



FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY

**11th Annual Report on
Banned and Challenged Books
in Texas Public Schools
2006-2007**

*and exclusive interview with banned book author
SUSAN PATRON
winner of the 2007 Newbery Award*

National Banned Books Week 2007
September 29, 2007

INTRODUCTION

Nothing could be simpler than the truly American notion that free people read freely.

Yet every year in Texas, schools fall victim to self-appointed censors who wish to restrict the knowledge available to students. Censorship breeds ignorance. No school funding plan can improve education in our state when knowledge is withheld.

Reading books that challenge assumptions that tackle difficult or controversial subjects, or contain thoughts or language that some find objectionable does not harm students. Rather the contrary. Students learn from being exposed to new ideas. They develop an appreciation for different viewpoints. They are better able to function effectively in a diverse society, and are better able to serve our communities and our state as leaders. In other words, they grow capable of exercising the rights and freedoms all Texans are entitled to enjoy.

Each year for eleven years, the ACLU Foundation of Texas has published this annual report of books banned or challenged in Texas schools. Our report spotlights schools that ban books from library shelves or from classroom reading lists. But just as importantly, our report highlights schools that decide to retain a book despite a challenge by a parent, a student, a school official, or a member of the public.

This report is only as useful as its users. Who's going to stand up in communities where books are banned? Who's going to speak out when great (and lesser) works of literature are censored? The most effective local advocates are local citizens – that means you, concerned members of the community, parents, teachers, librarians, and most importantly students.

I am confident that when one Texan speaks out against censorship, other will stand with you. While the ACLU doesn't have resources to follow through on every instance of censorship, we do want to help people stand firm against censorship in Texas schools.

Getting involved with the ACLU of Texas – as a member, generous donor, volunteer, or simply by joining our email list at www.aclutx.org – is one way to help assure that censors are not in control of school libraries and reading lists. It is also a great way to help protect civil rights and individual liberties for all Texans.

Our Banned Books Project is organized and led by volunteers. I extend the thanks of the ACLU to our volunteers and chapter leaders who have made this program successful for more than a decade. I also thank the school administrators and librarians who respond each year to the ACLU's Open Records request. Author Susan Patron has earned our thanks both because of her willingness to be interviewed for our project (see page 30), and for her ongoing work to oppose censorship.

Yours in liberty,

*Richard C. Alvarado
Interim Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Texas*

FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY

"The fact is that censorship always defeats its own purpose, for it creates, in the end, the kind of society that is incapable of exercising real discretion."

Henry Steele Commager

"Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself. It is the hallmark of an authoritarian regime..."

Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting
Ginsberg v. United States (383 U.S. 463)

"...And when we do that, shut off the dialogue, we do violence to the First Amendment and to the children of this generation and the next generation."

John Henry Faulk

This is the eleventh consecutive annual report on censorship in Texas public schools by the ACLU of Texas. The information in the report is based on data furnished by 1124 of the over 1200 Independent School Districts and Charter Schools in Texas (information requests were sent to all the districts and charter schools). The body of the report, which is indexed by book title, lists the book's author, the district or charter school and specific campus in which the book was challenged, the reason for the challenge, the result of the challenge, and any additional remarks made by the person furnishing the report. A separate listing in the back of the report lists the challenged books by school district. We also include a list of books that were informally challenged, with no official record reported by the District of the challenge.

Statistical Summary and Breakdown

Book challenges appear to be on the rise in public schools after a brief dip. For the 2006-2007 school year, 67 school districts reported challenges to library books and other teaching materials, which is 5.33% of the 1256 public school districts in Texas. Forty percent of reported challenges resulted in bans.

That figure compares with 25% for 2005-2006, 44% in 2004-2005, 36% in 2003-2004, and 31% in 2000-2001. While the

number of bans is lower than last year's 25%, it is more than offset by the much higher number of bans. Restrictions on books, including allowing alternates for curricular materials, is about 32%. At press time for this report, three challenges are still pending in Texas schools. The data in the report includes information reported by 1124 districts, or 89.42% of all school districts in Texas.

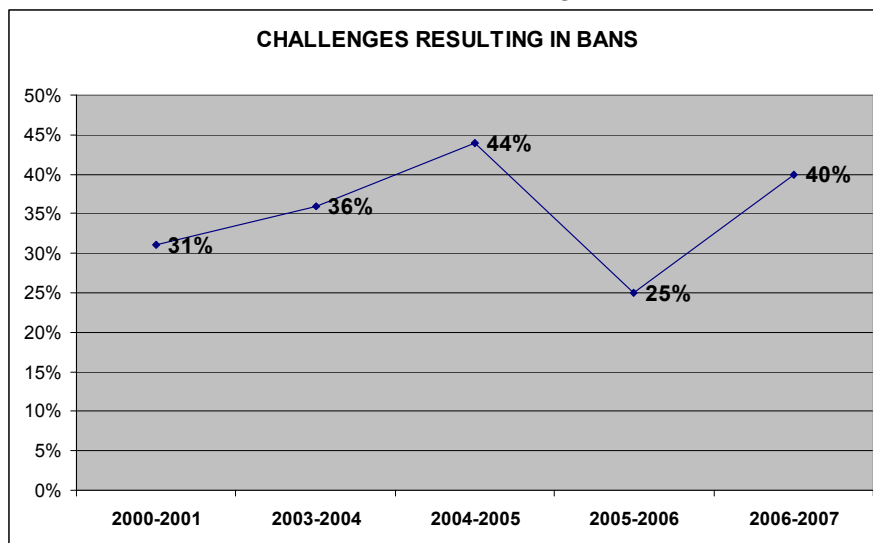
How the Report Was Compiled

Using a database made available to the public by the Texas Education Agency, requests for information were mailed to all Independent School Districts and Charter Schools in Texas. The request for information about banned and challenged books was made under the authority of the Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code Ch.552 (commonly known as the Open Records Act). State law requires that public entities make available records requested within ten business days.

In order to facilitate the process of providing requested information, a specific list of requests was included, and a form was provided which, if completed, provided all necessary data. Schools could also opt to fill out an on-line form and submit information electronically.

The information forms listed several choices for result of challenge: banned (removed from library or classroom use), use restricted, alternate book allowed, content changed or deleted, retained, and decision pending. Some school districts banned books from certain campuses due to concerns over grade level, but made no mention of whether the book was available at other grades. Other schools transferred the book from

one campus to another. All books that were removed from libraries are categorized for purposes of this report as banned; however, if the person furnishing the report indicated that the book was available at other campuses, this information appears in the synopsis.



TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

The Texas Library Association holds that the freedom to read is a corollary of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press. Freedom of choice in selecting materials is a necessary safeguard to the freedom to read and must be protected against extra-legal attempts by self-appointed censors to control that process. Citizens have the right of free inquiry, and democracy itself rests on an open dialogue and demands that freedom of the press in all forms of public communication be defended and preserved.

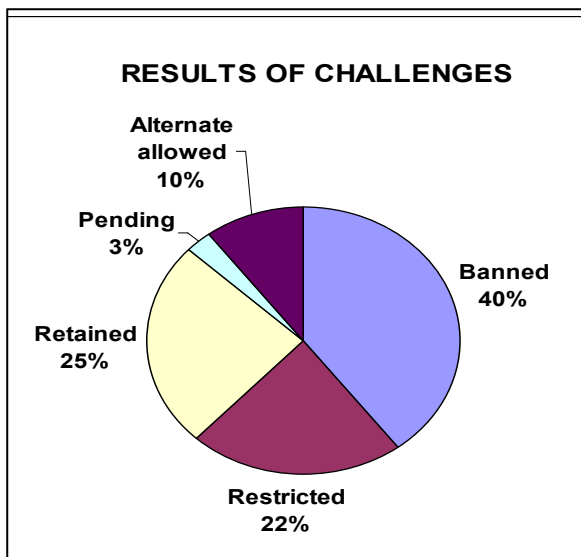
The Association, through its Intellectual Freedom Committee, supports access to information by responding to librarians facing book challenges, offering model policies and procedures, tracking reports of book challenges by its members, and supporting policies and legislative action that respect access to information. Members of TLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee are also available to consult with librarians facing intellectual freedom challenges. For additional information on these resources, go to: http://www.txla.org/groups/committees/IF/index.html#IF_Handbook

Highlights and Discussion

The total number of challenges is dramatically higher this year. Sixty-six districts reported challenges for a total of 116 items, compared to 48 districts with 65 challenges in 2005-2006, an increase of almost 40% in the number of districts reporting challenges and a significant 78% increase in total reported challenges. Forty percent of book challenges (46 items) this year resulted in outright bans on the materials. An additional 32% of material was restricted in some fashion (38 items), either by putting the material in the librarian's office, requiring parental permission, or in

the case of curricular material providing an alternative to the assignment. Exactly one fourth of the challenged materials (29 items) were reinstated without restrictions. Some of the titles reported are series (groups of related books), so the total number of individual books banned or restricted is actually higher than the numbers indicate. For example, one of the banned series (the *Alice* series) includes over twenty individual titles. The current number and percentage of challenges is more in line with years prior to 2005-2006, adding credibility to the idea that the 2005-2006 report was a statistical aberration, and not the beginning of a trend.

Interestingly, the most discussed and most highly awarded book of the year, Newbery Award winner *The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron, was only reported once as challenged in Texas. However, the book has received extensive discussion in the popular press as being censored by librarians and teachers for using the word "scrotum" in an anatomical context. In a February 18, 2007 article in the *New York Times*, Julie Bosman wrote: "The inclusion of the word has shocked some school librarians, who have pledged to ban the book from elementary schools, and reopened the debate over what constitutes acceptable content in children's books." When librarians fail to stock books that win the highest award in children's literature, the book has no opportunity to be challenged since it was censored *a priori*. See the section on **Challenges Without Due Process** for more information about books that have been censored through non-official channels. Another reason this title may be poorly represented in this year's report could be that since data for this report are solicited in March, and the Newbery Award is announced in late January, most schools would not have received their copies of the book in time for challenges before the reports were due.

