
Book Review Committee Final Report

Evaluation of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky

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Presented to the Readington Board of Education · October 13, 2026

Executive Summary

MATERIAL UNDER CHALLENGE

***The Perks of Being a
Wallflower*** By Stephen Chbosky

Readington Middle School
Library, 8th grade access.

COMMITTEE REVIEW

**Evaluate the challenged
material**

Pursuant to Board
Policy/Regulation 2535 and
N.J.S.A. 18A:34A-4.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

**RETAIN WITH
LIMITED USE**

Maintain as an 8th grade
self-selection marked as 'teen'
text.

Committee Composition

FORMED

June 18, 2026

Per Regulation 2535

TEXT PROVIDED

June 19, 2026

LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

School Library Media Specialist

BOARD REPRESENTATION

Selected Board of Education
Member

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Grade-appropriate Teacher
familiar with the material

COMMUNITY

Parent of an enrolled district
student

ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent and Principal
Department Supervisor (necessary)

Student representation is limited to grades 9–12 under regulation and was omitted accordingly.

Process Timeline

June 19, 2026

Book distributed to committee members for full summer review.

Sept. 29, 2026

Agenda, complaint details, circulation logs/data, policy definitions and evaluation rubric distributed.

October 2, 2026

Committee convened for review and deliberation.

October 13, 2026

Board of Education Meeting Report

Committee Agenda

Led to Discussion

- 1 Committee Norms
- 2 Review of Policy and Regulation 2535
- 3 The Formal Complaint
- 4 Circulation and Other Relevant Data
- 5 Evaluation Rubric

The Conversation

Major Discussion Topics:

- Circulation, Impact and Parental Autonomy
- Developmental Appropriateness
- Evaluation of the Complaint
- Overall Context

Circulation, Impact, and Parental Autonomy

32

checkouts since December 2012

7

checkouts over the last 7 years

1

recent parental opt-out request

CIRCULATION AND IMPACT

Lower check out volume may be tied to the grade 8-only access restriction. Student feedback confirms the novel is well-received, with deep emotional resonance.

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND CHOICE

Choice is maintained through annual Genesis opt-out letters. Until the one opt-out above, no previous concerns or challenges have been noted.

Developmental Appropriateness

CONTENT ADVISORIES

Published advisories identify the text as grades 9–12. The committee weighed this against the broad range of maturity and reading abilities in middle school.

STANDARDS AND DEVELOPMENT

Middle school ELA standards move toward higher-level literary analysis, so access to complex themes is needed. Emotional development progresses considerably from grade 6 to grade 8. 8th graders possess the capacity for topics such as sexual assault, substance abuse, and trauma.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Maturity varies by child, so parents play the primary role in directing reading. The opt-out letter supports choice rather than uniform restriction.

THE COMMITTEE'S CONCLUSION

The committee considered that materials unsuitable for *all* middle school grades should be excluded entirely. However, it affirmed that statutory curation means a diverse collection tailored to varying maturity and reading levels, with parental opt-out and limitation. This is not censorship: the definition in Policy 2535 allows limitations on available texts.

Evaluation of Challenged Content in Complaint

THE FORMAL COMPLAINT

Alleged that a scene describing sexual assault fails to show accountability or victim support, potentially misleading readers.

COMMITTEE LITERARY AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- Evaluated as a complete work in accordance with statutory mandates.
- The scene is a crucial structural device driving plot resolution, character development and the protagonist's realization of personal trauma.
- The overarching narrative emphasizes personal recovery, emotional healing and hope.
- Directly supports NJ Student Learning Standards for analyzing complex themes.

Overall Context

1990s SETTING

The text was written in 1999 providing an overall context of teenage life many years ago.

TODAY'S RELEVANCE

- Evaluated today's relevance to children in the year 2026.
- Central themes continue to resonate with many 8th graders.
- It was noted that students of today often experience these themes through digital communication and social media, but underlying issues still remain.

Evaluation Against Statutory Curation Standards

N.J.S.A. 18A:34A-4 · Average scores on a 3-point scale (3 = Strongly Aligned, 0 = Not Aligned)

Standard	Avg score	Key findings
Physical Condition	3.0	Very good condition with no damage.
Multiple Copies & Space	2.9	2 small copies available; space-efficient.
Voluntary Inquiry	2.7	Protects student and parent choice in self-selection.
Relevance	2.7	Addresses real-world adolescent themes and experiences.
Free Expression & Access	2.6	Promotes access to complex ideas.
Widest Array of Material	2.6	Serves the spectrum of middle school reading levels.
Enlightenment & Diversity	2.3	Offers diverse perspectives and complex text analysis for interested 8th graders.
Unique Content Value	2.1	Unique perspective of complex themes at middle school reading level.
Continued Demand	1.9	32 total checkouts; strong qualitative student resonance.

Committee Recommendations

1

Retain the material

Keep *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* in the RMS library as an 8th-grade 'teen' self-selection text.

2

Review opt-out processes

Administration should review and refine the annual September parental opt-out letter and procedures.

Summary

Statutory Alignment

- The text fulfills N.J.S.A. 18A:34A-4 requirements by offering developmentally appropriate, high-interest content that fosters voluntary inquiry and critical thinking.

Literary Value

- Evaluated as a complete work, the challenged scene functions as a deliberate literary device driving plot resolution, character growth, and themes of emotional healing.

Parental Choice

- Retaining the text maintains access for students with varied reading needs while honoring parental choice through existing district opt-out provisions.