

BOOKS ARE FOR EVERYONE!

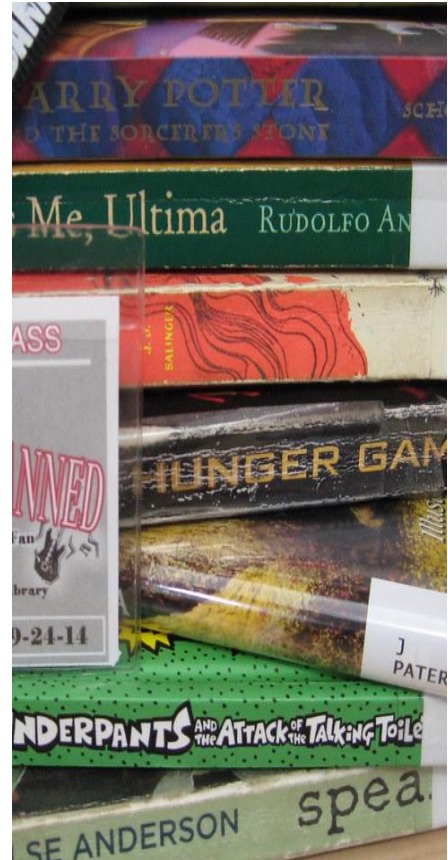


Everything You Want To Know
About Book Challenges
and a Bit You Probably Don't

August 2024

Agenda for Today

1. Talk About Banned Books
2. Banned Book Talk - The State of It All
3. What It Will Look Like At Your Library?
4. Role of Policy
5. Hope - Let's Find it



But First? Who Am I?

Not a Librarian!

Not an Educator!

BUT ...

Library Trustee - Prescott Public Library

Poet, Writer, Creative Writing Teacher

MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults
(Hamline University)



Grounding and Listening ... Some Guidelines

1. This is a difficult and hard.

We're going to talk about some hard subjects - and a lot of difficult stories.

We will get to hope! I promise!

2. You May Have Questions and are worried about asking them.

You can always email me - tasslyn@gmail.com or tmagnusson@pen.org

3. I'm going to say things ... you don't like, maybe don't agree with. That's okay.

Let's agree to listen and be open to the possibilities, together.

Reflection Point: Let's Talk About BANNED BOOKS

Let's talk about a few of the titles being challenged and banned across the country.

