

GUIDANCE FOR REACHING OUT TO YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL AND LIBRARY BOARDS

School boards and library boards need to hear from community members who support the freedom to read and support vulnerable readers including LGBTQ youth, queer people of color and all people of color whose stories and visibility are under attack by book bans and book challengers.

Whether your community is facing a book ban, or has in the past, or might in the future, use this guide to help reach board members to ensure your views are heard.

1. Research who is on the board and find their email addresses.
2. Research and capture evidence of what's going on in your community, or in a neighboring community, or your state, or nationwide. This can be articles in the press, postings on social media, and broadcast interviews/stories. Organize in a document with links so you can educate your board about the conversations happening, and how they do or do not reflect your views and the community at large.
3. Draft a one page letter to send to the board. Here is an example:

Dear **[Board Member of the Name of Board]**,

I am **[your name]** and a resident of **[city/town]**. I'm writing to express my support for **[name of challenged book/s]** and for the freedom of every reader to decide what they and their children should read and have access to in their libraries **[can specify if it's a school or public library]**.

Every reader deserves to see themselves and their experiences reflected in books on the shelves. Those wishing to ban books or make them harder to access do not have the right to make choices for me **[and my family]**. You may hear from groups claiming to be about "parents' rights," but what about my rights as a parent, a taxpayer and citizen, to not have books banned or have anyone else decide for me what I **[and my children]** can and cannot read?

Book banners do not represent the wishes of the vast majority of people in our community and around the country. It has been widely [reported](#) that book ban efforts across the country are focused on LGBTQ-inclusive material, and led by a small handful of people - in [Florida](#), for example, TWO people have been responsible for 600 challenges over the last year, often using exact language from censorship groups to coordinate the challenges. This outside influence is harmful to all children's education, a massive drain on taxpayer resources, and damaging to our town's reputation as a welcoming place where all can belong, contribute and succeed.

As a member of **[name of board]**, I urge you to monitor who is pushing book bans, and note the harmful rhetoric used against LGBTQ people and youth, as well as educators and librarians who believe LGBTQ people and books about their lives belong in our libraries and everywhere. **[I have attached examples below.]** This rhetoric and behavior is unacceptable and dangerous. LGBTQ people, families, youth and all people of color are our families, neighbors, coworkers and friends.

Thank you in advance for speaking up for and enforcing your policies [\[can link here, if available\]](#) that ensure that our libraries, classrooms and all public spaces are safe and welcoming. Our libraries should always be sacred spaces for all to learn about themselves and each other. Books are essential for our own self-growth and fuel curiosity, creativity and empathy for the world around us. Our community is safer and stronger when all are welcome.

Thank you,
[Your name]