

**Anchorage School District
Reconsideration of Instructional or Library Materials
Committee Report**

Date of Meeting: 5/4/22

Title of Challenged Material: George/Melissa

Author: Alex Gino

Has every committee member read the material completely? If not, why?

Everyone on committee read the book

Resources consulted (include policies, articles, reviews, etc):

All committee members read 4 professional reviews (Booklist, Kirkus, Publisher's Weekly, & School Library Journal). Committee also reviewed ALA Guidelines for Reconsideration Committees, ASD AR 6144(a) Controversial Issues, and ASD AR 6163.1(a) Libraries/Media Centers.

Recommended actions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book available in school libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> Book is not available in school libraries |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> High |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book available in classroom libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> Book is not available in classroom libraries |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> High |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book may be used for instructional purposes | <input type="checkbox"/> Book may not be used for instructional purposes |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> High |

Justification and comments:

The committee held a lengthy discussion about the title and considered each specific concern expressed by the challenger. In the end it was unanimously decided that the title should remain in ASD schools and libraries. George is an award-winning title that received multiple starred reviews in professional journals. Very few middle grade titles feature transgender characters, so this book fills a necessary role in allowing our transgender students to see themselves represented on our bookshelves. The committee also felt the book could help all students better understand the struggles that their transgender peers face.

In considering this challenge, the committee finds:

- Author's use of pronouns is not seen as confusing by the committee - going between he for external characters and she for Melissa's internal dialogue is an accurate depiction of what children like Melissa go through daily.
- The book covers many important themes in elementary and middle grade titles: parent relationships, bullying, friends, siblings, etc.
- Removal of the book from elementary schools would mean restricting access for the intended audience of the title. The main character is 10, and professional reviews recommend the title starting at 4th grade. The committee agreed with professional reviews that references to hormone therapy and gender reassignment are dealt with in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner.
- The book aligns with ASD BP 6163.1 and AR 6163.1(a)
- **Teachers using this book in their lessons should be aware of the suggested age range and communicate the purpose of the lesson to families.**