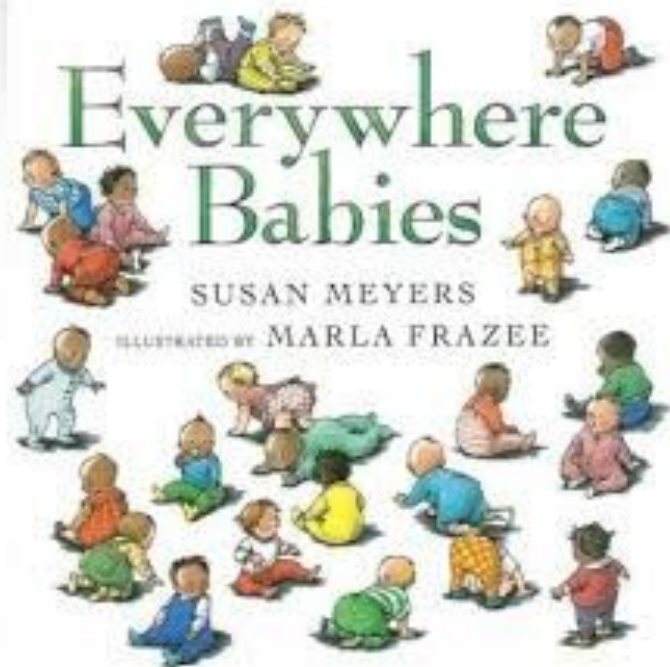


Eric Carle Draw Me a Star

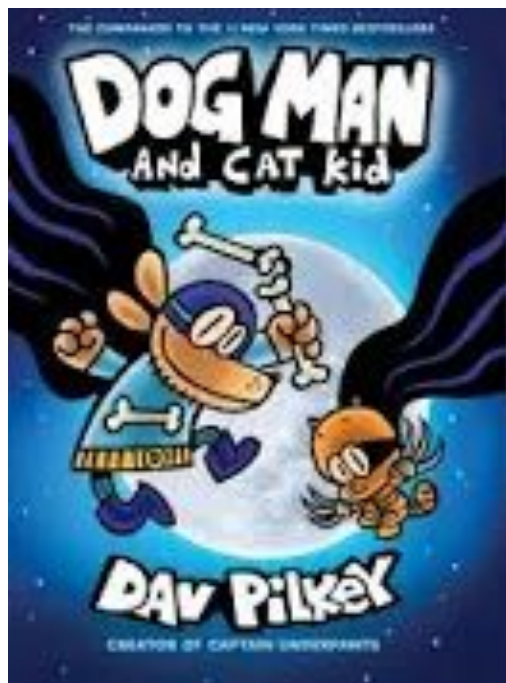


Draw me a tree, said the sun.
And the artist drew a tree.
It was a lovely tree.
Draw me a woman and a man.
And the artist drew a handsome couple.











FROM THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *SMILE*
RAINA TELGEMEIER

DRAMA





Why Did I Want You To See These?

This isn't about the books,
but about stories and people inside of the books.

(yes, it's political too)

And we, as library Trustees,
have a very important job.

Let's Dig In!

What are the Facets of this Censorship Crisis?



- Coordinated attack on literature for children and young people
- Disproportionately affecting fiction and nonfiction stories about and by BIPOC and LGBTQ authors
- Driven by activists and legislation
- Direct and indirect censorship

What is a School Book Ban?



PEN America's Index of School Book Bans lists instances where students' access to books in school libraries and classrooms in the United States is restricted or diminished for either **limited or indefinite** periods of time.

PEN America also tracks the banning of unique titles. **If the same book is banned in 10 school districts, that would count as 10 bans, but one unique title.**



PEN America recorded instances of book bans and individual titles banned over the past two years since PEN America started tracking from July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023

**Instances of book banning,
2022 - 2023**

3,362

**Instances of book banning,
2021 - 2022**

2,532

**Unique titles banned,
2022 - 2023**

1,557

**Unique titles banned,
2021 - 2022**

1,643

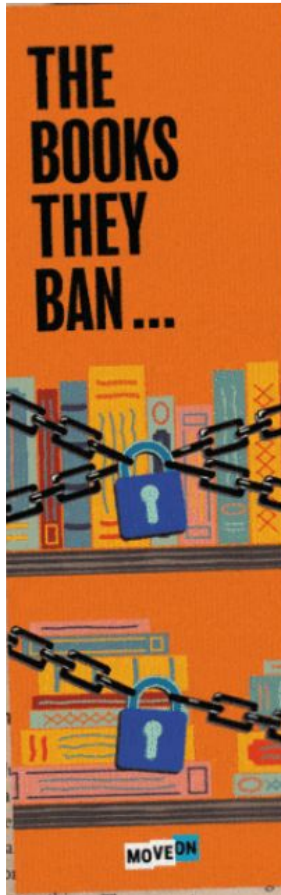
Ongoing data cleaning of unique titles led to changes in the 2021-22 figure from 1,648 to 1,643.
Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans.



