

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 3:55 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter (JHowerter@cde.ca.gov)
Subject: FW: Book choices

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2008 8:55 AM
To: Maxine Wheeler
Cc: Sharon Johnson
Subject: RE: Book choices

Maxine,

Could look at my answers to these questions and add/delete/edit them? I will then send them all to the inquirer and ask him/her to read all responses again since they may have changed. The different colors kind of show the chronology of the questions. I would answer some and s/he would ask more.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [<mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2008 9:07 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

I represent no one. I am simply a citizen who would like to know more about our education system.

I look forward to the additional information.

Thank you.

From: Geri Mohler [<mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2008 12:22 PM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

I am new to this process so I am researching a few things before I reply. In the meantime, I have a question for you: Can you tell me why you are interested in this process and if you represent anyone else? It will help me with the details of my answers.

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California Department of Education
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Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [<mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 2:50 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

[A few more questions in blue...](#)

From: Geri Mohler [<mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov>]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 11:16 AM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

My new answers are in red below. Please let me know if you have further questions.

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Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
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Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [<mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 10:45 AM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

[Thank you for your reply. I appreciate the information.](#)

[I have some follow up questions below for further clarification.](#)

From: Geri Mohler [<mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov>]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 8:15 AM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [<mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Friday, November 07, 2008 4:00 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: Book choices

Hello,

I have a few questions that hopefully you can help with regarding K-12 books:

Thank you for your interest in the K-12 Recommended Literature List.

1. Can you please tell me where I can see the list of books from which teachers can choose?

Here is a web site that has a searchable database of over 2000 annotated titles:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/>

2. Does the state or each district make that list?

The CDE directs the update of the list periodically. A committee of teachers and librarians read and recommend the books and add them to the list. Typically, two people have to recommend a book for it to be placed.

Does the public have any say about what books are on the list?

Once a book is on the list, it is rarely removed. Our policy is that since it is a recommended list only, districts are free to make decisions about which books are appropriate for their clientele.

Does the public have a say in getting a book on the list?

The public can request a Literature List input form and recommend any title.

Does the committee have the final say?

At this point, yes.

How do teachers and librarians get on the committee?

Teachers and librarians who have been on a literature list update in the past are asked to apply and they often recommend others. A teacher or librarian can also request an application. We do not, however, have a way currently to inform ALL qualified people that we are taking applications.

Are there any special qualifications for teachers and librarians to be on the list?

They should be very knowledgeable about quality literature, book publisher lists, out of print sources, and be willing to spend a lot of their own time with no remuneration.

How would they request an application?

They can contact me.

Are there typically more people interested in being on the committee than there are open positions?

Yes.

Who selects the committee members and what is the criteria?

CDE staff select the members with the aid of local librarians/teachers. We also ask for recommendations from various organizations such as the California Reading Association, the California Association of Teachers of English, the California Teachers Association, the California School Librarians Association, etc.

What is this committee called?

Nothing formal has been designated. The literature list update committee is what I refer to.

Is being on the committee a paid or volunteer position?

Volunteer.

How long are members on the committee?

They usually are on the committee for one school year, depending on how long it takes to complete the update. Many return to be on other committees such as on content area lists (social studies, science, etc.).

Can any 2 people recommend a book?

Any person can endorse a book by sending in a Lit List Input Form but the final approval goes to the committee members.

3. What is the process and criteria for getting a book on the list?

We have a book input form (attached) that authors, teachers, the general public can fill out. The selection committee will recommend that book after 2 others have read and approved it. A book can be placed on the list if it is considered high quality literature of lasting value. We have several standard caveats for books that may have mature content, etc. Teacher resource materials are typically not selected for the list, as it is reserved for literature.

What are the standard caveats for books?

I discovered we do not have a list of standard caveats. They are developed as needed and changed or entered as needed. For instance, if a particular book did not have a caveat and someone questions the content, we may develop something specific to that book so that users are aware.

Who sets those caveats?

The committee, in collaboration with CDE consultants. We also look at other states' lists to see how their caveats read.

4. Can teachers use materials (books, pamphlets, etc) in the classroom that are not on the approved list?

Teachers are not required by the state to use or not use books on the list. That is a district decision. The literature list is simply recommended or suggested. There are districts that will not allow anything in their schools that is not on the list. We do not agree with this type of requirement because we cannot update the list regularly enough. It has been 4 years since the last update; we were scheduled for an update this year but it is likely not to happen due to budget concerns.

How can I find out what the policies of each district are?

I don't know of any way except to contact them directly.

If a district requires the use of books that are on the list, how does that affect the use of other teaching materials that can be used in the classroom?

I do not know how that works in districts. Since we do not have a hand in this, we do not really have any information about how it is done or what the repercussions are. We can only recommend that teachers/parents, etc., contact their district if they have any problems with district policies.

So then could a district choose not to use any books on the list and instead use whatever material they wanted?

Basically, yes. Districts are supposed to use the adopted curricula but most other materials are district level decisions.

If you have any other questions or would like to recommend a book for the list, please do not hesitate to contact me or send an input form.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
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California Department of Education
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Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:21 PM
To: Laurie Duresky
Subject: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet
Attachments: bulk caveat removal.xlsx

Hi Laurie,

Thanks so much for helping me with this! It looks like it does have the title ID, so hopefully that helps out a lot! Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this. I really appreciate it!

Thanks again,
Jennifer

From: [Jennifer Howerter](#)
To: [Roxane Fidler](#); [Jennifer Moreno](#)
Subject: caveat discussion

EDIT: Sorry to move this!! I thought I'd have more time to prepare materials for this meeting, but that bill analysis threw a wrench into things. I'll be ready by this new time, though. Let me know if this conflicts with anything you have. :)

Hello ladies!

Let's meet to discuss how we can tackle the removal of the caveats together. I think if we all put in our effort, it can be done in no time. We can use this meeting to develop a timeline and discuss roles and responsibilities.

Let me know if you have any questions!

Thanks,
Jenn

From: [Jennifer Howerter](#)
To: [Jennifer Moreno](#); [Roxane Fidler](#)
Subject: caveat removal checkin

Hello!

I'm hoping by this date you will have had some time to get in the excel spreadsheet and start to remove caveat language. Let's touch base and make sure we're all on the same page. :)

Thanks,
Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 1:45 PM
To: Jennifer Moreno; Roxane Fidler
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: Caveat Removal Process

Hello ladies,

Thanks so much for helping me with this project. I could NOT get it done without you!!

You'll find the process document and the excel spreadsheet [here](#). Please let me know if you have any questions as you start working through the process. It all makes sense in my head, but it might not have translated properly. ☺ So, don't hesitate to ask for clarification!

Again, thank you! Let's connect next week after we've all had a bit of a chance to do some titles and go over any challenges/changes we might need to make.

Best,
Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 1:45 PM
To: Jennifer Moreno; Roxane Fidler
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: Caveat Removal Process

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Thanks so much for helping me with this project. I could NOT get it done without you!!

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Again, thank you! Let's connect next week after we've all had a bit of a chance to do some titles and go over any challenges/changes we might need to make.

Best,
Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:15 PM
To: Jennifer Moreno; Roxane Fidler
Subject: caveat update

Importance: High

Hi ladies,

TSD is going to update the database based on our work in that Excel file. So please refrain from doing anything else in it right now, thanks!

-Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 8:17 AM
To: Julian Cuevas
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: Caveats removed!

Importance: High

Hi Julian,

Just wanted to let you know that we were able to remove all of the caveats we found. We're continuing to go through the database to see if there is any other, non-standard language that serves as a warning, but the two main statements that Conejo was using are now gone. ☺

Let me know if you have any questions!

Best,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Doodle <mailer@doodle.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 5:21 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Doodle: "Call for the Literature List Committee" Update

Shelley Chappell just participated.

Doodle

Hi Jennifer Howerter,

Shelley Chappell just participated in the Doodle poll Call for the Literature List Committee.

[Go to your poll](#)

[Choose final option](#)



Has everyone participated already?

Once you've found an option that works for your event, make sure to choose the final option and inform everyone about it.

Send an online invitation.

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Doodle

Doodle AG, Werdstrasse 21, 8021 Zürich

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 11:39 AM
To: Roxane Fidler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: emails I found re: literature list
Attachments: FW: 2008-3503 School Curriculum; FW: The Recommended Reading List; FW: Book choices; FW: Hello,; FW: Book Evaluations; FW: Book choices; FW: Huck Finn

Hi ladies,

Here are the emails I mentioned yesterday, just in case you're interested.

-Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 3:56 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: FW: 2008-3503 School Curriculum
Attachments: LitList Input Form.doc

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2008 1:01 PM
To: Bobby Roy <BRoy@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: 2008-3503 School Curriculum

Bobby,

I looked the book up online and did find the F- word in one of the selections provided. This is not all that uncommon, however, and would likely exclude many books if we were that restrictive.

The best thing to tell this person is that every book is read and approved by at least two educators. The Recommended Literature list selections are determined by their content and their value as literature. This particular selection was written by real adults as well as youths and their particular language style was left intact. One of the purposes of the list is to provide a resource for parents and teachers but all books should be scrutinized for inappropriate content based on local and personal tastes and mores. (Can't figure out how to put the accent on the e.) Parents have the prerogative to opt out of any selection assigned.

If this teacher would like the next update to include some kind of caution about inappropriate language for this book, s/he can fill out the form attached and return it to me. The cautionary statement could be placed in the "annotation" or the "notes" sections and the person requesting this addition should put his/her name in the endorsement field. This will not guarantee the addition of the warning but it is a means by which to attempt it.

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California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
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Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: Bobby Roy [<mailto:BRoy@cde.ca.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2008 12:24 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: 2008-3503 School Curriculum

Hello Geri,

The inquiry below is regarding a book on the Recommended Literature List titled, Bamboo Among the Oaks. I looked it up and saw no language warnings, although the writer of the inquiry alleges that there is foul language in the book. How would an individual have that included on the annotation? Please advise.

Thank you,

Bobby G. Roy

The original inquiry follows: I am a teacher, and I am looking to incorporate Hmong literature into our curriculum. I just read a book that is on the Recommended Reading list. It is called Bamboo Among the Oaks by Mai Neng Moua. Did anyone read this book before placing it on the list? The F-bomb is dropped several, several times in this book. It is laced with numerous other choice words, as well. My son is 15, and if were to come home with this book, I would blow a gasket. I can't believe this is on the "recommended" list.

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 3:56 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter (JHowerter@cde.ca.gov)
Subject: FW: Book choices

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 10:45 AM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

Thank you for your reply. I appreciate the information.

I have some follow up questions below for further clarification.

From: Geri Mohler [mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 8:15 AM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, November 07, 2008 4:00 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: Book choices

Hello,

I have a few questions that hopefully you can help with regarding K-12 books:

Thank you for your interest in the K-12 Recommended Literature List.

1. Can you please tell me where I can see the list of books from which teachers can choose?

Here is a web site that has a searchable database of over 2000 annotated titles:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/>

2. Does the state or each district make that list?

The CDE directs the update of the list periodically. A committee of teachers and librarians read and recommend the books and add them to the list. Typically, two people have to recommend a book for it to be placed. Does the public have any say about what books are on the list?

Does the committee have the final say?

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What are the standard caveats for books?

Who sets those caveats?

4. Can teachers use materials (books, pamphlets, etc) in the classroom that are not on the approved list?

Teachers are not required by the state to use or not use books on the list. That is a district decision. The literature list is simply recommended or suggested. There are districts that will not allow anything in their schools that is not on the list. We do not agree with this type of requirement because we cannot update the list regularly enough. It has been 4 years since the last update; we were scheduled for an update this year but it is likely not to happen due to budget concerns.

How can I find out what the policies of each district are?

If a district requires the use of books that are on the list, how does that affect the use of other teaching materials that can be used in the classroom?

If you have any other questions or would like to recommend a book for the list, please do not hesitate to contact me or send an input form.

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 3:55 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter (JHowerter@cde.ca.gov)
Subject: FW: Book Evaluations

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2009 1:37 PM
To: Finch, Pat B (US SSA)
Cc: Sharon Johnson ; Maxine Wheeler ; Kristen Cruz
Subject: RE: Book Evaluations

Pat,

I had several discussions and input from others yesterday in order to draft this reply to you. First of all, I appreciate your contacting me regarding your concerns and becoming involved in your child's education. It is obvious that you are not a "whiner" but a thoughtful parent who wants the best for his children.

The book you refer to is on our list and, unfortunately, did not have the proper annotation; more specifically, a caution to parents and educators regarding the content of the novel. I am happy to tell you that, due to your inquiry and concern, the annotation now reads: "[This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.](#)" You may wish to bring this to the attention of your district as well as your child's teacher.

As for Question #1, we agree that the grade span of 9-12 is huge and there should be more direction as to which end of this span a particular selection might be more appropriate (or inappropriate). In fact, we are working on providing this information for books that contain caveats such as those above.

A letter from State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, explains that,

"In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on these lists does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students. Many of the literature selections available...contain material that can be provocative or controversial.... Despite this, any teacher could select an alternative literature selection from the many choices provided...if they felt (a) particular book was inappropriate for use in their classroom. They could also select (an) alternative literature selection if they felt that they could not adequately provide students with the context that is necessary when exposing children to any piece of literature."

I refer you to "Appendix C: District Policies on Book Selection" that can be found in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* as well as on the literature list web page:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/litrlppolicies.asp> . You can refer to this if you choose to get further involved in your district's policies on book selections and/or to establish a policy that is more appropriate than your district's current one. The following bulleted item from Appendix C may be of interest and addresses, somewhat, your Questions #2, #3 and #4:

"Do teachers prepare a brief rationale justifying the use of any literary work in class? The rationale would answer four questions: 1) Why would you want to use this work with this class at this time? 2) How do you believe this work will meet your objectives? 3) If problems of style, texture, tone, and theme exist for students in reading this work, how will you address those problems? 4) Assuming that the objectives are met, how will students benefit from having read and discussed this work?"

I would suggest that you talk directly with the teacher who assigned the book to determine what kinds of activities were prepared/presented in conjunction with the book. Also, it is entirely within your rights to request that your child be given an alternative selection if you do not wish to have him or her participate in what has been selected.

I hope this helps you and answers your questions. If you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: Finch, Pat B (US SSA) [mailto:pat.finch@baesystems.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 12:35 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book Evaluations

Hi Geri,

Yes, I hope so. I'm little perplexed by one of the choices on the list and I'm not sure who to address my questions and concerns to. It's always hard to interpret email so let me say up front that the tone is intended to be respectful and questioning, not accusatory.

My 15 yr-old daughter was required to read *Novel with No Name* by Duong Thu Huong for her 10th-grade English class. The book contains some very harsh language, violent sexually-explicit passages and descriptive incidents of bestiality. These references are not in direct relation to the war's violence. They are recollections of prior village life by the Vietnamese characters.

While this book may be age-appropriate for those students who are nearly adults, I'm not comfortable with my 15 yr-old daughter being required to read it. She doesn't understand why she was required to read this book.

I've contacted the school assistant principle to ask why this book was chosen and why I wasn't made aware of the content before it was assigned to my daughter for reading. She told me I'm the only parent who has ever "complained" about it. She told me it's on the State's recommended reading list. She also told me there no requirement to notify parents. For someone who's always stood by the teachers when my kids have complained about them (the lower the letter grade the more the kids complain about the teacher's alleged shortcomings), I feel as though I've suddenly been thrust into a fight against a huge and hostile bureaucracy the first time I've questioned it's authority to expose my children to certain subjects.

I realize there are parents who expose their children to much worse and so they may not have the same problems I have with this. This still seems to go beyond what a reasonable person would expect the school system to require the students to read at the high school level. I'd bet if most parents knew what was in this book they'd have questions too. But who has time to read all of their kids' textbooks? I have volunteered to be one of the readers/approvers for any new books being included in the curriculum. I also intend to ask my children's teachers about any questionable content in any of the books assigned. I hope that will keep this from reoccurring.

However, there are some things I'd like to understand better:

1. Can you address the methods and/or Dept of Education guidelines used for selecting books in an age-appropriate manner? There's a big difference in the maturity level of a student who's 14 yrs old and a student who's 17/18 yrs old yet this book is approved for 9th through 12th grades.
2. Why was this particular book deemed necessary and useful by the State for class instruction at the 10th grade level despite its very adult content? It's not the widely-recognized or highly-regarded novel about war by a foreign author (and former adversary of the U.S.) as is *All Quiet on the Western Front* which my daughter has already read this year.
3. Why wouldn't teachers be advised to address these questionable sections of the book in the same manner they would address racist language in a novel like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a means to provide the kids with relevant contextual information. After reading it, I myself am left wondering if this type of language, violence and sexual practices are or were accepted in Vietnamese or South East Asian cultures. I would think most of the kids would have the same questions. My daughter asked me but I don't know enough about it to intelligently discuss it. Are teachers restricted by the state from discussing these topics or could it just be simply a personal issue?
4. What are the State-established notification methods to parents when their children are required to read a book, watch a video, or take part in any activity which contains excessive foul language (for sake of argument we could say this would be any language which, if uttered by either staff or student at school, would result in disciplinary action being taken), violent sexually-explicit activity, bestiality or pornography? I don't see any caveats on the web site for this book (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/r/ll/ap/details.asp?id=1876>) and the school never notified me there was any questionable content. The school is reluctant to send out notifications because there's always a parent who would be unreasonable. My daughter's high school mentioned they'd never show an R-rated movie on campus but if the dialogue in this book were in a movie it would certainly be rated R. Are there different standards for spoken word and written word in the California education system? Not to be crude but let me paraphrase from the book to illustrate my point. What is the difference between being forced to listen to the words "... he was f-ing a cow" or "... shut up or next time it will be your mouth that is f-ed" in class and being forced to read them in class?

I've never been accused of being goody-two-shoes or a prude. I consider myself a progressive parent and have never had a problem discussing any sexual, violent, social or political issues with any of my children. I've read and said worse than what is found in this book. That said... I'm still shocked at the content of the book given the intended audience.

If I should discuss this with someone else please let me know. I really appreciate any help you can give me with this.

Thanks,
Pat

From: Geri Mohler [mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 10:22 AM
To: Finch, Pat B (US SSA)
Subject: RE: Book Evaluations

Pat,

I am currently the consultant in charge of the K-12 Recommended Literature List. The books on this list are carefully read and annotated by dedicated volunteer professionals who are either librarians or classrooms teachers for a particular grade span. Each book must be approved by at least two people. We have caveats for many books to caution the parent/teacher/student about content that may be for more mature readers or of a controversial nature. Is there a particular selection that you have questions about?

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
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California Department of Education
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Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone (916) 322-6638

Fax (916) 323-2928

gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: Finch, Pat B (US SSA) [mailto:pat.finch@baesystems.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 10:06 AM

To: Geri Mohler

Subject: Book Evaluations

Hi Geri,

I'm a parent of a high school sophomore. I have a question about how books on the recommended reading list are evaluated for age-appropriate content. Is there someone at the Dept of Education who deals with this subject?

Thanks,

Pat

Patrick Finch

Systems Engineer

BAE Systems

10920 Technology Place

Mail Zone 6102U

San Diego, CA 92127-1874

(858) 675-3867

pat.finch@baesystems.com

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 3:56 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter (JHowerter@cde.ca.gov)
Subject: FW: Hello,

-----Original Message-----

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2009 3:21 PM
To: Antonia Slagle <antonia-slagle@sac-city.k12.ca.us>
Subject: RE: Hello,

The caveat is actually from CDE, not the author. When the selection panel reads a book, they note whether it requires a cautionary or explanatory caveat. There are several standards caveats but some books have had caveats added that are specific to the book.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Antonia Slagle [mailto:antonia-slagle@sac-city.k12.ca.us]
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2009 2:03 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Hello,

Thanks so much for your quick response and the author's caveat...that's why we have chosen it for an older (high school junior) audience...

Best,
Antonia Slagle

>>> Geri Mohler <GMohler@cde.ca.gov> 05/08/09 11:39 AM >>>

Antonia,

Our newest version of the K-12 Recommended Literature List does include the title--The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie. We have not formally updated the list since 2004, but we are soon coming out with a new printed version and an online searchable version with new titles that are award winners. Not all award winners make it on the list but this Sherman Alexie book did with the following caveat: "Middle grades readers should be aware that the book includes some strong language. This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

If you would like me to fax the page this title appears on, I would be happy to do so.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
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Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov<mailto:gmohler@cde.ca.gov>

From: Antonia Slagle [mailto:Antonia-Slagle@sac-city.k12.ca.us]
Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2009 10:42 AM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: Hello,

Hello,

I have looked through the California recommended reading list and cannot find Sherman Alexie anywhere. Is it because he's not on the list, or I am just looking in the wrong place? We would like to teach his recent fiction, which won the National Book Award this year.

