

St. Tammany Parish Library  
Board of Control Meeting  
June 5, 2023  
St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers  
21490 Koop Dr.,  
Mandeville, LA 70471  
6:30 P.M.

Public Comment: A three (3) minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda. In the case of a Statement of Concern decision, the person who filed the Statement of Concern is given 5 minutes to speak. Please note, all comments must pertain to the agenda item announced, there is no general public comment at the end of the meeting.

AGENDA

Call to order by President and Roll Call by Director

Introduction of New Board Members

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of Control that was held on April 24th 2023.
  - Discussion
  - Public Comment
  - Vote
2. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Financial Reports – April 2023
    - Discussion
    - Public Comment
    - Vote
  - B. Summer Reading Presentation
  - C. Director’s Report
  - D. Rules and Regulations Update – Section 205 Materials Display
    - Public Comment
    - Discussion
    - Vote
  - E. Statement of Concern Decision – *Milk and Honey*
    - Public Comment
    - Discussion
    - Vote
  - F. Statement of Concern Decision – *Pink, Blue, and You!*
    - Public Comment
    - Discussion
    - Vote

G. Statement of Concern Decision – *Sex is a Funny Word*

- Public Comment
- Discussion
- Vote

H. Statement of Concern Decision – *Who Has What*

- Public Comment
- Discussion
- Vote

3. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Strategic Planning Committee Update
- B. Rules and Regulations Committee Update
- C. Library Foundation Update
- D. Friends of the Library Updates

4. Adjournment

**St. Tammany Parish Library  
Board of Control Meeting  
April 24, 2023  
St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers  
21490 Koop Dr.  
Mandeville, LA 70471  
6:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by Rebecca (Becky) Taylor, President. Kelly LaRocca, Director, called the roll and declared that a quorum was present.

**Present:** Jake Airey, Mary Reneau, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor

**Absent:** Carmen Butler

Emily Couvillon with the Civil Division of the District Attorney's Office was also present as legal counsel for the library.

B. Taylor explained the rules for public comment. A three-minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda.

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Library Board of Control that was held on March 27, 2023 and the special meeting that was held on March 25, 2023.**

**Discussion:** There were no suggested corrections to the minutes of the March 27, 2023 regular meeting.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Vote:** M. Reneau moved to approve the minutes. It was seconded by A. Shaw. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes*   Butler – *Absent*   Reneau – *Yes*   Shaw – *Yes*   Taylor – *Yes*

Motion carried.

**Discussion:** There were no suggested corrections to the minutes of the March 25, 2023 special meeting.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Vote:** A. Shaw moved to approve the minutes. It was seconded by M. Reneau. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes*   Butler – *Absent*   Reneau – *Yes*   Shaw – *Yes*   Taylor – *Yes*

Motion carried.

## 2. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Financial Reports – March 2023

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca reported that the library received another portion of ad valorem funding on March 30, 2023. We have received 96.8% of what was budgeted for the year. The next portion of State Revenue Sharing should be received this summer. The budget percentage for this point in the year should be 25%. Revenues are at 25.13% and expenditures are at 27.43%. K. LaRocca reviewed the revenues and expenditures and gave explanations for lines that were over or under budget. Most of the lines that are over budget are paid early in the year and will be in balance by December 2023.

The Publication of Legal Notices line continues to be over budget due to longer board meeting minutes that are published in the St. Tammany Farmer. The Office Machine and Equipment Repair line is over budget due to repairs to a disc cleaning machine. Some insurance and claims lines are over budget because they are paid early in the year. The Library Property Insurance line is at zero because we have not yet received the bill from the Parish. The Library In-service Training and Juvenile Programming lines are over budget due to purchasing Ozobots and Ozobot training. Those funds will be reimbursed by the Library Foundation.

#### **Public Comment:**

Kevin Marino – Mandeville, LA. Spoke of the cost of working on the amount of Statements of Concern that have been filed. Stated that he emailed the Board suggesting that they quantify the amount of time and money spent on the process by gathering data to show the amount of time and resources that are wasted on the process.

Johanna Miner – Asked if all the information the Board is referring to is on the website. K. LaRocca confirmed that the Board packet is posted on the website. J. Miner stated that the library continues to allow pedophilia and pornography in the children's and teen sections of the library. Stated that her group represents 99% of St. Tammany Parish and they will continue to fight.

**Vote:** A. Shaw moved to approve the March 2023 Financial Reports. It was seconded by M. Reneau. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes*   Butler – *Absent*   Reneau – *Yes*   Shaw – *Yes*   Taylor – *Yes*

Motion carried.

## **B. Director's Report**

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca reported that the Parish Procurement Department opened the quotes for the South Slidell roof replacement project. We are waiting to hear which roofing company received the contract. The Maintenance Department moved out of the Annex building on Highway 36. They are working out of a small satellite office at the Slidell Branch and out of their trucks. Work at the new Annex building on Commercial Way has begun. Lockstep Technology Group performed an internal penetration test on our data security and commended the I.T. Department for its work to maintain a secure environment. They offered a few recommendations that the I.T. Department will be implementing.

Staff offered outreach and promoted the library to the following organizations and events: Northshore Food Bank, Kiwanis of Greater Covington's Youth Wellness Fair, The Lake and The Highway radio stations, St. Tammany Commission on Families, and Junior League's Girls Health Day at Lakeview Hospital. Children's librarians performed Storytime at the following schools: Fontainebleau Children's Academy, Kidz Klubhouse, and Kinder Haus Montessori. Reference librarians offered the following outreach classes: Northshore Leadership Senior-to-Senior Tech Help at the Slidell COAST Center, Tech Talk orientation for Seniors at Northshore High School, and Tech Time at the Abita Springs Branch. Byron Holdiman, Genealogy Librarian, held the following genealogy programs: French Influence and Genealogy Time at various branches.

The library is promoting Food for Fines in celebration of National Library Week. One dollar will be waived from library fees for every nonperishable food item donated. The food will be donated to the Northshore Food Bank, the Samaritan Center, and First Baptist Church of Slidell. Staff attended the Summer Reading Challenge Workshop, various committee meetings, training sessions, and webinars.

The library's yearly audit is complete with no findings reported. This is the first year that entities in St. Tammany Parish are part of the state-wide agreed-upon procedures. We have previously been tested in two or three categories, but now are tested in all categories at the same time.

We have received 19 public records requests since the beginning of November 2022 and eight of those requests are currently outstanding. The requests consist of extensive email searches that are in line for redaction. A combination of electronic and paper documents will need to be sorted and organized to ensure completeness of the records.

To date, the library has received 203 Statements of Concern on 163 titles since August 2022. Library staff continue to read titles, hold meetings, and make recommendations. The remaining

Statements of Concern are still pending review. The Board will be deciding on four more titles at the next board meeting on May 22, 2023.

Renewed contracts: Uniti phone services, Bibliocommons BiblioSuggest for patron suggestions on our website, SHI cyber security and Solar Winds ticket system renewal, Transformyx for cloud security, New York Times Online, and New England Historic Genealogical Society Membership.

K. LaRocca reviewed the March 2023 and year-to-date service statistics. K. LaRocca noted the State Library Report statistics from 2022. B. Taylor asked about the number of library branches and support locations. K. LaRocca responded that there are 12 library branches, which consists of six small branches and six large branches located throughout St. Tammany Parish. Large branches have longer hours and are open 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Small branches are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. They are open on Wednesdays from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. K. LaRocca stated that there are also two support locations, which are the Annex and the Administration building. The Annex houses the Technical Services and Maintenance Departments. The Administration building houses various departments of library administration.

B. Taylor asked about the number of public service hours for last year. K. LaRocca stated that there were 30,200 public service hours for 2022. B. Taylor asked how many full-time and part-time staff are employed. K. LaRocca stated there are 150 staff members; 108 are full-time and 42 are part-time. B. Taylor asked if the library system is responsible for the insurance, utilities, and maintenance of all library buildings. K. LaRocca confirmed that though the library does not own the buildings, we are responsible for all of the costs to operate the library. B. Taylor noted that St. Tammany Parish Library is one of the top six library systems in the state by size.

A. Shaw asked if all positions are filled. B. Geiger responded that there are two open full-time positions and four part-time positions. T. DiMaggio stated that all librarian positions are filled.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

### **C. Rules and Regulations Update – Section 407 Challenged Materials**

T. DiMaggio reviewed the update to Section 407 Challenged Materials in the Rules and Regulations manual. The Board was provided copies of the original, revised, and final policy. Due to the number of multiple Statements of Concern that are submitted on one title, the Rules and Regulations committee researched other libraries and found that it is not uncommon to have time limitations set for how often a single title can be challenged within a certain period of time.

The committee revised the section to introduce a time limit on any new Statement of Concern for a specific title, program, or display topic after the Board makes a decision concerning that title, program, or display. The revision is as follows: “The decision on a Statement of Concern about specific materials, programs, or displays will remain in effect for five years. Within this five-year period, complainants submitting a new Statement of Concern on a decided title, program, or display shall receive a copy of the Board’s current decision.”

**Public Comment:**

Roxanne Newman – Mandeville, LA. Agreed with the revision of Section 407. Asked for the policy to be amended to remove the requirement that books will be kept behind the circulation desk during the challenge process. Stated it is a violation of the First Amendment and is known as red flagging.

Rachel Rhodes – Mandeville, LA. Thanked the Board. Agreed with the revision of Section 407. Read her transgender daughter’s speech aloud. Stated that removing books based on their content is a violation of freedom of speech and is a dangerous step towards creating a society based on ignorance and fear. Spoke of transphobia, homophobia, and history repeating itself.

Candice Mallard – Stated that five years is a long time and wishes the Board would reconsider the time limit. Stated that books that sexualize, groom, and steal children’s innocence are there to entice them into perversions. Stated it is more dangerous than filling the children’s section with razor blades, needles and knives. Accused the Director and Board of subverting parents’ decisions, indoctrinating children, normalizing, and promoting alternative lifestyles.

Kevin Marino – Mandeville, LA. Gave a copy of proposed policy changes to the Board and library administration. Stated that challenged materials should stay on the shelves. Spoke about First Amendment violations. Suggested creating a monetary fee for filing excess amounts of Statements of Concern. Stated that the group is abusing the system.

Rebecca Steele – Folsom, LA. Stated that she grew up not represented and feels that positive representation saves lives. Stated that parents can end up harming their children by not giving them the chance to be who they are, which could cause children to take their own lives. Stated that requiring a parent to give access to certain books is not the best way because many of the parents do not find it acceptable.

Julie Vitrano – Mandeville, LA. Stated she is disappointed in the library’s decision to keep books featuring radical gender ideology on the shelves. Stated it is purposeful targeting of children with an ideology based on fantasy and deception that targets developing minds. Mentioned the following titles specifically: *I Am Jazz*, *Julian Is a Mermaid*, *My Rainbow*, and *When Aiden*

*Became a Brother*. Stated she does not want her tax dollars going towards a blatant political movement.

Lawrence de Quay – Slidell, LA. Stated he consulted with an attorney with expertise in constitutional law and it is a violation of the First Amendment to remove the books from the shelves. Stated that it does not matter who is in the majority, as the Bill of Rights was put in the Constitution to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority. Stated that books such as *Sex Is a Funny Word* could help children understand the signs of sexual abuse.

Bonnie Schmidt – Slidell, LA. Concerned with books being taken off the shelves during the review process. Stated she went to the library to find the challenged books and they were on a cart that was rolled out from the back. Asked the Board to amend the rules to place the books back on the shelves until the decision process is complete.

Kim Turner – Mandeville, LA. Spoke about the cost of meetings, resources, and reviews of materials. Suggested that the completed statements should be hand-written to eliminate repeated copying and pasting of complaints. Mentioned the cost of having four police detail officers at the board meeting and noted the metal detector. Stated that if the person who challenges the book cannot be present, the submission should be considered withdrawn.

Lisa Rustemeyer – Covington, LA. Supports the changes to Section 407, but said it needs more work. Stated that whether or not the book was patron-requested should be taken into consideration. Stated that the Accountability Project is causing delays in other library business and has cost time and money. Opposes taking books off the shelves.

Erin Kennedy – Folsom, LA. Stated that this is a moral panic fueled by misinformation and preying on our instinct to protect ourselves from the “other,” which in this case is queer people. Spoke of those who were killed because they were accused of being witches in Salem and other examples of panic throughout history. Stated that children’s input is valuable and suggested that parents ask their children what they are currently reading.

Gary Lacoste – Abita Springs, LA. Stated his concern for the content in certain books, such as illustrations that are sexual. Stated that the books should not be on the shelves for children to see. Stated he does not want to ban them or burn them, just wants them in an appropriate area.

**Discussion:** There was no discussion by the Board.

**Vote:** M. Reneau moved to approve the changes made to Section 407 of the Rules and Regulations manual. It was seconded by A. Shaw. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes* Butler – *Absent* Reneau – *Yes* Shaw – *Yes* Taylor – *Yes*  
Motion carried.

#### **D. Rules and Regulations Update – Section 205 Materials Display**

T. DiMaggio reviewed the update to Section 205 Materials Display. The Board was provided copies of the original, revised, and final policy. She explained that the purpose of the revision is to clarify who is responsible for creating displays in the branch, the purpose of displays created by library staff, and guidelines for staff to use when creating displays. T. DiMaggio read the final policy aloud.

##### **Public Comment:**

Erin Kennedy – Folsom, LA. Referenced a comment made at a previous meeting from a representative of Slidell who suggested creating a communal Board who could screen books for displays. Stated that library staff are best qualified for such screening, as they are familiar with maintaining the shelves, collections, assessing items for disrepair, and general everyday handling of library materials.

Roxanne Newman – Mandeville, LA. Expressed concern with displays reflecting “all viewpoints on a given subject where appropriate.” Stated that it could lead to the inclusion of Mein Kampf in a Holocaust remembrance display or books about the alleged benefits of slavery during Black History month. Stated there has to be objective criteria to determine what materials are included or excluded. Stated she trusts the current staff and library leadership, but is concerned about the long-term endurance of the policy with future staff and leadership.

Nadia Slisarenko – Covington, LA. Asked that the Board revise the statement about “striving to include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints” for displays. Stated the statement favors opinion over fact and could be inadvertently or intentionally misused. Stated that the statement “all viewpoints on a given subject where appropriate” is vague and open to misuse.

Johanna Miner – Stated that she asked the library in June 2022 about displays and how they were chosen, but was never answered. Referenced the displays being chosen by staff and asked if the staff are young or old. Stated she is not asking for banning or censoring, and this is not about transgender or LGBTQIA people. Stated it is about protecting the innocence of children. Stated transgender books should not be on display in the children’s, teen, or young adult sections.

Jamie Segura – Covington, LA. Stated that a display during Pride Month started this disaster. Requested the discontinuation of all displays at every library for all holidays and dates of

historical or religious events. Suggested only having displays to promote what is in the library. Spoke of the separation of church and state in the First Amendment.

Ruth Terry Sipos – Abita Springs, LA. Stated that displays are a compelling hook that grabs patrons passing by them in the library. Stated her concern with how hard it is to accommodate everyone and called it a slippery slope.

Kevin Marino – Mandeville, LA. Supports the changes to the section, but is concerned about the “all viewpoints” statement as well. Stated he agrees with the previous comments and thinks it should be removed. Stated that people are concerned about their children seeing certain books, but the library already has a policy that states children nine and under need to be accompanied by an adult. Spoke of the mental health of LGBTQ teens and access to resources for that are crucial.

**Discussion:** J. Airey stated that he likes the first part of the policy that states the procedure for approving displays, but the remainder of the policy has some repeated language. K. LaRocca noted that the Rules and Regulations Manual is a “living” document that is updated frequently and changes can be made as needed. M. Reneau stated that feelings or comments about some subjects may spur hatred. She stated that if the comments or viewpoints reflect an attitude of hatred, injustice, or intolerance, she would consider those attitudes not appropriate. She added that comments on that subject should not be part of the display. A. Shaw asked about displays of new materials. K. LaRocca explained that new material displays are not curated in any way and are just newly purchased items. One third of new books are patron-requested. There was discussion about new book displays in large and small branches.

**Vote:** M. Reneau moved to table the update to Section 205 Materials Display to a future meeting to allow more time for consideration. It was seconded by A. Shaw. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes* Butler – *Absent* Reneau – *Yes* Shaw – *Yes* Taylor – *Yes*

Motion carried.

### **E. Adoption of the Strategic Plan**

K. LaRocca reviewed the final draft of the strategic plan for the Board’s consideration of adoption. The draft includes the library’s first strategic plan, new mission and vision statements, and goals. The process of drafting the plan was estimated to take six to nine months, but due to COVID-19, Hurricane Ida, and the rise of concerns surrounding library resources, the process has taken two years.

The goals, mission, and vision came from stakeholder engagement and were adjusted based on feedback from the Board and Strategic Planning Committee. K. LaRocca stated that these goals

are purposefully broad, as we are working in and adapting to tumultuous times. The plan is more of a GPS rather than a road map. If adopted, library staff will work on yearly action plans that will help us achieve the goals and allow us to adapt to the environment as necessary. The action plans will consist of all the information gathered during the process. Information was gathered from over 35 focus groups as well as surveys completed by staff, the Library Board, and the community. K. LaRocca thanked the staff who led the focus groups.

**Public Comment:**

Lisa Rustemeyer – Covington, LA. Stated she is excited for the strategic plan to come to fruition. Appreciates outreach services that have been offered and is looking forward to the expansion of those services. Enjoyed the Harp concert at the Covington Branch recently.

**Discussion:** B. Taylor thanked the staff for conducting the focus group sessions, which provided helpful feedback for the consultants to develop a plan to help guide us through the next five years. The consultants also conducted 16 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in the community. She stated that this is the first strategic plan that St. Tammany Parish Library has had and she looks forward to wonderful things for the future.

M. Reneau stated that the plan is very comprehensive and is an enhancement for all of the residents of the community. Stated that the public library is designed to meet the needs of every member of the community with resources made available to them.

**Vote:** A. Shaw moved to approve the adoption of the strategic plan. It was seconded by M. Reneau. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes* Butler – *Absent* Reneau – *Yes* Shaw – *Yes* Taylor – *Yes*  
Motion carried.

**F. Resolution regarding maintaining the current millage rate for 2024**

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca reported that the Parish Council sets the library’s millage rate each year and we must notify the Parish Government Finance Office by May 5, 2023 of our request for the millage rate for 2023. The St. Tammany Parish Library ad valorem levy is 5.78 mils with a legal maximum of 6.07 mils. This levy was authorized by voters from 2010 through 2024. K. LaRocca explained that the library has not taken the legal maximum over the last four years. Because we have not rolled up to the maximum allowable millage and 2024 is a reassessment year, our millage and maximum millage rates will be adjusted downwards. When reassessments happen in 2024, a new lower legal maximum will be set for the library’s levy so that we will not unduly benefit from the rise in assessments. K. LaRocca noted that the bonds for the Madisonville

Branch will be paid off at the end of 2024. K. LaRocca is recommending that we request to maintain the current millage rate for 2023.

**Public Comment:**

Johanna Miner – Stated she does not feel the library’s millage will be renewed in 2024. Stated that it was “cowardice” for Connie Phillips to be called out at the previous board meeting. Stated that the books that were returned to the shelves last month were all challenged by other residents of the community last year. Quoted a Bible verse. B. Taylor advised J. Miner that her comments do not pertain to the current agenda item. J. Miner called the Board high and mighty politicians who know nothing about God’s justice. B. Taylor again advised J. Miner that her comments did not pertain to the current agenda item. J. Miner continued speaking after being advised twice, therefore her public comment period was ended.

Joan Simon – Covington, LA. Stated that the library is a wonderful institution and she supports maintaining the current millage. Spoke of people who want to destroy the library and noted that it is a national movement fueled by political interests. Thanked the Board for their efforts over the last year.

B. Taylor read the resolution aloud.

**Vote:** M. Reneau moved to approve the resolution to request maintaining the current millage rate. It was seconded by A. Shaw. Roll call vote:

Airey – *Yes* Butler – *Absent* Reneau – *Yes* Shaw – *Yes* Taylor – *Yes*  
Motion carried.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Strategic Planning Committee Update**

K. LaRocca reported that since the Board has adopted the strategic plan, staff will be working on training for action planning as soon as Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

**B. Rules and Regulations Committee Update**

K. LaRocca reported that the committee met on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. Policies reviewed were Section 407 Challenged Materials, Section 205 Materials Display, and Section 111 of the Board’s by-laws, which includes Quorum, Rules of Order, and enactments. For Section 111, the committee is codifying how public comments are handled at meetings. The next committee

meeting is May 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. at the Covington Branch. They will be discussing Section 205 Materials Display again, Section 111, and will review financial policies.

### **C. Library Foundation Update**

K. LaRocca reported that the Distinguished Speaker event is on April 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Beau Chene Country Club. Emilie Rhys, author of *New Orleans Music Observed: The Art of Noel Rockmore and Emilie Rhys*, will be the speaker.

### **D. Friends of the Library Updates**

There is no Friends of the Library report.

## **4. Public Comment**

Laura Dinapolis – Covington, LA. Stated it is ironic that people are saying that this conflict is not about religion, yet previous speakers said that “God is watching” and God has a millstone for us. Stated that our job as parents is to make sure our kids grow up in a family where they are comfortable being who they are.

Ruth Terry Sipos – Abita Springs, LA. Spoke about putting in an interlibrary loan request on Wednesday at the Abita Springs Branch, and she was very happy that it arrived so quickly on Friday.

Sonnet Ireland – Slidell, LA. Thanked the Board and encouraged them and library staff to persevere. Spoke of the Lafayette library which lost funding and is in a sad state of being at this time. Urged the Board not to give up hope or to be disheartened. Stated that the public is here and supports them.