How Do I Know A Book Is Banned

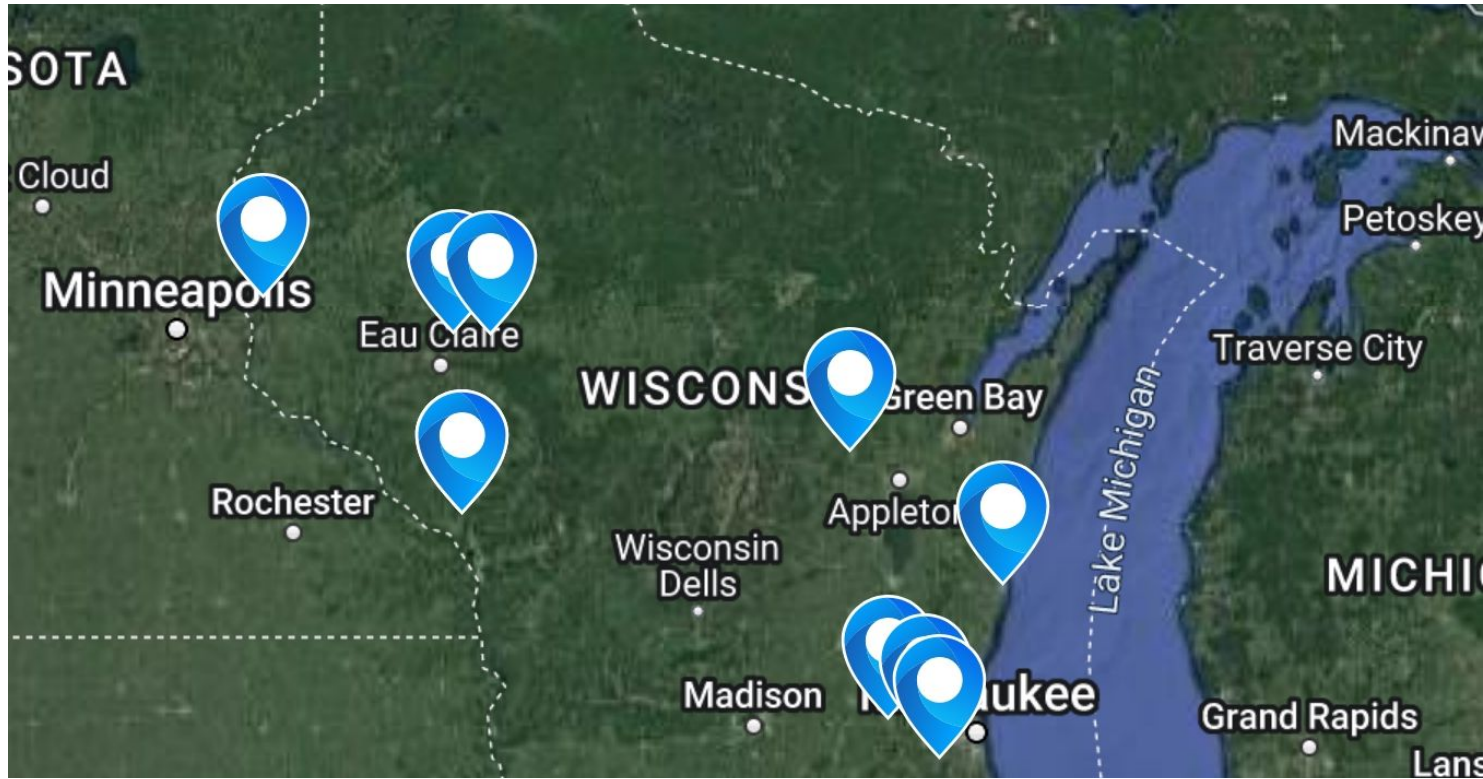
- Informal - Librarians and Students
- Organizations
 - [Florida Freedom to Read](#)
 - [PEN America](#)
 - [NCAC](#)
 - [Book Riot Censorship News Round-Up](#)
- Google Alerts

Keeping up to date - it's really, really hard.