Thanks,
Antonia Slagle
Teacher, West Campus High School
Sacramento

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 3:55 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: FW: Huck Finn
Attachments: SCS for Jack; Jill Rice3.vcf

From: Jill Rice
Sent: Friday, December 28, 2007 12:59 PM
To: Geri Mohler <GMohler@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Phil Lafontaine <PLafonta@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Huck Finn

Attached is a letter that Jack sent out after the last controversial book fiasco. It seems quite relevant and could easily be cut and pasted into a letter to fit Huck Finn.

Barbara suggested, wisely I think, that we refrain from developing a process for complaints and instead post language on each of the lit lists that the CDE does not pull books from the list. Borrowing language from the attached letter such notice to the public could read:

[Many of the literature selections available on the CDE's Recommended Literature lists contain material that can be provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature can stimulate debate and disagreement about important issues. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on these lists does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento.](#)

Let me know if there is anything else I can do.
-Jill

Jill N. Rice
Education Programs Consultant
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 323-5472
jrice@cde.ca.gov

From: [Jennifer Howerter](#) on behalf of [Aileen Allison-Zarea](#)
To: [Maxine Wheeler](#); [Roxane Fidler](#); [Jennifer Howerter](#)
Subject: FW: Literature List Call Prep

Hi Maxine – if you can make this meeting just to provide us some history and context in our discussions before we talk to the committee about the criteria for caveats, that would be great! Thanks!

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:27 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler; Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Literature List Call Prep
When: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 9:00 AM-9:30 AM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada).
Where: Napa or 4307

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 8:26 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: FW: Question about annotations
Attachments: Re: Question about annotations

I'm not sure how to answer this because I don't have the history. Roxane didn't really either. Can you help? Thanks!!!!

From: Betsy Connolly [mailto:dvmmum@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2017 4:03 PM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: Re: Question about annotations

Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Are all books published or cataloged without the Young Adult designation given that caveat? Does the review committee make the decision at the time of addition? If a book is not so annotated, is it a YA selection or has it been reviewed by a committee to ensure that it is not written for mature readers or are books from the pre-online version not so annotated?

Regards, Betsy Connolly

On Thu, Nov 9, 2017 at 3:37 PM, LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Good morning Ms. Connolly,

Thank you for your e-mail.

The caveat helps inform adults and youth that a title contains mature themes. To my knowledge the caveat was developed in the 1990's when the literature list moved from its print version to becoming an online resource.

The caveat is meant as a tool to assist in selecting literature not to censure it.

Also, the material included in the literature list is recommended not required. Local districts may create a process that engages educators and the community in selecting quality literature for classroom reading.

The literature list provides resources for districts that are reviewing, updating, or crafting a new literature selection policy: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/litrlppolicies.asp>.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler

Education Programs Consultant

California Department of Education

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

[1430 N Street, Room 4309](#)

[Sacramento, CA 95814](#)

Phone: [916-323-4861](tel:916-323-4861)

Fax: [916-323-2838](tel:916-323-2838)

E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov

From: Betsy Connolly [mailto:dvmum@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, November 08, 2017 3:22 PM

To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Question about annotations

It has been called to our attention that 223 books in the Recommended Literature List contain the annotation *This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.* Could you please clarify the source of this annotation language. I'm on a school board where a member wants all of these books flagged in teacher outlines so that parents are aware of potentially offensive content.

If this phrase is added by the review committee under certain specific circumstances or at the behest of a particular individual, it would be helpful to know what those circumstances are.

Regards,

Betsy Connolly

Board Member

Conejo Valley Unified School District

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 4:18 PM
To: 'shelley.chappell@tcoe.org'
Subject: FW: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Shelley,

I'm hoping this email is current I think I had an old one and was getting it bounced back to me. Please read the emails below I'm looking for input from the 2016 committee on this issue. Thanks so much!

Best,
Jennifer

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 3:57 PM
To: 'kbowen@ucdavis.edu'; 'schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us'; 'kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com'; 'jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net'; 'jligamari@gmail.com'; 'alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us'; 'kmacmillan@nvusd.org'; 'jritter@mvschools.org'
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hello everyone!

This issue is slowly becoming more urgent, so I think a conference call is best for us to all discuss it and come to a conclusion. I know next week is a holiday week, but I'm really hoping you are available. Please read my email below for the questions I have and the proposal I've made.

Fill out this Doodle poll ASAP so that I can schedule something! <https://doodle.com/poll/cbf4d5eby9typd45> I really appreciate you all taking time out of your busy schedules to help me with this. ☺ I am eager to talk with you!

Best,
Jennifer

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:46 PM
To: 'kbowen@ucdavis.edu' <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>; 'schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us' <schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us>; 'kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com' <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>; 'jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net' <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>; 'jligamari@gmail.com' <jligamari@gmail.com>; 'alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us' <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>; 'kmacmillan@nvusd.org' <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>; 'jritter@mvschools.org' <jritter@mvschools.org>
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Importance: High

Dear committee members,

I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

Background

Parents in a district in California are currently concerned about the appropriateness of some of the books that are listed on the Recommended Literature List. After initially wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with the caveat that is included in some of the entries in the List: ♦ This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child. ♦

They want a note published in all syllabi at the district that include texts in the List that have that caveat, although the CDE would not be involved in any local decision such as this. The note would state: ♦ Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it. ♦

Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of ♦ soft censorship, ♦ which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

Questions

Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

- Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Is it the entire committee? Only the members that suggested and then approved the book for inclusion?
- What are the criteria for adding that caveat to a book? Are those criteria applied universally, including to books that were added before the caveat was created? Are all books published or cataloged with/without the Young Adult designation given/not given that caveat?

Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. 😊 ♦ I'm not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this ♦ what is considered ♦ mature ♦? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the ♦ maturity ♦ of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn't let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. 😊 Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 11:11 AM
To: Julian Cuevas
Cc: Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: FW: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hello Julian,

Please see the inquiry below, which Roxane forwarded to you last Friday. We would be happy to join you in this phone conversation, but it would be helpful to know the specifics of his questions in advance.

Perhaps we could have a conversation prior to the call to provide you with additional background information. Your guidance on how to approach this inquiry would be much appreciated!

Aileen Allison-Zarea
Administrator

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
Teaching and Learning Support Branch
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Telephone: 916-319-0587
Fax: 916-323-2928
Email: aallisonzarea@cde.ca.gov

From: Lee, Alex [<mailto:Alex.Lee@sen.ca.gov>]
Sent: Friday, December 8, 2017 11:31 AM
To: Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Questions regarding Reading List Annotations

Hi Roxane,

I'm a legislative aide with the office of Senator Henry Stern. Last month, Betsy Connolly (a CVUSD board member) contacted you via the LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov address regarding the annotations for the recommended literature list. I wanted to follow up on this inquiry and wanted to ask you some questions regarding the annotations.

Can we set up a time to call today or Monday? Or if available please give me a call back when available. Thank you!

Best,

Alex Lee

Office of Senator Henry Stern
State Capitol, Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 651-4027
Fax: (916) 651-4927

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 12:01 PM
To: Maxine Wheeler
Subject: FW: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Maxine,

Do you have any insight into the language that we're talking about below? Any history you have on this is welcome! Thanks!!

-Jenn

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:55 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Fw: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Jennifer,

Can you please connect with Maxine to try to get the language Barbara is requesting?

Thanks!

Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM
To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

Maxine worked with the committee that developed the online list and the database tool in the late 1990's. She can provide insight about the crafting of the caveat language by the CDE staff and the literature list committee.

Roxane

From: Barbara Murchison
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Please bring some recommended disclaimer language options to our meeting tomorrow afternoon. It may be worth checking in with Maxine or Anie as they are likely to be familiar with how this is handled on other Web pages.

Thanks,
Barbara

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM

To: Barbara Murchison

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler

Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

I am hoping to get your input on an issue that Jennifer brought to my attention this week regarding the annotation placed on some titles within the CDE Recommended Literature List. On certain titles, there is a sentence indicating that the title may contain mature themes and that caution should be used...Jennifer can provide you with the exact language.

Anyway, I'd like to share the news article in the following link that refers to the Literature List, and this issue in particular: <https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

Roxane has been overseeing the literature list and committee work for several years, but Jennifer is assisting with various tasks. Since Roxane is on vacation this week, Jennifer has fielded a few calls and emails regarding this issue and brought it to my attention. We decided to reach out to the last update committee yesterday to determine how the determination was made to put this "warning" on some titles and how mature content etc. are determined. We realize that judging maturity of content can vary widely and is subjective, so we would like to know if a criteria was used.

Jennifer proposed we simply remove the "warning" on specific titles and replace with a more generic disclaimer for all titles. We can even link into reputable review sites. We are not comfortable at this point with stakeholders using CDE statements to develop their policies that could be perceived as censorship.

We would like to meet with you, but wanted to give you a heads up on this week's rapid happenings. We think that we may need to address this quickly.

Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 4:27 PM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank; Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler; Kate MacMillan; shelley.chappell@tcoe.org
Subject: Idea for language and agenda for tomorrow
Importance: High

Hi ladies,

Here is my idea for the language we might put on the Recommended Literature List landing page. This would serve the purpose of the caveat – to remind people to read a book before teaching it – without putting subjective labels on titles.

“The California Department of Education agrees with the American Library Association in its affirmation of the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. The needs and interests of each user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis.”

The language is basically from the ALA – I figured they were the resident experts on the issue of academic freedom. ☺ But I know it can definitely be revised and made even better. I hope that we can talk about what that language might be tomorrow. Here’s the agenda I have in mind:

- Quick summary of issue at Conejo Valley and background information that I found on the caveats
- Your experiences with the caveat and any information you have on the criteria that was used in adding it to specific titles
- Discussion of the proposal to remove the language and revisions to the draft statement above
- Anything else!

I’m excited to talk to you tomorrow! Let me know if you have any questions!

Best,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Scott Roark
Sent: Friday, March 2, 2018 8:52 AM
To: Stephanie Gregson
Cc: Bill Ainsworth; Robert Oakes; Tom Adams
Subject: Media Inquiry - Annotations for Mature Content - Thousand Oaks Acorn

Hi Stephanie,

I received an inquiry from Dawn Megli-Thuna, a reporter with the Thousand Oaks Acorn. She is doing a story on mature content and the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

Dawn has contacted us before regarding CVUSD. On November 13 of last year, she inquired about CDE policy regarding parental consent for books with an annotation that flags them as having mature content. Our response was that we have no policy and it's a district level decision.

Now, Dawn is stating that it appears CDE has removed annotations from the recommended literature list that identified certain titles, like the Bluest Eye, as having mature content. She wants to confirm those annotations were removed and if so, what was the reasoning behind the removal.

Scott

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Scott Roark
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 11:36 AM
To: Stephanie Gregson
Cc: Tom Adams; Bill Ainsworth; Robert Oakes
Subject: Media Inquiry - Policy on Instructional Materials with Mature Content

Hi Stephanie,

I received an inquiry from a reporter in Thousand Oaks. They are covering the issues at Conejo Unified School District.

As you probably are aware, Conejo USD has been dealing with policies allowing students to opt out of reading literary works they or their parents find offensive:

<http://www.vcstar.com/story/news/education/2017/11/09/tempers-flare-parents-teachers-students-and-community-members-discuss-opt-out-policy-conejo-valley-u/835936001/>

The reporter's question is this: some novels have been annotated by the CDE as having mature content. Did the CDE intend for books with this annotation to require a parent signature before they can be assigned?

I'm assuming CDE does not have a policy and that this is a district-level decision. However, I wanted to be sure.

I'm not finding information on our site. I have been looking at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/imfrpfaq1.asp>

Scott

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Mosetta Peppers
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 8:42 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Vicki Quinlan
Subject: PLSD # 5364 / CTS #2017- 08823: Proposal for the Removal of Caveats from the Recommended Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hello Jennifer,

FYI

Status Update: Approved by Branch
*Returning package to PLI - Vicki

Thank You



Mosetta Peppers

Executive Secretary | Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 94814
Direct | (916) 324-8102
MPeppers@cde.ca.gov
Office | (916) 323-6440 | Fax (916) 323-2807

From: Karen Mizuno [mailto:kmizuno@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 1:27 PM
To: Mosetta Peppers <MPeppers@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: 2017-08823 Appvd by TLSB Deputy; returning to PLSD

KM

The original inquiry follows:

Proposal for the Removal of Caveats from the Recommended Literature List

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 10:08 AM
To: 'Kate MacMillan'
Subject: RE: AASL Blog

Thank you for linking me to your article!!

You will be happy to know that we got the go-ahead to remove the caveat language. I am going to start working on doing that this week. ☺ Please don't announce that we're doing that to anyone until I can get a handle on how long this removal project might take me. I have some help to do it, but there are a lot of titles and not all of the language is the same. Here's hoping it doesn't take too long!

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 1:35 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter ; Roxane Fidler
Subject: AASL Blog

<http://knowledgequest.aasl.org/readability-or-content/#comments>

Kate MacMillan
Coordinator Library Services
Digital Resource Project Manager
CDE Recommended Literature Committee
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
707 259-8441; 707 287-2883
kmacmillan@nvusd.org

Preparing for an unknown future with unknown technologies is ultimately the goal of education.

What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 3:11 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet
Attachments: Titles.xlsx

Here is a list of all titles whose annotation contains mature or controversial.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:41 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Also, if that was a bad thing to do, I can redo the work – like I said, it didn't take long – and make sure to highlight the ones changed!

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:33 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Jennifer,

How did you note which titles were modified? I see some highlighting for a handful, but you mentioned there were a couple hundred of them.

Thanks,

Laurie

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:21 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Laurie,

Thanks so much for helping me with this! It looks like it does have the title ID, so hopefully that helps out a lot! Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this. I really appreciate it!

Thanks again,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 4:23 PM
To: Laurie Duresky
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Thank you! So would you like me to go in and remove the language that needs to be removed? I can have that done by tomorrow morning. 😊

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 3:11 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Here is a list of all titles whose annotation contains mature or controversial.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:41 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Also, if that was a bad thing to do, I can redo the work – like I said, it didn't take long – and make sure to highlight the ones changed!

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:33 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Jennifer,

How did you note which titles were modified? I see some highlighting for a handful, but you mentioned there were a couple hundred of them.

Thanks,

Laurie

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:21 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Laurie,

Thanks so much for helping me with this! It looks like it does have the title ID, so hopefully that helps out a lot! Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this. I really appreciate it!

Thanks again,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:41 PM
To: Laurie Duresky
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Also, if that was a bad thing to do, I can redo the work – like I said, it didn't take long – and make sure to highlight the ones changed!

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:33 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Jennifer,

How did you note which titles were modified? I see some highlighting for a handful, but you mentioned there were a couple hundred of them.

Thanks,

Laurie

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:21 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Laurie,

Thanks so much for helping me with this! It looks like it does have the title ID, so hopefully that helps out a lot! Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this. I really appreciate it!

Thanks again,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:39 PM
To: Laurie Duresky
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

I didn't note that titles were modified – we just removed the language. The ones that are highlighted are ones that we had discussions on.

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:33 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Jennifer,

How did you note which titles were modified? I see some highlighting for a handful, but you mentioned there were a couple hundred of them.

Thanks,

Laurie

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:21 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Laurie,

Thanks so much for helping me with this! It looks like it does have the title ID, so hopefully that helps out a lot! Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this. I really appreciate it!

Thanks again,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2018 8:35 AM
To: Laurie Duresky
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet
Attachments: Copy of Titles.xlsx

Okay, I've gone through and removed the necessary language. 😊 Let me know if there's anything else you need from me!

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2018 7:13 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Up to you, but I wanted to narrow down the list for you 😊

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 4:23 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Thank you! So would you like me to go in and remove the language that needs to be removed? I can have that done by tomorrow morning. 😊

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 3:11 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Here is a list of all titles whose annotation contains mature or controversial.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:41 PM
To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Also, if that was a bad thing to do, I can redo the work – like I said, it didn't take long – and make sure to highlight the ones changed!

From: Laurie Duresky
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:33 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Jennifer,

How did you note which titles were modified? I see some highlighting for a handful, but you mentioned there were a couple hundred of them.

Thanks,

Laurie

From: Jennifer Howerter

Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 2:21 PM

To: Laurie Duresky <LDuresky@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: bulk caveat removal spreadsheet

Hi Laurie,

Thanks so much for helping me with this! It looks like it does have the title ID, so hopefully that helps out a lot! Let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this. I really appreciate it!

Thanks again,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 4:25 PM
To: Jennifer Moreno; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Caveat Removal Process

Also, sorry, forgot to send the caveat language! Here it is:

- This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.”
- “This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.”

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 1:45 PM
To: Jennifer Moreno ; Roxane Fidler
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: Caveat Removal Process

Hello ladies,

Thanks so much for helping me with this project. I could NOT get it done without you!!

You'll find the process document and the excel spreadsheet [here](#). Please let me know if you have any questions as you start working through the process. It all makes sense in my head, but it might not have translated properly. ☺ So, don't hesitate to ask for clarification!

Again, thank you! Let's connect next week after we've all had a bit of a chance to do some titles and go over any challenges/changes we might need to make.

Best,
Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2017 1:33 PM
To: Sharon Debidour
Cc: LITERATURELIST
Subject: RE: CDE Literature List Warnings

Good afternoon Ms. Debidour,

Please accept my sincere apology at not having responded to your e-mail in a more timely fashion.

The CDE staff that work with the Literature List appreciate the concerns and questions. We sincerely appreciate your feedback and feedback in the e-mails and telephone calls that staff has received on this topic.

Please know that your opinion is valued and staff is working on next steps in response to concerns and questions raised regarding the Literature List.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler
Literacy, History, Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861
E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov
Fax: 916-323-2928

From: Sharon Debidour [mailto:sharon_debidour@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:36 AM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: CDE Literature List Warnings

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Conejo Valley Unified School District Board in Thousand Oaks, CA voted last night to require the following to be included on all Syllabi and parents have to provide written consent to allow their high school students to read books with this advisory.

Ensure selections with the following recommendation or similar recommendation from the California Department of Education Recommended Literature List appear on the teacher syllabus whenever these selections are included on the syllabus:
The California Department of Education states, " This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child ."

2. Ensure the following statement, along with the selections that have the above CDE recommendation (or similar), is provided to parents/guardians via email and at parent-teacher night: "Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive

human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the CVUSD Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it.” This statement could appear once in a footnote with an asterisk (or similar) flagging each book to which this statement applies.

There were many out of district Tea Party members agitating at Board Meetings for the past five months to ban these controversial books. Even the religious High Schools in our area have many of these books as required reading without parental approval or opt out options.

In addition to an opt out option they also instituted a parent committee selected by the Board to review all literature recommendations approved by the Board.

Create a committee of parents/legal guardians and community members to review supporting documents for requests to use potential selections. The committee members are encouraged to read requested selections themselves and also must review in a timely manner. This committee will be chosen and appointed by the Board. Each Board member shall appoint two members to the committee from among the applicants, who may be the parents/legal guardians of children currently enrolled as K-12 students in the District or community members. (EC 60002)

Please help us to combat this soft censorship by our School Board. We are quite sure you do not intend for this advisory to be used as a censorship tool. In a poll of over 5000 community members within five days over 70% objected to this amended policy.

Sincerely,

Sharon Debidour
1533 Calle Yucca
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
818-427-9678 Cell

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 9:27 AM
To: Shelley Chappell
Subject: Re: Idea for language and agenda for tomorrow

Hi Shelley! The call starts at 930! We'll be on soon!

From: Shelley Chappell
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 9:13:00 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: Idea for language and agenda for tomorrow
Hi Jennifer,

I couldn't get on the conference call this morning – don't know what the problem was. Anyway, interested to see this proceeds.

Shelley

Shelley Chappell
Tulare County Office of Education

From: Jennifer Howerter [mailto:JHowerter@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 4:27 PM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank ; Aileen Allison-Zarea ; Roxane Fidler ; Kate MacMillan ; Shelley Chappell
Subject: Idea for language and agenda for tomorrow
Importance: High

Hi ladies,

Here is my idea for the language we might put on the Recommended Literature List landing page. This would serve the purpose of the caveat – to remind people to read a book before teaching it – without putting subjective labels on titles.

“The California Department of Education agrees with the American Library Association in its affirmation of the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. The needs and interests of each user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis.”

The language is basically from the ALA – I figured they were the resident experts on the issue of academic freedom. 😊 But I know it can definitely be revised and made even better. I hope that we can talk about what that language might be tomorrow. Here's the agenda I have in mind:

- Quick summary of issue at Conejo Valley and background information that I found on the caveats
- Your experiences with the caveat and any information you have on the criteria that was used in adding it to specific titles
- Discussion of the proposal to remove the language and revisions to the draft statement above
- Anything else!

I'm excited to talk to you tomorrow! Let me know if you have any questions!

Best,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 10:34 AM
To: Julian Cuevas
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler; Barbara Murchison
Subject: RE: Literature List Process
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Julian,

This is great news! Aileen and I are available to meet this afternoon. Any time between 1-3 works!

Also, I'm happy to confirm that the removal of the caveats was approved by our deputy. I will begin work on that this week. ☺

Thanks, and I look forward to our meeting today!

