

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Jay Estabrook

To the PV School Board

Recently, Save PV Schools, PV school board member Julie Hamill, and hate monger Arthur Schaper have begun clamoring for the ability to "review all learning materials" in PVUSD. I don't know the group Save PV Schools or Julie Hamill well. However, when a PV School group and a PV school board member share their condemnation of the LGBTQ community with Arthur Schaper, you have a problem. Arthur Schaper is the chapter leader of Mass Resistance (MR). MR is an anti-LGBTQ organization that has been labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. He does not represent the views of south bay residents or the values of a civil society. If you give him or his allies a voice about the PV curriculum then you validate his rhetoric and, in turn, dehumanize some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community. Dehumanizing rhetoric invites violence. Suicide rates among LGBTQ youth are four times higher than the general population in part because of hateful people like Schaper. PV administrators and teachers are highly qualified. Trust your employees to do what is best for students. Staying silent in the face of hate, ignorance, and intolerance condones such behavior. I ask you, the PV school board, to publicly support your teachers and condemn the views of Arthur Schaper and anyone that aligns with his hateful rhetoric.

Madison Tody

Hello, my name is Madison Tody. I am a Palos Verdes High School alumni.

To my understanding there has been opposition against students at Vista Grande reading the book *To Bright to See* due to the main character being trans.

As someone who is openly queer and has struggled with gender identity throughout my entire life, hearing this news in my community breaks my heart. This type of bigotry not only hurts trans kids, who are directly affected by these remarks, but it also affects those who aren't. I don't think those who are fighting against the book seem to understand that.

I feel as if it's obvious that it's basic common decency to respect one another despite our differences. Younger kids especially, having limited experience in the world, don't know any better of how to deal with things they don't know much about. This makes them heavily reliant on the type of influences around them, good or bad. The story in *Too Bright to See* can help kids better understand one another and learn to be empathetic of struggles other than their own. It makes it possible for kids to normalize the experiences of others that they may not be familiar with, or maybe find solace within themselves that what they're feeling is okay and not wrong. I could have only wished to have something like that when I was younger.

I just hope the board understands how serious of a situation this is and that this book remains a part of the students' curriculum. Rather than to perpetuate behavior that hurts others, we should be taking steps forward to learn more about one another for a better future.

Thank you for your time.

Lauren Lee

Dear PVPUSD Board,

I hope this finds you well. Please find my comment intended for inclusion at the upcoming March 8th board meeting below (320 words):

As an alumna of PVPUSD schools (Vista Grande, Ridgecrest, and PVHS), I strongly encourage PVPUSD to support the use of the age-appropriate, award-winning book "Too Bright to See," as well as the teacher who read it at Vista Grande, a school of which I am a proud graduate. As a trans woman who grew up in an age without these stories being told, "Too Bright to See" is a book I wish I had been able to read in the classroom, to know that the feelings I had that led me to who know myself to be today are valid and something that is part of the diversity of life. I also know that I am not, nor will I be, the last transgender graduate of PVPUSD schools. By supporting the usage of this book, PVPUSD would not just be supporting the LGBTQ community, but specifically the students who need this the most, those who may be wondering if what they are feeling is okay or who might be able to gain a clearer picture of who they are from exposure to books such as "Too Bright to See."

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This is not a perspective shared on behalf of any quote-unquote “trans agenda,” but in recognition of children who deserve to feel loved, safe, and secure. I myself knew that I was transgender since I had conscious cognition, around the age of 4, before I even entered school and could potentially be exposed to influence from society. Nor did my parents ever influence me in any way towards being transgender. I urge PVPUSD to support its students and teachers by supporting the usage of this book, which assists students in finding their way in an increasingly complex world and to set a tone that PVPUSD will not stand for hatred, but for a kinder, more just and loving environment in which all students can have a chance for growth and success.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Stephanie Arnold

I support LGBTQIA curriculum including Too Bright To See being read in classrooms.

Janice Nikora (she/her)
Malibu, CA

To the Members of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District Board of Education,
It has recently come to my attention that the book “Too Bright to See” is being read aloud in 5th Grade Classrooms.
Bravo!!!

As the mother of a transgender young adult, the understanding of community members when a classmate or friend is transgender, is of the utmost importance.

We had a steep learning curve because this topic was not discussed when my child was young.

I support any and all readings and discussions of the variety of ways people differ, be it skin color, religion, sexuality or gender.

This open discussion will hopefully create understanding and honest dialog.

Children do not become transgender from reading a book or talking about the subject.

Please leave this book and others like it in the curriculum.

Sincerely,

Annie Wang

Teachers reading the Newbery Honors Awarded book, "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff are under fire because the book is authored by a transgender man and includes trans characters. The book is recommended by California Dept. of Education for grade levels 3-5. The district requested teachers stop teaching the book upon receipt of complaints that did not come from student parents, but instead from anti-trans groups

Jim Phillips

Regarding the acceptability of Too Bright To See and other LGBTQ books for children and young adults. I am a 69 year old gay man who attended Valmonte Elementary, Malaga Cove Junior High, and PV High. And, it seems to me, one of the worst things you can do for young LGBTQ kids is to close them off from the knowledge that there are other peers, adults, and role models who are just like them! To ban books with LGBTQ references only makes these kids feel more alone, isolated, and promotes low self esteem. Straight kids will learn to be more empathetic and inclusive with the introduction of such material. For goodness sake, it's not catching! I certainly didn't learn to be straight from attending the PVUSD schools in the 60's and 70's! On the contrary, I only learned to feel alone, depressed, and isolated. It was only when I attended UCLA that I saw others like myself and learned to love myself. We all need to learn to love ourselves and have empathy for others. And, the sooner, the better.

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Mandy Carlin

LGBTQ Support Your vision statement refers to "[development of] the whole child:" social and emotional education as well as academic. I am writing to support the mission of education in an environment of inclusivity and compassion. This is what makes schools safe for ALL kids. Currently the voices of some reactive parents, making wrong-headed assumptions about "bad influences" are in danger of drowning out opportunities for learning, for creative questioning, for independent thinking, for common sense. There is a lot of misinformation AND DISinformation out there about gender identity. What is not disputed are the high rates of anxiety and depression in LGBTQ youth who are just trying to grow up. There are bold statistics about kids who endure bullying, or worse : family rejection, violent crime, suicide attempts ... and successes. Why would any administrators heed the noise to censor the reading of a Newbery-Honored, National Book Award Finalist novel, which is described by the NY Times Book Review as "A gentle, glowing wonder, full of love and understanding." ? A novel that deals with challenges of growing up, individuation, as well as with grief. Please imagine even one kid being saved the pain and loneliness of being told/seeing that there is no place in this world for them. Why not also imagine another kid who falls in love with READING and/or WRITING because this book inspired them deeply ? Don't you remember being 12 years old and realizing that you were beginning to have an inner life? That your thoughts / experiences were sometimes confusing, that sometimes you felt misunderstood...? Kids deserve respect. They deserve to be introduced to the social and scientific realities of human diversity. I have a transgender daughter, who was very clear -very young - about her gender identity. She never wanted to be "different," and for many years she (-and we, her Mom & Dad) lived with the stress of secrecy. Middle school was especially dangerous. We did our best to learn, to listen, to find support and resources . She is now 23, and a remarkable person. I beg you parents to stay open-minded, to SEEK support for your own fears and anxieties. Let your children discover, let them learn. Trust your kids to find their way --together. Try trusting teachers who are encouraging curiosity and acceptance. Thank you for your attention. MANDY

Blake Pilger

Allow "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff for Grade 5 students: I was a student at PVPUSD for grades K-12, and I graduated from Peninsula High in 2016. As a non-binary person, I did not grow up seeing my community represented in any material we covered. Instead, I had no idea what "non-binary" even meant, and it took years after graduating high school for me to understand and accept my gender identity. I'm encouraged to see that teachers are reading their grade 5 students "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff, because they will finally be able to witness the representation I didn't encounter when I was attending your district. If I'd been able to read a book like this, it would have helped me humanize trans people and accept myself. This book will not turn kids trans, but it will show the kids who already identify as trans that there is nothing wrong with them being exactly who they are. Therefore, if you do not allow teachers to read it, you are sending a message that trans children are unwelcome in your school district. For this reason, banning this book from the district will be directly contradictory to PVPUSD's District Goal #9, where you strive to "Develop a climate of care, equity, diversity, and inclusion for students and staff." Whether you like it or not, trans people of every race, age, gender, ability, and class exist in this world. That includes students in the PVPUSD school district. If you truly believe in equity, diversity, and inclusion, you must prioritize the well-being of trans people in every decision you make. The Trevor Project released a survey on December 15, 2022 that showed "44% of LGBTQ youth in California seriously considered suicide in the past year, including 54% of transgender and nonbinary youth." Suicide risk does not stem from the transgender identity itself, but from a lack of support from society. In fact, "The Trevor Project's research consistently finds that LGBTQ young people report lower rates of attempting suicide when they have access to LGBTQ-affirming spaces." So I'm not exaggerating when I say that allowing students to read books like "Too Bright to See" will save lives. In the same survey, "50% of LGBTQ youth in California identified their school as an LGBTQ-affirming space." Part of achieving Goal #9 will be ensuring LGBTQ students at every school in PVPUSD would identify their school in the same way. That starts with allowing them to read literature about trans people. Thank you for your time.

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J4. Since the beginning of advertising for the school board candidates it was clear that some voters wanted to elect candidates who would restrict teaching of ethnic and wellness studies. Since the beginning of this current school year these same voters have been steadfast at curriculum working group meetings in speaking out against these topics. When the students were given an opportunity to speak up for themselves they said loud and clear that they appreciated these courses and they wanted them to continue. Now we have this same group of parents speaking out against including LGBTQ characters and themes in our school curriculum. CA state law requires the inclusion of these characters and themes via the FAIR Act and the California Healthy Youth Act. Students need to be taught through an inclusive curriculum.

No name

At the last meeting a woman began the public comments with misinformation about a book that has a trans main character. While she presented herself as someone looking out for the vulnerable children, behind the scenes she and her supporters have been viciously attacking and harassing the teachers and principal at that school. She has accused them of vile and disgusting and completely untrue intentions and acts. This harassment is similar to that inflicted on several school board members in the last couple years because the school board supported reasonable Covid protocols that California and LA County had established. This behavior should not be tolerated!

No name

Annie Pfohl

Trans students deserve trans inclusive education. Otherwise we are all contributing to ignorance, fear, and bigotry.

Kathleen Johnson

J4: I DO NOT support a new curriculum committee. I have two children in the district and I want curriculum decisions made by educators, not parents. We expect a public school education which by design is for the benefit of the public and takes into account visibility and inclusivity of students, and should not give in to the whims of a few loud parents. If a parent does not like curriculum they can opt out, move their children to a different district, home school, private school, or enroll them in a public charter. PVPUSD is known for providing a high quality education and a huge part of that is how our educators implement curriculum standards. I'm raising future leaders and I want them to not only be aware of their community, but of the myriad of identities, and how they can foster in change that will best accommodate the talents of all people. My kids have friends and peers who identify across the LGBTQ+ spectrum. My children get it: their friends are their friends, and their gender identity is a nonissue. If our school district denies the existence of the LGBTQ+ community by banning materials that feature said characters, it would be harmful to all students. Please do not cater to the lowest denominator parents in our district; our kids are better than that.

Jacintha Knapp

It's very wrong for PVPUSD Board to cancel any books / literature and / or teachers because they teach our children about LGBTQ+ and how to be compassionate and tolerant toward them! Referring this kind of teaching as "sexual abuse" is just LUDICROUS! It's most likely about HOMOPHOBIA, PREJUDICE and INTOLERANCE against the LGBTQ+ communities. You should instill ZERO TOLERANCE of this behavior in the PVP School District!! I urge you to support those literature and teachers that/who would teach our children to develop their critical thinking ability, to be compassionate and to be decent human beings!

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Ellen Ebert

Understanding Gender Identities I taught middle and high school visual arts in a Title 1 rural community prior to retirement 8 years ago. I had an experience with a trans student, who I knew as female in 6th grade, but always contended the inaccuracy of that category. The student was in my classes for 7 years and I was educated along their journey of transition, seeing the pain and struggle this person faced against so many odds. This was an area ripe with bigotry and conservative viewpoints, yet I was always surprised by the acceptance this student had, by many of their fellow students and the faculty, in general. Their parents were not wealthy or educated, yet loved and accepted this child for who they were—enough to find a way to pay for transition medication, therapy and surgery. I witnessed their growth and eventual graduation from high school and now in a committed, loving relationship with a woman. This bright, talented person defied a lot of obstacles at a time when there was very little discussion or understanding gender identity, before this topic became a political tool. The school, community and family leant support to this child as a matter of humanity and thus provided them an opportunity to be successful in life and to live as the person they knew they were from a very young age.

Anne and Ray Destabelle

We are deeply disturbed to hear of the repercussions against teachers within the district who shared a story about a trans child. We know that all kids develop greater empathy and understanding when they are exposed to a broad range of literature that represents the diversity of our lives. We know that it is a lifeline & can be a life-saver for queer kids to see themselves represented in literature and other forms of popular culture. We are and have always been financial supporters of the PVUSD.

Joan Reiter

Dear School Board:
As a parent of two PV graduates, it was alarming to discover Julie Hamill's position 'to review learning materials' along with the "Save PV Schools" social media campaign.
This proposition is frightening, disappointing, and unethical. PV schools should focus on inclusion and the wealth of knowledge gained from a broad range of literature, not actively restrict it.
The teachers in the district, who shared the award-winning book with their students, should be praised for their efforts to enrich the curriculum rather than feel threatened.
If Ms. Hamill enjoys this type of rhetoric, perhaps she should resign and move to Florida, but please keep her political views away from our excellent schools.

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Cameron Bird

My name is Cameron Bird, I was a student in the PVPUSD for over ten years, and served as the president of the GSA at PVHS for two years. It hurts my heart to hear the matter of inclusive education being a topic of debate today, especially in a district where I felt immense privilege to safely navigate as a gay person. We did not have the vernacular and cultural awareness at that time to readily understand and discuss trans and nonbinary identities in young people, but I have since, through social media, seen former classmates of mine live authentically once they found the community and access to information to come to terms with their own gender identities. All of that to give some context that may be shocking to some in the room today— but LGBTQ people exist and have long existed in the PVPUSD. But people don't just become LGBTQ in their teens, there are important moments that happen during elementary development that give those students the courage and vocabulary to grapple with identity. One of the first moments I knew I was gay was at Montemalaga, while reading On My Honor by Marion Dane Bauer, a district-approved book for fifth-graders that had nothing to do with LGBTQ issues. I read into the relationship between the two boys and felt a deep connection with their kinship to the point where I saw the story as a romance between the pair, and I finally felt seen. Imagine if we had read a book about a child who was proudly nonbinary or a boy who didn't know he was a boy yet— imagine how many people would have felt seen in those moments, instead of being forced to read between the lines to find representation amongst the words and pages that make up an education of self. It alarms me that the nationwide threat of censoring this important support and information from students has reached my former safe haven at PVPUSD. Censoring children from age-appropriate LGBTQ books and characters tells those children that these characters and stories are wrong, and if you tell a struggling child that their truth should be vilified and censored, you tell that child that they do not matter. That level of censorship will have a dramatic effect on the wellness and safety of children. My deepest hope today is that we prioritize the education of all children, and provide them the tools and experiences they need to feel safe, seen, and uplifted. Thank you for your time.

Eileen Gueringer

Inclusive Curriculum: Acceptance of all students, families and staff regardless of gender or gender expression should be expressed in the curriculum. It costs nothing to accept people as they are and there is a high cost associated with hate. It limits freedom, creates inequality, and the time and energy spent on erasing varied experiences from the curriculum could be better used helping our students in their continued recovery from the pandemic.

Gabriela Miller

J4 Dear PVPUSD School Board, I am writing to express my concern about the idea that parents should have the power to determine our curriculum and what books our students read. As a member of this community and an advocate for quality education, I firmly believe that this decision should be left to the experts - our teachers. It is important to recognize that exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences is a crucial part of our students' education. Reading books about people different from ourselves or to what we are used to is an important step in gaining independence and not indoctrination. It allows students to broaden their horizons, empathize with others, and develop critical thinking skills. If students are not exposed to ideas that challenge their existing beliefs, they may struggle to cope with the complexities of the real world later on. By allowing students to feel uncomfortable, unsure, or question their education, we are preparing them for a future where they will need to be able to ask tough questions and have difficult conversations. Therefore, I urge the PVPUSD School Board to recognize the importance of exposing our students to a diverse range of literature and ideas. While it is important to consider the concerns of parents, we must also prioritize the educational and personal growth of our students. By doing so, we are preparing them to be informed, responsible, and engaged citizens of the world. Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter.