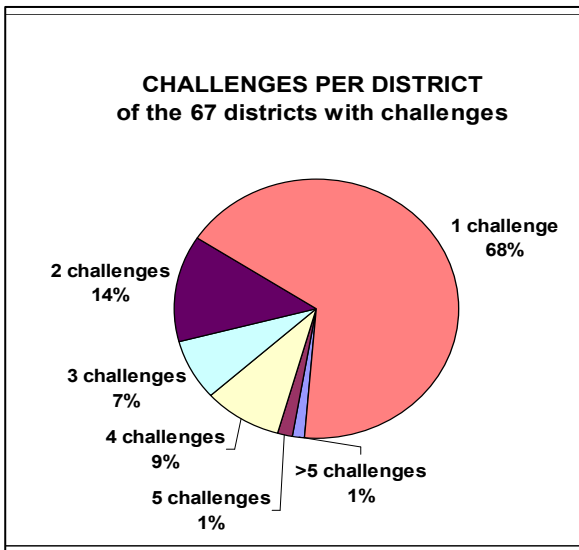


Most-challenged Titles and Authors

On this year's challenge list are some old standbys. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is on the list, as is *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. It wouldn't be a Banned Books report if a Judy Blume title were not on the list. Her *Are you there, God? It's me, Margaret* and *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* grace the list this year. Kevin Henkes' *Olive's Ocean* is this year's most challenged book, with five school districts officially considering removing the Newbery Honor title. Cecily von Ziegesar, Dav Pilkey, and Lois Lowry each had books (or entire series) challenged in three districts. Other authors with multiple challenges include Robert Cormier, Cornelia Funke, Robie H. Harris, Lauren Myracle, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Tana Reiff, John Steinbeck, R.L. Stine, Mildred Taylor, Alice Walker, and Paul Zindel.

Where are the most challenges?

Houston ISD led the list of challenges, with 11 books. Most districts facing challenges had only one challenge, but 22 districts faced multiple challenges this past school year. Most of the districts facing challenges came from the North Central Texas area (19 districts with challenges), though the Houston or South East Texas area was a close second (18 districts with challenges). Nevertheless, South East Texas won the “most challenges” title with a total of 52 challenges compared to 22 in the North Central Texas area.

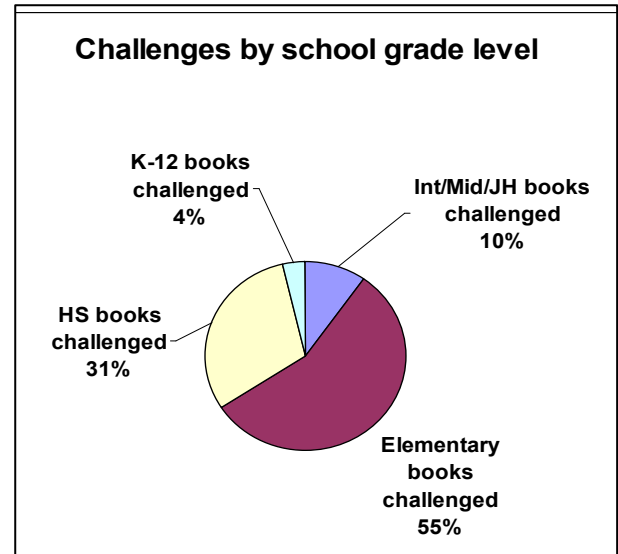


Challenged Books by School Level

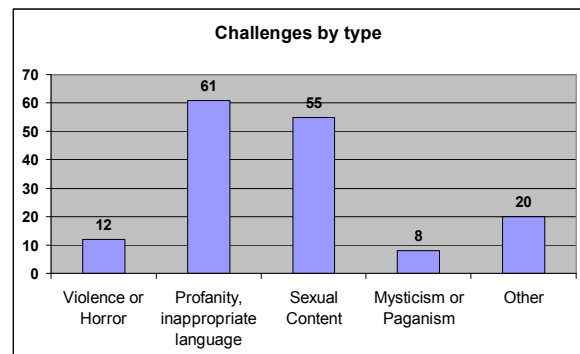
Slightly more than half of titles challenged (52%) were at the elementary school level. High school challenges were a distant second, with 32%. Elementary parents are traditionally more involved in their children’s schooling than at other levels, which might explain the higher attention parents pay to what their children read at that level. The low challenge rate at the middle school level may stem from the shorter period of time students are at those campuses, or an increasing student need for privacy in their person and school work with the onset of puberty. Another contributing cause may be that at that age students are more homogeneously grouped with those of a similar maturity level, so there is less likelihood of a parent of a young child challenging access to more mature material, as might happen in a Pre-K to grade 6 school. A few books are indicated as K-12 because the school in which the challenge takes place houses all students in the district, and students of all ages would have access to those titles.

Reasons for challenge

As in previous years, inappropriate language was the number one reason books were challenged. The inappropriate language may be profanity, or it may



just be age-inappropriate. Sexual content, ranging from child sexual predators to a small boy who loses his pajamas in his dream, came in a close second. The “Other” category ran the gamut from portrayal of a police officer as a serial killer, to “too scary,” to “trashy novel.”



The Impact of Accelerated Reader

One factor that shows up on at least one challenge is “Accelerated Reader status.” Accelerated Reader is a widely-used computerized reading incentive program in which students are required or pressured to read books at a certain reading level, called the Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD. Books that are “AR books” have a computer-administered, low-level test over certain facts about the book, to allegedly prove that the student actually read the book. Students read AR-identified books, and take the computerized test to earn “AR points” which are exchanged for tangible rewards such as pencils or candy. Some schools offer larger rewards such as special events or field trips that can be purchased with AR points. Just about any trade book can be an “AR book” if the school purchases or creates a test for that book. In many AR schools, those who select library books are urged to purchase only books for which there exist AR tests. AR has become a driving force in library collection development, and many book selectors look first to AR test availability,

then reading level, in selecting books. However, many books with mature subject matter but written at a low reading level entice older, mature students with low reading skills. When a book selector looks only to AR status and reading level in making book selections, and doesn't read reviews or know the literature landscape well enough to know what types of books some authors write, some of these age-inappropriate, low-reading-level books may end up in collections for younger students. These mistakenly selected titles may be appropriately challenged in order to rid collections of materials that should never have been there in the first place.

A key factor in these suspect book selection practices, aside from curricular and administrative pressure to purchase only books for which there are AR tests, is the fact that many districts have replaced certified, degreed librarians with library aides. Library aides do not have qualifications in book selection or children's literature that certified librarians receive in their training, and they might not consider reviews, awards, author history, and other factors that a certified school librarian would consider in making book purchases or reading recommendations to students. Even certified librarians may be pressured to select inappropriately. One middle school librarian wrote: "[T]he reading dept. chair and I chose the [AR] titles. We had a potfull of money and a short time-frame. It was much easier to order by sets than individually. And they wanted some college bound titles. Some of those titles could get a JH library into trouble." When such selection is done on a school-by-school basis by a trained librarian, the librarian will deselect inappropriate materials when the books arrive and re-route them to a campus with a more sophisticated student body. An untrained aide may not know the difference.

The larger problem, though, is the lack of qualified, certified librarians available to guide students to appropriate literature. More and more districts are replacing retiring librarians with clerks, believing that all a librarian does is check out books. Districts such as Houston ISD, White Settlement ISD, Beckville ISD, Keene ISD, Southside ISD (San Antonio), and Waco ISD are examples of districts where librarian positions have been filled with aides. One regional Education Service Center (ESC) area, with 31 school districts, has only four certified librarians in schools. Texas standards for school libraries and school library staffing are advisory, not mandatory, so schools feel free to cut corners on the position, leaving reading guidance and collection development in the hands of untrained and unqualified personnel. < <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/schoollibs/>>

Challenges Without Due Process

Because *The Higher Power of Lucky* didn't show up on the challenged list until late in the collection process, we decided to investigate informal bans – bans and restrictions on materials that are imposed at the building level without going through the formal reconsideration process. These types of censorship are particularly difficult to root out because there is no documentation of the process or the rationale used. An individual in a position of power (the principal who receives an objection from a parent, teacher, or simply reads about a book in a newspaper article; or a librarian who views a book that was selected according to district policy and decides after the fact that the book is inappropriate) removes or restricts access to materials based on the opinion of this one person. Such actions violate board policy in almost all cases, but are not reported through the Texas Public Information Act request process because there is no official proceeding to report.

To collect this data, we asked the librarians who were subscribed to the Texas Library Association's TLC (Texas Library Connection) mailing list if they were aware of any informal challenges in their buildings or districts. This is an imperfect process, since the librarians are unlikely to report self-censorship. However, they may report administrative restrictions on materials. The other flaw in this data collection is that the request was not made to librarians until the second week in June, and most librarians were off-contract and therefore not monitoring this email list during that time.

Despite the obstacles, thirteen librarians reported sixteen administrative bans in the last school year. None of these administrative bans were reported through the Texas Public Information Act collection process. The reasons for the administrative censorship ranged from "locker room language" (*Friday Night Lights*), to "because author is a radical insurgent and leader of the Zapatista Party of National Liberation" (*The Story of Colors=La Historia de los Colores*). These books were simply taken from the library, or ordered sequestered, based on the opinion of one person. Because of the lack of scientific sampling, the informal bans are not included in the data from which this report was compiled, but a list of the books and the reasons for their challenge is appended to this report. Districts with administrative bans include: Bullard ISD, Collinsville ISD, Corpus Christi ISD, Dickinson ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Harlingen ISD, Leander ISD, Lewisville ISD, Liberty Hill ISD, Marion ISD, Peaster ISD, and San Antonio ISD. One respondent refused to identify the school district for fear of retaliation.