-Jennifer

From: Julian Cuevas
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 4:09 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea ; Roxane Fidler ; Barbara Murchison
Subject: RE: Literature List Process
Importance: High

Hi Everyone 📧

I met with Stern's office this afternoon. We discussed the possibility of him carrying a bill for us around funding CDE's Literature List/Website. I'd like to set up a time to meet Tuesday or Wednesday of next week to discuss what that could potentially look like. The deadline to get a bill proposal to Stern's office is Thursday, 1/18 📧 so we'll need to move quickly.

I am currently available:

- Tuesday, 1/16 at 9:30am or between 1pm-3pm
- Wednesday, 1/17 between 10am-12pm

Let me know what works best for you.

Thanks!

Julian Y. Cuevas
Legislative Policy Representative
Government Affairs Division
1430 N Street | Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-327-4628 | Email: JCuevas@cde.ca.gov

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 10:21 AM
To: Julian Cuevas <JCuevas@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>; Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Literature List Process

Hi Julian,

I received notification that it had been approved and returned to my desk, though, I haven't been at my desk to check (I'm at off site meetings this week).

I'm sure that it was approved without requested changes, though, I cannot be sure. I can let you know on Tuesday! I am planning on starting work to remove the caveats next week.

Thanks,
Jennifer

From: Julian Cuevas
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 9:44 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler; Barbara Murchison
Subject: RE: Literature List Process

Good Morning 📧

I wanted to confirm if the decision to remove the literature flagging was approved and implemented. I have a follow up call with the member's office this morning.

Thanks!

Julian Y. Cuevas
Legislative Policy Representative
Government Affairs Division
1430 N Street | Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-327-4628 | Email: JCuevas@cde.ca.gov

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:33 AM

To: Julian Cuevas <JCuevas@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>; Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Literature List Process

Hi Julian,

Attached are our literature list procedures. I've also included the various training documents that past consultants have used over the years.

Let me know if you have any questions! I look forward to the call this afternoon. ☺ Are we meeting in a particular room?

Thanks,
Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

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Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 10:21 AM
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Let me know if you have any questions! I look forward to the call this afternoon. ☺ Are we meeting in a particular room?

Thanks,

Jennifer

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Tom Adams
Sent: Friday, March 2, 2018 9:05 AM
To: Scott Roark; Stephanie Gregson; Barbara Murchison
Cc: Bill Ainsworth; Robert Oakes
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry - Annotations for Mature Content - Thousand Oaks Acorn

I am copying Barbara Murchison as her division is responsible for the Recommended Literature List. Barbara may have more to say but the notation on individual titles was removed and replaced with general guidance on the selection of literature for the classroom. Below is the wording from the opening page on the CDE website and I have highlight the relevant portion:

Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve (Recommended Literature List) is a searchable database of books for children and teens which helps students, teachers, and families find books that entertain, inform, and explore new ideas and experiences.

Each book has a description called an "annotation" that explains what the book is about. The annotation can help someone decide if the title is interesting and appropriate to read.

Literature used in a school is determined by the district. Each district should have a [selection policy](#) that explains the procedures it uses for selecting literature that reflects the school's education mission, program, and the ages and interests of its students. The selection policy should describe the process for reconsidering the use of a title. The Recommended Literature List is intended as a tool to assist districts as they select literature, but the list only **recommends** titles. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the district to select literature according to the selection policies that are in place.

Many of the literature selections available within the Recommended Literature List contain material that can be considered provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature can stimulate debate and disagreement about important issues. The Recommended Literature List is designed to give local educational agencies a range of materials to choose from to meet the needs of local teachers and students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on the Recommended Literature List does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students.

In 2014, Assembly Bill (AB) 484 eliminated the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program of which the California Reading List (CRL) was a resource. The CRL identified leveled reading materials appropriate to a student's reading level using Lexile numbers provided on a student's STAR results report. Although it does not include Lexile numbers, the *Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve* list is still available to aid students, teachers, parents, and other education stakeholders in discovering quality literature through a variety of criteria including, but not limited to, grade level, topic, genre, and culture.

The opening page is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/>.

I hope this helps you.
Tom

Thomas Adams, Ph.D.

Deputy Superintendent
Teaching and Learning Support Branch
California Department of Education
(916) 319-0900

From: Scott Roark
Sent: Friday, March 02, 2018 8:52 AM
To: Stephanie Gregson
Cc: Bill Ainsworth ; Robert Oakes ; Tom Adams
Subject: Media Inquiry - Annotations for Mature Content - Thousand Oaks Acorn

Hi Stephanie,

I received an inquiry from Dawn Megli-Thuna, a reporter with the Thousand Oaks Acorn. She is doing a story on mature content and the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

Dawn has contacted us before regarding CVUSD. On November 13 of last year, she inquired about CDE policy regarding parental consent for books with an annotation that flags them as having mature content. Our response was that we have no policy and it's a district level decision.

Now, Dawn is stating that it appears CDE has removed annotations from the recommended literature list that identified certain titles, like the Bluest Eye, as having mature content. She wants to confirm those annotations were removed and if so, what was the reasoning behind the removal.

Scott

ImTurner, Hyonchin

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Sent: Friday, March 2, 2018 9:09 AM
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Thanks Tom,

S

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Dawn has contacted us before regarding CVUSD. On November 13 of last year, she inquired about CDE policy regarding parental consent for books with an annotation that flags them as having mature content. Our response was that we have no policy and it's a district level decision.

Now, Dawn is stating that it appears CDE has removed annotations from the recommended literature list that identified certain titles, like the *Bluest Eye*, as having mature content. She wants to confirm those annotations were removed and if so, what was the reasoning behind the removal.

Scott

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2017 1:19 PM
To: Betsy Connolly
Cc: LITERATURELIST
Subject: RE: Question about annotations

Good morning Betsy,

Please accept my apology at not responding to your inquiry in a more timely fashion.

I've answered your questions in blue:

Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? **The grade span committee members initially recommend a caveat, in most cases. There is an administrative committee that is convened—out of interested grade span committee members—that additionally review the title submissions and may suggest the addition of a caveat or the deletion of a caveat for a title.**

Are all books published or cataloged without the Young Adult designation given that caveat? **I'm not certain what you are asking here. The caveat is associated with the Recommended Literature List only.**

Does the review committee make the decision at the time of addition? **Yes, the committee members suggest the caveat be added to the annotation at the time the title is suggested for submission into the list.**

If a book is not so annotated, is it a YA selection or has it been reviewed by a committee to ensure that it is not written for mature readers or are books from the pre-online version not so annotated? **Within a grade span committee, the member who initially suggests the title for submission is confirming that he/she has read the title and understands the title's content. For a title to move forward in the process for it to be considered for addition to the list, at least two more members of a grade span committee that the title is suggested for must endorse the title for that grade span. Finally it is reviewed by the administrative committee and given final approval for addition. I'm not sure that I'm answering your entire question, as I'm unclear on what is being asked in the second half of the question.**

Roxane

Roxane Fidler
Literacy, History, Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861
E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov
Fax: 916-323-2928

From: Betsy Connolly [mailto:dvmum@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2017 4:03 PM
To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Question about annotations

Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Are all books published or cataloged without the Young Adult designation given that caveat? Does the review committee make the decision at the time of addition? If a book is not so annotated, is it a YA selection or has it been reviewed by a committee to ensure that it is not written for mature readers or are books from the pre-online version not so annotated?

Regards, Betsy Connolly

On Thu, Nov 9, 2017 at 3:37 PM, LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Good morning Ms. Connolly,

Thank you for your e-mail.

The caveat helps inform adults and youth that a title contains mature themes. To my knowledge the caveat was developed in the 1990's when the literature list moved from its print version to becoming an online resource.

The caveat is meant as a tool to assist in selecting literature not to censor it.

Also, the material included in the literature list is recommended not required. Local districts may create a process that engages educators and the community in selecting quality literature for classroom reading.

The literature list provides resources for districts that are reviewing, updating, or crafting a new literature selection policy: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/litrlppolicies.asp>.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler

Education Programs Consultant

California Department of Education

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

[1430 N Street, Room 4309](#)

[Sacramento, CA 95814](#)

Phone: [916-323-4861](tel:916-323-4861)

Fax: [916-323-2838](tel:916-323-2838)

E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov

From: Betsy Connolly [mailto:dvmum@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, November 08, 2017 3:22 PM

To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Question about annotations

It has been called to our attention that 223 books in the Recommended Literature List contain the annotation *This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.* Could you please clarify the source of this annotation language. I'm on a school board where a member wants all of these books flagged in teacher outlines so that parents are aware of potentially offensive content.

If this phrase is added by the review committee under certain specific circumstances or at the behest of a particular individual, it would be helpful to know what those circumstances are.

Regards,

Betsy Connolly

Board Member

Conejo Valley Unified School District

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 4:13 PM
To: 'Betsy Connolly'
Subject: RE: Question about annotations
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Betsy,

Unfortunately I cannot answer those questions because I am relatively new to the project. I will forward your questions on the process to our previous committee – since they worked on adding books to the list. After hearing from them, I should be able to share additional information about the deliberations that went into those caveats.

We are also going to revisit the caveats themselves. We appreciate you bringing this issue to our attention – it is very helpful to us as we make future determinations.

I will share more information with you as soon as I have it. Thank you again!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

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Roxane

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Education Programs Consultant

California Department of Education

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[Sacramento, CA 95814](#)

Phone: [916-323-4861](tel:916-323-4861)

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Regards,

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Board Member

Conejo Valley Unified School District

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2017 10:28 AM
To: Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Recommended Literature List

Nice!!! I'm glad it's coming in handy. :)

-----Original Message-----

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2017 10:27 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Recommended Literature List

Hi Jenn,

This gal was looking for the titles that have the caveat in the annotation.

I wanted to share with you.

Thank you for suggesting the ability to download the titles!!!! What a wonderful tool it is!!!

Rox :^)

-----Original Message-----

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2017 10:25 AM
To: Sandee Everett <sandee.everett@gmail.com>
Cc: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Recommended Literature List

Hi Sandee,

Thank you for your e-mail. Please find attached an Excel file of the titles in the Literature List that contain the caveat: "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

Please let me know if you have additional needs!

Roxane

Roxane Fidler
Education Programs Consultant
California Department of Education
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
1430 N Street, Room 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861

Fax: 916-323-2838
E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Sandee Everett [mailto:sandee.everett@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2017 12:06 AM
To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Recommended Literature List

Hello,

I am a board member for the Conejo Valley Unified school district. I am wondering if you can send me a list of all CDE recommended literature that have the following recommendation in your annotation:

“This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.”

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Sandee Everett, MEd
CVUSD, Board Trustee

Sent from my iPhone

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Kathy Goodwin <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 5:00 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter; kbowen@ucdavis.edu; schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us; jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net; jligamari@gmail.com; alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us; kmacmillan@nvusd.org; jritter@mvschools.org
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Dear committee members,

I won't be contributing to the discussion. I've now been retired for seven years and, although I continue to read children's and using adult literature, I've become too far removed from the classroom and the library to continue participating in the work of this committee. Thank you for all the excellent work you do.

Kathy Goodwin

----- Original message -----

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: 11/15/17 3:56 PM (GMT-08:00)
To: kbowen@ucdavis.edu, schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us, kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com, jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net, jligamari@gmail.com, alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us, kmacmillan@nvusd.org, jritter@mvschools.org
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>, Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hello everyone!

This issue is slowly becoming more urgent, so I think a conference call is best for us to all discuss it and come to a conclusion. I know next week is a holiday week, but I'm really hoping you are available. Please read my email below for the questions I have and the proposal I've made.

Fill out this Doodle poll ASAP so that I can schedule something!

<https://doodle.com/poll/cbf4d5eby9typd45> I really appreciate you all taking time out of your busy schedules to help me with this. ☺ I am eager to talk with you!

Best,
Jennifer

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:46 PM
To: 'kbowen@ucdavis.edu' <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>; 'schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us' <schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us>; 'kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com' <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>; 'jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net' <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>; 'jligamari@gmail.com' <jligamari@gmail.com>; 'alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us' <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>; 'kmacmillan@nvusd.org' <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>; 'jritter@mvschools.org' <jritter@mvschools.org>
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Importance: High

Dear committee members,

I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

Background

Parents in a district in California are currently concerned about the appropriateness of some of the books that are listed on the Recommended Literature List. After initially wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with the caveat that is included in some of the entries in the List: "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

They want a note published in all syllabi at the district that include texts in the List that have that caveat, although the CDE would not be involved in any local decision such as this. The note would state: "Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it."

Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of 'soft censorship,' which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

Questions

Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

- Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Is it the entire committee? Only the members that suggested and then approved the book for inclusion?
- What are the criteria for adding that caveat to a book? Are those criteria applied universally, including to books that were added before the caveat was created? Are all books published or cataloged with/without the Young Adult designation given/not given that caveat?

Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. 😊 I'm not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this – what is considered 'mature'? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the 'maturity' of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn't let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. ☺ Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:23 AM
To: 'Jonathan Hunt'
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Ah okay, thanks! ☺

From: Jonathan Hunt [mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 3:21 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

The annotation was lifted from publisher, not the warning.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 14, 2017, at 2:47 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Ah so it was publisher language? Not a warning from the committee in particular?

From: Jonathan Hunt [mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:35 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Okay, now I remember that we were in grade level groups. It's ridiculous to put that caveat on WONDER. Really!?!?

The other four were YA, and I was in that group. I think we each annotated different books, but we lifted the annotations from the publisher citations. I've personally read TALES OF THE MADMAN UNDERGROUND and loved it. There was mature content in that book, most notably one of the boys in the group was given to having trysts with older gentlemen in the park. I haven't read the other three, but know of FAT ANGIE and FORGED BY FIRE.

Jonathan Hunt
Coordinator, Library Media Services
San Diego County Office of Education
5304 Metro St, Ste C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 718-4988

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 2:26 PM
To: SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hi Jonathan,

Yeah, hopefully some others will respond soon. I'm glad there has already been talk about how troublesome the caveat can be. It might make it easier to remove it.. ☺

Here are the five titles! Thank you so much for all your help. ☺

-Jenn

Fat Angie	Fat Angie's sister was captured in Iraq, she is the resident laughingstock at school, and her therapist tells her to count instead of eat, but her life changes when she meets the daring new girl, KC Romance. With an offbeat sensibility, this story deals with death, suicide, cutting, bullying and coming out. This story will appeal to anyone who likes current and meaningful fiction. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Forged by Fire	Gerald, a teenager who has spent years protecting his fragile half-sister from their abusive father, must face the prospect of one final confrontation before the problem can be solved. In this second book of the Hazelwood High trilogy, Sharon M. Draper has woven characters and events from Tears of a Tiger in an unflinchingly realistic portrayal of poverty and child abuse. It is an inspiring story of a young man who rises above the tragic circumstances of his life by drawing on the love and strength of family and friends. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Freaks and Revelations	This raw, moving novel follows two teenagers—one, a Mohawk-wearing 17-year-old violent misfit, the other, a gay 13-year-old cast out by his family—hustling on the streets and trying to survive. Acclaimed author Davida Wills Hurwin creates a riveting narrative told in alternating perspectives of their lives before and after the violent hate crime that changed both their futures. This tragic but ultimately inspirational journey of two polarized teens, their violent first meeting, and their peaceful reunion years later is an unforgettable story of survival and forgiveness. This story is inspired by the real lives of Matthew Boger and Timothy Zaal, who have shared their story on The Oprah Winfrey Show and NPR. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
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From: Jonathan Hunt [<mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:24 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Jennifer,

I was only there for the last meeting. Others on that e-mail list may have been involved in the previous efforts. I do remember that we had a discussion about how subject that caveat is, and how it's an invitation to censorship.

Yes, send me the five titles with annotations and I'll tell you why . . .

Jonathan Hunt
Coordinator, Library Media Services
San Diego County Office of Education
5304 Metro St, Ste C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 718-4988

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 2:21 PM
To: SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hi Jonathan,

I was definitely afraid of there being inconsistencies. :/

Do you know what thought process went into using the designation in the last group? Or were you not part of those discussions since it happened so infrequently? It looks like there were five titles that have a mature note in their annotations. I can send them your way if it'll help jog your memory?

Thanks for any information you can give me!

-Jenn

From: Jonathan Hunt [<mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:56 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Importance: High

Jennifer,

It's really hard to say because this database has been compiled over a number of years by different groups of people. I think our most recent group collectively decided on that designation together, but we didn't use it often, if at all. So it's inconsistent, at best.

Sure hope that district doesn't bow to a handful of parents.

Jonathan Hunt
Coordinator, Library Media Services
San Diego County Office of Education
5304 Metro St, Ste C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 718-4988

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 1:45 PM
To: "kbowen@ucdavis.edu" <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>, "schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us" <schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us>, "kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com" <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>,

SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>, "jligamari@gmail.com" <jligamari@gmail.com>, "alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us" <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>, "kmacmillan@nvusd.org" <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>, "jritter@mvschools.org" <jritter@mvschools.org>
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>, Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Dear committee members,

I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

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Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of 'soft censorship,' which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

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Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

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Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. ☺ I'm not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this – what is considered 'mature'? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the 'maturity' of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn't let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. ☺ Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer

Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 4:16 PM
To: 'Kate MacMillan'
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Kate,

So these caveats were rogue caveats? ☺ It sounds like they may have gotten added without a full group discussion. I'm thinking of scheduling a conference call just so that we can all hash this out and get to the bottom of this – why they were added so that we can communicate that to the questioning public, and discuss taking the caveats away so that they don't become a tool for censorship.

I agree that the list needs to be cleaned. We're still working on getting that funding so that we can update the database a bit to enable the cleaning to take place. The virtual committee is still the main vehicle to do this. We're excited to get the work done!

-Jenn

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 4:04 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Yes, Jennifer it makes perfect sense! I have attached the reviews for the 5 titles... most are Stonewall Awards but Wonder is a shocker! The movie with Julia Roberts opens this Friday! I am not sure how these caveats were attached.. we were very clear about this but there were some that were new to the committee and may have felt compelled to add their opinions.

I still believe we need to clean this list up... drop some Jodi Pcoult books and archive the out of print.

Kate MacMillan
Coordinator Library Services
Digital Resource Project Manager
CDE Recommended Literature Committee
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
707 259-8441; 707 287-2883
kmacmillan@nvusd.org

Preparing for an unknown future with unknown technologies is ultimately the goal of education.

What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

On Tue, Nov 14, 2017 at 3:36 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi Kate,

Here are the five titles:

Fat Angie	Fat Angie's sister was captured in Iraq, she is the resident laughingstock at school, and her therapist tells her to count instead of eat, but her life changes when she meets the daring new girl, KC Romance. With an offbeat sensibility, this story deals with death, suicide, cutting, bullying and coming out. This story will appeal to anyone who likes current and meaningful fiction. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Forged by Fire	Gerald, a teenager who has spent years protecting his fragile half-sister from their abusive father, must face the prospect of one final confrontation before the problem can be solved. In this second book of the Hazelwood High trilogy, Sharon M. Draper has woven characters and events from Tears of a Tiger in an unflinchingly realistic portrayal of poverty and child abuse. It is an inspiring story of a young man who rises above the tragic circumstances of his life by drawing on the love and strength of family and friends. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
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To be clear, the CDE is NOT adding any caveats – in fact, I really want to take them AWAY because of the subjectivity issue you brought up. I would rather just include a statement on the

Recommended Literature List page (not on ANY individual entries) that it is a best practice to always read the book before you suggest it to a student, regardless of the book. I hope that makes sense. ☺

Thanks again for all of your thoughts! This is a really great discussion!

-Jenn

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 3:25 PM

To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Jennifer:

I had thought we did not add any caveats (can you give me the titles)? Another reason I dislike caveats is they are subjective at best... what may be controversial to some may not be the case for others.

The only disclaimer that I would accept would be to attach an interest level to the book ... (Example K-3, 3-6, 5-8, YA and 10-12) IL has long been overlooked in the rush to Lexile or ATOS all library materials so that students are reading on their levels. We have forgotten that just because a student can read the words of *Huckleberry Finn* in the 3rd grade does not mean he has the cultural awareness or the historical perspective to understand the content. One work around would be to add a short description of the IL's that are included in the various grade level lists.

Another caution...if you do indeed add caveats to the Stonewall and/or Prinz awards, the ACLU may very well take issue with this. And one more thought... this District has a right to self-select their reading materials. The CDE list reflects the interests, needs and subject matters of all our students... and literature is often uncomfortable.

Kate MacMillan

Coordinator Library Services

Digital Resource Project Manager

CDE Recommended Literature Committee

Napa Valley Unified School District

[2425 Jefferson St.](#)

[Napa, CA 94558](#)

[707 259-8441; 707 287-2883](#)

kmacmillan@nvusd.org

Preparing for an unknown future with unknown technologies is ultimately the goal of education.

What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

On Tue, Nov 14, 2017 at 2:50 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi Kate!

I think you are very likely correct that it has to do with including the Stonewall books in particular. ☺

Do you know what the criteria were in past committees for adding that caveat? In the 2016 update, there were five titles that had a warning about mature themes. Do you know what decision process was behind those?

