*, www.scag.gov/opinions/opinions-archive/september-24-1999-1/. Accessed 10 Aug. 2023.

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains obscene sexual activities; explicit sexual nudity; profanity; alcohol use; and violence

Profanity	Count
Ass	**4**
Fuck	**4**
Piss	**1**
Prick	**4**
Shit	**9**

A COURT OF Frost and Starlight

BY SARAH J. MAAS

Another kiss, this one to the hollow of my throat as his hands slipped around my back and began to undo the hidden buttons of my dress...I arched my neck to given him better access, and he obliged, his tongue flicking over the spot he'd just kissed. "My plan," he went on, the dress sliding from me to pool on the rug, "involved this cabin, and a wall."...My stomach tightened int anticipation, my breasts turning achingly heavy...Then he was standing naked before me, wings slightly flared, muscled chest heaving, showing me the full evidence of just how ready he was. "Do you want to begin at the wall, or finish there?" His words were guttural, barely recognizable, and the gleam in his eyes turned into something predatory..."Or shall it be the wall the entire time?"...Rhys didn't wait for my answer before kneeling before me, his wings draping over the rug. Before he pressed a kiss to my abdomen, as if in reverence and benediction. The pressed a kiss lower. Lower. My hands slid into his hair, just as he gripped one of my thighs and hoisted my leg over his shoulder. Just as I found myself somehow leaning against the wall near the doorway, as if he'd winnowed us. My head hit the wood with a soft thud as Rhys lowered his mouth to me. He took his time. ***Licked and stroked me until I'd shattered***, then laughed against me, dark and rich, before he rose to his full height. Before he hoisted me up, my legs wrapping around his waist, and pinned me against that wall. One arm braced on the wall, the other holding me aloft, Rhys met my eyes. "How shall it be, mate?"…"Hard enough to make the pictures fall off," I reminded him, breathless. He laughed again, low and wicked. "Hold on tight, then."…My hands slid onto his shoulders, digging into the hard muscle.But he slowly, so slowly, pushed into me. So I felt every inch of him, every place where we were joined. I tipped my head back again, a moan slipping out of me. "Every time," he gritted out. "Every time, you feel exquisite." I clenched my teeth, panting through my nose. He worked his way in, thrusting in small movements, letting me adjust to each thick inch of him. And when he was seated inside me, when his hand tightened on my hip, just…stopped. I moved my hips, desperate for any friction. He shifted with me, denying it. Rhys licked his way up my throat. "I think about you, about this, every damn hour," he purred against my skin. "About the way you taste."Another slight withdrawal- then a plunge in. I panted and panted, leaning my head into the hard wall behind me. Rhys let out an approving sound, and withdrew slightly. Then pushed back in. Hard.A low rattle sounded down the wall to my left. I stopped caring. Stopped caring if we did indeed make the pictures fall off the wall as Rhys halted once more. "But mostly I think about this. How you feel around me, Feyre." He drove into me, exquisite and relentless. "How you taste on my tongue."...Release began to gather along my spine, shutting out all sound and sense beyond where he met me, touched me. Another thrust, longer and harder. The wood groaned beneath his hand. He lowered his mouth to my breast and nipped- nipped, and then licked away the hurt that sent pleasure zinging through my blood. "How you let me do such naughty, terrible things to you."His voice was a caress that had my hips moving, begging him to go faster. Rhys only chuckled softly, cruelly, as he withheld that all-out, unhinged joining I craved. I opened my eyes long enough to peer down, to where I could see him joined with me, moving so achingly slowly in and out of me. "Do you like watching?" he breathed. "Watching me move in you?"…and then I was looking through his eyes- looking down at me as he gripped my hip and thrust.He purred, Look at how I fuck you, Feyre. …Look at how perfectly we fit. My flushed body was arched against the wall- perfect indeed for receiving him, for taking every inch of him...Again, he withdrew and drove in, and released the damper on his power….Rhys remained before me, my legs wrapped around his waist…He gave me everything I wanted: the unleashed pounding of him inside my body- the unrelenting thrust and filling and slap of skin on skin, the slam of our bodies against wood. …his body still moving in my own……Rhys spilled into me with a roar…

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Court of Wings and Ruin by Sarah J. Maas **Rated 4**
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Hilton Head Island High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual nudity; obscene sexual activities; mild profanity; and violence.

Profanity	**Count**
Ass	**27**
Bitch	**3**
Cock	**1**
Fuck	**13**
Piss	**11**
Prick	**12**
Shit	**36**

Felix Ever After by Kacen Callender **Rated 3**
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Bluffton High School
May River High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; drug use; profanity; and alternate gender ideologies.

The Fixer by Bernard Malamud **Rated 3**
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Battery Creek High School
Bluffton High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains controversial religious and racial commentary; hate involving racism; violence including self harm; and profanity.

Profanity	Count
Ass	**1**
Bitch	**1**
Cock	**2**
Fuck	**6**
Piss	**5**
Prick	**1**
Shit	**6**