BANNED BOOKS

Books Removed From Library Shelves or Class Reading Lists

Allende, Isabel <i>House of Spirits</i>	Hee, Lee Yun <i>Demon Diary</i>	Pilobolus and John Kane <i>The Human Alphabet</i>
Anonymous <i>Go Ask Alice</i>	Henkes, Kevin <i>Olive's Ocean</i>	Reiff, Tana <i>So Long, Snowman</i> <i>Take Away Three</i>
Avi <i>Wolf rider, A Tale of Terror</i>	Howe, Norma <i>The Adventures of the Blue Avenger</i>	Rodriguez, Victor <i>Eldorado in East Harlem</i>
Blume, Judy <i>Then Again, Maybe I Won't</i>	Hrdlitschka, Shelley <i>Dancing Naked</i>	Rowling, J.K. <i>Harry Potter</i> (entire series)
Chbosky, Stephen <i>The Perks of Being A Wallflower</i>	LeGuin, Ursula <i>A Fisherman of the Inland Sea</i>	Sendak, Maurice <i>In the Night Kitchen</i>
Codell, Esme Raji <i>Educating Esme</i>	Limb, Sue <i>Girl 15, Charming but Insane</i>	Steer, Dugald <i>Wizardology</i>
Cole, Brock <i>The Facts Speak For Themselves</i>	Lynch, Chris <i>Slot Machine</i>	Stine, R.L. <i>Nightmare Hour</i>
Duncan, Lois, editor <i>On the Edge: Stories at the Brink</i>	Mac, Carrie <i>Charmed</i>	Strasser, Todd <i>Give a Boy a Gun</i>
Funke, Cornelia <i>Inkheart</i> <i>Inkspell</i>	Mackler, Carolyn <i>The Earth, My Butt & Other Big Round Things</i>	Temple, Charles <i>Train</i>
Garden, Nancy <i>Endgame</i>	Murray, Martine <i>The Slightly True Story of Cedar B. Hartley</i>	Tyree, Omar <i>What They Want</i>
Gerstein, Mordicai <i>Stop Those Pants</i>	Myracle, Lauren <i>The Fashion Disaster That Changed My Life</i>	von Ziegesar, Cecily <i>Gossip Girl</i> (entire series)
Green, John <i>Looking for Alaska</i>	Paulsen, Gary <i>Zero to Sixty</i>	Walker, Alice <i>The Color Purple</i>
Guest, Judith <i>Ordinary People</i>	Pilkey, Dav, et al <i>The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby</i>	Watase, Yuu <i>The Art of Ceres, Celestial Legend</i>
Harris, Robie H. <i>It's Perfectly Normal</i>		Zindel, Paul <i>Loch</i>

RESTRICTED BOOKS

Books Restricted to Readers Based on Age, Reading Level, Parental Permission, etc.

Bennett, Cherie <i>Life in the Fat Lane</i>	Grisham, John <i>A Time to Kill</i>	Pascal, Francine <i>My First Love and Other Disasters</i>
Blackstone, Margaret & Eissa Haden Guest <i>Girl Stuff: A Survival Guide to Growing Up</i>	Gwaltney, Doris <i>Homefront</i>	Patron, Susan <i>The Higher Power of Lucky</i>
Bradbury, Ray <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	Henkes, Kevin <i>Olive's Ocean</i>	PBS Producers: Rachel Dretzin, Barak Goodman <i>Frontline: The Merchants of Cool</i> (video)
Brashares, Ann <i>The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants</i>	King, Jonathon <i>A Killing Night</i>	Philbrick, Rodman <i>The Last Book In the Universe</i>
Buckhanon, Kalisha <i>Upstate</i>	Lee, Harper <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	Pilkey, Dav, et al <i>The Adventures of Captain Underpants</i>
Cabot, Meg <i>Boy Next Door</i>	Lowry, Lois <i>Anastasia, Again! Number the Stars</i>	Rodman, Mary Ann <i>Yankee Girl</i>
Cormier, Robert <i>The Chocolate War I Am The Cheese</i>	Mcneal, Laura <i>Zipped</i>	Rodriguez, Luis <i>Always Running</i>
Crutcher, Chris <i>Running Loose</i>	Myracle, Lauren <i>TTYL</i>	Steinbeck, John <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>
Enthoven, Sam <i>The Black Tattoo</i>	Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds <i>Alice</i> (entire series)	Taylor, Mildred <i>Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry</i>
Gardner, John <i>Grendel</i>	Olsen, Sylvia <i>The Girl With a Baby</i>	Twain, Mark <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>
Giblin, James Cross and David Frampton <i>When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS</i>	Parnall, Peter and Justin Richardson <i>And Tango Makes Three</i>	Walker, Alice <i>The Color Purple</i>

RETAINED BOOKS

School Retained Book in Library or on Class Reading List Despite Challenge

Austin ISD

Kocurek Elementary
Stine, R.L., *Bride of the Living Dummy* (Goosebumps Series)

Barbers Hill ISD

Elementary Schools
Gorman, Carol, *Dork in Disguise*

Boerne ISD

Boerne Middle School North
Fraser, Celeste, *World Geography - Building a Global Perspective*

Canutillo ISD

Alderete Middle School
Ferris, Jean, *Eight Seconds*

Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Chisholm Ridge Elementary
Bright, Michael, *Endangered & Extinct Prehistoric Animals*

Fort Bend ISD

Fort Settlement Middle School
Brown, Dan, *The Da Vinci Code*

Houston ISD

Hogg Middle School
Hinton, S.E., *The Outsiders*

Revere Middle School

Logue, Mary, *Dancing with an Alien*

Humble ISD

Atascosita Middle School
Coman, Carolyn, *What Jamie Saw*
Eberhardt, Thom, *Rat Boys*

Keller ISD

Indian Springs Middle School
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds, *Alice on Her Way*

Kennedale ISD

Arthur Intermediate
Taylor, Mildred, *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*

Klein ISD

Theiss Elem
Lowry, Lois, *The Giver*
Northampton Elem
McKee, David, *Tusk, Tusk*

Leander ISD

Laura Bush Elementary
Payan, Gregory, *Chemical and Biological Weapons: Anthrax and Sarin*

Knowles Elementary

Tamaki, Hisao, *Star Wars: a New Hope* (manga version)

Liberty Hill ISD

Liberty Hill Intermediate
Henkes, Kevin, *Olive's Ocean*

Mabank ISD

Maybank Middle School
Fredericks, Mariah, *The True Meaning of Cleavage*

Magnolia ISD

Magnolia West High School
Preston, Richard, *The Hot Zone*

McKinney ISD

McKinney High School
Hesse, Herman, *Siddhartha*

Nederland ISD

Highland Park Elementary
Browne, Anthony, *Willy's Pictures*

Langham Elementary

Seuss, Dr., *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*

New Boston ISD

New Boston Middle School
Baer, Judy, *Broken Promises*

North East ISD

Fox Run Elementary School
Jeffrey, Gary and Romano
Felmang, *Egyptian Myths*

Northside ISD

All middle schools
Hautman, Pete, *Invisible*

All elementary schools

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley, *The Witches of Worm*

Silverton ISD

Silverton School
Steinbeck, John, *The Red Pony*

Spring Branch ISD

Stratford High School
Angelou, Maya, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Tyler ISD

Kissam Middle School
Zindel, Paul, *Rats*

BANNED AND CHALLENGED BOOKS – By School

Alvin ISD

School: Manvel High School

Book: *A Killing Night*, by Jonathon King

Reason cited: Sexual Content, Violence, Other

Action taken: Use Restricted

Notes: Portrayal of main character - police officer becomes serial killer

Austin ISD

School: Kocurek Elementary

Book: *Bride of the Living Dummy* (Goosebumps Series) by R.L. Stine

Reason cited: Other-- too scary

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Too scary for elementary children.

Barber's Hill ISD

School: Intermediate School Grades 5&6

Book: *On the Edge: Stories at the Brink*, by Lois Duncan, ed.

Reason cited: Profanity or

Inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Mature content

School: Primary School Grades 1&2

Book: *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby*, by Dav Pilkey et al

Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual Content

Action taken: Banned

Notes: The challenge was make by a parent.

School: Middle School Grades 7-8

Book: *Life in the Fat Lane*, by Cherie Bennett

Reason cited: Profanity or

Inappropriate language

Action taken: Use Restricted

Notes: The challenge was make by a parent.

School: Elementary Schools Grades 3&4

Book: *Dork in Disguise*, by Carol Gorman

Reason cited: Profanity or

Inappropriate language

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Other-vandalism. The challenge was made by a parent.

Boerne ISD

School: Boerne Middle School North

Book: *World Geography - Building a Global Perspective*, by Celeste Fraser

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Parent complains that textbook doesn't address TEKS curriculum. "We should use another book or not use one at all, they say."

Brazos ISD

School: Brazos Middle School

Book: *The Facts Speak For Themselves*, by Brock Cole

Reason cited: Profanity, Language

Action taken: Banned

School: Brazos Middle School

Book: *The Adventures of the Blue Avenger*, by Norma Howe

Reason cited: Profanity, Language

Action taken: Banned

School: Brazos Elementary School

Book: *Stop Those Pants*, by Mordicai Gerstein

Reason cited: Profanity, Language

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "It was a gift given to us after our library burned down. It was in bad shape to begin with."

Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity

School: Elementary

Book: *Harry Potter* (entire series), by J. K. Rowling

Reason cited: Mysticism or Paganism

Action taken: Banned (Special

permission required)

Notes: "Teacher was reading it aloud in class. Parent asked us not to read the book. We were surprised. Did research to find that book is often challenged. We respected parent's wishes and chose another book to read."

Burkeville ISD

School: Burkeville Secondary

Book: *Ordinary People*, by Judith Guest

Reason cited: Profanity, sexual content

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Book challenged and removed from library after investigation into content.

Canutillo ISD

School: Alderete Middle School

Book: *It's Perfectly Normal*, by Robie H. Harris

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Challenged by faculty. Inappropriate illustrations.

School: Alderete Middle School

Book: *Eight Seconds*, by Jean Ferris

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Challenged by parent.

"Alternative lifestyle of character is inappropriate for ages 11-14."

Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD

School: all schools

Book: *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Retained

Notes: "Challenged as a "Trashy novel"."

Cedar Hill ISD

School: Lake Ridge Elementary

Book: *In the Night Kitchen*, by Maurice Sendak

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Nudity

School: Joe Wilson Intermediate

Book: *Alice Books* (series), by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Restricted

Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD

School: Lincoln Jr. High

Book: *Gossip Girl* (series), by Cecily von Ziegesar

Reason cited: sexual content

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "Seemed to be advocating pre-marital sex."

Columbia-Brazosport ISD

School: West Brazos Junior High

Book: *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea*, by Ursula LeGuin

Reason cited: Profanity or

inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "Challenge taken through the district policy process with unanimous decision to remove book from library."

School: West Brazos Junior High

Book: *Zero to Sixty*, by Gary Paulsen

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language, sexual content

Action taken: Banned
Notes: "Challenge taken through the district policy process with unanimous decision to remove book from library. Book was inappropriate for junior high level."

Conroe ISD

School: Caney Creek High School
Book: *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury
Reason cited: Profanity, Language
Action taken: Allowed alternate book
Notes: "The District allowed the complainant's daughter to read another book."