## **5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by J. Airey and seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

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Mary Reneau, Secretary



**St. Tammany Parish Library - General Fund  
Balance Sheet  
April 30, 2023**

2

**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**

Cash	\$ 12,889,078.64
Cash - Health Claims	(26,146.25)
Due from Paylocity	0.00
Returned Checks	24.10
Ad Valorem Receivable - 2021	0.00
Ad Valorem Receivable - 2022	454,396.96
Ad Valorem Receivable - 2020	3,864,666.68
Due from State of Louisiana	241,127.52
Prepaid Expenses	0.00

**Total Current Assets** 17,423,147.65

**Other Assets**

Deposits	<u>1,981.00</u>
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**Total Other Assets** 1,981.00

**Total Assets** \$ 17,425,128.65

**LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE**

**Current Liabilities**

Accrued Salaries	\$ 189,735.09
Deferred Inflows - Ad Valorem	167,512.00
Elective Benefits Payable	(1,660.77)
Retirement Payable	69,835.52
Health Claims Payable	255,932.55
Due to Employee	<u>219.82</u>

**Total Current Liabilities** 681,574.21

**Fund Balance**

Fund Balance	<u>16,743,554.44</u>
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**Total Fund Balance** 16,743,554.44

**Total Liabilities & Fund Balance** \$ 17,425,128.65

**St. Tammany Parish Library-General Fund**  
**Statement of Revenues and Expenditures**  
**For the Four Months Ending April 30, 2023**

3

	<u>Current Period</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Year to Date</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Yearly Total</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>YTD Act</u> <u>to YTD</u> <u>Budget</u>
<b>Revenues</b>					
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$ 966,166.67	\$ 3,864,666.68	11,644,000.00	7,779,333.32	33.19
State Revenue Sharing	21,052.33	84,209.32	258,515.00	174,305.68	32.57
Fines/Fees	5,831.94	23,255.48	70,500.00	47,244.52	32.99
Grants and Other	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Interest Income	19,690.83	58,789.78	39,000.00	(19,789.78)	150.74
Insurance Proceeds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donations Received	495.54	12,623.33	50,000.00	37,376.67	25.25
Summer Reading Shirt Sales	42.00	1,689.97	1,350.00	(339.97)	125.18
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b><u>1,013,279.31</u></b>	<b><u>4,045,234.56</u></b>	<b><u>12,064,365.00</u></b>	<b><u>8,019,130.44</u></b>	<b><u>33.53</u></b>
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Library Administration	396,384.20	1,767,332.16	5,555,000.00	3,787,667.84	31.82
Employee Benefits	168,294.73	753,613.18	1,962,100.00	1,208,486.82	38.41
Advertising,Dues & Subscriptio	1,053.20	7,640.19	41,500.00	33,859.81	18.41
Signage	0.00	274.28	3,000.00	2,725.72	9.14
Printing, Duplicating & Bindin	3,754.31	4,390.24	22,000.00	17,609.76	19.96
Promotional Production	1,386.34	1,386.34	10,000.00	8,613.66	13.86
Utilities	19,077.14	115,215.38	323,050.00	207,834.62	35.66
Communications	12,188.30	48,837.31	151,500.00	102,662.69	32.24
Leases	32,813.10	119,489.34	326,500.00	207,010.66	36.60
Maintenance of Property & Equi	48,020.13	281,034.98	572,500.00	291,465.02	49.09
Maintenance Services (Building	14,848.05	98,955.25	264,055.00	165,099.75	37.48
Professional Services	20,267.92	129,029.27	313,925.00	184,895.73	41.10
Insurance and Claims	4,073.00	63,801.50	222,026.00	158,224.50	28.74
Operating Supplies	16,384.74	58,087.33	166,000.00	107,912.67	34.99
Travel & Continuing Education	5,003.04	14,923.68	86,000.00	71,076.32	17.35
Public Relations/Programming	3,041.19	19,480.00	116,200.00	96,720.00	16.76
Capital Outlay-Non-Book Acq.	6,432.92	172,886.66	448,758.00	275,871.34	38.53
Capital Outlay-library Res. Ac	124,049.13	543,934.19	1,473,500.00	929,565.81	36.91
Capital Expenditures - Cameras	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b><u>877,071.44</u></b>	<b><u>4,200,311.28</u></b>	<b><u>12,063,614.00</u></b>	<b><u>7,863,302.72</u></b>	<b><u>34.82</u></b>
<b>Excess of Revenues/(Expenditur</b>	<b><u>\$ 136,207.87</u></b>	<b><u>\$ (155,076.72)</u></b>	<b><u>751.00</u></b>	<b><u>155,827.72</u></b>	<b><u>(20,649.36)</u></b>

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**St. Tammany Parish Library**  
**Statement of Changes in Fund Balance**  
**For the Four Months Ending April 30, 2023**

Beginning Fund Balance	\$	16,898,631.16
Net Income		(155,076.72)
		<hr/>
Ending Fund Balance	\$	<u>16,743,554.44</u>

**SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

**St. Tammany Parish Library-General Fund**  
**Schedule of Expenditures**  
**For the Four Months Ending April 30, 2023**

	<u>Current Period</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Year to Date</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Yearly Total</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual to</u> <u>YTD</u> <u>Budget</u>
<b>Library Administration</b>					
Library Salaries	\$ 396,384.20	\$ 1,767,332.16	\$ 5,555,000.00	3,787,667.84	31.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 396,384.20</b>	<b>\$ 1,767,332.16</b>	<b>\$ 5,555,000.00</b>	<b>3,787,667.84</b>	<b>31.82</b>
<b>Employee Benefits</b>					
FICA/ Supplemental Retirement	\$ 8,677.85	\$ 39,036.38	\$ 109,600.00	70,563.62	35.62
Retirement Contributions	43,915.26	175,132.63	516,000.00	340,867.37	33.94
Health Insurance Expense	31,430.66	122,954.63	450,000.00	327,045.37	27.32
Health Trust	84,270.96	389,354.54	855,500.00	466,145.46	45.51
Worker's Compensation Expense	0.00	27,135.00	30,000.00	2,865.00	90.45
Employee Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 168,294.73</b>	<b>\$ 753,613.18</b>	<b>\$ 1,962,100.00</b>	<b>1,208,486.82</b>	<b>38.41</b>
<b>Advertising, Dues &amp; Subscriptions</b>					
Publication of Legal Notices	\$ 1,053.20	\$ 3,915.19	\$ 7,000.00	3,084.81	55.93
Membership Dues	0.00	1,750.00	7,500.00	5,750.00	23.33
Advertising	0.00	1,975.00	27,000.00	25,025.00	7.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,053.20</b>	<b>\$ 7,640.19</b>	<b>\$ 41,500.00</b>	<b>33,859.81</b>	<b>18.41</b>
<b>Signage</b>					
Signage	\$ 0.00	\$ 274.28	\$ 3,000.00	2,725.72	9.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 274.28</b>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>	<b>2,725.72</b>	<b>9.14</b>
<b>Printing, Duplicating &amp; Binding</b>					
Printing	\$ 675.26	\$ 1,311.19	\$ 12,000.00	10,688.81	10.93
Book Binding	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
Patron Cards	3,079.05	3,079.05	5,000.00	1,920.95	61.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,754.31</b>	<b>\$ 4,390.24</b>	<b>\$ 22,000.00</b>	<b>17,609.76</b>	<b>19.96</b>
<b>Promotional Production</b>					
Promotional Production	\$ 1,386.34	\$ 1,386.34	\$ 10,000.00	8,613.66	13.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,386.34</b>	<b>\$ 1,386.34</b>	<b>\$ 10,000.00</b>	<b>8,613.66</b>	<b>13.86</b>

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**St. Tammany Parish Library-General Fund  
Schedule of Expenditures  
For the Four Months Ending April 30, 2023**

	<u>Current Period</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Year to Date</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Yearly Total</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual to</u> <u>YTD</u> <u>Budget</u>
<b>Utilities</b>					
Electricity	\$ 15,839.27	\$ 101,010.43	\$ 284,000.00	182,989.57	35.57
Gas	83.42	1,466.91	3,050.00	1,583.09	48.10
Water	3,154.45	12,738.04	36,000.00	23,261.96	35.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 19,077.14</b>	<b>\$ 115,215.38</b>	<b>\$ 323,050.00</b>	<b>207,834.62</b>	<b>35.66</b>
<b>Communications</b>					
Postage	\$ 1,143.19	\$ 4,608.29	\$ 14,000.00	9,391.71	32.92
Voice Line	6,200.89	26,259.19	88,500.00	62,240.81	29.67
Data Lines (Internet)	4,812.50	17,837.50	48,000.00	30,162.50	37.16
Courier/Shipping	31.72	132.33	1,000.00	867.67	13.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 12,188.30</b>	<b>\$ 48,837.31</b>	<b>\$ 151,500.00</b>	<b>102,662.69</b>	<b>32.24</b>
<b>Leases</b>					
Building Lease Expense	\$ 31,897.75	\$ 117,651.00	\$ 318,000.00	200,349.00	37.00
Equipment Lease Expense	915.35	1,838.34	6,000.00	4,161.66	30.64
Vehicle Lease Expense	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 32,813.10</b>	<b>\$ 119,489.34</b>	<b>\$ 326,500.00</b>	<b>207,010.66</b>	<b>36.60</b>
<b>Maintenance of Property &amp; Equipment</b>					
Custodial and Janitorial	\$ 19,597.87	\$ 71,136.45	\$ 212,000.00	140,863.55	33.55
Grounds/Lawn Maintenance	6,883.00	26,982.00	85,000.00	58,018.00	31.74
Maintenance Supplies	911.65	2,471.35	9,000.00	6,528.65	27.46
Fuel & Lube	2,363.09	7,285.10	40,000.00	32,714.90	18.21
Vehicle Repairs	1,267.23	4,791.20	6,000.00	1,208.80	79.85
Small Tools	37.67	315.67	3,000.00	2,684.33	10.52
Office Machine & Equip Repair	0.00	504.92	1,000.00	495.08	50.49
Network Utility Software	15,959.62	108,470.68	125,000.00	16,529.32	86.78
Automation System Maintenance	0.00	567.00	29,500.00	28,933.00	1.92
Polaris Maintenance	1,000.00	53,635.61	54,000.00	364.39	99.33
PC Network Maintenance & Repai	0.00	4,875.00	8,000.00	3,125.00	60.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 48,020.13</b>	<b>\$ 281,034.98</b>	<b>\$ 572,500.00</b>	<b>291,465.02</b>	<b>49.09</b>
<b>Maintenance of Services (Buildings)</b>					
Physical Plant	\$ 11,590.11	\$ 58,881.55	\$ 150,000.00	91,118.45	39.25
Plumbing, Heating and AC	287.14	29,458.41	66,500.00	37,041.59	44.30
Electrical	1,596.73	4,144.73	8,000.00	3,855.27	51.81
Sanitation	644.07	2,895.56	11,000.00	8,104.44	26.32
Pest Control	730.00	2,850.00	7,000.00	4,150.00	40.71

**St. Tammany Parish Library-General Fund**  
**Schedule of Expenditures**  
**For the Four Months Ending April 30, 2023**

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	<u>Current Period</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Year to Date</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Yearly Total</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual to</u> <u>YTD</u> <u>Budget</u>
Termite Contract	0.00	0.00	4,555.00	4,555.00	0.00
Carpet Cleaning	0.00	725.00	17,000.00	16,275.00	4.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,848.05</b>	<b>\$ 98,955.25</b>	<b>\$ 264,055.00</b>	<b>165,099.75</b>	<b>37.48</b>
<b>Professional Services</b>					
Payroll Service Fees	\$ 2,766.62	\$ 12,195.58	\$ 34,100.00	21,904.42	35.76
Legal	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00
Financial	15,000.00	17,155.35	40,000.00	22,844.65	42.89
Consultants	1,513.46	26,219.74	90,000.00	63,780.26	29.13
Security	987.84	3,485.46	10,000.00	6,514.54	34.85
Web Design Consultant	0.00	69,973.14	79,825.00	9,851.86	87.66
Movers	0.00	0.00	45,000.00	45,000.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 20,267.92</b>	<b>\$ 129,029.27</b>	<b>\$ 313,925.00</b>	<b>184,895.73</b>	<b>41.10</b>
<b>Insurance and Claims</b>					
Library Property Insurance	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 135,500.00	135,500.00	0.00
Flood Insurance	4,073.00	21,740.00	23,500.00	1,760.00	92.51
Vehicle Insurance	0.00	22,616.00	42,950.00	20,334.00	52.66
LBOC Liability	0.00	4,000.00	4,076.00	76.00	98.14
General Liability	0.00	15,445.50	16,000.00	554.50	96.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,073.00</b>	<b>\$ 63,801.50</b>	<b>\$ 222,026.00</b>	<b>158,224.50</b>	<b>28.74</b>
<b>Operating Supplies</b>					
Office Supplies	\$ 1,522.83	\$ 10,263.20	\$ 33,000.00	22,736.80	31.10
Bank Service Charges	1,668.48	5,625.28	16,000.00	10,374.72	35.16
Book Preparation Supplies	1,906.03	13,543.53	44,000.00	30,456.47	30.78
Computer/Printer Supplies	10,345.30	25,871.79	65,000.00	39,128.21	39.80
Programming Supplies	942.10	2,783.53	8,000.00	5,216.47	34.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 16,384.74</b>	<b>\$ 58,087.33</b>	<b>\$ 166,000.00</b>	<b>107,912.67</b>	<b>34.99</b>
<b>Travel and Continuing Education</b>					
Staff Travel - Local	\$ 1,099.37	\$ 3,260.66	\$ 22,000.00	18,739.34	14.82
Library In-service Training	84.00	84.00	9,000.00	8,916.00	0.93
Conventions & Seminars	3,819.67	11,579.02	55,000.00	43,420.98	21.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,003.04</b>	<b>\$ 14,923.68</b>	<b>\$ 86,000.00</b>	<b>71,076.32</b>	<b>17.35</b>
<b>Public Relations/Programming</b>					

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**St. Tammany Parish Library-General Fund  
Schedule of Expenditures  
For the Four Months Ending April 30, 2023**

	<u>Current Period</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Year to Date</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>Yearly Total</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual to</u> <u>YTD</u> <u>Budget</u>
Summer Reading Program	\$ 368.45	\$ 1,320.26	\$ 45,000.00	43,679.74	2.93
Summer Reading T-shirts	0.00	1,256.84	6,400.00	5,143.16	19.64
Adult Programming	1,803.44	10,600.22	36,000.00	25,399.78	29.45
Young Adult Programming	0.00	916.17	15,000.00	14,083.83	6.11
Juvenile Programming	781.92	4,425.23	12,000.00	7,574.77	36.88
LEH Grant	87.38	961.28	1,800.00	838.72	53.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,041.19</b>	<b>\$ 19,480.00</b>	<b>\$ 116,200.00</b>	<b>96,720.00</b>	<b>16.76</b>
<b>Capital Outlay-Non-Book Acq</b>					
Landscape Additions	\$ 0.00	\$ 10,260.00	\$ 33,000.00	22,740.00	31.09
Imp Phys Plant	0.00	18,300.00	132,000.00	113,700.00	13.86
Vehicles	0.00	0.00	68,758.00	68,758.00	0.00
Office Equip, Furn & Shelving	4,510.97	16,030.58	48,000.00	31,969.42	33.40
PC Network	1,921.95	128,296.08	146,000.00	17,703.92	87.87
Integrated Lib Automation Sys	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Audio/Visual Equipment	0.00	0.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,432.92</b>	<b>\$ 172,886.66</b>	<b>\$ 448,758.00</b>	<b>275,871.34</b>	<b>38.53</b>
<b>Capital Outlay-Library Res. Acq.</b>					
Adult Books	\$ 19,510.35	\$ 64,867.00	\$ 205,000.00	140,133.00	31.64
Lease/Purchase Books	0.00	18,203.89	18,400.00	196.11	98.93
Juvenile Books	2,020.75	23,865.42	105,000.00	81,134.58	22.73
Young Adults	1,235.95	3,952.79	15,000.00	11,047.21	26.35
Music Recordings	211.62	1,012.51	4,000.00	2,987.49	25.31
Adult Reference	4,935.00	25,307.62	111,000.00	85,692.38	22.80
Juvenile Reference	0.00	2,366.30	45,000.00	42,633.70	5.26
Periodicals	3,946.80	18,667.46	52,000.00	33,332.54	35.90
Audio Recordings	705.87	4,341.37	12,600.00	8,258.63	34.46
Video Recordings	2,740.44	14,565.18	69,000.00	54,434.82	21.11
Genealogy	359.15	1,314.68	5,000.00	3,685.32	26.29
Microfilm	0.00	5,867.00	10,000.00	4,133.00	58.67
Downloadable Media	34,617.14	136,483.95	415,000.00	278,516.05	32.89
CD/Software	17,319.37	43,944.80	85,500.00	41,555.20	51.40
Internet Database Subscription	36,446.69	179,174.22	321,000.00	141,825.78	55.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 124,049.13</b>	<b>\$ 543,934.19</b>	<b>\$ 1,473,500.00</b>	<b>929,565.81</b>	<b>36.91</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>					
Capital Expenditures - Cameras	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>	<b>6,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>



# 2023 SRC REGISTRATION CHEAT SHEET



## CHILDREN

Ages 0-11

### HOW DO THEY REGISTER

All kids register can register in-person or online in Beanstack.

### REGISTRATION PRIZE

All kids (0-11) receive a Reading Log with Stickers, a BINGO Card, and a stuffed animal Reading Buddy. Kids 6-11 can also register for Pin Club and receive a lanyard.

### CHALLENGE REQUIREMENTS

#### Reading Challenge (ages 0-11):

Read or be read to 720 minutes.

#### BINGO Challenge (ages 0-11):

Complete 5 activities in a row.

Activities include attending events at the library, spending time with friends & family, and reading.

#### Pin Club Challenge (ages 6-11):

Read 5 books in a category. There are 6 categories: Adventure, Animals, Funny, Free Read, Scary, & Science Fiction/Fantasy.

### COMPLETION PRIZE

**Reading Challenge:** Completion Certificate and a Pop-It Toy for ages 4- 11 or a Rubber Duck for ages 0-3. For completing the Reading Challenge, your name will also be placed in a drawing for a LEGO set.

**BINGO Challenge:** For 5 in a row, Squish Toy for ages 4-11 or a Rubber Duck for ages 0-3. You can only BINGO once. For a Blackout, their name will be placed in a drawing for a Lego set.

**Pin Club Challenge:** A themed prize pin for every 5 books read in a category. Categories can be repeated up to 3 times for a different pin each time.

## TEENS

Ages 12-18

### HOW DO THEY REGISTER

Teens register online through Beanstack.

### REGISTRATION PRIZE

Baseball Hat

\*while quantities last

### CHALLENGE REQUIREMENTS

Two options:

Read/Listed for 12 hours

Complete a Bingo Blackout

### COMPLETION PRIZE

Receive a Raising Canes bookmark for a free kids meal when you complete one option.

Complete both options automatically enters you into a drawing for a \$50 gift card to the STP retailer of your choice.

## Adult

Ages 18 and up

### HOW DO THEY REGISTER

Register online through Beanstack.

### REGISTRATION PRIZE

Baseball Hat (while quantities last)

### CHALLENGE REQUIREMENTS

Read 12 hours and log it into Beanstack *OR* Read and play BINGO.

### COMPLETION PRIZES

A BINGO automatically enters you into a drawing for \$25 gift card. Blackout BINGO automatically enters you into a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

### OTHER CHANCES TO WIN

Other prize drawings will be held throughout the summer to win books

## IMPORTANT DATES

First Day of Summer Reading – Thursday, May 18

Kickoff at SLIDELL – Thursday, May 18, 4-7 PM

Kickoff at Madisonville – Friday, May 19, 4-7 PM

First week of Events – May 31 – June 4

First Day to receive prizes – Monday, June 12

Juneteenth - Library closed – Monday, June 19

Fourth of July - Library Closed – Tuesday, July 4

Last week of Events – Week of July 5-9

Last Day for Reading Challenge – Saturday, July 29

Drawings for Prizes – Tuesday, August 1

Last Day to pick up prizes – Saturday, August 12

**Director's Report**  
**June 5, 2023**

**FACILITIES**

John Bennett, Maintenance Department Manager, Louanne Bertrand, Technical Services Manager, and Tanya DiMaggio, Assistant Director of Support Services met with representatives from Quality Group Movers on April 27, 2023, to coordinate the Technical Services Department move to their new building in June.

Renovations at the new Annex on Commercial Way are close to completion.

John Bennett, Maintenance Department Manager, Noelle Williams, South Slidell Branch Manager, Kelly LaRocca, Director, and Tanya DiMaggio, Assistant Director of Support Services along with Christopher Dean from the St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department met with representatives with Roofs Restored USA for a pre-construction kick-off meeting for the South Slidell Library roof on May 19.

The Technical Services department's move to their new building will begin on June 6 and be completed on June 16. There will be minimal disruption to patrons.

**IT**

We have been funded \$70,320 by E-Rate for category 1 services for the 7/1/23-24 funding year. Last year we were funded at 50% and this year we have received 80% of our projected data services. Category 1 services are made up of our internet and phone services to all branches through Uniti. Our estimated annual cost for all branches is \$87,900. Last year E-Rate covered \$43,950. This year \$70,320 will be paid via E-Rate. E-Rate is the federal Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund.

**MARKETING AND OUTREACH**

Tanya DiMaggio and Brett Bennett, Maintenance Staff, attended the Friends of Slidell Library Parking Lot Enhancement meeting on April 27.

Jessica Aucoin, Children's Librarian for the Mandeville branch, performed Storytime at Kinder Haus Montessori Mandeville on May 15 and at Kidz Klubhouse Mandeville on May 16.

