A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE, TO AMEND THE AGE-APPROPRIATE MATERIALS ACT: RESTORE CONTEXTUAL REVIEW, EXTEND THE MATERIALS REVIEW PERIOD AND ESTABLISH GRADE-BAND DIFFERENTIATION

RESOLUTION NO. 26-002

PREPARED BY:

ANNE TEMPLETON
BOARD MEMBER, DISTRICT 2

WHEREAS, the Knox County Board of Education is charged by the people of Knox County with the responsibility of operating a system of public schools that serves the intellectual and civic development of all students; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that school libraries are foundational to student learning and the development of literate citizens, and that access to a broad and thoughtfully curated library collection is essential to fulfilling the educational mission; and

WHEREAS, prior to the enactment of the 2024 changes to T.C.A. § 49-6-3803, Tennessee law and longstanding practice permitted school districts to evaluate challenged library materials in their entirety, weighing any objectionable passage against the full work, including its historical significance and educational value. This is a standard rooted in established First Amendment case law governing obscenity; and

WHEREAS, the Board further believes that the Tennessee General Assembly shares the goal of educating students with access to the rich literary and historical materials that prepare them for engaged citizenship, and that the current law, as written, falls short in allowing a balance;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION hereby urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend T.C.A. § 49-6-3803 to:

Section 1 – Restore Contextual Review. The Board urges the General Assembly to restore the requirement that all materials be evaluated as a complete work, with the reviewing body empowered to weigh any identified passage against the full text's historical significance, literary merit, educational purpose, religious significance, and overall effect.

Section 2 – Extend the Materials Review Period. The Board urges the General Assembly to extend the period within which a local school body must evaluate and determine whether a challenged library material complies with the Act from sixty (60) to ninety (90) days. A ninety-day review period would better serve the interests of students, schools, and communities by ensuring that consequential decisions about library collections are made carefully and deliberately, while still providing complainants with a timely resolution.

Section 3 – Establish Grade-Band Differentiation. The Board urges the Tennessee General Assembly to replace the current uniform K-12 removal standard with a grade-band framework that permits school districts to evaluate and restrict library materials by developmental level.

Confirmed as an action of the Board:

Kristi Kristy, Chair
Knox County Board of Education

Date: June 4, 2026