

# BANNED BOOKS

2016-2017 REPORT ON TEXAS SCHOOLS



## FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY

This year **44%** of schools in Texas responded to our request for information about banned and challenged books.

**2 out of 17** of the books challenged were banned. The same book was banned by different schools.

Challenges came from elementary, middle, and high schools in **independent school districts and charter schools**.

## BANNED AGAIN

The only book that was fully banned this school year was *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier. The graphic novel was banned from Franklin Middle School and Kirbyville Junior High School. The book has been deemed one of the top 10 frequently challenged books, with the primary area of concern being an illustration of two boys kissing. *Drama* has appeared on the ACLU of Texas' banned book report in 2014 and 2016, and was banned in the 2016-2017 school year because it was considered politically, racially, or socially offensive and inappropriate for certain ages.



## BLUM ISD

### School: Blum Middle School

Book: *Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary*, Walter Dean Myers

- Reason cited: offensive to religious sensitivities; politically, racially, or socially offensive
- Action taken: alternate book assigned

## FRANKLIN ISD

### School: Franklin Middle School

Book: *True Colors Series*, Melody Carlson

- Reason cited: inappropriate situations for age of student reading
- Action taken: use restricted for certain age group

Book: *Maximum Ride Manga Series*, James Patterson

- Reason cited: inappropriate language for age of student reading
- Action taken: use restricted for certain age group

Book: *Drama*, Raina Telgemeier

- Reason cited: inappropriate material for all ages on this campus
- Action taken: banned

## HARMONY ISD

### School: Harmony School Of Advancement

Book: *Black Butler #5 And #6*, Yana Toboso

- Reason cited: offensive to religious sensitivities; witchcraft, satanic, and occult themes
- Action taken: book retained

## LAKE TRAVIS ISD

### School: Lake Travis Middle School

Book: *1984*, George Orwell

- Reason cited: parents felt book was not age-appropriate
- Action taken: alternate book allowed

## KIRBYVILLE CISD

### School: Kirbyville Junior High School

Book: *Drama*, Raina Telgemeier

Reason cited: politically, racially, or socially offensive

Action taken: banned

## LAKE TRAVIS ISD

### School: Lake Travis Elementary

Book: *More Scary Stories To Tell In The Dark*, Alvin Schwartz

- Reason cited: violence or horror
- Action taken: decision pending (book was removed from school library)

## LEANDER ISD

### School: River Place Elementary

Book: *Beyond The Grave*, Judith Herbst

- Reason cited: photographs will scare children and give them nightmares
- Action taken: book was moved from elementary school campus to middle school

### School: Camacho Elementary School

Book: *Boxers*, Tammy Gagne

- Reason cited: information regarding bull-baiting, bull-docking, and bull-cropping was not appropriate for elementary school
- Action taken: retained

## MONTGOMERY ISD

### School: Montgomery Junior High School

Book: *The Highwayman*, Alfred Noyes

- Reason cited: profanity; sexual content or nudity; violence or horror
- Action taken: unknown

## NEW BRAUNFELS ISD

### School: Memorial Elementary School

Book: *I Survived (The Attacks Of September 11, 2001)*, Lauren Tarshis

- Reason cited: the word terrorist being used
- Action taken: retained

## ORENDA CHARTER SCHOOLS

### School: Gateway College Preparatory School

Book: *The Stranger*, Albert Camus

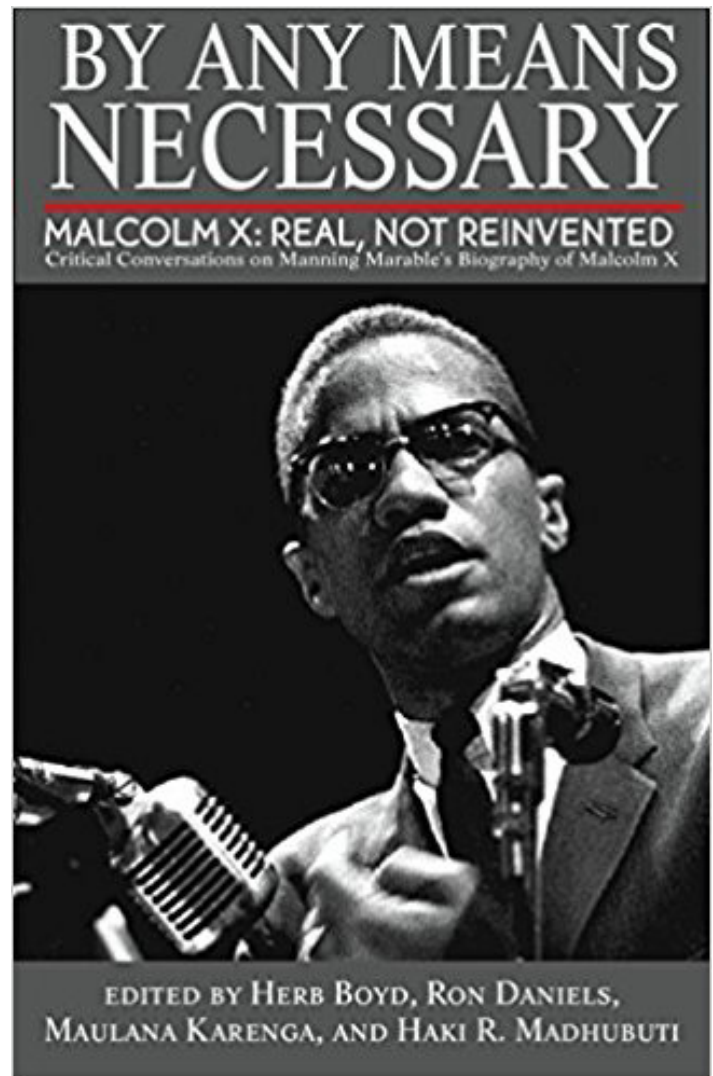
- Reason cited: violence or horror; offensive to religious sensitivities
- Action taken: retained

## POTH ISD

### School: Poth Junior High School

Book: *The Tell Tale Heart*, Edgar Allan Poe

- Reason cited: violence or horror; offensive to religious sensitivities
- Action taken: alternate book assigned



## TAYLOR ISD

### School: Taylor Middle School

Book: *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Harper Lee

- Reason cited: politically, racially, or socially offensive
- Action taken: retained

## UPLIFT CHARTER SCHOOLS

### School: North Hills Preparatory

Book: *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison

- Reason cited: unknown
- Action taken: retained

Book: *Like Water For Chocolate*, Laura Esquivel

- Reason cited: too complex for the grade level assigned
- Action taken: excerpts of text still used in 11th and 12th grade Spanish IB diploma course

In 2016-2017, we recorded eighteen book challenges submitted to Texas schools. The books in question were challenged for a number of reasons, including violence (Poe, Noyes), political or racial offensiveness (Toboso), or upsetting to religious sensitivities (Myers, Camus).

Based on responses to our open records requests, twelve school districts logged book challenges this past year. Some school districts logged multiple challenges, including Franklin ISD and Leander ISD. In many cases, librarians and school administrators made efforts to restrict access to challenged material without banning books outright. Challenges were often resolved by moving books to other campuses or permitting alternate reading material. The most frequent result of a challenge this school year was books being retained on campus.

Only one book was banned outright, *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier. The novel was fully prohibited in two school districts. *Drama* is also one of three graphic novels or Manga series to have been challenged this school year.