Jackie Riecke, PR and Communications Coordinator, Jillian Boudreaux, Adult Programming Coordinator, Ethan Drott, and Austin Ortiz attended the Special Needs Expo on May 13 at the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office.

Tanya DiMaggio represented the library at the American Legion Post 16 Rededication and Open House on May 15.

Jackie Riecke, Sarah Aucoin, Reference Librarian for Slidell, Jennifer Rifino, and Tanya DiMaggio attended the St. Tammany Commission on Families meeting on May 9.

Jillian Boudreaux, Jenny Mayer, Children's Services Coordinator, and Jennifer Rifino, Teen Coordinator, promoted the Summer Reading Challenge on the Lake and the Highway radio stations on May 5.

Tanya DiMaggio and Ellen John, Reference Department Manager, met with the St. Tammany Parish GIS District about partnering on programs and about a possible grant opportunity on May 8.

Carly Nguyen promoted the SRC Kickoff at the Alton Elementary Expo on May 11. She also performed Storytime at St. Margaret Mary's on May 5.

Amy Strain, Folsom Branch Manager, attended the Library Foundation meeting in Madisonville on May 9.

Kay Redd, Abita Spring Branch Manager, attended Abita Elementary School to promote SRC on May 8, May 9, and May 11. Kay spoke to 19 classes, totaling 380 students.

Jillian Boudreaux, Jenny Mayer, Jennifer Rifino, and Jackie Riecke taped the Check It Out Show promoting Summer Reading at Koop Dr on April 26. The show is aired on the St. Tammany Parish Government Access Channel.

Susan Badon, Children's Librarian for the Madisonville Branch, performed Storytime at Kidz Klub House in Madisonville on April 28 and on May 12.

Alexis Davis, Children's Librarian for the Slidell Branch, performed outreach for the Bonne Ecole Library Club Field Trip on May 11.

Amy Strain Folsom Branch Manager attended a Kiwanis club meeting on May 25 at the Folsom Town Hall

Jackie Riecke promoted Summer Reading Challenge Special Guests events on the Lake and Highway radio stations on June 2.

Abita Springs Friends of the Park awarded Kay Redd, Abita Springs Branch Manager, with the Public Service of the Season award.

## **PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS**

Global Accessibility Day Open House was held at the Madisonville Library on May 18 to showcase the TAPit learning station. TAPit is the first ADA-compliant interactive learning station designed to recognize the difference between an arm resting upon the screen and a finger or assistive device intentionally tapping an image. Providing an optimal interface for patrons with special needs to use at their own pace. The TAPit station was gifted to the library by the St. Tammany Library Foundation.

Summer Reading Challenge Community Partner Showcase Kick-Off Parties were held May 18 at the Slidell Library with over 450 attendees and May 19 at the Madisonville Library with over 400 attendees. The Highway and the Lake radio stations were at the events to increase the promotion of the Summer Reading Program. The showcase included over 20 community partners such as the Madisonville and Slidell fire departments, Northshore Technical Community College, NAMI St. Tammany, START Corp, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services.

The Abita Springs, Slidell, and South Slidell Branches launched "Get Down and Clean Up" programs sponsored by Keep Louisiana Beautiful. Patrons are able to use their library card to check out a clean-up kit, which includes a safety vest, grabbers, a trash bag, and instructions on how to conduct a cleanup.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Children's Services staff, the Teen Services staff, four small branch managers, and Tanya DiMaggio had Stewards of Children child sexual abuse awareness, prevention, and reporting training at the Children's Advocacy Hope House on May 10.

Louanne Bertrand, Technical Services Manager, Audra Kackley, Cataloger, Vickie D'Antonio, Cataloger, Ann Saucier, Acquisitions Clerk, and Amanda Soileau, Systems Administrator attended IUG from May 9 through May 13.

Charlene Barrett, Teen Services Librarian attended the Louisiana Teen Readers' Choice (LTRC) 9-12 Spring Committee Meeting on May 6.

Byron Holdiman, Genealogy Librarian, attended the virtual Illinois State Genealogical Society Board Meeting.

All leadership staff attended the online Strategic Planning Implementation training on April 26.

### **WEBINAR ATTENDANCE**

Emily Stephan, Reference Librarian for the Madisonville branch, attended a Newsbank webinar on April 27.

Sarah Aucoin attended the Leading with Confidence: Best Practices for New and Emerging Library Managers, Leaders, and Supervisors Webinar on April 20. She also attended the NNLM Region 3 ECLI Webinar: Goal Setting Webinar on April 27 and a News Literacy Project Webinar on April 29.

Jane Johnson, Madisonville Branch Manager, attended a webinar on May 17, about Disability Accommodations in Libraries.

Amy Strain, Folsom Branch Manager, attended a webinar: Empowering Communities with Creativity: Craft and Hobby on April 25.

Kellie Nelson, Reference Librarian for the Covington Branch, attended the Dashboards for Fundraising Success with iWave webinar on April 25.

### **PERSONNEL**

Nine (9) Summer Reading Assistants were hired, these are temporary positions for the Summer Reading Challenge.

Cathy Badon is now the Children's Librarian Assistant at Slidell Branch.

Dana Woodall was hired to take Cathy's place as Children's Services Assistant at the Administration building. Dana started on May 22.

### **PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS**

We have received 19 public records requests since the beginning of November 2022. Eight are currently outstanding. The outstanding requests consist of extensive email searches that are in line for reduction and combinations of electronic and paper documents that will need to be sorted and organized to ensure the completeness of the records. Our new file clerk is training on the various library systems needed to pull requested records.

### **STATEMENTS OF CONCERN**

To date, the library has received 209 statements of concern on 167 titles since August 2022. The most recent statement of concern was submitted on May 15, 2023. The library board will be deciding on four titles this evening. Plans are being made for one special meeting to be held in June specifically for book decisions. Library administration is working to confirm a quorum before announcing this date. Library staff continue to read titles, hold meetings and make recommendations. The remaining statements of concern are still "pending review."

The library recently received 176 statements of concern with fake names and addresses, however, our policy states that in order to submit a statement of concern, the submitter must be a resident of St. Tammany parish. Since the submitter used fake addresses, we are unable to confirm their residency and therefore are unable to evaluate these statements. These statements are not included in our statements of concern and titles total.

Library administration has been working to determine the average cost of a Statement of Concern from initial filing to completion of a Board decision. This cost information will be available at the Board meeting.

### **CONTRACTS**

**Kace Systems Management Appliance** renewal for \$ **6,378.97** (Manages all of the public computers)

**VALUE OF PROCESSING A STATEMENT OF CONCERN  
DOES NOT INCLUDE READING**

TASK	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	TIME SPENT IN MINUTES	RATE PER MINUTE	COST OF TASK
Redact pdf Enter into chart Share info with appropriate staff	Admin Asst	8	0.37	\$ 2.96
Book Resume	Collection Librarian	30	0.53	\$ 15.90
Obtaining more books	Technical Services	10	0.98	\$ 9.80
Average cost of one book (between 1-7 additional copies are purchased of each title)				\$ 19.00
Identify and Schedule committee	Asst Director	10	0.73	\$ 7.30
Consideration Meeting		45	1.57	\$ 70.65 *Minimum
Write recommendation	Asst Director	30	0.73	\$ 21.90 average 20-45 minutes
Write letter to complainant	Director	40	0.88	\$ 35.20
Prepare for Board Meeting	Admin Asst	15	0.37	\$ 5.55
Board Meeting	Administration	45	4.9	\$ 220.50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>233 minutes</b> <b>3.88 hours</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>408.76</b>

April 2023  
Service Statistics

Branch	Adult Books	CD	DVD	ILL	Juv Bks	Mag	Pbks	YA	Virtual	Total Circulation	Computer Usage	Door Count	Wireless Inside	Wireless Outside
Admin/Annex	308	94	122	41	1,091	0	0	39		1,695				
Abita	547	35	277	20	541	4		18		1,442	199	1,965	116	314
Bush	144	28	388	4	84	12		4		664	86	774	47	151
Causeway	2209	124	738	40	1989	62		180		5,342	532	5,097	1,160	1,452
Covington	3307	289	1392	50	3535	84	61	238		8,956	1,230	6,424	2,938	1,294
Folsom	371	22	363	7	392	75		34		1,264	247	1,157	125	212
Lacombe	294	36	249	9	243	3		38		872	213	2,677	118	150
Lee Road	314	33	111	6	318	13	5	15		815	63	609	71	186
Madisonville	1238	181	371	20	1432	23		95		3,360	394	3,289	885	535
Mandeville	2495	271	836	46	3572	42	4	228		7,494	1,036	5,653	923	636
Pearl River	382	9	157	21	200	20	39	10		838	267	1,600	117	198
Slidell	3320	322	1307	44	3346	236	305	389		9,269	1,926	9,889	1,486	1,048
South Slidell	616	84	586	14	679	5	13	83		2,080	1,343	4,610	619	900
Virtual <sup>1</sup>									29,395	29,395				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,545</b>	<b>1,528</b>	<b>6,897</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>17,422</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>1,371</b>	<b>29,395</b>	<b>73,486</b>	<b>7,536</b>	<b>43,744</b>	<b>8,605</b>	<b>7,076</b>

1 - Virtual stats include Overdrive, Tumblebooks, 3M Cloud Library, Rbdigital, Hoopla

CD=CompactDisc; DVD=DigitalVersatileDisc; ILL=InterLibraryLoan; Mag=Magazines  
Pbks=Paperbacks; YA=Young Adult

**Patrons Registered:            633**

YTD Jan - Apr. 2023  
Service Statistics

Branch	Adult Books	CD	DVD	ILL	Juv Bks	Mag	Pbks	YA	Virtual	Total Circulation	Computer Usage	Door Count	Wireless Inside	Wireless Outside
Admin/Annex	1,137	269	647	140	1,655	7		118		3,973				
Abita	2,311	221	1,138	119	2,111	16		86		6,002	698	7,488	391	1,050
Bush	723	82	1,504	25	471	44		40		2,889	357	3,190	182	525
Causeway	8,938	576	3,227	208	7,788	125		740		21,602	2,168	21,166	5,073	6,270
Covington	13,629	1,149	5,901	166	14,188	416	280	730		36,459	4,899	24,980	11,241	5,186
Folsom	1,811	123	1,389	41	1,656	362		87		5,469	1,057	5,240	590	837
Lacombe	1,100	122	1,016	29	924	14		94		3,299	941	9,920	443	639
Lee Road	1,387	157	641	11	1,468	41	10	62		3,777	318	2,899	272	821
Madisonville	4,873	724	1,497	79	6,183	38		453		13,847	1,556	17,181	4,094	2,316
Mandeville	10,235	1,094	3,333	148	13,927	204	10	846		29,797	4,248	24,622	3,494	2,405
Pearl River	1,671	41	546	85	987	35	89	78		3,532	1,076	6,496	408	752
Slidell	14,393	1,331	5,299	182	12,958	1,003	1,097	1,331		37,594	7,939	41,753	5,856	3,949
South Slidell	2,564	293	2,157	64	3,063	27	30	255		8,453	5,227	19,111	2,715	4,118
Virtual <sup>1</sup>									120,483	120,483				
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,772</b>	<b>6,182</b>	<b>28,295</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>67,379</b>	<b>2,332</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>4,920</b>	<b>120,483</b>	<b>297,176</b>	<b>30,484</b>	<b>184,046</b>	<b>34,759</b>	<b>28,868</b>

1 - Virtual stats include Overdrive, Tumblebooks, 3M Cloud Library, Rbdigital, Hoopla

CD=CompactDisc; DVD=DigitalVersatileDisc; ILL=InterLibraryLoan; Mag=Magazines  
Pbks=Paperbacks; YA=Young Adult

**Patrons Registered:      2,546**

**Library Board of Control Rules and Regulations**  
**Chapter 2, Section 205 Materials Display**

The purpose of this revision is to clarify who is responsible for creating displays in the branch, the purpose of displays created by Library staff, and guidelines for staff to use when creating displays.

This version has been revised based on the feedback from LBOC members at the April 24, 2023 regular LBOC meeting.

## Original Policy

### **Section 205. Materials Display**

*Effective Date: TK*

*Revision Date: TK*

#### **A. Displays**

##### 2. Staff

- a. A library display is any display created by an employee promoting the library and its services;
- b. staff shall create displays of library materials to encourage the use of information resources and promote a positive view of the library in the community.
- c. such displays shall reflect all viewpoints on a given subject where appropriate.

## Draft A of Revised Policy

### **Section 205. Materials Display**

*Effective Date: TK*

*Revision Date: TK*

#### **A. Displays**

##### **2. Displays by Staff**

Staff curate Library displays to further the mission and goals of Library programming and services. Library displays are curated by staff at each branch location under the direction of the Branch Manager, a Department Manager, or occasionally, Administration. All staff displays shall be approved by the Branch Manager.

Library displays created by staff shall feature STPL services, collections, and/or programs which may consist of infographics, book/resource lists, images, decorations, Library materials and resources, Library technologies and services, interactive elements, and third-party information resources.

The Library curates and maintains displays of information and resources at its branch outlets and online in Library discovery and engagement platforms.

Displays in the Children's and Teen's areas of the Library shall be age appropriate for the patrons likely to encounter such displays in those areas.

## Draft B of Revised Policy

### **Section 205. Materials Display**

*Effective Date: TK*

*Revision Date: TK*

#### **A. Displays**

##### **2. Displays by Staff**

Staff curate Library displays to further the mission and goals of Library programming and services. Library displays are curated by staff at each branch location under the direction of the Branch Manager, a Department Manager, or occasionally, Administration. All staff displays shall be approved by the Branch Manager.

Library displays created by staff shall feature STPL services and/or programs which may consist of infographics, book/resource lists, images, decorations, Library materials and resources, Library technologies and services, interactive elements, and third-party information resources.

The Library curates and maintains displays of information and resources at its branch outlets and online in Library discovery and engagement platforms.

Displays in the Children's and Teen's areas of the Library shall be age appropriate for the patrons likely to encounter such displays in those areas.



## ***Statement of Concern about Library Resources***

Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Date 11-19-2022

Name Connie Phillips

A [REDACTED]

City Mandeville State LA Zip 70471

Telephone [REDACTED]

Representing  (self)  St. Tammany Parish Library Accountability Project (organization)

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

book  Book  Newspaper  Other  
 Magazine  Content of Library Program  
 Audiovisual  Electronic Resource

2. Title Milk and Honey

Author/Producer Rupi Kaur

3. What brought this title to your attention?

Content violates the state obscenity statues  
2021 Louisiana Laws  
Revised Statutes  
Title 14 - Criminal Law

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

yes

5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?

Restrict access to minors as outlined in statute above. Require parent to check out for minor. The book should be shelved in a section where minors do not have access. A separate place in the library. A room or some section where minors do not have entry without parent and minors cannot check out.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

Violates Content violates the state obscenity statues

Inapropriate for minors.

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains illustrations depicting  
non-sexual nudity, sexual activities

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?

Something that does not violate the state obscenity statues for minors.

NOTE:

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

### 3. What brought this title to your attention?

Content violates the state obscenity statutes

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

§91.11.

2) "Material harmful to minors" is defined as any paper, magazine, book, newspaper, periodical, pamphlet, composition, publication, photograph, drawing, picture, poster, motion picture film, video tape, video game, figure, phonograph record, album, cassette, compact disc, wire or tape recording, or other similar tangible work or thing which exploits, is devoted to or principally consists of, descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality for commercial gain, and when the trier of fact determines that each of the following applies:

(a) The material incites or appeals to or is designed to incite or appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors.

(b) The material is offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors.

(c) The material taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

(3) For the purpose of this Section "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality" includes the depiction, display, description, exhibition or representation of:

(a) Ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual, simulated, or animated, whether between human beings, animals, or an animal and a human being;

(b) Masturbation, excretory functions, or exhibition, actual, simulated, or animated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples;

(c) Sadoomasochistic abuse, meaning actual, simulated, or animated, flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume which reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva,

genitals, or female breast nipples, or the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained, on the part of one so clothed;

(d) Actual, simulated, or animated, touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with, a pubic area, anus, female breast nipple, covered or exposed, whether alone or between human\*, animals or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification; or

(e) Actual, simulated, or animated, stimulation of the human genital organs by any device whether or not the device is designed, manufactured, and marketed for such purpose.

(4) "Minor" means any person under the age of eighteen years.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

Violates Content violates the state obscenity statutes

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

Violates Content violates the state obscenity statutes

Inappropriate for minors.

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains illustrations depicting non-sexual nudity; sexual activities including sexual assault.

ge Content

7 the first boy that kissed me held my shoulders down like the handlebars of the first bicycle he ever rode

I was five

he had the smell of starvation on his lips which he picked up from his father feasting on his mother at 4 a.m.

He was the first boy to teach me my body was for giving to those that wanted that I should feel anything less than whole

8 The illustration on this page depicts a naked woman sitting with her legs open with the words "you have been taught your legs are a pit stop for men that need a place to rest a vacant body empty enough for guests but no one ever comes and is willing to stay". The words are written over the pubic region of the illustration.

See Figure 1.

8 the therapist places the doll in front of you it is the size of girls your uncle likes touching

point to where his hands were

you point to the spot between its legs the one he fingered out of you like a confession

13 you pinned my legs to the ground with your feet and demanded I stand up the rape will tear you in half

15 he guts her with his fingers like he's scraping the inside of a cantaloupe clean

19 our knees pried open by cousins and uncles and men our bodies touched by all the wrong people that even in a bed full of safety we are afraid

20 you plough into me with two fingers and I am mostly shocked. It feels like rubber against an open wound. I do not like it. You begin pushing faster and faster. But I feel nothing. You search my face for a reaction so I begin acting like the naked women in the videos you watch when you think no one's looking. I imitate their moans. Hollow and hungry. You ask if it feels good and I say yes so quickly it sounds rehearsed, but the acting. You do not notice.

29 The illustration on this page depicts a naked woman with her mouth open, head

back, and hand on her thigh and fingers curled into her pubic region.

29 the very thought of you has my legs spread apart like an easel with a canvas  
begging for art

35 you talk too much

he whispers into my ear

I can think of better ways to use that mouth

it's your voice that undresses me

my name sounds so good french kissing your tongue

you wrap your fingers around my hair and pull

this is how you make music out of me

37 I want your hands to hold not my hands your lips to kiss not my lips but other  
places

38 you move my hand between my legs and whisper

make those pretty little fingers dance for me

- solo performance

Page Content

40 instead. Lie me down. Lay me open like a map. And with your finger trace the  
places you still want to \*\*\*\* out of me. Kiss me like I am the center point of  
gravity and you are falling into me like my soul is the focal point of yours. And  
when your mouth is kissing not my mouth but other places. My legs will split  
apart out of habit. And that's when. I pull you in. welcome you. Home.

41 I will smile. Throw my head back. Arch my body like a mountain you want to split  
in half. Baby lick me.

Like your mouth has the gift of reading and I'm your favorite book. Find your  
favorite page in the soft spot between my legs and read it carefully. Fluently.  
Vividly. Don't you dare leave a single word untouched. And I swear my ending will  
be so good. The last few words will come. Running into your mouth. And when  
you're done. Take a seat. Cause it's my turn to make music with my knees pressed  
to the ground.

Sweet baby. This. Is how we pull language out of one another with the flick of our tongues. This is how we have the conversation.

45 he only whispers I love you as he slips his hands down the waistband of your pants

47 she will then try to make love to your body. But she will never lick, caress, or suck like me.

48 you have spent enough nights with his manhood curled inside your legs to forget what loneliness feels like

52 you must have known you were wrong when your fingers were dipped inside me searching for honey that would not come for you

54 even when you undress her you were searching for me I am sorry I taste so good when the two of you make love it is still my name that rolls off your tongue accidentally

55 The illustration on this page depicts a woman's nude buttocks while she is standing in front of a shirtless man whom is at her waist level.

58 The illustration on this page depicts two mouths. One of the mouths is open with the other one's tongue inside of it.

58 It wasn't you I was kissing- don't be mistaken  
it was him on my mind your lips were just convenient

66 your body is still the only one I want to be undressed under

67 The illustration on this page depicts two nude people laying back to front; one with their hand resting on the outer thigh of the other.

85 The illustration on this page depicts a nude woman lying on her side, looking upward with flowers growing along her leg and waist.

92 The illustration on this page depicts vines intertwined creating an image of a vagina.

See Figure 1.

97 the goddess between your legs makes mouths water

99 The illustration on this page depicts a nude woman lying on her side with hair

shown in her pubic and underarm regions.

**MILK AND HONEY** by Rupi Kaur  
Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2015

**PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

The book is divided into four chapters, and each chapter serves a different purpose. Deals with a different pain. Heals a different heartache. *milk and honey* takes readers through a journey of the most bitter moments in life and finds sweetness in them because there is sweetness everywhere if you are just willing to look.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Women  
Abused women  
Poetry  
Femininity  
Survival

**HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 2 print copies at Covington and Slidell/ Shelved in Adult Non-fiction/Call number 811.6 Kau
- Hoopla E-book

Purchased in January 2016. Available on shelf January 2016.