What are your thoughts on just removing the caveat entirely from individual annotations? I don't particularly want to give people an avenue for excluding books, especially for vulnerable students.

Thanks for the link to your blog!!!! I'll share that as a resource. ☺

Best,

Jennifer

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:35 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hi, Jennifer!

Years ago we included caveats but as a group decided we would not continue. I do not believe that one school district has the right to demand that we censor or warn students and/or parents about the suitability of a book. What may be controversial for one district may resonate with another. I believe that this may be the result of including Stonewall and Prinz award books to the list. In a way this smacks of censorship and I for one would rather resign from the committee than be a part of this.

To be fair there are mediocre adult books that are still included on the list and should be weeded. These were added to the list by previous committee members who were classroom teachers and not librarians.

I have attached the link to my blog [Libraries Are for Everyone](#) that I wrote for AASL Knowledge Quest. My post addresses the issues of privacy for LGBTQ students and the need to provide much needed materials that will resonate with our students.

Kate MacMillan

Coordinator Library Services

Digital Resource Project Manager

CDE Recommended Literature Committee

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I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

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Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of 'soft censorship,' which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

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Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

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Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. ☺ I'm not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this – what is considered 'mature'? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the 'maturity' of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off

having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn't let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. 😊 Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,

Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

Professional Learning Support Division

California Department of Education

[1430 N Street, Suite 4309](#)

[Sacramento, CA 95814-5901](#)

Phone: [916-323-4630](#)

FAX: [916-323-2928](#)

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 3:36 PM
To: 'Kate MacMillan'
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Kate,

Here are the five titles:

Fat Angie	Fat Angie's sister was captured in Iraq, she is the resident laughingstock at school, and her therapist tells her to count instead of eat, but her life changes when she meets the daring new girl, KC Romance. With an offbeat sensibility, this story deals with death, suicide, cutting, bullying and coming out. This story will appeal to anyone who likes current and meaningful fiction. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Forged by Fire	Gerald, a teenager who has spent years protecting his fragile half-sister from their abusive father, must face the prospect of one final confrontation before the problem can be solved. In this second book of the Hazelwood High trilogy, Sharon M. Draper has woven characters and events from Tears of a Tiger in an unflinchingly realistic portrayal of poverty and child abuse. It is an inspiring story of a young man who rises above the tragic circumstances of his life by drawing on the love and strength of family and friends. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Freaks and Revelations	This raw, moving novel follows two teenagers—one, a Mohawk-wearing 17-year-old violent misfit, the other, a gay 13-year-old cast out by his family—hustling on the streets and trying to survive. Acclaimed author Davida Wills Hurwin creates a riveting narrative told in alternating perspectives of their lives before and after the violent hate crime that changed both their futures. This tragic but ultimately inspirational journey of two polarized teens, their violent first meeting, and their peaceful reunion years later is an unforgettable story of survival and forgiveness. This story is inspired by the real lives of Matthew Boger and Timothy Zaal, who have shared their story on The Oprah Winfrey Show and NPR. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Tales of the Madman Underground	September 1973 and it is the beginning of Karl Shoemaker's senior year in stifling Lightsburg, Ohio. For years, Karl's been part of "the Madman Underground"—kids forced to attend group therapy during school. Karl has decided that he is going to get out of the Madman Underground for good. He is going to act—and be—normal. But normal, of course, is relative. Karl has two after-school jobs, one dead father, one seriously unhinged drunk mother, and a huge attitude. Welcome to a gritty, uncensored rollercoaster ride, narrated by the singular Karl Shoemaker. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Wonder	Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan. Auggie struggles with the teasing of his classmates as he tries to be seen as just another student. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many young people and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

To be clear, the CDE is NOT adding any caveats – in fact, I really want to take them AWAY because of the subjectivity issue you brought up. I would rather just include a statement on the Recommended Literature List page (not on ANY individual entries) that it is a best practice to always read the book before you suggest it to a student, regardless of the book. I hope that makes sense. ☺

Thanks again for all of your thoughts! This is a really great discussion!

-Jenn

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 3:25 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Jennifer:

I had thought we did not add any caveats (can you give me the titles)? Another reason I dislike caveats is they are subjective at best... what may be controversial to some may not be the case for others.

The only disclaimer that I would accept would be to attach an interest level to the book ... (Example K-3, 3-6, 5-8, YA and 10-12) IL has long been overlooked in the rush to Lexile or ATOS all library materials so that students are reading on their levels. We have forgotten that just because a student can read the words of *Huckleberry Finn* in the 3rd grade does not mean he has the cultural awareness or the historical perspective to understand the content. One work around would be to add a short description of the IL's that are included in the various grade level lists.

Another caution...if you do indeed add caveats to the Stonewall and/or Prinz awards, the ACLU may very well take issue with this. And one more thought... this District has a right to self-select their reading materials. The CDE list reflects the interests, needs and subject matters of all our students... and literature is often uncomfortable.

Kate MacMillan
Coordinator Library Services
Digital Resource Project Manager
CDE Recommended Literature Committee
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
707 259-8441; 707 287-2883
kmacmillan@nvusd.org

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What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

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I think you are very likely correct that it has to do with including the Stonewall books in particular. ☺

Do you know what the criteria were in past committees for adding that caveat? In the 2016 update, there were five titles that had a warning about mature themes. Do you know what decision process was behind those?

What are your thoughts on just removing the caveat entirely from individual annotations? I don't particularly want to give people an avenue for excluding books, especially for vulnerable students.

Thanks for the link to your blog!!!! I'll share that as a resource. ☺

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

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Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:47 PM
To: 'Jonathan Hunt'
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Ah so it was publisher language? Not a warning from the committee in particular?

From: Jonathan Hunt [mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:35 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Okay, now I remember that we were in grade level groups. It's ridiculous to put that caveat on WONDER. Really!?!?

The other four were YA, and I was in that group. I think we each annotated different books, but we lifted the annotations from the publisher citations. I've personally read TALES OF THE MADMAN UNDERGROUND and loved it. There was mature content in that book, most notably one of the boys in the group was given to having trysts with older gentlemen in the park. I haven't read the other three, but know of FAT ANGIE and FORGED BY FIRE.

Jonathan Hunt
Coordinator, Library Media Services
San Diego County Office of Education
5304 Metro St, Ste C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 718-4988

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 2:26 PM
To: SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hi Jonathan,

Yeah, hopefully some others will respond soon. I'm glad there has already been talk about how troublesome the caveat can be. It might make it easier to remove it... 😊

Here are the five titles! Thank you so much for all your help. 😊

-Jenn

Fat Angie	Fat Angie's sister was captured in Iraq, she is the resident laughingstock at school, and her therapist tells her to count instead of eat, but her life changes when she meets the daring new girl, KC Romance. With an offbeat sensibility, this story deals with death, suicide, cutting, bullying and coming out. This story will appeal to anyone who likes current and meaningful fiction. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
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Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:24 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Jennifer,

I was only there for the last meeting. Others on that e-mail list may have been involved in the previous efforts. I do remember that we had a discussion about how subject that caveat is, and how it's an invitation to censorship.

Yes, send me the five titles with annotations and I'll tell you why . . .

Jonathan Hunt
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5304 Metro St, Ste C
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From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 2:21 PM
To: SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hi Jonathan,

I was definitely afraid of there being inconsistencies. :/

Do you know what thought process went into using the designation in the last group? Or were you not part of those discussions since it happened so infrequently? It looks like there were five titles that have a mature note in their annotations. I can send them your way if it'll help jog your memory?

Thanks for any information you can give me!

-Jenn

From: Jonathan Hunt [<mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:56 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Importance: High

Jennifer,

It's really hard to say because this database has been compiled over a number of years by different groups of people. I think our most recent group collectively decided on that designation together, but we didn't use it often, if at all. So it's inconsistent, at best.

Sure hope that district doesn't bow to a handful of parents.

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From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 1:45 PM
To: "kbowen@ucdavis.edu" <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>, "schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us" <schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us>, "kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com" <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>, SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>, "jligamari@gmail.com" <jligamari@gmail.com>, "alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us" <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>, "kmacmillan@nvusd.org" <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>, "jritter@mvschools.org" <jritter@mvschools.org>
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Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. ☺ I’m not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn’t applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this – what is considered ‘mature’? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the ‘maturity’ of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn’t let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. ☺ Let me know if you’re interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:22 PM
To: 'Jonathan Hunt'
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Jonathan,

I was definitely afraid of there being inconsistencies. :/

Do you know what thought process went into using the designation in the last group? Or were you not part of those discussions since it happened so infrequently? It looks like there were five titles that have a mature note in their annotations. I can send them your way if it'll help jog your memory?

Thanks for any information you can give me!

-Jenn

From: Jonathan Hunt [mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:56 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Importance: High

Jennifer,

It's really hard to say because this database has been compiled over a number of years by different groups of people. I think our most recent group collectively decided on that designation together, but we didn't use it often, if at all. So it's inconsistent, at best.

Sure hope that district doesn't bow to a handful of parents.

Jonathan Hunt
Coordinator, Library Media Services
San Diego County Office of Education
5304 Metro St, Ste C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 718-4988

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 1:45 PM
To: "kbowen@ucdavis.edu" <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>, "schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us" <schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us>, "kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com" <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>, SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>, "jligamari@gmail.com" <jligamari@gmail.com>, "alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us" <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>, "kmacmillan@nvusd.org" <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>, "jritter@mvschools.org" <jritter@mvschools.org>
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>, Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Dear committee members,

I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

Background

Parents in a district in California are currently concerned about the appropriateness of some of the books that are listed on the Recommended Literature List. After initially wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with the caveat that is included in some of the entries in the List: ♦ This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child. ♦

They want a note published in all syllabi at the district that include texts in the List that have that caveat, although the CDE would not be involved in any local decision such as this. The note would state: ♦ Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it. ♦

Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of ♦ soft censorship, ♦ which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

Questions

Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

- Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Is it the entire committee? Only the members that suggested and then approved the book for inclusion?
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Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. 😊 I ♦ am not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this ♦ what is considered ♦ mature ♦? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

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Thank you for reading through this very long email. 😊 Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Kate MacMillan <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 4:05 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Oh, dear! I am so sorry... but perhaps reflects the tenor of the country.

Kate MacMillan
Coordinator Library Services
Digital Resource Project Manager
CDE Recommended Literature Committee
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
707 259-8441; 707 287-2883
kmacmillan@nvusd.org

Preparing for an unknown future with unknown technologies is ultimately the goal of education.

What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

On Wed, Nov 15, 2017 at 3:56 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Hello everyone!

This issue is slowly becoming more urgent, so I think a conference call is best for us to all discuss it and come to a conclusion. I know next week is a holiday week, but I'm really hoping you are available. Please read my email below for the questions I have and the proposal I've made.

Fill out this Doodle poll ASAP so that I can schedule something!

<https://doodle.com/poll/cbf4d5eby9typd45> I really appreciate you all taking time out of your busy schedules to help me with this. ☺ I am eager to talk with you!

Best,

Jennifer

From: Jennifer Howerter

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:46 PM

To: 'kbowen@ucdavis.edu' <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>; 'schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us' <schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us>; 'kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com' <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>; 'jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net' <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>; 'jligamari@gmail.com' <jligamari@gmail.com>; 'alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us' <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>; 'kmacmillan@nvusd.org' <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>; 'jritter@mvschools.org' <jritter@mvschools.org>

Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Importance: High

Dear committee members,

I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

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Thank you for reading through this very long email. ☺ Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,

Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

Professional Learning Support Division

California Department of Education

[1430 N Street, Suite 4309](#)

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Phone: [916-323-4630](#)

FAX: [916-323-2928](#)

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Kate MacMillan <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 11:45 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Just more food for thought.....

<http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/>

Kate MacMillan
Coordinator Library Services
Digital Resource Project Manager
CDE Recommended Literature Committee
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
707 259-8441; 707 287-2883
kmacmillan@nvusd.org

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What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

On Tue, Nov 14, 2017 at 4:16 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi Kate,

So these caveats were rogue caveats? ☺ It sounds like they may have gotten added without a full group discussion. I'm thinking of scheduling a conference call just so that we can all hash this out and get to the bottom of this – why they were added so that we can communicate that to the questioning public, and discuss taking the caveats away so that they don't become a tool for censorship.

I agree that the list needs to be cleaned. We're still working on getting that funding so that we can update the database a bit to enable the cleaning to take place. The virtual committee is still the main vehicle to do this. We're excited to get the work done!

-Jenn

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 4:04 PM

To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Yes, Jennifer it makes perfect sense! I have attached the reviews for the 5 titles... most are Stonewall Awards but Wonder is a shocker! The movie with Julia Roberts opens this Friday!

I am not sure how these caveats were attached.. we were very clear about this but there were some that were new to the committee and may have felt compelled to add their opinions.

I still believe we need to clean this list up... drop some Jodi Pcoult books and archive the out of print.

Kate MacMillan

Coordinator Library Services

Digital Resource Project Manager

CDE Recommended Literature Committee

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What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

On Tue, Nov 14, 2017 at 3:36 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi Kate,

Here are the five titles:

Fat Angie	Fat Angie's sister was captured in Iraq, she is the resident laughingstock at school, and her therapist tells her to count instead of eat, but her life changes when she meets the daring new girl, KC Romance. With an offbeat sensibility, this story deals with death, suicide, cutting, bullying and coming out. This story will appeal to anyone who likes current and meaningful fiction. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Forged by Fire	Gerald, a teenager who has spent years protecting his fragile half-sister from their abusive father, must face the prospect of one final confrontation before the problem can be solved. In this second book of the Hazelwood High trilogy, Sharon M. Draper has woven characters and events from Tears of a Tiger in an unflinchingly realistic portrayal of poverty and child abuse. It is an inspiring story of a young man who rises above the tragic circumstances of his life by drawing on the love and strength of family and friends. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Freaks and Revelations	This raw, moving novel follows two teenagers—one, a Mohawk-wearing 17-year-old violent misfit, the other, a gay 13-year-old cast out by his family—hustling on the streets and trying to survive. Acclaimed author Davida Wills Hurwin creates a riveting narrative told in alternating perspectives of their lives before and after the violent hate crime that changed both their futures. This tragic but ultimately inspirational journey of two polarized teens, their violent first meeting, and their peaceful reunion years later is an unforgettable story of survival and forgiveness. This story is inspired by the real lives of Matthew Boger and Timothy Zaal, who have shared their story on The Oprah Winfrey Show and NPR. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Tales of the Madman Underground	September 1973 and it is the beginning of Karl Shoemaker's senior year in stifling Lightsburg, Ohio. For years, Karl's been part of "the Madman Underground"—kids forced to attend group therapy during school. Karl has decided that he is going to get out of the Madman Underground for good. He is going to act—and be—normal. But normal, of course, is relative. Karl has two after-school jobs, one dead father, one seriously unhinged drunk mother, and a huge attitude. Welcome to a gritty, uncensored rollercoaster ride, narrated by the singular Karl Shoemaker. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to

	many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
Wonder	Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan. Auggie struggles with the teasing of his classmates as he tries to be seen as just another student. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many young people and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

To be clear, the CDE is NOT adding any caveats – in fact, I really want to take them AWAY because of the subjectivity issue you brought up. I would rather just include a statement on the Recommended Literature List page (not on ANY individual entries) that it is a best practice to always read the book before you suggest it to a student, regardless of the book. I hope that makes sense. ☺

Thanks again for all of your thoughts! This is a really great discussion!

-Jenn

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 3:25 PM

To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Jennifer:

I had thought we did not add any caveats (can you give me the titles)? Another reason I dislike caveats is they are subjective at best... what may be controversial to some may not be the case for others.

The only disclaimer that I would accept would be to attach an interest level to the book ... (Example K-3, 3-6, 5-8, YA and 10-12) IL has long been overlooked in the rush to Lexile or ATOS all library materials so that students are reading on their levels. We have forgotten that just because a student can read the words of *Huckleberry Finn* in the 3rd grade does not mean he has the cultural awareness or the historical perspective to understand the content. One work around would be to add a short description of the IL's that are included in the various grade level lists.

Another caution...if you do indeed add caveats to the Stonewall and/or Prinz awards, the ACLU may very well take issue with this. And one more thought... this District has a right to self-select their reading materials. The CDE list reflects the interests, needs and subject matters of all our students... and literature is often uncomfortable.

Kate MacMillan

Coordinator Library Services

Digital Resource Project Manager

CDE Recommended Literature Committee

Napa Valley Unified School District

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What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

On Tue, Nov 14, 2017 at 2:50 PM, Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi Kate!

I think you are very likely correct that it has to do with including the Stonewall books in particular. ☹

Do you know what the criteria were in past committees for adding that caveat? In the 2016 update, there were five titles that had a warning about mature themes. Do you know what decision process was behind those?

What are your thoughts on just removing the caveat entirely from individual annotations? I don't particularly want to give people an avenue for excluding books, especially for vulnerable students.

Thanks for the link to your blog!!!! I'll share that as a resource. ☺

Best,

Jennifer

From: Kate MacMillan [mailto:kmacmillan@nvusd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:35 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List

Hi, Jennifer!

Years ago we included caveats but as a group decided we would not continue. I do not believe that one school district has the right to demand that we censor or warn students and/or parents about the suitability of a book. What may be controversial for one district may resonate with another. I believe that this may be the result of including Stonewall and Prinz award books to the list. In a way this smacks of censorship and I for one would rather resign from the committee than be a part of this.

To be fair there are mediocre adult books that are still included on the list and should be weeded. These were added to the list by previous committee members who were classroom teachers and not librarians.

I have attached the link to my blog [Libraries Are for Everyone](#) that I wrote for AASL Knowledge Quest. My post addresses the issues of privacy for LGBTQ students and the need to provide much needed materials that will resonate with our students.

Kate MacMillan

Coordinator Library Services

Digital Resource Project Manager

CDE Recommended Literature Committee

Napa Valley Unified School District

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wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with the caveat that is included in some of the entries in the List: "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

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Future Action

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Thank you for reading through this very long email. ☺ Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,

Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

Professional Learning Support Division

California Department of Education

[1430 N Street, Suite 4309](#)

[Sacramento, CA 95814-5901](#)

Phone: [916-323-4630](#)

FAX: [916-323-2928](#)

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 3:57 PM
To: kbowen@ucdavis.edu; schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us; kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com; jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net; jligamari@gmail.com; alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us; kmacmillan@nvusd.org; jritter@mvschools.org
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hello everyone!

This issue is slowly becoming more urgent, so I think a conference call is best for us to all discuss it and come to a conclusion. I know next week is a holiday week, but I'm really hoping you are available. Please read my email below for the questions I have and the proposal I've made.

Fill out this Doodle poll ASAP so that I can schedule something! <https://doodle.com/poll/cbf4d5eby9typd45> I really appreciate you all taking time out of your busy schedules to help me with this. ☺ I am eager to talk with you!

Best,
Jennifer

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:46 PM
To: 'kbowen@ucdavis.edu' ; 'schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us' ; 'kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com' ; 'jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net' ; 'jligamari@gmail.com' ; 'alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us' ; 'kmacmillan@nvusd.org' ; 'jritter@mvschools.org'
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea ; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
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I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

Background

Parents in a district in California are currently concerned about the appropriateness of some of the books that are listed on the Recommended Literature List. After initially wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with the caveat that is included in some of the entries in the List: ♦This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.♦

They want a note published in all syllabi at the district that include texts in the List that have that caveat, although the CDE would not be involved in any local decision such as this. The note would state: ♦Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it.♦

Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of soft censorship, which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

Questions

Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

- Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Is it the entire committee? Only the members that suggested and then approved the book for inclusion?
- What are the criteria for adding that caveat to a book? Are those criteria applied universally, including to books that were added before the caveat was created? Are all books published or cataloged with/without the Young Adult designation given/not given that caveat?

Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. 😊 I'm not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this what is considered mature? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the maturity of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn't let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. 😊 Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 9:03 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hi Jennifer and Roxane,

Please see the questions from Julian below in preparation for our meeting.

Aileen

From: Julian Cuevas
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 8:44 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Okay. I'll send out the invite today. Here are the list of questions Stern's office plans on asking us:

Hi Julian,

Thank you. Generally here are my questions and I'm sure new ones may arise in conversation

- What is the criteria and process for books to be annotated with the "mature" readership/content annotation?
- What is the process for deciding what annotations in general are for books? And how do you take amendments to annotations?
- Is the recommended Literature List the one referenced by Education Code 19336?
- This inquiry is also in regards to CVUSD board member Betsy Connolly's email inquiry a few weeks ago. Has there been follow up since the last email from Roxanne?

Thank you!

Julian Y. Cuevas

Legislative Policy Representative

Government Affairs Division

1430 N Street | Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-327-4628 | Email: JCuevas@cde.ca.gov



ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Julian Cuevas
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 12:20 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hi Aileen -

Apologies for the delayed response. I have reached out to Alex and proposed a 12pm-2pm time block for next Monday, 12/18 as this week is tough. Once I confirm, I'll request questions in advance to help us better prepare. I'll let you know when I hear back. In the meantime, let's touch base tomorrow in preparation for the meeting. I'm out of the office today, but I'm currently pretty open in the morning.