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PVPUSD Parent

Diversity inclusive curriculum Here are some key resources regarding the California Healthy Youth Act and additional LGBTQ students rights The California Healthy Youth Act (CHYA) (which requires inclusive sexual health and HIV prevention education in schools) – • LGBTQ inclusivity requirements and how they interact with parental opt out. (See p. 3 re CA Ed Code 51932 and general instruction or programming relating to LGBTQ people and/or issues) - https://www.aclunc.org/docs/lgbtq_inclusivity_requirements_and_how_they_interact_with_parental_opt_out.pdf • ACLU general resources on sexual health education requirements in CA public schools - <https://www.aclusocal.org/en/know-your-rights/sex-education> • CA Dept of Ed resource on CHYA: [https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20California,sexually%20transmitted%20infections%20\(STIs\).](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20California,sexually%20transmitted%20infections%20(STIs).) • Additional LGBTQ student rights resources • www.myschoolmyrights.com – website with resources on students rights on many topics, including First Amendment rights, LGBTQ student rights, how to file a complaint with your school, and more. • CA Dept of Education website on Supporting LGBTQ students - <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/supportlgbtq.asp>

Joan Davidson

Dear Board members, Just to clarify the District is run by you, the elected Board members, who are acting within the CA laws, CDE requirements, and District policies. Although some are trying, please do not let them try and govern the board with emotion. Our country is in a mood of political fighting and choosing which line of thought is correct. A line of thought is based upon opinion and emotion. But the District has to comply within the laws and policies. And not emotion. I'm aware that emotions are running high. But those emotions will pit community members against each other with different opinions. In the end, it will destroy chances of support for any bond or tax down the road. And that will not end well for anyone trying to get funding for salaries or other district benefits for students. And the District should be all about the students and not political opinions. Yours truly, Joan Davidson
Former PVPUSD Board Member

Haley

Too Bright To See Restriction -- We must stand against bigotry and discrimination against protected classes. It is estimated that nearly 1 child in every 50 children identifies as transgender, roughly the same percentage as those with red hair. Most transphobia stems from a lack of understanding of what it means to be trans or genderqueer. Providing comprehensive education on gender identity to all students can help to change that.

Gail Robillard

Regarding the book Too Bright to See by Kyle Lukoff, recently read in fifth grade classrooms at Vista Grande Elementary: Both my children went through PVPUSD schools, K through 12, the last one graduating in 2010. I myself hold a California multiple subject credential, as well as a California Teacher Librarian credential. I am now retired. The empirical evidence is clear: Children develop greater empathy and understanding when they are exposed to a broad range of literature that represents the actual composition of real people in the world. I know from personal and professional experience that such literature is essential for queer kids; it is essential that they can see themselves represented if we want them to reach their full potential, personally and as citizens. Such literature does not "groom" or harm in any way children who experience it. Indeed, it broadens the humanity of all students who experience it. Again, this has been empirically demonstrated, and repeated over and over in my personal and professional experience. Lastly, I greatly resent that a few parents, or elected officials or governmental agencies, seek to unilaterally dictate what educated professionals and a majority of parents desire for their children. Such actions are not rooted in truth, and they actually reduce parental rights. It is an absurd and dangerous idea that there is only one kind of American who should be celebrated, educated, and nurtured.

Jennifer Taggart

I submit comments on the Discussion/Action J(4): Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee. Unfortunately, I cannot attend the BOE Meeting due to a work commitment but desperately wish I could. This issue is very important to me.

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I am a parent in the Palos Verdes Peninsula School District. My son attended Miraleste Intermediate School ("MIS") and Palos Verdes High School ("PVHS") and is now in college. My daughter attended Dapplegray Elementary School, MIS and is a senior enrolled at PVHS. The proposed Board Appointed Curriculum Committee is unnecessary. The California State Board of Education adopts content standards and variety of resources and information to develop curriculum standards to achieve the performance based standards. At the District level, there is a Curriculum Division as well as a Superintendent Advisory Curriculum Committee.

More importantly, it is a not very well disguised effort to suppress ideas and materials dressed up as a call for transparency and the rallying cry that parents know best. But what it really seems to be is that certain factors believe that materials, particularly those dealing with race and gender, to be inappropriate and that they should be censored. Is that the direction that the District wants to take? I hope not.

We are a diverse community and representation is important. Recently, a very small faction has called out the book *Too Bright To See*, which is a sweet coming of age story, but focuses on what it is like to realize the gender you were assigned at birth is not the one you actually are wrapped up with a ghost story. Of course, because the main character is transgender, it is challenging to some. But it is a gentle, kind book. As another reviewer said, it is a book "full of love and understanding, full of everything any of us would wish for our children."

It is not a book that advocates for children to remove their sex organs, as Board Member Hamill has stated:

In social media, some have termed the book "controversial" and cited the District's policy on Controversial Issues, Regulation 6144. Regulation 6144 provides that controversial issues may be discussed in the classroom under certain circumstances, and identifies those circumstances. It is important to note that the term "controversial" assumes that there are "sides" to the issue. In fact, No. 4 of the circumstances under which controversial issues can be discussed is that "[a]ll sides of the issues are given a proper hearing, using established facts as primary evidence." (PVPUSD Policy 6144(4).)

To contend that *Too Bright To See* is a "controversial issue" within the meaning of Policy 6144 means that one believes that being transgender is not normal or not valid or not worthy. That there are sides to discuss. It assumes that there is another side – a side where being transgender is bad and not normal. The California Constitution, the California Education, and the District's own policies protect against discrimination based upon gender identity. The California Gender Recognition Act creates a non-binary gender category on California birth certificates, drivers' licenses, identity cards and gender-change court order. PVPUSD Policy 5145.3 specifically provides:

The Board of Education desires to provide a safe school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the district's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities. The Board prohibits, at any district school or school activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying, targeted at any student by anyone, based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. (PVPUSD Policy 5145.3 (emphasis added).)

I urge that PVPUD not to embark on a path that leads to discrimination. It is important for all our students to feel represented in the materials they read. Instilling in our students a love of reading will open worlds to them – from flying in spaceships to exploring the depths of the ocean to delving into history to simply understanding themselves. Reading sparks creativity, develops empathy, and informs the intellect.

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Representation matters in reading. My school reading was relatively limited to white males – typical of the reading materials at the time. But when I discovered female science fiction and fantasy authors with female lead characters, the entire world opened to me. A very forward thinking librarian helped me discover that a young girl with a love of science and math could actually be an engineer and dream of building a spaceship. And I ended up working for the company that built the Space Shuttle Main Engine and tested the emissions from various rocket engines. To be effective global citizens, it is critical that our students learn about life experiences that differ from their own.

I cannot emphasize it enough: representation matters. It is important that our students’ reading materials be diverse and inclusive. According to The Trevor Project, LGBTQIA kids consider, attempt, and commit suicide far more than other groups of young people. In a culture where their rights to an equal life are demonized and marginalized, they are not heard or represented. Ultimately, these kids die of shame. Shouldn’t we, as a District, take the steps to show that they are represented? That there is no shame? We do that by including books that represent such as Too Bright To See. Feeling accepted, connected, and represented is essential for mental health.

Curriculum should be developed and decided upon by experts in education and childhood development and consistent with required standards. Accordingly, I urge the PVPUSD BOE to decline to add a Board-appointed Curriculum Committee.

Ourania Kontes

Public comment for agenda item J-4 - Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee

I support a formal curriculum committee that would present itself as an arena for teachers, administrators, parents and Board members to discuss new and optimal ways to increase student achievement. This would be a forum to combine ideas, research new curriculum, literature and to make changes that have a meaningful impact on student learning and achievement. It would also put the district in compliance with existing state policy.

N.K. - PVPUSD Parent

Angela Houle

I’d like to comment that the establishment of a Curriculum Committee specifically in response to some parents’ reaction to a highly lauded (National Book Award finalist!) and critically acclaimed book gives me a great deal of pause. I have no information on what the suggested makeup of such a committee would be, but if it is to be activist parents with little or no educational training/experience, I would caution the board against this. Because of the wide range of perspectives in the community, we have to trust educators to make education-related decisions, and those decisions should err on the side of being inclusive and accepting of all students and their family constellations. In another time in our country, parents objected to their children being taught that interracial relationships existed among good citizens. This seems preposterous to us now (I hope), but there was a time when that was as controversial as gender identity is now. Not talking about a group of people does not make them go away, but it can make them feel unseen and unaccepted. This is certainly not what we want for any of our children. I am a former member of the Chadwick School Board of Trustees (and had two kids graduate from Peninsula High). I am aware of the appropriate limits of board involvement in schools (though admittedly not of the state mandated scope for a public board) and how important it is for board members to adhere to the limits of their expertise and allow the educators to adhere to theirs. From what I can see, there is only one current board member with experience of any kind as an educator. To me this means that the board must make sure good people with the right experience and training are in appropriate positions to make education-related decisions and then leave those decisions to those people. Parents certainly retain the right to remove their children from classroom situations they deem inappropriate for their children, but they do not have the right to impose their personal value system on the entire PVPUSD community nor to use the mechanisms of the school board to conceal prejudice behind a guise of good governance. Education is about opening minds, not closing them or subjectively cordoning them off.

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Jeremy Vanderhal

J4: Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee --What the law says (CA Ed Code Section 51101): "...the parents and guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools have the right...to examine the curriculum materials of the class or classes in which their child is enrolled." --What the president of the PVFA says: "Teachers should ultimately be trusted to select appropriate books for their classes...Teachers should not have to disclose every text they are reading in class to the public..." If for no other reason than to prevent this blatant attempt to subvert the law, PVPUSD should create a Brown Act Board-Appointed Curriculum Committee. The community has demanded--and board members have all stated that they are advocates of--more transparency. Nobody knows my daughter better than me and my wife. And certainly nobody comes close to loving her as much as we do. We as parents will send her to public school with the tacit understanding that there is a sacred trust we are placing in her teachers to impart upon her the knowledge and character she needs to thrive and succeed in our society. If it is the opinion of the president of the PVFA that teachers should circumvent the law regarding her education for reasons as yet unclear, then perhaps we need to reconsider if that trust is properly placed. This should be an easy decision. Create the Board-Appointed Committee. Restore trust in our schools.

David Batty

J4 - Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee I am writing today in support of the creation of a Brown Act Committee for the review of school curriculum and educational materials for PVPUSD. I believe our students, parents, and teachers could all benefit from more clear guidelines on what material should be covered and in what fashion, particularly for more controversial topics like the discussion of certain gender-related topics in the classroom. The best way to encourage open debate among all interested parties is through the maximum public transparency offered by a committee compliant with the requirements of the Brown Act. Thank you for all of the hard work you do on behalf of our children.

Megan Ebenhack

J.4 My husband and I completely disagree w/ a parent committee formed to censor books and school agenda designed to educate our students about diversity. We both graduated from Peninsula and then graduated from USC and UCLA respectively. We know this community and schools. Let's leave that up to our educators who have dedicated their life to our students education and well being. I completely disagree with Erin Diammagio and Julie Hamill. If they get what they want, our family will no longer support the Palos Verdes Unified School District. I do not want to support a school district that is going to jeopardize my children's chances of getting into college because of a backwards agenda.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

April White

Topic: Brown Act Curriculum Committee proposal My name is April White. I've been a parent in this district for fifteen years, and I'm a novelist with twelve published works of fiction. I understand books—the value of them, the power of them, and the need for them. A sitting board member has called for a Brown Act curriculum committee to require full public review and approval of all curriculum and materials taught in our schools. She called for this committee specifically in response to the reading of a California Department of Education-approved, Newberry Award-winning book about an 11-year-old transgender character. She talks about giving comfort to the parents of elementary school children that they're "safe" coming to school after Too Bright to See was read aloud to 5th graders. Another parent in this district, one of the most vocal, critical, and outspoken against district policies, has called for formal complaints to be filed against the 5th grade teacher she named by name, accusing her of "promoting and encouraging body image dysmorphia (sic) that leads to mutilation of sex organs." In author Kyle Lukoff's Stonewall Award acceptance speech for Too Bright To See, he described his novel as being "about a drag queen ghost and an eleven year old figuring out that he's trans. It's also about the ways that dysphoria makes you unrecognizable to yourself, how grief follows you wherever you go, and that queer people need and deserve both community and elders." This book stars a transgender character at a time in our history when anti-trans legislation is sweeping the nation. When a school board member goes to her public social media to call out a book for teaching "a controversial political and social ideology as fact – that a person can change their gender," and insists that a teacher reading this award-winning book is "selling a fantasy that if they (children) don't feel comfortable in their body they can change into the opposite sex," she is actively harming the transgender children and teens in this district. I've read Too Bright To See, and I can refute—in the text—every out-of-context quote and misleading "fact" its detractors use to argue against its inclusion in our curriculum. This is exactly why a Brown Act curriculum committee in our district would become nothing more than a shouting match about political differences rather than a curriculum committee that values diversity, inclusion, and representation in the books our kids read. And books, especially the ones focused on representation, can not only change everything for one kid, they can create empathy in a hundred more.

PV Resident

J4 - Don't let extremist voices get control of our district curricula. A minority of families in PV are trying to steer the curricula to follow states like Florida so our kids will not know diversity. Our children's character is too important to sacrifice it to close-minded people.

EdFirstPV

EdFirstPV is a local Palos Verdes Peninsula advocacy group for parents and voters. The community is aware of PVFA's recent position regarding controversial instructional material, however some of the information PVFA communicated is in conflict with the California Education Code and PVPUSD Board Policies. We are concerned about the spread of misinformation in our school district. 1. The state has offered guidance on how to apply the FAIR Act. Please refer to the following link from the California Department of Education. Districts have the authority to determine how and in which grades the act will be included into curriculum. Also, parents and community members can participate in the process. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/senatebill48faq.asp#:~:text=Senate%20Bill%2048%20emphasized%20that,discrimination%20based%20on%20sexual%20orientation> 2. The Recommended Literature List provided by the CDE is just that, a list of recommendations. Under the Background tab, the following link clearly explains that "Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the district to select literature according to the selection policies that are in place." And, "Many of the literature selections available within the Recommended Literature List contain material that can be considered provocative or controversial." <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/> 3. PVPUSD Board Policy 6144 requires teachers to obtain permission from the district before presenting controversial materials to students. Topics that arouse strong reactions are considered controversial in our district. <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030360&revid=VHfm9hslshNWDsc37LGzaVvw==&ptid=amlgTZiB9plushNjl6WXhfiOQ==&secid=ruE8yj8gaZHBkljNHwMKZw==&PG=6&IRP=0&isPndg=false> 4. Teachers are required to keep all instructional materials on hand in the classroom and make them available to parents. The following two laws are from the California Education Code. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=49091.10&lawCode=EDC https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC§ionNum=51101. Thank you,

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Kayla V

I want to speak in favor of Too Bright to See, a Newbery Honor book, being read in a fifth-grade classroom. PVPUSD must stand up against intolerance and book banning.

Samantha Weiss

I am supportive of my esteemed colleagues for their courageous choice to read from a book in which there are non-binary characters. While they were “only following the law”, they also chose a book with characters that express non-binary attitudes. Our non-binary kiddos need to see themselves in the literature they read. These women will have handled questions that come up in a clear, caring way. Families get to talk at home about issues that matter to them and so home I You don’t need a curriculum committee either. That’s the CDE. They do a great job. So leave the curriculum to the experts.

Perry, Jill

I have been a PVPUSD parent, former PTA president, and volunteer for 20 years.

If I am understanding the situation correctly, a board member has requested the board consider appointing a curriculum committee to review and potentially remove books from our students. This board member and her supporters have shown a frighteningly negative and discriminatory view toward those they consider different from themselves.

We must avoid this slippery slope. A small vocal group like this should not have this type of authority. Our district already has ample curriculum oversight.

By this point in human history, have we not evolved enough to understand that discrimination has devastating results?

This district is in the education business. This proposal is the polar opposite of education. It is a return to the days of the past when those in the minority were shunted to the side or worse. We are better than this. Let’s lead with openness and understanding.

Cameron Wilson

J4 Curriculum Committee: I encourage this Board to follow the guidance established by the Ca. Bd. of Education on establishing a Curriculum Committee. Such a committee would include teachers from all grades, admin, parents, english learner programs etc. The committee would follow state guidance for piloting and determining the best instructional materials available and truly elevate our children's educational experience in Palos Verdes. This is a HUGE PLUS for our schools and our kids!

In light of recent information about a 5th grade teacher reading Too Bright To See to a 5th Grade Class - the District must implement a policy prohibiting teaching any materials related to human sexuality exclusively to state mandated "health" sex ed classes. The idea that teachers of any grade can decide when and where sex and sexuality is taught is inappropriate and unsafe. It does not help ease parents' distrust or concerns about what goes on in the classroom when we have a middle school teacher who was recently charged with possession of child porn. It makes sense to alleviate parent concerns and District vulnerabilities to enact policies that ensure everyone knows what is being taught and when.

