

Waunakee Public Library
Library Board Meeting
Library Board Room
Friday, April 21, 2023 7:45 AM

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll call: Annie Ballweg, Jean Elvekrog, Kathy Grosskopf, Melissa Hill, Erin Moran, Angie Rojas Agudelo, Cathy Sheffield, Library Director Erick Plumb.
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Consent agenda
 - A. Approve March 31, 2023 Library Board Minutes
 - B. Approve Schedule of Bills
 - C. Approve Financial Reports
- V. Director's Report
- VI. Old Business
 - A. Friends of the Library Update
- VII. New Business
 - A. Discuss and approve Display Policy
 - B. Approve Closing for Staff Inservice, Tuesday, May 30, 2023
- VIII. Adjourn

Next Library Board meeting: Friday, May 19, 2023 @ 7:45 AM in the Board Room, Waunakee Public Library

Notice is hereby given that the Village Board may attend this meeting. No action will be taken by the Village Board at this meeting.

Any person who has a qualifying disability as defined by the Americans With Disabilities Act that requires the meeting or materials at the meeting to be in an accessible location or form should contact the municipal clerk at (608) 850-8500, 500 West Main Street, Waunakee, Wisconsin.

Waunakee Public Library

Library Board Meeting

Friday, March 31, 2023- 7:45AM

201 N. Madison Street, Conference Room

- I. **Call to order:** Cathy Sheffield called the meeting to order at 7:49 AM
- II. **Roll Call:**
 - A. **Roll call:** Present: Cathy Sheffield, Melissa Hill, Jean Elvekrog, Annie Ballweg, Kathy Grosskopf and Erick Plumb. Absent: Angie Rojas Agudelo and Erin Moran
 - B. **Guests:** No guests
- III. **Public Comment** No public comment
- IV. **Approval of the consent agenda** Jean made a motion to approve. Annie seconded. Passed.
- V. **Director's Report** Andrea Brandt and Katherine Faust were hired as Customer Service Assistants and started the week of February 26. Courtney Cosgriff, Adult Services Manager gave birth to a healthy baby boy and will be on Maternity Leave until June. The Library will once again be one of the polling places for the Spring Election on April 4. The Library issued a statement in light of the Waunakee Library being discussed on Social Media.
- VI. **Old Business**
 - A. **Friends of the Library Update** The annual Pi Day Pie Sale was on Tuesday, March 14. They sold 74 pies in 2hrs and raised \$1,418.00. The Perineal Sale has orders for 2000 plants. Orders are available for pick up on May 6.
- VII. **New Business**
 - A. **Discuss and approve Community Hall/Meeting Room Rental Damage Policy** Cathy made a motion to approve the Policy after it is changed to reflect collecting a deposit from everyone. Melissa seconded the motion. Passed.
- VIII. **Adjourn:** Cathy made a motion to adjourn at 8:55AM. Annie seconded. Passed.

Library Board Meeting: Friday, April 21, 2023 at 7:45AM

Respectfully submitted, Kathy M. Grosskopf, Trustee and Secretary

March 2023

Account	Vender	Amount
<u>100-551400-210 Outside services</u>		
	Total	0.00
<u>100-551400-219 Automation levy</u>	SCLS	0.00
	Total	0.00
-		
	Total	0.00
<u>100-551400-290 Leased items</u>		
	Gordon Flesch	515.27
		0.00
	Total	515.27
<u>100-551400-292 Maintenance contracts</u>		
	SCLS	0.00
	Bibliotheca	0.00
	Midwest Alarm	0.00
	Total	0.00
<u>100-551400-311 Postage</u>		
	Post Office	137.56
	Total	137.56
<u>100-551400-320 Publications, subscriptions and dues</u>		
	WILS	0.00
	ALA	174.00
	Wauaukee Rotary	211.00
	Wall Street Journal	118.90
	Total	503.90
<u>100-551400-330 Travel and training</u>		
	SCLS	0.00
	UW- Madison	0.00
		0.00
	Total	0.00
<u>100-551400-340 Programs</u>		
	Pig	16.03
	Apple Music	0.00
	Amazon	307.90
	Dollar Tree	2.50
	Dunkin	24.98
	Boxed	181.80
	Represented collective	0.00
	Huma Siddiqui	0.00
	Book Outlet	277.81
	Melanie Juedes	0.00
	Anne Urso	0.00
	Sara Alvarado	0.00
	Minuteman Press	0.00
	Thysse	0.00
	Post Office	0.00
	Total	811.02
<u>100-551400-341 Equipment</u>		

	Minuteman Press	0.00
	Amazon	0.00
	Nassco	0.00
	Laird Plastics	0.00
	SCLS	0.00
<u>100-551400-350 Repairs and maint</u>	Total	0.00
	Total	0.00
<u>100-551400-380 Adult books</u>		
	Amazon	454.09
	Baker and Taylor	2,507.88
	Barnes and Noble	0.00
	University of Wi	0.00
	Total	2,961.97
<u>100-551400-381 Juvenile books</u>		
	Amazon	36.77
	Baker and Taylor	2,153.69
	Penworthy	0.00
	Will Publishing	0.00
	Total	2,190.46
<u>100-551400-383 Serial subscriptions</u>		
	Rivistas	0.00
	Total	0.00
<u>100-551400-384 - Digital Materials & Computer Software</u>		
	Kanopy	70.30
	Demco Software	0.00
	TBS	0.00
	Verizon -Hotspots	200.05
	CDW - Adobe	0.00
	Total	270.35
<u>100-551400-385 Kit supplies</u>		
	Amazon	478.10
	Minuteman Press	42.46
	UPS Store	0.00
	Janway	0.00
	Total	520.56
<u>100-551400-386 Audio materials</u>		
	Blackstone Publishing	407.86
	Midwest Tape	102.82
	Amazon	118.88
	Findaway	209.97
	Total	839.53
<u>100-551400-387 Videos</u>		
	Amazon	652.77
	Midwest Tape	229.37
	Debbie Howard	0.00
	Greta Productions	0.00
	Total	882.14
<u>100-551400-390 Other</u>		
	Amazon	139.31
	Office Depot	0.00
	Cardio Partners	1,364.93
	Minuteman Press	176.43
	Pig	0.00
	Walmart	78.52
	Demco	308.29
	Duraready	0.00
	Total	2,067.48
<u>100-551400-391 Personnel</u>		