Julian Y. Cuevas
Legislative Policy Representative
Government Affairs Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street | Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-327-4628 | Email: JCuevas@cde.ca.gov

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 11:11:06 AM
To: Julian Cuevas
Cc: Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: FW: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hello Julian,

Please see the inquiry below, which Roxane forwarded to you last Friday. We would be happy to join you in this phone conversation, but it would be helpful to know the specifics of his questions in advance.

Perhaps we could have a conversation prior to the call to provide you with additional background information. Your guidance on how to approach this inquiry would be much appreciated!

Aileen Allison-Zarea
Administrator

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
Teaching and Learning Support Branch
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Telephone: 916-319-0587
Fax: 916-323-2928

Email: aallisonzarea@cde.ca.gov

From: Lee, Alex [<mailto:Alex.Lee@sen.ca.gov>]
Sent: Friday, December 8, 2017 11:31 AM
To: Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Questions regarding Reading List Annotations

Hi Roxane,

I'm a legislative aide with the office of Senator Henry Stern. Last month, Betsy Connolly (a CVUSD board member) contacted you via the LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov address regarding the annotations for the recommended literature list. I wanted to follow up on this inquiry and wanted to ask you some questions regarding the annotations.

Can we set up a time to call today or Monday? Or if available please give me a call back when available. Thank you!

Best,

Alex Lee
Office of Senator Henry Stern
State Capitol, Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 651-4027
Fax: (916) 651-4927

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Lee, Alex <Alex.Lee@sen.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 12:08 PM
To: Roxane Fidler
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Julian Cuevas; Sue Vang
Subject: RE: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hi Roxane,

Please let me know when or who I should direct my questions to! My senator is returning the capitol this week and I'd like to provide him with some answers. Thank you

From: Roxane Fidler [mailto:RFidler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 08, 2017 12:50 PM
To: Lee, Alex
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Julian Cuevas; Sue Vang
Subject: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hi Alex,

I will reach out to my supervisors today regarding your request.

Again, please know that we value the Senator's concerns and questions very highly and will respond quickly.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler
Literacy, History, Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861
E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov
Fax: 916-323-2928

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Phone: (916) 651-4027

Fax: (916) 651-4927

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 1:23 PM
To: Julian Cuevas
Cc: Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler; Mosecca Peppers
Subject: RE: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Thank you, Julian. You should receive an appointment from Mosecca soon.

From: Julian Cuevas
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 12:20 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Barbara Murchison ; Jennifer Howerter ; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hi Aileen -

Apologies for the delayed response. I have reached out to Alex and proposed a 12pm-2pm time block for next Monday, 12/18 as this week is tough. Once I confirm, I'll request questions in advance to help us better prepare. I'll let you know when I hear back. In the meantime, let's touch base tomorrow in preparation for the meeting. I'm out of the office today, but I'm currently pretty open in the morning.

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Legislative Policy Representative
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California Department of Education
1430 N Street | Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-327-4628 | Email: JCuevas@cde.ca.gov

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Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 11:11:06 AM
To: Julian Cuevas
Cc: Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: FW: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hello Julian,

Please see the inquiry below, which Roxane forwarded to you last Friday. We would be happy to join you in this phone conversation, but it would be helpful to know the specifics of his questions in advance.

Perhaps we could have a conversation prior to the call to provide you with additional background information. Your guidance on how to approach this inquiry would be much appreciated!

Aileen Allison-Zarea
Administrator

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:08 AM
To: 'Jonathan Hunt'
Subject: RE: Summary of Literature List Conference Call
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

No worries! Let me know if you have any thoughts to add, though. 😊 I hope you have an amazing holiday!!!

From: Jonathan Hunt [mailto:jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net]
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:07 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Summary of Literature List Conference Call

Oops. Totally could have made that call, but just forgot about it. :(

Jonathan Hunt
Coordinator, Library Media Services
San Diego County Office of Education
5304 Metro St, Ste C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 718-4988

From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Date: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 10:05 AM
To: "kbowen@ucdavis.edu" <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>, "shelley.chappell@tcoe.org" <shelley.chappell@tcoe.org>, "kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com" <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>, SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>, "jligamari@gmail.com" <jligamari@gmail.com>, "alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us" <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>, Kate MacMillan <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>, "jritter@mvschools.org" <jritter@mvschools.org>, Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>, Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>, Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>, Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Summary of Literature List Conference Call

Hello everyone!

Thank you so much to Shelley and Kate for being on the call yesterday. I wanted to provide a quick summary of what we discussed, what we agreed upon, and invite anyone to provide any additional comments!

What We Discussed

We started off the call with a summary of the issue at Conejo Valley USD (please see my original email for details). Kate brought up the critical point that libraries are for everyone, and that labeling books, especially LGBTQ books, can be problematic. Shelley and Kate recalled that historically the caveats appeared to not have any strict criteria in place ♦ it was more about how individual committee members felt about the content of any particular book. Kate also had a conversation with Sandy Killian from the 2008 committee, who confirmed that outlook.

We discussed how the caveats, while they may have been appropriate when they were conceived, may no longer be appropriate in today's ♦ educational context. Kate and Shelley brought up interest levels and how it's ♦ important to pay attention to student interest in addition to the actual reading level of a student. We discussed the possibility of trying to

add them to a future update of the List, and also considered mentioning interest in the broad statement that would replace the caveat. Shelley made the point that adults must consider not just interest, but historical awareness, cultural perspective, etc. when considering a title for a student. It is not an easy decision and varies widely based on the individual in question.

We also briefly discussed the importance of weeding the collection and the upcoming project that the CDE is proposing to management for this purpose.

What We Agreed Upon

We agreed that the caveats as well as any other labeling language should be pulled from title annotations and replaced with a statement on the landing page of the database. We considered the possibility of using language from the ALA:

The California Department of Education agrees with the American Library Association in its affirmation of the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. The needs and interests of each user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis.

We also considered a statement from Jack O'Connell, former SSPI, that stated:

Many of the literature selections available within the Recommended Literature List contain material that can be considered provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature can stimulate debate and disagreement about important issues. The Recommended Literature List is designed to give local educational agencies a range of materials to choose from to meet the needs of local teachers and students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on the Recommended Literature List does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students.

We felt that a statement reflecting the sentiments above would direct responsibility for selecting literature to the local level, which is where it belongs. The next step is to vet proposed language through the California Department of Education chain of command and receive approval for removing the caveat and adding a statement to the Recommended Literature List landing page.

Any Additional Comments?

Another long email! Please let me know if you have any additional input to contribute. I really appreciate all of your expertise, and thank you again Kate and Shelley for taking time out of a holiday week to call us. ☺

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
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1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630

FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

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Date: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 10:05 AM
To: "kbowen@ucdavis.edu" <kbowen@ucdavis.edu>, "shelley.chappell@tcoe.org" <shelley.chappell@tcoe.org>, "kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com" <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>, SDCOE <jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net>, "jligamari@gmail.com" <jligamari@gmail.com>, "alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us" <alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us>, Kate MacMillan <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>, "jritter@mvschools.org" <jritter@mvschools.org>, Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>, Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>, Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>, Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
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Any Additional Comments?

Another long email! Please let me know if you have any additional input to contribute. I really appreciate all of your expertise, and thank you again Kate and Shelley for taking time out of a holiday week to call us. ☺

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Jennifer



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California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Kathy Goodwin <kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:15 AM
To: kbowen@ucdavis.edu; shelley.chappell@tcoe.org; jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net; jligamari@gmail.com; alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us; Kate MacMillan; jritter@mvschools.org; Roxane Fidler; Renee Ousley-Swank; Aileen Allison-Zarea; Maxine Wheeler; Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: Summary of Literature List Conference Call
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Thanks ... especially to Shelly and Kate. Excellent decisions. We've come a long way. Years ago, most on the committee would probably prefer the wording we are now supporting. Now I think many more readers and educators agree with us on diversity issues. There is still work to be done and getting quality books into the hands of young readers helps in that work.

Kathy Goodwin

(Retired teacher and librarian. Lifelong reader.)

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From: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:05:02 AM
To: kbowen@ucdavis.edu; shelley.chappell@tcoe.org; kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com; jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net; jligamari@gmail.com; alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us; Kate MacMillan; jritter@mvschools.org; Roxane Fidler; Renee Ousley-Swank; Aileen Allison-Zarea; Maxine Wheeler
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Best,
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California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
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Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 12:47 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: RE: the conejo valley thing passed

No, we do not. Do you want me to try to schedule something for tomorrow?

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: the conejo valley thing passed

Wow. Do we have a meeting scheduled with Barbara? If not, I'll discuss it with her on Friday but will email her info today.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 11:20 AM
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<https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

Let's discuss when you return! I think we REALLY have to move fast on removing those designations. We also received another email about it in the lit list email box. ./

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:02 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Re: the conejo valley thing passed

Yes. Later in the afternoon if possible.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 12:47 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: RE: the conejo valley thing passed

No, we do not. Do you want me to try to schedule something for tomorrow?

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: the conejo valley thing passed

Wow. Do we have a meeting scheduled with Barbara? If not, I'll discuss it with her on Friday but will email her info today.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 11:20 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: the conejo valley thing passed

<https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 11:19 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Jennifer Moreno; Maxine Wheeler
Subject: RE: TSD Questions for Caveat Removal

Hi Jenn,

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Laurie said that Maxine has back-end capability that is similar to what TSD staff has, but again, we are really limited to looking for the caveat language and/or keywords through the back-end.

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This project makes me think that maybe another thing we'd like to look at adding to the database, is the capability for us to see a history of which users, including CDE staff, made changes to a particular title and what change they made. That would help us with a CDE staff member—like the past consultant—who went into the database and potentially made edits to titles across the committees.

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Rox :^)

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To: Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Moreno <JMoreno@cde.ca.gov>
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Thanks – let me know if this doesn't make sense. I'm kinda scrambling over here. ☺ If you'd like to have a quickie meeting to discuss this and get things nailed down before you write this up, that's cool too.

-Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
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To: Roxane Fidler
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ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 11:22 AM
To: Roxane Fidler
Cc: Jennifer Moreno; Maxine Wheeler
Subject: RE: TSD Questions for Caveat Removal

No, I mean just with us. ☺

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 11:21 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Jennifer Moreno ; Maxine Wheeler
Subject: RE: TSD Questions for Caveat Removal

Okay—we will have to pay for that meeting. That’s my understanding from Laurie.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 11:21 AM
To: Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Moreno <JMoreno@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
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-Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 10:38 AM
To: Maxine Wheeler
Subject: RE: Two different caveats in lit list database

Thank you!!! And thank you also for your insights today. I really appreciate all of the history that you bring to the table!!

From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 10:05 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea ; Roxane Fidler ; Jennifer Howerter ; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Two different caveats in lit list database

Caveat #1: 212 titles

This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

Caveat #2: 106 titles

This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 1:00 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Barbara Murchison; Stephanie Gregson
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Roxane Fidler; Cliff Rudnick
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thank you for including me in this exchange. I wanted to share I agree with Jennifer's suggestion of removing the "caveat" language from within individual titles and placing a generic statement for all titles, including the final decision on whether to use a book or not is a local decision, on the list's main page.

The 2016 group was directed to include Stonewall books on the list (as they should be) and I don't recall a conversation about including "caveat language." I've been told, if the ACLU were to see the caveat language on these Stonewall books, we could be opening ourselves up to a lawsuit.

How in the world did we allow this language to be posted for Wonder?!

Wonder	Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan. Auggie struggles with the teasing of his classmates as he tries to be seen as just another student. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many young people and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
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I have included Stephanie and Cliff in this e-mail exchange because the Recommended Literature List was discussed at the IQC meeting. The IQC sees the need to have the list updated with new titles supporting curriculum updates. We would like to be involved in the discussion of updating the literature list as appropriate. CFIRD is here to support you in cleaning up the language and updating titles on the list.

Sincerely,

Renée Ousley-Swank, School Library Technology Consultant
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-319-0449

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 11:23 AM
To: Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Renee Ousley-Swank

<ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

Unfortunately, Maxine may not be in the office today. We will schedule a conference call with the Literature List Committee that did the last update in 2016 for next week when Roxane is back in the office. It will be good to have their input on next steps also. Hopefully we will be able to get some additional background from Maxine if she is in tomorrow and will bring that to you.

Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM

To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

Maxine worked with the committee that developed the online list and the database tool in the late 1990's. She can provide insight about the crafting of the caveat language by the CDE staff and the literature list committee.

Roxane

From: Barbara Murchison

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM

To: Aileen Allison-Zarea

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Please bring some recommended disclaimer language options to our meeting tomorrow afternoon. It may be worth checking in with Maxine or Anie as they are likely to be familiar with how this is handled on other Web pages.

Thanks,
Barbara

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Anyway, I'd like to share the news article in the following link that refers to the Literature List, and this issue in particular: <https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

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Jennifer proposed we simply remove the "warning" on specific titles and replace with a more generic disclaimer for all titles. We can even link into reputable review sites. We are not comfortable at this point with stakeholders using CDE statements to develop their policies that could be perceived as censorship.

We would like to meet with you, but wanted to give you a heads up on this week's rapid happenings. We think that we may need to address this quickly.

Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:47 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue
Attachments: Caveat info sheet for meeting.doc

I think most of the detail was in the SCM I sent previously. I don't recall being present at the subcommittee meeting that decided to introduce caveats into potentially controversial titles, so I'm not positive what criteria they used. The consultant who worked directly with the committee has long since retired from CDE. If the criteria to add a caveat was similar to which books were selected, it came down to the committee members' expertise and best judgement.

From: Jennifer Howerter
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Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Thanks!! This is really valuable. Do you know what sort of criteria they developed in order to apply those caveats?

From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:29 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Good morning.

Attached is an SCM we submitted to Branch on May 13, 2004, to add caveats to high school books which a subcommittee felt had the potential to receive complaints about the content. Also attached is the original listing of titles which the subcommittee felt needed one of two caveats. It was intended (to my recollection) as additional information to cut down on the number of complaints that CDE received and to help teachers and parents more easily discern if a book could be inappropriate for their students.

Each time there was a literature list update, the high school committee would determine which titles (if any) needed to have one of the two caveats added. There have been six full updates and one smaller update (to add award winning titles only).

I can join you for a discussion about this if you would like.

Maxine

P.S. I did not respond to the e-mail that went to CFIRD and Barb, as I did not feel that it was my place to do so.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 12:01 PM

To: Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Maxine,

Do you have any insight into the language that we're talking about below? Any history you have on this is welcome! Thanks!!

-Jenn

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Can you please connect with Maxine to try to get the language Barbara is requesting?

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We would like to meet with you, but wanted to give you a heads up on this week's rapid happenings. We think that we may need to address this quickly.

Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Barbara Murchison
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:04 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Please bring some recommended disclaimer language options to our meeting tomorrow afternoon. It may be worth checking in with Maxine or Anie as they are likely to be familiar with how this is handled on other Web pages.

Thanks,
Barbara

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM
To: Barbara Murchison
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

I am hoping to get your input on an issue that Jennifer brought to my attention this week regarding the annotation placed on some titles within the CDE Recommended Literature List. On certain titles, there is a sentence indicating that the title may contain mature themes and that caution should be used...Jennifer can provide you with the exact language.

Anyway, I'd like to share the news article in the following link that refers to the Literature List, and this issue in particular: <https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

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Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:29 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue
Attachments: SCM for Carol Jago's caveats.doc; Carol Jago's caveats.doc

Good morning.

Attached is an SCM we submitted to Branch on May 13, 2004, to add caveats to high school books which a subcommittee felt had the potential to receive complaints about the content. Also attached is the original listing of titles which the subcommittee felt needed one of two caveats. It was intended (to my recollection) as additional information to cut down on the number of complaints that CDE received and to help teachers and parents more easily discern if a book could be inappropriate for their students.

Each time there was a literature list update, the high school committee would determine which titles (if any) needed to have one of the two caveats added. There have been six full updates and one smaller update (to add award winning titles only).

I can join you for a discussion about this if you would like.

Maxine

P.S. I did not respond to the e-mail that went to CFIRD and Barb, as I did not feel that it was my place to do so.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 12:01 PM
To: Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Maxine,

Do you have any insight into the language that we're talking about below? Any history you have on this is welcome! Thanks!!

-Jenn

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:55 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Fw: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Jennifer,

Can you please connect with Maxine to try to get the language Barbara is requesting?

Thanks!

Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM
To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

Maxine worked with the committee that developed the online list and the database tool in the late 1990's. She can provide insight about the crafting of the caveat language by the CDE staff and the literature list committee.

Roxane

From: Barbara Murchison
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 3:35 PM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Roxane Fidler; Cliff Rudnick; Barbara Murchison; Stephanie Gregson
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Many thanks for your input, Renee. We agree with your comments below and have consulted with Barbara on the matter. We are moving forward with next steps as quickly as possible, but will be getting a legal consult as well, so that might take some time.

It seems that the language was developed many years ago and certainly needs to be considered for removal or modification, as we are not aware of the criteria (if any) that was used to place this caveat on some pieces of literature and not others.

Again, thank you for the email and we will be sure to include you in all communications regarding the Literature List.

Aileen

From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 1:00 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>; Stephanie Gregson <SGregson@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>; Cliff Rudnick <CRudnick@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

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titles supporting curriculum updates. We would like to be involved in the discussion of updating the literature list as appropriate. CFIRD is here to support you in cleaning up the language and updating titles on the list.

Sincerely,

Renée Ousley-Swank, School Library Technology Consultant
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-319-0449

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
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Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

Unfortunately, Maxine may not be in the office today. We will schedule a conference call with the Literature List Committee that did the last update in 2016 for next week when Roxane is back in the office. It will be good to have their input on next steps also. Hopefully we will be able to get some additional background from Maxine if she is in tomorrow and will bring that to you.

Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM
To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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Roxane

From: Barbara Murchison
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

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Thanks,
Barbara

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To: Barbara Murchison
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
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Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:09 PM
To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

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Roxane

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To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
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To: Barbara Murchison
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Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Yes, I'll add you!

Also, I have some calls on the Info Lit Summit coming up with Common Sense Media, NAMLE, and some calls in the works with a professor from CSUS, a reporter from channel 10, and a guy from Politifact. Are you interested in being with me on those calls as well?

From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:00 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

If Aileen is fine with me joining you I think that will work. Are you meeting in a specific room?

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:57 AM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

It's from 930-1030, and Aileen, Roxane and I are meeting just before that so that we can prep for it. On the call will be Kate McMillan and Shelley Chappell. Those were the only two to respond to my request for a call! ☺

From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:56 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

What time is your call? If I can fit it in my schedule I would love to be in the conversation. Curious, what group members are you talking to?
~ Renée

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:54 AM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Renee,

Thank you for providing CFIRD support in this!! Maybe we can have a meeting with Roxane so that she can catch you up on what we're doing with the List. We're planning on doing a bit of weeding with our next committee, and we're convening virtually rather than in person to cut down on costs. As for the issue below, I'm on a call with two committee members tomorrow to talk about the criteria and my proposal for removing that language in the annotations. Would you like to be on it? I would love to have your input if you're available!

Thanks,
Jenn

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 3:35 PM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>; Cliff Rudnick <CRudnick@cde.ca.gov>; Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>; Stephanie

Gregson <SGregson@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Many thanks for your input, Renee. We agree with your comments below and have consulted with Barbara on the matter. We are moving forward with next steps as quickly as possible, but will be getting a legal consult as well, so that might take some time.

It seems that the language was developed many years ago and certainly needs to be considered for removal or modification, as we are not aware of the criteria (if any) that was used to place this caveat on some pieces of literature and not others.

Again, thank you for the email and we will be sure to include you in all communications regarding the Literature List.
Aileen

From: Renee Ousley-Swank

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 1:00 PM

To: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>; Stephanie Gregson <SGregson@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>; Cliff Rudnick <CRudnick@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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Sincerely,

Renée Ousley-Swank, School Library Technology Consultant
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-319-0449

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 11:23 AM

To: Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

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Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM

To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank

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Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 11:13 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

I don't think she's here. ☹

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:55 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: Fw: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Jennifer,

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From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:29 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue
Attachments: SCM for Carol Jago's caveats.doc; Carol Jago's caveats.doc

Good morning.

Attached is an SCM we submitted to Branch on May 13, 2004, to add caveats to high school books which a subcommittee felt had the potential to receive complaints about the content. Also attached is the original listing of titles which the subcommittee felt needed one of two caveats. It was intended (to my recollection) as additional information to cut down on the number of complaints that CDE received and to help teachers and parents more easily discern if a book could be inappropriate for their students.

Each time there was a literature list update, the high school committee would determine which titles (if any) needed to have one of the two caveats added. There have been six full updates and one smaller update (to add award winning titles only).

I can join you for a discussion about this if you would like.

Maxine

P.S. I did not respond to the e-mail that went to CFIRD and Barb, as I did not feel that it was my place to do so.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 12:01 PM
To: Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Maxine,

Do you have any insight into the language that we're talking about below? Any history you have on this is welcome! Thanks!!