Samantha Weiss

I am supportive of my esteemed colleagues for their courageous choice to read from a book in which there are non-binary characters. While they were doing what CDE requires, in accordance with the Healthy Kids Act, choosing a book with characters that express non-binary characteristics is so important. Our non-binary kiddos need to see themselves in the literature they read. These women will have handled questions that come up in a clear, caring way. Families get to talk at home about issues that matter to them and get to always reassert family's value system. This is as it should be.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Lynn McLeod	<p>I'm not sure which agenda item this is, but I'm writing regarding the issue of the teachers who read to 5th graders about the experience of a transgender child. It's dismaying to me that arguments against transgender status being an open topic in our society and among children do not see this as primarily a HUMAN issue. Any transgender person is someone's child, sibling, parent, friend, colleague. Many transgender people have known from a very early age that they were in the wrong body. Think what a gift it is to them to be able to talk to teachers and friends about what they feel is true for them, without shame or embarrassment. Children are born sexual and curious. They touch themselves at an early age and it feels good - they have to be told to stop. They have questions and know when the answers they get are fully truthful or not. Our responsibility as grownups is to provide age-appropriate, compassionate, fully truthful answers about the whole complicated human condition. This is not "sexual grooming": it is ethical adult communication with minors who are already sexual. Supporting children who feel that they're a different sex is not "sexual abuse." It is a way of affirming them as important, accepted members of families, classrooms, the community and society in general. Please don't let this fine school district that I attended as a child take the road of exclusion and book-burning. Please don't let phrases like "protecting children's innocence" or standing for "family values" blind you to the fear-based rejection behind this effort. Remember part of what initiated WWII was book-burning and exclusion; let's not follow that example.</p>
Do not harass me	<p>Do not let anti-LGBTQ people tell our district what we can teach. Our district kids need our support. We have LGBTQ kids in our schools. We need to support them and show them they are part of the community.</p>
Anonymous	<p>J4. I believe a curriculum committee is necessary in our district where parents want to be involved and would make it easier for teachers to teach. If something is approved, it is more difficult for parents to complain. In addition, parents will feel reassured that appropriate material is being taught in the classroom. It is the parents' right to choose when and where information related to controversial topics is taught to their children. Please consider implementing a committee to help with this process.</p>
Sara Roos	<p>Please don't use the "study it" excuse to paper over bigotry in the name of controlling our children's access to books. No one's encouraging anyone's kids to "become" trans by reading about what may be happening in their world. Understanding reality is not a threat to anyone anywhere. Reality is just... reality. The reading of "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff that features a transgender character, is not a censorable act, not of the teacher, not of its readers or kids who could benefit from the tale's offerings. It's up to us to stop hatred in its tracks! Don't accidentally fall into the trap of censorship in a misguided effort to protect our kids. We can teach them values and morality, but legislating it is a slippery slope to fascism.</p>

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Edward Gorsuch

Curriculum Committee Proposal Dear PVPUSD School Board Members; I grew up in Palos Verdes, attended Soleado, Malaga Cove, and Palos Verdes High School and I brought up my own two children within same school system. A major factor in raising my family in PV was the high-quality, well-rounded education provided by the PVPUSD. Now, however, I'm concerned this respected organization is facing an existential threat. PV School Board member Julie Hamill's desire to establish a board appointed Curriculum Committee may seem like a harmless suggestion but it is really a very dark and dangerous idea. Hamill's concern for the safety of the students is based on a fake moral panic cooked up by extremist politicians and fueled by questionable media outlets. The proposal of a Curriculum Committee is only a few goose steps away from the "Don't Say Gay" laws of another state. I'm sure School Board member Hamill believes they're doing the righteous thing, but the PV School Board should be the last line of defense against unsubstantiated bias and discrimination in our schools. Establishing a board appointed Curriculum Committee creates another tool to demonize LBGTQ+ people and impose the will of a disturbed minority on the rest of us. Let's be clear, School Board member Hamill is no supporter of the LBGTQ+ community based on their public social media comments about gender issues that are misinformed, disrespectful and dangerous. Peninsula High School's Queer Social Club sign was recently vandalized on campus. People may dismiss this as "kids being kids" rather than an act of intolerance and intimidation – sparked by ignorant social media comments like Hamill's. School Board member Hamill would know the consequences of anti-trans rhetoric if they actually read a few LBGTQ+ books. History does not look kindly on organizations pushing to police language, curriculum or culture. You are not the American Taliban and this school district does not need more regulations. What it does need is more freedom, tolerance and support for diversity, equity and inclusion in our classrooms. And the only proven way to achieve that is through education. Free states don't ban books or people - which is really at the heart of School Board member Hamill's suggestion. Sincerely, Edward Gorsuch Palos Verdes High School Class of 1982

USA PTA

"The LGBTQ community has been subjected to hate violence and rhetoric in recent years, including the recent shooting in Colorado Springs. Within this climate of hostility, one in six LGBTQ youth report being physically assaulted because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. And LGBTQ students are two to four times more likely to commit suicide than their non-LGBTQ peers. LGBTQ students are also more likely than their peers to be bullied, feel unsafe in school and skip school due to safety concerns. "National PTA stands with the LGBTQ community and denounces all hate violence and rhetoric in our country. Acts of hate have a profound effect on the communities impacted, and our nation must do better. "PTA has long believed that every child deserves to go to school excited to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, and every person deserves to go out in society without the fear of bullying, violence or discrimination. It is urgent that we understand, value and embrace the uniqueness of all individuals and appreciate that each contributes a diversity of views, experiences, preferences, cultural heritage/traditions, skills/abilities and values that enrich and strengthen our nation. And it is critical that we rise to correct the inequities and injustices that permeate the United States. "PTA has taken a stand and pushed for policies and protections for LGBTQ youth. We have also educated and empowered parents and families to help build safe and inclusive environments for all children. Our association remains committed to advocating for and supporting policies and programs that create a climate of acceptance and inclusion and ensure LGBTQ youth have every opportunity to thrive at school, at home and in their communities. "We can eliminate social injustices and build a better nation for our children's future when we respect differences and unite as communities, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, culture, skin color, language or ability. This is more important than ever." <https://www.pta.org/home/About-National-Parent-Teacher-Association/PTA-Newsroom/news-list/news-detail-page/2022/12/05/national-pta-stands-with-lgbtq-community>

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

I am writing specifically to condemn the "Save PV Schools" group and board member Julie Hamill. I won't insult especially when not present to have a meaningful conversation, but I will say that this group and Hamill's membership embarrass me as a community member. I hope the people involved communicate with local members of the community, particularly people who have undergone transition while part of the PV system. Being a kid is hard enough for most of us, but it's worse when adults are targeting you. It's the kind of thing you read about in history books and see made into movies, except we have PV people in the role reserved for villains, and it's absolutely humiliating. Palos Verdes deserves better.

Andrew Ross

The Nazi book burnings were a campaign conducted by the German Student Union to ceremonially burn books in Nazi Germany and Austria in the 1930s. The books targeted for burning were those viewed as being subversive or as representing ideologies opposed to Nazism. Will this Board deny our student their first amendment rights by censoring their learning? Don't waste time on seeing how you can be a better Nazi! Deny Hamill's request to waste our tax dollars to form a committee to see who they can try to cancel in our society. Supremacist like her and the Proud Boys she embraces are free to live in their hate filled world but should not be supported by our tax dollars to foment more hate.

Renay Grace Rodriguez

Sex Reassignment Surgery - PVPUSD must focus on Education Not Sexual Orientations of Children: LGBTQ+ activists are not necessarily the same as LGBTQ people. Activists have orchestrated a climate where anyone who dares question them is labeled a bigot, homo/transphobe, or risks being "canceled" on social media or having his name dragged through the mud in professional and social circles. As we have seen from a recent email from the Palos Verdes Democrats sent out a defamatory email to their community labeling hundreds of parents from Save PV Schools and a School Board Member as "transphobic" and "anti-trans." The PV Democrats claim the Teachers who read a Book about a Girl who becomes a Boy was for "Enrichment and Enjoyment." Shame on them for inserting their Sexual Orientations, Sexual Preferences and Political Agenda on the innocent children in Palos Verdes! These activists have mainstream press in their pockets, further pushing the appearance that everyone is on board. Many people (including doctors, educators, psychologists, and many LGBT people, themselves) are concerned with how this agenda is being pushed onto society, particularly onto our most vulnerable children and young adults. While the UK, Sweden, Finland, and France have begun to step on the "gender affirming" breaks, California accelerates. The CTA holds an annual LGBTQ+ conference. These are sold-out conferences. The 2021 conference called Beyond the Binary: Imagining the Possibilities, held workshop sessions with titles like Decolonizing the Classroom, Securing Our Queer Futures, Inclusive Feminism, and Straight Fragility. This most recent conference had sessions titled Breaking the Binary: Creating Inclusive Spaces in Elementary, Challenging the Dominant Narrative, and Creating Safe Spaces for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Children in Early Childhood Program, with a description saying, "The presenter will provide valuable insights into transgender education in preschool settings..." Not long after the 2021 conference, a recording was leaked, and two teachers from a Salinas middle school were put on leave for apparently coaching other teachers on how to secretly run GSA clubs on campus without parents knowing. Parents addressed the school board about their concerns. There are many stories of children and teens who were led to embrace gender ideology in school. Other recent stories include this one out of LA County and this one in Orange County.

Anonymous

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

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BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

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BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

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BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Anonymous

Sex Reassignment Surgery - PVPUSD must focus on Education Not Sexual Orientations of Children: LGBTQ+ activists are not necessarily the same as LGBTQ people. Activists have orchestrated a climate where anyone who dares question them is labeled a bigot, homo/transphobe, or risks being "canceled" on social media or having his name dragged through the mud in professional and social circles. As we have seen from a recent email from the Palos Verdes Democrats. They sent out an email to all Democrats on their mailing list. They wrote a defamatory email to attack the Parents who do not want Teachers reading the book, Too Bright to See. Too Bright to See is about a girl who most likely has "Gender Dysphoria." Her mental health is not mentioned in the book. Rather it's fictional story about a Girl who takes the Guidance from her dead Uncle Roderick's Ghost to come out of the closet as a Boy. Overnight, on her 13th Birthday the Girl becomes a Boy by shaving her head and then "he" goes shopping for new "boy" clothes. The parents who don't want teachers reading this book are feminists who believe Girls should not be encouraged to become Men. In a sick manipulative email the Palos Verdes Democrats labeled the Feminist Mothers, who are hundreds of parents from Save PV Schools and a School Board Member as "transphobic" and "anti-trans." Their tactics are always the same: claim to be compassionate and character assassinate all who won't comply with their chosen mandates. And, now the PV Democrats are inserting themselves in our local schools to control actions by the School Board. The PV Democrats claim the Teachers who read a Book about a Girl who becomes a Boy was for "Enrichment and Enjoyment." Shame on them for inserting their Sexual Orientations, Sexual Preferences and Political Agenda on the innocent children in Palos Verdes! These activists have mainstream press in their pockets, further pushing the appearance that everyone is on board. Many people (including doctors, educators, psychologists, and many LGBT people, themselves) are concerned with how this agenda is being pushed onto society, particularly onto our most vulnerable children and young adults. While the UK, Sweden, Finland, and France have begun to step on the "gender affirming" breaks, California accelerates. The CTA holds an annual LGBTQ+ conference. These are sold-out conferences.

The 2021 conference called Beyond the Binary: Imagining the Possibilities, held workshop sessions with titles like Decolonizing the Classroom, Securing Our Queer Futures, Inclusive Feminism, and Straight Fragility. This most recent conference had sessions titled Breaking the Binary: Creating Inclusive Spaces in Elementary, Challenging the Dominant Narrative, and Creating Safe Spaces for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Children in Early Childhood Program, with a description saying, "The presenter will provide valuable insights into transgender education in preschool settings...". ☹ Not long after the 2021 conference, a recording was leaked, and two teachers from a Salinas middle school were put on leave for apparently coaching other teachers on how to secretly run GSA clubs on campus without parents knowing. Parents addressed the school board about their concerns. There are many stories of children and teens who were led to embrace gender ideology in school. Other recent stories include one out of LA County and one in Orange County. Currently, the LGBTQI+ Community is highly represented on all PVPUSD Campuses. Teachers have Rainbow Flags, Gay Lives Matter Stickers and at Ridgecrest Intermediate there's a huge mural with Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Ellen Degeneres. Why is the Comedian Ellen Degeneres on the Mural? One can only assume it's because she came out of the closet and confessed she was a Lesbian in 1997. The only families who aren't represented on Public School Campuses are children from Faith-Based Communities. Christians, Muslims, Jews and children of other faiths no longer feel safe in our Public Schools sharing their beliefs that the human body is a Temple for their Souls. They have been harassed, intimidated and bullied by the WOKE MOB of ACTIVISTS DEMANDING WE ALL AGREE THAT A GIRL CAN BE A BOY AND A BOY CAN BE A GIRL. Either all children, including children from the Faith Based Community, should be FAIRLY represented at school with their appropriate symbols or no symbol should be at school other than the UNITED STATES FLAG. The School Board was elected by the local community to make local decisions that are in the best interest of all stakeholders in the District. It is in the best interest of the School Board to take into account the California Department of Education's recommendations and then decide what is best for the mostly conservative families of faith on the Hill and ensure that Public Schools focus on preparing children for careers in science, math, robotics and actually educate our kids on subjects based on facts and science.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Sex Reassignment Surgery - PVPUSD must focus on Education Not Sexual Orientations of Children: LGBTQ+ activists are not necessarily the same as LGBTQ people. Activists have orchestrated a climate where anyone who dares question them is labeled a bigot, homo/transphobe, or risks being "canceled" on social media or having his name dragged through the mud in professional and social circles. As we have seen from a recent email from the Palos Verdes Democrats. They sent out an email to all Democrats on their mailing list. They wrote a defamatory email to attack the Parents who do not want Teachers reading the book, Too Bright to See. Too Bright to See is about a girl who most likely has "Gender Dysphoria." Her mental health is not mentioned in the book. Rather it's a fictional story about a Girl who takes the Guidance from her dead Uncle Roderick's Ghost to come out of the closet as a Boy. It also introduces adult topics like Drag Queens to young impressionable children by making it seem as if it's perfectly normal for men to dress up as seductive scantily dressed women with big hair, false lashes and giant fake breasts. Overnight, on her 13th Birthday the Girl becomes a Boy by shaving her head and then "he" goes shopping for new "boy" clothes. The parents who don't want teachers reading this book are feminists who believe Girls should not be encouraged to become Men. In a sick manipulative email the Palos Verdes Democrats labeled the Feminist Mothers, who are hundreds of parents from Save PV Schools and a School Board Member as "transphobic" and "anti-trans." Their tactics are always the same: claim to be compassionate and character assassinate all who won't comply with their chosen mandates. And, now the PV Democrats are inserting themselves in our local schools to control actions by the School Board. The PV Democrats claim the Teachers who read a Book about a Girl who becomes a Boy was for "Enrichment and Enjoyment." Shame on them for inserting their Sexual Orientations, Sexual Preferences and Political Agenda on the innocent children in Palos Verdes! These activists have mainstream press in their pockets, further pushing the appearance that everyone is on board. Many people (including doctors, educators, psychologists, and many LGBT people, themselves) are concerned with how this agenda is being pushed onto society, particularly onto our most vulnerable children and young adults. While the UK, Sweden, Finland, and France have begun to step on the "gender affirming" breaks, California accelerates. The CTA holds an annual LGBTQ+ conference. These are sold-out conferences. The 2021 conference called Beyond the Binary: Imagining the Possibilities, held workshop sessions with titles like Decolonizing the Classroom, Securing Our Queer Futures, Inclusive Feminism, and Straight Fragility. This most recent conference had sessions titled Breaking the Binary: Creating Inclusive Spaces in Elementary, Challenging the Dominant Narrative, and Creating Safe Spaces for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Children in Early Childhood Program, with a description saying, "The presenter will provide valuable insights into transgender education in preschool settings..."

Anonymous

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BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Anonymous

The topic of Gender Orientations, Pronouns and Sex Changes for children is trending. It is essential that Public Schools focus on education and do not endorse, promote or enable children to change their sex, gender identity, or discuss their sexual preferences at school. Sexual preferences are private information and schools should not survey our children and ask them personal intimate details about their sex lives or their sexual identities. The following are book recommendations and articles for Teachers, Parents, and all who care about the wellbeing of children: Irreversible Damage by Abigail Shrier The End of Gender by Dr. Debra Soh Interesting websites/articles-- Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine Transgender Trend Parents of ROGD (Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria) Kids Quillette, as Australian-based blog, has some very thought-provoking pieces, like --An Interview with Lisa Littman who Coined the Term 'Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria' Read Littman's original research from 2018

Angela Yang, former PVHS alumni Dear PVPUSD Board,

As an alumni of Palos Verdes High School, and former Gay Straight Alliance co-president, this is a matter that is very important to my heart.

