

**NATIONAL
COALITION
AGAINST
CENSORSHIP**

**KIDS'
RIGHT
TO READ**

A project of the National Coalition Against Censorship

CO-SPONSORED BY

American Booksellers for Free Expression
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

September 23, 2020

By electronic mail

Board of Trustees
Clark County School District
5100 West Sahara Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89146

Re: Removal of *Fun Home* from curriculum

Dear Board members:

As organizations dedicated to protecting the freedom to read, the First Amendment, and high quality public education, the National Coalition Against Censorship and the other groups signed below are deeply concerned by the Clark County School District's peremptory removal of the graphic novel *Fun Home* from the reading list of a tenth grade English Honors class at Palo Verde High School. The District has apparently violated its own regulations by removing the book without following the mandated procedures for the review of challenged instructional material.

District regulation R-6150 states that each school shall have a library-media center committee which "shall" review challenged material. The regulation further states that the committee "shall" resolve challenges to material by assessing the suitability of the material "through examination, checking of available reviews, and consulting standard evaluation aids." Moreover, the regulation expressly states that the committee's recommendation "should be based on the material as a whole without judging passages out of context."

There is no evidence that this procedure was followed in regard to the assignment of *Fun Home* at Palo Verde High School. Instead, press reports indicate that "after being notified, the principal for Palo Verde High School immediately pulled the book from the list."

Thus, a small group of parents, who might well represent only a tiny minority of parents in the District, have been granted de facto veto power over the curriculum, without input from other stakeholders.. That is precisely the outcome that District regulations are designed to avoid.

Therefore, we urge the District to rescind the removal and to commence the review process which is mandated by the District's regulations.

We also strongly urge the District to reject the challenge to *Fun Home* and to retain it in the curriculum for Honors English. *Fun Home* spent two weeks on the *New York Times* Best Seller list and was named by several publications as one of the best books of 2006. It was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award and also for three Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards,

winning one. In 2019, it was ranked 33rd on *The Guardian's* list of the 100 best books of the 21st century.

Fun Home was lauded by critics for its groundbreaking innovations in two literary genres: The graphic novel and LGBTQ literature, In particular, critics praised it as an exemplar of how effectively the graphic novel can advance narrative, as well as its introduction of themes which had previously been largely neglected in LGBT literature. Finally, the book became the basis for a musical play which was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and which won the Tony Award for Best Musical the following year.

Although *Fun Home* deals with mature themes, it has been appropriately assigned to mature sophomores at Palo Verde High, and district regulations permit parents who object to the book to request that their children be assigned other works.

Therefore, we urge the District to permit teachers of Honors English to assign *Fun Home* in those classes.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression
Authors Guild
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
PEN America Children's and Young Adult Book Committee
Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

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