Wisconsin Stats School Book Bans 2021-2023 (June)

- 72 Bans
- 10 Districts
 - At least 49 authors
 - 67 unique titles
- Challenges associated with BookLooks, Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty, Moms for Liberty, No Left Turn in Education
- 2 Largest Districts
 - School District of Somerset
 - School District of Waukesha





Wisconsin Stats Public Libraries Book Bans 2021 - 2023

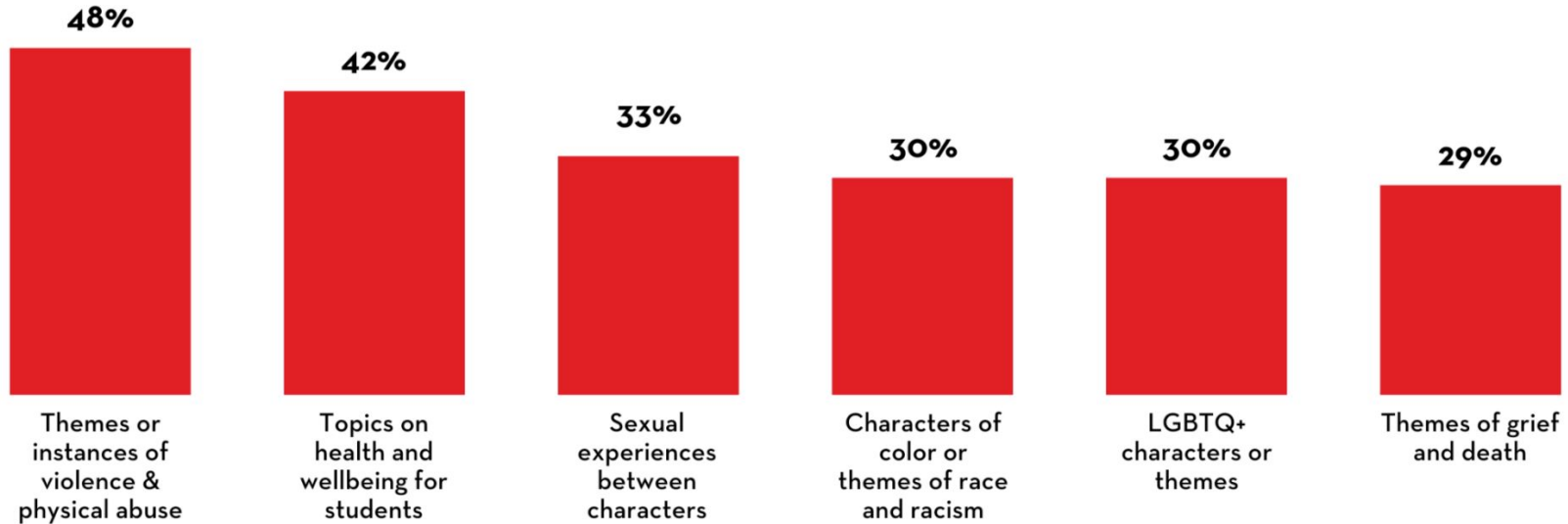
- Iron River Public Library
- Brown County Public Library
- Marathon County Public Library
- Chippewa Falls Public Library
- Phillips Public Library



Subject matter of banned content

Of the 3,362 instances of book bans July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Note: many titles contain more than one type of content.



Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans.

The Mounting Pressure to Censor

- **Advocacy groups and legislation** are two key pressures behind the censorship of books in schools across the country.
- Out of all 33 states with book bans in the 2022-23 school year, **13 have relevant legislation** and all **33 have advocacy groups** present.
 - 87% of all book bans (over 2,000 bans) occurred in districts with groups nearby
 - 63% of all book bans occurred in states with laws likely to influence book bans

Intersection of Groups/Legislation In WI?