<u>100-551400-392 Public relations</u>	Total	0.00
	Minuteman Press	0.00
	Sticker Mule	335.00
	SCLS	0.00
<u>100-551401-210 Building services</u>	Total	335.00
	RG Heating and Air Conditioning	0.00
	Masters Building Solutions	0.00
	Ahern Co	677.28
	Amazon	0.00
<u>100-551401-350 Repairs/Maintenance</u>	Total	677.28
	Nassco	0.00
	Kraemer Air Filter Corp	0.00
	Menards	66.39
	Ace Hardware	18.75
	Amazon	15.19
	Schilling Supply Company	288.19
	Canteen	725.75
	Walgreens	0.00
	Interstate battery	129.99
	Divison Street Mart	12.28
	Total	1,256.54
<u>220 fund</u>	Dunkin	0.00
	Waunakee Chamber of Commerce	0.00
	Tee Public	0.00
	Total	0.00
	Month Total	13,969.06



1030243: Waunakee Library Forever Fund

2/1/2023 To 2/28/2023

Balance

Beginning Balance 313,109.41

Contributions/Gifts

Contributions* 194.70

**Contribution totals include net gift amounts for credit card gifts. Each credit card gift is assessed a merchant processing fee by the donor's credit card company of approximately 4%.*

Transfers In 0.00

194.70

Portfolio Gains (Losses)

Investment Results, Net Of Investment Expenses (4,495.49)

(4,495.49)

Grants/Distributions

Grants/Distributions 0.00

Transfers Out 0.00

MCF Support (260.92)

(260.92)

Ending Balance

\$308,547.70

Cash Available for Grants as of 2/28/2023

\$0.00

WAUNAKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

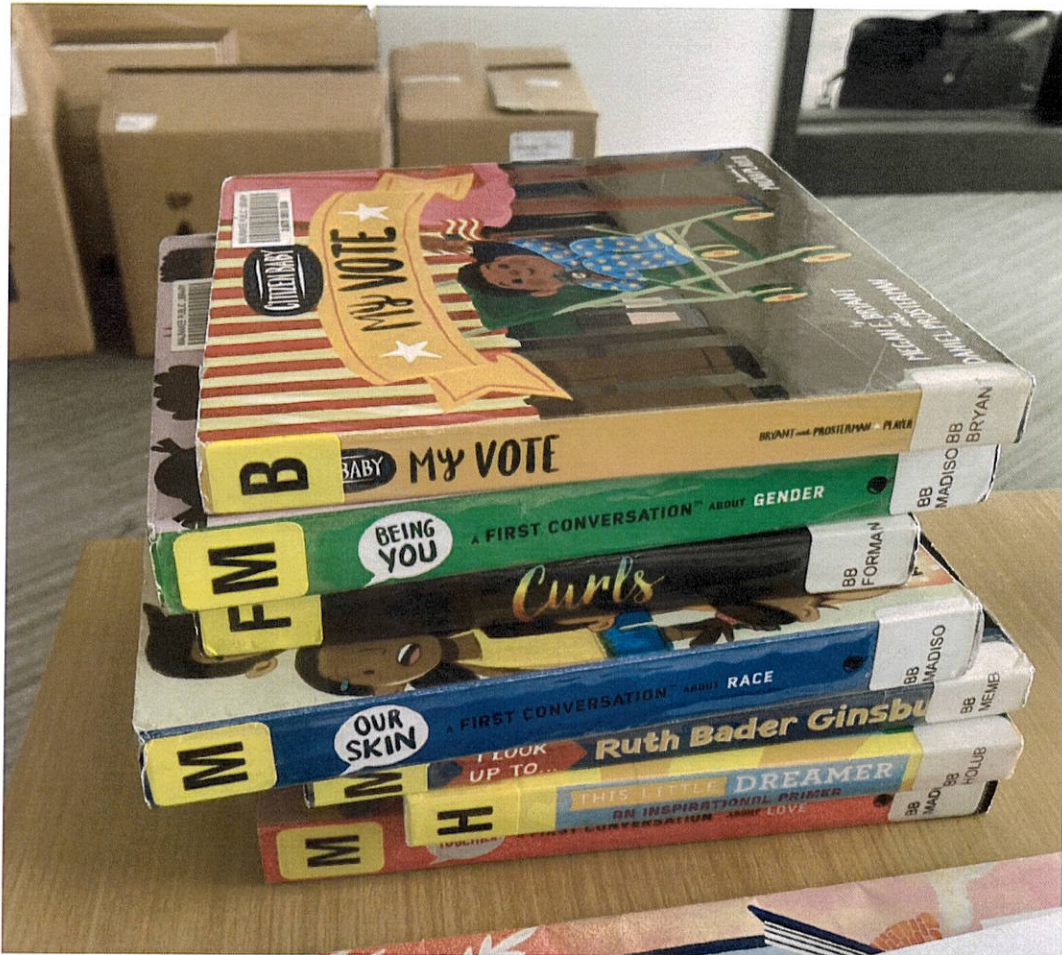
March 2023

	2023			2022		% Change Prev Month	% Change Prev Year	YTD % Change
	March	Prev Month	Yr-to-date	March	Yr-to-date			
# of Days Library was open	31	28	88	31	87	10.7%	N/A	N/A
CIRCULATION								
Physical circulation	25,347	23,009	72,467	25,335	67,623	10.2%	0.0%	7.2%
Digital circulation	4,259	4,039	12,824	3,858	10,845	5.4%	10.4%	18.2%
Library Total	29,606	27,048	85,291	29,193	78,468	9.5%	1.4%	8.7%
Per Day library was open	955	966	2,909	942	2,704	-1.1%	1.4%	7.6%
Average of Deforest, Monona and Verona libraries	28,353	24,968	79,426	27,287	76,094	13.6%	3.9%	4.4%
By Category								
Books								
Juvenile Fiction	3,219	2,957	9,238	3,518	9,195	8.9%	-8.5%	0.5%
Juvenile Non-Fiction	1,630	1,577	4,878	1,635	4,450	3.4%	-0.3%	9.6%
Easy Readers	1,832	1,779	5,377	1,672	4,722	3.0%	9.6%	13.9%
Picture books	5,134	5,008	15,669	5,625	14,423	2.5%	-8.7%	8.6%
Total Juvenile	11,815	11,321	35,162	12,450	32,790	4.4%	-5.1%	7.2%
Young Adult	742	598	1,987	686	1,889	24.1%	8.2%	5.2%
Adult Fiction	3,381	2,883	9,374	3,055	8,307	17.3%	10.7%	12.8%
Adult non-Fiction	2,641	2,343	7,421	2,447	6,578	12.7%	7.9%	12.8%
Large print	977	801	2,613	834	2,181	22.0%	17.1%	19.8%
Adult Paperbacks	55	45	185	64	206	22.2%	-14.1%	-10.2%
Total Adult	7,054	6,072	19,593	6,400	17,272	16.2%	10.2%	13.4%
Magazines	407	409	1,173	556	1,378	-0.5%	-26.8%	-14.9%
Audio	939	748	2,397	820	2,094	25.5%	14.5%	14.5%
DVD and Blu-ray	2,976	2,663	8,308	2,949	8,270	11.8%	0.9%	0.5%
Software and video games	160	113	381	150	394	41.6%	6.7%	-3.3%
Kits	1,147	1,006	3,209	1,206	3,270	14.0%	-4.9%	-1.9%
Electric Resources	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
E-reader, laptops, equipment	73	49	164	78	181	49.0%	-6.4%	-9.4%
E-books	4,259	4,039	12,824	3,858	10,845	5.4%	10.4%	18.2%
% of total circulation	14.4%	14.9%	15.0%	13.2%	13.8%	-3.7%	8.9%	N/A
PROGRAMS								
Children								
Number	37	35	103	39	100	5.7%	-5.1%	3.0%
Attendance	969	1,033	2,947	873	2,039	-6.2%	11.0%	44.5%
Young adult								
Number	7	4	15	8	21	75.0%	-12.5%	-28.6%
Attendance	90	19	139	53	96	373.7%	69.8%	44.8%
Adult								
Number	12	11	40	12	24	9.1%	0.0%	66.7%
Attendance	178	105	510	107	619	69.5%	66.4%	-17.6%
NEW PATRONS ADDED	96	76	281	148	350	26.3%	-35.1%	-19.7%
PUBLIC MEETING ROOM BOOKINGS	26	31	81	26	55	-16.1%	0.0%	47.3%
STUDY ROOM BOOKINGS	458	356	1330	386	916	28.7%	18.7%	45.2%
PUBLIC PC SESSIONS	532	422	1,403	428	1,104	26.1%	24.3%	27.1%
UNIQUE WIRELESS USERS	2,141	2,032	6,408	1,872	4,738	5.4%	14.4%	35.2%
CURBSIDE TRANSACTIONS	29	40	113	52	188	-27.5%	-44.2%	-39.9%
# OF VISITORS TO LIBRARY	12,532	10,963	34,962	11,824	28,223	14.3%	6.0%	23.9%