Total circulation on all print copies: 96

Total circulation on Hoopla: 94

**OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held at 2618 libraries.  
Jefferson Parish Library – Adult Non-fiction  
New Orleans Public Library – Adult Non-fiction  
East Baton Rouge Parish Library – Adult Non-fiction

**REVIEWS**

**Shelf Awareness (06/28/2016):**

Rupi Kaur's *Milk and Honey* is a collection of prose and poetry that explores themes of silence, abuse, womanhood, family, connections and personal power. Kaur divides the work into four sections--hurting, loving, breaking, and healing--that mirror the poet's growth. In the section "the hurting," Kaur explores the idea of otherness within oneself, how one cannot be at home in one's own body and how so many experiences affirm that to be a woman is undesirable and alien. Her trauma related to alcoholic family members, abuse and rape shape the poet's fraught psyche, leaving a sense of insecurity and confusion that permeates every page. This confusion is directed both toward understanding her place in the world as an individual and her relationships with others.... COPYRIGHT(2016) Shelf Awareness, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

RUPI KAUR is a poet, artist, and performer. As a 21-year-old university student Rupi wrote, illustrated, and self-published her first poetry collection, *Milk and Honey*. Next came its artistic sibling, *The Sun and her Flowers*. These collections have sold over 10 million copies and have been translated into over 40 languages. Her latest collection, *Home Body*, debuted #1 on bestseller lists across the world. As she has done in all things from the very beginning, Rupi self-produced *Rupi Kaur Live*, the first poetry special of its kind, which debuted on Amazon Prime Video in 2021. Rupi's work touches on love, loss, trauma, healing, femininity, and migration. She feels most at home when creating art, performing her poetry onstage, and spending time with family and friends.

## **AWARDS & LISTS**

Goodreads Choice Awards for Best Poetry



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips



Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Connie Phillips,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

Pursuant to La. R.S. § 14:91.11, it is unlawful for any St. Tammany Library to display, exhibit, disseminate, check-out, or otherwise provide any minor anything that constitutes material harmful to minors by law. However, materials are only deemed harmful to minors if all four (4) of the following apply beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. First, the material must exploit, be devoted to, or principally consist of "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality." To be "descriptions or depictions of illicit or sexual immorality," the material must convey ultimate sex acts, masturbation or excretory functions, lewd exhibition of private areas, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual intimacy via physical acts of private areas, or stimulation of human genitalia.
2. Second, the material must incite, appeal to, or be designed to incite or appeal to "the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors," i.e., a sexual response over and beyond those that would be characterized as normal for a minor.
3. Third, the material must be "offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors." These standards are not defined or limited by any specific geographic area.
4. Fourth, the material, when considered in its entirety (including both objectionable and nonobjectionable parts), must lack any "literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors." If any of the foregoing requirements are not met, the material is not unlawful under La. R.S. §14:91.11.

Importantly, the statute defines "minor" as "any person under the age of eighteen years." Thus, the last three (3) elements above must be considered in that context, e.g., "The material taken as a whole [must] lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for [any person

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
1112 WEST 21<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE COVINGTON, LA 70433  
PH: (985) 871-1219 FAX: (985) 871-1224

ABITA SPRINGS (985) 893-6285

FOLSOM (985) 796-9728

MANDEVILLE (985) 626-4293

BUSH (985) 886-3588

LACOMBE (985) 882-7858

PEARL RIVER (985) 863-5518

CAUSEWAY (985) 626-9779

LEE RD (985) 893-6284

SLIDELL (985) 646-6470

COVINGTON (985) 893-6280

MADISONVILLE (985) 845-4819

SOUTH SLIDELL (985) 781-0099



under the age of eighteen years].” Additionally, if materials that qualify as harmful to minors are not sold, distributed, advertised, or otherwise distributed to minors, it is permissible under the law to have them available for adults to do so, as long as the minors are unable to see, “as displayed,” descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality.”

Under this analysis, the staff committee determined that the material at issue in your Statement of Concern does not qualify as unlawfully harmful to minors.

1. The book does contain references to sexual acts and sexual abuse. However, the content is related to emotional feelings rather than primarily sexual content. The purpose of the sexual content is not to arouse. The poems and illustrations show the author/illustrator’s journey and search for a connection between sexual experiences and relationships.
2. The committee found that the text and images did not incite or appeal to the prurient interests of minors. The sexual texts and images illustrate the author’s own experience. They are not erotic. There are not “action” images. The poems that relate to trauma are not prurient.
3. The committee did not find the material to be offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors. This book is not appropriate for young children, they will have no frame of reference. However, the poems may be relevant to an older teen’s or adult’s experiences with first relationships.
4. The committee believes the material taken as a whole does not lack serious literary or artistic value for minors. The author is a well known “Insta-poet” and has a huge following on Instagram, especially with older teen girls. The author’s books have sold over 10 million copies and have been translated into over 40 languages. Her latest collection debuted number 1 on bestseller lists across the world. Committee members noted that many young women relate to the author’s experience and are inspired by her poetry. The text is honest and shows real situations in an eloquent way. The collection of poems as a whole would not make sense without the sexual and traumatic content. The collection of poems as a whole show the journey of a young adult learning their boundaries with sex and other people. The book has a high circulation rate at STPL, with 190 circulations of both the print and electronic copies since 2016. The title is held in over 2,618 other public libraries across the country.

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
1112 WEST 21<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE COVINGTON, LA 70433  
PH: (985) 871-1219 FAX: (985) 871-1224

ABITA SPRINGS (985) 893-6285

FOLSOM (985) 796-9728

MANDVILLE (985) 626-4293

BUSH (985) 886-3588

LACOMBE (985) 882-7858

PEARL RIVER (985) 863-5518

CAUSEWAY (985) 626-9779

LEE RD (985) 893-6284

SLIDELL (985) 646-6470

COVINGTON (985) 893-6280

MADISONVILLE (985) 845-4819

SOUTH SLIDELL (985) 781-0099



When the book was purchased, we seriously considered the subject matter and placed the book in the Adult non-fiction collection. In this collection, only adults and minors whose parents have given them permission to check out adult materials may check out the book. After reviewing the book and discussion, it was determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book does not violate the statute, and the book is shelved in the appropriate section of the library.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for their family, that alone does not render it unlawful and does not warrant censoring the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item, and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips

  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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May 31, 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips



Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

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## Statement of Concern about Library Resources

Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Date 11 30 2022

Name fran w smith

Addr [REDACTED]

City slidell State la Zip 70461

Telephon [REDACTED]

Representing \_\_\_\_\_ (self) St Tammany Prarish L brary Accountablity Project (organization)

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Book                      \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper                      \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine                      \_\_\_\_\_ Content of Library Program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Audiovisual                      \_\_\_\_\_ Electronic Resource

2. Title Milk and Honey

Author/Producer Rupi Kaur

3. What brought this title to your attention?

The title

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

I reviewed several of the sections. This book has no place in a public library. It is very difficult for me to read this trash. Our children do not need to be reading this sexual content. This type of literature is nothing but trash. IF adults want to read this that's fine but my tax dollars should not be paying for this.

5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?  
remove all books from the public library that has this content in it. Stop pandering to perverts. Provide descent reading material for our children in a safe and loving enviroment.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.  
The whole book!

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?  
something good for children to read.

NOTE:

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

**MILK AND HONEY** by Rupi Kaur  
Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2015

**PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

The book is divided into four chapters, and each chapter serves a different purpose. Deals with a different pain. Heals a different heartache. *milk and honey* takes readers through a journey of the most bitter moments in life and finds sweetness in them because there is sweetness everywhere if you are just willing to look.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Women  
Abused women  
Poetry  
Femininity  
Survival

**HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 2 print copies at Covington and Slidell/ Shelved in Adult Non-fiction/Call number 811.6 Kau
- Hoopla E-book

Purchased in January 2016. Available on shelf January 2016.

Total circulation on all print copies: 96

Total circulation on Hoopla: 94

**OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held at 2618 libraries.  
Jefferson Parish Library – Adult Non-fiction  
New Orleans Public Library – Adult Non-fiction  
East Baton Rouge Parish Library – Adult Non-fiction

**REVIEWS**

**Shelf Awareness (06/28/2016):**

Rupi Kaur's *Milk and Honey* is a collection of prose and poetry that explores themes of silence, abuse, womanhood, family, connections and personal power. Kaur divides the work into four sections--hurting, loving, breaking, and healing--that mirror the poet's growth. In the section "the hurting," Kaur explores the idea of otherness within oneself, how one cannot be at home in one's own body and how so many experiences affirm that to be a woman is undesirable and alien. Her trauma related to alcoholic family members, abuse and rape shape the poet's fraught psyche, leaving a sense of insecurity and confusion that permeates every page. This confusion is directed both toward understanding her place in the world as an individual and her relationships with others.... COPYRIGHT(2016) Shelf Awareness, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

RUPI KAUR is a poet, artist, and performer. As a 21-year-old university student Rupi wrote, illustrated, and self-published her first poetry collection, *Milk and Honey*. Next came its artistic sibling, *The Sun and her Flowers*. These collections have sold over 10 million copies and have been translated into over 40 languages. Her latest collection, *Home Body*, debuted #1 on bestseller lists across the world. As she has done in all things from the very beginning, Rupi self-produced *Rupi Kaur Live*, the first poetry special of its kind, which debuted on Amazon Prime Video in 2021. Rupi's work touches on love, loss, trauma, healing, femininity, and migration. She feels most at home when creating art, performing her poetry onstage, and spending time with family and friends.

## **AWARDS & LISTS**

Goodreads Choice Awards for Best Poetry



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Fran Smith  
[REDACTED]  
Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

The author is a New York Times best selling author, is a well known "Insta-poet" and has a huge following on Instagram . Since its publishing in 2015, the book has sold more than 4.5 million copies, and has been translated into more than 40 languages. The book has had a high circulation, with 190 circulations since 2016. It is held in over 2,618 other public libraries across the country.

This book is not appropriate for young children or even young teens. However, older teens and adults may find the poetry relevant to their experience with first relationships. The library recognized the mature subject matter and content of this book and, upon purchase, placed it into the Adult Non-Fiction collection.

The committee found that the book is about the writer's emotional journey in relationships. It is not eroticism. The illustrations portray the author/illustrator's experience. They are not "action" images. Their purpose is not to arouse. The parts relating to trauma have a purpose which is not prurient but to portray a journey of a young adult learning their sexual and emotional boundaries with other people.

You asked specifically that we "remove all books from the public library that has this content in it." After reviewing the book and discussion, it was determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book should be retained and it is shelved in the appropriate section of the library.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for themselves or their family, that alone does not warrant censoring the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line

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with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what they and their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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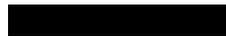
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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Fran Smith

  
Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Ms. Smith,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey* and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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May 31, 2023

Ms. Fran Smith

  
Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Ms. Smith,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey* and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?

Move to adult section of the library which would require a person of the age of majority and or parent to check out book.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

10 So I listened to sexist jokes. Racist jokes. 11 ...and I acknowledge that, as a white woman, I am speaking from a place of privilege. ...I've been called out and challenged to look at the things I say and think about how my wording might marginalize groups of people. 17 I think this is exactly why the neighbor told me, "It's our secret. If you tell anybody, then they'll want to play our tickly game, too. It won't be special anymore." I was five. I wanted to be special. 18 I didn't tell anybody that this man lay me down in the back of his work van, took my pants down, and touched me there. But that's not the reason I didn't tell I didn't tell because at age five I had no idea this was wrong 19 I

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?

No need to replace it; Put it in a request only section. It is a controversial topic and does; a mature topic. It pushes the ALA ideology of love is love etc. Love is love and lust is lust. This is a prime example the library attempting to confusing small children about their sexuality as though that is the norm. It is not the norm. It is an anomaly and should be put in the request only section but alas there is no section like that in our library; however, the complaint is still submitted.

NOTE:

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

Pink, Blue, and You

3. What brought this title to your attention?

Online reviews - inappropriate books for children. Further investigation confirms topics that violate the Louisiana Criminal Statue for material harmful to minors Title 14 section 91:11. Book Summary:

Teaches very young children about  
alternate genders and pronouns.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains alternate gender  
ideologies and nudity.

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

Summary of Concerns:

9 And what does it even mean to be a GIRL or BOY?

Do we have to be one or the other?

Or can we be BOTH at the same time, or NEITHER.

10 A few of us are born in bodies that aren't all female or male. Scientists call us  
INTERSEX.

The illustration on this page depicts a very young nude boy and a very young nude  
girl in a frontal position.

See Figure 1.

11 The illustration on this page depicts three very young children talking. They are  
saying:

"When I was born, I was called a girl but I feel like a boy."

"I don't really feel like a boy or a girl. I just want to be ME."

"I feel like I'm both a boy and a girl at the same time."

12 The illustration on this page depicts two young children talking. They are saying:

"When I was born, I was called a boy and I feel like a boy."

"Sometimes I feel more like a boy and sometimes I feel more like a girl."

How we feel inside is called our

GENDER IDENTITY.

How do you describe your gender?

14 Little words like HE, SHE, and THEY are called

PRONOUNS.

There are other pronouns, too. What pronoun do you want people to use when they talk about you?

The illustration on the top of this page depicts a young girl saying, "The word that I like the most is THEY."

16 Some people don't believe that all humans should have the same rights.

19 Some governments even made laws telling people who they're allowed to fall in love with.

The illustration on the bottom of the page depicts a man pointing at a couple of young men holding hands saying, "Men should love women, and women should love me!"

One of the young men is replying, "Why? We love each other, and we're happy this way."

23 Today, it's still harder for women to become presidents or to run big companies.

Most of the world's leaders are men.

The illustration on the bottom of the page depicts a young woman at the bottom of a staircase holding a briefcase looking upward toward a group of men standing at the top of the staircase. One of the men is saying, "We're in charge here."

24 People with other gender identities are also not treated equally.

Page Content

25 RICHARD JOHN BAKER & JAMES MICHAEL McCONNELL were the first male couple to marry in the United States.

When she was little, SARAH McBRIDE was called a boy.

26 WE'WHA was a Zuni Mexican whose sex was male but lived as a two-spirit, which is a third gender in some cultures.

27 The illustration on this page depicts several people with protest signs. Some are holding a rainbow sign, one man is holding a sign that reads: LOVE IS LOVE.

Another person is holding a sign with a male and female symbol together with an "equals" sign in the middle of the circle

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

10 So I listened to sexist jokes. Racist jokes. 11 ...and I acknowledge that, as a white woman, I am speaking from a place of privilege. ...I've been called out and challenged to look at the things I say and think about how my wording might marginalize groups of people. 17 I think this is exactly why the neighbor told me, "It's our secret. If you tell anybody, then they'll want to play our tickly game, too. It won't be special anymore." I was five. I wanted to be special. 18 I didn't tell anybody that this man lay me down in the back of his work van, took my pants down, and touched me there. But that's not the reason I didn't tell. I didn't tell because at age five, I had no idea this was wrong. 19 I asked him if he could make a doll bed out of the box, and he said, "Sure. But first, I want to play with you, okay?" Play with me? Sure! I nodded happily. "But it's a secret," he said. "You can't tell anybody, or they'll want to play, too." A secret? Oh, boy! He picked me up, set me on the floor of the van, pushed me back, and took off my pants. They were shorts, actually. ...He had a cigarette clamped in the corner of his mouth as he put his hand between my legs and rubbed. "Does that tickle? Does that feel good?" he asked. ...He gave me a little pat on the leg, put my clothes back where they belonged, and lifted me up. "Remember, you can't tell anybody. This is our secret." ...I remember eventually seeing a pediatrician because it hurt every time I peed. 22 I told Brian, "They're mad at Billy's dad for tickling me down there." I pointed between my legs, and both moms nearly passed out. 27 "Wow, I'll bet your nipples are as big as silver dollars!" Michael proclaimed as he stood behind me in line at the diving board. ...By that time- at the ripe old age of barely thirteen- I had heard it all. ...The hallways in my junior high school during passing period were some of the most naked fully-clothed moments of my life. Boys' overtly sexual comments- often accompanied by "accidental" brushes, grabs, and gropes- were often the burden of early-developing girls like me. 37 I wish I could say that there was never a time in my life where I felt out of place or unwanted because of my race, but unfortunately for me (and many other people of color, I'm sure), that's not the case. 38 I was very aware of the distinct differences between me and my White neighbors across the street or my Filipino neighbors next door. 42 Yes, the Barbie conversation with my mom hinted at the idea that we, as a Black race, were inferior to White people- the fact that society expected me to play with a doll that didn't represent what I looked like on the outside was a flashing neon sign foreshadowing the hidden racism I would have to endure as I grew older- but it wasn't until someone call me a nigger that I actually felt like less of a

Page Content person, just because I was born with a little more melanin in my skin than some people would have liked. 43 She was shunned by the Black community, who said she was a mutt- that her White side made her too White to hang out with them- and out cased by the White kids, who didn't believe her that she, as a half-Black person, was smart enough to be in the honors class. 44 I wasn't

made fun of by the Black kids because I "acted White" and "talked White,"... 46 As Shay put it, the guys were pulling out their penises and putting the in my butt and back as we danced. Whenever I'd satisfied them enough to reach their climax, they'd spray their secretions on my back and leave, making room for the next guy to dance with me. 46 "Too Whit to know better," one of the girls said with a laugh as she washed her hands. 51 Misogyny and sexism seemed a part of almost every interaction. As I got older, I cringed at the constant comments men made about women's bodies, their obsession with breasts, and the derogatory terms they used to talk about women. 72 During my first year o high school, I realized that gay women were considered inherently erotic. It's not noticeable at first, the idea that queer relationships exist- for some people- purely for the pleasure of erotic gaze. 73 I didn't want the recognition of my bisexuality to mean that those things were anything other than acts of friendship. ...Gay women are constantly told that there love is purely sexual, a show put on for the eyes of others. ..Queerness is constantly fetishized by television and film despite being demeaned by the people who write the characters. 77 In case you, reader, don't know what it means, it's a turn of phrase used to describe a serial harasser- usually a \*cis man- who's never been officially outed or reported,... 78 Mr. Mathers liked the chesty girls, you see. ...He wasn't grabbing girls in their chest area or propositioning them for sex in his car. He was a much more subtle bag of gross. He was a woodshop teacher, so he stood over or behind the girls and pressed against them while he taught them. He stared down our shirts while we worked the machinery- shamelessly, even- almost every time. When he talked to us, he didn't look us in the face, but in the boobs. 92 Right on the playground of my elementary school, hands reached down my pants and fingers entered me. Robbing me of an innocent youth. 100 White-passing skin...but ultimately, I was a little black girl, and with that came special rules. Don't act too "white" (even though most of my interests were "white" ones). Don't act too "fast" (and when you're a black girl, any move-rolling your shoulders, shaking your butt when you're dancing, snapping your fingers- is considered "fast"). ...I must have also written some stuff regarding struggling with my identity,

Page Content because eventually, some classmates got a hold of the journal, read it, and decided that I was the class Oreo. I don't know if the meaning still holds, but back then, people used the term "Oreo" to make fun of "black people who act white." 102 Because I was an "Oreo." 103 Maybe I should have "acted my color." 114 Was the rejection borne of feeling that my friend and me-both of color- weren't worthy because we weren't white? ...It wasn't even a half hour into the dance, and I was already exhausted by the weight of my skin color and my gender. 119 My short stint in junior high had already included scalding looks, cultural misunderstandings, microaggressions, being called a P\*\*\*\* and a N\*\*\*\*\*, people asking if my skin color washed off, if I was brown because I didn't shower, and off-color jokes about the Kama Sutra. Now, I was being subjected to someone's asinine (emphasis on the "ass" in asinine) idea that I was obligated to him for a date because I ingested three sips of his Coke,... 121 They delighted in coming up and asking me, "Hey, Jon said this about you. Is it true you're a stuck-up b\*\*\*\* and you're better than everyone else?" ...there was the idea that I should be flattered that he, a white boy, had asked me, a brown girl, out. More than flattered. I should be grateful. 125 Some days, I'm just so tired, exhausted to my bone marrow that these injustices continue to be inflicted on women, minorities, LGBTQ2 people, on anyone who doesn't fit the mold. 129 For one thing, I was addicted to gay porn. That was how I chose to frame it back then- the porn was gay. ...Gayness was still a joke in my tiny hometown- not an identity. 130 According to these guys, the only challenge associated with sex was convincing a girl to do it with you. ...If she was a "fat chick" or a "butterface," your buddies would probably give you shit for it. 131 I'd seen enough gay porn to know what men were supposed to look like naked. Bodies like mine didn't exist within the realm of male desire. ...Wasn't I supposed to be the

one begging her for sex? What kind of guy didn't want to score with his hot girlfriend? ...My internet browsing history consisted exclusively of penises, sure, but maybe a real-life vagina was just what I needed to trigger my latent straightness. I pictured myself successfully having sex with Whitney and then bragging about it to all of my guy friends the next day. 132 ...I could finally admit it wasn't just the porn that was gay. ...Eventually we started kissing on his bed. His hands wandered, and I tried not to cringe when they got close to my fleshy problem areas. I was relieved when he stopped to get up and turn off the lights. The darkness calmed my nerves just enough to let him take my clothes off. 133 Dylan put his hands down my pants. I froze. If someone had asked me before that moment what I would have done if

Page Content my boyfriend's best friend took it upon himself to grab my dick, I probably would have said that I'd freak out and tell him to stop. But I didn't. ...Instead, he leaned over and unbuckled my belt. I remained frozen. Shawn started kissing me. Dylan kept touching me and Shawn and himself. It occurred to me that they had probably done this before, which made me sick to my stomach. ...I kissed both of them back as convincingly as possible. ...Eventually, we were all naked. 135 "He has a nice ass." 135 I texted my best friend when I got home: Shawn and I had a threesome tonight! 137 My identity was so wrapped up in the struggle to validate myself against the atmosphere of toxic masculinity and fat-shaming and homophobia that defined my childhood. ...Would I have seized the opportunity to have sex with Whitney? ...How many of his friends' sexual boasts were just positive spins on negative experiences? 146 The ones who palmed girls' butts and remarked on how juicy they were. 147 Uncle J had spotted a vulnerable, traumatized girl, and had used his understanding of her- my- situation to prime me for a sexual relationship. ...It wasn't that I was scared, it just didn't seem that big a deal. By then, I was used to the men at the gas station who leered at my breasts too long, or the uncle who always seemed very concerned about the shortness of my skirts. This incident was just another in a long line that had started happening the moment I started wearing bras- and, if we're being honest, well before that. 154 And there was the time I was walking across a crowded train platform on my way home from school and someone reached up under my uniform skirt and between my legs. 155 ...though I doubt there were too many boys who have had the experience of having some stranger's hand thrust between their legs. 158 It's bad enough that there are so many men who seem to think that sticking their hands up teenage girls' skirts or down their shirts is somehow acceptable, or at least excusable. 163 She was thirteen when she was attacked. Thirteen when she was raped. ...We drank a lot of alcohol and smoked a lot of weed. 165 ...this young girl was picked up by a group of people who were drinking and doing drugs. They gave her a ride, and then one of the men raped her. 166 He was eventually arrested for molesting young boys, but we didn't know that at the time. Rumor has it that the allegations and charges against him eventually led to his suicide in a jail cell. 167 They would stick their hands up under our shirts. Feel our bras. Grab at our boobs.