- Being tracked by JOHN NORCROSS - on X - @

The image shows a screenshot of a social media post on X (formerly Twitter). At the top, the profile of John Norcross is visible, with 11.1K posts and a 'Following' button. The tweet, dated Jan 20, reads: "We don't need a #RonDeSantis-style #DontSayGay bill in #Wisconsin. It's bad for students. It's bad for schools and teachers. It's bad for communities. We need education policy, not #culturewars. #StopAB510 #DropAB510 #VetoAB510 #SupportOurPublicSchools #LakeCountryWI #Waukesha". Below the tweet is a reply from Fair Wisconsin (@Fair_Wisconsin) dated Jan 19, which says: "Replying to @Fair_Wisconsin 'Politicians need to stop meddling in classrooms where they don't belong and instead focus on solving the real issues facing our school system - like teacher shortages and inadequate funding of our public schools.' ... Show more". At the bottom of the screenshot is a large yellow graphic with the text: "Stand against a 'Don't Say Gay' bill in Wisconsin schools. Bill AB 510 censors LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom, puts LGBTQ+ students at risk, and allows challenges to a teacher's curriculum for any reason. Education curriculum should be set by professional teachers and administration, not by politicians with extreme ulterior motives." To the right of the tweet, there are sections for "You might like" (listing Dr. Kristin F, WIcountry, and Rep. Lee Sn) and "What's happening" (listing Blues at Kraken, #QueenOfRape, Fetterman, #RoyalRumble, and #BoycottRipCurl).

A Glimmer of Hope

Students Rally For The Right To Read

Lucy Gellman | November 3rd, 2023

[Books](#) | [Culture & Community](#) | [Downtown](#) | [Education & Youth](#) | [Arts & Culture](#) | [Literacy](#)



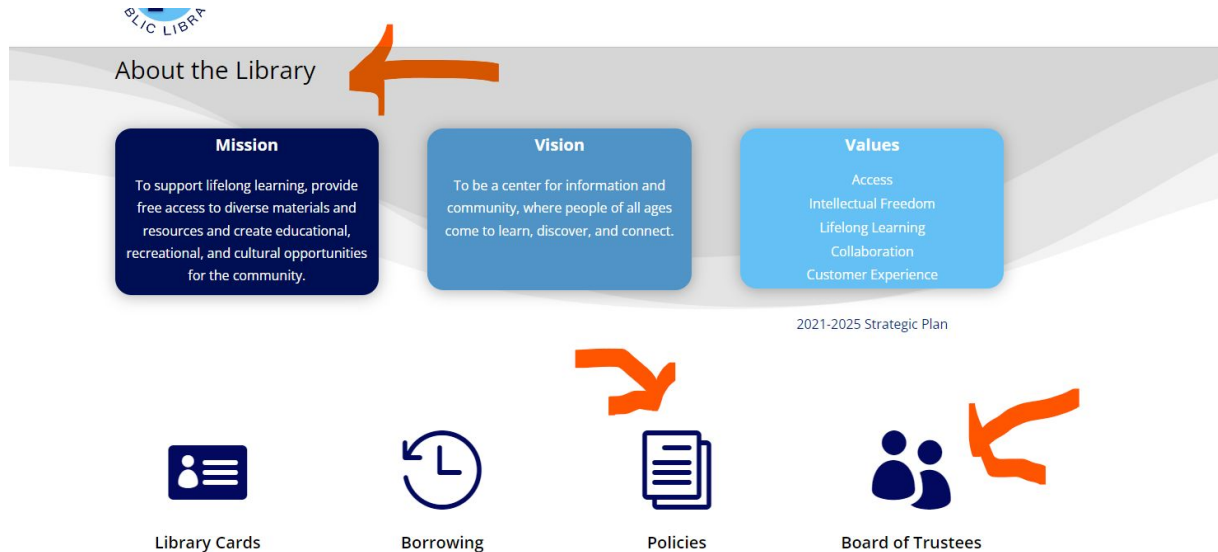


Pop Quiz - Trustees and Book Challenges

- Where Is Your Reconsideration Policy Located?
- What is the [Library Bill of Rights](#)?
- What does the *Freedom to Read* mean?
- Where is the form for requesting a material review in your library?
- What is the [American Library Association](#)?
- Who is in *charge* of curating the library collection?