Library Activity Report
Library Director Erick Plumb
April 2023

Library Activity in March/April

- Over 3,000 Waunakee residents cast ballots on April 4 at WPL for the Spring Election. The Village Clerk and her team worked well with the Library's maintenance manager, Jeff Curwick, to once again provide an orderly, well-run election site.
- Over 200 people attended the Trinity Irish Dancer program on April 1. The upshot is: dancing = library attendance!
- We are currently hosting the Wisconsin Regional Arts Program (WRAP). Check out the display cases in History Hall for an exhibition of art created by Waunakee area artists. Several programs will be held in conjunction with the displays.
- Our "normal" History Hall programming resumes in mid-May with a new exhibit on the history of the Waunakee airfield, curated by Judy Borke and members of the Waunakee Airport & Pilots Association.
- In addition to History Hall news, the Library and Village of Waunakee are teaming up with the Ho-Chunk Nation to pursue a Wisconsin Humanities Council grant that would fund a brand-new exhibit of Ho-Chunk Nation history in Dane County that would premiere at WPL at the end of 2023 and into 2024. The exhibit would then be returned to the Ho-Chunk Nation for their usage as a traveling exhibit for other locations in the area. The grant application is due this month, with grants awarded by June.
- Library staff received full CPR and AED training on April 14. We also have ordered a new AED unit.
- Since our last meeting, the social media chatter about our collection has died down to almost nothing, especially since the April 4 election concluded. That has been very welcome to a weary staff. I must express my thanks to the people of our area for their overwhelming support of our work and for our staff members. It's appreciated.
- We are seeing some items in our children's collection go missing in recent days, however. Children's books with LGBTQ themes as well as books touching on social or racial justice have either disappeared from our shelves entirely, or have been found "hidden" in the small openings in the center of our picture book shelving. Missing books include titles like "Daddy, Papa, and Me", "My Two Dads and Me" and "My Two Moms and Me." Replacement copies are already ordered. Below is a picture of board books found hidden under the picture book shelving.



Youth Services Report by Brittany Gitzlaff

March brought a lot of excitement and new programs, and ended with continued support and kind words as the attacks against the library reignited. Caitlin started a new, monthly program called "LEGO League," that had kids building new creations and racing them down a homemade ramp. The library once again hosted a practice ACT test for sophomores that filled Community Hall. During Spring Break we took a break from our regularly scheduled programs and storytimes, and instead offered a week-long I Spy Hunt, a tea party, goof off day, a family movie, and an escape room for teens. All were well attended, and tons of fun. When we returned to our Storytime schedule, we added a third session of the very popular "Tiny Tots" Storytime, which brings our weekly Storytime offerings up to eight per week, **and now beats our pre-Covid offerings (emphasis added by Erick)**. Laura finished out the month with a brand-new Anime Club, that had been requested repeatedly in recent months. She had seven very exuberant teens show up that left wishing Anime Club could be every single day. Again, we'd like to thank all in the community that have supported us, and reached out with thoughtful gestures.

Community Engagement Report by Amy Sampson

In March, I continued planning programs like the April Wellness Series and End of Summer Fest, and am preparing for National Library Week (Apr 23-29!). Angie and WNC are submitting

funding requests to Rotary and other local groups for English Classes through Literacy Network. Our blood drive was another great success with 40 donors and 6 Friends volunteers. We are now on a 6 month schedule with the Red Cross to hold 2 drives a year. I am still spending a good chunk of time on Community Hall reservations, but met with Jeff and Erick to discuss our capacity going forward to make it more manageable. The tech help appointments also continue to be popular and get a lot of notice in the Senior Center newsletter!



LIBRARY DISPLAY POLICY

Purpose

The Waunakee Public Library's Display Policy provides a basis for the display of library materials curated by library staff, informs the public about the principles and criteria upon which these decisions are made, and promotes the purposes of the library's mission, which is:

To make high-interest, high-demand materials readily available, as well as to actively support the lifelong learning and information needs of community residents of all ages and abilities. Special emphasis is placed on stimulating children's interests and appreciation for reading and learning, on integrating new technology with traditional library resources, and expanding access and services beyond the library's physical walls.

Principles and Criteria

The final responsibility for the display of library materials is held by the Library Director, but day-to-day responsibility is shared by the Library's professional and paraprofessional employees. Library staff uses the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials, and accompanying resources:

- Community needs and interest
- Availability of display space
- Historical, cultural, or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions, or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits, and programs

In addition, the Library draws upon other community resources in developing displays and exhibits, and may partner with other community agencies, organizations, educational institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored displays and exhibits.