-Jenn

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
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From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:00 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

If Aileen is fine with me joining you I think that will work. Are you meeting in a specific room?

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:57 AM
To: Renee Ousley-Swank <ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

It's from 930-1030, and Aileen, Roxane and I are meeting just before that so that we can prep for it. On the call will be Kate McMillan and Shelley Chappell. Those were the only two to respond to my request for a call! ☺

From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:56 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

What time is your call? If I can fit it in my schedule I would love to be in the conversation. Curious, what group members are you talking to?

~ Renée

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Aileen

From: Renee Ousley-Swank
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 1:00 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea <AAllisonZarea@cde.ca.gov>; Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>; Stephanie Gregson <SGregson@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>; Cliff Rudnick <CRudnick@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thank you for including me in this exchange. I wanted to share I agree with Jennifer's suggestion of removing the "caveat" language from within individual titles and placing a generic statement for all titles, including the final decision on whether to use a book or not is a local decision, on the list's main page.

The 2016 group was directed to include Stonewall books on the list (as they should be) and I don't recall a conversation about including "caveat language." I've been told, if the ACLU were to see the caveat language on these Stonewall books, we could be opening ourselves up to a lawsuit.

How in the world did we allow this language to be posted for Wonder?!

Wonder	Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan. Auggie struggles with the teasing of his classmates as he tries to be seen as just another student. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many young people and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.
------------------------	--

I have included Stephanie and Cliff in this e-mail exchange because the Recommended Literature List was discussed at the IQC meeting. The IQC sees the need to have the list updated with new titles supporting curriculum updates. We would like to be involved in the discussion of updating the literature list as appropriate. CFIRD is here to support you in cleaning up the language and updating titles on the list.

Sincerely,

Renée Ousley-Swank, School Library Technology Consultant
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-319-0449

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 11:23 AM
To: Barbara Murchison <BMurchison@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>; Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>; Renee Ousley-Swank

<ROusleySwank@cde.ca.gov>; Roxane Fidler <RFidler@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

Unfortunately, Maxine may not be in the office today. We will schedule a conference call with the Literature List Committee that did the last update in 2016 for next week when Roxane is back in the office. It will be good to have their input on next steps also. Hopefully we will be able to get some additional background from Maxine if she is in tomorrow and will bring that to you.

Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM

To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

Maxine worked with the committee that developed the online list and the database tool in the late 1990's. She can provide insight about the crafting of the caveat language by the CDE staff and the literature list committee.

Roxane

From: Barbara Murchison

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM

To: Aileen Allison-Zarea

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler

Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Please bring some recommended disclaimer language options to our meeting tomorrow afternoon. It may be worth checking in with Maxine or Anie as they are likely to be familiar with how this is handled on other Web pages.

Thanks,
Barbara

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM

To: Barbara Murchison

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler

Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

I am hoping to get your input on an issue that Jennifer brought to my attention this week regarding the annotation placed on some titles within the CDE Recommended Literature List. On certain titles, there is a sentence indicating that the title may contain mature themes and that caution should be used...Jennifer can provide you with the exact language.

Anyway, I'd like to share the news article in the following link that refers to the Literature List, and this issue in particular: <https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

Roxane has been overseeing the literature list and committee work for several years, but Jennifer is assisting with various tasks. Since Roxane is on vacation this week, Jennifer has fielded a few calls and emails regarding this issue and brought it to my attention. We decided to reach out to the last update committee yesterday to determine how the determination was made to put this "warning" on some titles and how mature content etc. are determined. We realize that judging maturity of content can vary widely and is subjective, so we would like to know if a criteria was used.

Jennifer proposed we simply remove the "warning" on specific titles and replace with a more generic disclaimer for all titles. We can even link into reputable review sites. We are not comfortable at this point with stakeholders using CDE statements to develop their policies that could be perceived as censorship.

We would like to meet with you, but wanted to give you a heads up on this week's rapid happenings. We think that we may need to address this quickly.

Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 11:23 AM
To: Barbara Murchison
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

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To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

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Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

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Thanks,

Barbara

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM
To: Barbara Murchison
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:09 PM
To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

Maxine worked with the committee that developed the online list and the database tool in the late 1990's. She can provide insight about the crafting of the caveat language by the CDE staff and the literature list committee.

Roxane

From: Barbara Murchison
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:03 PM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Aileen,

Thanks for bringing this to my attention. Please bring some recommended disclaimer language options to our meeting tomorrow afternoon. It may be worth checking in with Maxine or Anie as they are likely to be familiar with how this is handled on other Web pages.

Thanks,
Barbara

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM
To: Barbara Murchison
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

I am hoping to get your input on an issue that Jennifer brought to my attention this week regarding the annotation placed on some titles within the CDE Recommended Literature List. On certain titles, there is a sentence indicating that the title may contain mature themes and that caution should be used...Jennifer can provide you with the exact language.

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We would like to meet with you, but wanted to give you a heads up on this week's rapid happenings. We think that we may need to address this quickly.

Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:38 AM
To: Maxine Wheeler
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Thanks!! This is really valuable. Do you know what sort of criteria they developed in order to apply those caveats?

From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 10:29 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea ; Roxane Fidler
Subject: RE: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Good morning.

Attached is an SCM we submitted to Branch on May 13, 2004, to add caveats to high school books which a subcommittee felt had the potential to receive complaints about the content. Also attached is the original listing of titles which the subcommittee felt needed one of two caveats. It was intended (to my recollection) as additional information to cut down on the number of complaints that CDE received and to help teachers and parents more easily discern if a book could be inappropriate for their students.

Each time there was a literature list update, the high school committee would determine which titles (if any) needed to have one of the two caveats added. There have been six full updates and one smaller update (to add award winning titles only).

I can join you for a discussion about this if you would like.

Maxine

P.S. I did not respond to the e-mail that went to CFIRD and Barb, as I did not feel that it was my place to do so.

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 12:01 PM
To: Maxine Wheeler <MWheeler@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Maxine,

Do you have any insight into the language that we're talking about below? Any history you have on this is welcome! Thanks!!

-Jenn

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:55 AM

To: Jennifer Howerter <JHowerter@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Fw: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Jennifer,

Can you please connect with Maxine to try to get the language Barbara is requesting?

Thanks!

Aileen

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:08 PM
To: Barbara Murchison; Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Maxine Wheeler; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi!

Maxine worked with the committee that developed the online list and the database tool in the late 1990's. She can provide insight about the crafting of the caveat language by the CDE staff and the literature list committee.

Roxane

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To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Re: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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Thanks,
Barbara

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM
To: Barbara Murchison

Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler

Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

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Aileen

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: LITERATURELIST
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2017 1:27 PM
To: Betsy Connolly
Cc: Henry Stern; Irwin, Jacqui; Mary Anne Van Zuyle; LITERATURELIST
Subject: RE: Question about annotations

Good afternoon Betsy,

Again, please accept my apology for not having responded in a more timely fashion.

The CDE staff that work with the Literature List appreciate the concerns and questions. We sincerely appreciate your feedback and feedback in the e-mails and telephone calls that staff has received on this topic.

Please know that your opinion is valued and staff is working on next steps in response to concerns and questions raised.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler
Literacy, History, Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861
E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov
Fax: 916-323-2928

From: Betsy Connolly [mailto:dvmum@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 8:23 AM
To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Henry Stern <henry.stern@sen.ca.gov>; Irwin, Jacqui <Jacqui.Irwin@asm.ca.gov>; Mary Anne Van Zuyle <maryanne@westlakegis.com>
Subject: Re: Question about annotations

I'm sorry to persist in this. I know that it adds to your work and stress load but I cannot stop as there is too much at stake. One of our board members has written a policy that includes a requirement to add this paragraph to all syllabi that include literature with the CDE mature content annotation. It is likely to be approved by a vote of 3-2 if local outrage isn't sufficient. If there is someone I should be speaking with about the manner that the CDEs annotation is being used, please advise. Regards, Betsy Connolly

“Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the CVUSD Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it.”

On Thu, Nov 9, 2017 at 4:03 PM, Betsy Connolly <dvmum@gmail.com> wrote:

Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Are all books published or cataloged without the Young Adult designation given that caveat? Does the review committee make the decision at the time of addition? If a book is not so annotated, is it a YA selection or has it been reviewed by a committee to ensure that it is not written for mature readers or are books from the pre-online version not so annotated?

Regards, Betsy Connolly

On Thu, Nov 9, 2017 at 3:37 PM, LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Good morning Ms. Connolly,

Thank you for your e-mail.

The caveat helps inform adults and youth that a title contains mature themes. To my knowledge the caveat was developed in the 1990's when the literature list moved from its print version to becoming an online resource.

The caveat is meant as a tool to assist in selecting literature not to censure it.

Also, the material included in the literature list is recommended not required. Local districts may create a process that engages educators and the community in selecting quality literature for classroom reading.

The literature list provides resources for districts that are reviewing, updating, or crafting a new literature selection policy: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/litrlppolicies.asp>.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler

Education Programs Consultant

California Department of Education

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

[1430 N Street, Room 4309](#)

[Sacramento, CA 95814](#)

Phone: [916-323-4861](tel:916-323-4861)

Fax: [916-323-2838](tel:916-323-2838)

E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov

From: Betsy Connolly [mailto:dvmum@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, November 08, 2017 3:22 PM

To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: Question about annotations

It has been called to our attention that 223 books in the Recommended Literature List contain the annotation *This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.* Could you please clarify the source of this annotation language. I'm on a school board where a member wants all of these books flagged in teacher outlines so that parents are aware of potentially offensive content.

If this phrase is added by the review committee under certain specific circumstances or at the behest of a particular individual, it would be helpful to know what those circumstances are.

Regards,

Betsy Connolly

Board Member

Conejo Valley Unified School District

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Diane Gies <diane.gies@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2017 4:31 PM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: Recommended Literature List

Hi, Friends,

I'm following the controversy in our district about the books for high school students that have asterisks for more adult content.

I have just finished *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie.

Can you describe how I'd search your list to find the books with asterisks? I'm a retired librarian and am curious to see what the fuss is about.

Thank you very much for your help.

Diane Gies

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Sally Hibbitts <sjhibbitts@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 1, 2018 10:53 PM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: Recommended Literature List

I've noticed that the previous parental warnings about certain titles (Bluest Eyes) on the CDE Lit list have recently been removed. Please explain why and will these warnings be put back, etc. please provide a status update about this issue. Thank you.

Sally Hibbitts
Thousand Oaks, CA

Sent from my iPad

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Teri Trudel <mthk@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 3:52 PM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: Recommended Literature List

Hello,

I have been informed that “mature content” references have been deleted from your website.

Just like the movie ratings system, I found this “mature content “ info very informative.

I now will have to individually research all books, rather than a select few.

Is there another place on your website I might be able to find this info?

Additionally, would you consider adding this information back on to your website?

Thank you,

Teri Trudel

mthk@verizon.net

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Dryer, Dede <ddryer@conejouso.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 1:08 PM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: Recommended Literature List

We just noticed that some of the descriptors for various titles on the recommended list have been shortened – including information about mature content. Can you confirm and also let us know why these changes have been made? We used the mature content part of the descriptor to help us communicate information about the books to teachers, parents, and students. Please advise!

Thanks,

DD

DeDe Dryer
Instructional Coach
Curriculum and Assessment
Professional Development
Conejo Valley Unified School District
805.497.9511 x242

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Lauren Gill <laurengill@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2018 10:49 AM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: Recommended Literature List
Attachments: IMG_2430.jpeg; IMG_2430.jpeg

Dear Literature Staffmember,

My child's syllabus came home with the following asterisked warning:

*This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child. Per annotations produced by the California Department of Education (CDE), books identified as having "mature content" may contain portrayals of abusive human rights violations and rape as well as graphic language, mature situations, and other content potentially disturbing to students.

I recognize the first two sentences from the CDE Recommended Literature List. However, the third sentence is freelanced and seems to me to be hyperbolic and unnecessarily frightening.

Can you comment on the intent of the CDE's mature content designation and whether the language on my child's syllabus is faithful to the CDE's intent in designating texts on the Recommended Literature List?

Many thanks, in advance, for your consideration and advice,

Lauren

Lauren Gill
laurengill@me.com

617 970 2417

@ldgill

"You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read." Cesar Chavez

Newbury Park High School

Addendum to English 12 Syllabus
2017/2018 School Year - Semester 2 and Term 2

The following information is an addendum to the information presented at the start of the 2017/2018 school year. This information specifically relates to the material and information utilized during English class.

Parents/legal guardians and students have the choice to request an alternative assignment when the content of core literature materials are in conflict with personal sensibilities and/or values.

The following literature selections may be used during the 2nd semester or Term 2 of 12th grade English courses.

12th Grade English Course Book List

George Orwell

Aldous Huxley

Oscar Wilde

Robert Louis Stevenson

Mary Shelley

Jane Austen

William Shakespeare

Khaled Hosseini

Rohinton Mistry

Margaret Atwood

Juan Rulfo

1984

Brave New World

The Importance of Being Earnest

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Frankenstein

Pride and Prejudice

Hamlet

*The Kite Runner

121B

A Fine Balance

*The Handmaid's Tale

Pedro Paramo

*This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child. Per annotations produced by the California Department of Education (CDE), books identified as having "mature content" may contain portrayals of abusive human rights violations and rape as well as graphic language, mature situations, and other content potentially disturbing to students.

Please have your student return this form to his or her English teacher.

Student Printed Name _____ Date _____

I acknowledge notification of the Core Literature reading selections for my student's English class.

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____

Thomas Prouty

From: Barbara Murchison
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 5:31 PM
To: Tom Adams
Subject: literature list caveat

Hi Tom,

Per our conversation yesterday, we will plan to remove the caveats attached to specific titles and add a general caveat on the landing page of the Recommended Literature List. Here is the general caveat:

Many of the literature selections available within the Recommended Literature List contain material that can be considered provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature can stimulate debate and disagreement about important issues. The Recommended Literature List is designed to give local educational agencies a range of materials to choose from to meet the needs of local teachers and students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on the Recommended Literature List does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like us to proceed in a different manner.

Thanks,
Barbara

Barbara Murchison, Director
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-319-0203
bmurchison@cde.ca.gov

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:46 PM
To: kbowen@ucdavis.edu; schappell@rocklin.k12.ca.us; kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com; jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net; jligamari@gmail.com; alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us; kmacmillan@nvusd.org; jritter@mvschools.org
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Response Requested: Mature Note in Literature List
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Importance: High

Dear committee members,

I hope this email finds you well! I have received a question from the public on some of the titles in the Recommended Literature List, and as it is more of a process question and I am new to this project, I thought I would reach out to you so that you could provide a bit of explication on your decisions.

Background

Parents in a district in California are currently concerned about the appropriateness of some of the books that are listed on the Recommended Literature List. After initially wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with the caveat that is included in some of the entries in the List: "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

They want a note published in all syllabi at the district that include texts in the List that have that caveat, although the CDE would not be involved in any local decision such as this. The note would state: "Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it."

Some other parents are concerned that this amounts to a sort of 'soft censorship,' which will discourage teachers from including anything, including supplementary reading material, that would require that notice and potentially cause issues among the parents of their students.

Questions

Some questions have arisen at this district about how the current caveat came to be and the decision making process that went into some books having it and others not:

- Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Is it the entire committee? Only the members that suggested and then approved the book for inclusion?
- What are the criteria for adding that caveat to a book? Are those criteria applied universally, including to books that were added before the caveat was created? Are all books published or cataloged with/without the Young Adult designation given/not given that caveat?

Can you provide some insight into this issue? Your experience and knowledge in this can potentially help those parents that are concerned about censorship argue their case. If you like, and you think it would be productive, I could even set up a conference call for all of us to discuss this.

Future Action

All of this has me thinking more deeply about the caveat and the appropriateness of it. ☺ I'm not sure what the criteria is for including the caveat, but I am concerned that it isn't applied universally (though I could be wrong!). I am also concerned that there is a morality aspect to this – what is considered 'mature'? For example, a kiss shared between a heterosexual teen couple might not be considered mature, but a kiss shared between a LGBTQ teen couple might have been. And then a lot of classics have mature themes, but have they received the caveat? Of Mice and Men certainly has mature themes, but that does not have the caveat.

So, essentially, I am concerned about us making a judgement on the 'maturity' of literature. What could be considered to have mature themes could vary wildly based on the audience. Instead of having the caveat at all, I think that we might be better off having a blanket proclamation on the landing page of the database that teachers and parents should read the book before offering it to the child. Regardless of the book, I think this is best practice. Adults shouldn't let a subjective caveat on the List make a decision for them as to whether a book is appropriate for a child.

Thank you for reading through this very long email. ☺ Let me know if you're interested in that conference call. Regardless, I am eager to receive your insights!

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Kate MacMillan <kmacmillan@nvusd.org>
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 9:54 AM
To: Jennifer Howerter
Subject: SB 48 and Textbooks

I am sure you are aware of this... but some more info for tomorrow's conversation

<http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-lgbt-textbooks-20171113-story.html>

Kate MacMillan
Coordinator Library Services
Digital Resource Project Manager
CDE Recommended Literature Committee
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
707 259-8441; 707 287-2883
kmacmillan@nvusd.org

Preparing for an unknown future with unknown technologies is ultimately the goal of education.

What I'm reading now.....*Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*

1-5-18 K

Summary Cover Memo

SCM Preparer	
Name:	Jennifer Howerter
Phone:	323-4630

Date: December 21, 2017

To: Tom Adams

Content Provider	
Name:	Jennifer Howerter
Phone:	323-4630

From: Barbara Murchison

Subject: Proposal for the Removal of Caveats from the Recommended Literature List

Approval

Manager Approved	
Signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>
Phone:	319-0587

Summary of Contents

I am submitting the attached package for your approval and signature.

The Educator Excellence and Equity Division requests approval to:

Director Approved	
Date:	1/2/18
Signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>

1) Remove two caveats from annotations in the Recommended Literature List: Pre-kindergarten through Grade Twelve (Recommended Literature List)

2) Add a general statement on the Recommended Literature List's Web page explaining the purpose of the Recommended Literature List and the responsibility of local districts to choose literature for their students.

12/19/18

Deputy Approved	
Date:	1/10/18
Signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>

General Counsel Approved	
Date:	
Signature:	

The caveats are currently being used to effectively ban certain books from a school district. This package outlines the request, background information, and other pertinent details surrounding the history of the language in question. It includes:

Other Approved	
Name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

1) The request to remove the caveats and add the general statement

2)

Chief Deputy Use Only	
<input type="checkbox"/>	For TT's Digital signature
<input type="checkbox"/>	For TT's Signature
<input type="checkbox"/>	With Edits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved
Date:	
Signature:	

3) E-mails containing history on the creation of the caveat

4) E-mails the California Department of Education received from the public regarding their concerns on what Conejo Valley USD is doing

5) Position statements from the American Library Association on the use of caveats or "prejudicial labels"

6) Information on the Recommended Literature List and proposed locations for general language

Superintendent's Correspondence Unit Use Only	
<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mailed from TT
Date:	
Signature:	

If you have any questions regarding this package, please contact Jennifer Howerter by phone at 916-323-4630 or by e-mail at jhowerter@cde.ca.gov.

Proposal for the Removal of Caveats from the Recommended Literature List

Issue

Some parents in Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) have recently expressed concern about the appropriateness of some of the books that are listed on the California Department of Education's (CDE) Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten through Grade Twelve (Recommended Literature List). After initially wanting the books to not be taught in the classroom, they faced push back from other parents, and instead have concerned themselves with two caveats that are included in the annotations of some of the titles in the database:

- "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."
- "This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

The group of concerned parents drafted a note to present to the school board, asking that the note be published in all syllabi at the district that include the specific texts in the Recommended Literature List that contain either one of those caveats, along with any similar language. The note would state: "Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The CDE and the Conejo Valley Unified School District Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it."

On November 14, 2017, the School Board voted 3-1 in favor of including the note in the syllabi. The adopted language reads:

Ensure selections with the following recommendation or similar recommendation from the CDE Recommended Literature List appear on the teacher syllabus whenever these selections are included on the syllabus: The CDE states, "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

Ensure the following statement, along with the selections that have the above CDE recommendation (or similar), is provided to parents/guardians via email and at parent-teacher night: "Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The CDE and the CVUSD Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it." This statement could appear once in a footnote with an asterisk (or similar) flagging each book to which this statement applies.

The local school board is also requiring teachers to obtain a signed permission from parents before proceeding with teaching any book that contains a caveat on the Recommended Literature List. The group of opposing parents, along with district staff, are concerned that this is essentially censorship, as obtaining signed permission from every parent before proceeding would effectively discourage a teacher from choosing the book at all.

In addition to the "opt in" option, the school board also instituted a parent committee, selected by the school board, to review all board-approved literature recommendations. The language reads:

"Create a committee of parents/legal guardians and community members to review supporting documents for requests to use potential selections. The committee members are encouraged to read requested selections themselves and also must review in a timely manner. This committee will be chosen and appointed by the Board. Each Board member shall appoint two members to the committee from among the applicants, who may be the parents/legal guardians of children currently enrolled as Kindergarten through Grade 12 students in the District or community members."