Collections and Reconsideration Policies - Let's Find One!

- <https://www.prescottpubliclibrary.org/>



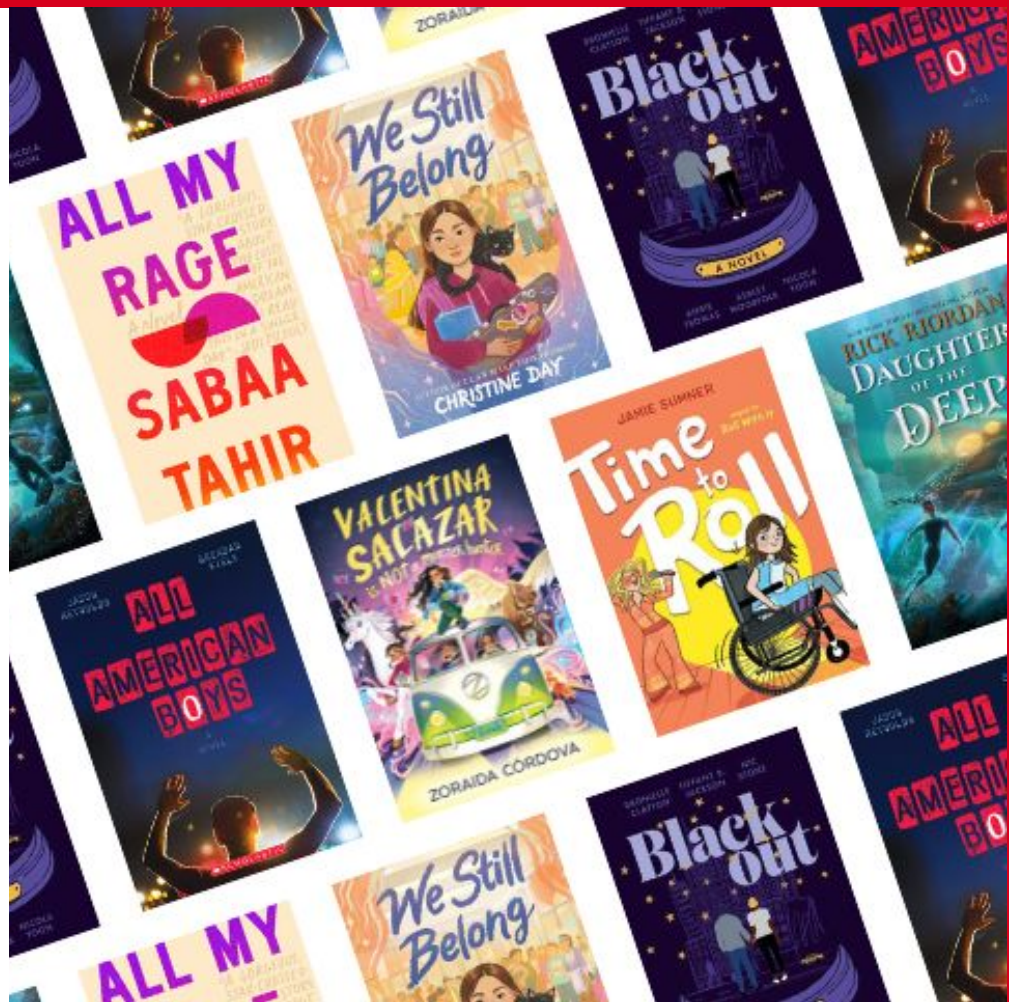
Collections Development & Reconsideration/Challenge Policy

- The job of the Trustees - *Section A* - "Purpose"
 - "The responsibility for this policy governing the inclusion of materials in the library collection rests solely with the Library Board of Trustees."
- The job of the Library Director and staff - *Section B* - "Selection"
 - "The actual task of selection has been delegated to the Library Director who chooses materials for residents and taxpayers of all ages, backgrounds, and opinions."