The Library will strive to include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints in library-initiated displays and exhibits, as well as offer displays and exhibits that appeal to a range of ages, interests, and information needs. Library-initiated displays and exhibits should not exclude topics, books, media, and other resources solely because they may be considered to be controversial. Acceptance of a display or exhibit topic by the Library does not constitute an endorsement by the Waunakee Public Library or Village of Waunakee of the content of the display or exhibit, or of the views expressed in materials on display.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Library preserves the right of citizens to obtain information on all sides of potentially controversial issues so that each individual can decide for themselves the value of opposing ideas. In representing various sides of a question, the Library thus provides citizens with reliable sources of information on which to base intelligent decisions in their daily lives.

The Library has a responsibility to protect the rights of all patrons; displays which may be considered frank or offensive to some are permitted if they adhere to the Library's Display Policy and contribute to the furtherance of its mission.

Only parents and legal guardians have the right and responsibility to restrict the access of their children to library resources. The display of materials is not inhibited by the possibility that particular works may inadvertently be seen by or come into the possession of children and young adults.

Labels will be provided only as viewpoint-neutral directional aids to facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate materials. The materials are displayed on open shelves and are equally accessible to all users, who may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements are basic to the above policy.

Procedures for the Questioning of Library Displays by Patrons

In the event a patron has questions or concerns regarding a library display, the following procedures should be used:

1. The patron is referred to the manager on duty.
 - This staff member makes every attempt to satisfy the patron's concern by clarifying the established display policies on an informal, positive, one-to-one basis.
 - After the interview, the manager notifies the Library Director in a brief written statement as to the date, circumstances, and the result of the patron's concern.
2. A patron who wishes to pursue their question further is referred to the Library Director or their designated alternate as soon as possible. A concern taken to this level constitutes a formalized complaint. After consideration, the Library Director will determine if the item in questions should be removed from display status. The Library Director's decision on the complaint is final and without further appeal. The Library Director will inform the Library Board of Trustees of the formal complaint and reasoning for his or her decision at the next meeting of the Library Board.

Proposed April 21, 2023

[scls-announce] Notice of unavailability of services during SCLS network cutover -- May 27- May 30

Vicki Teal <vickiteal@scls.info>

Wed 3/29/2023 2:32 PM

To: scls-announce email list <scls-announce@warden.wiscnet.net>

 5 attachments (64 KB)

Cutover information for libraries sort by Availability.pdf; Cutover information for libraries sort by Service Area.pdf; Cutover information for libraries sort by Service.pdf; Cutover information for libraries.xlsx; ATT00001.txt;

SCLS network services will not be available between Saturday, May 27 - and Tuesday, May 30, 2023, while SCLS moves network services to its new building. This means that libraries that use SCLS as its Internet Services Provider will be without access to the Internet. In addition, other SCLS services will not be available due to the cutover. Bibliovention, LINKcat and some databases will be available remotely, or with alternate internet access in libraries. Attached you will find lists of the affected services sorted by Availability, Service Area (such as Databases) and by individual Service. An Excel version is also attached so that libraries may sort and annotate it in ways that work for the library. We have a team available to help you prepare for the cutover. We ask each SCLS library to complete [this form](#) no later than Wednesday, May 24. If you request assistance from SCLS, the sooner you submit the form the better! We thank you for your patience and understanding during this service outage and we look forward to serving you from our [new headquarters](#).

[Form for help -- respond by May 24](#)

Vicki Teal Lovely

Helping our member libraries provide the best possible service to the public.

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PEOPLE GET READY: PREPARING FOR CHALLENGES

Library leaders, staff, and boards need to be prepared for increasingly sophisticated attacks on readers' rights

By Lisa Peet

As censorship of materials, programs, and services ramps up around the country, an increasing number of politically right-wing groups are making public (and some academic) libraries their primary targets. Despite the insistence that they're concerned for community members, the groups mounting opposition to anti-racist or LGBTQIA+-themed titles in libraries are not grassroots organizations, nor are they necessarily locally based. Many, such as Moms for Liberty, are extensive—often national—in scope. Legislation across the country, also coordinated and supported on a national scale, is targeting the freedom to read, seeking to remove power from library boards and standardize the challenge process at the state level to reduce local library control.

While these challenges often feel like they come out of left field with little provocation beforehand, a clear pattern of deliberate and coordinated action is at work, and libraries can prepare to meet the moment. Immediate-action items include educating staff and the board of trustees on challenge procedures, reviewing and strengthening current policies, forging active and supportive relationships with elected officials, and understanding the American Library Association (ALA) censorship reporting tools. But there are other proactive measures libraries can take to be as ready as possible and to help allay worries when challenges do arrive. (See also the Challenge Readiness Resources sidebar.)

POLICIES AS FIRST DEFENSE

When it comes to facing challenges, a library's strongest and probably most-used defense is its policy. Collection development, reconsideration, and challenge policies should be robust and detailed; the procedures they specify should be followed without exception.

There are many resources for crafting solid policy, starting with the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom's (OIF) *Intellectual Freedom Manual* (ALA Editions). Examples of other policies can provide useful benchmarks and language, with the caveat that policies at libraries in larger cities may

not map as easily to a small or rural library. Still, says Amanda Vazquez, director of Dubuque County Library District, IA, there will be concepts that apply to all, noting that "Finding policies that you think are good, or finding other procedures in other libraries that you think are working well, is important."

Policies should be living documents, and be reviewed every two to three years as needs change or become apparent. In recent years libraries have updated reconsideration policies to clarify who can mount a request (only mem-

bers of the library's service population), to determine how frequently a title will be reconsidered (once only, or only once a year), and to specify internal actions that are not acceptable (such as reshelving or pulling materials in advance of a reconsideration request or decision).

LEGAL OPTIONS

Library administrators should familiarize themselves with First Amendment legal decisions at the national and state level—the state law library can help with the latter. Library leadership should also be well versed in the ALA Code of Ethics and *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, as well as state law pertinent to libraries. The library's legal resource toolkit can also include the local public information board, state library association or consortium, and state library to forge useful connections and stay current on local developments.

Actively think about whom the library can turn to for legal assistance, and become familiar with the tactics of those trying to mount censorship campaigns in other communities. OIF Director Deborah Caldwell-Stone recommends hiring prospective lawyers for a small job—a policy or code that needs changing, for example—and consulting with them for an hour. Once that is done, the library is that firm's client and that relationship will take precedence even if an outside group wants to engage the same firm. "I've been in a city where the city attorney went around and consulted with all of the attorneys in town so that the citizens who were unhappy about something could not use those attorneys," says Vazquez. Spending a small fee to establish a relationship is "a little insurance policy," she adds.

Vazquez suggests that libraries engage independent legal

“It's not really a question of if you'll have a challenge, but when.”

PAMELA MONROE LEROY COLLINS
LEON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

Lisa Peet is Executive Editor, LJ.

counsel not dependent on the library's city or county. "They do not answer to you," she says, "and they probably have a much better relationship with your police department than they do with you."