Page Content 168 They stormed inside, and the three boys turned into one monster, pushing each other on. The monster had six hands. It was angry. Demanding. Six hands grabbed at me. Six of them. "Get her. Grab her." They spoke in short, terse sentences. ...The six-handed monster tried to go a little further than just feeling my boobs, until I ran from them and locked myself in a bathroom. 180 ...I went from being molested by not just one man in my family, but by two. 193 The first time he touched me, I invited more. He showed me things my younger sexual partners didn't know or wouldn't do. ...Then he'd kiss the back of my neck while I was filling molds. Sometimes he'd pull me into the back office for a quickie. 201 The truth is that, according to laws of the time, Bathsheba couldn't say no to her king if he

demanded sex from her. The truth is that, according to the laws, it wasn't rape unless the woman was a virgin, which David would have known Bathsheba likely wasn't, because she was married. The truth is that David raped Bathsheba, and after the rape, when she became pregnant, David not only murdered her husband, but then also forced Bathsheba into a relationship with him. She was forced to marry and live with her rapist for the rest of his life. 202 Bathsheba was raped by a man in a position of power over her. 203 The paintings of her hanging in art museums around the world portray her breasts exposed, her naked body being presented to the viewer in a sprawl over the edge of a fountain. 207 A hand job I didn't want to give, to a guy I didn't like. 208 A body that belonged to everyone but me. It belonged to the boy who lived next door to my parents' best friends, who pushed his tongue into my mouth and his hands beneath my T-shirt. (Twelve: there was nothing beneath my T-shirt; my body was still a vast and unshaped plain.) 209 My gender swam back and forth, male and female, everything and nothing. I moved in those waters, easily. Wanting her and loving her was easy. But not the slaps. Not the punches. Not the bites and pinches and vicious twists, my flesh between her forefingers and thumb- her nails, long and sharp. 210 So many people knew that this man bedded me and hit me; that he pulled out my hair and stuck his hands up my skirt in public. ...I finally broke up with the Beast (ran away from him, hid from him) because he hit me and threatened me and put his hands on my throat on a military installation. 212 ...and just let him have what he wanted- a hand job on the steps of the student union. ...At seven, I said I only wanted to see it, but he insisted on so much more. ...It wound black ribbons around my throat and cinched tight beneath my disappointing breasts.

Page Content 221 "Nothing, technically. You've got great boobs, but believe me- a push-up bra never hurts." 222 "...I've been patted and squeezed like an animal at a petting zoo, and one time, a guy offered me a hundred-dollar bill to take off my top." 223 All after groping my butt. 225 "...Made her want to try all this kinky shit in the bedroom," Twin Number One said. "It was awesome." ..."One time she let me handcuff her to the bed, and then I surprised her with some nipple clamps." "How'd she like it?" "Howled like a banshee. I've never cummed so fast in my life." ...TaylorMade squeezed me tighter against his side." I bet Blondie her would look great in nipple clamps. What do you think, boys?" 237 There were no sounds. Manny sat down on the wall, yanked me onto his lap and leaned backward pinning me against his stomach. When I say these two boys were "beefier" than others, I should make note that Manny was literally a giant- the result of some congenital pituitary gland hormone dysfunction. Rylan stood in front of us and tugged at my lime-green-and-white striped Dolfin shorts. I kicked and screamed, and I remember thinking how easy my stretchy shorts could be taken off. Soon those shorts were draped around my ankles. The memory that stands out the most for me is their laughter. Whooping, hollering laughter. The time frame may have been seconds, or minutes. I have no idea. I t felt like hours. I was unsure if my underwear had been dragged down with my shorts. But as I kicked and squirmed, I felt their skin against mine in parts of my body that had never been touched before. 238 "Now I am going to be raped." 255 I was sixteen years old the first time a grown man told me I wasn't worth raping. 256 ...a beautiful starlet whistled at by a crude construction worker who pushed his hard hat up his brow to better take a look at her legs. 264 Until now, I haven't written about the time I was assaulted, at fifteen years old, at 2:00 in an empty high school classroom by a male student. 266 The families of successful white traders became more patriarchal. 268 I suddenly felt D behind me, pressing me into the table. I tried to turn and pull away, saying, "Stop it, D," but I was knocked backward onto the table. D's body was heavy on top of mine as he forced his hand under my sweater. I screamed, "Ge the fuck off me! Goddammit!" His shaved face pressed roughly against mine, while all hundred pounds of me kicked and shoved. It didn't move him an inch. 273 I was sexually

assaulted my junior year of high school. 276 He grabbed my hair and forced me to kiss him in the movie theater, even when I tried to push him off me. He called me a tease. 280 The discrimination wasn't overt, but the message was the same: white men get away with what they want. The people in power are still mostly white men, too.

Page Content 292 It seems that there has become a "right way" to be wronged., be a pretty, white, cis-het female; be affected, but not broken; be pissed, but not too pissed; and always be ready to be a spokesperson for a group you never wanted to be part of. 296 After the first time I had sex, I wrote a letter to myself. 298 What happened was that he got angry and slammed me against the bed with his hands around my neck. 300 What I meant was, I let a man fuck me last night and felt powerful because I refuse to hurt over it, which is easier than I let this happen to me. I did this to my body. 302 Good sex isn't lonely, or wordless, or out of reach. It's really pretty simple. It is, This is what I like. It is, Does this feel good? More concrete things. Masturbation is vital. When you're feeling a certain pleasure for the first time, it's going to overwhelm. Reciprocations becomes difficult; so probably, it's a good idea to orgasm on your own before you expect yourself to help someone else.

#### Profanity Count

Ass

2

Bitch

2

Fuck

3

Piss

2

Shit

5

## ***PINK, BLUE, AND YOU!* by Elise Gravel**

Anne Schwartz Books, 2022

### **PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

Simple, accessible, and direct, this picture book is perfect for kids and parents or teachers to read together, opening the door to conversations about gender stereotypes and everyone's right to be their true selves. Is it okay for boys to cry? Can girls be strong? Should girls and boys be given different toys to play with and different clothes to wear? Should we all feel free to love whoever we choose to love? In this incredibly kid-friendly and easy-to-grasp picture book, author-illustrator Elise Gravel and transgender collaborator Mykaell Blais raise these questions and others relating to gender roles, acceptance, and stereotyping. With its simple language, colorful illustrations, engaging backmatter that showcases how appropriate male and female fashion has changed through history, and even a poster kids can hang on their wall, here is the ideal tool to help in conversations about a multi-layered and important topic.

### **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Gender identity

Sexism

Sexual orientation

### **HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 4 print copies at Covington, Madisonville, Mandeville, and Slidell/ Shelves in Juvenile Non-fiction/ Call number J 305.3 Gra

Purchased in September 2022. Available on shelf October 2022.

Total circulation on all print copies: 5

### **OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held in 634 libraries.

Jefferson Parish Library – Juvenile Non-fiction

Mobile Public Library – Juvenile Non-fiction

### **REVIEWS**

#### **Kirkus Reviews (01/01/2022):**

Where do our ideas and assumptions about gender come from, and how might they be holding us back? Gravel and Blais--who is transgender--invite young readers to reflect on these questions. The book explains the difference between biological sex and gender identity, teaches about gender inclusive pronouns, and offers a capsule history of gender norms, showing how they have varied cross-culturally and throughout time. Children will also learn about the tough realities of gender stereotyping, gender inequality, gender policing, and homophobia. One double-page spread is devoted to affirming the multitude of gendered family structures that exist. The authors unequivocally make the case for gender diversity and gender parity using concrete, kid-friendly examples. Designed to prompt conversation, the book directly poses questions to readers such as "Do you think all people should be allowed to love whoever they

want?" and "Should we feel bad about doing the things we like?" This strategy is mostly effective but at times undermines the potential for emotional resonance. Little attention is paid to social movements oriented around gender issues, although a few individual changemakers, like Malala Yousafzai, are highlighted. Unfortunately, the text often feels like an exercise in preaching to the choir; transphobes and critics of gender ideology aren't likely to be convinced that this rather didactic book holds value for youngsters in their care. Gravel's colorful but not very saturated webcomics-style illustrations have strong visual appeal with their pithy speech bubbles, frameless panels, and interactive elements. An emollient and digestible distillation of complex issues. (Picture book. 4-8) COPYRIGHT(2022) Kirkus Reviews, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

**Publishers Weekly** (01/31/2022):

Collaborating with Blais, who is transgender, author-illustrator Gravel offers an examination of gender stereotypes, employing a series of probing questions and speech bubbles that invite readers to consider gender identity and its attendant connotations: "Look at these pictures. Are some for girls? Are some for boys? Are some for everyone?" (Images include "blue things," "pink things," "makeup," and "trucks.") Definitions and examples of sex, gender identity, pronouns, and more are explained concisely, followed by historical examples of exclusionary laws, rules, and social mores, such as legislature against marriage equality. Brief inclusion of real-life trailblazers--including Sarah McBride, the first transgender woman elected to the state senate--also feature. The book occasionally feels wide-ranging, but Gravel's distinctive bug-eyed cartoons, rendered in pen and ink and digitally, imbue levity. Back matter includes fun facts about gender and clothing. Ages 4-8. (Mar.) Copyright 2022 Publishers Weekly, LLC Used with permission.

**School Library Journal** (02/01/2022):

**PreS-Gr 2**--In her signature style, Gravel (*What Is a Refugee?* and others) and Blais provide an accessible introduction to gender and gender stereotypes. Beginning with smart, open-ended questions, the authors challenge readers to think about gender stereotypes, why they exist, and if they are true or fair. The book progresses to an overview of sex versus gender, complete with helpful visual aids, an exploration of pronouns, and ultimately, a few examples of how gender is treated in different communities. At each step, the authors ask readers what they think and how they feel. This engagement, coupled with the accessible presentation of the material, makes for an excellent resource. The folks depicted throughout vary in appearance, and include many skin tones, ages, and family structures. A few folks wear hijabs, and two others use wheelchairs. Gravel's illustrative style is wildly appealing, and the comic-style presentation helps to endear the book to readers. A slight weakness is the homogeneity of illustrated body type, though this is not enough to diminish the book's overall value. **VERDICT** Thoughtful, engaging, and visually bright, this is an excellent addition to any library serving preschool and early elementary ages.--*Taylor Worley* Copyright 2022 School Library Journal, LLC Used with permission.

**Booklist** (02/15/2022):

Preschool-Grade 2 Pink things, blue things, fart jokes, princesses. "Are some for girls? Are some for boys? Are some for everyone?" Gravel and Blais, who is transgender, offer simple yet

effective open-ended questions that build on one another, allowing children (either on their own or in conversation with caregivers, educators, and others) to consider gender stereotypes and gender identity. A quick biology lesson also acknowledges the difference between sex and gender. Gravel's softly shaped, endearing comics feature kids and adults with various skin colors, hair styles, clothing, and physical abilities and speech bubbles stating their thoughts and affirmations. The text progresses to related topics on pronouns, diversity in families and loving relationships, and respect. In addition, it briefly looks at gender inequities in the workplace (e.g., men not encouraged to work in caregiving roles) and changemakers (e.g., Sarah McBride, a transgender state senator in Delaware). A final "fun facts" spread presents light trivia about gender and clothing in history (e.g., countries where men wear skirts). A gentle way to introduce or reaffirm gender identity in young readers. COPYRIGHT (2022) Booklist, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Elise Gravel is the creator the Olga series and the Disgusting Critters series as well as *I Want a Monster*, *The Cranky Ballerina*, and *What Is a Refugee?*, which *School Library Journal* called effective and compassionate. Elise studied graphic design at Le Collège d'Enseignement Général et Professionnel and has since published numerous picture books, including *La clé à molette*, which won the Governor General's Literary Award for illustration. Her books have been translated into twelve languages. Elise is inspired by social causes and lives in Montreal with her husband and two children.

Mykaell Blais (he/him) works as a training coordinator for GRIS-Quebec, the Research and Social Intervention Group, a nonprofit community organization and support program for LGBTQ+ kids and young adults. It aims to demystify stereotypes about sexual orientation and gender identity by raising awareness in schools. Being a transmasculine person himself, Mykaell would have loved to read this book in his youth, to celebrate his uniqueness. Learn more at [grisquebec.org](http://grisquebec.org).

### **AWARDS & LISTS**

N/A



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips  
[REDACTED]  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Connie Phillips,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Pink Blue and You* by Elise Gravel. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

Pursuant to La. R.S. § 14:91.11, it is unlawful for any St. Tammany Library to display, exhibit, disseminate, check-out, or otherwise provide any minor anything that constitutes material harmful to minors by law. However, materials are only deemed harmful to minors if **all** four (4) of the following apply beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. First, the material must exploit, be devoted to, or principally consist of "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality." To be "descriptions or depictions of illicit or sexual immorality," the material must convey ultimate sex acts, masturbation or excretory functions, lewd exhibition of private areas, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual intimacy via physical acts of private areas, or stimulation of human genitalia.
2. Second, the material must incite, appeal to, or be designed to incite or appeal to "the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors," i.e., a sexual response over and beyond those that would be characterized as normal for a minor.
3. Third, the material must be "offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors." These standards are not defined or limited by any specific geographic area.
4. Fourth, the material, when considered in its entirety (including both objectionable and nonobjectionable parts), must lack any "literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors." If any of the foregoing requirements are not met, the material is not unlawful under La. R.S. §14:91.11.

Importantly, the statute defines "minor" as "any person under the age of eighteen years." Thus, the last three (3) elements above must be considered in that context, e.g., "The material taken as a whole [must] lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for [any person under the age of eighteen years]." Additionally, if materials that qualify as harmful to minors are not sold, distributed, advertised, or otherwise distributed to minors, it is permissible under the law to have them available for adults to

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do so, as long as the minors are unable to see, “as displayed,” descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality.”

Under this analysis, the staff committee determined that the material at issue in your Statement of Concern does not qualify as unlawfully harmful to minors.

1. The material is not primarily devoted to the description, display, or depiction of sexual conduct described in La R.S. 14:91.11. One page out of 32 pages has a simple drawing of nude children. However, the images are not lewd, there is no touching. The purpose of the image is to show anatomical differences, not to portray sexual activity. There is no “lust” or sexual expression at all.
2. The committee found that the text and images did not incite or appeal to the prurient interests of minors. Some children may be amused or even embarrassed by the image but it is not designed to appeal to a sexual response in a minor.
3. The committee did not find the material to be offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors. The book is designed to be read with a child as it prompts questions. It does contain a viewpoint that might not be shared by all families in our parish. The book does not convey a viewpoint specific to any organization or ideology. The overall theme is acceptance. Some parents might find the book to be inappropriate for their children. However, there are parents in St. Tammany Parish who are interested in discussing this topic with their child. The book shows a variety of people and families, not exclusively transgender or homosexual. Gender is currently part of a national conversation.
4. The committee believes the material taken as a whole does not lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors. The book has scientific/educational value. It is not political. The book presents balanced descriptions of gender roles and stereotypes in history and in modern society. It has factual information. The book is not instructive or persuasive. The committee agreed that this book is a resource for parents and families who need or want to start a conversation with their child about gender.

The book has been on the shelf at STPL for a very short time. STPL owns four copies at Covington, Madisonville, Mandeville, and Slidell. It circulated a total of five times from October-December, 2022 before it was challenged. It is held in Juvenile Non-Fiction in over 600 other public libraries across the country, including Jefferson Parish Public Library and Mobile Public Library (Alabama.) This book is in picture book format but is shelved in the Juvenile Non-Fiction section under call number J305.3 with other books on sociology/gender. Our placement is consistent with our peer library systems.

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When the book was purchased the library recognized the topical nature of the book and placed it into children's non-fiction. After reviewing the book and discussion, it was determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book does not violate the statute, and the book is shelved in the appropriate section of the library.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for their family, that alone does not render it unlawful and does not warrant censoring the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item, and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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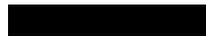
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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips

  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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May 31, 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips



Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

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## ***Statement of Concern about Library Resources***

Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Date 11-19-2022

Name Connie Phillips

[REDACTED]

City Mandeville State LA Zip 70471

Telephone [REDACTED]

Representing \_\_\_\_\_ (self) St. Tammany Parish Library Accountability Project (organization)

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

book Book                      \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper                      \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine                      \_\_\_\_\_ Content of Library Program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Audiovisual                      \_\_\_\_\_ Electronic Resource

2. Title Sex is a Funny Word

Author/Producer Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth

3. What brought this title to your attention?

Content violates the state obscenity statues  
2021 Louisiana Laws  
Revised Statutes  
Title 14 - Criminal Law

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

yes

5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?

Restrict access to minors as outlined in statute above. Require parent to check out for minor. The book should be shelved in a section where minors do not have access. A separate place in the library. A room or some section where minors do not have entry without parent and minors cannot check out.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

Violates Content violates the state obscenity statues for minors.

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

Not suitable for minors

Summary of Concerns:

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?

Something that does not violate the state obscenity statues for minors.

NOTE:

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

### 3. What brought this title to your attention?

Content violates the state obscenity statutes

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

§91.11.

2) "Material harmful to minors" is defined as any paper, magazine, book, newspaper, periodical, pamphlet, composition, publication, photograph, drawing, picture, poster, motion picture film, video tape, video game, figure, phonograph record, album, cassette, compact disc, wire or tape recording, or other similar tangible work or thing which exploits, is devoted to or principally consists of, descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality for commercial gain, and when the trier of fact determines that each of the following applies:

(a) The material incites or appeals to or is designed to incite or appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors.

(b) The material is offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors.

(c) The material taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

(3) For the purpose of this Section "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality" includes the depiction, display, description, exhibition or representation of:

(a) Ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual, simulated, or animated, whether between human beings, animals, or an animal and a human being;

(b) Masturbation, excretory functions, or exhibition, actual, simulated, or animated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples;

(c) Sadoomasochistic abuse, meaning actual, simulated, or animated, flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume which reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva,

genitals, or female breast nipples, or the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained, on the part of one so clothed;

(d) Actual, simulated, or animated, touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with, a pubic area, anus, female breast nipple, covered or exposed, whether alone or between human\*, animals or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification; or

(e) Actual, simulated, or animated, stimulation of the human genital organs by any device whether or not the device is designed, manufactured, and marketed for such purpose.

(4) "Minor" means any person under the age of eighteen years.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

Violates Content violates the state obscenity statutes  
for minors.

2021 Louisiana Laws

Revised Statutes

Title 14 - Criminal Law

Not suitable for minors

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains graphic illustrations  
involving sexual nudity; sexual activities;  
sexuality and alternate gender ideology  
inappropriate illustrations

Page Content

29 JUSTICE

Justice is like fairness, only bigger.

Justice means working together so that everyone can share in the good and the hard parts of living.

Justice means that every person and every body matters.

The illustration on this page shows people with protest signs that read "PLAY IS A RIGHT"

60 Nipples can feel very good to touch, but if you pinch them it can hurt!

The illustrations on this page depict exposed breasts and nipples in different views.

61 Like nipples, some people's breasts are sensitive and can feel good when they are touched.

The illustrations on this page depict breasts. There is one image of a full-frontal nude female.

63 Like other holes in our body, the anus is usually very sensitive, which means it can feel good to touch but can also hurt if we are rough with it.

64 The illustrations on this page are zoomed in views of the exposed vulva. There is one image of two hands spreading the labia.

See Figure 1.

65 The illustrations on this page show hairless labia at the top of the page and two zoomed in images of the vulva including the clitoris and the internal clitoris. The opening to the vagina and the urethra are drawn, but there are not dotted outlines for their internal structures, as was done for the clitoris.

See Figure 1.

66 The images on this page are of male genitalia in various states of arousal.

See Figure 2.

67 The illustrations on this page are of male genitalia including a close-up profile image of a penis and scrotum.

See Figure 2.

68 The illustrations on this page are depictions with implications of a male and a

female masturbating. The male is lying in bed with his arms under the covers. There are several white lines radiating out from where his pubic region would be. He has a large smile on his face. A female is outside sitting against a tree with her hand between her legs. She has a large smile on her face and there are several white lines radiating out from her pubic region. There is another girl at the bottom of the page whom is standing up dancing. Her right leg is linked behind her left leg seemingly creating a rubbing effect in her groin area. She too has large smile on her face and there are several white lines radiating out from her body.

71 But having a penis isn't what makes you a boy. Having a vulva isn't what makes you a girl.

The truth is much more interesting than that!

78 There are more than two kinds of bodies, but they call the baby a boy or a girl based on what they see.

This might sound like the end of the story, but really, it's just the beginning.

Page Content

81 When we are born, a doctor or midwife calls us boy or girl because of what we look like on the outside. They choose a word or label (usually boy or girl, or male or female) to describe our bodies.

But that's based on our outside, our cover, or who they think we are.

What about our whole body, inside and out? What about who we think we are?

83 As we grown into being a kid and then an adult, we get to figure out who we are and what words fit best.

...For most of us, words like boy and girl, or man and woman, feel okay, and they fit. For some of us, they don't.