Too Bright to See should be taught in schools. For so long, LGBTQ people have been silenced, discriminated against, and made victims of violent attacks. So few books already exist about LGBTQ experiences, especially transgender experiences. How are students supposed to learn about other genders and sexualities if LGBTQ books aren't taught in school? It is so important to allow this book not only to expose kids to different identities, but to also tell transgender kids that they are allowed to exist, just as anyone else is.

It is offensive to hear that reading children a book about a transgender boy is encouraging children to "cut pieces of themselves off." When we don't stand up to bigots, we are sending a message that their behavior is okay. We are telling them that they are allowed to bully transgender youth and allies. We are telling transgender students that their identity is invalid and they don't deserve to be spotlighted. We are telling transgender students to hide themselves, when we as a community should instead help them flourish.

We cannot follow in the steps of Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, and countless other states that have banned important books from children. We need students to know that their identity is valid, that they are important, and that they deserve to be seen. We cannot keep silencing the voices of the marginalized.

You all, as school board members, need to take the side of justice and take a stand against bigotry. In your position of power, you can, and have a duty to speak for the marginalized and vulnerable. We cannot be teaching our children, our students, and our peers, that discriminating against LGBTQ people, or any person, is okay.

I urge you to support the LGBTQ community and support this Vista Grande teacher. Please make sure this important book continues to be taught to children.

Holly Enriquez

I.4 ? A quick note in support of a conservative approach to what we expose our kids to; in this case a book on transgenderism. Parents obviously have the right to read any book to their children at home that they deem important. Why spend precious classroom minutes on topics that are controversial and very rare? Teachers need to stick to the the "3 Rs". Parents can handle the rest. Thank you.

Gilda Sebenick

As a parent of Vista Grande alumni, I am deeply troubled to hear that the reading of an award-winning book to fifth graders that includes a transgender character is being characterized as sex abuse. PVPUSD has always supported students as they have tried to find their place in the world, including our transgender students. To make these students feel less than is child abuse. To punish a teacher for teaching children empathy is criminal. History has shown us that fear of the other has only ever led to discrimination and hate. We are stronger if we support each other and acknowledge the humanity of all.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Erin DiMaggio	<p>Agenda Item: J:4, (Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee): The California State Board of Education adopts content standards. Still, we have local School Board Elections to ensure Palos Verdes Residents have local control of all District Matters, specifically the Curriculum. The proposed Board-Appointed Curriculum Committee is 100% Necessary. PVPUSD Bylaw 9000 states, "The Board of Education has been elected by the community to provide leadership and CITIZEN OVERSIGHT of the District. The Board shall work with the Superintendent to fulfill its primary responsibilities, which include: setting the direction for the District through a process that involves the community, parents/guardians, students, and staff and is focused on student learning and achievement." Recognizing that the Palos Verdes Homeowners provide revenue to the District is essential. In 2019, The Measure M Parcel Tax brought in nearly 9 million in total tax revenue. Our community voted in favor of Measure M in 2011 because they believed in the Public School System. Voters who feel disenfranchised from Public Schools will not vote to give the District more money if they don't think the District represents their moral values, beliefs, and priorities for academic achievement. One example of why a Board-Appointed Curriculum is necessary is the current controversy over the Book, Too Bright To See. Two fifth-grade Teachers read the highly controversial Book that introduces third through fifth graders to Drag Queens and most notably, The Main Character of the Story is born a Girl who changes her Gender and becomes a flat-chested boy with a shaved head and a new wardrobe of "boys" clothes. The Fifth Grade Teachers may have chosen this book without consideration of the impact it would have. It is on the California Department of Education's recommended reading list for Third to Fifth Graders, however it is not appropriate considering the known facts that children's prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until they are 25. A child should not be encouraged to make life-altering decisions when they are 10. A Citizen's Oversight Curriculum Committee must establish healthy boundaries regarding sensitive private topics relating to Human Sexuality, Sexual Orientation, and Sexual Activity. All Curricula in a Tax Funded Public School should have community input and allow for the diversity of beliefs of the residents of Palos Verdes, a mostly conservative and faith-based population. To ensure that our School Teachers stay focused on excellence in academics, we need to have Community oversight in matters relating to Curriculum. A Board-Appointed Curriculum Committee will be the set of checks and balances our Schools need to maintain a balanced and inclusive Curriculum for families of all faiths and various beliefs.</p>
Tamsyn Curtis	<p>Curriculum - I will not stand by and allow depravity to infiltrate our community. Our children have been through enough thanks to the outlandish and unjustified covid policies this district bought in to. We, the parents, will not allow obscene materials and topics to infiltrate our kids learnings. There is a song with extremely appropriate lyrics for this situation - 'Leave our Kids alone!' and I expect our School Board to protect our children and put them first - not the agenda of a minority which is offensive.</p>
Sally Moite	<p>Diversity Public schools serve all children in the community, and have the duty to make them all feel welcome at school, including children who are gender diverse. I hope board members will support teachers' efforts to do this, and help teachers affirm and not stigmatize their students.</p>
Parent	<p>J4: I am against forming a new board appointed curriculum committee. A small faction is trying to undermine the majority by circumventing the California Board of Education and the PVPUSD Curriculum board decisions. The majority of constituent in PVPUSD voted for progressive board members. I do not want the minority to make decisions that will change and shape PVPUSD.</p>

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Moira Nelson

Perhaps this has to do with item J4, Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee? My concerns are in regard to the complaints lodged by a group of parents concerning a teacher in a fifth-grade classroom reading aloud from the novel "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff. As posted on Audible, the book in question has received the following accolades: Newbery Honor Book; National Book Award finalist; Boston Globe Best Book of 2021; Time Magazine Best Children's book of 2021; Washington Post Best Children's Book of 2021; New York Public Library Best Book for Kids of 2021; Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Book for 2021; NPR Best Book of 2021; Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2021; Kirkus Best Book of 2021; School Library Journal Best Book of 2021. On Amazon.com, the reading age is identified as 10 to 12 years. The book's message is one of tolerance, its goal to relieve children's anxiety concerning the subject of gender identity and to allow children respectful space in which to examine their own emerging identities (whatever those may be). It does not pressure or proselytize. It is a sensitive acknowledgement of the different perspectives that children of the target age group are grappling with today.

Heather Burr

J4 I do hope there is a more honest intent behind this than last time. I know that the last committee really had barely any input and there was very little discussion allowed whatsoever by the members. I can only assume it was intended as a rubber stamp for what the previous board and teachers' union wanted to do, thereby having a fall guy when parents complain. It was a shame.

The behavior going on in our district is disappointing. The Book Too Bright to See (and any other book with similar content) being read to elementary school kids is completely unacceptable. It is clearly an agenda to expose (double meaning intended) young minds to inappropriate content without their parents' knowledge. Nobody would just randomly select that book for enjoyment to be read to children. Absolutely no content with regard to sex should be taught or discussed with school children of any age without the express consent of their parent, and even then, should be confined to health class. This includes, straight, gay, trans or whatever other new idea comes up. In light of the fact that a former teacher has just been arrested for possessing pedophile content, I should think the Board would be particularly concerned about what the students are learning and who is coming into contact with them. I've also seen the video of the Miraleste teacher verbally assailing his student. I'm sure it isn't the first time. This kind of behavior and bias is also unacceptable. It appears that the teachers' union and many others seem to think they know better than the children's own parents. Our school district should stick to teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, not to mention actual science. They should not spend time on a woke agenda to indoctrinate kid's minds. Let them be kids. It is activity such as this that is causing parents to move their kids to religious schools or to home school. If we want to remain a top academic school district, we need to do better.

Richelle Miller

Teachers are for teaching not grooming. School subjects are math, history, science, literature. Stick to your job. Leave the raising kids to the parents

Christina Jones

Call to action regarding parents being notified regarding books being read on sexuality. Having a book about a former drag queen? Give me a fricken break. Talk about dumbing us down as a society! As a resident of Rancho Palos Verdes and a concerned parent and grandparent and an active member of the Southbay community who is an advocate for bringing up children in a nurturing environment with high moral standards dignity and respect, this nonsense only degrades and continues to dumb our children down. How about read books on loving your neighbor and respecting and valuing human life and nature. How about books on wonderful moral grandparents and amazing hero's and war veterans. Cut the crap. Enough is enough.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23**Written Public Comments**

Anonymous	<p>It's infuriating when an ex-school board member sets the example of exactly what an online bully is - and it's happening frequently. Rick Phillips is an online troll and the BOE needs to do something about it and distance yourself from him. It is very concerning the ways in which he is attacking not only current BOE members, but also other community members within our school district. What is even more concerning, is that Rick and his wife was selected to attend Capitol Convoy on behalf of our district ... is his actions that of what we wish to represent our entire community in Sacramento? We should teach our children and lead with example that it is ok to have different perspectives and viewpoints and that we should not be ashamed nor afraid to speak our minds. We should cultivate safe environments which fosters healthy dialogue. Rick Phillips is the antithesis from that. PLEASE speak up and out against his behaviour and PLEASE ensure he is not representing us at Capitol Convoy. It is embarrassing.</p>
Alisa Logan	<p>Item J4 I wanted to share my recent experience with a new social studies pilot program introduced in kindergarten in the PVPUSD. I have a daughter at Cornerstone in kindergarten and earlier this year the teacher sent out an email notifying parents they were to begin a new social studies pilot program for the next 8 weeks. The email asked parents to look over the curriculum and fill out a survey. When I went to look over the material, the link they provided was empty. When I emailed the teacher, she never responded. So when I asked her in person she said I had to go down to the district and request to see the materials and view in the office. I was confused and disappointed by the lack of transparency the district was providing. I am the parent and primary educator for my children. I want to see what my kids are being taught.</p>
Kam Najmi	<p>books like this should never be allowed in schools. This is not a partisan issue. Kids should not be exposed to such nonsense. It only creates confusion.</p>
Derek Elder	<p>Are people shocked that there's public outcry when they read smut to children? There's a reason I won't be sending my kids to public schools. The teachers unions can't die soon enough.</p>
Mark Schwartz	<p>Where will the censorship end? What can it lead to? Too Bright to See by Kyle Lukoff is a Newberry Honor Book and a National Book Award Finalist. Quoting the New York Times Book Review, it is "...a gentle, glowing wonder, full of love and understanding." Here's another quote: "It is the press, above all, which wages a positively fanatical and slanderous struggle, tearing down everything which can be regarded as a support...to cultural elevation." That one was from Mein Kampf by Adolf Hitler. No doubt Ms. Hamill, Mr. Schaper, and their ilk would agree.</p>
Jenay Rouimi	<p>J4 - PVPUSD already has a curriculum working committee. Curriculum must be developed & decided upon by experts in education and childhood development. Our district has a strong reputation across California and the United States. Diminishing this reputation by being constantly embroiled in overly political drama and hysterics will not serve our students well in the long term, especially in something so counter intuitive as banning books. Strong oversight by the district and the State of California already ensure that our students receive a top flight education that is well rounded, diverse, and structured appropriately to their grade. The voices of just a few parents cannot direct the Board to make such a sweeping change that the PVFTA opposes vehemently.</p>

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23**Written Public Comments**

G1 - Mental health for our LGBTQ+ students has been directly challenged during the onslaught of negative, hateful, transphobic ideologies shared by just a few, but outrageously vocal, individuals throughout the Palos Verdes community over the past few weeks. The fight for our kids should be for their well being, which cannot be guided by any one religion or belief. The morality of some is not the morality for all, but that seems to be the direction this argument has gone. Gender identity is not to be conflated with sexuality. Discussing LGBTQ ideas is not sex education. How many books that our kids read refer to heterosexuality (prince/princess, mother/father, husband/wife), and there is no consideration as to how those might effect the reader. Gender is a social construct. All of our children deserve to be represented, respected, recognized and not harangued for living their own individual truth. This is what we should expect across the board - not just to be bestowed upon those who live according to a narrow reading of some people's religious texts. In 2021, nearly 70% of LGBTQ+ students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Over half (52%) seriously considered suicide, and 1 in 5 reported making an attempt. Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ students say they have been bullied on school property (Los Angeles LGBT Center study). We must do better.

Erin	J4- I strongly oppose the creation of a curriculum committee. This would not be in the best interests of our students. The very small number of folks that do support this are doing so with bad intentions and to serve their own agendas. Please stand up for what is right and do not be bullied by these aggressive groups.
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Marvin Schlackman	The teachers union and their WOK policies are killing this nation.
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Kathy Goodson	Book banning, a form of censorship, occurs when private individuals, government officials, or organizations remove books from libraries, school reading lists, or bookstore shelves because they object to their content, ideas, or themes." One Parent should not be allowed to infringe on the rights of all students because they wish to shelter their own child. They are the first person to scream about not having their parenting interfered with, yet are the first person to scream to control what should happen with other people's children. This hypocrisy must be allowed to infect our schools, and rob our students of their opportunity to be exposed to diverse ideas, and more importantly, to teach students how to think for themselves.
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Rose Bothner	Reading of transgender book in 5th grade. I am totally opposed to spending precious learning time with our children reading books on issues that are best handled in the home by the parents. 5th grade is too early for children to be exposed to literature that can influence their sexual identity, again this needs to be discussed in the home with the parents, not by teachers who have such a liberal agenda. Where is the reading, writing, arithmetic, history and science that are needed to be successful students? Get off the political agenda and get back to the job of education is my challenge to teachers.
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Edith Cohn	Item J4 I oppose the creation of a parent curriculum committee. Curriculum should be decided on by educators who are the experts in learning and childhood development. Mental health G1: Transphobia expressed by members of our community is unacceptable. The trans children of our community deserve respect and to see themselves in books chosen by our wonderful educators. Non trans children of our community need to be taught empathy and kindness for trans kids. This can best be accomplished through books such as Too Bright To See
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BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

MK anonymous

Gender ID in school: I work in a children's hospital, with with a gender clinic. All children's hospitals in CA have them. What I am about to state is very hard to accept if you have any faith in all in the medical community. CA taxpayers now pay for "affirming" care; Insurance companies have to pay for it, by CA law signed 1/2023. Most of my coworkers, loving, moms who believe in "accepting everyone" have not connected the dots re: what they do at the GC. When I told them, I got blank, wide eyed stares, then they changed the subject. It's too horrible to comprehend. This is not just about a book, it's what the book LEADS to: medicalizing, causing irreversible damage to the most vulnerable: autistic, confused, abused, gay kids. You cannot change sexes. Kids are perfectly way they are. Puberty is normal (and sucky). 80-90% of kids will grow out of dysphoric feelings. Gender ideology purposely confuses kids, who can then pressure parents to take them to an MD who will provide "affirming care" which will "affirm" their delusion, and fast track them to blockers, hormones, then surgery. The kids may be happy/relieved at first. Most regret doesn't happen for 7 years. Kid changes their mind? Too bad, there is no such thing as "detransitioning" and zero protocols. Please follow the Chloe Cole lawsuit to find out what is happening to some kids who regret their decision. It is a never ending nightmare, it IS happening, it is NOT a "right wing conspiracy". Thank you for trying to understand.

Brian Pannuzzo

Curriculum Committee comment... I am extremely supportive of a formal, board appointed Curriculum Committee. It's important to have parents involved in the curriculum process, which is why it's required by state policy. It will be a huge positive for community trust and understanding. There is absolutely no downside involving parents in this process. -Brian Pannuzzo

Caryl Schwartz

Reading is an opportunity for children to learn about people that have different life experiences, whether it be historical, contemporary fiction, or non-fiction. Too Bright to See is a Newberry Honor and National Book Award Finalist. Labeling the book controversial or provocative as a means to prevent teachers from reading it is wrong and is going down a slippery slope. What's next? Banning books about the Holocaust, Slavery, or Japanese internment camps because some parents or school board members decide to label the subject matter as controversial or provocative? Going to the local library and demanding books be removed from the shelves? It's sad that some parents feel their children are so malleable that being exposed to a fictional character questioning their identity is detrimental to their well-being. Children can learn empathy and understanding reading about the emotional struggles and life's experiences of others.