GETTING ELECTED OFFICIALS UP TO SPEED

Library leaders should actively, and proactively, talk with their elected officials and legislators to explain that they are fully ready and able to make decisions about library materials with the interests of the community in mind. Don't wait until a challenge happens—build those relationships now. Remember: advocacy is not only for election cycles.

In addition to municipal leaders such as the mayor and city council, library leaders should get to know local school superintendents and administrators. Reach out to school librarians as well, if the district has them—they can offer a heads up on which titles are getting challenged. Find out who the state library association lobbyist is as well, and make sure your library is on their radar.

TRUSTEE TRAINING

Freedom of information and library policy training for trustees is critical, as they will find themselves on the front lines as well—and it's important that they can speak decisively about the challenge process and present a unified front. This can begin by talking to the board about the issues they may face and describing existing First Amendment precedents, whether or not they agree with those decisions.

That's only the first step, however. "Established legal precedent is not as comforting as it used to be," says Vazquez. "Lots of things are changing, and they're changing quickly and dramatically." Continuing education for trustees is therefore a wise investment; United for Libraries offers trustee training with membership, as well as articles that can be shared with board members.

Trustee support also includes working with the library's user base to enlist the support of all library fans—patrons, Friends, and community members—before it's needed. Then invite them to the public-comment portion of trustee board meetings where their enthusiasm can help support the library, especially if challengers are planning to do the same.

BE FOIA-READY

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests are often part of challenge tactics. FOIA requires federal and state organizations to disclose uncirculated documents fully or partially on request; these can include emails, texts, internal memos, personnel files, and—in the case of libraries—data such as program attendance and title circulation. FOIA requests are used to gather information, but because compiling and sorting the material can be time-consuming, they are also employed as a strategy to disrupt operations. Being FOIA-

ready—especially if a program or event is expected to draw attention from opposition groups—can greatly streamline the process and reduce the impact of such tactics.

Even before Downers Grove Public Library (DGPL), IL, drew anti-LGBTQIA+ attention with a Drag Queen Bingo event last fall (see "Standing Up to Hate and Misinformation at Downers Grove," pp. 16-17), Director Julie Milavec understood the FOIA process and made sure the library had a system in place to handle it. All FOIA requests and responses were posted on the library website, explains Public Relations Manager Cindy Khatri. "Then we could simply link to a previous FOIA response instead of having to redo all the work."

Having an efficient way to easily compile information, sort through duplicate items, and redact personal or identifying in-

formation for a FOIA response is key. DGPL uses Google Vault, an archiving and electronic discovery service, to store all internal email and documents. The library also created a button at the bottom of any online statement or response that sent patrons to a form to submit feedback. This was then automatically added to an Excel spreadsheet used to respond to FOIA requests—it was a lifesaver, Khatri says. "Luckily, we had made the decision to turn off all social media comments a day into this process," she adds, cutting down on the comments that needed to be weeded through.

Learn the ins and outs of FOIA parameters, she advises, such as what information falls within its scope, what can and should be redacted, and how many hours of staff time can legally be spent on a FOIA response before the individual who filed needs to pay for it. In the absence of an administrator or IT staff member who knows their way around FOIA, Khatri recommends searching for research guides or professional development opportunities through a state library or consortium.

“When someone comes in [to challenge a book], everyone should know their roles. First off, hand them a reconsideration form. Direct them to the director, don't answer any questions.”

JENNIFER PEARSON MARSHALL COUNTY
MEMORIAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

“It seems a little fatalistic to be so prepared for the negativity and for the criticism, but it's a lot less emotionally draining to prepare for those things in advance. You can feel confident that you're doing a better job if you have worked through these potentials.”

AMANDA VAZQUEZ
DUBUQUE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Online and print media can be valuable allies during a challenge, but that relationship needs to be cultivated ahead of time as well. Making sure that staff members know how to engage with the media will ensure that the library's message gets across clearly when competing voices are trying to be heard.

Media training for staff can be done within the library and is often available for municipal employees at the county level. In Florida, the management team

at LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System took advantage of in-depth media training offered by the county's Government Community and Media Relations department—because as director Pamela Monroe says, "It's not really a question of if you'll have a challenge, but when." Management shared the information, which included tips for preparing for an interview and how to incorporate bridging statements—which refocus the conversation on the topic at hand when responding to questions—with staff.

A SELECTION OF CHALLENGE READINESS RESOURCES

American Library Association (ALA) Challenge Support (ala.org/tools/challengesupport) contains a wealth of information and tools, including the Challenge Reporting form (ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report).

Also see ALA's **Code of Ethics** (ala.org/tools/ethics), **Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries** (ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit), and **Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement pamphlet**: (ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif/LBOR-FTR-statement-pamphlet).

ALA's **Merritt Fund** (bit.ly/MerrittFund) helps support librarians who have been denied employment rights because of defense of intellectual freedom—use it or donate.

Office for Intellectual Freedom (oif.ala.org) offers information, trainings, and profiles.

United for Libraries (ala.org/united) has tools and trainings for library boards, foundations, and Friends, including **trustee training** (ala.org/united/training/trustee_academy) and a list of **state resources for trustees** (ala.org/united/trustees/stateresources).

ALA and Public Library Association (PLA) **Resource Guide for Library Safety and Preparedness**: ala.org/advocacy/resource-guide-library-safety-and-preparedness.

Freedom to Read Foundation: ftrf.org

Unite Against Book Bans: uniteagainstbookbans.org

Applicable First Amendment Laws: constitution.congress.gov/browse/amendment-1

Texans for the Right to Read: texansfortherighttoread.com

#FRedom Fighters: freadom.us

School Library Journal's **"State-by-State Guide to the Coalitions and Campaigns Fighting Legislation Criminalizing Librarians"**: bit.ly/SLJFightLegislation

WebJunction's **"Book Challenges and Intellectual Freedom: Proactive Planning for Public Libraries"** webinar: webjunction.org/events/webjunction/book-challenges-and-intellectual-freedom

Iowa Library Association's **"Trustees on the Front Lines: Intellectual Freedom in Public Libraries and Your Role"** webinar: youtube.com/watch?v=4tdv0JVKS1E

Toolkit for Censorship and Challenges at Your Public Library template—download and make a copy with this view only link: bit.ly/CensorshipToolkit

The information was then added to the employee handbook to be referenced as needed. As the library gears up for spring programming announcements, says Monroe, staff "have expressed appreciation because they felt prepared to respond when reporters called or came in person to request an interview."

In the event of a specific incident, media requests should be funneled through one person to keep the message consist-

tent. "Don't go off the record," Khatri advises. Keeping the press on your side means having open lines of communication, she adds: "Give them a heads up when you update a FAQ page or your statement" (and update the library's FAQ page regularly, so it's a useful resource).

