

**Request for Reconsideration Committee Report
Ludlow Public Schools**

Title: *Sex is a Funny Word*

Author: Silverberg, Cory (Author), Smyth, Fiona (Illustrator)

Resources consulted:

- Ludlow Public Schools Policies for Library Resources (IJL) & Reconsideration of Library Materials (IJLAA)
- Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks
- Reviews from: *Kirkus Reviews* (April 15, 2015), *Publishers Weekly* (June 22, 2015), *School Library Journal* (March 1, 2016)
- American Library Association Library Bill of Rights & Freedom to Read Statement
- Case overviews including: *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*; *Right to Read Defense Committee v. School Committee of the City of Chelsea*; *Case v. Unified School District No. 233, Counts v. Cedarville School District*
- Q on CBC interview with the author (as referenced in the Request for Reconsideration form: <https://youtu.be/pbaMyfC4URw>)

Reconsideration committee recommendation:

The committee unanimously recommends the following action:

- The copy of *Sex is a Funny Word* held at Baird Middle School should be retained on the library shelves and available for circulation to students.
- The copy of *Sex is a Funny Word* held at Veterans Park Elementary School should be relocated to the professional collection, reclassified as such in the library catalog, shelved in a staff office or work room (nurse, counseling, etc. at the discretion of educators in the building), and available to staff members to use in their work with students as they deem appropriate.

Rationale and Comments:

The committee deliberations centered on the following main ideas:

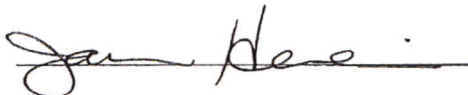
- The content and presentation of the book are consistent with the criteria for Selection of Library Media Resources as described in the District's policy on Library Resources (IJL). Specifically:
 - 1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
 - 2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
 - 3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
- The concepts, vocabulary, and illustrations in the book are consistent with elements of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks. Specifically:
 - Standard 4: Reproduction/Sexuality
 - By the end of grade 5:
 - 4.1 Identify the components, functions, and processes of the reproductive system

- 4.3: Define sexual orientation using the correct terminology (such as heterosexual, and gay and lesbian)
 - By the end of grade 8:
 - 4.5 Recognize the emotional and physical changes as related to the reproductive system during puberty
 - Standard 9: Safety & Injury Prevention:
 - By the end of grade 5:
 - 9.4 Distinguish among safe, unsafe, and inappropriate touch
 - By the end of grade 8:
 - 9.10 Recognize sexual abuse and child abuse and how to get help
- The content is age-appropriate for middle school students and should be freely available. Students have the First Amendment right to read and access information in a school library as affirmed in Counts v. Cedarville and Board v. Pico

The committee members agree that the material presented in this book is age-appropriate for students at Baird Middle School and in keeping with state curriculum frameworks and District policies. Materials that address basic sexuality education concepts are relevant to the information needs of 11-13 year old students and they have the right to access such information. At Veterans Park Elementary School the match between the curriculum frameworks and the concepts in the book are not as clearly aligned. Therefore, the committee members agree that the book should remain available at Veterans Park as a resource for staff members who may be working with students who need this information, but not be available for unrestricted circulation to students.

Report prepared by Jamison Hedin, committee chair, on behalf of committee members: Michelle Annecchiarico, Michelle D'Amore, Michael Kelliher, Stacy Monette, and Jacob Oliveira

February 13, 2020


Chairperson

2/13/2020
Date

SUPERINTENDENT

Committee Decision

Affirmed

Overturned

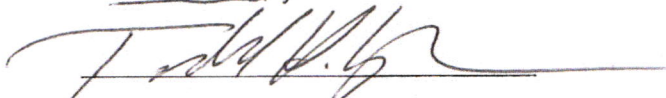
Materials

Retained

Relocated

Removed

Notes: As per committee's decision materials are retained for Baird MS and relocated per their recommendation for Veterans Park Elem.


Superintendent

2/19/2020
Date