C.J. Ruona

I recently became aware that a fifth-grade teacher in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District (PVPUSD) read a story book to her class, "Too Bright to See". I understand that this is a story regarding a drag queen and in it a girl believes she is actually a boy. This, a controversial subject with sexual overtones, was done in violation of the California Education Code as well as district policy. Fortunately, newly elected school board member Julie Hamill in her newsletter dated March 3, 2023, has pointed out why this is not only contrary to state law, but inappropriate. As a parent who has had three children educated in the PVPUSD I salute Hamill for her values and stand and urge everyone to read her newsletter at www.hamill4pv.com.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

C. Ramos

Greetings; allow that I begin with two quotes from a call to action post by an unknown instructor. I begin with: " We know that all kids develop greater empathy and understanding when they are exposed to a broad range of literature that represents the diversity of our lives. We know that it is a lifeline & can be a life-saver for queer kids to see themselves represented in literature and other forms of popular culture." Of all the quotable statements by a Democrat forum - which by the way, does not have a 425 word limit; expresses the above. Should one truly be concerned with popular culture, it is assured that imposition of an unnatural sex deviation does NOT constitute American popular culture. This is PV. But just down the hill is Torrance which does make room for those who will attend LGBTQT meetings. This can easily be found on Meetup website. Our nation is undergoing extremely challenging times, and Trans "empathy" just will not be the solution to bring America out from its current embrace with pro-Socialist and counter culture agendas. This conversation is absurd mainly because Parents know what is right for their children and so do administrators and teachers. However, in this pro-socialist environment, any and all instruments to undermine American Tradition seems to be the order of the day. Allow that I ask a huge favor of all listeners. As an analogy, this mountain just underwent an avalanche. The business at hand is to dig those who are trapped beneath the snow out! The meeting is not to discuss the beauty and design of individual snowflakes (no pun intended whatsoever.) But I beg to ask that families focus. The Trans demographic is a minuscule element of our culture which is in fact compromised of broader, richer, deeper, higher, and far more enriching and life enhancing experiences than is 'trans' promotion within a public school arena. The underlying purpose of public education is to do just that - to educate. The fallacious fascination with "queer kids" by media, by a left leaning politics, and further promotion via cross dressing men leads a younger person into confusion. But more importantly, that sole mission; to educate; through the introduction of confusing and abstract concepts at a primary or middle school level completely belies the reason public schools are funded. Beginning with a segment of generation X, most of generation Y and much but not all of generation Z, these demographics comprise large groups of students who have been and who are ineffectively and inefficiently educated. The quote above lists "empathy" as being tantamount to a fine education. Ridiculous! Where is any demonstration of empathy exhibited by teachers who knowingly and willfully immerse young persons under the waters of materials that will result in their deliberate mal-education?

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

This exemplifies an overt absence of empathy, simply in the instructors knowing that in the reading of such a text or texts, rather than age appropriate titles, and age appropriate subject matter. The other side of "queer kids" matter is the healthy majority of heterosexually aligned kids. These youths are being asked to stew in materials that they no doubt cannot agree with, have no interest in, nor are they inclined to be. In fewer but more deliberate words; the neologisms "inclusion, empathy, broad range of literature, "diversity" in our lives, tolerance" these are all nebulous and meaningless terms that are used politically to whatever end the speaker or reader wishes to imbue the air with. This issue about diversity - this specific queer diversity - is that this is divisive. No child is born without a natural means to emote, to share experiences and feelings, to care, to bond with each other, and to make friends. This artificial method of imparting sexual material that is in fact, were any of the sentiments therein true; it would be, and will be ultimately up to the youths who, again, should there be uniformly any fabric of truth to the material - to decide for themselves what path they shall take regarding their sexual makeup. But allow that this PV district stop and refocus, it is not their sexuality, but their minds that are primary here. And in order to create strong minds, to create emotionally sturdy young people, intelligent problem solving youths, smart kids, bright, patriotic and also athletic young persons, the materials presented to them must be of the American Tradition, of American beliefs and core values. No one will enjoy listening to their core values being marginalized, sidelined in favor of a painfully small demographic of "trans" who have not even reached puberty. This topical subject matter at this young age is a disgrace to the profession of teaching by presentation of subject matter that is not pertinent to, nor is this appropriate to certain age brackets identified in this Call to Action. The youths mentioned here are fifth graders! I wonder who is behind the course curriculum that requires age inappropriate materials and who is the designer of the class room teaching guide? Granted, in university and collegiate levels, a Professor is allowed to present controversial material one day per semester - But this is at higher emotional and intelligence levels. Do not equate these Fifth grade students on the same plane as university and collegiate level students. Fifth grade is not a laboratory where one explores imparting empathy OVER education. Thank you for your consideration and your time. This topic should have never come this far.

Ann Nye

I support the teachers who decided it was important for the students to read Kyle Lukoff's book, Too Bright to See. I support the PVFA position of teaching with books that include members of the LGBTQ community. It is healthy for our kids to hear and read these books. We are fortunate to have the California Healthy Youth Act here in California to guide our school districts. The Act's Requirement #12 (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/faq.asp>) about LGBTQ instruction materials says in part that, "schools must teach about all sexual orientations and what being LGBTQ means." Please support PVPUSD teachers in teaching with books that include LGBTQ people.

Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi

Good evening Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District. I'm Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi and I wanted to make a comment on an important discussion that is occurring regarding the recent reading of "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff in a 5th grade class at Vista Grande Elementary School. I did a quick read of the book on my flight from LA to Sacramento and in the fictional story the main character explores gender identity issues. As a parent, I think it is a wonderful book. The moral of the story is to love and accept a person for who they are, and to encourage everyone to have the courage to be themselves. The book has received the Newbery Medal for outstanding children's literature and also was a National Book Award Finalist. As a parent, I appreciate the conversation about whether the book is appropriate for elementary school, but I fully support the teacher who decided that it was good and important to read this book. I thank you for the time. Best, Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi.

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Frank Zerunyan	<p>I am sorry I cannot be there this evening. I will be in my classroom. I am utterly dismayed by either political party and unions infringing upon the decisions of duly elected members of this board who are elected to make policy for the district. The authority to determine the curriculum rests with the district, not individual teachers. Five people are accountable to the community and the children they represent. Teachers, as employees, must carry out that curriculum and abide by any restrictions. They do not have a right to use whatever teaching materials and methodologies they choose if this is contrary to school policy. There is ample jurisprudence on this topic. Academic freedom for higher education is different than K-12. While academic freedom, as a constitutional rule, could somehow apply to primary and secondary schools, that does not insulate a teacher's curricular and pedagogical choices from the school board's oversight. I ask all these special interests to allow this school board to govern under the authority of our California and Federal Constitutions. Our kids deserve nothing less.</p>
Igor Eric Abelev	<p>Comment on Item J4: I'll just say that parents 100% need to be involved on any decisions teaching gender ideology to our children. Any materials like this that a teacher decides to bring into the classroom must be vetted by a committee of parents. This ideology is new and despite the cries of 'settled science', the science is far, far from settled. We need broad discussion BEFORE anything like this is introduced to the classroom - particularly in elementary school.</p>
Marianne Hunter	<p>Good evening,</p> <p>I have just learned about the hearing by PV Board of Education regarding teacher censorship in the matter of reading material. Reading is a doorway to greater understanding of the world. Reading is an ideal means of gaining information. Classroom discussion is an invaluable means of gaining insight and evaluating that information, in order to develop one's own POV and to weigh others. This is how a child develops the ability to think critically and how to communicate with others. This classroom interaction helps a child MATURE as an independent, respectful and responsible person.</p> <p>In short. I reject the banning of books. I support teachers in their efforts to help children understand the world around them. Understanding is a tool, it is not brain-washing. Thank you very much for deciding in favor of EDUCATION.</p>
Catherine C Beyer	<p>People pay exorbitant prices for homes in Palos Verdes, so their children can attend school there. Your district is nationally known for its excellence. Why start banning books to limit what intelligent, enthusiastic, preteens want to read? NOT a good look! Cathy Beyer. retired teacher, 27 years with LAUSD.</p>
Joanna brow	<p>I firmly believe that we need a formal Curriculum committee that includes PARENTS, teachers, including ESL and special education teachers, as outlined in ca state board of education policy 01-05.</p>
Robert Parker	<p>It is not the job of elementary teachers to indoctrinate 5th graders with gender identity issues and education. This is a parent-child topic to discuss when the time is appropriate and under the instruction of a parent, not a public school educator. A school educator should stick to scholastic topics of Math, Science, History and English. Reading transgender stories to 5th graders is inappropriate and out of line.</p>
Jessica O'Rourke	<p>Agenda Item J4 I am writing in support of a formal board appointed Curriculum Committee. I feel that it's vitally important to have parents involved in the curriculum process.</p>

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Melody Lomboy

Representation is important, all children should be able to see themselves in various places in our curriculum. As a mixed minority, I rarely saw myself in curriculum, whether it was books, topics, or history. LGBTQi+ kids have read books with heterosexual characters during their whole childhood, yet they still grow up to be LGBTQi+. I have no worries that if my child is exposed to a book with a trans character that they will want that lifestyle solely based on a character. Our children are being brought up in a bubble and seeing the world beyond Palos Verdes is important and I fully respect and support our teachers and their book choices. I do not agree with parents choosing our curriculum. If parents are not happy with the district, they have other options and should utilize those.

K4, Establishment of a Board appointed curriculum committee Curriculum should be created by experts in education and childhood development. Much like I seek healthcare from actual Medical Doctors, I want my child's education to be molded by those who have studied education. Parents of other children that say they are speaking for ALL children are not speaking for mine. We are very happy with this district and very happy with the education that our children have

CC Ball

A quote from Mohamad Safa, Human Rights Activist: "Gay Kids read thousands of books about straight characters, yet they still grow up gay. But y'all are worried if your son, Billy, reads just one book where a penguin has two dads, he is going to wake up the next day and ask Brad to prom." If Billy and Brad want to go to prom, let them. This isnt 1950. Our kids are more accepting that they are given credit for and I hope they are not taking on all of the hate that has been demonstrated lately by a SMALL group of LOUD parents in our community---AND those OUTSIDE of our community being riled up by a board member that is reaching out to groups not affiliated with palos verdes to help her push her personal initiatives. The people angry about masks are finding new things to complain about and its a crazy waste of time and energy. I would hope that this board member would spend more time realizing that our community supports our students and when she refers to "safety" she should worry about LIVESCAN and gun violence. Not gay kids or a book with one trans kid in it. I also wish she would see that the community doesnt support her as seen with the votes.

Christine Harris

Banning a book and demonizing instructors for sharing it is unwise and has the opposite effect that those who object to it intend. If there is truly confusing and inflaming content in a well written book it should be discussed and debated so that young minds have an opportunity to determine for themselves what they think instead of trying to keep them from thinking at all

Matt

J4 As a former student & current resident I think this is an awful idea. What this is designed to do is say, "we don't trust teacher". There is no need for a committee like this now or in the future. The uproar by a small majority trying to gain power is awful. Please deny this committee.

Danica Keese

#J4 I am so grateful that this suggestion has come. We ABSOLUTELY could use a curriculum committee. This would ease up the amount of work that is expected from the board and a committee could be so helpful in representing our community. The controversial issues are just beginning and we are a boutique school district that should directly represent our community. Please vote to implement one.

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Mia Viljoen

Agenda Item: J4. Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee The BOE have a great responsibility in bringing our community together, and we hope you will make decisions keeping this in mind, instead of driving a deeper wedge by opposing sides and create more aggression. It is important to understand that parents are the primary stakeholders in their children's education. Different families have different value systems and parents choose to raise their children imparting these different perspectives to their children. It is critical to understand the importance in respecting our differences. Parents play an essential role in shaping their child's future by being actively involved in their educational journey. In addition to family value systems, parents have firsthand knowledge of their child's strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, and interests. Parental involvement ensures that the curriculum reflects the values and beliefs of everybody in the community. As a result the curriculum will be designed to fit the diverse needs of our students. Moreover, involving parents in the curriculum committee will ensure that their voices are heard. It will provide them with the opportunity to provide feedback on the curriculum and express their concerns. By including parents in the curriculum committee, we will create a sense of transparency and collaboration, which will ultimately benefit everyone. Schools should be neutral and provide impartial instruction, without promoting any political ideology or religion or social construct. The goal for schools are to create students who are able to think critically, analyze information, and make their own informed decisions. The removal of politics and religion from schools was meant to ensure that education remains impartial and focused on providing students with knowledge and skills, rather than indoctrinating them with specific beliefs or ideologies. Controversial social issues, which do not relate directly to academic advancement or which are part of very specific curriculum with set boundaries, should fall in this category as well. **It should be noted that this proposed curriculum committee should be made up of a much more diverse group of parents, representing all perspectives, backgrounds and opinions within our community, unlike the very biased medical committee with exclusively one mindset. In closing to reiterate: It is important to understand that parents are the primary stakeholders in their children's education, please value parents in this process and respect and honor different viewpoints.

Jennifer Montesana

Section J - Curriculum Committee. Dr. Cherniss, President Ami Gandhi and members of the board, thank you for your time in hearing this written submission this evening. I am writing as a proud parent in the PVPUSD to express my support of the Curriculum Committee agenda item being presented this evening. As a parent of two children currently in the district, as well as a graduate of this district and active community member, I am in full support a formal Curriculum Committee that includes parents, teachers, administrators and community members, as outlined in California State Board of Education Policy, 01-05. This committee has been in the discussion and planning stages for far too long and it is now finally time to officially form the committee so that we can be in accordance with state policy. In the spirit of collaboration, our board should agree that parents have the right to collaborate with educators and administrators to decide what curriculum is appropriate for all students in our district. The state requires for parents to be a part of the discussion and specifically allows for individual districts to make the decision to adopt (or not adopt) specific curriculum that is appropriate or desired for their community. Without the adoption of the Curriculum Committee, we will not be in accordance with state policy. There is absolutely no valid reason for the Curriculum Committee to not be formed at this time. Thank you for your time and careful attention to this matter.

Carol Martin

As a registered Republican, living in Redondo Beach and for the protection of our children, I support the banning of this book and others similar. It is my hope that the teacher reconsider the reading of this book due to its immoral and dangerous supernatural message causing a child to rethink his/her body and emotions, let alone convincing the child of his/her insecurities at this stage in life. Who am I? Why don't I like to play with dolls? Why don't I think like other kids? Is there something wrong with me?

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The Woke agenda seems to seek and devour our children into thinking there must be something wrong with them and that they will be warmly accepted by the LGBTQ movement. A straight road to hell. Parents need to pay attention and get their families back into church. LGBTQ should not be allowed to consider itself as part of a child's education. This movement has been infiltrating our education system with the use of tax payers money for some time. How nice for the LGBTQ; no need to campaign or spend money, just sneak this type of influence and destruction into the system. Satan will happily scoop our children up along with the teachers and authors.

Parents need to read what the Board of Education promises to provide their children and make it accountable and what exactly does the Teacher's Union provide for a sane learning environment. Like it or not, LGBTQ and Union, God is in control. Thank you for your time.

Anonymous

J4. Why does this have to be such an issue? Keep controversial topics out of elementary school classrooms. Pick a different book to read to the fifth graders and have this book available for kids whose parents want their 10/11 year olds to read. It isn't that hard. Why does this have to be politicized. It is sad and frustrating.

Paul Midford

I am writing in strong support for the right of 5th-grade teachers at Vista Grande Elementary School (and other elementary schools in the District) to read aloud to students the award winning children's book Too Bright to See, by Kyle Lukoff. Transgender people are an integral part of our community and nation, and teaching 5th graders about them and their presence in our communities is entirely appropriate. Moreover, we should trust the professional judgement of our hardworking teachers to decide which children's books are appropriate for what age. We entrust our teachers and public schools with educating future generations, and trying to micromanage that education from outside the classroom would be a mistake that will damage our children's education. As a graduate of the Palos Verdes Unified School District from kindergarten through my senior year in high school, I am grateful for the excellent education I received from the dedicated and talented teachers of the District, including through exposure to a variety of literature that introduced a wide range of characters in society. That education has served me extraordinarily well ever since, and I trust the same will prove true for current and future generations of students if we continue to trust the professional judgement of our teachers.

Charity Malin

I have reviewed several of the most recent Board Meetings where new curriculum was adopted. I have also compared the information presented at those meetings with the recommendations from the state on piloting new curriculum. I think our district is greatly in need of a more public and transparent process, and a Board established curriculum committee is an excellent solution.

Here are some problems with our current process that I think could be solved by a formal committee.

It is unclear how the need to update curriculum was determined.

The criteria used to evaluate the available curriculum options was not made public. The unique needs of our local student body were not publicly identified. Also, the needs of English learners and special needs students were not addressed in the presentations.

The reasons given for recommending a curriculum are extremely vague. For example, when the new AP World History textbook was adopted, only one curriculum had been piloted, and the Board was simply told by an administrator that "teachers loved it". When the Middle School Social Studies textbooks were adopted, the board was offered three anonymous quotes from teachers, which basically just said, "This curriculum is great." It should be clear to the community how the recommended curriculum measured up to the established criteria.

Parents of students in a pilot are notified, but parents of younger children who will use the adopted curriculum in future years are not notified, and there is no attempt whatsoever to seek the wisdom of older residents who do not have children attending school anymore. Also, there does not appear to be any organized means of gathering and quantifying input from parents or other members of the community.

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Some people have raised concerns with piloted curriculum at the the board meetings, but this is very late in the process. It would be better to consider everything long before the recommendation to the board.

The current Superintendent's committee is a good start, but it has not addressed these or other problems. The state guidance on selecting curriculum to pilot says, "The process of selecting and implementing new instructional materials should be thoroughly planned, conducted publicly and well documented."

Attached is the entire document provided by the state.

