



The Florida House of Representatives

Paul Renner
Speaker

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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Speaker Paul Renner Stands Up for Florida Parents

Florida House seeks records related to age-inappropriate books in Hillsborough school libraries

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (February 3, 2023) — Today, Florida House Speaker Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast) announced he has requested records from Hillsborough County public school officials regarding age-inappropriate reading materials available in public school libraries. The request seeks to understand the decision-making processes for allowing such materials to be made available to young children and how school officials address parental objections.

“While the vast majority of reading and educational materials in our school libraries are age-appropriate, some books are so clearly obscene and directed to children that they would be rejected by adult bookstores. Any fair-minded person reviewing these books would agree, and we will not tolerate continued efforts to bypass Florida law,” **said Speaker Renner**. “The Florida House of Representatives has an obligation to protect our children and a responsibility to uphold Florida law, which prohibits schools from exposing young children to age-inappropriate materials. These books have no place in our school system due to their graphic depiction of sexual conduct and step-by-step instructions of how to access digital sex apps on the internet.”

“I appreciate the work that school administrators and teachers do to prepare our students for a bright future. The HCPS mission ‘to provide an education and the support that enable each student to excel as a successful and responsible citizen’ is a noble goal. However, nearly half of all Hillsborough County students are reading below grade level. We must focus all our energies on prioritizing learning and teaching the core skills – math, reading, writing – to unleash the full potential of every child.”

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The Florida House of Representatives

Office of the Speaker

Paul Renner
Speaker

February 2, 2023

Via electronic mail and U.S. Mail

Mr. Addison Davis, Superintendent
Hillsborough County Public Schools
901 East Kennedy Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33602
Addison.Davis@hcps.net

Re: Request for documents

Dear Mr. Davis:

Recent media reports indicate that elementary and middle school libraries within your school district contain numerous books that appear not to be age-appropriate, and that at least some schools engage in an opaque decision-making process when addressing complaints from concerned parents. To better understand how such decisions are made in your district, I request that you provide copies of the documents described below. The following definitions apply to these requests:

“Communications” means all written or electronic communications (including but not limited to emails, text messages, and social media messages) transmitted to or from the following persons: Nadia Combs; Stacy Hahn; Jessica Vaughn; Melissa Snively; Patricia Rendon; Henry Washington; Karen Perez; Lynn Gray; Addison Davis; Pablo Gallego Alvarez; Rachael Clark; Lisa Gammons; Kenya Sutton; Kimberly DeFusco; Erin Maloney.

“Documents” include, but are not limited to, communications, notes, memoranda, written policies, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes, and all drafts thereof.

“EMMC” means the Educational Media Materials Committee of Pierce Middle School.

“Library Book” means the book titled, “This Book is Gay.”

Documents to be provided

1. All documents relating to the selection of the Library Book for inclusion in the Pierce Middle School library collection (and any other Hillsborough County public school library collection). This request includes, but is not limited to, all documents reflecting consideration of whether the Library Book meets the selection criteria identified on the Hillsborough County Public Schools "Library Media Materials" webpage (<https://www.hillsboroughschools.org/Page/8179>).
2. All documents relating to complaints (from students, parents, or any other person) about the Library Book. The scope of this request includes, but is not limited to, all complaints and all communications relating to those complaints.
3. All documents relating to the EMMC's determination that the Library Book should not be removed from the Pierce Middle School library. This request includes, but is not limited to, all documents supporting or reflecting the EMMC's determination that the Library Book is appropriate for middle school students and supports Pierce Middle School's curriculum needs.
4. All other documents that mention the Library Book.
5. All documents containing or reflecting discussion, consideration, or analysis of (a) whether the EMMC's meetings and deliberations are required to be open to the public, and (b) the reasons why the EMMC did not conduct a public meeting to decide whether to remove the Library Book from the school library.
6. The Hillsborough County School Board's policy (or policies) regarding objections by parents or county residents to school library materials, which the school board is required to adopt pursuant to Section 1006.28(2)(a)2., Florida Statutes.

The timeframe for this request is December 1, 2021 through the date of your response. Please address your response and any questions to the general counsel for the House of Representatives, David Axelman (David.Axelmann@myfloridahouse.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'PR', written over a white background.

Paul Renner, Speaker of the House