Coppell ISD

School: middle schools
Book: *TTYL*, by Lauren Myracle
Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual Content
Action taken: Use Restricted
Notes: Removed from middle school collection. Placed at high school level.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

School: Postma Elementary
Book: *It's Perfectly Normal*, by Robie H. Harris
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Student showed the book to her parent, who showed it to librarian. Librarian and principal agreed the title was inappropriate for the campus.

School: Frazier Elementary
Book: *So Long, Snowman*, by Tana Reiff
Reason cited: Profanity, Language
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Title did not meet campus interpretation of District's objectives of enrichment/support of curriculum or personal needs of students.

School: Frazier Elementary
Book: *Take Away Three*, by Tana Reiff
Reason cited: Profanity, Language
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Title did not meet campus interpretation of District's objectives of enrichment/support of curriculum or personal needs of students.

School: Adam Elementary
Book: *Yankee Girl*, by Mary Ann Rodman
Reason cited: Profanity, Language, Violence, Horror
Action taken: Restricted
Notes: Tagged title for 5th grade checkout only. Note to ask student if parent would be okay with them

reading book due to mature language. Accelerated Reader status deleted.

School: Middle School
Book: *Life Strategies for Teens*, by Jay McGraw
Reason cited: Profanity, Language, Sexual Content
Action taken: Decision pending
Notes: School board member received letter of complaint from a woman in his office, forwarded to superintendent. Info regarding school policy on banned books was given to superintendent's assistant.

Diboll ISD

School: Diboll High School
Book: *Endgame*, by Nancy Garden
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Removed from the library; challenge made by teacher.

School: Diboll High School
Book: *Looking for Alaska*, by John Green
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Removed from the library; challenge made by teacher.

Dublin ISD

School: junior high
Book: *The Chocolate War*, by Robert Cormier
Reason cited: Profanity, Language, Sexual Content, Violence
Action taken: Restricted
Notes: The challenge was made by a parent. The committee decided to place the book in the AP section of the High School Library for volunteer reading.

Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

School: Chisholm Ridge Elementary
Book: *Endangered & Extinct Prehistoric Animals*, by Michael Bright
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Parent complained of pictures of naked men. Said it's no different than pornography and the book is only appropriate for married adults. Review committee found it completely appropriate for students.

Eanes ISD

School: Eanes Elementary
Book: *Olive's Ocean*, by Kevin Henkes
Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language, Sexual Content
Action taken: Restricted

Notes: Bluebonnet Award book; use restricted to upper elementary students.

Ector County ISD

School: Permian High School
Book: *Grendel*, by John Gardner
Reason cited: Profanity or inappropriate language and sexual content
Action taken: Alternate book allowed
Notes: Student was offered alternative reading selection. Parent and student declined.

Fort Bend ISD

School: Pecan Grove Elementary School
Book: *Olive's Ocean*, by Kevin Henkes
Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language
Action taken: Restricted
Notes: Challenge made by parent. Book to remain on library shelves for 5th grade students.

School: Fort Settlement Middle School
Book: *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown
Reason cited: Other--
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Misrepresentation of church history. Challenge made by parent.

Frisco ISD

School: Elementary Schools
Book: *And Tango Makes Three*, by Peter Parnall and Justin Richardson
Reason cited: Other --
Action taken: Use restricted
Notes: Sensitive subject matter and the book is written so that young readers may be drawn to the book and not fully understand the subject matter. Challenged by principal.

Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

School: Bear Creek Elementary
Book: *When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS*, by James Cross Giblin and David Frampton
Reason cited: Sexual Content, Other--
Action taken: Restricted
Notes: "Could stir up fears based on subject matter of plagues." The book was placed in a professional collection available only to teachers.

Henderson ISD

School: Henderson Middle School
Book: *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor
Reason cited: Profanity or Inappropriate language
Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Highland Park ISD (Dallas)

School: Highland Park High School
Book: *Frontline: The Merchants of Cool* (video), by PBS Producers: Rachel Dretzin, Barak Goodman
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Restricted

Houston ISD

School: Edison Middle School
Book: *House of the Spirits*, by Isabel Allende
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned

School: Hartman Middle School
Book: *Demon Diary*, by Lee Yun Hee et al
Reason cited: Violence, Horror, Mysticism, Paganism
Action taken: Banned

School: Golfcrest Elementary School
Book: *The Earth, My Butt & Other Big Round Things*, by Carolyn Mackler
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned

School: Marshall Middle School
Book: *Eldorado in East Harlem*, by Victor Rodriquez
Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned

School: Crockett Elementary School
Book: *Nightmare Hour*, by R. L. Stine
Reason cited: Violence, Horror, Mysticism, Paganism
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Witchcraft

School: Sharpstown High School
Book: *What They Want*, by Omar Tyree
Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned

School: Revere Middle School
Book: *The Art of Ceres, Celestial Legend*, by Yuu Watase
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned

School: Empowerment College Prep HS
Book: *Upstate*, by Kalisha Buckhanon
Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual Content
Action taken: Restricted, Content Changed or Deleted
School: Hogg Middle School
Book: *The Outsiders*, by S.E. Hinton
Reason cited: Other--
Action taken: Retained

Notes: Gang related violence

School: Revere Middle School
Book: *Dancing with an Alien*, by Mary Logue
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Retained

School: Davis High School
Book: *Always Running*, by Luis Rodriguez
Reason cited: Profanity, Violence
Action taken: Alternative book allowed

Humble ISD

School: Kingwood Middle School
Book: *Girl 15, Charming but Insane*, by Sue Limb
Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language, Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Parental challenge

School: Atascosita Middle School
Book: *What Jamie Saw*, by Carolyn Coman
Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Parental challenge

School: Atascosita Middle School
Book: *Rat Boys*, by Thom Eberhardt
Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Parental challenge

Karnes City ISD

School: Karnes City Junior High
Book: *The Black Tattoo*, by Sam Enthoven
Reason cited: Mysticism or Paganism
Action taken: Restricted
Notes: If desired for checkout, students must first take home a book summary and secure written parent approval.

School: Roger E. Sides Elementary
Book: *Homefront*, by Doris Gwaltney
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Restricted
Notes: Challenged by third grade teacher; too sexually explicit for elementary age children.

School: Roger E. Sides Elementary
Book: *Olive's Ocean*, by Kevin Henkes
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Restricted

Notes: Challenged by third grade teacher; too sexually explicit for elementary age children.

Katy ISD

School: Jo Ella Exely Elementary
Book: *The Fashion Disaster That Changed My Life*, By Lauren Myracle
Reason cited: Profanity, Language, Sexual Content
Action taken: Banned
Notes: Book was removed and transferred to a Katy ISD junior high school library.

Keller ISD

School: Indian Springs Middle School
Book: *Alice on Her Way*, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Reason cited: Sexual Content
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Campus committee was unanimous in decision to leave book on the regular-access library shelves. Committee includes teachers, librarian, parent, and school counselor.

Kennedale ISD

School: Arthur Intermediate
Book: *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor
Reason cited: Profanity, Language
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Book remains as approved classroom text with no restrictions.

School: Kennedale High School
Book: *Running Loose*, by Chris Crutcher
Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual Content
Action taken: Alternate book allowed
Notes: Book was removed from required reading list, but is still available in library and still available as alternative reading selection in class.

Klein ISD

School: Theiss Elementary
Book: *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry
Reason cited: Other--
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Designated for curriculum use at intermediate grade levels and not elementary. Retained in library. Challenge made by someone outside of school system.

School: Northampton Elementary
Book: *Tusk, Tusk*, by David McKee
Reason cited: Other--
Action taken: Retained
Notes: Inappropriate for students in primary grade levels. Call number

changed. Challenge made by someone outside of school system.

School: Benigus Elementary

Book: *Anastasia Again!*, by Lois Lowry

Reason cited: none

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: "No formal request or challenge. Question by student's guardian.

Challenge made by someone outside of school system."

School: Schindewolf Intermediate

Book: *I Am The Cheese*, by Robert Cormier

Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Notes: Challenge made by someone outside the school system

Leander ISD

School: Wiley Middle School

Book: *Zipped*, by Laura Mcneal

Reason cited: Sexual Content

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: No formal challenge; after a librarian read the book following a parent's concern, she now requires parent permission.

School: Laura Bush Elementary

Book: *Chemical and Biological Weapons: Anthrax and Sarin*, by Gregory Payan

Reason cited: Violence

Action taken: Retained

Notes: First grade parent concerned about appropriateness of topic for elementary age children.

School: Knowles Elementary

Book: *Star Wars: a New Hope* (manga version), by Hisao Tamaki

Reason cited: Profanity or

Inappropriate language

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Parent filed reconsideration request because of language.

School: Deer Creek Elementary

Book: *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, by Judy Blume

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language, sexual content

Action taken: Pending

Notes: Second grade parent was concerned about appropriateness for that grade level.

Liberty Hill ISD

School: Liberty Hill High School

Book: *The Girl With a Baby*, by Sylvia Olsen

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language, sexual content

Action taken: Retained with notation about possible objectionable material

Notes: "Book provides insight into cultural differences and into difficulties/prejudices/stereotypes associated with teenage pregnancy. Book meets/exceeds criteria for selection despite content that some find objectionable."

School: Bill Burden Elementary

Book: *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*, by Dav Pilkey et al

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: "Principal and selected teachers disapproved of content. All copies removed and placed in restricted area; may only be checked out with parental permission -- no formal procedure followed for removal."

School: Liberty Hill Intermediate

Book: *Olive's Ocean*, by Kevin Henkes

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Retained

Notes: "Followed district procedure for challenged materials; book retained upon committee's recommendation."

Mabank ISD

School: Middle School

Book: *The True Meaning of Cleavage*, by Mariah Fredericks

Reason cited: Profanity, Language, Sexual Content, Mysticism or Paganism, Drug References

Action taken: Retained

Magnolia ISD

School: four elementary schools

Book: *The Higher Power of Lucky*, by Susan Patron

Reason cited: Profanity or Inappropriate language

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: Parent challenges

School: Magnolia West High School

Book: *The Hot Zone*, by Richard Preston

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language, sexual content

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Challenge by parent (elementary teacher)

School: Magnolia West High School

Book: *Seabiscuit*, by Laura Hillenbrand

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Notes: Challenged by 2 parents - both elementary teachers. One scene describes actions of a prostitute; not explicit, only suggestive.

School: Magnolia High School

Book: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

Reason cited: Profanity or Inappropriate language

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Mansfield ISD

School: Danny Jones Middle School

Book: *Dancing Naked*, by Shelley Hrdlitschka

Reason cited: Profanity, Language

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "Patron feels book glorifies teen pregnancy."