California State Board of Education Policy

SUBJECT

Guidelines for Piloting Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Forward

These guidelines have been revised to reflect changes in law related to the flexibility of local instructional materials reviews and the local control funding formula. They are designed to touch upon major considerations most likely to be universally applicable to local educational agencies (LEA) and offer suggested strategies. They are offered for grades K–8; however, they may be adapted for grades 9–12.

Introduction

The California State Board of Education (SBE) has constitutional authority to adopt textbooks for grades one through eight (Article IX, Section 7.5 of the California Constitution) and statutory authority to adopt instructional materials for kindergarten. *Education Code (EC)* Sections 60200-60204 describe the process for the adoption of instructional materials for these grades and mandate that submitted materials be evaluated for consistency with adopted content standards and specific evaluation criteria approved by the SBE. (The evaluation criteria are incorporated in the curriculum frameworks.) *EC* Section 60010(h) defines instructional materials as "all materials that are designed for use by pupils and their teachers as a learning resource and help pupils to acquire facts, skills, or opinions or to develop cognitive processes. Instructional materials may be printed or non-printed, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational materials, and tests." The SBE traditionally adopts only basic instructional materials programs, i.e., programs that are designed for use by pupils and their teachers as a principal learning resource and meet in organization and content the basic requirements of a full course of study (generally one school year in length).

An LEA may choose to use instructional materials that have not been adopted by the SBE, pursuant to *EC* Section 60210, so long as they are aligned to state standards and a majority of the participants of any review process conducted by the LEA are classroom teachers who are assigned to the subject area or grade level of the materials being reviewed.

The process of selecting and implementing new instructional materials should be thoroughly planned, conducted publicly and well documented. At every step an LEA should adhere to *EC* Section 60002 which states the following: "Each district board shall provide for substantial teacher involvement in the selection of instructional materials and shall promote the involvement of parents and other members of the community in the selection of instructional materials."

I. Determining Materials to Pilot

The SBE-adopted curriculum framework for the respective subject will provide extensive information regarding initial selection of instructional materials. A review of the curriculum framework will be the first step in any curriculum development and instructional materials selection process.

In selecting instructional materials to pilot, a district may either choose from programs on the current SBE-adopted list of recommended materials, or the district may conduct its own independent review. In either case, the steps identified below are critical to the process.

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The format of instructional materials may include print, technology-based or a combination of both, as identified in *EC* Section 60010(h).

1. Establish a representative committee charged with recommending instructional materials for district adoption. The committee should involve representatives of all populations in the district including, parents, administrators, teachers at all grade levels, English learner programs, and programs to support students with special needs. The committee will:

Review criteria for evaluation of instructional resources as outlined in the most recent SBE-approved curriculum framework for the subject area under consideration. Whether choosing from the SBE-adopted list or conducting an independent review, a thorough understanding of the SBE's evaluation criteria will be helpful. These criteria include alignment with the SBE-adopted content standards, program organization, assessment, universal access, and instructional planning with teacher support.

Review, as appropriate, the Toolkit for Evaluating Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials developed by Achieve, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Student Achievement Partners located at Qualitative Rubric for Informational

Texts: <http://programs.ccsso.org/projects/common%20core%20resources/documents/Informational%20Text%20Qualitative%20Rubric.pdf> [preceding link is no longer valid] and

[Qualitative Rubric for Literary](#)

[Texts: http://programs.ccsso.org/projects/common%20core%20resources/documents/Literary%20Text%20Qualitative%20Rubric.pdf](http://programs.ccsso.org/projects/common%20core%20resources/documents/Literary%20Text%20Qualitative%20Rubric.pdf) [preceding link is no longer valid]

Review SBE or District adopted grade level content standards for the specific subject area under consideration.

Review the SBE Adoption Report of Instructional Materials which outlines the K–8 state adoption process and the state level evaluations of each program.

Identify student strengths and weaknesses using district or site level data as appropriate. Disaggregate measures of student achievement in mathematics and language arts from statewide tests results. Review results from district assessments in the content area for which materials are being adopted. District assessment data would be especially useful for the content areas that do not have CAASPP results.

Identify student diversity/universal access issues that instructional materials need to address—above grade level, below grade level, English learner populations, and special needs populations. Ensure that the instructional materials being considered provide equitable access to all areas of the curriculum for all students. The curriculum frameworks contain extensive information regarding this access. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires an LEA to provide accessible instructional materials to students who need them for participation and achievement. While SBE-adopted materials are available in accessible formats from the CDE, an LEA utilizing non-adopted materials will need to obtain digital files and have them converted to accessible formats, such as braille and large print books.

2. Define and prioritize evaluation criteria. Develop an evaluation instrument. The evaluation instrument should reflect criteria from the State, but it should also reflect district or site specific concerns, such as, organization of teacher materials, management/availability of supplemental materials, required level of teacher knowledge, preparation time, etc. The evaluation instrument can also be used as a guide for a preliminary screening of suggested instructional materials for piloting so that only the few programs most closely aligned with the identified evaluation criteria will be piloted. It is difficult to adequately monitor and support piloting of more than two to four programs.

3. Ensure that instructional materials comply with the state laws and regulations for social content. Instructional materials must meet EC Sections 60040–60045 as well as the SBE guidelines in the Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content. These laws and the SBE guidelines require that instructional materials used in California public schools reflect California’s multicultural society, avoid stereotyping, and contribute to a positive learning environment. Instructional materials that are adopted by the SBE meet the social content requirements. The CDE conducts social content reviews of a range of instructional materials and maintains an online, searchable list of the materials that meet the social content requirements. If an LEA is not purchasing state-adopted instructional materials or materials from the list of approved instructional materials maintained by the CDE, the LEA must ensure that the review for social content review is done at the state or local level. An LEA may require a publisher to submit its materials for social content at the state level before the materials are adopted at the local level. Information about the review process and the CDE’s searchable database can be found on the CDE Social Content Review Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/lc.asp>.

II. The Pilot

Piloting instructional materials using a representative sample of classrooms for a specified period of time during a school year is a frequent part of the adoption process in many school districts. A structured and monitored pilot process can be helpful to school districts and school sites as they consider the adoption of instructional materials.

An effective pilot will help determine if the materials will actually provide teachers with the needed resources to implement a standards-based instructional program. The core of the pilot process is determining the relationship of the materials to the standards and the teachers’ evaluations of how well the materials provide students access to the standards. The actual use of the materials in classrooms will provide teachers experience with the program’s organization, assessment, and range of instructional strategies. The evaluations of the pilot teachers will carry considerable influence at the decision making time.

The piloting process, being mindful of *EC* Section 60002 as quoted above, should also involve representatives of all populations in the district including, parents, administrators, English learner programs, and programs to support students with special needs.

Listed below is a suggested chronology of the local pilot process.

1. Contact selected publishers to ascertain what assistance they will provide, e.g., number of pilots at free or reduced cost, in-service for the pilot teachers, consultation with teachers during the pilot process.
2. Establish the district contact for the selected publishers. Set firm ground rules with the publishers and teachers. Limit the amount of materials that can be distributed and to whom. Maintain a careful list of what materials are being used in each classroom in order to ensure student access to appropriate complete and rigorous content.
3. Ensure that teachers are comparing similar components of competing programs by standardizing the components to be piloted, e.g., intervention materials, English learner support, skills reinforcement.
4. Consider the use of formative assessments and pre and post testing. This might be done with subject areas that are used to determine statewide test score or to determine retention/promotion policies.
5. Establish a system for removing non-consumable materials when the pilot is completed. Keep teachers, publishers, and site administrators informed of timelines and procedures.
6. Determine the duration of the pilot. Determine what information is needed from the pilot and give teachers enough time to develop a complete unit or concept so that they will be able to evaluate the program fairly. It is preferable to have teachers use more than one program. This establishes a basis for comparison and evaluation.
7. Set up the pilot sites to represent the various student populations and teacher populations. Have programs distributed equally among grade levels.
8. Require that teachers attend an in-service training for their materials. They need to know what they have and how to use it in order to fairly evaluate the materials. They also need to understand that they are part of a small group of people who will be giving valuable input to the selection committee.

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9. Review the evaluation instrument with the pilot teachers at the in-service training. Distribute it to the publishers prior to the in-service training, so they can address criteria during the in-service training.

10. Gather evaluations promptly when the pilot process is completed. Compile results and distribute them to the selection committee, teachers, and publishers. Look for trends by grade level, criteria and particular school populations. The committee should use the evaluations as one step in the adoption process.

III. Additional Piloting Considerations

1. Keep the offerings of each publisher consistent with the other publishers, so that a bias will not be established toward a publisher who is more “generous”.

2. Caution teachers and publishers about accepting or offering gifts, gratuities, meals, etc. Pilot evaluations need to be based on the merits of the program and its effectiveness with student learning. It is recommended that *EC* sections 60070–60076 be reviewed as these sections specify the prohibitions between publishers and school officials.

3. Establish firm guidelines regarding contact between publishers and district personnel at the outset of the piloting process and monitor during the process. To assist in setting guidelines, it is advisable to review the *EC* sections dealing with instructional materials (grades K–12, sections 60052–60076; grades K–8, sections 60200–60112; grades 9–12, sections 60400–60411).

4. Inform evaluation committees that publishers must comply with numerous statutes and regulations. In particular, evaluation committees should be aware that publishers are prohibited from publicizing in their marketing material excerpts, in whole or part, from state adoption reports.

5. Verify correlations/standards maps supplied by publishers to actual standards and check the references to specific lessons and page numbers. Materials adopted by the SBE must be aligned to the standards.

6. Survey educators outside the district to explore their experiences with the instructional materials that are being piloted or considered for adoption.

IV. Curriculum Mapping Considerations

If using materials from more than one source, i.e. basal program, to provide content aligned to the SBE-adopted standards, an LEA should develop a curriculum map to identify the materials to be utilized to provide complete coverage of the standards. This documentation is important for determining whether or not the LEA is in compliance with *EC* Section 60119, commonly known as *Williams’* instructional materials sufficiency. This law in part requires that each pupil in each school in the school district has sufficient textbooks or instructional materials, or both, that are aligned to the content standards adopted pursuant to *EC* Section 60605 or 60605.8 in each of the following subjects, as appropriate, that are consistent with the content and cycles of the curriculum framework adopted by the SBE: mathematics; science; history-social science; and English language arts, including the English language development component of an adopted program. While in the past an LEA typically utilized one SBE-adopted program for a particular grade level, in this era of local control, LEAs are beginning to incorporate additional materials. An LEA may utilize a textbook, a supplemental component, and online resources. It is important that an LEA demonstrate that students have access to this content both in the classroom and to take home, pursuant to *EC* Section 60119.

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Supriya Mathur Gianchandani

#4. Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee Comment - I am an immigrant that feels I have hit a jackpot by living in the wonderful diverse education centric and family oriented community of Palos Verdes . Though the events of last few years have been polarizing where science and good citizenry has been cast aside in parts of this country , my family and I felt relatively safe from such politically motivated transgressions. Today I feel this is under threat . I firmly believe in diversity and equality as a way forward to a better more inclusive future. This is even more critically important for our youth who will be our future leaders. To that end they need to be exposed to stories that are different from theirs . We cannot give into fear based ideology and create a parent run curriculum with the ability to abolish books that may address issues like what it is to be a transgender person. Transgender youth have some of the highest rates of suicide and their stories need to come to light so we don't abolish them into darkness of mental health trauma and agony but give them strength to endure an often scary and difficult journey. It is essential that curriculum be developed and decided upon by experts in education and childhood development. I hope that our community and school district trusts the processes by which books are chosen at a district level and does not regress into a situation where uncomfortable topics / books can be removed from the curriculum based on preference of chosen few members. For the reasons stated above, I am opposed to creating a Board appointed curriculum committee. I want not only my family, but everyone to feel safe and welcome to live here and send their children to the excellent school system that we are fortunate to have.

Doug Wroan

Agenda item J4 I support the District forming a Brown Act Curriculum Committee

William Whittenbury

It is my understanding that the book "Too Bright to See," a Newbery Honor Book recommended for instruction by the California Department of Education, has been the subject of complaints from non-parent, non-student groups because it was written by a Transgender individual and features Transgender characters, and the district has asked teachers to not use the book in classroom instruction. While I have not personally read the book and cannot speak to its content, I know that diversity, inclusion, and freedom from censorship are foundational elements of public education and, by extension, our democracy. There is a broader trend towards book-banning taking place across the nation, with many disturbing historical parallels, and as a graduate of the PVPUSD district from K-12, I believe this practice should not be welcome in our school district, which is consistently ranked as one of the highest-quality public education providers in the state. Children need the opportunity to learn more about other communities, and it's even more important for children who belong to marginalized communities to see themselves represented positively in instructional materials. The Transgender community is one of the most discriminated-against groups in the United States, with Transgender youth among the most affected by anti-Trans legislation, bullying, hate crimes, and mental health challenges. These children need the support of our community and our school district. I urge PVPUSD to reconsider its policy surrounding Trans-inclusive content in the classroom, as well as other curricula celebrating diversity and inclusion. This doesn't have to be a political issue. We need to do the right thing for all of our kids.

judy pang

Vista Grande 5th grade book read. At Vista Grande Elementary School, two 5th grade teachers read aloud to their students a book titled Too Bright to See, by Kyle Lukoff, followed by a class discussion. The award-winning story features a transgender character. The kids reportedly enjoyed the book. Now, a few vocal parents and other individuals would like to "cancel" the teacher, whatever that means, and ban the book. As a parent of two boys who have graduated from District schools, I am disturbed and saddened by such close-minded, intolerant and hurtful behavior. Our students will only benefit by hearing stories and learning about diverse people and cultures, and LBGTQ youth will feel welcome by their educators and peers in hearing stories such as the one in question. PVPUSD teachers, students and the community at large expect and deserve better.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Cat Spydell

I am commenting on the recent events taking place by a group of parents trying to ban entertaining and educational books in the classroom. My family has a long history in the PVPUSD school district. My mother taught at Dapple Gray Elementary school in the 1950s and in the 1970s she worked as a substitute teacher and later in the 80s to 90s at the school district. I also worked at the district in the 90s. And my brother and I attended schools at PVPUSD, as did our children.

For this reason, I was surprised to hear that there is a reckless group of parents with hollow ideas of how life should be who are trying to strong-arm their limited beliefs into our PVPUSD schools. Life has changed in drastic yet important ways over the past few years. One main way is that people who have traditionally been ostracized, who have had to hide who they truly are, and who have been chronically misunderstood are finally finding a voice. The LGBTQ community is comprised of people we all know: Our friends, family, co-workers, and classmates. I believe that it is wrong to try and hide basic truths from kids, especially when it is being taught through an award-winning book about a ghost who happens to be transgender, and it is being taught with an adult present to answer questions and explain further if needed. The book in question, *Too Bright to See*, is described as a National Book Award Finalist that is "... a gentle, glowing wonder, full of love and understanding."- The New York Times Book Review.

Keep in mind, the average age of sexual self identity is age 9 or 10. This subject is not inappropriate for a 5th grader to learn.

There is nothing unseemly or perverse about this topic and stating that it is true is homophobic and what is now called "gaycism." I know we would not allow racist parents to have a say. Why are we giving the same opportunity to "gaycists?"

