



## Kerrville Independent School District

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March 2, 2022

In response to a recent request from a parent to remove certain books from circulation in our district's libraries, Kerrville ISD would like to share our book review and ordering policies and processes in the spirit of transparency.

During our Board Meeting on Feb. 21, a parent read excerpts from four books on our library circulation lists. This parent also provided a list of 17 books identified as having objectionable material. They requested that the books be removed and that the district review our collections for other objectionable content.

We immediately removed all of the books on the list that were active in our collection and we will follow Kerrville ISD Board Policy EF (Legal) and (Local) for review.

### **Challenged Book Lists, Recent Activity and Ongoing Follow Up**

In November 2021, Governor Abbott ordered Texas Education Agency Commissioner, Mike Morath, to respond to Texas Representative Matt Krause's list of 850 objectionable books in Texas school libraries. We have not received guidance from TEA, but we did begin to review and adjust our collections. We also reviewed our policy EF (Local) to address challenged books through committees. Policy EF (Local) requires our committees to include parents, teachers, librarians and administrators.

In December 2021, the Curriculum and Instruction Department met with librarians, and made them aware of State Rep. Matt Krause's list of 850 books that he recommended should be removed from school libraries in Texas. At that time the librarians began reviewing their collections to ensure grade level appropriateness and to determine if any titles needed to be relocated or removed. Some titles, such as the L8R;G8R, cited at our February Board Meeting, were removed from circulation in December and January. Other titles are under review by the librarians.

We are reviewing the status of all 17 titles on the list submitted to the district on February 21, 2022. We found that five of the 17 titles were removed or not active in our collection. One title, *The Kite Runner*, is on the Advanced Placement Exam Reading List, and assessed on the (HS Senior English) AP Literature Exam. AP students read this book as part of their AP preparation, with parent permission. If parents of students in 12th grade object to this title the students are given an alternate title.

### **Information Regarding the four book excerpts read during the February Board Meeting:**

Books that clearly violate laws related to "pornography" have been permanently removed and all other contested titles will follow policy EF (Local) and go to committee review.

**I am Jazz:** In the DES collection since 2014, never checked out, permanently removed from inventory on 2/22/22

**L8R;G8R:** In the THS collection since 2016, checked out one time in 2016, permanently removed from inventory in December 2021

**Looking For Alaska:** In the HPMS and THS collections since 2014, checked out with parent request/permission one time only at HPMS. Never checked out at THS, permanently removed from circulation on 2/22/22

**The Perks of Being a Wall Flower:** In the HPMS and THS collection since 2002, checked out one time at HPMS with parent request/permission, checked out one time (this year) at THS; previously checked out once in 2020, permanently removed from circulation on 2/22/22

### **Book Ordering Process, Policies and Procedures**

The Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees is responsible for approving required Instructional Materials (i.e. text books) but does not approve library books (used for voluntary inquiry). The book ordering process is the responsibility of our campus librarians. All of our libraries operate under the ***School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas (2018)*** established by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and TEA. This is aligned to policy EFB (Legal). KISD has more than 90,000 books in its circulation.

The librarians receive requests from students and teachers to order books and consult with teachers and department chairs on lists of requested / recommended books before purchasing. The librarians read reviews of books before purchasing, but they do not read every book before they are purchased. They have sources designed for librarians with lists of book synopses and reviews, such as the Texas Library Association, American Library Association, Hornbook, Kirkus School Library Journal, and Publishers Weekly. In recent years our librarians have also reviewed controversial or banned books lists prior to placing book orders. We are considering ways to augment our book review system to improve our ability to keep inappropriate materials out of our libraries.

Our librarians use the Follett System (also our book check out/in digital inventory system) and other purchasing means to buy library books. Prior to this semester Tivy used a subscription service that would send award winning books monthly. Because the service was sending books that the librarian felt did not match the values of our community we ended that subscription service. Our elementary librarians have used the Jr. Library Guild subscription service to receive books monthly. That practice is under review, and in December 2021 the decision was made that all book purchases will now go through a committee review before being ordered. Our committee review for spring book purchases is scheduled for April.

Beside teacher/student requests for books, our librarians use book award lists such as Printz, Bluebonnet, Caldecott, Newberry and Lone Star Awards lists to select books for our libraries. The books on these lists have synopses and detailed reviews, but do not always disclose controversial content. We expect the new committee review process to be an added layer of protection to keep inappropriate materials out of our libraries. We will continue to seek resources to improve our book ordering processes.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of Kerrville Independent School District.