84 Maybe you're called a boy but you know you're a girl. You know how girls are treated and what they do. That's how you want to be treated and what you want to do.

Maybe you're called a girl but feel you're a boy. You know how boys are treated and what they do. That's how you want to be treated and what you want to do.

85 Maybe you aren't sure, or don't care that much. Maybe you don't feel like a boy or a girl. Maybe you feel like both. Maybe you just need some time to figure it out, without all the boy and girl stuff.

...Part of being a kid is learning what you like, what you don't like, and who you are. That's part of being a grown-up too.

86 "PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE WORDS PEOPLE USE WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES."

87 "WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE WORDS BOY AND GIRL?"

"DO YOU KNOW ANYONE FOR WHOM THOSE WORDS DON'T FIT?"

106 TOUCHING YOURSELF

The top left illustration on this page, depicts a woman emersed in water in a bathtub with both of her arms resting on the edges of the tub.

The image on the top right of the page depicts the same woman with her left arm in the water angled toward where her pubic region would be. She has a large smile on her face.

The illustration on the bottom left of the page, depicts the same woman with her left arm still under the water and there is an exclamation mark above her head.

The illustration on the bottom right of the page depicts the same woman with blush marks on her cheeks and squiggles around her body along with radiating lines coming out of her body.

107 We also touch ourselves.

We touch ourselves all the time, in all kinds of places, for all kinds of reasons.

Touching yourself I one way to learn about yourself, your body, and your feelings.

You may have discovered that touching some parts of your body, especially in the middle parts, can make you feel warm and tingly.

Grown-ups call this kind of touch masturbation.

Masturbation is when we touch ourselves, usually our middle parts, to get that warm and tingly feeling.

108 The illustration on this page depicts several biodomes with people's names on

them. They all have different terrains and landscapes within the biodomes. There is also a young girl sitting at a picnic table with several other people and she has

Page Content

her hand in her skirt, seemingly masturbating as the older woman sitting next to her glares at her and the other kids at the table do not seem to notice her.

109 "DO YOU KNOW IF THERE ARE RULES IN YOUR FAMILY ABOUT TOUCHING YOURSELF? IF THERE ARE RULES, DO THEY MAKE SENSE TO YOU?"

127 The illustration on this page depicts a giant, wavy, pink sculpture with two holes of differing sizes. There is a group of kids staring at the sculpture and the woman is pointing at it saying "THIS SCULPTURE IS CALLED SEXINESS."

138 There's no right or wrong way to have a crush

The illustration on these pages depict characters all with very feminine features, staring at each other lovingly. Two of them have thought bubbles which show other effeminate characters.

151 BISEXUAL, GAY, STRAIGHT, LESBIAN, ASEXUAL, QUEER

159 "WHO NEEDS A GLOSSARY? I JUST MAKE UP MY OWN WORDS."

***SEX IS A FUNNY WORD*** by Cory Silverberg  
Triangle Square, 2015

**PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

A comic book for kids that includes children and families of all makeups, orientations, and gender identities, *Sex Is a Funny Word* is an essential resource about bodies, gender, and sexuality for children ages 8 to 10 as well as their parents and caregivers. Much more than the facts of life or "the birds and the bees, *Sex Is a Funny Word* opens up conversations between young people and their caregivers in a way that allows adults to convey their values and beliefs while providing information about boundaries, safety, and joy.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Sex differences  
Gender identity  
Sex  
Sex (Biology)  
Sex instruction for children  
Human body

**HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 4 print copies at Admin, Covington, Mandeville, and Slidell/ Shelved in Juvenile Non-fiction/Call number is J 613.9071 Sil
- Hoopla E-book.

Purchased in November 2017. Available on shelf December 2017

Total circulation on all print copies: 38

Total circulation on E-book: 4

**OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held at 1379 libraries.  
Jefferson Parish Library – Juvenile Non-fiction  
Mobile Public Library (AL) – Juvenile Non-fiction  
Baldwin County Library (AL)– Juvenile Non-fiction

**REVIEWS**

*Kirkus Reviews* (04/15/2015):

Moving up in target audience from their explanation of reproduction, *What Makes a Baby* (2013), Silverberg and Smyth explore various meanings for the word "sex." In their own ways, Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar respond to information in chapters about bodies, "Boys, Girls, All of Us," touch, language, and "Crushes, Love, and Relationships." With skin tones in unlikely shades (blue! purple! green!) and wildly diverse crowd scenes, chances are good that any reader can identify with someone in these pages. Refreshingly, these crowds are diverse in a way that does not appear assembled by checklist. Lively design, bright, clashing colors, cartoon-style illustrations, comic strips, and plenty of humor support the informal, inclusive approach.

Each chapter ends with questions to think and talk about. The author's respect for different approaches to the subject comes through. No actual sexual activities are described except for masturbation, in the chapter that also deals with "secret touches." The gender chapter tells how gender is assigned but notes "there are more than two kinds of bodies." The character Zai doesn't identify as either boy or girl. Illustrations show body parts of kids and grown-ups (nipples, breasts, bottoms, and parts biologically specific to boys or girls) demonstrating wide variety. Puberty will be addressed in a third title. This carefully thought-out explanation may surprise but should be widely appreciated. (glossary) (Nonfiction.7-10) COPYRIGHT(2015) Kirkus Reviews, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

*Publishers Weekly* (06/22/2015):

Silverberg and Smyth follow *What Makes a Baby* with a highly visual introduction to sex education for older readers, featuring four characters between the ages of eight and 10 with skin in a rainbow of crayon-box colors. Full-page artwork and comics sequences follow the students as they react to discussions of gender, bodies (including what Silverberg calls "middle parts"), touching, and the emotions that lead to sexual contact; the book stops short of getting into the mechanics of intercourse. Throughout, Silverberg invites readers to consider their own feelings through activities and questions ("Why do you think people want to know if a baby is a boy or a girl?"). Emphasizing the importance of trust, respect, justice, and joy--as well as open communication--it's a thoughtful and affirming exploration of relationships, gender identity, and growing sexual awareness. Ages 7-10. (July)  
Copyright 2015 Publishers Weekly, LLC Used with permission.

*School Library Journal* (03/01/2016):

**Gr 2-6**--Silverberg and Smyth follow up their book for younger readers, *What Makes a Baby* (Triangle Square, 2013), with this engaging introduction to gender, bodies, and relationships. A diverse cast of cartoon kids--in terms of appearance, ability, and point of view--explore the multiple meanings of the word sex with their teacher, friends, and family members. There is a heavy emphasis on the importance of thinking for oneself and developing one's own opinions. The language is conversational and accessible, as well as direct, fastidiously accurate, and entirely gender-neutral. Each section ends with conversation-provoking questions, reinforcing the suggestion that the book be read and shared in conversation with a trusted adult. What makes this volume exceptional is its introduction of the subjects of transgender identity, intersex conditions, and masturbation. The quality text is enhanced and brought to life by comics drawn with bold lines on bright, full-bleed pages. Smyth's illustrations are interactive, fun, and edifying, presenting a range of body types and diversity. Despite the title, the topic of sexual intercourse is not covered; but Silverberg prepares readers for this information by introducing concepts such as respect, trust, and joy. **VERDICT** Exciting, enlightening, and innovative, this book addresses timeless questions about sex for a new generation of kids who are increasingly aware of the broad spectrum of gender and sexual identities.--Clara Hendricks, Cambridge Public Library, MA

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Raised by a children's librarian and a sex therapist, Cory Silverberg split the difference and grew up to be a sexuality educator and writer. With an academic background in education and counseling psychology, he has developed and facilitated workshops for hundreds of agencies across North America, working on a range of topics including sexuality and disability, sexual pleasure, and sexual communication. He is the coauthor of *The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability*, and since 2005 he has worked as the Sexuality Guide for About.com. In 2012, Silverberg developed a book project-- *What Makes a Baby?*--that became the best-funded children's book on Kickstarter. He subsequently signed a three-book deal with Seven Stories Press to produce a series of inclusive children's books about gender and sexuality. Silverberg lives in New York City.

Fiona Smyth is a Toronto-based painter, illustrator, and cartoonist. Her first graphic novel, *The Never Weres*, was published by Annick Press in 2011. Fiona's comic *Cheez* was published in *Exclaim!* magazine for almost ten years, and her comic *Fazooz* was in *Vice* for eight years. Fiona teaches illustration and comics at OCAD U in Toronto.

## **AWARDS & LISTS**

2016 Rainbow Project Book List ALA

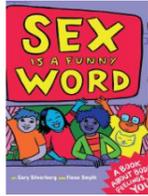
2016 Winner of the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-Fiction

2016 ALA Stonewall Book Award, Honor Book

2016 ALA Notable Children's Book

# Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU

Book review by Mandie Carroll, Common Sense Media



Common Sense says age 7+ Inclusive, lively guide to bodies, touch for older kids. Cory Silverberg | Body Awareness | 2015

Save Rate book

Enjoy your 2nd of 3 free monthly reviews. Get unlimited reviews

Table with 2 columns: Parents say (age 11+, 4 stars, 3 reviews) and Kids say (age 14+, 5 stars, 2 reviews)

Read or buy Common Sense is a nonprofit organization. Your purchase helps us remain independent and ad-free.

Did we miss something on diversity? Research shows a connection between kids' healthy self-esteem and positive portrayals in media. That's why we've added a new "Diverse Representations" section to our reviews that will be rolling out on an ongoing basis. You can help us help kids by suggesting a diversity update.

## A Lot or a Little?

The parents' guide to what's in this book.

Parental guide metrics: Stands out for positive messages and positive role models. Educational Value (A+), Positive Messages, Positive Role Models, Violence & Scariness (Not present), Language (Not present).

## What Parents Need to Know

Parents need to know that Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU, by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth, is a companion book for older kids to 2013's What Makes a Baby. Characters Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar are kids between 8 and 10 years old who approach learning about sex and bodies very differently, affirming the various responses that kid readers might have as they work through the book. Neither reproduction or intercourse is discussed, but masturbation is described. Diagrams, definitions, and explanations explore different meanings of sex, bodies and their sexual organs, gender, touch (including "secret touch"), and relationships. Body-positive messages are communicated in inclusive text and pictures throughout. Skin color is represented in green, orange, pink, purple, blue, etc., while hair, facial features, head coverings, and clothing show a variety of ethnicities, cultures, and genders. Crowd and family scenes depict a wide range of family compositions and people of different ages and abilities. This comprehensive, thoughtful guide to bodies will appeal to older kids who are curious about bodies and, yes, sex.

Show less

## Community Reviews

## Our Editors Recommend

It's So Amazing: Engaging guide to tweens. age

## For kids who love le their bodies

Books That Promote a Healthy Body Image See all recommended books

## Themes & Topics

Adventures See all

Common Sense Media's unbiased reviews are by expert reviewers and authors or product's creators or by any

AB Abigail B., Adult

age 15+ ★★★★★

**Not for kids**

This book was way too graphic for anyone under the age of 15. It goes into the nitty-gritty about sex, and give to anyone under age 12 that is asking questions about sex or bodies. I also don't approve of their gender fluidity for the kids. I'd be okay if it talked about gender roles being fluid, but not the gender its

This title has:

☹ Too much sex

👍 Helpful    🚩 Report

C clutter, Adult

age 7+ ★★★★★

**this takes me back to when**

i would take out my dictionary and scroll to the super funny word that begins with an S

This title has:

A+ Educational value

👍 Helpful    🚩 Report

E ElisonJ., Adult

age 10+ ★★★★★

**Educational**

My niece bought this book for my sons 10th birthday and as a parent I must say it is quite educational detailed. It does talk about masturbation and other sexual purposes but I say to my son that sex is just would reccomend this book for ages 10 plus.

This title has:

A+ Educational value

👍 Helpful    🚩 Report

### What's the Story?

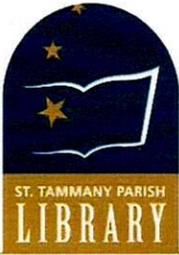
SEX IS A FUNNY WORD opens with a note to adult readers. And then we meet Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar, all ages 8-10, as they're in class beginning a unit on sex. The teacher says that learning about sex is like a carnival: You can't do it all in one day, and it can be fun, strange, and a little scary. The classmates are shown in various situations that relate to each chapter topic like "What Is Sex?" "Learning About Bodies," "Boys, Girls, All of Us," "Touch," and so forth. Comic strips, two-page scenes, diagrams, and explanatory text work together to show and explain terms and ideas. Discussion questions and activity suggestions end each chapter, making this book suitable for educational settings as well as family reading, and a glossary at the end defines terms that are referred to but not named in the book itself (asexual, transgender, etc.).

[Show less ^](#)

### Is It Any Good?

Not your typical book about sex for kids, this fun, honest volume covers the topic in new and exciting ways. *Sex Is a Funny Word* provides a framework of foundational information about bodies, gender, and touch, and then invites young readers and their adults to talk to each other in order to "fill in the blanks" with beliefs, values, and connections to family history, culture, and community. This book isn't actually about sex: It's about providing a foundation for kids to understand sex as a big, multifaceted life experience.

Also notable is the book's lack of jargon -- you won't find identity labels or advanced terms in the text (though there is a useful glossary) -- which means that all the different ways we talk about and define ourselves are available to use in the conversations this book will inspire. The interesting, diverse characters and inclusive language and art mean that every reader will be able to see themselves in this book. Fiona Smyth's thick-line cartoon drawings and bold color choices make for a visually absorbing read. This truly modern and open-ended guide about sex, bodies, and touch will help parents and kid readers alike take a thoughtful, relationship-building path toward growing up.



St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control
Resolution regarding graphic novels

February 28th, 2023

WHEREAS, pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute § 25:215, the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control has the authority to establish rules and regulations for the St. Tammany Parish Library not inconsistent with law;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Attorney General has provided guidance regarding access of certain materials that depict sexual conduct;

WHEREAS, the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control has determined that graphic novels found to contain depictions of "sexual conduct" as defined by the Attorney General, and as similarly defined in La. R.S. § 14:106 et. seq., (See Exhibit "A" attached hereto) should be retained behind the circulation desk, and that digital access to graphic novels should be similarly restricted, and only available to adult library card holders and to minors whose parents or guardians have chosen a juvenile unrestricted card; and,

WHEREAS, the Library Board of Control continues to recognize that parents and guardians are primarily responsible for the supervision of their children, including making decisions regarding the materials that their children may check out.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control directs library administration and staff to do what is necessary to identify all graphic novels that the library owns physically or has access via digital media that contain depictions of "sexual conduct" as defined by the Louisiana Attorney General and as similarly defined in La. R.S. § 14:106 et. seq. This definition is attached to this resolution as Exhibit A. Any graphic novels that are found to have these depictions shall be retained behind the circulation desk, and only available to adult library card holders, or to minors whose parents or guardians have chosen a juvenile unrestricted card. Digital access would similarly be restricted making it only available to adult library card holders, or to minors whose parents or guardians have chosen a juvenile unrestricted card.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all graphic novels that do not contain depictions of "sexual conduct" shall remain on the shelves and/or available electronically.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Library Board of Control directs the administration and staff to move forward with this directive.

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Moved for adoption by J. Airey and seconded by A. Shaw.

YEAS: 4 - Jake Airey, Carmen Butler, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor

NAYS: 1 - Mary Reneau

ABSENT: 1

ABSTAIN: 0

AND THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED DULY ADOPTED ON THIS DAY, THE 28th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2023, AT A MEETING OF THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERSHIP BEING PRESENT.

Signature of Rebecca Taylor

Rebecca Taylor, Board President

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FOLSOM (985) 796-9728

MANDEVILLE (985) 626-4293

BUSH (985) 886-3588

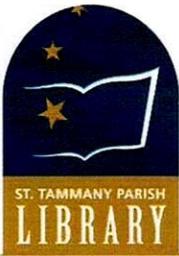
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CAUSEWAY (985) 626-9779

LEE RD (985) 893-6284

SLIDELL (985) 646-6470



**Exhibit A**

Sexual Conduct – any of the following:

(a) Masturbation or lewd exhibition, actual, simulated, or animated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples;

(b) Sadomasochistic abuse, meaning actual, simulated or animated, flagellation, or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume that reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva, genitals, or female breast nipples, or in the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained, on the part of one so clothed;

(c) Actual, simulated, or animated touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with a pubic area, anus, female breast nipple, covered or exposed, whether alone or between humans, animals, or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification;

(d) Actual, simulated, or animated stimulation of a human genital organ by any device whether or not the device is designed, manufactured, or marketed for such purpose; or

(e) Actual, simulated, or animated ultimate sexual acts, whether between human beings, animals, or an animal and a human being.

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April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips

[REDACTED]  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cori Silverberg. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

Pursuant to La. R.S. § 14:91.11, it is unlawful for any St. Tammany Library to display, exhibit, disseminate, check-out, or otherwise provide any minor anything that constitutes material harmful to minors by law. However, materials are only deemed harmful to minors if **all** four (4) of the following apply beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. First, the material must exploit, be devoted to, or principally consist of "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality." To be "descriptions or depictions of illicit or sexual immorality," the material must convey ultimate sex acts, masturbation or excretory functions, lewd exhibition of private areas, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual intimacy via physical acts of private areas, or stimulation of human genitalia.
2. Second, the material must incite, appeal to, or be designed to incite or appeal to "the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors," i.e., a sexual response over and beyond those that would be characterized as normal for a minor.
3. Third, the material must be "offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors." These standards are not defined or limited by any specific geographic area.
4. Fourth, the material, when considered in its entirety (including both objectionable and nonobjectionable parts), must lack any "literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors." If any of the foregoing requirements are not met, the material is not unlawful under La. R.S. §14:91.11.

Importantly, the statute defines "minor" as "any person under the age of eighteen years." Thus, the last three (3) elements above must be considered in that context, e.g., "The material taken as a whole [must] lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for [any person

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under the age of eighteen years].” Additionally, if materials that qualify as harmful to minors are not sold, distributed, advertised, or otherwise distributed to minors, it is permissible under the law to have them available for adults to do so, as long as the minors are unable to see, “as displayed,” descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality.”

Under this analysis, the staff committee determined that the material at issue in your Statement of Concern does not qualify as unlawfully harmful to minors.

1. It does not primarily consist of or is devoted to the sexual acts described in the law. The book does not contain any ultimate sex acts. There are two pages about masturbation and there is a section showing body parts, however the portrayal is not lewd.
2. It does not incite or appeal to or is designed to incite or appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors. The illustrations, text, and format are meant to catch the interest on a level appropriate for children of puberty age. The images of body parts are not in detail. The images of genitals are focused on without the rest of the body shown. The purpose of showing the variety of genitals is to portray the wide variety of human forms that are considered “normal.”
3. It is not offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors. The book has a steady circulation rate at STPL. It is held in Juvenile Non-Fiction in over 1000 other public libraries across the country, including Jefferson Parish Public Library and the Mobile Public Library (Alabama.) Our ownership of the book is consistent with our peer library systems.
4. The material taken as a whole does not lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors. The book has education value as it discusses hygiene and correct medical terms for body parts. It also discusses the emotional and social aspects of first relationships, concepts not often discussed in books for this target age audience. The book has artistic value with colorful and amusing pictures. The unnatural colors of the humans shows universality.

When the book was purchased the library recognized the topical nature of the book and placed it into children’s non-fiction. However, the book is published in “graphic novel” format

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and is now shelved behind the circulation desk and only available to minors who have a parent authorized Juvenile or Juvenile Unrestricted library card per the directive of the Library Board of Control's resolution regarding graphic novels on February 28th, 2023. After reviewing the book and discussion, it was determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book does not violate the statute, and the book should continue to be shelved behind the circulation desk per the directive of the LBOC.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for their family, that alone does not render it unlawful and does not warrant censoring the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item, and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips

  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

---

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May 31, 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips



Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

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**Statement of Concern about Library Resources**



Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Date Nov 22, 2022

Name Jacki Schneider

Address [REDACTED]

City Lacombe State LA Zip 70445

Telephone [REDACTED]

Representing  (self) \_\_\_\_\_ (organization)

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

- Book                      \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper                      \_\_\_\_\_ Other
- \_\_\_\_\_ Magazine                      \_\_\_\_\_ Content of Library Program
- \_\_\_\_\_ Audiovisual                      \_\_\_\_\_ Electronic Resource

2. Title Sex Is A Funny Word

Author/Producer Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth

3. What brought this title to your attention?

The book is in violation of state Obscenity Laws.  
Content violates the state obscenity statutes  
2021 Louisiana Laws  
Revised Statutes  
Title 14 - Criminal Law

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

Yes

5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?

I suggest that a separate board be formed comprised of parents and teachers to review these books prior to purchase.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.  
It's contents are pornographic.

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?

Nothing pornographic.

**NOTE:**

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

***SEX IS A FUNNY WORD*** by Cory Silverberg  
Triangle Square, 2015

**PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

A comic book for kids that includes children and families of all makeups, orientations, and gender identities, *Sex Is a Funny Word* is an essential resource about bodies, gender, and sexuality for children ages 8 to 10 as well as their parents and caregivers. Much more than the facts of life or "the birds and the bees, *Sex Is a Funny Word* opens up conversations between young people and their caregivers in a way that allows adults to convey their values and beliefs while providing information about boundaries, safety, and joy.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Sex differences  
Gender identity  
Sex  
Sex (Biology)  
Sex instruction for children  
Human body

**HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 4 print copies at Admin, Covington, Mandeville, and Slidell/ Shelved in Juvenile Non-fiction/Call number is J 613.9071 Sil
- Hoopla E-book.