And when talking to the press, be sure the response centers any impacted group—in the case of the pushback at Downers Grove, says Khatri, messaging from and about the LGBTQIA+ community took priority.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Challenges are stressful for everyone—perhaps most of all for the employees who work with the public and who will be the ones who are approached first face-to-face. Make sure that everyone, from administration to volunteers, understands the challenge process and is well versed in intellectual freedom and library policy basics, as well as local laws that relate to libraries; it's often helpful to prepare messaging and scripts ahead of time. Library leaders should remember that being confronted with a book challenge can be intimidating. "Having your staff and your board know that you're prepared for these things can instill a lot of confidence and minimize panic in the moment," says Vazquez.

"When someone comes in [to challenge a book], everyone should know their roles," Jennifer Pearson, director of Marshall County Memorial Library System, TN, advises in WebJunction's "Book Challenges and Intellectual Freedom: Proactive Planning for Public Libraries" webinar. "First off, hand them a reconsideration form. Direct them to the director, don't answer any questions." A solid reconsideration policy should list who fills which role in the process. It's helpful to keep an up-to-date packet at the front desk to hand to a challenger that contains the library's collection development policy, ALA's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read statement, and—last of all—a reconsideration form.

Most important: Encourage all employees not to take challenges personally. Because the library is a publicly funded entity, the public can request reconsiderations or file statements of concern as part of their right to petition the government, and not every request originates with a pro-censorship group's agenda.

"We don't have to make it the easiest thing in the world to file an official challenge," Vazquez notes. "But your patrons, users, and community members should feel that their library and their local government is responsive to them and their concerns."

While you can't anticipate when or where a censorship attempt or protest might come from, being ready for them is an investment in the library's values. Make sure that all policies, checklists, and toolkits are available to staff and trustees when they need them. Reread the library's reconsideration policy periodically. Pay attention to your state's bill-tracker website. Report all challenges using ALA's tools so they're on record.

Most of all, keep talking to colleagues—find out what situations they've encountered, and how they've managed them. "It seems a little fatalistic to be so prepared for the negativity and for the criticism, but it's a lot less emotionally draining to prepare for those things in advance," says Vazquez. "You can feel confident that you're doing a better job if you have worked through these potentials." ■

STANDING UP TO HATE AND MISINFORMATION

When a planned event came under attack, Downers Grove Public Library staff handled the hostilities, keeping safety a priority

By Cindy Khatri and Amanda Klenk

In celebration of National Coming Out Day during LGBTQIA+ History Month, the Downers Grove Public Library (DGPL), IL, planned a Drag Queen Bingo program for grades 7–12 on October 11, 2022. The event was to include bingo games, with prizes provided by the Teen Program Coordinator, and snacks. A drag performer would call the numbers and do a short, age-appropriate lip-sync to “Firework” by Katy Perry. The drag performance was to be a celebration of self-identity and self-expression, highlighting a joyous and historically significant part of LGBTQIA+ culture on an important day. Programs that affirm and reflect identities in positive ways can be life-saving, and this one would have been significant for LGBTQIA+ teens.

On August 28, screenshots of the program from the library’s newsletter and online calendar began to circulate on social media. Local factions that described themselves as “parental rights advocates” immediately began to bombard the library with hostile email, letters, phone calls, and in-person complaints demanding the cancellation of the event and using slurs against employees. The event was ultimately cancelled for safety concerns after a bullet was mailed to the DuPage County Police department anonymously with a note addressed to the library stating, “More to come.” DGPL is still dealing with the aftermath, which includes ongoing messaging in opposition to materials and programs. Staff continue to process the trauma they experienced.

Amanda Klenk: Few, if any, librarians create a program thinking that congressional candidates will be debating it as their election draws near. It’s definitely not what I had in mind when I started planning Drag Queen Bingo for teens. Yet that’s exactly where I found myself last fall as we navigated the community response to the program.

Over the course of those weeks, we went into crisis-management mode to communicate with the community and did everything in our power to continue the program. While the director and marketing team took the lead in creating public statements and responses, I was responsible for the program itself.

Cindy Khatri: I oversee the marketing and communications of the library and take the lead on all media requests. I saw comments of all kinds pour in at a rapid pace as soon as news broke of our event. It was essential to quickly get everyone on the same page. After speaking with our incredibly brave director, Julie Milavec, and the rest of my team, we decided to take this as an opportunity to center the LGBTQIA+ community and use our platform to explain why libraries are doing equity, diversity, and inclusion

Cindy Khatri is the Public Relations Manager and Amanda Klenk is the Teen Services Coordinator, both in Downers Grove Public Library, IL.



work. We discussed why we chose to pursue this program and what it could do for the community, sharing why libraries house materials and programs that speak to a variety of audiences. With each response the library issued, more feedback arrived, both positive and negative. It felt like a vicious circle that continued to prompt itself: The

more violently vocal the opposition became, the more local and regional media paid attention and wanted the library to respond. Once we responded, the flames of anger were stoked and the cycle started again.

Looking back, I’m still shocked by the avalanche of hate, vitriol, support, and love. The event drew patrons out of the woodwork to share comments about their approval and disapproval of the program. I expected patrons who opposed the event to send in angry emails, and perhaps voice their opposition at the next board meeting, but I never anticipated the personal attacks, the ongoing fixation, and the relentless harassment of the library.

AK: Responses flooded our inboxes with criticisms, including opinions on taxpayer money use and the appropriateness of hosting a drag queen or LGBTQIA+ program for teens at the library, which reflected a lack of understanding about my expertise to budget and create age-appropriate programs. There was also a general ignorance about what drag is.

This was a program targeted to meet the expressed needs and wants of teens and completely optional to attend, yet patrons were screaming at staff, cutting up their library cards and mailing us the remnants, and spewing hate on social media. Soon local media were reporting on it, congressional candidates were weighing in and using it to leverage campaign funds, and it became a polarizing conversation in our community. All of this was incredibly hard to cope with. The days were long and filled with anxiety. I brought all of the emotional baggage home with me each night. It felt like it might never end.

CK: The feedback the library received is a microcosm of the larger national divide. It was shocking how brave people are behind their keyboards. Letters in support of the library brought tears to my eyes as patrons shared their own experiences, naming programs like Drag Queen Bingo as lifesav-



ing. The messages of compassion, care, validation, and support gave us strength to make it through the most difficult time of my career. On the other hand, messages from fierce dissenters were so full of anger it was clear the sender had responded in a knee-jerk reaction. Their words, filled with a fundamental misunderstanding of what libraries stand for as well as a blatant disregard of others' humanity, broke my heart. On both sides, I recognized names from growing up and living in the community. It was affirming and devastating at the same time. Equally shocking was the amount of feedback—both positive and negative—we received from neighboring communities and people all over the country.