If certain parents are offended by basic teachings in their children's PVPUSD school, home school is the option for them. A group of parents attempting to get teachers fired for reading to a classroom full of students is an aggressive time-wasting act and does nothing to benefit any children or staff in the district. I think these discontented families should be the ones to leave, not the teachers who are just trying to teach. Let's put an end to this offensive witch hunt now

Christina Bernhardt

Public comment for Open Session Agenda Item J4 - Establishment of a Board-appointed Curriculum Committee Parents deserve an opportunity to understand what is being taught in class, but I'm not interested in parents having overarching sway to determine what subjects are taught, or whether particular books should be banned. Education experts and child development specialists already review materials used in our schools, and the process for parental review already exists. We do not need a committee to add bureaucracy or suppress the materials selected and used by our excellent teachers. Minority extremist views must not be guiding decisions on public instruction. Thank you.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Public comment for Open Session G1 Non-Agenda Items, Topic: Transphobia in our district I'm alarmed by recent community commentary regarding the book "Too Bright to See." There seems to be a loud minority of parents who believe it is acceptable to name and shame a particular teacher who read this book to her class. This book was approved by experts in education and childhood development, and the rabid transphobia that is being spread regarding its content is appalling. It is essential for children to understand life experiences that may differ from their own in order to be caring and effective community members. The attempts by some in our community to deride the "other" and sow fear and anger is frightening. All children need to see representations of themselves in their studies so they know they're part of our community, and their personal stories and histories of their identities and race should be respected and valued. Parents deserve an opportunity to understand what is being taught in class, but I'm not interested in parents having overarching sway to determine what subjects are taught, or whether particular books should be banned. The phrase "book banning" should never be heard here on the Peninsula, or anywhere else. Parents who don't accept the general teachings of wide perspectives as part of a public education would be better served by opening their own minds to those perspectives rather than trying to limit what can be taught. Minority extremist views must not be guiding decisions on public instruction. My son enjoyed the benefits of a wonderful education in PVPUSD that gave him excellent skills to succeed in college. I can see that his PV education equipped him in ways that many of his college cohorts are not, and I'm very appreciative of that. Although he has graduated, I'm still part of this community, and am extremely concerned about the reputation of our schools as it affects home values. A major reason people move to PV is for the schools, but this slide into fringe fearmongering will negatively affect our reputation, which will affect us financially, and that will be very hard to reverse. I urge the board to avoid knee-jerk reactions to extremist voices, and continue to uphold our principles and values of diversity and inclusion. Thank you

Concerned Parent

I am a PV resident, voter, and parent who is quite appalled by the negative attention PV is currently receiving regarding the censorship of 5th grade teachers reading "Too Bright To See" in class due to the protagonist being a Trans child. This was highlighted by the local parent group SavePVSchools and given widespread publicity by Board member Julie Hamill's tweet on Feb. 22 and retweet on Feb. 24 against gender-affirming care for Trans youth (@hamill_law). My understanding is that many local groups, ranging from seniors to students, are coming to speak at tonight's meeting. Although I believe civic engagement is a great aspect of a democracy – even Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi has publicly weighed in and spoken in support of the teachers and book – I can't help but feel scared for the safety of our community when Board member Hamill has requested members of the Reopen California Schools Facebook group, with over 20.8K members, to "add to the conversation...about parental rights in curriculum adoption and review, specifically with respect to sex and gender issues," and also directed her 35.5K followers on Twitter to view details about tonight's meeting. Finally, I would like Board member Hamill to elaborate further on her latest newsletter stating that "the curriculum agenda item is not related to 'the book,'" when at the last BOE meeting Board member Hamill stated that she was "hopeful that through discussing curriculum issues and review of materials, we can give comfort to our parents of elementary school children that they're safe coming to school." Even Dr. Cherniss said he thought Board member Hamill was referring to a book when asked about this topic at the PVPHS PTSA meeting on Feb. 28. Furthermore, I feel that Board member Hamill's characterization of parents asking clarifying questions as "gossip" is antithetical to her campaign statement of "trust and respect." Please focus on fixing the facilities and keeping a balanced budget to ensure academic excellence, that's really "putting kids first" in my opinion.

V Choi

Item J4 I am writing to strongly oppose the formation of a curriculum committee. I'm my opinion the motives behind doing so are bigoted and harmful. Our district has highly qualified people doing this work already. The last thing we need is unqualified parents with an agenda having a say in what our children should and should not be reading and learning.

Alexandra Krasovec

Comment Re Open Session Agenda Item J4: Establishment of Curriculum Committee

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

The impetus for this discussion is the teaching of Kyle Lukoff's book *Too Bright to See* by two fifth grade teachers at a PVPUSD elementary school. This award-winning book is on the recommended reading list published by the California Department of Education, and listed for 3rd-5th grade. The teachers should not be maligned for reading an age-appropriate approved book with their classes.

Learning about and exploring varying perspectives is one of the important benefits of reading. Children often find that they can relate to characters in the books they read, including the scenarios they face and the things they are feeling. Some children may find this connection with a book, and it will be fulfilling to them in ways different than for others. For those who don't connect, who feel ambivalent or even opposed, this still presents an opportunity to broaden exposure to persons and scenarios that are new and/or different, and further develop emotional intelligence, empathy, understanding, and awareness. All of these things are worthy goals. We should—and do—teach these lessons to our children regularly in school in various contexts (e.g., Montemalaga's SOAR model).

Instead of banning books or permitting the public to micromanage teachers as they develop their curriculum, parents who disagree with a book or viewpoint their child encounters in class should have a conversation with their child to share their perspective. The student will be further enriched in their educational experience by exploring multiple perspectives on an issue. The answer is not to shut down all access for the entire school community, and close doors to ideas, concepts, and topics, simply because some people within that community may disagree with, lack knowledge about, or be fearful of such topics. Nor is it necessary to insert community oversight into every text a teacher presents to their students. Indeed, this is the reason we have and hire professionally trained teachers with advanced degrees and credentials.

Lastly, transgender people are already the target of prejudice and suffer greatly from lack of acceptance and understanding on the part of society. For adolescents, this is compounded by the "usual" coming of age trials and tribulations. Using this book to fuel an uprising over "parents' rights" and permit such advocates to take control of our students' curriculum only serves to further ostracize transgender individuals and reeks of bigotry. As a community, I would hope we could be more open and inclusive in our approach to this issue and many others.

Thank you,

Ann Klein

Dear PVPUSD Board, I heard from a friend that your discussions of appropriate assigned reading for students have attracted harassment from people outside the school district. I'm sorry this happened, please don't let hecklers with no real interest in the district derail your work! Parents have the right to request a discussion of the curriculum, and not get harassed for it. Especially by people that don't send their kids to the schools, and are just using your meetings as their outrage cause of the day. They'll move on eventually.

Ashling Grigorian

J4- PVPUSD currently has a Curriculum advisory committee that allows parents input. Allowing parents more than an advisory position is discrediting teacher's education and expertise. Our curriculum needs to be diverse and represents all the members of the community.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

K4 – Curriculum Committee

Initially, I thought the creation of a curriculum committee would be a good proposal and while I am not necessarily opposed to it, after reading the public comments by members of our community (including on social media), I am concerned that this committee may end up causing more harm than good. My main concern is that this curriculum committee will be inappropriately used as a vehicle to ultimately censor educational materials as well as severely limit certain discussion topics in our schools.

I worry that we are leading down a path where we are micromanaging the curriculum, creating division between parents and teachers, not entrusting teachers and administrators to do what they do best - teach and that any discussion or any literature related to race or gender (including just having a gay or trans character in a book or discussing historical injustices) will require an opt-out (at best) or banned all together (at worst). This will end up creating more insensitivity, more division and further marginalize minority groups.

By severely limiting or removing any discussion of these topics, we risk perpetuating harmful stereotypes and sending a message to these minority students that they are not valued or accepted in our community. I believe that we should provide students with a well-rounded education that exposes them to a variety of perspectives and experiences. This includes a diverse range of literature, historical events, and scientific concepts that may challenge their existing beliefs, prejudices and understanding of the world. While the intention of the curriculum committee may very well be to foster this diversity of education and increase critical thinking, I'm concerned that the committee and its selected members will end up having the opposite effect by actually increasing censorship and limiting academic freedom.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mike Yang

Kalik Family

At Vista Grande Elementary School in the Palos Verdes Unified School District two 5th grade teachers read aloud a book to their classes (Too Bright to See, by Kyle Lukoff) that features a transgender character. The book was not "assigned" to students. Both teachers just read aloud and discussed it for enrichment/enjoyment. There is no place for this type of garbage in schools. These teachers should be fired

Julie Stoll

I am incredibly concerned about the name calling occurring over the issue of which books are appropriate for certain grade levels. To levy the charge that Julie Hamill posts "anti-trans propaganda" because she raises the issue of parental involvement in curriculum development is absurd. Anyone who is engaging in this bullying behavior by trying to silence those who disagree (by calling them names) does not have a strong position. If a particular book is worthy of being read to elementary students, it should be able to stand up to the scrutiny of an actual dialogue between parents and teachers without any name calling as a part of that conversation.

Francois Viljoen

J4: Only parents of current students should serve on a curriculum committee. The committee should include diverse viewpoints (cultural, religious, political).

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Mia Viljoen

Agenda Item: J4. Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee The BOE have a great responsibility in bringing our community together, and we hope you will make decisions keeping this in mind. We ask for decisions which will affect change in bringing a community together, instead of decisions and policy which will merely create further divide within our already extremely divisive community. It is important to understand that parents are the primary stakeholders in their children's education. Different families have different value systems and parents choose to raise their children imparting these different perspectives to their children. It is critical to understand the importance in respecting our differences. Parents play an essential role in shaping their child's future by being actively involved in their educational journey. In addition to family value systems, parents have firsthand knowledge of their child's strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, and interests. Parental involvement ensures that the curriculum reflects the values and beliefs of everybody in the community. As a result the curriculum will be designed to fit the diverse needs of our students. Moreover, involving parents in the curriculum committee will ensure that their voices are heard. It will provide them with the opportunity to provide feedback on the curriculum and express their concerns. By including parents in the curriculum committee, we will create a sense of transparency and collaboration, which will ultimately benefit everyone. Schools should be neutral and provide impartial instruction, without promoting any political ideology or religion or social construct. The goal for schools are to create students who are able to think critically, analyze information, and make their own informed decisions. The removal of politics and religion from schools was meant to ensure that education remains impartial and focused on providing students with knowledge and skills, rather than indoctrinating them with specific beliefs or ideologies. Controversial social issues, which do not relate directly to academic advancement or which are part of very specific curriculum with set boundaries, should fall in this category as well. **It should be noted that this proposed curriculum committee should be made up of a much more diverse group of parents, representing all perspectives, backgrounds and opinions within our community, unlike the very biased medical committee with exclusively one mindset. In closing to reiterate: It is important to understand that parents are the primary stakeholders in their children's education, please value parents in this process and respect and honor different viewpoints.

Colette Tracy

Hello, My name is Colette Tracy, I am an educator and Mother of a transgender daughter who is now 28 years old. Ryan let us know that he was transgender about 3 years ago. I definitely consider myself and my husband to be very progressive. However, when she told us this, we were more than shocked. Ryan never showed the "signs" of transgender. He had a very difficult childhood, and while a brilliant student he struggled socially to assimilate. He went to college and finished top of his class. The difficulty for Ryan was that she needed to understand who she is and embrace her "difference." My plea to you all is to let your child explore and get to know who they are, as a Mother who has always felt that way, I never pushed a specific sexuality or "masculine role" for Ryan, At this point in time, I am truly blessed to say that Ryan is thriving in her life today. This is the thing, as progressive as I consider myself, I would not choose this for Ryan (Cami) not because of judgment but because, her life is difficult. It takes a tremendous amount of courage to be brave enough to be exactly who you are, especially when you are "other." If your child is transgender or gay or any other part of LGBTQ people, they cannot change who they are, and if you don't allow them to understand through education, who they are, you are essentially telling them, that you will never accept them. If your child receives this education and they are not an LGBTQ person, you will be teaching them to be a much more empathic and loving person.

Stephen McDannold

I have lived in Palos Verdes Estates almost my entire life. I attended the public school system here as did our children. However because of the leftward drift of this public school system, our grandchildren no longer attend it. They now attend private schools. It is impossible to understand how unelected teachers or administrators should be allowed to usurp the rights of parents. The public school system should only concern itself with academics not political ideology. If allowed, the liberal Woke direction that is taking place will ensure that more parents remove their children from the public school system.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23**Written Public Comments**

Michele Higgins J4 It is very important for a school district to have parental involvement when it comes to bringing learning materials into the classroom for students of all ages to be learning from, If a new Health curriculum for middle schoolers has sexual content in it that gives the parents the option to opt their children out of, then certainly any other book containing ANY sexual content for any other grade should be shared with parents with the option to opt out of. Some may not be aware, but anything brought into a classroom is considered curriculum - reading books, posters, flags, etc. Kids are sent to school to learn academics to prepare them for college and a productive life. It seems that there has been a lot of time taken away from our children from learning academics in order to learn about sexuality. Every minute spent in class that is focused on sex and sexuality is depriving our kids of learning science, math, reading, and critical thinking. In addition, parents should be required to “opt in” to stead of “opt out” of sexual content shared in classrooms.

Shan Chen Below is my public written comment from a year ago on March 9, 2022. I’m disappointed that adults in PV, including election board member Julie Hamill, still don’t understand the difference between gender and sexual orientation and that a book with a Trans character is deemed unsafe. I recommend the SafeZone Project, a free two-hour online training for adults to learn more about the LGBTQI+ experience. Words have consequences. I try to always speak from my personal experience and ask myself if what I say is true, kind, and necessary before saying anything. The PV school district is small and funding and resources are limited. Everyone needs to come together respectfully to help all children. Thank you. “Mental Health/Positive School Climate: I urge the district to provide more accurate training to all school community members about LGBTQI+ concepts such as gender and sexuality so that some students/adults may unlearn prejudice that they have learned elsewhere and everyone can feel comfortable and safe enough to focus on academic learning in PVPUSD schools. According to the 2021-2022 California Healthy Kids Survey, our secondary nonbinary students reported higher in substance use and cyberbullying, and had more social and emotional issues such as “chronic sadness” and thoughts of suicide than male and female students. Our LGBTQI+ families may be a minority group but they deserve to be treated without prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization. As a newer parent in the district, I have already witnessed derogatory comments made about LGBTQI+ people from fellow parents and am disappointed at the lack of inclusive and representational books in the school libraries about LGBTQI+ families, concepts, and history. I believe if the district focuses more on District Goal #9, with more thoughtful and intentional policies and training to improve school climate for the marginalized and vulnerable groups like our LGBTQI+ students and families, we will attract and retain more families, garner more donations, and continue our reputation and legacy as a distinguished school district. I am grateful to live in a democratic nation where civil rights are an essential component—LGBTQI+ students are protected under Title IX and Title IV; supported in California’s FAIR Education Act, Healthy Youth Act, and School Success and Opportunity Act; and defended in US v. Arcadia School Unified District. I feel fortunate to live in a state that respects everyone's right and freedom to choose their gender without the fear of prosecution. Hate and bigotry do not deserve a stronghold. If our district chooses to defer to parents with outdated world-views, our students will miss out on the opportunities to become confident and compassionate citizens who can thrive down the hill. Thank you for your dedication in this difficult time.”

Derek Thomas Masi Please do not read transgender books to kids in PV schools. This discussion should be had in the household between the parents and their child. It shouldn't be brought up by the teachers/schools. Thanks

Jooyun Lee I am an advocate for excellent academic education in Palos Verdes school district. Students need not be taught political agenda that influences them on different sexuality. I strongly urge the decision makers in this city to promote academic based learning in classrooms. Whatever else needs to be discussed at home. I do not agree with sexual indoctrination by teachers.

Sulmo Kim J4: Board Appointed Curriculum Committee

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Please see attached. There seems to be a disconnect in what topics should be up for discussion when it comes to changing or introducing curriculum and its process. I have made a chart based on the information and experience that I've had watching pilot program such as Ethnic Studies and AVID come into fruition in our district. The PVFA seems to want to hold the reigns with the Administrators like Lindsey Gotanda when it comes to new curriculum, and the previous Curriculum Committee (made up with some parents in the district) had meetings cancelled more than once while in the process of the adoption. Was that a coincidence? Why the rush in implementing new curriculum which would cause the district to pour funds into textbooks and coaching hours? More importantly, what are the benefit and costs are to the students?

Parents need to be put back in the fold as was designated by the CA State guidelines for curriculum adoption. They need to have an equal footing in the delicate balance of power. If the new programs do not meet a pre-established metric, they should be revised, or abandoned. You don't force a square peg in a round hole without sanding the corners.

J1: In light of recent events regarding teacher conduct at Miraleste Intermediate, the Board and the Administration have to implement and adopt stricter code of conduct policies with accountability through more frequent reviews from the customer - the parents and students. I had highlighted this at the board meeting regarding overnight field trips - to have the teachers, admins, students, and parents in a room where the rules were discussed. However Linda Reid thought that was "reprehensible". What is reprehensible is how Mr. Bloise lost his composure to a minor. If I were the parent of that child in that class, my protective instinct would lead me to have a personal confrontation, as I would suspect many parents. From the words of other parents that have asked their child who had that teacher in the past, this was not an isolated case. This was a problem that was left to fester by the Teachers Union.

Please bring some common sense and the well-adjusted adult back into the room. Lead with wisdom, love, and kindness. Do not let rhetoric, fear, and money lead the district.

PV Parent

I am a PV parent who has read "Too Bright To See" last week and thought it was a great choice and age-appropriate for fifth graders. I encourage my kids to see and respect differences in people and actively look for similarities between everyone. This book is not controversial to me because I believe all people have the right to live an authentic life. I also knew my gender before the age of 10 and so I'm not worried that my kids reading about another child's journey would change their genders. Rather, I welcome the opportunity to discuss being and loving your "true self" with my kids. I support the teachers in teaching the experiences of diverse people and wish to see more representation, like in "Too Bright To See," to enrich learning of literature and inclusion for all students.

Michelle Finkel, MD

Young people's books should act as mirrors and windows: Helping students feel valued (mirrors) and understanding the experiences of others (windows) are imperative to building a compassionate and productive society. Conversely, when children and adolescents don't feel appreciated - or worse - when they feel actively rejected - they are more likely to hide their concerns and avoid medical and mental health care, leading to physical and emotional illness. Ultimately, a broad range of literature is important for building empathy, improving well-being, and even saving lives.

Ben Klein

Too Bright to See by Kyle Lukoff It is the parents job to teach there kids about sexuality and gender. The teachers job is to teach the kids math reading and writing. The PVPUSD school board members should be protecting our kids and listening to the majority of parents in our school district not the loud activists from who knows where.