Selection - It's About the Community!

- How Do They Do It?
 - “The Library Director and staff use a variety of resources to select materials for the collection such as professional journals and reviews, material demand levels, and requests from patrons.”
- They have *Criteria*
 - Is the item in popular demand?
 - Is the item relevant?
 - Existing library holdings. Does the item contribute to a useful, balanced, and diverse library collection?
 - Is the item's information current/up to date?
 - Is the item's information grounded in good scholarship?
 - Is the format suitable for the collection and for community needs?
 - Does the item's purchase fit into the library's budget?

Here Come the Challenges



What Will A Challenge Look Like?

- Book Challenge
- Request to Reshelve
- Books Hidden in The Library
- Attacks on Library Funding





There's a Book Challenge! Now What?

- Safety
 - Check Your Social Media Privacy Settings
 - Ask Library Director if they need support in ensuring social media safety for themselves and their staff
- Review
 - Reconsideration policies and collections development policies
 - Review Meeting policies - esp public comment
- Listen
 - To the library director and library staff - the board has a role - but you weather this moment - together

I Read Banned Books



What Will You Hear?

- This is PORN! In the Library!
 - (It's Not and There Isn't!)
- We need to Protect the Children!
 - (We are - it's the collections policy)
- It's Not Book Banning - It's Age Appropriate Book shelving!
 - (It is)



The Supreme Court has established a three-part legal definition for obscenity called the Miller Test.

1. The average person, applying current community standards, must find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests.
2. The work depicts or describes in a patently offensive way sexual conduct as defined by state law.
3. The work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.



AND!!!



<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship/courtcases>

Selection - It's About the Community!

- How Do They Do It?
 - "The Library Director and staff use a variety of resources to select materials for the collection such as professional journals and reviews, material demand levels, and requests from patrons."

Remember This

- They have Criteria

- Is the item in popular demand?
- Is the item relevant?
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What is a BOOK BAN

What is a school book ban?

PEN America defines a school book ban as any action taken against a book based on its content and as a result of parent or community challenges, administrative decisions, or in response to direct or threatened action by lawmakers or other governmental officials, that leads to a previously accessible book being either completely removed from availability to students, or where access to a book is restricted or diminished. Diminished access is a form of censorship and has educational implications that extend beyond a title's removal.

It is important to recognize that books available in schools, whether in a school or classroom library, or as part of a curriculum, were selected by librarians and educators as part of the educational offerings to students. Book bans occur when those choices are overridden by school boards, administrators, teachers, or politicians, on the basis of a particular book's content.

Easy Answer? Stickers and Labels and Reshelving

Library Search > Search Results > "Everywhere babies"

Library Search

Destiny Discover

Source Lists

Español

Everywhere babies

Susan Meyers ; illustrated by Marla Frazee.

Call #: E MEY

There are no local copies of this title.
Off-site copies available: 6 of 7. [See all...](#)

ADVISORY NOTICE TO PARENTS This Advisory Notice shall serve to inform you that this book has been identified by some community members as unsuitable for students. This book will also be identified to whether this book is suitable or unsuitable shall be the decision of the parent(s) who has the right to oversee his/her child's education consistent with state law. AVISO PARA PADRES Esta nota sirve para informar a las personas en la comunidad, como un libro inapropiado para estudiantes. Este libro también será identificado en el Sistema Destiny con esta misma anotación. La decisión de si un libro es apropiado o inapropiado para los hijos de los supervisores de la educación de los hijos conforme las leyes del estado de Florida. ADVISORY NOTICE TO PARENTS - CREOLE Avè Konsiltatif sa a pral sèvi pou enfòmè ou ke gen kèk manb nan komite ki gen dwa pou siprize edikasyon pou lòt moun pou kontinye liv sa a tou nan sistèm Destiny avèk menm remake la. Deszlyon pou konnen si liv sa a apwopriye ou pa apwopriye pou elèv pral chita nan men paran(yo) ki gen dwa pou siprize edikasyon pou lòt moun pou kontinye liv sa a tou nan sistèm Destiny avèk menm remake la.

