



BECKY LYNCH

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March 6, 2024

Dear Honorable Members of the Mentor Board of Education Ms. Cook, Ms. Jeschelnic, Ms. Ioppolo, Ms. Marchaza, Ms. Payne and Superintendent of Mentor Schools Heath:

Thank you for taking to time to read my support of the Mentor School Board. As your members Annie Payne and Rose Ioppolo fight for our kids by protecting them from being exposed to harmful content, I stand with them on their positions stated in the Press Release about two book challenges up for a vote on March 12, 2024. The responsibility to be more vigilant about these materials falls on our dedicated leaders such as yourselves. And if the several libraries under your jurisdiction are influenced by the ALA – American Library Association then this influence needs to also be held to account in these matters. Of interest to ascertain possible origins of controversial concepts and activism, “ALA/ARL Approve Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework” and “Banned and Challenged Books” (to look out for) is included for your review.

“Right Now!: Real Kids Speaking Up For Change” and “Empire of Storms” are the materials. Questionable ideological concepts and depictions of age-inappropriate sexual graphics are referenced to be contained in these materials, in the board’s March 1, 2024 Press Release. And I ask that you please exercise caution and vote to protect the young minds in your care.

Ohio law covers libraries in Code 3375, and refers to school library information networks (O.R.C. 3375.64) in Section C relating to Boards, *“board shall adopt a policy that requires each participant to establish and enforce procedures designed to keep juveniles who use the participant’s services from having access to materials or performances that may be obscene or harmful to juveniles and to keep persons who are not juveniles and who use the participant’s services from having access to materials or performances that may be obscene.”* You have adopted your Policy Manual. And specifically, in Section 2000 Program – Materials Containing Sexual Content you already list “Empire of Storms” as actively challenged under po2520.03 so it appears that the board is aware of the dangers of this title and that it is ‘harmful to juveniles.’

The law above further states, the meanings of “juveniles,” “materials,” “performances,” “obscene,” and “harmful to juveniles” are as defined in O.R.C. 2907.01 – Sex Offenses General Definitions. Here are the definitions in this law;

Section (I) “Juvenile” means an unmarried person under the age of eighteen.

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Section (J) "Material" means any book, magazine, newspaper, pamphlet, poster, print, picture, figure, image, description, motion picture film, phonographic record, or tape, or other tangible thing capable of arousing interest through sight, sound, or touch and includes an image or text appearing on a computer monitor, television screen, liquid crystal display, or similar display device or an image or text recorded on a computer hard disk, computer floppy disk, compact disk, magnetic tape, or similar data storage device.

Section (K) "Performances" means any motion picture, preview, trailer, play, show, skit, dance, or other exhibition performed before an audience.

Section (F) When considered as a whole, and judged with reference to ordinary adults or, if it is designed for sexual deviates or other specially susceptible group, judged with reference to that group, any material or performance is "obscene" if any of the following apply:

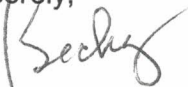
- (1) Its dominant appeal is to prurient interest;
- (2) Its dominant tendency is to arouse lust by displaying or depicting sexual activity, masturbation, sexual excitement, or nudity in a way that tends to represent human beings as mere objects of sexual appetite;
- (3) Its dominant tendency is to arouse lust by displaying or depicting bestiality or extreme or bizarre violence, cruelty, or brutality;
- (4) Its dominant tendency is to appeal to scatological interest by displaying or depicting human bodily functions of elimination in a way that inspires disgust or revulsion in persons with ordinary sensibilities, without serving any genuine scientific, educational, sociological, moral, or artistic purpose;
- (5) It contains a series of displays or description of sexual activity, masturbation, sexual excitement, nudity, bestiality, extreme or bizarre violence, cruelty, or brutality, or human bodily functions of elimination, the cumulative effect of which is a dominant tendency to appeal to prurient or scatological interest, when the appeal to such an interest is primarily for its own sake or for commercial exploitation, rather than primarily for a genuine scientific, educational, sociological, moral, or artistic purpose.

Section (E) "Harmful to juveniles" means that quality of any material or performance describing or representing nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sado-masochistic abuse in any form to which all of the following apply;

- (1) The material or performance, when considered as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest of juveniles in sex.
- (2) The material or performance is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable for juveniles.
- (3) The material or performance, when considered as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value for juveniles.

It is my hope that you will exercise the authority entrusted in you to keep school library materials safe for juveniles and permit the materials in this challenge to be properly categorized and off the school library shelves. The laws are clear on protecting children. With the parents and stakeholders who have brought these titles, along with their serious concerns, to your attention, I'm confident that the Board of Education and Superintendent will have the same heartfelt intentions for their well-being and protection and vote accordingly. I appreciate your time and attention.

Sincerely,



-Becky Lynch

Enclosures