The board adoption of this language was covered by several newspaper organizations:

<https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

<https://www.toacorn.com/articles/mature-content-ahead/>

Recommendation

The Professional Learning Support Division (PLSD) recognizes that the nature of the Recommended Literature List includes books of very diverse nature and subject matter, some of which might be offensive to certain audiences, and those audiences might be upset at the thought of the CDE recommending such literature. Even so, the nature of the Recommended Literature List, also, is to represent the unique and diverse experiences of students throughout California, and inclusion of those experiences in literary form does not prohibit teachers, parents, and others from selecting books that are appropriate for a particular child or group of children. In essence, including books of any nature does not *require* users to select them.

The PLSD recommends that:

1. The caveats be immediately removed from all titles in addition to any other language that may act as what the American Library Association calls "prejudicial labeling."
2. A statement be added to the Recommended Literature List Web page that states "Many of the literature selections available within the Recommended Literature

List contain topics and discussions that may be considered provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature stimulates reflection and debate about important issues. The Recommended Literature List is designed to give local educational agencies a range of materials to choose from to meet the needs of local teachers and students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level. The variety of materials on the Recommended Literature List is intended to help local teachers and administrators select those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students and does not preclude using other fiction and non-fiction literature.”

This language would direct those accessing the Recommended Literature List to determine their own needs and interests and select books that adhere to those needs and interests. As such needs and interests vary, it will be up to the user to read and become familiar with any title that they wish to use in the classroom or pass on to a student.

This recommendation has been shared with members of the 2016 Recommended Literature List committee – they provided their input on the issue and language above and concur with this recommendation.

Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors

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An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users violate the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation. Equitable access to all library resources and services shall not be abridged through restrictive scheduling or use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, games, software, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services." Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children.

Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Note

1. See *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant's Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011): a) Video games qualify for First Amendment protection. Like protected books, plays, and movies, they communicate ideas through familiar literary devices and features distinctive to the medium. And "the basic principles of freedom of speech . . . do not vary" with a new and different communication medium."

2. See *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; and July 1, 2014.

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ALA American Library Association

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The Freedom to Read Statement

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The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public*

information.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association (/)
Association of American Publishers (<http://www.publishers.org/>)

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression (<http://www.bookweb.org/abfe>)
The Association of American University Presses (<http://www.aaupnet.org/>)
The Children's Book Council (<http://www.cbcbooks.org/>)
Freedom to Read Foundation (<http://www.ftrf.org>)
National Association of College Stores (<http://www.nacs.org/>)
National Coalition Against Censorship (<http://www.ncaac.org/>)
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Labeling Systems

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An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Labels may be a library-sanctioned means of organizing resources or providing guidance to users. They may be as simple as a colored dot or strip of tape indicating reference books or fiction or as elaborate as the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress call number systems.

Labels as viewpoint-neutral directional aids are intended to facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate resources. Users may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion. Viewpoint-neutral directional labels are a convenience designed to save time. These are different in intent from attempts to prejudice, discourage, or encourage users to access particular library resources or to restrict access to library resources. Labeling as an attempt to prejudice attitudes is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library resources.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the resource, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the resource, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Directional aids can also have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling. Even well-intentioned labels may have this effect.

Prejudicial labeling systems assume that the libraries have the institutional wisdom to determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for its users to access. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The American Library Association opposes the use of prejudicial labeling systems and affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access.

Adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council.

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Jennifer Howerter

From: Sharon Debidour <sharon_debidour@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:36 AM
To: LITERATURELIST
Subject: CDE Literature List Warnings

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Conejo Valley Unified School District Board in Thousand Oaks, CA voted last night to require the following to be included on all syllabi and parents have to provide written consent to allow their high school students to read books with this advisory:

Ensure selections with the following recommendation or similar recommendation from the California Department of Education Recommended Literature List appear on the teacher syllabus whenever these selections are included on the syllabus: The California Department of Education states, " This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child ."

2. Ensure the following statement, along with the selections that have the above CDE recommendation (or similar), is provided to parents/guardians via email and at parent-teacher night: "Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the CVUSD Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it." This statement could appear once in a footnote with an asterisk (or similar) flagging each book to which this statement applies.

There were many out of district Tea Party members agitating at Board Meetings for the past five months to ban these controversial books. Even the religious High Schools in our area have many of these books as required reading without parental approval or opt out options.

In addition to an opt out option they also instituted a parent committee selected by the Board to review all literature recommendations approved by the Board.

Create a committee of parents/legal guardians and community members to review supporting documents for requests to use potential selections. The committee members are encouraged to read requested selections themselves and also must review in a timely manner. This committee will be chosen and appointed by the Board. Each Board member shall appoint two members to the committee from among the applicants, who may be the parents/legal guardians of children currently enrolled as K-12 students in the District or community members. (EC 60002)

Please help us to combat this soft censorship by our School Board. We are quite sure you do not intend for this advisory to be used as a censorship tool. In a poll of over 5000 community members within five days over 70% objected to this amended policy.

Sincerely,

Sharon Debidour
1533 Calle Yucca
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
818-427-9678 Cell

Jennifer Howerter

From: Betsy Connolly <dvmum@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 8:23 AM
To: LITERATURELIST
Cc: Henry Stern; Irwin, Jacqui; Mary Anne Van Zuyle
Subject: Re: Question about annotations

I'm sorry to persist in this. I know that it adds to your work and stress load but I cannot stop as there is too much at stake. One of our board members has written a policy that includes a requirement to add this paragraph to all syllabi that include literature with the CDE mature content annotation. It is likely to be approved by a vote of 3-2 if local outrage isn't sufficient. If there is someone I should be speaking with about the manner that the CDEs annotation is being used, please advise. Regards, Betsy Connolly

"Parents please be advised that the mature content in this book may include one or more of the following: graphic rape, graphic abusive human rights violations, graphic sex, graphic violence and suicidal ideation. The California Department of Education and the CVUSD Board of Education encourage parents to read this book before allowing your child to read it."

On Thu, Nov 9, 2017 at 4:03 PM, Betsy Connolly <dvmum@gmail.com> wrote:

Who decides whether a book has that caveat added? Are all books published or cataloged without the Young Adult designation given that caveat? Does the review committee make the decision at the time of addition? If a book is not so annotated, is it a YA selection or has it been reviewed by a committee to ensure that it is not written for mature readers or are books from the pre-online version not so annotated?

Regards, Betsy Connolly

On Thu, Nov 9, 2017 at 3:37 PM, LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov> wrote:

Good morning Ms. Connolly,

Thank you for your e-mail.

The caveat helps inform adults and youth that a title contains mature themes. To my knowledge the caveat was developed in the 1990's when the literature list moved from its print version to becoming an online resource.

The caveat is meant as a tool to assist in selecting literature not to censure it.

Also, the material included in the literature list is recommended not required. Local districts may create a process that engages educators and the community in selecting quality literature for classroom reading.

The literature list provides resources for districts that are reviewing, updating, or crafting a new literature selection policy: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/litrlppolicies.asp>.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler

Education Programs Consultant

California Department of Education

Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office

1430 N Street, Room 4309

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861

Fax: 916-323-2838

E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov

From: Betsy Connolly [<mailto:dymmum@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 08, 2017 3:22 PM
To: LITERATURELIST <LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: Question about annotations

It has been called to our attention that 223 books in the Recommended Literature List contain the annotation *This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.* Could you please clarify the source of this annotation language. I'm on a school board where a member wants all of these books flagged in teacher outlines so that parents are aware of potentially offensive content.

If this phrase is added by the review committee under certain specific circumstances or at the behest of a particular individual, it would be helpful to know what those circumstances are.

Regards,

Betsy Connolly

Board Member

Conejo Valley Unified School District



Recommended Literature List

Title Information

Title: Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence

Annotation: Short stories by various well-known authors explore how homosexuality affects young people's lives, through personal identity, parent or teacher orientation, friends, and other connections. Many stories are humorous, and all illuminate aspects of the gay/lesbian issue. This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

Copyright: 1994

Original Copyright:

Translator:

Author: Marion Dane Bauer (editor)

Illustrator:

Grade Level Span: 9-12

Language: English

Genre: Fiction
Humor
Realistic Fiction
Science Fiction
Short Story

Classification:

Culture:

Topic: English-Language Arts/General
Gender/Sexuality

Discipline: English-Language Arts/Vocabulary
History/Social Science

**English-Language
Arts/Vocabulary
Standards:**

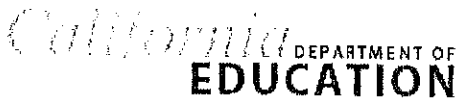
**History/Social Science
Standards:**

Award:

Questions: Literature List Staff | LiteratureList@cde.ca.gov

California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

[Web Policy](#)



Recommended Literature List Title Information

Title: ¿De Dónde?

Annotation: This play deals with the political and social conflicts faced by illegal immigrants and those living near the Texas–Mexico border. The play shows different viewpoints on the issue of illegal immigrants living in various Central American countries and offers alternative reasons (beside economic concerns) to explain why people come to the United States illegally. This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

Copyright: 1991

Original Copyright: 1991

Translator:

Author: Mary Gallagher

Illustrator:

Grade Level Span: 9-12

Language: English
Spanish

Genre: Drama

Classification:

Culture: Latino/Latino American
Multicultural

Topic: English-Language Arts/General
Immigration/Migration
Theatre

Discipline: English-Language Arts/General
English-Language Arts/Literary Elements
Visual and Performing Arts

**English-Language
Arts/General Standards:**

**English-Language
Arts/Literary Elements
Standards:**

**Visual and Performing
Arts Standards:** VAPA T PreK-12.2

Award:

Questions: Literature List Staff | LiteratureList@cde.ca.gov

California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

[Web Policy](#)



Home / Curriculum & Instruction / Curriculum Resources / Recommended Literature List

Recommended Literature List

Collection of outstanding literature for children and adolescents in grades prekindergarten through grade twelve in all disciplines.

Introduction

Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve (Recommended Literature List) is a searchable database of books for children and teens which helps students, teachers, and families find books that entertain, inform, and explore new ideas and experiences.

Each book has a description called an "annotation" that explains what the book is about. The annotation can help someone decide if the title is interesting and appropriate to read.

Literature used in a school is determined by the district. Each district should have a selection policy that explains the procedures it uses for selecting literature that reflects the school's education mission, program, and the ages and interests of its students. The selection policy should describe the process for reconsidering the use of a title. The Recommended Literature List is intended as a tool to assist districts as they select literature, but the list only **recommends** titles. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the district to select literature according to the selection policies that are in place.

can include explanation of responsibility of users to choose here
 In 2014, Assembly Bill (AB) 484 eliminated the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program of which the California Reading List (CRL) was a resource. The CRL identified leveled reading materials appropriate to a student's reading level using Lexile numbers provided on a student's STAR results report. Although it does not include Lexile numbers, the *Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve* list is still available to aid students, teachers, parents, and other education stakeholders in discovering quality literature through a variety of criteria including, but not limited to, grade level, topic, genre, and culture.

Search the List

Recommended Literature List Search

Search the online database for books by grade level spans or other criteria. Some books may be out of print and not readily available through most sellers, but they may be available in libraries and through used bookstores.

Recommended Literature List Search Instructional Webinar

This webinar explains the purpose of the *Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, and demonstrates search techniques in order to access quality literature quickly.

Recommended Literature List Title Suggestion Form

This form may be filled out to suggest titles for addition to the *Recommended Literature: Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Please fill out a separate form for each title suggested and e-mail the form to LiteratureList@cde.ca.gov.

List Resources

Recommended Literature List Resources

Information about the list including search categories, acknowledgements, awards, district selection policies, literary genres, classifications, connections to standards, cultural designations, frequently asked questions, and previously published literature lists.

Questions: Literature List Staff | LiteratureList@cde.ca.gov | 916-323-6269

Last Reviewed: Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Internal Page ID: #416208

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Recommended Literature List Search

To search the list, choose from these options: *include reminder that it's the responsibility of user to choose*

- Simple Search (Search by Author, Title, Keywords, Discipline, Grade Level Span and Language)
- Customized Search (Search by everything above as well as all other categories)

Customized Search

Author's Last Name:

Author's First Name:

Title:

Any of these words All of these words

Annotation:

Any of these words All of these words

Illustrator's Last Name:

Illustrator's First Name:

Translator's Last Name:

Translator's First Name:

Discipline:

- English-Language Arts/General
- English-Language Arts/Literary Elements
- English-Language Arts/Vocabulary
- English-Language Arts/Writing
- Health

To select more than one, hold the CTRL key and click all applicable selections. To deselect one, hold the CTRL key and click on the selection. To select all items between any two items, select the first item then hold the SHIFT key while selecting the second item.

Grade Level Span:

- Preschool/Pre-K
- K-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- 9-12

Language:

Copyright Year:

Genre:

Classification:

Award:

Topic:

Culture:



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FAQs

Answers to the questions most commonly asked related to Recommended Literature: Pre-K-12.

[Expand All](#) | [Collapse All](#)

1. [Do I need to fill in all of the blanks and choose an option in each category before I conduct a search?](#)
2. [Why does my search return zero results?](#)
3. [Why is there a keyword search or "string" search and not a subject search?](#)
4. [Can I list all of the books on a certain subject area or keyword without having to enter a grade level or author?](#)
5. [Why does it take so long to conduct a search?](#)
6. [Do I have to know the name of the book or the author's name to search the list?](#)
7. [Why are the books organized by grade-level span instead of by a single grade level?](#)
8. [Can I print out the entire list of titles in the database including the annotations?](#)
9. [Can I download the database onto my computer?](#)
10. [Is the document available in a printed version?](#)
11. [Why is a title included in the previous *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, but it is not included here?](#)
12. [Can my school or district choose literature that is not on this recommended list?](#)
13. [Who selected the books on the list?](#)
14. [What was the process for selection?](#)
15. [What was the criteria for selection?](#)

[Add FAQ about selection - how to determine whether a book is appropriate for a student.](#)
 Questions: Literature List Staff | LiteratureList@cde.ca.gov | 916-323-6269
 Last Reviewed: Wednesday, August 9, 2017



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

1430 N STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA
95814-5901

JACK O'CONNELL

State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

PHONE: (916) 319-0800

DRAFT February 7, 2007

Sang-ki Chung
Consul General of Korea
3500 Clay Street
San Francisco, CA 94118

Dear Mr. Chung:

Thank you for taking the time to write regarding the book *So Far From the Bamboo Grove*.

This book is a component of two programs that were adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) in January 2002. The book is part of a literature library offered by the publishers Glencoe/McGraw-Hill and McDougal Littell as part of their programs for grades six through eight. In each case, this particular book is one of dozens included as part of the library of literature selections.

The adoption process includes an extensive review of submitted instructional materials by teachers, content area experts, and members of the public. In addition to a review of submitted materials for educational content and alignment to the evaluation criteria adopted by the SBE, there is also a separate review for legal compliance with the social content requirements in the *Education Code*, sections 60040-60048. The evaluation criteria, which can be found in its entirety at the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/im/documents/criteria2002.pdf>, required that programs include literature selections that were "high-quality", interesting, multicultural, and age-appropriate for students. Furthermore, both programs were placed on public display at numerous Learning Resource Display Centers across the state during the adoption. Public comment was invited in writing and at public hearings that were held by both the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission and the SBE prior to SBE action on the adoption. At the conclusion of this process, both of these programs were found to be fully aligned to the evaluation criteria, and therefore were adopted by the SBE.

The state adoption list is designed to give local education agencies a range of materials to choose from to meet the needs of local teachers and students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on these lists does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students.

Sang-ki Chung
February 7, 2007
Page 2

Many of the literature selections available within adopted programs and on the CDE's Recommended Literature list (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/>) contain material that can be provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature can stimulate debate and disagreement about important issues. This particular book has received awards including the American Library Association's "Notable Children's Book," and the Gold Award from the Parents' Choice Foundation. Despite this, any teacher could select an alternative literature selection from the many choices provided with both adopted programs if they felt that this particular book was inappropriate for use in their classroom. They could also select the alternative literature selection if they felt that they could not adequately provide students with the context that is necessary when exposing children to any piece of literature.

You may also wish to consider providing alternative reading selections or background information on the period of history that is covered in the novel that teachers could reference when teaching this book in their classrooms. This material could be hosted on your Web site.

If you have any questions regarding the adoption process, please contact Thomas Adams, Director, Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division, at (916) 319-0881 or by e-mail at tadams@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

JACK O'CONNELL

JO:km
10205

Jennifer Howerter

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2009 1:37 PM
To: Finch, Pat B (US SSA)
Cc: Sharon Johnson; Maxine Wheeler; Kristen Cruz
Subject: RE: Book Evaluations

Pat,

I had several discussions and input from others yesterday in order to draft this reply to you. First of all, I appreciate your contacting me regarding your concerns and becoming involved in your child's education. It is obvious that you are not a "whiner" but a thoughtful parent who wants the best for his children.

The book you refer to is on our list and, unfortunately, did not have the proper annotation; more specifically, a caution to parents and educators regarding the content of the novel. I am happy to tell you that, due to your inquiry and concern, the annotation now reads: "This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child." You may wish to bring this to the attention of your district as well as your child's teacher.

As for Question #1, we agree that the grade span of 9-12 is huge and there should be more direction as to which end of this span a particular selection might be more appropriate (or inappropriate). In fact, we are working on providing this information for books that contain caveats such as those above.

A letter from State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, explains that,

"In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on these lists does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students. Many of the literature selections available...contain material that can be provocative or controversial.... Despite this, any teacher could select an alternative literature selection from the many choices provided...if they felt (a) particular book was inappropriate for use in their classroom. They could also select (an) alternative literature selection if they felt that they could not adequately provide students with the context that is necessary when exposing children to any piece of literature."

I refer you to "Appendix C: District Policies on Book Selection" that can be found in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* as well as on the literature list web page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/litr/1ppolicies.asp>. You can refer to this if you choose to get further involved in your district's policies on book selections and/or to establish a policy that is more appropriate than your district's current one. The following bulleted item from Appendix C may be of interest and addresses, somewhat, your Questions #2, #3 and #4:

"Do teachers prepare a brief rationale justifying the use of any literary work in class? The rationale would answer four questions: 1) Why would you want to use this work with this class at this time? 2) How do you believe this work will meet your objectives? 3) If problems of style, texture, tone, and theme exist for students in reading this work, how will you address those problems? 4) Assuming that the objectives are met, how will students benefit from having read and discussed this work?"

I would suggest that you talk directly with the teacher who assigned the book to determine what kinds of activities were prepared/presented in conjunction with the book. Also, it is entirely within your rights to request that your child be given an alternative selection if you do not wish to have him or her participate in what has been selected.

I hope this helps you and answers your questions. If you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: Finch, Pat B (US SSA) [mailto:pat.finch@baesystems.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 12:35 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book Evaluations

Hi Geri,

Yes, I hope so. I'm little perplexed by one of the choices on the list and I'm not sure who to address my questions and concerns to. It's always hard to interpret email so let me say up front that the tone is intended to be respectful and questioning, not accusatory.

My 15 yr-old daughter was required to read *Novel with No Name* by Duong Thu Huong for her 10th-grade English class. The book contains some very harsh language, violent sexually-explicit passages and descriptive incidents of bestiality. These references are not in direct relation to the war's violence. They are recollections of prior village life by the Vietnamese characters.

While this book may be age-appropriate for those students who are nearly adults, I'm not comfortable with my 15 yr-old daughter being required to read it. She doesn't understand why she was required to read this book.

I've contacted the school assistant principle to ask why this book was chosen and why I wasn't made aware of the content before it was assigned to my daughter for reading. She told me I'm the only parent who has ever "complained" about it. She told me it's on the State's recommended reading list. She also told me there no requirement to notify parents. For someone who's always stood by the teachers when my kids have complained about them (the lower the letter grade the more the kids complain about the teacher's alleged shortcomings), I feel as though I've suddenly been thrust into a fight against a huge and hostile bureaucracy the first time I've questioned it's authority to expose my children to certain subjects.

I realize there are parents who expose their children to much worse and so they may not have the same problems I have with this. This still seems to go beyond what a reasonable person would expect the school system to require the students to read at the high school level. I'd bet if most parents knew what was in this book they'd have questions too. But who has time to read all of their kids' textbooks? I have volunteered to be one of the readers/approvers for any new books being included in the curriculum. I also intend to ask my children's teachers about any questionable content in any of the books assigned. I hope that will keep this from reoccurring.

However, there are some things I'd like to understand better:

1. Can you address the methods and/or Dept of Education guidelines used for selecting books in an age-appropriate manner? There's a big difference in the maturity level of a student who's 14 yrs old and a student who's 17/18 yrs old yet this book is approved for 9th through 12th grades.
2. Why was this particular book deemed necessary and useful by the State for class instruction at the 10th grade level despite its very adult content? It's not the widely-recognized or highly-regarded novel about war by a foreign

author (and former adversary of the U.S.) as is *All Quiet on the Western Front* which my daughter has already read this year.