McKinney ISD

School: McKinney High School

Book: *Siddhartha*, by Herman Hesse

Reason cited: Sexual Content

Action taken: Retained

Notes: "On Curriculum. Formal challenge was made anonymously. Campus committee met and unanimously voted to retain the book."

Midland ISD

School: Emerson Elementary

Book: *Number the Stars*, by Lois Lowry

Reason cited: Mysticism or Paganism

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Notes: "Parent believed the Star of David on cover was a pentagram associated with witchcraft. Parent believed that a passage which said "down a dark path" had a figurative meaning of an evil way of life."

Nacogdoches ISD

School: Brooks Quinn Jones Elementary

Book: *The Human Alphabet*, by Pilobolus and John Kane

Reason cited: Sexual Content

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "The children thought the human bodies creating the alphabet were inappropriate poses."

School: Brooks Quinn Jones Elementary

Book: *Give a Boy a Gun*, by Todd Strasser

Reason cited: Profanity, Language, Violence, Horror

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "A student brought the book back explaining that his parents thought the topic was inappropriate and had a couple of inappropriate words."

Nederland ISD

School: Langham Elementary

Book: *Slot Machine*, by Chris Lynch

Reason cited: Profanity, Language

Action taken: Banned

School: Central Middle School

Book: *Wizardology*, by Dugald Steer

Reason cited: Mysticism or Paganism

Action taken: Banned

School: Highland Park Elementary

Book: *Willy's Pictures*, by Anthony

Browne

Reason cited: Sexual Content

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Hans Christian Anderson Award winning book. Pictures in question are historical works of art from the 1700s and 1800s.

School: Langham Elementary

Book: *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, by Dr. Seuss

Reason cited: Other-- Contained a chant.

Action taken: Retained

New Boston ISD

School: Middle School

Book: *Broken Promises*, by Judy Baer

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Complaint made by parent

Nixon-Smiley ISD

School: Nixon-Smiley Elementary

Book: *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*, by Judy Blume

Reason cited: Profanity or

Inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

North East ISD

School: Fox Run Elementary School

Book: *Egyptian Myths*, by Gary Jeffrey and Romano Felmang

Reason cited: Violence

Action taken: Retained

Notes: "The committee felt the content of the book was appropriate. Parents have the prerogative to review library resources and decide on appropriateness."

Northside ISD

School: middle and high schools

Book: *My First Love and Other Disasters*, by Francine Pascal

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: Request by NISD librarian to reinstate book at all middle school campuses. Committee recommended to reinstate book at high school campuses only.

School: elementary and middle schools

Book: *The Last Book In the Universe*, by Rodman Philbrick

Reason cited: Violence

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: Committee recommended to keep book in middle school libraries but remove from elementary schools.

School: middle schools

Book: *Invisible*, by Pete Hautman

Reason cited: Profanity, Language

Action taken: Retained

School: elementary schools

Book: *The Witches of Worm*, by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Reason cited: Inappropriate language

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Request by elementary librarian to reinstate book at elementary libraries. Committee recommended that book be reinstated at elementary libraries with the communication that the book is most appropriate for upper level grades at the elementary school.

Pettus ISD

School: Pettus Secondary School

Book: *Gossip Girl* (Series), by Cecily von Ziegesar

Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual content

Action taken: Banned

Pilot Point ISD

School: Pilot Point High School

Book: *A Time to Kill*, by John Grisham

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Notes: "Parent conference with teacher, campus administrator, and follow-up conference with superintendent. Expressed concern, but did not request removal, simply expressed concern about appropriateness of this book for young high school students."

Plano ISD

School: Bowman Middle School

Book: *Charmed*, by Carrie Mac

Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language, Sexual Content, Violence, Horror

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Book about a girl ensnared in prostitution and the sex trade. Appropriateness for middle school students was challenged due to profanity, sexual content and violence.

School: Barron Early Childhood School

Book: *Train*, by Charles Temple

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "A picture depicts an individual in jail. Jail is not an appropriate place to be. Committee said "75% of the committee felt it inappropriate."

Pleasant Grove ISD

School: Pleasant Grove Middle School

Book: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, by Ann Brashares

Reason cited: Other --

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: "Exposing young readers to material they are not mature enough to understand. Boy/girl relationship/inappropriate relationships for 10 year olds."

Poolville ISD

School: Poolville Junior High

Book: *Boy Next Door*, by Meg Cabot

Reason cited: Sexual Content

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: Only one copy will remain on the shelf. All others will be housed in library office, and parents can check them out to review and discuss with their children.

Port Aransas ISD

School: Port Aransas High School

Book: *Gossip Girl* (series), by Cecily von Zielesar

Reason cited: Sexual conduct

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Drug and alcohol abuse - review committee believed that books conveyed the wrong message to students.

Richardson ISD

School: high schools

Book: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain

Reason cited: Inappropriate Language

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Notes: "Book contains text that some might find sensitive or controversial. Book used in 7th grade English class.

Alternate titles available. Review Committee recommends book for 10-12th grades."

Rising Star ISD

School: Rising Star High School

Book: *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker

Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual content

Action taken: Banned

Santa Fe ISD

School: Santa Fe Elementary

Book: *Inkheart*, by Cornelia Funke

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

School: Santa Fe Elementary

Book: *Inkspell*, by Cornelia Funke

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

School: Santa Fe High School

Book: *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker

Reason cited: Other--

Action taken: Alternate book allowed

Notes: The parent was upset about the graphic description of the rape. She felt the teacher had no moral or Christian values by allowing students to read it. Alternate book was assigned.

Sierra Blanca ISD

School: Sierra Blanca ISD (all schools)

Book: *Educating Esme*, by Esme Raji Codell

Reason cited: Profanity, Sexual content

Action taken: Banned

Silverton ISD

School: Silverton School

Book: *The Red Pony*, by John Steinbeck

Reason cited: Profanity, Violence

Action taken: Retained

Splendora ISD

School: Splendora Intermediate

Book: *Girl Stuff: a Survival Guide to Growing Up*, by Margaret Blackstone & Eissa Haden Guest

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Restricted

Notes: The library book is now by request only, and must have parental permission.

Spring Branch ISD

School: Stratford High School

Book: *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*, by Maya Angelou

Reason cited: Sexual content

Action taken: Retained

Notes: "The Committee recommended keeping the book in the curriculum with some added suggestions (like move it from 10th grade to 11th grade). The parent took the case to the Superintendent. The Superintendent upheld the Committee recommendations."

Stephenville ISD

School: Henderson Junior High

Book: *The Slightly True Story of Cedar B. Hartley*, by Martine Murray

Reason cited: Profanity or Inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

Tioga ISD

School: Tioga Elementary

Book: *Wolf Rider, A Tale of Terror*, by Avi

Reason cited: Violence

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "Teacher found it inappropriate for young adults."

Tyler ISD

School: Kissam Middle

Book: *Loch*, by Paul Zindel

Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate Language

Action taken: Banned

Notes: Parent complaint

School: Kissam Middle

Book: *Rats*, by Paul Zindel

Reason cited: Violence, Horror

Action taken: Retained

Notes: Parent complaint

Valley View ISD

School: Valley View Jr. High

Book: *Go Ask Alice*, by Anonymous

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language, sexual content

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "This book was purchased for use in the classroom. It was never used because of the content found in it. It was restricted and later removed on the direction of the Supt. of Schools."

Waco ISD

School: Viking Hills Elementary

Book: *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby*, by Dav Pilkey et al

Reason cited: Profanity, Inappropriate language

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "Book was not formally challenged. A parent expressed concern. Ban was principal's decision and it was supported by the library coordinator."

West Hardin CCISD

School: West Hardin Elementary

Book: *Olive's Ocean*, by Kevin Henkes

Reason cited: Profanity, inappropriate language, sexual content

Action taken: Pending

Woodville ISD

School: Woodville High School

Book: *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky

Reason cited: Sexual Content

Action taken: Banned

Notes: "The parent of a freshman girl who checked out the book challenged it. The girl was offended by the sexual explicitness of the book; mother requested the review."

2007 LIST OF BOOKS BANNED OR CHALLENGED IN TEXAS SCHOOLS (ALPHABETICAL BY TITLE)

Note: Most of the book summaries come from the Library of Congress Annotated Card project. The Award notation may be representative. We have not attempted to include all awards won by these titles, but have chosen the highest award as representative. The AR notation indicates an Accelerated Reader test is available for the book. See section on Accelerated Reader.

The Adventures of Blue Avenger, by Norma Howe, Holt, 1999. A boy trying to cope with the unexpected death of his father decides to change his name to Blue Avenger, hoping to find a way to make a difference in his neighborhood and in the world. **Award:** 2000 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

The Adventures of Captain Underpants, by Dav Pilkey et al, Blue Sky Press, 2002. When two boys hypnotize their principal into thinking that he is the superhero Captain Underpants, he leads them to the lair of the nefarious Dr. Diaper, where they must defeat his evil robot henchmen. **Award:** 1998 Best Children's Books of the Year. **AR:** Yes

The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby, by Dav Pilkey et al, Blue Sky Press, 2002. The boys from Captain Underpants create a new comic book superhero, Super Diaper Baby, whose nemesis transforms into poo. **Award:** 2003 Children's Choices, Int'l Reading Assn. **AR:** Yes

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, by Mark Twain, Ideals, 1985. Adventures of a mischievous young boy and his friends growing up in a Mississippi River town in the nineteenth century. **Award:** 1988 Books For You, Nat'l Council of Teachers of English. **AR:** Yes

Alice on Her Way, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Atheneum, 2005. Alice is adjusting to her new stepmother, her brother's new apartment, her ex-boyfriend, and getting a driver's license. **AR:** Yes

Always Running, by Luis Rodriguez, Simon & Schuster, 2005. An account of growing up in an L.A. gang in the 1960s and 70s, interspersed with bits of poetry. **Award:** 2002 Outstanding Books for the College Bound. **AR:** Yes

Anastasia Again! by Lois Lowry, Houghton Mifflin, 1981. Twelve-year-old Anastasia is horrified at her family's decision to move from their city apartment to a house in the suburbs. **Award:** Nominee for 2 state children's book awards. **AR:** Yes

And Tango Makes Three, by Peter Parnall and Justin Richardson, Simon & Schuster, 2005. At New York City's Central Park Zoo, two male penguins fall in love and start a family by taking turns sitting on an abandoned egg until it hatches. **Award:** 2005 Best Children's Books of the Year. **AR:** Yes

Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, by Judy Blume, Bradbury, 1990, 1970. Faced with the difficulties of growing up and choosing a religion, a twelve-year-old girl talks over her problems with her own private God. **Award:** 1970 NYT Best Books for Children. **AR:** Yes

The Art of Ceres, Celestial Legend, by Yuu Watase, VIZ Media, 2002. A collection of art works by popular anime and manga artist, Yuu Watase.

