

NATIONAL ██████ ██████ COALITION AGAINST ██████ ██████ CENSORSHIP

KIDS' RIGHT TO READ

February 24, 2023

School Board
Broward County Public Schools
600 S.E. Third Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Dear Members of the School Board,

The National Coalition Against Censorship is an alliance of national nonprofit groups dedicated to protecting freedom of expression, including the rights of K-12 students, teachers and staff. We are writing to urge you to uphold your policy which requires that books that have been challenged will not be removed from school libraries until they are formally reviewed.

According to news reports, John Sullivan, a district spokesman, has said that *Let's Talk About It: The Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human*, will be removed during the review. This would be a violation of the district policy, "Guidelines For Challenged Instructional And Library Materials," which requires that the district "keep the challenged material on the shelf/available during the reconsideration process."

Therefore, *The Teen's Guide to Sex* should remain in the library until the reconsideration process has run its course. If it has been removed already, it should be returned to the shelf.

It is important that books remain available to students because most book challenges fail. Reconsideration committees usually recognize their educational value and vote to retain them. Barring the premature removal of books ensures that students continue to have access to important resources during the often prolonged review process..

The effort to ban *Let's Talk About It* is an example of the problem. Someone has complained that a book that has been written for kids and recommended by educators is "pornography." But others disagree. They argue that there is a difference between pornography, which is intended to sexually arouse, and sex education, which provides students with valuable and necessary information.

The critics are entitled to their opinion, but so are the many parents who support sex education for their teens and want them to have access to accurate information in their school library. Polls show that a majority of parents support sex education.

The Broward school district adopted its reconsideration policy to address this kind of conflict. The review process must be allowed to run its course. In the meantime, students should continue to have access to *Let's Talk About It*.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Authors Guild
Children's and Young Adult Books Committee, PEN America
National Council of Teachers of English
PEN America
Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

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