3. Why wouldn't teachers be advised to address these questionable sections of the book in the same manner they would address racist language in a novel like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a means to provide the kids with relevant contextual information. After reading it, I myself am left wondering if this type of language, violence and sexual practices are or were accepted in Vietnamese or South East Asian cultures. I would think most of the kids would have the same questions. My daughter asked me but I don't know enough about it to intelligently discuss it. Are teachers restricted by the state from discussing these topics or could it just be simply a personal issue?
4. What are the State-established notification methods to parents when their children are required to read a book, watch a video, or take part in any activity which contains excessive foul language (for sake of argument we could say this would be any language which, if uttered by either staff or student at school, would result in disciplinary action being taken), violent sexually-explicit activity, bestiality or pornography? I don't see any caveats on the web site for this book (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/ap/details.asp?id=1876>) and the school never notified me there was any questionable content. The school is reluctant to send out notifications because there's always a parent who would be unreasonable. My daughter's high school mentioned they'd never show an R-rated movie on campus but if the dialogue in this book were in a movie it would certainly be rated R. Are there different standards for spoken word and written word in the California education system? Not to be crude but let me paraphrase from the book to illustrate my point. What is the difference between being forced to listen to the words "... he was f-ing a cow" or "... shut up or next time it will be your mouth that is f-ed" in class and being forced to read them in class?

I've never been accused of being goody-two-shoes or a prude. I consider myself a progressive parent and have never had a problem discussing any sexual, violent, social or political issues with any of my children. I've read and said worse than what is found in this book. That said... I'm still shocked at the content of the book given the intended audience.

If I should discuss this with someone else please let me know. I really appreciate any help you can give me with this.

Thanks,
Pat

From: Geri Mohler [mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 10:22 AM
To: Finch, Pat B (US SSA)
Subject: RE: Book Evaluations

Pat,

I am currently the consultant in charge of the K-12 Recommended Literature List. The books on this list are carefully read and annotated by dedicated volunteer professionals who are either librarians or classrooms teachers for a particular grade span. Each book must be approved by at least two people. We have caveats for many books to caution the parent/teacher/student about content that may be for more mature readers or of a controversial nature. Is there a particular selection that you have questions about?

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: Finch, Pat B (US SSA) [mailto:pat.finch@baesystems.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 10:06 AM

To: Geri Mohler
Subject: Book Evaluations

Hi Geri,

I'm a parent of a high school sophomore. I have a question about how books on the recommended reading list are evaluated for age-appropriate content. Is there someone at the Dept of Education who deals with this subject?

Thanks,
Pat

Patrick Finch
Systems Engineer
BAE Systems
10920 Technology Place
Mail Zone 6102U
San Diego, CA 92127-1874
(858) 675-3867
pat.finch@baesystems.com

Jennifer Howerter

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2008 8:55 AM
To: Maxine Wheeler
Cc: Sharon Johnson
Subject: RE: Book choices

Maxine,

Could look at my answers to these questions and add/delete/edit them? I will then send them all to the inquirer and ask him/her to read all responses again since they may have changed. The different colors kind of show the chronology of the questions. I would answer some and s/he would ask more.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2008 9:07 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

I represent no one. I am simply a citizen who would like to know more about our education system.

I look forward to the additional information.

Thank you.

From: Geri Mohler [mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2008 12:22 PM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

I am new to this process so I am researching a few things before I reply. In the meantime, I have a question for you: Can you tell me why you are interested in this process and if you represent anyone else? It will help me with the details of my answers.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 2:50 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

A few more questions in blue...

From: Geri Mohler [mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 11:16 AM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

My new answers are in red below. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 10:45 AM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Book choices

Thank you for your reply. I appreciate the information.

I have some follow up questions below for further clarification.

From: Geri Mohler [mailto:GMohler@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2008 8:15 AM
To: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net
Subject: RE: Book choices

From: eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net [mailto:eaglenet1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, November 07, 2008 4:00 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: Book choices

Hello,

I have a few questions that hopefully you can help with regarding K-12 books:

Thank you for your interest in the K-12 Recommended Literature List.

1. Can you please tell me where I can see the list of books from which teachers can choose?

is a web site that has a searchable database of over 2000 annotated
books: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/r/l/l/>

2. Does the state or each district make that list?

The CDE directs the update of the list periodically. A committee of teachers and librarians read and recommend the books and add them to the list. Typically, two people have to recommend a book for it to be placed.

Does the public have any say about what books are on the list?

Once a book is on the list, it is rarely removed. Our policy is that since it is a recommended list only, districts are free to make decisions about which books are appropriate for their clientele.

Does the public have a say in getting a book on the list?

The public can request a Literature List input form and recommend any title.

Does the committee have the final say?

At this point, yes.

How do teachers and librarians get on the committee?

Teachers and librarians who have been on a literature list update in the past are asked to apply and they often recommend others. A teacher or librarian can also request an application. We do not, however, have a way currently to inform ALL qualified people that we are taking applications.

Are there any special qualifications for teachers and librarians to be on the list?

They should be very knowledgeable about quality literature, book publisher lists, out of print sources, and be willing to spend a lot of their own time with no remuneration.

How would they request an application?

They can contact me.

Are there typically more people interested in being on the committee than there are open positions?

Yes.

Who selects the committee members and what is the criteria?

CDE staff select the members with the aid of local librarians/teachers. We also ask for recommendations from various organizations such as the California Reading Association, the California Association of Teachers of English, the California Teachers Association, the California School Librarians Association, etc.

What is this committee called?

Nothing formal has been designated. The literature list update committee is what I refer to.

Is being on the committee a paid or volunteer position?

Volunteer.

How long are members on the committee?

They usually are on the committee for one school year, depending on how long it takes to complete the update. Many return to be on other committees such as on content area lists (social studies, science, etc.).

Can any 2 people recommend a book?

Any person can endorse a book by sending in a Lit List Input Form but the final approval goes to the committee members.

3. What is the process and criteria for getting a book on the list?

We have a book input form (attached) that authors, teachers, the general public can fill out. The selection committee will recommend that book after 2 others have read and approved it. A book can be placed on the list if it is considered high quality literature of lasting value. We have several standard caveats for books that may have mature content, etc. Teacher resource materials are typically not selected for the list, as it is reserved for literature.

What are the standard caveats for books?

I discovered we do not have a list of standard caveats. They are developed as needed and changed or entered as needed. For instance, if a particular book did not have a caveat and someone questions the content, we may develop something specific to that book so that users are aware.

Who sets those caveats?

The committee, in collaboration with CDE consultants. We also look at other states' lists to see how their caveats read.

4. Can teachers use materials (books, pamphlets, etc) in the classroom that are not on the approved list?

Teachers are not required by the state to use or not use books on the list. That is a district decision. The literature list is simply recommended or suggested. There are districts that will not allow anything in their schools that is not on the list. We do not agree with this type of requirement because we cannot update the list regularly enough. It has been 4 years since the last update; we were scheduled for an update this year but it is likely not to happen due to budget concerns.

How can I find out what the policies of each district are?

I don't know of any way except to contact them directly.

If a district requires the use of books that are on the list, how does that affect the use of other teaching materials that can be used in the classroom?

I do not know how that works in districts. Since we do not have a hand in this, we do not really have any information about how it is done or what the repercussions are. We can only recommend that teachers/parents, etc., contact their district if they have any problems with district policies.

So then could a district choose not to use any books on the list and instead use whatever material they wanted?

Basically, yes. Districts are supposed to use the adopted curricula but most other materials are district level decisions.

If you have any other questions or would like to recommend a book for the list, please do not hesitate to contact me or send an input form.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

Jennifer Howerter

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2008 1:01 PM
To: Bobby Roy
Subject: RE: 2008-3503 School Curriculum
Attachments: LitList Input Form.doc

Bobby,

I looked the book up online and did find the F- word in one of the selections provided. This is not all that uncommon, however, and would likely exclude many books if we were that restrictive.

The best thing to tell this person is that every book is read and approved by at least two educators. The Recommended Literature list selections are determined by their content and their value as literature. This particular selection was written by real adults as well as youths and their particular language style was left intact. One of the purposes of the list is to provide a resource for parents and teachers but all books should be scrutinized for inappropriate content based on local and personal tastes and mores. (Can't figure out how to put the accent on the e.) Parents have the prerogative to opt out of any selection assigned.

If this teacher would like the next update to include some kind of caution about inappropriate language for this book, s/he can fill out the form attached and return it to me. The cautionary statement could be placed in the "annotation" or the "notes" sections and the person requesting this addition should put his/her name in the endorsement field. This will not guarantee the addition of the warning but it is a means by which to attempt it.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D., Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

From: Bobby Roy [mailto:BRoy@cde.ca.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2008 12:24 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: 2008-3503 School Curriculum

Hello Geri,

The inquiry below is regarding a book on the Recommended Literature List titled, Bamboo Among the Oaks. I looked it up and saw no language warnings, although the writer of the inquiry alleges that there is foul language in the book. How would an individual have that included on the annotation? Please advise.

Thank you,

Bobby G. Roy

The original inquiry follows: I am a teacher, and I am looking to incorporate Hmong literature into our curriculum. I just read a book that is on the Recommended Reading list. It is called Bamboo Among the Oaks by Mai Neng Moua. Did anyone read this book before placing it on the list? The F-bomb is dropped several, several times in this book. It is laced with numerous other choice words, as well. My son is 15, and if were to come home with this book, I would blow a gasket. I can't believe this is on the "recommended" list.

Jennifer Howerter

From: Geri Mohler
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2009 3:21 PM
To: Antonia Slagle
Subject: RE: Hello,

Categories: Red Category

The caveat is actually from CDE, not the author. When the selection panel reads a book, they note whether it requires a cautionary or explanatory caveat. There are several standards caveats but some books have had caveats added that are specific to the book.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Antonia Slagle [mailto:antonia-slagle@sac-city.k12.ca.us]
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2009 2:03 PM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: RE: Hello,

Thanks so much for your quick response and the author's caveat...that's why we have chosen it for an older (high school junior) audience...

Best,
Antonia Slagle

>>> Geri Mohler <GMohler@cde.ca.gov> 05/08/09 11:39 AM >>>

Antonia,

Our newest version of the K-12 Recommended Literature List does include the title--The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie. We have not formally updated the list since 2004, but we are soon coming out with a new printed version and an online searchable version with new titles that are award winners. Not all award winners make it on the list but this Sherman Alexie book did with the following caveat: "Middle grades readers should be aware that the book includes some strong language. This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child."

If you would like me to fax the page this title appears on, I would be happy to do so.

Geri Mohler, Ed.D.
Education Programs Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone (916) 322-6638
Fax (916) 323-2928
gmohler@cde.ca.gov<mailto:gmohler@cde.ca.gov>

From: Antonia Slagle [mailto:Antonia-Slagle@sac-city.k12.ca.us]
Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2009 10:42 AM
To: Geri Mohler
Subject: Hello,

Hello,
I have looked through the California recommended reading list and cannot find Sherman Alexie anywhere. Is it because he's not on the list, or I am just looking in the wrong place? We would like to teach his recent fiction, which won the National Book Award this year.

Thanks,
Antonia Slagle
Teacher, West Campus High School
Sacramento

SUMMARY COVER MEMO

Prepared by	
Name:	Debby Lott
Phone:	323-4800

Date: May 13, 2004

Manager Approval	
Name:	Terry Emmett
Date:	
Signature:	

To: Sue Stickel, Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction Branch

From: Terry Emmett, Administrator
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office

Director Approval	
Name:	William W. Vasey
Date:	
Signature:	

Subject: Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve
Annotation Amendment

Sign	Approve	Review	Handle	Draft a Response	For Your Files	Information
	X					

Other Approval	
Name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Summary of Contents

In July 2001, CDE released a newly updated *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. This update was coordinated by CDE and developed with the assistance of teachers, library consultants from school and public libraries, administrators, curriculum planners, college professors, and parents. The collection of fully annotated titles covers a broad range of subjects that will help students meet California's rigorous content standards. Local school officials and teachers are encouraged to use this list in designing standards-based instructional programs.

Deputy Approval	
Name:	Sue Stickel
Date:	
Signature:	

The searchable database includes nearly 2,700 titles classified according to the following grade-level spans: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Since July 2001, CDE has received three complaints concerning the content of titles on the high school list. Each of these concerns was addressed individually, but in an attempt to better support and inform the field, we felt that a caution should be added to the annotation for each of titles on the list that contains potentially controversial material.

Needs Legal Approval Marsha Bedwell	
Date:	
Signature:	

Therefore we have taken the following steps:

Needs Legislative Approval Teri Burns	
Date:	
Signature:	

1. A subcommittee of high school English teachers, from California Association of Teachers of English (CATE), and chaired by Carol Jago, identified all titles on the high school list that they determined contained potentially controversial material.
2. The committee composed two statements to caution users of the list concerning content.

Chief Deputy Approval	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved w/Edits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digitally sign
<input type="checkbox"/>	JO's Signature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Web Posting
Date:	
Signature:	

Upon approval, we will add the appropriate caution to each annotation identified by the committee. Enclosed are lists of titles that are organized according to the statement that will be added to the annotation.

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Roxane Fidler
Sent: Friday, December 8, 2017 12:50 PM
To: Lee, Alex
Cc: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Barbara Murchison; Jennifer Howerter; Julian Cuevas; Sue Vang
Subject: Sen. Henry Stern Office--questions regarding Literature List annotations

Hi Alex,

I will reach out to my supervisors today regarding your request.

Again, please know that we value the Senator's concerns and questions very highly and will respond quickly.

Roxane

Roxane Fidler
Literacy, History, Arts Leadership Office
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-323-4861
E-mail: rfidler@cde.ca.gov
Fax: 916-323-2928

From: Lee, Alex [mailto:Alex.Lee@sen.ca.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 8, 2017 11:31 AM
To: Roxane Fidler
Subject: Questions regarding Reading List Annotations

Hi Roxane,

I'm a legislative aide with the office of Senator Henry Stern. Last month, Betsy Connolly (a CVUSD board member) contacted you via the LITERATURELIST@cde.ca.gov address regarding the annotations for the recommended literature list. I wanted to follow up on this inquiry and wanted to ask you some questions regarding the annotations.

Can we set up a time to call today or Monday? Or if available please give me a call back when available. Thank you!

Best,

Alex Lee
Office of Senator Henry Stern
State Capitol, Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 651-4027
Fax: (916) 651-4927

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:05 AM
To: kbowen@ucdavis.edu; shelley.chappell@tcoe.org; kathymgoodwin@hotmail.com; jonathan.hunt@sdcoe.net; jligamari@gmail.com; alokrantz@centralusd.k12.ca.us; Kate MacMillan; jritter@mvschools.org; Roxane Fidler; Renee Ousley-Swank; Aileen Allison-Zarea; Maxine Wheeler
Subject: Summary of Literature List Conference Call
Attachments: image001.jpg; image001.jpg

Hello everyone!

Thank you so much to Shelley and Kate for being on the call yesterday. I wanted to provide a quick summary of what we discussed, what we agreed upon, and invite anyone to provide any additional comments!

What We Discussed

We started off the call with a summary of the issue at Conejo Valley USD (please see my original email for details). Kate brought up the critical point that libraries are for everyone, and that labeling books, especially LGBTQ books, can be problematic. Shelley and Kate recalled that historically the caveats appeared to not have any strict criteria in place – it was more about how individual committee members felt about the content of any particular book. Kate also had a conversation with Sandy Killian from the 2008 committee, who confirmed that outlook.

We discussed how the caveats, while they may have been appropriate when they were conceived, may no longer be appropriate in today's educational context. Kate and Shelley brought up interest levels and how it's important to pay attention to student interest in addition to the actual reading level of a student. We discussed the possibility of trying to add them to a future update of the List, and also considered mentioning interest in the broad statement that would replace the caveat. Shelley made the point that adults must consider not just interest, but historical awareness, cultural perspective, etc. when considering a title for a student. It is not an easy decision and varies widely based on the individual in question.

We also briefly discussed the importance of weeding the collection and the upcoming project that the CDE is proposing to management for this purpose.

What We Agreed Upon

We agreed that the caveats as well as any other "labeling" language should be pulled from title annotations and replaced with a statement on the landing page of the database. We considered the possibility of using language from the ALA:

"The California Department of Education agrees with the American Library Association in its affirmation of the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. The needs and interests of each user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis."

We also considered a statement from Jack O'Connell, former SSPI, that stated:

"Many of the literature selections available within the Recommended Literature List contain material that can be considered provocative or controversial. By its very nature, literature can stimulate debate and disagreement about important issues. The Recommended Literature List is designed to give local educational agencies a range of materials to choose from to meet the needs of local teachers and students. In California, specific decisions about classroom instruction are made at the local level by teachers and local administrators, rather than in Sacramento. It should be understood that inclusion of a variety of diverse materials on the Recommended Literature List does not preclude local teachers and administrators from selecting those specific materials that best suit the needs and interests of their local students."

We felt that a statement reflecting the sentiments above would direct responsibility for selecting literature to the local level, which is where it belongs. The next step is to vet proposed language through the California Department of Education chain of command and receive approval for removing the caveat and adding a statement to the Recommended Literature List landing page.

Any Additional Comments?

Another long email! Please let me know if you have any additional input to contribute. I really appreciate all of your expertise, and thank you again Kate and Shelley for taking time out of a holiday week to call us. ☺

Best,
Jennifer



Jennifer Howerter, Education Programs Assistant
Literacy, History, and Arts Leadership Office
Professional Learning Support Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4309
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
Phone: 916-323-4630
FAX: 916-323-2928

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 11:21 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Subject: the conejo valley thing passed

<https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

Let's discuss when you return! I think we REALLY have to move fast on removing those designations. We also received another email about it in the lit list email box. ./

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Jennifer Howerter
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 10:07 AM
To: Roxane Fidler
Cc: Jennifer Moreno
Subject: TSD Questions for Caveat Removal

Hi Roxane,

I've been wanting to pick TSD's brain for a few weeks now to get those caveats removed, but I've just not had the time to actually do it. I was wondering if you could? Here are my thoughts:

- We need to bulk-remove as many caveats as possible
- To do that, we can search for keywords, like 'controversial' and 'mature'
- It might be best to download the database in excel and do it that way
- We will also have to review the rest of the entries to catch those that might have similar language but without those keywords
- I'm not sure how to do that last one in an efficient way – I think we might have to do it one by one? (Or maybe wait until we can have our committee do it?? I dunno)

So, I wanted to ask TSD their thoughts on how we might best go about doing this, and whether my way of approaching it was the most efficient, etc. In other words, is there any capability that the database has that I'm not currently aware of that might make this job easier? Can you write up something, share it with me so that I can add anything else, and then share it with TSD? Also, if you have other ideas about how to approach this, please let me know. Jennifer, you as well!

Thanks – let me know if this doesn't make sense. I'm kinda scrambling over here. ☺ If you'd like to have a quickie meeting to discuss this and get things nailed down before you write this up, that's cool too.

-Jenn

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Maxine Wheeler
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 10:05 AM
To: Aileen Allison-Zarea; Roxane Fidler; Jennifer Howerter; Renee Ousley-Swank
Subject: Two different caveats in lit list database

Caveat #1: 212 titles

This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

Caveat #2: 106 titles

This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content. Before handing the text to a child, educators and parents should read the book and know the child.

ImTurner, Hyonchin

From: Aileen Allison-Zarea
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 1:01 PM
To: Barbara Murchison
Cc: Jennifer Howerter; Roxane Fidler
Subject: Urgent: Recommended Literature List Issue

Hi Barbara,

I am hoping to get your input on an issue that Jennifer brought to my attention this week regarding the annotation placed on some titles within the CDE Recommended Literature List. On certain titles, there is a sentence indicating that the title may contain mature themes and that caution should be used...Jennifer can provide you with the exact language.

Anyway, I'd like to share the news article in the following link that refers to the Literature List, and this issue in particular: <https://www.vcreporter.com/2017/11/permission-to-read-conejo-valley-school-teachers-students-fear-censorship-coming-to-classrooms-via-proposed-book-policy/>

Roxane has been overseeing the literature list and committee work for several years, but Jennifer is assisting with various tasks. Since Roxane is on vacation this week, Jennifer has fielded a few calls and emails regarding this issue and brought it to my attention. We decided to reach out to the last update committee yesterday to determine how the determination was made to put this "warning" on some titles and how mature content etc. are determined. We realize that judging maturity of content can vary widely and is subjective, so we would like to know if a criteria was used.

Jennifer proposed we simply remove the "warning" on specific titles and replace with a more generic disclaimer for all titles. We can even link into reputable review sites. We are not comfortable at this point with stakeholders using CDE statements to develop their policies that could be perceived as censorship.

We would like to meet with you, but wanted to give you a heads up on this week's rapid happenings. We think that we may need to address this quickly.

Aileen
