

## Dr. Kalia Reynolds' Explanations of Committee Procedures and Ultimate Recommendation to Retain Gender Queer

Note The context of Dr. Reynolds' explanations can be understood by viewing the video at this [LINK](#)

Dr. Reynolds discussed Policy 109.1 for school libraries (as noted previously on p.2 above). She said: *"We wanted to know that books and other reading materials would be chosen for the value of interest and enlightenment of all students in the community and that we would make every effort to provide materials that provide all points of view concerning the problems and issues of the times."*

Reynolds also noted that the committee discussed censorship and that it is the *"school's responsibility to provide information and also enlightenment."* She said *"We want to recognize that students have free access to all types of books. We also discussed that no parent, guardian or group of guardians have the right to determine the reading matter of students other than their own children."*

**The concerns noted in the filed complaint were the book's sexually-explicit content and pornographic material.** Dr. Reynolds alluded to these complaints and provided the following explanations in support of retaining *Gender Queer*.

1. *"This book is an awarded book and is recommended as a read from the [School Library Journal](#)."*
2. *"This is an optional book in our libraries and should remain for students that need to see themselves or their stories reflected in the book."*
3. *"We should consider what we deem appropriate for our high school students and whether images are appropriate."*
4. *"This book supports queer students and their allies and the importance of representation on our library shelves."*
5. *"We should have books that reflect the experiences of our LGBTQ+ students."*
6. *"There is a high rate of suicide for transgender students and having opportunities to have connection in relation was important in our library collections."*
7. *"It was also noted (that) nude images in art books are also considered appropriate."*
8. *"There are images that could be viewed as explicit but in context of the memoir they are not pornographic."*

## Counterarguments to Dr. Reynolds' Rationalizations (Author's Opinions)

The reasons given by Dr. Reynolds for keeping *Gender Queer* in our high school libraries are hollow rationalizations. None of her arguments provides justification for that which is indefensible.

- 1. The bottom line and overriding factor is that there are indisputably pornographic images in this comic book memoir that cannot be ignored.** Why the author felt s/he had to include them is anyone's guess. Absent these images, this would have been a book that indeed could have supported our queer students and provided them with the opportunity to see themselves within its pages, in which case it should certainly have remained in our libraries. However, **that is not the case.** As some speakers noted, **there must be other options of more appropriate reading material available to meet the needs of our LGBTQ students other than a book that contains such sexually explicit and offensive images.**
- 2. To imply that this comic book with its pornographic images even remotely resembles an "art book" is preposterous.**
- 3. Additionally, admitting that there are explicit images which should not be considered to be pornographic because they are taken in context of the memoir is absurd.** This is a desperate and failed attempt to defend the inexplicable. Why should sexually explicit images be acceptable just because they are contained in a memoir? It is not unreasonable to assume that **most** WCASD residents, if shown these images, would vehemently object to their taxes funding this book for our high school libraries, memoir or no memoir!
4. During the March 28, 2022 meeting, both Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Sokolowski implied that even though there are concerning and explicit images, the book, **taken as a whole**, is appropriate reading material for our libraries. "**Taken as a whole" is a specious argument which can be refuted by a food analogy.** Eating a dozen oysters could result in severe food poisoning or even death if **just one** oyster is contaminated. Similarly, if even a small portion of the book is undeniably toxic, that book should not be in our school libraries that are accessible to minors.