AK: So many validating and empowering stories poured in from residents. At the end of the day, the positive responses outweighed the negative. Downers Grove was speaking up for the library and for the LGBTQIA+ community. Each day, I tried to find something positive to hold on to: Community members who spoke up in support or dropped in to check on us, hearing from the teens and parents who were registered, having coworkers who saw the importance of the program and who upheld our library's values. All of this helped me refocus and stay the course. I am lucky to be at a library that not only supported me but truly stood behind the program.

CK: Misinformation ran rampant, with social media and news sources trying to get the story out as fast as possible. It helped to create a central place to update a FAQ, where we

frequently pointed patrons and media. Tracking feedback in a spreadsheet was an essential and gargantuan task that paid off when the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests began to roll in.

AK: We learned via social media that people were planning to register just to fill the spots. What they didn't realize was that we had the means to double-check and verify registrations. While we rarely do this, I wanted to make sure that only teens were attending. I trusted that teens and parents interested in the program would be okay with that. In fact, I think it helped demonstrate that safety was a priority. At the end of the day we had about 40 teens registered, which is far above average participation for us.

My other responsibility was maintaining communication with the presenter, Aurora Divine. I wanted to be as transparent as possible and give her the opportunity to decide whether to continue with the program. Luckily for us, she did not want to back down, and was flexible when we had ideas of moving the program offsite and to a different day. When I learned about the threat, I reached out to Aurora one last time. Like the rest of us, she was understanding of our decision but disappointed about the circumstances that led to the cancellation.

CK: Through the process, it felt as though my role was to be a voice for my colleagues who were being attacked, for libraries that are experiencing attacks on intellectual freedom, for those who are allies, and for those who are oppressed. The weight felt impossible, but imperative, to carry. At times, it was maddening to be so intimately involved in the chaos yet feel so helpless, with nothing to do but continue to speak into the void, hoping to connect. Leaning on my fellow staff members was crucial, and connecting with our supporters made a big difference in keeping my head up.

Months have passed and I'm still processing everything that happened; how I reflect on it changes weekly. Although I firmly believe that no one can truly be prepared for something like this, I've since created a new crisis plan for my department, which includes everything from the rules of drafting responses to details such as room setup for a press conference. Each crisis will look different, but I know one thing will be consistent—our library's commitment to being a place for everyone to discover, grow, play, and learn. (See also "People Get Ready," pp. 18–20.)

AK: We endured a lot and survived by leaning on each other. I often felt guilty, as though the program invited the continued backlash, something I'm still working through. However, I know it was the right program for so many teens; they let their voices be heard by registering for the program. Canceling Drag Queen Bingo may have meant one less fabulous performance of "Firework" to be enjoyed by the world, but it has only strengthened my resolve to provide teens with diverse programming and ensure that their voices are heard and matter in this world. I am so proud of our library and community for standing up to hate and misinformation. My hope is that as libraries across the country fight for everybody's rights to be represented in collections, services, and programming, we show strength in numbers and stand together against hate and censorship. ■

Voters Oppose Book Bans in Libraries

Polling Shows Voters Oppose Efforts to Remove Books from Libraries and Have Confidence in Libraries to Make Good Decisions About Their Collections



Large majorities of voters (71%) oppose efforts to have books removed from their local public libraries, including a majority of Democrats (75%), independents (58%), and Republicans (70%). Most voters and parents hold librarians in high regard, have confidence in their local libraries to make good decisions about what books to include in their collections, and agree that libraries in their communities do a good job offering books that represent a variety of viewpoints.

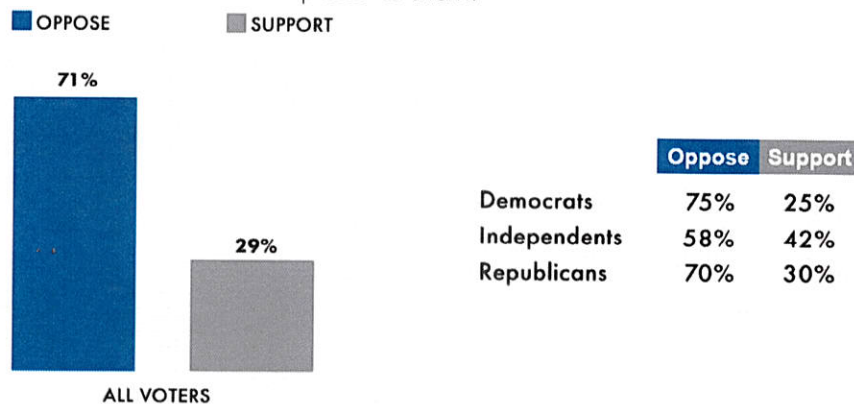
Key Findings

1) More than seven in 10 voters (71%) oppose efforts to remove books from public libraries, with majorities of voters across party lines opposed.

- By a substantial 42-point margin, voters oppose efforts to have books removed from their local public libraries because some people find them offensive or inappropriate and do not think young people should be exposed to them: 71% oppose, 29% support. Majorities of Democrats (75%), independents (58%), and Republicans (70%) are opposed.
- Parents also oppose efforts to remove books from their local public libraries by a significant 20-point margin: 60% oppose, 40% support.

Strong Opposition to Removing Books from Public Libraries

Would you support or oppose efforts to remove books from local public libraries because some people find them offensive or inappropriate and do not think young people should be exposed to them?



These key findings are from a survey conducted by Hart Research Associates and North Star Opinion Research on behalf of the American Library Association among 1,000 voters and 472 parents of children in public school. The survey was conducted March 1 to 6, 2022, and the sample is demographically and geographically representative of U.S. voters and parents.

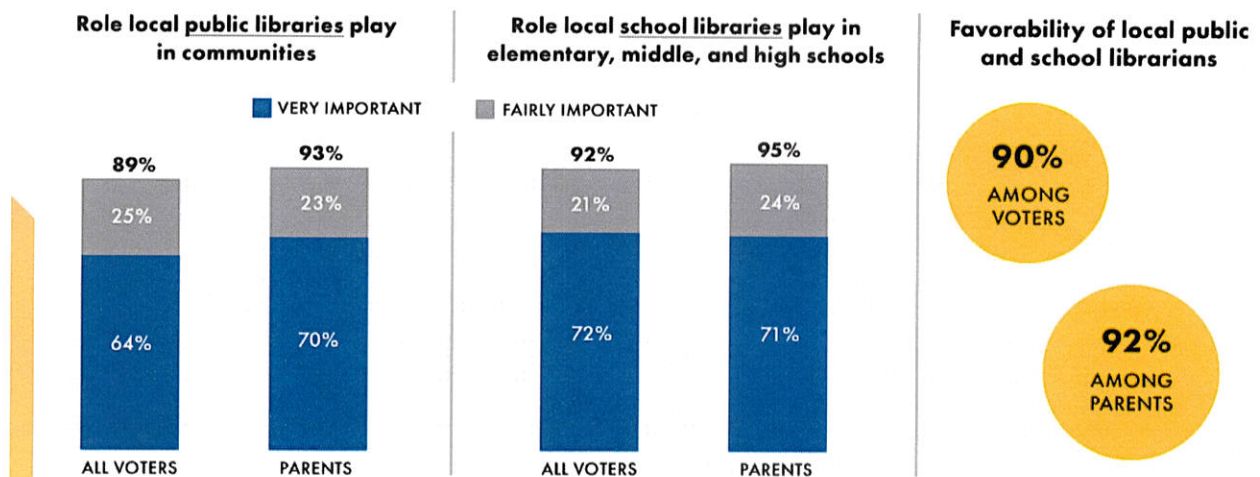
2) Large majorities oppose book removals in school libraries after hearing arguments from both sides.