Bartholomew and the Oobleck, by Dr. Seuss, Random House, 1949. The King, tired of rain, snow, sun, and fog, commands his magicians to make something else come down from the sky, but when oobleck falls, in sticky greenish droplets, Bartholomew Cubbins shames the King and saves the kingdom. **Award:** 1950 Caldecott Honor Book. **AR:** Yes

The Black Tattoo, by Sam Enthoven, Razorbill, 2006. When his best friend is possessed by an ancient demon, a fourteen-year-old boy, accompanied by a girl with superhuman powers, battles all over London and into Hell to save him. **AR:** Yes

Boy Next Door, by Meg Cabot, Avon, 2002. An entertaining tale told entirely through email, about a young woman in the workforce and her romantic and mysterious

encounters. By the author of *Princess Diaries*.

Bride of the Living Dummy (Goosebumps Series), by R.L. Stine, Scholastic, 1998. A horror tale in which a ventriloquist's dummy comes to life. **AR:** Yes

Broken Promises, by Judy Baer, Bethany House, 1989. Christian "chick lit" title from the Cedar River Daydreams series, a realistic series packed with drama, adventure, and tests of faith. **AR:** Yes

Charmed, by Carrie Mac, Orca, 2004. A teenager finds she is trapped in a prostitution ring, with no way to escape.

Chemical and Biological Weapons: Anthrax and Sarin, by Gregory Payan, Children's Press, 2000. Discusses the components, use, and history of chemical and biological weapons, especially anthrax and sarin, and explains the effects on humans after exposure. **AR:** Yes

The Chocolate War, by Robert Cormier, Random House, 2004, 1974. A high school freshman discovers the devastating consequences of refusing to join in the school's annual fund raising drive and arousing the wrath of the school bullies. **Award:** 1982 Books for You (Nat'l Council of Teachers of English). **AR:** Yes

The Color Purple, by Alice Walker, Pocket Books, 1990. A multigenerational tale of strong, African-American women in the face of abuse and discrimination. **Award:** 2002 Senior High School Library Catalog. **AR:** Yes

The Da Vinci Code, by Dan Brown, Doubleday, 2004. A mystery of symbols, hidden in the works of Leonardo da Vinci, that lead to an important religious relic. **Award:** 2004-2005 TAYSHAS High School Reading List. **AR:** Yes

Dancing Naked, by Shelley Hrdlitschka, Orca, 2002. A young girl is pregnant, and the father wants her to have an abortion. She has difficult decisions to make. **Award:** 2004 Young Adult's Choices (Int'l Reading Assn.) **AR:** Yes

Dancing with an Alien, by Mary Logue, HarperCollins, 2000. A teenage boy from outer space travels to earth on a mission to help save his planet, and ultimately he falls in love, causing his mission to fail. **Award:** 2001 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers. **AR:** Yes

Demon Diary, by Lee Yun Hee, et al, Tokyopop, 2003. Gods and demons wage war, with the earth as the battlefield. **Award:** 2007 Core Collection: Japanese Manga for Teens.

Dork in Disguise, by Carol Gorman, HarperCollins, 1999. Starting middle school in a new town, brainy Jerry Flack changes his image from "dork" to "cool kid," only to discover that he'd rather be himself. **Award:** 2002 Adventuring with Books: a Booklist for pre-K - Grade 6. **AR:** Yes

The Earth, My Butt & Other Big Round Things, by Carolyn Mackler, Candlewick, 2003. Feeling like she does not fit in with the other members of her family, who are all thin, brilliant, and good-looking, fifteen-year-old Virginia tries to deal with her self-image, her first physical relationship, and her disillusionment with some of the people closest to her. **Award:** 2004 Prinz Honor book. **AR:** Yes

Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year, by Esme Raji Codell, Algonquin, 1999. Autobiographical account documents the frustrations, achievements, and struggles of a first year public school teacher in Chicago. **Award:** 2000 Alex Award.

Egyptian Myths, by Gary Jeffrey and Romano Felmgang, Rosen, 2006. A graphic book (comic-book-like) format of the ancient Egyptian myths. **AR:** Yes

Eight Seconds, Jean Ferris, Harcourt, 2000. An eighteen-year-old boy must

confront his own sexuality when he goes to rodeo school and finds himself strangely attracted to an older boy who is smart, tough, complicated, gorgeous, and gay. **Award:** 2002 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

Eldorado in East Harlem, by Victor Rodriguez, Arte Publico Press, 1992. Capturing the essence of barrio life in the 1960s, gang members are disillusioned with their lot, yet don't know anything else.

Endgame, by Nancy Garden, Harcourt, 2006. A fifteen-year-old boy, bullied at school and ridiculed by an unfeeling father for preferring drums to hunting, goes on a shooting rampage at his high school. **Award:** 2006 Senior High School Library Catalog. **AR:** Yes

The Facts Speak For Themselves, by Brock Cole, Front Street, 1997. At the request of her social worker, a thirteen-year-old girl gradually reveals how her life with her unstable mother and her younger brother led to her rape and the murder she witnessed. **Award:** 1998 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers. **AR:** Yes

Fahrenheit 451, by Ray Bradbury, Chelsea House, 2007. The classic science fiction story of book burning in a near-future dystopia. **Award:** 2002 Recommended Literature Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (Calif. Dept. of Ed.) **AR:** Yes

The Fashion Disaster That Changed My Life, by Lauren Myracle, Dutton Children's, 2005. Seventh-grader Alli inadvertently arrives on the first day of school with underwear static-clinging partly outside her pant leg. **AR:** Yes

A Fisherman of the Inland Sea, by Ursula LeGuin, Perennial, 2005. A collection of short science fiction stories. **Award:** 1997 Senior High School Library Catalog.

Frontline: The Merchants of Cool (video), PBS Producers: Rachel Dretzin and Barak Goodman, WGBH Boston, 2001. A documentary news

program on how merchants attract young customers.

Girl 15, Charming but Insane, by Sue Limb, Delacorte, 2004. A fifteen-year-old English girl, living with her mum, separated from her father in Cornwall, and with a best friend who seems to do everything perfectly, finds her own assets through humor. **Award:** 2006, Finalist Heartland Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. **AR:** Yes

Girl Stuff: a Survival Guide to Growing Up, by Margaret Blackstone, Harcourt, 2006. A guide for girls explaining both the physical and psychological aspects of puberty.

The Girl with a Baby, by Sylvia Olsen, Sono Nis, 2003. Fourteen and a mother, Jane draws on her Indian heritage to make the best of her life for her child. **Award:** 2004 Best Children's Books of the Year. **AR:** Yes

Give a Boy a Gun, by Todd Strasser, Simon & Schuster, 2000. Events leading up to a night of terror at a high school dance are told from the point of view of various people involved. **Award:** 2006 Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults.

The Giver, by Lois Lowry, ECM/Paradigm, 2002. Given a lifetime assignment at a special ceremony, a boy becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his world and discovers a terrible truth about the society in which he lives. **Award:** 1994 Newbery Award. **AR:** Yes

Go Ask Alice, by Anonymous, Aladdin, 1998. Based on the diary of a fifteen-year-old drug user chronicling her struggle to escape the pull of the drug world. **Award:** 2001 Best of the Best Revisited (100 Best Books for Teens). **AR:** Yes

Gossip Girl (Series), Cecily von Ziegesar, Little, Brown, 2002-. Presents a world of jealousy and betrayal at an exclusive private school in Manhattan. **Award:** 2003 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers. **AR:** Yes

The Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck, Sagebrush, 1999. Depression-era family moves from Arkansas to California as migrant farm workers. **Award:** 1976 Books for You: An Annotated Booklist for Senior High. **AR:** Yes

Grendel, by John Gardner, Hall, 1972. A vivid reinvention of the Beowulf tale. **Award:** 2002 Outstanding Books for the College Bound. **AR:** Yes

Harry Potter (series), by J.K. Rowling, Scholastic, 1998-2007. A young boy with a great destiny proves his worth while attending Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry. Subsequent titles follow his career. **Award:** 1997-98 Anne Spencer Lindbergh Prize in Children's Literature. **AR:** Yes

The Higher Power of Lucky, by Susan Patron, Atheneum, 2006. Fearing that her legal guardian plans to abandon her, ten-year-old aspiring scientist Lucky Trimble determines to run away while also continuing to seek the Higher Power that will bring stability to her life. **Award:** 2007 Newbery Award. **AR:** Yes

Homefront, by Doris Gwaltney, Simon & Schuster, 2006. In 1941 in rural Virginia, a twelve-year-old girl's fervent desire for a room of her own is thwarted by the arrival of her "perfect" English cousin who, having escaped the London blitz with her mother, is given the coveted room as well as all the care and attention of the rest of the family. **Award:** 2006 Society of School Librarians Int'l Book Awards honor book. **AR:** Yes

The Hot Zone, by Richard Preston, Anchor, 1995. A fictional account of a previously unknown deadly virus, and how it could enter the population and wipe out whole communities. **Award:** 1996 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

House of the Spirits, by Isabel Allende, Knopf, 1985. Written in the style of magical realism, this award winning novel describes a family saga, complete with a clairvoyant matriarch, in an unnamed South American country. **Award:** 2002 Recommended Literature

Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (Calif. Dept. of Ed.) **AR:** Yes

The Human Alphabet, by Pilobolus and John Kane, Roaring Brook Press, 2005. An alphabet made of people — here are the 26 familiar letters of the alphabet and images to illustrate them, each made with ingenious grips, bends and twists of the human form. **Award:** 2006 Children's Catalog.

