



Pause and Prepare: A School District Guide To Navigating Book Challenges

Familiarize With Books

Know which titles are being challenged by activists and which are in your collection. Read as many as you can.

See ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom for more resources.



Engage Your Librarian

Your librarian can support you by providing background information about the book, its purpose in the collection, and helping to write policies or form reconsideration committees. The heat of a challenge is often directed at librarians; offer your encouragement and keep lines of communication open.



Have Policy Ready

Keep links handy and have printed copies of School Board Policy for Book Selection and Book Reconsideration in school offices, available for the public.

See ALA's "Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit" for examples.



Avoid Performance Protests

During public comments, when it becomes apparent that a speaker intends to challenge a book or library program, the moderator should explain the policy and process for public complaints and offer a copy of the reconsideration form. Avoid the meeting becoming a "protest performance."



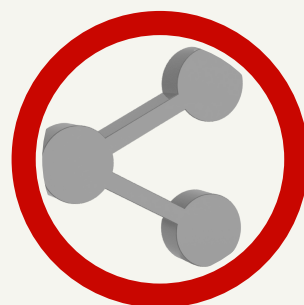
Reserve Any Judgement

Do not form an opinion of the challenged material based on a provocative passages presented out of context. Instead, encourage the complainant to read the work in full, as should all members of the reconsideration committee.



Share And Collaborate

Use your professional network to share resources and strategies as challenges have been spreading across communities.



Protect Student Rights

The First Amendment limits the power of school officials to remove books from school libraries due to their content (Island Trees School District V. Pico) and is a violation of students' rights to receive information (Montero V. Tempe Union). Learn more about the history of court rulings and censorship in schools.



Report Censorship to ALA

Whether you need challenge support or not, please share information with the American Library Association. It can be confidential and anonymous. Anyone can report or contact ALA for any reason.



www.ala.org/oif