- After hearing reasons to both support and oppose efforts to remove books from school libraries because some parents find them offensive or inappropriate, voters oppose efforts to remove books from school libraries by a 34-point margin (67% oppose, 33% support).
- Similarly, after hearing arguments on both sides, parents oppose efforts to remove books from school libraries by a 22-point margin (61% oppose, 39% support), and this view holds true for parents with children of all grade levels: 59% of parents with children in pre-K through 5th grade, 66% with middle schoolers, and 64% with high schoolers oppose book removals.

3) There is near-universal high regard for librarians and recognition of the important role that local public libraries and school libraries play in communities.

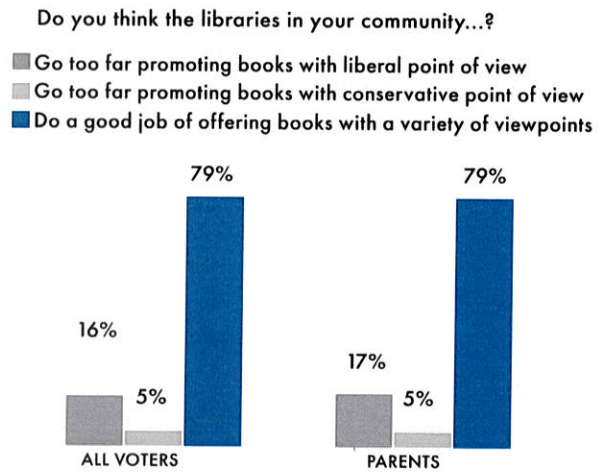
- Nine in 10 voters (90%) and parents (92%) have a favorable opinion of librarians who work in local public libraries and school libraries, including 66% of voters and 65% of parents who are very favorable toward librarians.
- The vast majority of voters (89%) and parents (93%) say local public libraries play an important role in communities across the country including their own, including 64% of voters and 70% of parents who believe they play a very important role.
- At even higher rates, voters (92% important, 72% very important) and parents (95% important, 71% very important) say school libraries play an important role in public elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Voters across the political spectrum have a keen sense of the importance of public libraries (95% of Democrats, 78% of independents, 87% of Republicans) and school libraries (96% of Democrats, 85% of independents, 91% of Republicans).

High Regard for Librarians and the Role Libraries Play in Communities and Schools



4) Most voters are confident in local public libraries to make good decisions about their collections and think libraries do a good job representing a variety of viewpoints.

- Large majorities of voters (75%) and parents (80%) have quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in their local libraries to make good decisions about what books to include in their collections and make available in their communities.
- Nearly eight in 10 voters (79%) and parents (79%) say libraries in their community do a good job of offering books that represent a variety of viewpoints, a sentiment held by majorities of Democrats (89%), independents (77%) and Republicans (70%), and by majorities of voters across demographic backgrounds. Only small proportions think libraries go too far in promoting books that present a liberal (16% voters, 17% parents) or conservative (5% voters and parents) point of view.
- Fully 83% of voters and 86% of parents say that they are more likely to trust librarians when they hear that librarians are trained to not impose their own thoughts and opinions on which ideas are right but to make knowledge and ideas available so that people have the freedom to choose what to read.



Belief that Libraries Do a Good Job Offering Books with Variety of Viewpoints

Voters	Good job representing variety of viewpoints	Parents	Good job representing variety of viewpoints
All voters	79%	All parents	79%
Democrats	89%	Democratic parents	86%
Independents	77%	Independent parents	83%
Republicans	70%	Republican parents	70%
Men	74%	Child in Pre-K-5th grade	78%
Women	84%	Child in 6th-8th grade	80%
White voters	79%	Child in 9th-12th grade	79%
Black/African-American voters	83%	White parents	76%
Hispanic/Latino voters	75%	Parents of color	83%

5) Parents express a high degree of confidence in school libraries' decisions about their collections and very few think that school librarians ignore parents' concerns.

- Three in four parents (74%) have quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in public libraries in their local school district to make good decisions about what books to include in their collections.
- Only 12% of parents say librarians in their district's public school libraries ignore the concerns of parents. Majorities of parents (59%) say school librarians in their district generally listen to the concerns of parents and try to work with them if they have concerns; 29% of parents indicate that they do not know enough to say.

6) Voters and parents affirm the importance of giving young people access to books and not allowing individual parents to decide what books are available to other people's children.

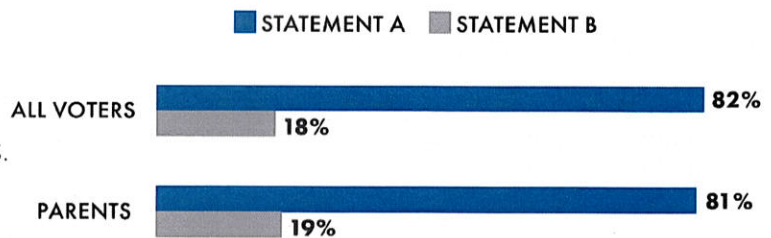
- When presented with pairs of statements that represent different viewpoints about removing books from libraries, voters and parents consistently align with opponents of these removals by large margins:

Agreement with Viewpoints Against Removing Books from Libraries

Please indicate which one of the following statements you agree with more.

STATEMENT A: We need to protect the ability of young people to have access to books from which they can learn about and understand different perspectives, and help them grow into adults who can think for themselves.

STATEMENT B: We need to protect young people from books they might find upsetting or that reflect ideologies and lifestyles that are out of the mainstream.



STATEMENT A: Individual parents can set rules for their own children, but they do not have the right to decide for other parents what books are available to their children.

STATEMENT B: Parents have a right not to have their children exposed to objectionable books at the library, and should be able to join with other parents in having those books removed.