I Am The Cheese, by Robert Cormier, Knopf, 1977. A young boy desperately tries to unlock his past yet knows he must hide those memories if he is to remain alive. **Award:** 2000 Middle and Junior High School Catalog; 2002 Senior High School Catalog. **AR:** Yes

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings, by Maya Angelou, Random House, 1970. An autobiographical treatment of racism, sexism, and self-acceptance through the story of a girl who finally finds peace in early motherhood. **Award:** 2001 Best of the Best Revisited (100 Best Books for Teens). **AR:** Yes

In the Night Kitchen, by Maurice Sendak, Harper & Row, 1970. A little boy's dream-fantasy in which he helps three fat bakers get milk for their cake batter. **Award:** 1971 Caldecott Honor book. **AR:** Yes

Inkheart, by Cornelia Funke, Scholastic, 2003. A twelve-year-old girl learns that her father, who repairs and binds books for a living, can "read" fictional characters to life when one of those characters abducts them and tries to force him into service. **Award:** 2007 Educators' Top 100 Children's Books. **AR:** Yes

Inkspell, by Cornelia Funke, Scholastic, 2005. Now thirteen, the protagonist from *Inkheart* "reads" herself into Inkworld, where she, her family, and the characters in the book face chaos and danger as the original creator of the world frantically tries to redirect the story. **Award:** 2006 Notable Children's Books. **AR:** Yes

Invisible, by Pete Hautman, Simon & Schuster, 2005. Two boys are unlikely best friends—one a loner obsessed by

his model trains, the other a popular student involved in football and theater—who grew up together and share a bond that nothing can sever. **Award:** 2006 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

It's Perfectly Normal, by Robie H. Harris, Candlewick, 1994. Provides scientific and medical answers to young people's questions about sexuality, physical development, diseases, and responsible decision-making. Created with the input of parents, clergy, educators, and health professionals. **Award:** 1994 Notable Books for Children.

A Killing Night, by Jonathon King, Dutton 2005. A former policeman, now a private investigator, tracks another former police officer, considered a suspect in a string of murders.

The Last Book In the Universe, by Rodman Philbrick, Blue Sky Press, 2000. After an earthquake has destroyed much of the planet, an epileptic teenager nicknamed Spaz begins the heroic fight to bring human intelligence back to the Earth of a distant future. **Award:** 2001 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

Life in the Fat Lane, by Cherie Bennett, Delacorte, 1998. A sixteen-year-old winner of beauty pageants and Homecoming Queen, is distressed and bewildered when she starts gaining weight and becomes a fat girl. **Award:** 2005 Middle and Junior High School Catalog. **AR:** Yes

Life Strategies for Teens, by Jay McGraw, Fireside, 2000. Dr. Phil McGraw's son tells teens how to have a rewarding and successful life.

Loch, by Paul Zindel, Hyperion, 1995. Fifteen-year-old Loch and his younger sister join their father on a scientific expedition searching for enormous prehistoric creatures sighted in a Vermont lake, but soon discover that the expedition's leaders aren't interested in preserving the creatures. **Award:** 1995 Quick Picks for Reluctant Teen Readers. **AR:** Yes

Looking for Alaska, by John Green, Dutton Children's, 2005. A sixteen-year-old's first year at a preparatory

school in Alabama includes good friends and great pranks, but is defined by the search for answers about life and death after a fatal car crash. **Award:** 2006 Prinz Award. **AR:** Yes

My First Love and Other Disasters, by Francine Pascal, Simon Pulse, 2003. An almost fifteen-year-old girl struggles with her life on Fire Island, but finally wins the attention of the handsomest boy at school.

Nightmare Hour, by R.L. Stine, HarperCollins, 1999. A collection of ten short horror stories featuring a Halloween visit to a strange pumpkin patch, a girl who wants the power and respect that comes with being a witch, and a mask that lets the wearer see into another time. **Award:** 2001 Books for You (Nat'l Council of Teachers of English). **AR:** Yes

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry, Houghton Mifflin, 1989. In 1943, a ten-year-old Danish girl learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis. **Award:** 1990 Newbery Award. **AR:** Yes

Olive's Ocean, by Kevin Henkes, Greenwillow, 2003. On a summer visit to her grandmother's cottage by the ocean, a twelve-year-old girl gains perspective on the death of a classmate, on her relationship with her grandmother, on her feelings for an older boy, and on her plans to be a writer. **Award:** 2004 Newbery Honor book. **AR:** Yes

On the Edge: Stories at the Brink, by Lois Duncan, editor, Simon & Schuster, 2000. A collection of twelve stories by different writers and in different genres in each of which a young person is physically or emotionally on the edge. **Award:** 2000 Parent's Guide to Children's Media. **AR:** Yes

Ordinary People, by Judith Guest, Penguin, 1982. The accidental death of the elder son of an affluent family strains family relationships. **Award:** 1982 Books for You, Nat'l Council of Teachers of English. **AR:** Yes

The Outsiders, by S.E. Hinton, Viking, 1967. The struggle of three brothers to stay together after their parent's death and their quest for identity among the conflicting values of their adolescent society. **Award:** 1976 Books for You: An Annotated Booklist for Senior High. **AR:** Yes

The Perks of Being A Wallflower, by Stephen Chbosky, Pocket, 1999. Told through letters to an unknown recipient, the teenage protagonist struggles through love, drugs, and the loss of those dear to him. **Award:** 2000 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

Prehistoric Animals, by Michael Bright, Copper Beech, 2001. Short descriptions and illustrations of various creatures from prehistoric times, including fish, dinosaurs, mammals, and birds. **AR:** Yes

Rat Boys, by Thom Eberhardt, Hyperion, 2001. Fourteen-year-old girls use a magic ring to turn two rats into cute boys so that they can have dates for the Spring Fling. **Award:** 2002 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers. **AR:** Yes

Rats, by Paul Zindel, Hyperion, 1999. When mutant rats threaten to take over Staten Island, which has become a huge landfill, a fourteen-year-old girl and her younger brother try to figure out how to stop them. **Award:** 2001 Books for You (Nat'l Council of Teachers of English). **AR:** Yes

The Red Pony, by John Steinbeck, Hall, 1994. A short novel tracing a boy's growth into manhood on a ranch in the West. **Award:** 2005 Middle and Junior High School Catalog. **AR:** Yes

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry, by Mildred Taylor, Dial, 1976. A black family living in Mississippi during the Depression of the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand. **Award:** 1977 Newbery Award. **AR:** Yes

Running Loose, by Chris Crutcher, Greenwillow, 1983. A high school senior in a small Idaho town learns about sportsmanship, love, and death

as he matures into manhood. **Award:** 2001 Best of the Best Revisited (100 Best Books for Teens). **AR:** Yes

Seabiscuit, by Laura Hillenbrand, Random House, 2001. A biography of the most famous race horse in history, from which the movie of the same name was made. **Award:** 2001 School Library Journal Best Adult Books for High School Students. **AR:** Yes

Siddhartha, by Herman Hesse, New Directions, 1964. Nobel laureate's acclaimed novel traces an Indian aristocrat's efforts to renounce sensual and material pleasures and discover spiritual truths. **Award:** 2002 Outstanding Books for the College Bound. **AR:** Yes

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, by Anne Brashares, Delacorte, 2001. During their first summer apart, four teenage girls, best friends since earliest childhood, stay in touch through a shared pair of secondhand jeans that magically adapts to each of their figures and affects their attitudes to their different summer experiences. **Award:** Winner of 12 state student book awards. **AR:** Yes

The Slightly True Story of Cedar B. Hartley, by Martine Murray, A.A. Levine, 2003. When twelve-year-old Cedar loses her dog, it sets off a chain of events leading her to find a new friend, become an acrobat, and learn some bitter-sweet truths about family, community, and herself. **Award:** 2004 Best Children's Books of the Year. **AR:** Yes

Slot Machine, by Chris Lynch, HarperCollins, 1995. When an overweight thirteen-year-old is sent to camp at a seminary retreat center, he and his two best friends are forced to try out various sports in order to find out where they belong. **Award:** 1996 Best Books for Young Adults. **AR:** Yes

So Long, Snowman, by Tana Reiff, Fearon Pitman, 1979. A high-interest, low-vocabulary book. An eighteen-year-old boy considers his future from a prison cell. **AR:** Yes

Star Wars: a New Hope (manga version), by Hisao Tamaki, Dark Horse Comics, 1998. A manga (Japanese comic style) version of George Lucas's tale.

Stop Those Pants, by Mordecai Gerstein, Harcourt, 1998. A young boy has trouble getting dressed one morning when his clothes decide to play hard to get. **AR:** Yes

Take Away Three, by Tana Reiff, Tandem, 1999. A high-interest, low-vocabulary book. A young married couple work to overcome his traveling, and her roving eye. **AR:** Yes

Then Again, Maybe I Won't, by Judy Blume, Bradbury, 1971. Unable to accept or explain his family's newly acquired wealth, his growing interest in sex, and a friend's shoplifting habit, a thirteen-year-old finds the pains in his stomach getting worse and worse. **Award:** 1976 Books for You: An Annotated Booklist for Senior High. **AR:** Yes

A Time to Kill, by John Grisham, Wynwood, 1989. A white lawyer defends a black father who took revenge on the men who gang-raped his 10 year old daughter. **AR:** Yes

To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee, HarperCollins, 1999. White attorney defends a black man unfairly accused of rape. **Award:** 1961 Pulitzer Prize. **AR:** Yes

Train, by Charles Temple, Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Everyone along the way enjoys the sight and sound of the C & O train and its passengers rolling down the rail.

The True Meaning of Cleavage, by Mariah Fredericks, Atheneum, 2003. When best friends since seventh grade begin their freshman year of high school and one becomes obsessed with a senior boy, the other wonders if their friendship will survive. **Award:** 2003 Recommended Teen Books. **AR:** Yes

TTYL, by Lauren Myracle, Amulet, 2004. Chronicles, in "instant message"

format, the day-to-day experiences, feelings, and plans of three friends as they begin tenth grade. **Award:** 2005 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Readers. **AR:** Yes

Tusk, Tusk, by David McKee, Kane/Miller, 1990, 1978. After the white elephants and the black elephants kill each other off, the grey descendants of those nonfighting elephants who hid during the war emerge, only to eventually find new differences to set them against each other. **AR:** Yes

Upstate, by Kalisha Buckhanon, St. Martin's, 2005. A tale told in letters between a teenage girl and her boyfriend in prison.

What Jamie Saw, by Carolyn Coman, Front Street, 1995. Having fled to a family friend's hillside trailer after his mother's boyfriend tried to throw his baby sister against a wall, a nine-year-old finds himself living an existence full of uncertainty and fear. **Award:** 1996 Newbery Honor book. **AR:** Yes

What They Want, Omar Tyree, Simon & Schuster, 2006. The surprise pregnancy of one of his many girlfriends shows a male model that there is more to life than hedonism.

