



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

BOOK REVIEW COMMITTEE – MINUTES

Meeting Type:	Book Review Committee
Meeting Location:	McConnell Center, Room 305
Meeting Date:	Thursday, March 23, 2023
Meeting Time:	4:30 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** Dr. Christine Boston called a meeting of the Book Review Committee to order on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda:**

Charlie Reynolds moved; Matt Mayberry seconded to approve the agenda as presented. **An oral VOTE PASSED 4/0.**

3. **Roll Call Attendance:** Present were Christine Boston, Peter Driscoll, Kristin Whitworth, Siobhan Mehalek, Eric Schlapak, Matthew Cox, Matt Mayberry, Charles Reynolds, and Susan Spence. Steve Coco was excused.

4. **Election of Chairperson:**

Charlie Reynolds moved; Matthew Cox seconded to nominate Matt Mayberry as Chairperson of the Book Review Committee. **An oral VOTE PASSED 4/0.**

5. **Adoption of Procedural Rules:**

a. **Robert's Rules (12th ed)**

Following discussions surrounding the procedural rules, the committee unanimously agreed to follow Robert's Rules.

b. **Citizens Forum Adoption**

The committee unanimously agreed to adopt Citizens Forum.

c. **Citizens Forum Limitations on Speakers and Time**

Following discussions surrounding Citizens Forum, the committee agreed unanimously that any resident or business owner of the City of Dover, and/or residents of sending school districts shall have the opportunity to speak during Citizens Forum. Citizen's will be required to state their name and address, and if identifying themselves as a character witness, must provide their qualifications. Statements shall be limited to three (3) minutes and will be restricted to items on the agenda.

The committee unanimously agreed citizen's will not be allowed to display posters and/or signs or speak disrespectfully.

6. **Citizens Forum:**

Jodi Langellotti, 453 Sixth Street – Ms. Langellotti expressed she is a parent in the District, as well as a Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid Trainer, and Adverse Childhood Experiences Master Trainer. She requests future meetings begin with a later start time to allow for a higher attendance rate. She spoke in favor of the book remaining in the schools' libraries as the subject matter is relevant to what youth are experiencing in the world today.



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7. Hearing on Request for Reconsideration of *Tricks*, by Ellen Hopkins:

a. Presentation by Person Seeking Reconsideration (duration to be determined by committee)

Sally Staude, Sierra Hill Drive. Ms. Staude requests the book *Tricks*, by Ellen Hopkins be removed from the school library and online database SORA. She discussed excerpts she has read from the book which were provided by "Book Looks", finding them inappropriate for minors as they discuss rape, violence, molestation, adult and child prostitution, and drug use. She expresses children are not capable of putting the book's topics into a proper perspective as adults are able to. She mentioned the book's five sections, saying "they supposedly come together at the end", and "has heard the ending of the book is good", but reiterates the content does not belong in a school library with a young audience.

Ms. Staude includes that children's exposure to these sexual and violent books does not represent what a healthy relationship looks like.

She requests the District follow the City of Dover's City Ordinance 41 relating to adult oriented establishments.

b. Presentation by School District Staff

Dover High School Principal Peter Driscoll reviewed how District materials are selected, outlining School Board Policies KEC-Reconsideration of Instructional Materials, and IJ-Instructional Materials.

Dover High School Librarian, Kristen Whitworth reviewed how library materials are selected and the check-out process for library books, which include one-on-one discussions with students.

Dover High School teacher Eric Schlapak discussed the connections he sees his students make with books and the conversations they spark about controversial topics.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Christine Boston provided data from the District's DCYF reports and Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results. Results from ACES shows that one in five students have been subject to an adverse event throughout their childhood.

Co-Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA) Director Siobhan Mehalek provided literary reviews of the book. She included they all state the book provides literary value for students.

c. Open Inquiry Members

Committee members asked clarifying questions to staff members on the committee. One specific question was "After reading the book in its entirety, would you allow your fourteen-year-old child to read it?" To which staff responded unanimously they would allow it, although, they would have discussions with their child.

The committee asked Sally Staude if she read the book in its entirety, to which she responded she had not.



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d. Close Hearing

Matt Mayberry closed the inquiry and hearing.

8. Deliberation:

Dr. Boston informed the committee they are to make a recommendation to the Superintendent to either 1) Maintain the book as is, 2) Move the book to a reserved shelf, or 3) Remove the book.

Committee members deliberated.

9. Disposition on Merits:

a. Determine Recommended Disposition

The committee unanimously agreed to maintain the book as is.

Matthew Cox moved; Charlie Reynolds seconded to recommend to the Superintendent that the book remain as is and no action be taken. **An oral VOTE PASSED 4/0.**

b. Determine Written Communication of Recommended Disposition

Dr. Boston requested a written recommendation be submitted to the Superintendent, to which Matt Mayberry agreed he would submit the recommendation on behalf of the committee.

10. Adjourn

Charlie Reynolds moved; Matthew Cox seconded adjourning the meeting at 6:12 PM. **An oral VOTE PASSED 4/0.**