Show Less ▲

Explore!

- Babies -- Fiction. [Find It](#)
- Stories in rhyme. [Find It](#)
- Infants -- Fiction. [Find It](#)
- Titles by: Meyers, Susan.
- Titles by: Frazee, Marla, ill. [Find It](#)

Publication Info

Published San Diego [Calif.] : Harcourt, [2001]

Edition 1st ed.

Selected List: My List [Add to This List](#)



Easy Answer? Stickers and Labels and Reshelving

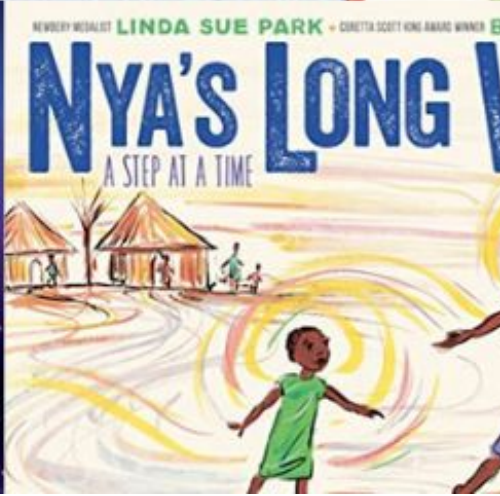
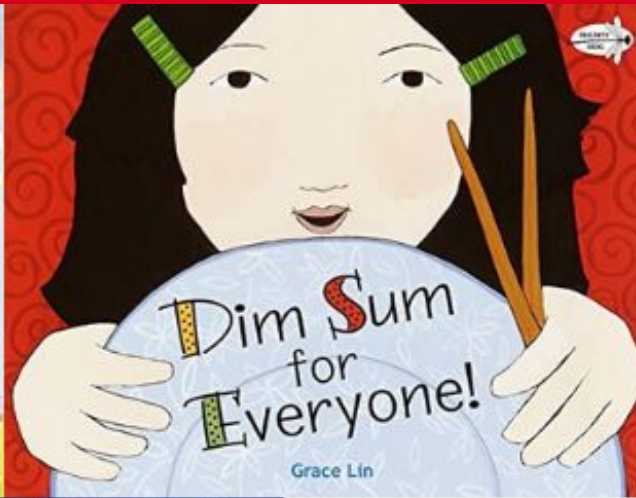
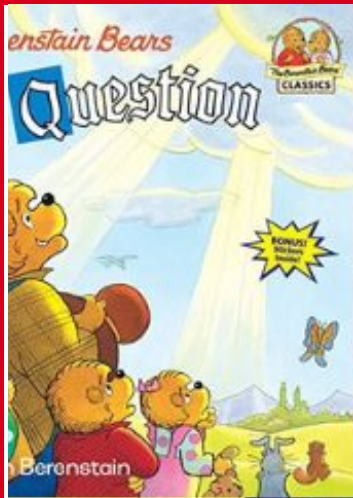
“These are different in intent from attempts to prejudice, discourage, or encourage users to access particular library resources or to restrict access to library resources. Labeling as an attempt to prejudice attitudes is a censor’s tool.”

NOPE! STILL A BAN!



What Gives ME Hope

- Most people don't approve of Book Bans
 - ([It's True! Promise!](#))
- Most Parents Trust Librarians!
 - ([Survey Data Here!](#))
- You are a trustee of a library (or maybe a school board)
 - You have power and responsibility to support the freedom to read in your community!



Questions?

Resources

- [Briefing Kit for Authors](#) from 2022-2023 school year report with talking points, findings, graphics, and example engagement opportunities
- **Freedom to Read Program team:**

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