

From: [Forsyth Becky](#)
To: [Prince Sean](#); [Baalerud Valerie](#); [Stephens Kaci](#); [jacobsen leif](#)
Subject: Book mentioned at school board meeting
Date: Thursday, October 27, 2022 8:14:03 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-nbu5h44h.png](#)

Sean, Valerie, Kaci, and Leif,

Perhaps you listened to the school board meeting last week and heard a community member read from a book entitled *This Book is Gay*. As it is featured each year on the frequently banned book list, it is popular. Banning can have that effect. In searching for it in the school district libraries, we are the only school that has a copy that is not lost or long overdue. In searching the public library, it is hard to find on the shelves as well. Not long ago we had two copies, but one walked off. This frequently happens with books appealing to the LGBTQIA+ community for one of two reasons: someone wants it and takes it to keep, or someone doesn't want it circulated.

In case you face questions from parents or other community members, I just wanted to let you know a little bit of the back story. If you want to watch the clip it is at 1:33 on the school board meeting channel. It is shocking to hear out loud. At this point, I feel it should stay in the library considering we are a 9-12 grade school. It has positive reviews in *School Library Journal* and *Booklist*. They both recommend it for ages 8th to 12th grade. It is filled with factual information, including talking points for how to challenge homophobic language and come out to family and friends. It stresses safety and the importance of getting professional help rather than self-administering hormones. There are potentially life-saving resources for LGBT youth regarding STIs, bullying and suicide. Furthermore, the book is written by a transgender woman who is on the other side of this difficult journey that many students are just beginning.

Another reason for the book to remain is that we have at least one other book about heterosexual sex, and other books on the reproductive system and anatomy. We need to have balance if we are going to have books featuring relationships, dating, and sex. We have numerous fiction books describing sexual acts, both heterosexual and gay. Where would we draw the line on how explicit the books should be or not be? Who is expected to take the time to read each book to find out? We need to assume parents and teachers have taught students the skills to think for themselves. We live in a democratic society. Free speech is equated with free reading choice.

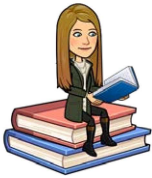
At the school board meeting the chapter about sex read aloud is explicit and there is a big warning in the book, in case younger readers (or anyone else) wants to skip it. The passage read at the school board meeting is the most explicit of the entire book. The school board policy allowing people to read from library books for 3 minutes needs to be reconsidered. Three minutes does not allow for context to be understood. Students are never forced to read

a book in the library. We can be confident in our students' critical thinking skills in deciding on what to read. I don't believe in living in fear of what is not comfortable for us. During the public testimony, no one was able to choose to read, but instead they were subjected to listening to someone engendering controversy.

It is vital that our library reflects the community we serve, and that every student can find themselves in the books on our shelves. We have transgender and gay students on our campus. If you are asked about the book in our library, you are welcome to share this message as you see fit. The book is checked out to Lisa Sam right now who is loaning it to a board member to read.

Thank you for your support. If you have questions, please come see me.

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“Many people, myself among them, feel better at the mere sight of a book.”
- Jane Smiley