When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS, by James Cross Giblin and David Frampton, HarperCollins, 1995. The social, political, and economic impact of these three diseases. **Award:** 1995 Notable Books for Children. **AR:** Yes

Willy's Pictures, by Anthony Browne, Candlewick, 2000. Willy the chimp paints pictures that are tributes to art masterpieces, including "American Gothic," "The Birth of Venus," and "Mona Lisa." **Award:** 2002 Adventuring with Books: a Booklist for pre-K - Grade 6. **AR:** Yes

The Witches of Worm, by Zilpha Keatley Snyder, Atheneum, 1972. A lonely twelve-year-old is convinced that the cat she finds is possessed by a witch and is responsible for her

own strange behavior. **Award:** 1973 Newbery Honor book. **AR:** Yes

Wizardology, by Dugald Steer, Candlewick, 2005. Originally discovered in 1588, this remarkable text by history's most respected wizard is revealed to the world for the very first time. Recreated by four artists as a book with movable parts. **Award:** 2006 Children's Choices. **AR:** Yes

Wolf rider, A Tale of Terror, by Avi, Bradbury, 1996. After receiving an apparent crank call from a man claiming to have committed murder, a fifteen-year-old finds his close relationship with his father crumbling as he struggles to make everyone believe him. **Award:** 2005 Middle and Junior High School Catalog. **AR:** Yes

World Geography - Building a Global Perspective, by Celeste Fraser, Prentice-Hall, 1993. Textbook.

Yankee Girl, by Mary Ann Rodman, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004. When her FBI-agent father is transferred to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1964, an eleven-year-old girl wants to be popular but also wants to reach out to the one black girl in her class in a newly-integrated school. **Award:** 2005 Children's Book Award. **AR:** Yes

Zero to sixty: the motorcycle journey of a lifetime, by Gary Paulsen, Harcourt, 1997. An award-winning author's retrospective look at his own past, and how his life developed as it did. **Award:** Nat'l Council of Teachers of English. **AR:** Yes

Zipped, by Laura Mcneal, Knopf, 2003. At the end of their sophomore year in high school, the lives of four teenagers are woven together as they start a tough new job, face family problems, deal with changing friendships, and find love. **Award:** 2004 PEN Center USA Literary Award. **AR:** Yes

Books Banned or Restricted Without Due Process

Book: Assorted manga titles

Action taken: Banned

Reason: Violence

Notes: Principal decided to pull them all when a parent complained about the violence in one of them. Librarian had tried the manga and her kids loved them, but the parent of one student who was having problems at home with his behavior complained that the books encouraged his behavior, so the principal just had them all pulled rather than restrict the one student. The librarian did not try to change the principal's mind.

Book: *Captain Underpants* (series), by Dav Pilkey et al

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Other –

Notes: Principal challenged because "book promotes disrespect for persons in authority." Book now housed in restricted shelves and must have parental permission.

Book: *Counterfeit Son*, by Elaine Marie Alphin

Action taken: Banned

Reason: Sexual content

Notes: Censoring party, assistant superintendent for administrative services, objected to discussion of pedophilia. When librarians complained about the policy not being followed, he called book "slam dunk" that needed no review.

Book: *Friday Night Lights*, by H.G. Bissinger

Action taken: Banned (in two different districts)

Reason: Profanity, Inappropriate language

Notes: (From one district report)

Censoring party is assistant superintendent for administrative services. Objected to "locker room language." When librarians complained about the policy not being followed, he called book "slam dunk" that needed no review.

Book: *From Slave Ship to Freedom Road*, by Julius Lester and Rod Brown

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Other –

Notes: Parent objected as inappropriate for age group.

Book: *GANGS (Voices)* by Clive Gifford

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Other – Gang signs

Notes: The Assistant Principal found them, confiscated the book, and came to librarian to say he wanted it off the shelf. Librarian asked him if he had read the book completely. He said he saw enough pictures to know it was not appropriate. Librarian explained the reconsideration procedures, so he took the book to read it, and gave it to the Principal. At that point the complete process stopped, and a compromise was encouraged. It is now re-cataloged and shelved with the teacher materials to use with the introduction to the *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton literature unit.

Book: *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Other – Inappropriate for PK-5 campus

Notes: Censorship requested by campus teachers; reassigned to Prof. Dev. shelves, but no official challenge.

Book: *Goosebumps* (series), by R.L. Stine

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Other--

Notes: 2nd grade teacher said the series "promotes evil."

Book: *Harry Potter* (series), by J.K. Rowling

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Mysticism

Notes: Community member believes book glorifies witchcraft.

Book: *Life is Funny*, by E.R. Frank

Action taken: Banned

Reason: Sexual content

Notes: "Language made it unsuitable (in the mind of the campus) for middle school students. Sent to a special HS campus with a focus on teen mothers, drop-outs, and special situations. The campus had just gone through a formal process with another title and kept the books. I suspect the formal process requires just too much effort."

Book: *Love and sex: ten stories of truth*, by Michael Cart, ed.

Action taken: Banned

Reason: Sexual content

Notes: President of School Board complained that the book talks about sex and gays. Board President borrowed the book. After many months of requests, librarian was told to report the book as "lost." Book was never paid for, nor replaced. No official challenge.

Book: *Spying on Miss Müller*, by Eve Bunting

Action taken: Banned

Reason: Profanity, Inappropriate language

Notes: Parent objected. Character calls teacher a slut. Book sent to high school campus.

Book: *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*, by Bette Greene

Action taken: Banned

Reason: Profanity, Inappropriate language

Notes: Principal objected to offensive language. Told librarian to remove book from library.

Book: *The Story of Colors=La Historia de los Colores*, by Subcomandante Marcos

Action taken: Retained

Reason: Inappropriate language; Other – Author's reputation

Notes: Book contains the phrase "making love" but no graphic illustrations; author is radical insurgent and leader of the Zapatista Party of National Liberation. Originally challenged by permanent sub; library aide, when she saw it, felt the same way for an additional reason.

Book: *What's the big secret?* by Laurie K. Brown

Action taken: Restricted

Reason: Sexual content

Notes: Involved parent felt that parents should be made aware of checkouts of books on the subject of reproduction and sexuality due to age of students. This book and similar books were moved to a cart right behind the circulation counter (highly visible) and a parent notification form was created and is now in use.

The ACLU of Texas Interviews Newbery Award Winner, Susan Patron

*Susan Patron is a collection development librarian at the Los Angeles Public Library. She won the 2007 Newbery Award - the highest award in children's literature - for **The Higher Power of Lucky**, a story of a gutsy young girl. Lucky overhears the word "scrotum," and wonders about it. Some librarians believed the word made the book inappropriate for children.*

Please tell us about the start of your career as a writer.

As a children's librarian beginning in the 1970's at the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL), I was immersed in folklore and storytelling. This led to *Burgoo Stew*, my contemporary retelling of the Stone Soup folktale, which was published by Richard Jackson at Orchard in the late 1980's. It was followed by three other picture books and a chapter book called *Maybe Yes, Maybe No, Maybe Maybe*.

When you began your career, did you instinctively limit the language you used or the themes you explored out of fear of offending readers?

When I became the Juvenile Materials Collection Development Manager at LAPL, part of my job was to respond to patron complaints and challenges to children's books. I found that people can be offended by such elements as a perception of too much violence in a *Thomas the Tank Engine* book or a

humorous illustration of a can of bug spray in *I Know An Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly*. Almost anything can be offensive to someone. As a public librarian, I validated the parent's prerogative in selecting a more appropriate book for their child, but only for *their* child, and the challenged books were not removed from the shelves.

As a writer, I love the English language, with its immense vocabulary and potential for subtlety and shades of meaning. It can be

a powerful, limber, and effective tool. I try to use it very deliberately, with respect for the intelligence of readers. My picture books contain words such as cantankerous, feisty, and peevish, which may not be in the vocabulary of the average 6 year old. But the words are the tools, and I'd never opt *not* to use the right tool for the job out of fear of offending some readers.

My use of the anatomical word scrotum in *The Higher Power of Lucky* offended some readers, but it's still the appropriate word and I wouldn't change it in hindsight.

When was it that censorship of your work became noticeable to you?

I'm not sure, at this point, whether or to what degree *The Higher Power of Lucky* was actually censored, as distinct from being banned, challenged, or simply not selected for a school or public library collection. The great debate about it began in February of this year.



Were you surprised by the public censure of your work?

I was amazed by the degree of passion evinced in the nationwide discussion over the appropriateness a book for children containing the word scrotum. Many of those who objected to the word freely admitted that they hadn't read the entire book, or even past the first page. This fact appalled me since any book should be evaluated as an entity without taking parts of it out of context.

How has the focus on your books by censors affected your writing?

I banish the voice of the censor when I'm writing. If need be, a debate about the book can take place in a direct and open way later, after publication, but not during the creative process.

Do you feel that those who call for the banning or restriction of your books are generally aware of what is going on in the real lives of children today?

It seems to me that there is a disconnect between the reality of what children experience (either directly in their own lives or through the media) and issues that some adults consider appropriate for children's books. It's as if fiction for kids should avoid subjects that mirror the real world, as if fiction should be "safe." This is implicit (if naïve) recognition of the power of literature, and simultaneously a disservice to and undermining of children. I believe that writers must trust in the intelligence of readers.

Do you feel that the presence of censors has affected the quality of writing for young readers?

No; there are marvelous books available to children and young adults. There are writers, editors, and publishers who aren't afraid to take risks, and this can be seen in our strong and vibrant body of contemporary juvenile fiction.

What has been the impact of censorship on young readers?

Some professionals and parents continue to seek out material that won't provoke questions about or pose challenges to their own beliefs. I believe that many kids will find these books anyway, sometimes through school and sometimes through the networks and alliances that young people form in order to get the information they need. When children perceive that adults are afraid of a book, this can have the effect of making that book all the more desirable.

What advice would you offer to parents who are concerned about what their children are exposed to in books?

Parents *should* be concerned about what their children are exposed to; good for them. They should read the book in question, and if they feel that it isn't appropriate, choose another book. Alternatively, read the book together and be open to questions and discussion. Books don't harm kids; they arm them to think more deeply and to make better choices.

Photo credit: Renee Patron

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