Purchased in November 2017. Available on shelf December 2017

Total circulation on all print copies: 38

Total circulation on E-book: 4

**OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held at 1379 libraries.  
Jefferson Parish Library – Juvenile Non-fiction  
Mobile Public Library (AL) – Juvenile Non-fiction  
Baldwin County Library (AL)– Juvenile Non-fiction

**REVIEWS**

*Kirkus Reviews* (04/15/2015):

Moving up in target audience from their explanation of reproduction, *What Makes a Baby* (2013), Silverberg and Smyth explore various meanings for the word "sex." In their own ways, Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar respond to information in chapters about bodies, "Boys, Girls, All of Us," touch, language, and "Crushes, Love, and Relationships." With skin tones in unlikely shades (blue! purple! green!) and wildly diverse crowd scenes, chances are good that any reader can identify with someone in these pages. Refreshingly, these crowds are diverse in a way that does not appear assembled by checklist. Lively design, bright, clashing colors, cartoon-style illustrations, comic strips, and plenty of humor support the informal, inclusive approach.

Each chapter ends with questions to think and talk about. The author's respect for different approaches to the subject comes through. No actual sexual activities are described except for masturbation, in the chapter that also deals with "secret touches." The gender chapter tells how gender is assigned but notes "there are more than two kinds of bodies." The character Zai doesn't identify as either boy or girl. Illustrations show body parts of kids and grown-ups (nipples, breasts, bottoms, and parts biologically specific to boys or girls) demonstrating wide variety. Puberty will be addressed in a third title. This carefully thought-out explanation may surprise but should be widely appreciated. (glossary) (Nonfiction.7-10) COPYRIGHT(2015) Kirkus Reviews, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

*Publishers Weekly* (06/22/2015):

Silverberg and Smyth follow *What Makes a Baby* with a highly visual introduction to sex education for older readers, featuring four characters between the ages of eight and 10 with skin in a rainbow of crayon-box colors. Full-page artwork and comics sequences follow the students as they react to discussions of gender, bodies (including what Silverberg calls "middle parts"), touching, and the emotions that lead to sexual contact; the book stops short of getting into the mechanics of intercourse. Throughout, Silverberg invites readers to consider their own feelings through activities and questions ("Why do you think people want to know if a baby is a boy or a girl?"). Emphasizing the importance of trust, respect, justice, and joy--as well as open communication--it's a thoughtful and affirming exploration of relationships, gender identity, and growing sexual awareness. Ages 7-10. (July)  
Copyright 2015 Publishers Weekly, LLC Used with permission.

*School Library Journal* (03/01/2016):

**Gr 2-6**--Silverberg and Smyth follow up their book for younger readers, *What Makes a Baby* (Triangle Square, 2013), with this engaging introduction to gender, bodies, and relationships. A diverse cast of cartoon kids--in terms of appearance, ability, and point of view--explore the multiple meanings of the word sex with their teacher, friends, and family members. There is a heavy emphasis on the importance of thinking for oneself and developing one's own opinions. The language is conversational and accessible, as well as direct, fastidiously accurate, and entirely gender-neutral. Each section ends with conversation-provoking questions, reinforcing the suggestion that the book be read and shared in conversation with a trusted adult. What makes this volume exceptional is its introduction of the subjects of transgender identity, intersex conditions, and masturbation. The quality text is enhanced and brought to life by comics drawn with bold lines on bright, full-bleed pages. Smyth's illustrations are interactive, fun, and edifying, presenting a range of body types and diversity. Despite the title, the topic of sexual intercourse is not covered; but Silverberg prepares readers for this information by introducing concepts such as respect, trust, and joy. **VERDICT** Exciting, enlightening, and innovative, this book addresses timeless questions about sex for a new generation of kids who are increasingly aware of the broad spectrum of gender and sexual identities.--Clara Hendricks, Cambridge Public Library, MA

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Raised by a children's librarian and a sex therapist, Cory Silverberg split the difference and grew up to be a sexuality educator and writer. With an academic background in education and counseling psychology, he has developed and facilitated workshops for hundreds of agencies across North America, working on a range of topics including sexuality and disability, sexual pleasure, and sexual communication. He is the coauthor of *The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability*, and since 2005 he has worked as the Sexuality Guide for About.com. In 2012, Silverberg developed a book project-- *What Makes a Baby?*--that became the best-funded children's book on Kickstarter. He subsequently signed a three-book deal with Seven Stories Press to produce a series of inclusive children's books about gender and sexuality. Silverberg lives in New York City.

Fiona Smyth is a Toronto-based painter, illustrator, and cartoonist. Her first graphic novel, *The Never Weres*, was published by Annick Press in 2011. Fiona's comic *Cheez* was published in *Exclaim!* magazine for almost ten years, and her comic *Fazooz* was in *Vice* for eight years. Fiona teaches illustration and comics at OCAD U in Toronto.

## **AWARDS & LISTS**

2016 Rainbow Project Book List ALA

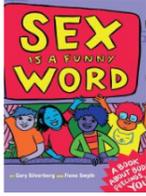
2016 Winner of the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-Fiction

2016 ALA Stonewall Book Award, Honor Book

2016 ALA Notable Children's Book

# Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU

Book review by Mandie Carroll, Common Sense Media



Common Sense says  
 age 7+ ★★★★★  
 Inclusive, lively guide to bodies, touch for older kids.  
 Cory Silverberg | Body Awareness | 2015

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Enjoy your 2nd of 3 free monthly reviews. Get unlimited reviews

Parents say age 11+ ★★★★★ Based on 3 reviews	Kids say age 14+ ★★★★★ Based on 2 reviews
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Read or buy  
 Common Sense is a nonprofit organization. Your purchase helps us remain independent and ad-free.

**Did we miss something on diversity?** Research shows a connection between kids' healthy self-esteem and positive portrayals in media. That's why we've added a new "Diverse Representations" section to our reviews that will be rolling out on an ongoing basis. You can help us help kids by [suggesting a diversity update](#).

## A Lot or a Little?

The parents' guide to what's in this book.

- Stands out for positive messages and positive role models.
- Educational Value: A+ ●●●●●
- Positive Messages: ●●●●●
- Positive Role Models: ●●●●●
- Violence & Scariness: Not present
- Language: Not present

### What Parents Need to Know

Parents need to know that *Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU*, by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth, is a companion book for older kids to 2013's *What Makes a Baby*. Characters Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar are kids between 8 and 10 years old who approach learning about sex and bodies very differently, affirming the various responses that kid readers might have as they work through the book. Neither reproduction or intercourse is discussed, but masturbation is described. Diagrams, definitions, and explanations explore different meanings of sex, bodies and their sexual organs, gender, touch (including "secret touch"), and relationships. Body-positive messages are communicated in inclusive text and pictures throughout. Skin color is represented in green, orange, pink, purple, blue, etc., while hair, facial features, head coverings, and clothing show a variety of ethnicities, cultures, and genders. Crowd and family scenes depict a wide range of family compositions and people of different ages and abilities. This comprehensive, thoughtful guide to bodies will appeal to older kids who are curious about bodies and, yes, sex.

[Show less](#)

### Community Reviews

## Our Editors Recommend

**It's So Amazing**  
 Engaging guide to tweens.  
 age

## For kids who love their bodies

[Books That Promote a Healthy Body](#)  
[See all recommended books](#)

## Themes & Topics

Browse titles with similar themes

**Adventures**  
 See all

Common Sense Media's unbiased reviews are by expert reviewers and authors or product's creators or by any

AB Abigail B., Adult

age 15+ ★★★★★

#### Not for kids

This book was way too graphic for anyone under the age of 15. It goes into the nitty-gritty about sex, and give to anyone under age 12 that is asking questions about sex or bodies. I also don't approve of their gender fluidity for the kids. I'd be okay if it talked about gender roles being fluid, but not the gender its

This title has:

☹️ Too much sex

👍 Helpful 🚩 Report

C clutter, Adult

age 7+ ★★★★★

#### this takes me back to when

i would take out my dictionary and scroll to the super funny word that begins with an S

This title has:

A+ Educational value

👍 Helpful 🚩 Report

E ElisonJ., Adult

age 10+ ★★★★★

#### Educational

My niece bought this book for my sons 10th birthday and as a parent I must say it is quite educational detailed. It does talk about masturbation and other sexual purposes but I say to my son that sex is just would recommend this book for ages 10 plus.

This title has:

A+ Educational value

👍 Helpful 🚩 Report

## What's the Story?

SEX IS A FUNNY WORD opens with a note to adult readers. And then we meet Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar, all ages 8-10, as they're in class beginning a unit on sex. The teacher says that learning about sex is like a carnival: You can't do it all in one day, and it can be fun, strange, and a little scary. The classmates are shown in various situations that relate to each chapter topic like "What Is Sex?" "Learning About Bodies," "Boys, Girls, All of Us," "Touch," and so forth. Comic strips, two-page scenes, diagrams, and explanatory text work together to show and explain terms and ideas. Discussion questions and activity suggestions end each chapter, making this book suitable for educational settings as well as family reading, and a glossary at the end defines terms that are referred to but not named in the book itself (asexual, transgender, etc.).

[Show less ^](#)

## Is It Any Good?

Not your typical book about sex for kids, this fun, honest volume covers the topic in new and exciting ways. *Sex Is a Funny Word* provides a framework of foundational information about bodies, gender, and touch, and then invites young readers and their adults to talk to each other in order to "fill in the blanks" with beliefs, values, and connections to family history, culture, and community. This book isn't actually about sex: It's about providing a foundation for kids to understand sex as a big, multifaceted life experience.

Also notable is the book's lack of jargon -- you won't find identity labels or advanced terms in the text (though there is a useful glossary) -- which means that all the different ways we talk about and define ourselves are available to use in the conversations this book will inspire. The interesting, diverse characters and inclusive language and art mean that every reader will be able to see themselves in this book. Fiona Smyth's thick-line cartoon drawings and bold color choices make for a visually absorbing read. This truly modern and open-ended guide about sex, bodies, and touch will help parents and kid readers alike take a thoughtful, relationship-building path toward growing up.



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Jacki Schneider  
[REDACTED]  
Lacombe, 70445

Dear Ms. Schneider,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cori Silverberg. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

Pursuant to La. R.S. § 14:91.11, it is unlawful for any St. Tammany Library to display, exhibit, disseminate, check-out, or otherwise provide any minor anything that constitutes material harmful to minors by law. However, materials are only deemed harmful to minors if **all** four (4) of the following apply beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. First, the material must exploit, be devoted to, or principally consist of "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality." To be "descriptions or depictions of illicit or sexual immorality," the material must convey ultimate sex acts, masturbation or excretory functions, lewd exhibition of private areas, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual intimacy via physical acts of private areas, or stimulation of human genitalia.
2. Second, the material must incite, appeal to, or be designed to incite or appeal to "the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors," i.e., a sexual response over and beyond those that would be characterized as normal for a minor.
3. Third, the material must be "offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors." These standards are not defined or limited by any specific geographic area.
4. Fourth, the material, when considered in its entirety (including both objectionable and nonobjectionable parts), must lack any "literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors." If any of the foregoing requirements are not met, the material is not unlawful under La. R.S. §14:91.11.

Importantly, the statute defines "minor" as "any person under the age of eighteen years." Thus, the last three (3) elements above must be considered in that context, e.g., "The material taken as a whole [must] lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for [any person

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under the age of eighteen years].” Additionally, if materials that qualify as harmful to minors are not sold, distributed, advertised, or otherwise distributed to minors, it is permissible under the law to have them available for adults to do so, as long as the minors are unable to see, “as displayed,” descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality.”

Under this analysis, the staff committee determined that the material at issue in your Statement of Concern does not qualify as unlawfully harmful to minors.

1. It does not primarily consist of or is devoted to the sexual acts described in the law. The book does not contain any ultimate sex acts. There are two pages about masturbation and there is a section showing body parts, however the portrayal is not lewd.
2. It does not incite or appeal to or is designed to incite or appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors. The illustrations, text, and format are meant to catch the interest on a level appropriate for children of puberty age. The images of body parts are not in detail. The images of genitals are focused on without the rest of the body shown. The purpose of showing the variety of genitals is to portray the wide variety of human forms that are considered “normal.”
3. It is not offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors. The book has a steady circulation rate at STPL. It is held in Juvenile Non-Fiction in over 1000 other public libraries across the country, including Jefferson Parish Public Library and the Mobile Public Library (Alabama.) Our ownership of the book is consistent with our peer library systems.
4. The material taken as a whole does not lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors. The book has education value as it discusses hygiene and correct medical terms for body parts. It also discusses the emotional and social aspects of first relationships, concepts not often discussed in books for this target age audience. The book has artistic value with colorful and amusing pictures. The unnatural colors of the humans shows universality.

When the book was purchased the library recognized the topical nature of the book and placed it into children’s non-fiction. However, the book is published in “graphic novel” format and is now shelved behind the circulation desk and only available to minors who have a parent authorized Juvenile or Juvenile Unrestricted library card per the directive of the Library Board of Control’s resolution regarding graphic novels on February 28th, 2023.

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You specifically commented that the book's content was "pornographic." After reviewing the book and discussion, it was determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book does not violate the statute nor is it pornography. The committee further recommends that the book should be retained and continue to be shelved behind the circulation desk per the directive of the LBOC.

You also specifically asked "that a separate board be formed comprised of parents and teachers to review these books prior to purchase." Books and other materials are purchased by trained professionals using a variety of tools and who are themselves members of the St. Tammany community. In order to increase transparency, the LBOC - who are members of the St. Tammany community, appointed by the Parish President and Parish Council, and currently includes parents and educators - will be reviewing and making decisions about all challenged materials.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for their family, that alone does not render it unlawful and does not warrant censoring the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item, and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Jacki Schneider



Lacombe, 70445

Dear Ms. Schneider,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

---

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
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SOUTH SLIDELL (985) 781-0099



May 31, 2023

Ms. Jacki Schneider

[REDACTED]

Lacombe, LA 70445

Dear Ms. Schneider,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the book *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly LaRocca".

Kelly LaRocca, Director

---

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**Statement of Concern about Library Resources**

Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Date 11/22/2022

Name Frances W Smith

Address [REDACTED]

City Slidell State La Zip 70461

[REDACTED]

Representing  (self)  St Tammany Parish Library Accountablility Project. (organization)

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

- Book  Newspaper  Other
- Magazine  Content of Library Program
- Audiovisual  Electronic Resource

2. Title Sex is a Funny Word

Author/Producer Cory Silverbert and Fiona Smyth

3. What brought this title to your attention?

Sex is not a funny word.... It can be used to comprmise people, seduce young children and totally mess with their minds for the rest of their lives.

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

Page 71. I don't believe it is necessary to teach young children these things.

5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?  
remove it from the library. it is pornograhly.

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.  
It has no value to help a young person grow into a responsible adult. It takes away young children's innocence.

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?  
Something that was uplifting for children to read.

NOTE:

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

***SEX IS A FUNNY WORD*** by Cory Silverberg  
Triangle Square, 2015

**PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

A comic book for kids that includes children and families of all makeups, orientations, and gender identities, *Sex Is a Funny Word* is an essential resource about bodies, gender, and sexuality for children ages 8 to 10 as well as their parents and caregivers. Much more than the facts of life or "the birds and the bees, *Sex Is a Funny Word* opens up conversations between young people and their caregivers in a way that allows adults to convey their values and beliefs while providing information about boundaries, safety, and joy.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Sex differences  
Gender identity  
Sex  
Sex (Biology)  
Sex instruction for children  
Human body

**HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 4 print copies at Admin, Covington, Mandeville, and Slidell/ Shelved in Juvenile Non-fiction/Call number is J 613.9071 Sil
- Hoopla E-book.

Purchased in November 2017. Available on shelf December 2017

Total circulation on all print copies: 38

Total circulation on E-book: 4

**OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held at 1379 libraries.  
Jefferson Parish Library – Juvenile Non-fiction  
Mobile Public Library (AL) – Juvenile Non-fiction  
Baldwin County Library (AL)– Juvenile Non-fiction

**REVIEWS**

*Kirkus Reviews* (04/15/2015):

Moving up in target audience from their explanation of reproduction, *What Makes a Baby* (2013), Silverberg and Smyth explore various meanings for the word "sex." In their own ways, Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar respond to information in chapters about bodies, "Boys, Girls, All of Us," touch, language, and "Crushes, Love, and Relationships." With skin tones in unlikely shades (blue! purple! green!) and wildly diverse crowd scenes, chances are good that any reader can identify with someone in these pages. Refreshingly, these crowds are diverse in a way that does not appear assembled by checklist. Lively design, bright, clashing colors, cartoon-style illustrations, comic strips, and plenty of humor support the informal, inclusive approach.

Each chapter ends with questions to think and talk about. The author's respect for different approaches to the subject comes through. No actual sexual activities are described except for masturbation, in the chapter that also deals with "secret touches." The gender chapter tells how gender is assigned but notes "there are more than two kinds of bodies." The character Zai doesn't identify as either boy or girl. Illustrations show body parts of kids and grown-ups (nipples, breasts, bottoms, and parts biologically specific to boys or girls) demonstrating wide variety. Puberty will be addressed in a third title. This carefully thought-out explanation may surprise but should be widely appreciated. (glossary) (Nonfiction.7-10) COPYRIGHT(2015) Kirkus Reviews, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

*Publishers Weekly* (06/22/2015):

Silverberg and Smyth follow *What Makes a Baby* with a highly visual introduction to sex education for older readers, featuring four characters between the ages of eight and 10 with skin in a rainbow of crayon-box colors. Full-page artwork and comics sequences follow the students as they react to discussions of gender, bodies (including what Silverberg calls "middle parts"), touching, and the emotions that lead to sexual contact; the book stops short of getting into the mechanics of intercourse. Throughout, Silverberg invites readers to consider their own feelings through activities and questions ("Why do you think people want to know if a baby is a boy or a girl?"). Emphasizing the importance of trust, respect, justice, and joy--as well as open communication--it's a thoughtful and affirming exploration of relationships, gender identity, and growing sexual awareness. Ages 7-10. (July)  
Copyright 2015 Publishers Weekly, LLC Used with permission.

*School Library Journal* (03/01/2016):

**Gr 2-6**--Silverberg and Smyth follow up their book for younger readers, *What Makes a Baby* (Triangle Square, 2013), with this engaging introduction to gender, bodies, and relationships. A diverse cast of cartoon kids--in terms of appearance, ability, and point of view--explore the multiple meanings of the word sex with their teacher, friends, and family members. There is a heavy emphasis on the importance of thinking for oneself and developing one's own opinions. The language is conversational and accessible, as well as direct, fastidiously accurate, and entirely gender-neutral. Each section ends with conversation-provoking questions, reinforcing the suggestion that the book be read and shared in conversation with a trusted adult. What makes this volume exceptional is its introduction of the subjects of transgender identity, intersex conditions, and masturbation. The quality text is enhanced and brought to life by comics drawn with bold lines on bright, full-bleed pages. Smyth's illustrations are interactive, fun, and edifying, presenting a range of body types and diversity. Despite the title, the topic of sexual intercourse is not covered; but Silverberg prepares readers for this information by introducing concepts such as respect, trust, and joy. **VERDICT** Exciting, enlightening, and innovative, this book addresses timeless questions about sex for a new generation of kids who are increasingly aware of the broad spectrum of gender and sexual identities.--Clara Hendricks, Cambridge Public Library, MA

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Raised by a children's librarian and a sex therapist, Cory Silverberg split the difference and grew up to be a sexuality educator and writer. With an academic background in education and counseling psychology, he has developed and facilitated workshops for hundreds of agencies across North America, working on a range of topics including sexuality and disability, sexual pleasure, and sexual communication. He is the coauthor of *The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability*, and since 2005 he has worked as the Sexuality Guide for About.com. In 2012, Silverberg developed a book project-- *What Makes a Baby?*--that became the best-funded children's book on Kickstarter. He subsequently signed a three-book deal with Seven Stories Press to produce a series of inclusive children's books about gender and sexuality. Silverberg lives in New York City.

Fiona Smyth is a Toronto-based painter, illustrator, and cartoonist. Her first graphic novel, *The Never Weres*, was published by Annick Press in 2011. Fiona's comic *Cheez* was published in *Exclaim!* magazine for almost ten years, and her comic *Fazooz* was in *Vice* for eight years. Fiona teaches illustration and comics at OCAD U in Toronto.

## **AWARDS & LISTS**

2016 Rainbow Project Book List ALA

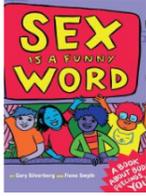
2016 Winner of the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-Fiction

2016 ALA Stonewall Book Award, Honor Book

2016 ALA Notable Children's Book

# Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU

Book review by Mandie Carroll, Common Sense Media



Common Sense says  
 age 7+ ★★★★★  
 Inclusive, lively guide to bodies, touch for older kids.  
 Cory Silverberg | Body Awareness | 2015

Save Rate book

Enjoy your 2nd of 3 free monthly reviews. Get unlimited reviews

Parents say age 11+ ★★★★★ Based on 3 reviews	Kids say age 14+ ★★★★★ Based on 2 reviews
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Read or buy  
 Common Sense is a nonprofit organization. Your purchase helps us remain independent and ad-free.

**Did we miss something on diversity?** Research shows a connection between kids' healthy self-esteem and positive portrayals in media. That's why we've added a new "Diverse Representations" section to our reviews that will be rolling out on an ongoing basis. You can help us help kids by [suggesting a diversity update](#).

## A Lot or a Little?

The parents' guide to what's in this book.

- Stands out for positive messages and positive role models.
- Educational Value: A+ ●●●●●
- Positive Messages: ●●●●●
- Positive Role Models: ●●●●●
- Violence & Scariness: Not present
- Language: Not present

### What Parents Need to Know

Parents need to know that *Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU*, by Cory Silverberg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth, is a companion book for older kids to 2013's *What Makes a Baby*. Characters Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar are kids between 8 and 10 years old who approach learning about sex and bodies very differently, affirming the various responses that kid readers might have as they work through the book. Neither reproduction or intercourse is discussed, but masturbation is described. Diagrams, definitions, and explanations explore different meanings of sex, bodies and their sexual organs, gender, touch (including "secret touch"), and relationships. Body-positive messages are communicated in inclusive text and pictures throughout. Skin color is represented in green, orange, pink, purple, blue, etc., while hair, facial features, head coverings, and clothing show a variety of ethnicities, cultures, and genders. Crowd and family scenes depict a wide range of family compositions and people of different ages and abilities. This comprehensive, thoughtful guide to bodies will appeal to older kids who are curious about bodies and, yes, sex.

[Show less](#)

### Community Reviews

## Our Editors Recommend

**It's So Amazing**  
 Engaging guide to tweens.  
 age

## For kids who love their bodies

[Books That Promote a Healthy Body](#)  
[See all recommended books](#)

## Themes & Topics

Browse titles with similar

**Adventures**  
 See all

Common Sense Media's unbiased reviews are by expert reviewers and authors or product's creators or by any

AB Abigail B., Adult

age 15+ ★★★★★

#### Not for kids

This book was way too graphic for anyone under the age of 15. It goes into the nitty-gritty about sex, and give to anyone under age 12 that is asking questions about sex or bodies. I also don't approve of their gender fluidity for the kids. I'd be okay if it talked about gender roles being fluid, but not the gender its

This title has:

☹ Too much sex

👍 Helpful 🚩 Report

C clutter, Adult

age 7+ ★★★★★

#### this takes me back to when

i would take out my dictionary and scroll to the super funny word that begins with an S

This title has:

A+ Educational value

👍 Helpful 🚩 Report

E ElisonJ., Adult

age 10+ ★★★★★

#### Educational

My niece bought this book for my sons 10th birthday and as a parent I must say it is quite educational detailed. It does talk about masturbation and other sexual purposes but I say to my son that sex is just would reccomend this book for ages 10 plus.

This title has:

A+ Educational value

👍 Helpful 🚩 Report

## What's the Story?

SEX IS A FUNNY WORD opens with a note to adult readers. And then we meet Zai, Cooper, Mimi, and Omar, all ages 8-10, as they're in class beginning a unit on sex. The teacher says that learning about sex is like a carnival: You can't do it all in one day, and it can be fun, strange, and a little scary. The classmates are shown in various situations that relate to each chapter topic like "What Is Sex?" "Learning About Bodies," "Boys, Girls, All of Us," "Touch," and so forth. Comic strips, two-page scenes, diagrams, and explanatory text work together to show and explain terms and ideas. Discussion questions and activity suggestions end each chapter, making this book suitable for educational settings as well as family reading, and a glossary at the end defines terms that are referred to but not named in the book itself (asexual, transgender, etc.).

[Show less ^](#)

## Is It Any Good?

Not your typical book about sex for kids, this fun, honest volume covers the topic in new and exciting ways. *Sex Is a Funny Word* provides a framework of foundational information about bodies, gender, and touch, and then invites young readers and their adults to talk to each other in order to "fill in the blanks" with beliefs, values, and connections to family history, culture, and community. This book isn't actually about sex: It's about providing a foundation for kids to understand sex as a big, multifaceted life experience.

Also notable is the book's lack of jargon -- you won't find identity labels or advanced terms in the text (though there is a useful glossary) -- which means that all the different ways we talk about and define ourselves are available to use in the conversations this book will inspire. The interesting, diverse characters and inclusive language and art mean that every reader will be able to see themselves in this book. Fiona Smyth's thick-line cartoon drawings and bold color choices make for a visually absorbing read. This truly modern and open-ended guide about sex, bodies, and touch will help parents and kid readers alike take a thoughtful, relationship-building path toward growing up.



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Fran Smith  
[REDACTED]  
Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cori Silverberg. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

Pursuant to La. R.S. § 14:91.11, it is unlawful for any St. Tammany Library to display, exhibit, disseminate, check-out, or otherwise provide any minor anything that constitutes material harmful to minors by law. However, materials are only deemed harmful to minors if all four (4) of the following apply beyond a reasonable doubt:

1. First, the material must exploit, be devoted to, or principally consist of "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality." To be "descriptions or depictions of illicit or sexual immorality," the material must convey ultimate sex acts, masturbation or excretory functions, lewd exhibition of private areas, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual intimacy via physical acts of private areas, or stimulation of human genitalia.
2. Second, the material must incite, appeal to, or be designed to incite or appeal to "the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors," i.e., a sexual response over and beyond those that would be characterized as normal for a minor.
3. Third, the material must be "offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors." These standards are not defined or limited by any specific geographic area.
4. Fourth, the material, when considered in its entirety (including both objectionable and nonobjectionable parts), must lack any "literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors." If any of the foregoing requirements are not met, the material is not unlawful under La. R.S. §14:91.11.

Importantly, the statute defines "minor" as "any person under the age of eighteen years." Thus, the last three (3) elements above must be considered in that context, e.g., "The material taken as a whole [must] lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for [any person

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under the age of eighteen years].” Additionally, if materials that qualify as harmful to minors are not sold, distributed, advertised, or otherwise distributed to minors, it is permissible under the law to have them available for adults to do so, as long as the minors are unable to see, “as displayed,” descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality.”

Under this analysis, the staff committee determined that the material at issue in your Statement of Concern does not qualify as unlawfully harmful to minors.

1. It does not primarily consist of or is devoted to the sexual acts described in the law. The book does not contain any ultimate sex acts. There are two pages about masturbation and there is a section showing body parts, however the portrayal is not lewd.
2. It does not incite or appeal to or is designed to incite or appeal to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors. The illustrations, text, and format are meant to catch the interest on a level appropriate for children of puberty age. The images of body parts are not in detail. The images of genitals are focused on without the rest of the body shown. The purpose of showing the variety of genitals is to portray the wide variety of human forms that are considered “normal.”
3. It is not offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards with respect to what is suitable for minors. The book has a steady circulation rate at STPL. It is held in Juvenile Non-Fiction in over 1000 other public libraries across the country, including Jefferson Parish Public Library and the Mobile Public Library (Alabama.) Our ownership of the book is consistent with our peer library systems.
4. The material taken as a whole does not lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors. The book has education value as it discusses hygiene and correct medical terms for body parts. It also discusses the emotional and social aspects of first relationships, concepts not often discussed in books for this target age audience. The book has artistic value with colorful and amusing pictures. The unnatural colors of the humans shows universality.

When the book was purchased the library recognized the topical nature of the book and placed it into children’s non-fiction. However, the book is published in “graphic novel” format

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and is now shelved behind the circulation desk and only available to minors who have a parent authorized Juvenile or Juvenile Unrestricted library card per the directive of the Library Board of Control's resolution regarding graphic novels on February 28th, 2023.

You asked specifically that this book be "removed from the library" and that it was "pornography." After reviewing the book and discussion, it was determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book does not violate the statute nor is it pornography. The committee further recommends that the book should be retained and continue to be shelved behind the circulation desk per the directive of the LBOC.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for their family, that alone does not render it unlawful and does not warrant censoring the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item, and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

---

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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Fran Smith

  
Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Ms. Smith,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey* and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

---

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May 31, 2023

Ms. Fran Smith

  
Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Ms. Smith,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey* and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

---

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## ***Statement of Concern about Library Resources***

Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Representing \_\_\_\_\_ (self) \_\_\_\_\_ (organization)

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_ Book                      \_\_\_\_ Newspaper                      \_\_\_\_ Other  
\_\_\_\_ Magazine                      \_\_\_\_ Content of Library Program  
\_\_\_\_ Audiovisual                      \_\_\_\_ Electronic Resource

2. Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

3. What brought this title to your attention?

4. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

5. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?

6. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes or sections. Consider commenting on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

7. In its place, what materials would you recommend on this topic?

NOTE:

This statement will be referred to a Library Resource Review Committee. You will be advised in writing of the committee's decision. Thank you for your concern and input.

## ***WHO HAS WHAT?* by Robie H. Harris**

Candlewick Press, 2011

### **PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY**

Young children are curious about almost everything. Asking questions is one of many ways they learn about themselves and the world around them. Now, this unique series for our youngest children provides easy-to-understand facts and answers to their delightful, thoughtful, and often nonstop questions. Launching the series is *WHO HAS WHAT?*, a simple story following Nellie and Gus on a family outing to the beach. Humorous illustrations, conversations between the siblings, and a clear text all reassure young kids that whether they have a girl's body or a boy's, their bodies are perfectly normal, healthy, and wonderful. Authoring the series is Robie H. Harris, whose nonfiction books are known as the source for addressing kids' questions about themselves, their families, and their friends. Nadine Bernard Westcott's accurate and entertaining illustrations offer an inviting way for children to discover straightforward, fascinating information about themselves.

### **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS**

Human body

Sex instruction for children

Sex differences

### **HOLDINGS AND CIRCULATION**

- 9 print copies at Bush, Causeway, Covington, Lacombe, Lee Road, Madisonville, Mandeville, Pearl River, and Slidell/ Shelved in Juvenile Non-fiction/ Call number J 612.6 Har

Purchased in December 2011. Available on shelf December 2011.

Total circulation on all print copies: 145

### **OTHER LIBRARY HOLDINGS**

Held in 913 libraries.

Jefferson Parish Library – Juvenile Non-fiction

Tangipahoa Parish Library – Juvenile Non-fiction

Mobile Public Library (AL) – Juvenile Non-fiction

Jackson-George Regional Library (Gulf Coast MS) – Juvenile Non-fiction

### **REVIEWS**

**Kirkus Reviews** (07/15/2011):

A family outing to the beach provides the opportunity for a discussion of the similarities and differences between boys and girls. In a conversation between a pair of mixed-race preschoolers securely strapped in their car seats, Nellie's play on the words "everybody" and "every body" leads Gus to wondering about body parts. Their beach visit provides an opportunity to see a variety of people and puppies, to itemize all the parts that boys and girls and dogs have in common (head, cheek, belly button, tummy, toes, etc.) and learn about those

that are different. Harris (*It's Not the Stork!*, 2006, etc.) matter-of-factly combines common childhood language--"opening where poop comes out"--and anatomically correct terms such as vagina, penis and scrotum. The children's parents explain interior organs (appropriately placed boxes reveal what's inside) while applying sunscreen. Some information is conveyed in text, some in speech balloons or labels. Westcott's digital cartoonlike illustrations show different compositions of families representing a wide range of ages, races and nationalities. They include a very pregnant mother in a bathing suit, as well as, appropriately shaded by beach umbrellas, a woman discreetly nursing a baby and a man giving a bottle to his.

This much-needed title stands out for its comfortably familiar presentation of material adults sometime find difficult to share with young children. (*Informational picture book. 2-6*)

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**Publishers Weekly (07/25/2011):**

Harris, the guardian angel of parents facing their school-age child's questions about sex, tackles the preschool set in this first book in the Let's Talk About You and Me series. Readers follow Gus and his older sister, Nellie, on a family trip to the beach; the relaxed environment enables Westcott to riff on the central theme that "Everybody everywhere has a body!" and to show Gus and Nellie's anatomy (including key internal organs) as they change into swimsuits. Harris understands just how much her audience wants and needs to know about sex: adult bodies are out, family dogs are in ("Hey, boy puppies have a penis too," notes Gus). The text is somewhat repetitious, and the dialogue forced and chirpy as Harris delineates everything, body parts and otherwise, that makes boys and girls similar and different ("Boys and girls like to catch frogs, swing high up in the air, ride scooters, and make a lot of noise"). Nonetheless, it's a sunny, useful introduction to anatomy that kicks some gender stereotypes to the curb in the process. Ages 26. (Sept.) Copyright 2011 Publishers Weekly Used with permission.

**Bulletin of Ctr for Child Bks (10/01/2011):**

Harris has been bringing her comprehensive yet light-hearted approach to sex education to younger and younger children, and unless she has a prenatal audience in mind for the future, here she hits the end of the road. Preschooler Nellie and her younger brother Gus are off with their parents for a day at the beach. The siblings' chatter turns to bodies, their similarities and differences, and as they make observations about the preponderance of commonality (with, of course, a few striking and important gender differences), the narrator's voice supplies commentary on how internal and external genitalia may someday figure into motherhood and fatherhood. The particulars of conception are left for another day and another title (quite likely Harris' own *It's Not the Stork!*, BCCB 10/06), and the steady focus on identifying body parts makes the territory below the swimsuits seem little more mysterious or significant than eyes and elbows and ankles. Although the children's remarks sometimes feel a bit clunky and forced, the beach provides a natural setting for generating "the discussion": the changing rooms afford the opportunity to check out everybody's parts as they shimmy in and out of swimwear, while subtly underscoring the privacy altogether appropriate for the, well, altogether. Westcott's bouncy cartoon cast is thoroughly multicultural, with Nellie and Gus the creamy-skinned offspring of a biracial couple and beachgoers representing just about every demographic under the blazing summer sun. With this appealing new title, families can now choose from among an

almost seamless step-up series. EB

**Booklist** (09/01/2011):

Preschool-G \*Starred Review\* Harris' oft-challenged *It's Perfectly Normal* (1994), *It's So Amazing!* (1999), and *It's Not the Stork!* (2006) each address a different age group of children. This newest outing aims for the youngest set yet (an injury is called a boo-boo), though most parents should plan to read the words aloud and offer clarification. As always, Harris' tone is cheerful and confident, introducing an interracial couple and their two children as they hit the beach, repeating one message: Every girl has a body. Every boy has a body. Every grown-up has a body. The kids are not sure who has what, which leads to a series of short, clear explanations, with little arrows pointing out each body part, whether they are the same (cheek, chin) or different. Changing into swimwear provides the opportunity to point out the primary physical differences: Girls have an opening to the vagina, and an opening where pee comes out. Unobtrusive X-rays show interior views, while pet dogs are there for further anatomical comparison. Westcott's bright digital illustrations keep the affair as breezy and nonshocking as possible just as it should be. Expect the usual outcry, as well as the usual demand. (Reprinted with permission of Booklist, copyright 2011, American Library Association.)

**School Library Journal** (10/01/2011):

**PreS-Gr 2**--This is a straightforward presentation, as told through simple exposition and the dialogue of a young girl and boy who are going to the beach for the day. As the youngsters chat with one another about their similarities and differences, readers are greeted with visually appealing cartoonlike drawings that depict an array of people in various family groupings. As the two children change in their separate cabanas, arrows point to and name the parts of their bodies that distinguish them as male or female. A dog (of the same sex as the child) has crept into each child's cabana so its parts are labeled, too. Correct terminology is used, e.g., vagina, scrotum, penis, ovary, uterus, but Harris does not delve into how these body parts function, and she doesn't address the reproductive process. The book serves as a great way to introduce male and female body parts for anyone not used to discussing or naming them. For a more comprehensive look at body parts, reproduction, and birth, check out Harris's *It's Not the Stork!* (Candlewick, 2006).--*Maggie Chase, Boise State University, ID*  
Copyright 2011 School Library Journal, LLC Used with permission.

**Horn Book Magazine** (11/01/2011):

Sexpert for the under-twelve set Harris (*It's Perfectly Normal*, rev. 3/95; *It's So Amazing!*, rev. 1/00; and others) here explains to young children how boys and girls are a lot alike but also anatomically different. A biracial brother and sister start the conversation while buckled into car seats on the way to the beach. "Girls and boys are different -- right, Nellie?" the little brother begins, which prompts his sister to wonder, "Or -- are we mostly the same?" Out the car window, Westcott's friendly ink-and-watercolor illustrations depict a playground where boys and girls both "like to catch frogs, swing high up in the air, ride scooters, and make a lot of noise." Harris gradually moves from personality traits to physical characteristics, and, at the beach, Westcott labels shared parts -- eye, ear, nose, mouth, etc. -- on the kids and two dogs. The book very naturally introduces differences as the siblings, separately, change into their

swimsuits. Readers are shown the various male and female "openings" (e.g., the "opening where pee comes out") for both humans and canines and given the anatomical terms for exterior and interior sex organs. (Since most dogs in this country are neutered, parents might have some explaining to do.) The overall tone is lighthearted but never too silly. There's no description of how babies are made, though there's mention of how girls can grow up to be mommies and boys can grow up to be daddies. But, happily, "Growing from a baby to a kid to a grown-up takes a long, long, long time," because now it's time to play! christine m. heppermann(Copyright 2011 by The Horn Book, Incorporated, Boston. All rights reserved.)

**Hornbook Guide to Children (01/01/2012):**

Harris explains how boys and girls are a lot alike but also anatomically different. A brother and sister start the conversation on their way to the beach. Harris gradually moves from personality traits to physical characteristics, very naturally introducing differences as the siblings, separately, change into their swimsuits. Enhanced by Westcott's friendly ink and watercolor illustrations, the tone is lighthearted but never too silly. (Copyright 2012 by The Horn Book, Incorporated, Boston. All rights reserved.)

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

**Robie H. Harris** is the author of the much-acclaimed Family Library series. While working on *Who Has What?* she consulted parents, grandparents, educators, librarians, child development specialists, health professionals, and clergy to make sure that the information and illustrations answer young children's questions about themselves in an appropriate and honest manner. Robie H. Harris lives in Massachusetts.

**Nadine Bernard Westcott** is the illustrator of more than fifty books, including *Supermarket!* and *Up, Down, and Around*. She lives in Massachusetts.

**AWARDS & LISTS**

ALA Notable Children's Book  
Bank Street CBC Best Children's Book of the Year  
Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Book Award  
Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Platinum Book Award



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips

[REDACTED]  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

Thank you for submitting your Statement of Concern regarding *Who Has What* by Robie H. Harris. Per the St. Tammany Library Board of Control's policies and procedures, this correspondence is to notify you of the recommendation of the library staff committee regarding the material referenced in your Statement of Concern.

The author is a New York Times best selling author and is a well known non-fiction writer for children. The book received favorable reviews. The Library purchased the book in 2011 and it has circulated 145 times. The book is informational with all body parts labeled. It is meant for parents to use to have a conversation with their child. The committee noted that the "girl" and "boy" parts images with corresponding labels are on separate page spreads.

In your statement of concern you specifically asked that it be available upon request and not "lying around willy nilly when we are at the library to read about trains, planes, and automobiles." This book is in picture book format but is shelved in the Juvenile Non-Fiction section under call number J612.6 with other books on human physiology, not in the browsable Picture Book section. The Juvenile Non-Fiction call number makes it easy for parents to find, but is not easily accessible to a young child.

The committee felt that putting the book behind the circulation desk permanently or in a restricted area would be a hinderance to parents. They may not have time to wait for the book to be paged from behind the desk, they might be embarrassed to ask for the book, and they would not have the opportunity to compare books on the subject to determine which book is the best for their family. STPL's policy for placement of a book is based on the subject matter and the intended audience, not by directive of the American Library Association.

It is held in Juvenile Non-Fiction in over 900 other public libraries across the country, including Jefferson Parish Public Library, Tangipahoa Parish Library, Jackson-George Regional Library (Gulf Coast Mississippi), and the Mobile Public Library (Alabama.) Our placement is consistent with our peer library systems. After reviewing the book and discussion, it was

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determined that, in the opinion of the committee members, the book is shelved in the appropriate section of the library.

While we recognize that some may find the material in question not suitable for themselves or their family, that alone does not warrant censoring or hindering the public at large from accessing and/or checking out the material. Parents are the ultimate deciders of which books and media their children will consume. At the same time, we do acknowledge that this book may not be in line with the values of all families in the Parish. The purchase of any item by the St. Tammany Parish Library is not an affirmation of the content of the item and each family in our Parish has the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding what they and their own children will read or hear.

The committee's report and recommendation will be made available to the St. Tammany Library Control Board, which shall make the ultimate determination based thereupon at a special meeting scheduled on May 1st, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers where it will be on the agenda. At that meeting, you will have an opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes.

Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will recognize the important role that a public library plays in a free and open democratic society as a neutral resource for everyone.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips

  
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The special meeting scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, has been cancelled. The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for the regular meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,



Kelly LaRocca, Director

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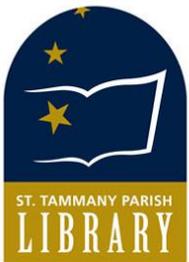
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May 31, 2023

Ms. Connie Phillips



Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Ms. Phillips,

The Board's discussion and decision regarding the books *Milk and Honey*, *Pink, Blue, and You!*, *Who Has What*, and *Sex is a Funny Word* has been rescheduled for Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully,

Kelly LaRocca, Director

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## **Strategic Planning Committee Update**

Action planning training was held on April 26<sup>th</sup> over zoom. Carson Block and Susan Kent presented to 32 staff members and recorded the session so that any staff that wish are able to participate in our strategic planning action plans for this year.

We will be asking staff for volunteers to work on action plans for each of the goals. We hope to have the first working group meetings over the next month.

## **Rules and Regulations Committee Update**

The Rules and Regulations Committee met on May 4<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>. The committee worked on Section 205 Materials Display.

Our next meeting will be on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12:00 pm at the Causeway Branch.

## **Library Foundation Update**

The St. Tammany Library Foundation was pleased to host its 6th annual Distinguished Speaker Series at the Beau Chene Country Club on April 26, 2023 featuring Emilie Rhys as its distinguished speaker. The final numbers are not in yet, but the Foundation estimates to have made approximately \$11,000.00 from the event.

The Foundation board met in May before it breaks for June and July, but has already discussed plans to expand its general membership through social media avenues in the Fall. The Board has also begun planning for the next speaker for the 7th annual Distinguished Speaker Series which is our largest fundraiser each year.

At the May meeting, The President of Foundation received the invoice for the Ozobots that were approved by the Foundation Board in Fall of 2022. The Foundation looks forward to working with the Library to identify additional projects it can fund to aid our community libraries.