Our schools consider water slides, bounce houses, blow up obstacle courses, dunk tanks, foam parties all too risky. They will not allow it. But they do allow gender affirming counseling, leading to mutilating 12+yr old bodies. Not considered risky at all.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Constance L Koehler	Topic: Reading aloud of "Too Bright to See," at Vista Elementary School, 5th grade, PVPUSD, featuring a transgender character. I applaud the two teachers who introduced this book to their students. It teaches diversity, inclusion and empathy in an era where we are all being divided by hate and violence. LGBTQ+ students are especially targets of this malevolent behavior, which can lead to suicide. Above all, academic freedom in the classroom at all levels of education must be preserved. Thank you!
Andrew Noch	May I charitably say we simply do not need to be reading a transgender story book to any 5th grad class (e.g. Too Bright to See by Kyle Lukoff). Therefore, I would like to voice my concern and protest over this book. Thank you for listening.
Parent	J4– I watched the January 12, 2022 BOE meeting on Textbook and Curriculum Adoptions Presentation and learned that PVPUSD has a list of curriculum adoptions to conduct and each one costs time, resources, and money. I am happy with the current Adoption Process and think that forming a Board-appointed Curriculum Committee is unnecessary. I also trust the teachers’ professional expertise in course development—the outstanding school ranking for PVPUSD speaks for itself. If a district Curriculum Committee is formed, it will take longer to approve course materials, which will negatively impact student learning. Also, the increase in time and energy from teachers and staff to coordinate with a district Curriculum Committee will take focus away from student learning and into parental discourse. In a diverse community like PV, it is natural to have differences of perspectives and values. Fortunately the district already has policies and procedures in place for when parents have concerns about the appropriateness of curriculum materials. Perhaps the district leaders can do a better job in informing parents of these policies. As a small district with limited funding and personnel, and deteriorating facilities, I urge the district and new board members to focus on existing district goals, vision, and philosophy to achieve what’s best for the current students and to make Board decisions based on research and statistics rather than on promoting personal political agendas and beliefs.
A Concerned Parent	J4–no more parent committees! Being a parent does not make a person an expert in education, curriculum, reading, etc. It is unnecessary to have parents involved at this late stage, when they’ve already done so earlier. This is just busy work and a waste of time
Umesh Ketkar	J4: A question I always ask is “what problem are we trying to solve?” And I just don’t understand the issue here. We have top-rated schools, wonderful teachers, and intellectually engaged students that are highly sought after by the top colleges. The existing process- using a state-provided framework, and making use of an advisory committee seems to work pretty well. Parents already have the ability to review specific syllabus & content for each class, simply by contacting teachers. On the other hand, we have real issues that need to be addressed- aging facilities, need to improve HVAC & ventilation in classrooms, an ongoing teen mental-health crisis, and the coming end of state-provided one-time funds. The creation of a board-appointed curriculum committee will distract the district from these important near-term issues. A new committee will require writing & approving bylaws, reviewing applications for membership, as well as all the other requirements of the Brown Act. This will all take months and valuable time & energy- which might be OK if there were real pressing & urgent issues to be resolved- but I fear this will just be a distraction. I urge the board to reject this proposal, and instead work within the existing structure to see if there are improvements that can be made to allow parents to have easier access & ability to see course materials. I also want to discuss a semi-related topic- the book “Too Bright To See”. This book is a Newberry winner, and was a finalist for a National Book Award. The New York Times Book Review said it was “a gentle glowing wonder, full of love & understanding”. Some people have said that the book is “controversial”, or promotes a “transgender ideology” or “agenda”. There is no ideology in simply recognizing that teenagers can struggle with issues of gender or sexuality, and that transgender people exist. The book’s themes are instead about love and of acceptance. Books from “Huckleberry Finn” to “To Kill A Mockingbird” to even “Harry Potter” have been deemed controversial- but they should still be read and taught. We shouldn’t dumb down the curriculum, and we shouldn’t let teachers be intimidated into dumbing down lesson plans. We should let teachers teach, and let them challenge students to think, learn, and grow. Thank you for your time.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Debbie Steffe

I believe that parents have the ultimate authority in imparting values around sexuality to their children. It is not the teacher or the school district's right to impose their own agenda on these parental rights.

Constance Sullivan

RE: Item J4 Dear PVPUSD Board Members: I live in Palos Verdes Estates and both my sons graduated from PVPHS in 2005 and 2008. They are both gay men in their 30's now. They received a great education in an inclusive school community. I'm writing to let you know of my support for the teacher who read the book Too Bright to See to her fifth grade class. There are various estimates of the prevalence of gender dysphoria in America but they range from 0.6% to 1.4%. Using the lower estimate I would expect there are about 66 children in the district experiencing gender dysphoria. If one or two of them was exposed to this book and made to feel safe and more hopeful about their future, I think that's a wonderful outcome. And if the other children in the classroom, who are cisgender and always will be, if they learned some tolerance and empathy, that is a wonderful outcome. I read the book last night. Until then, all I knew about it was what I'd read on social media. It has been grossly mischaracterized, as I'm sure you know. For example, from social media I incorrectly learned that the child and the adults slept in the same bed. Not true. Never happens. Also, many children, not just those experiencing gender dysphoria, can relate to the theme of feeling different from the "normal" kids. And they can take heart in the inclusionary conclusion to the story. I understand there's a move afoot to ban this book. We have an award winning school district. Award winning school districts do not ban books. That would be an embarrassment to our community and do harm to the district's reputation. The proposed curriculum committee is a veneer to make it seem as if this is not a book banning exercise. It doesn't fool anyone. Please do not establish this committee. I trust educators to know which books are appropriate for each grade level and the educators have selected this book as one that is appropriate at the fifth grade level. Some individual parents might want to "protect" their children from some material, but they should not be allowed to make that decision for all children in the district. That would not in the best interest of the school community. Sincerely, Constance Sullivan

Abigail Whitman

Agenda Item J4: In light of the recent transphobic remarks and the overreaction from the board to discourage teachers to read books like Too Bright to See, I ask that the board be wary of these transphobic sentiments by a minority of people within the community and take proactive measures to be sure that any new curriculum be inclusive and diverse. Any persons appointed by the board to influence curriculum choices should be experts in the field of curriculum and capable of choosing curriculum meant to educate the students fairly, to the highest caliber affordable, and should be capable of working with teachers to choose the curriculum they wish to teach.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Supporting the PV Queer and Trans Community: I am an alumni of the PV school district. The constant inundation of homophobia from PV schools caused me to attempt suicide at 17. I am lucky that I survived it, and that I am still here today, but any “mutilation” that occurred on my part was from self-harm, as I struggled to cope with the idea that I was a queer person and the people I spent 40 hours a week with made me feel like I was worthless because of it. In the eight years since I have graduated from high school, I have spent much of it in therapy, unlearning the hatred towards myself and breaking down the gendered binaries I was taught in school. Upon hearing that students were learning about trans people, I started to hope that maybe there were kids like me who were going to make it to high school graduation without the scars. Throughout my education, there was a distinct lack of inclusivity regarding the trans community. Books like *Too Bright to See* were not read aloud in my classrooms. Elementary school sex-ed focused on puberty, but our textbook was so outdated, the idea that people could identify, or even dress, outside of social gender norms, was just not included. Middle school health class covered drugs and sex, but not gender expression. By the time I reached high school, health class just didn’t exist. My teachers did their best to help us understand the changes in our bodies, but they didn’t have resources to help anyone potentially struggling with gender dysphoria. While my parents were supportive, I saw and experienced too much bullying before my high school graduation to consider the PV school system a safe space for anything other than cisgender heteronormativity. But the message from the school board is very different. The PVPUSD official facebook page carelessly shares transphobic rhetoric and blends sexuality and gender expression into one “gender ideology” to instill fear in parents that their children are being taught secret and shameful things, as if being trans is controversial. So I ask the board to make a clear statement: Being transgender is not controversial. Gender expression is not sexual. We trust our teachers to teach. Because, while I know now that not everyone in PV feels this way, many queer students in this district won’t. And we have the science and studies to prove queer and trans kids die at a higher rate than their cisgender straight counterparts. So if you actually want to “save the children”: include them. All of them.

Darren M. Richie

Vista Grande Trans Book Intro I’m not sure if it’s Agendized or not. Comment: Sexual education, including gender preference and assignment, is not a topic to be introduced in general education courses to elementary school children. These issues should only be discussed, if at all, to children in elementary school at the discretion of their parents and in their own home. Schools should stay true to their curriculum for specific courses. If, when age appropriate, the district plans to introduce these topics in a sex education course that is the more appropriate forum. However, when and if that course decides to include these issues in that forum parents should possess the ultimate decision making authority as to expose or not expose their child to that content. At present, the issue created by the Vista Grande teacher was wholly unsanctioned inappropriate irresponsible and frankly subjects the district to liability. Certain sensitive intimate subjects of life requiring alignment to culture religion tradition core beliefs and values are best left to parents. This is one of them.

Deidra Lukoff

I have two children and like you I was concerned about their well-being. My oldest child, Alex was the All-American kid, friends, played sports and the drum, did well academically.
My baby, Karen was premature and had some health issues. My baby never wanted toys or dolls, only books and read everything from the Babysitters Club series to the all of Edgar Allen Pos being entering junior high.
Now I understand that Karen was searching for something, but never found it.
We were always close and talked often, especially after moving to New York to attend Columbia University.
Over time our conversations became emotional as Karen shared that she might be transgender.
Following months of therapy, my baby realized he was right.
He is male and our youngest son.
His name is Kyle, Kyle Lukoff, the author of Too Bright to See.
TBTS is about a kid being haunted by the ghost of their dead uncle into figuring out something important.

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TBTS was written to support gay and transgender kids who are trying to understand who they are and help them realize they are not alone.

It was also written for parents and relatives of gay children to help them understand and support the struggle that some face when searching for their authentic identity.

Conservative statistics state that parents and relatives and gay and transgender children are in this district.

Educators have increasing responsibilities beyond reading, writing and arithmetic - one is a strong **anti-bullying policy**.

Another is exposing students to a national award winning* age appropriate novel that helps them understand the world they live in.

That is a valuable use of classroom time.

*Too Bright to See was a **Newbery Honor Book**, won the **American Library Association Stonewall Book Award** and was a **National Book Award Finalist**.

Publishers Weekly - "Smart and thought provoking...Lukoff provides a tender rumination on grief, love and identity."

Kirkus - "A chilling, suspenseful ghost story balances the intimate, introspective narrative style...Haunting and healing."

School Library Journal - " A hopeful examination of grief and gender, and a good ghost story to boot."

Shelf Awareness - "While gender identity remain prominent throughout, Lukoff also combines pitch-perfect adolescent angst, evolving friendships and spooky encounters to create a welcoming story accessible to young readers of all backgrounds."

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Cindy Byrne, President PFLAG Mai

Item #J4: On behalf of PFLAG Manhattan Beach/South Bay, which advocates for our local LGBTQ+ community: The Board is considering a committee to assess what constitutes “appropriate” reading materials within the District. Prior to entrusting such a committee with this critical task, the District must firmly establish its commitment to the safety and support of LGBTQ+ students and to reflecting and respecting their existence and their experiences in District curriculum – as required by California law. Without explicit mandates and guidelines for including LGBTQ+ materials in school programming, any committee could fall prey to the extreme and unfounded biases of a few especially vocal parents. The objections of a few parents to the book *Too Bright to See* highlights their motivation to eliminate representation of trans identities from the curriculum. LGBTQ+ and gender questioning children, like ALL children, desperately need to see themselves reflected in their school curriculum. Studies show that LGBTQ+ students who have an inclusive curriculum are less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and are more likely to have peers who are accepting of LGBTQ+ people and feel more connected to their school communities. Erasing the very real existence of trans people from school curriculum is antithetic to the purpose of education — to give kids an opportunity to learn about the real world and about the experiences of others that may be very different than their own. We know that reading creates empathy because it gives us an opportunity to see the world through others’ eyes and to recognize universal truths and commonalities, even among people with whom we think we have nothing in common. Sadly, the vocal and vitriolic attacks on this book already have chilled the normalization of LGBTQ+, and particularly trans, identities. The message has been sent that teachers who dare to share materials that portray trans existence, even award winning, highly praised materials, will be attacked. Even worse, LGBTQ+ children and their families have heard loud and clear that a portion of their school community finds something about them so unacceptable that other children need to be protected from them. They are hearing that their trans identity is a shameful secret that they can’t feel safe sharing with others – and maybe even acknowledging to themselves. It’s not being LGBTQ+ in itself that leads to the high rates of depression, anxiety and suicidality among LGBTQ+ youth – it’s the community’s response and rejection. LGBTQ+ students, like all our kids, deserve to feel safe, supported and seen by our District. It will literally save lives.

DAVID BIRNBRYER

Transgender Book Reading - as a parent of a 5th grader I do not think it is age appropriate. There is plenty of time in middle school and high school for kids to learn about these complex issues that their minds are not fully developed for in elementary school. The kids should be having fun at this age. Like I tell young kids - do not be in a hurry to grow up because being an adult is not that much fun- it is stressful. Teachers should be focused on teaching the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic in elementary school. Leave the personal agenda and ideology at home. It is not the teacher's main job to teach my kids morals, values, ethics, respect for others and empathy - it begins at home with me as a parent doing the most important job I have which is raising a child to become a good human being. Make time for your kids, talk to them, listen to them and love them. It goes by way too fast.

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Written Public Comments

Colleen Mullowney

All trans adults were once trans children. My biological father transitioned late in life because coming out as trans was not an option in their youth. There weren't any books, movies, or prominent public figures they could identify with. For many trans people in my transparent time, cross-dressing was their only option. To be done in secret, so they would not be judged, ridiculed, or harmed. Living a secret life causes a tremendous amount of stress on the psyche inducing fear and paranoia, with long-term effects on a person's mental health. For many people who identify as trans today, coming out not only brings feelings of guilt, shame, and fear of rejection but also has life-or-death consequences. Trans people are four times more likely than cisgender people to be victims of violent crimes (UCLA Williams Institute of Law). Data indicates that 82% of transgender people have considered suicide and 40% have made at least 1 attempt. For trans children, the statistics are even higher. 86% of trans youth have considered suicide and as many as 56% have tried to kill themselves. Why? Studies show that the risk factors that lead to suicide include such things as interpersonal and environmental microaggressions. What exactly is an interpersonal or environmental microaggression? Well, I think it is safe to say that wanting to ban a book because one of the lead characters in trans can be considered an environmental microaggression. When society has labeled you as broken, deficient, deviant, and unnatural, these are environmental microaggressions that can build to a macro level. An interpersonal microaggression can be seen as a lack of belonging in school and family and internalized self-stigma. Internalized self-stigma is an inherent belief that there is something wrong with you, that you are bad. These interpersonal microaggressions can be brought on by not understanding that diversity and inclusion are built at a micro level. It is the everyday acceptance of people's uniqueness. It is understanding that empathy is built on understanding other people's life experiences are different from yours. It is seeing yourself represented in characters on tv and in books. It is feeling different than everyone else and still feeling safe in school and with your own family. It appears that item J4 on tonight's agenda is a direct response to reading an age-appropriate book to 5th-grade students that had a lead character that is trans. Creating a committee to review curricula set up by lifelong academic professionals opens the door to ideology over expertise. Banning books is not parenting. It only eliminates an opportunity for parenting. For those of you who take umbrage to a trans character in a book read at school, use this opportunity to have an open and honest discussion with your children about your beliefs and feelings. But choose your words wisely because you may be talking to a future trans adult.

Kathleen Erickson

I support the establishment of a Brown Act Committee for curriculum for our district, and I think that all books that are read in class or placed on suggested reading lists for students be a part of that discussion.

Public Disclosure of books used in our classrooms. In 1973, I was in 7th grade at Malaga Cove Intermediate School, the school was all abuzz with the news that two of our classmates had sex in the upstairs section of Mr. B's Bookstore in the Peninsula Center. The girl was beautiful and was far more physically mature than many of the rest of us, if true, I guess the boy was too, who knows. The point is that people physically mature at different ages. It is in the range of normal for women to get their periods between the ages of 10-16. Meanwhile, we have witnessed thousands of adults come forward over the past couple of decades detailing the ways their lives were destroyed by the sexual exploitation and abuse by trusted adults including ministers, close family friends, uncles. Now, we have a book being read in our elementary schools, about two 5th grade (10-11 years old) friends, one who is starting to be interested in boys and fashion, and the other who just isn't quite at that stage. Yet instead of this being portrayed as normal differences in maturation, the one less interested is visited by the ghost of a trusted adult who leads her down a different path of sexual exploration, and leaves her convinced she is really meant to be a boy. Many have described this book as magical. To this day, I have some of the books that were magical to me as a child, sitting on my bookshelf. They include Nancy Drew books and The Witch of Blackbird Pond. The books our children read go deep in their minds. I am shocked by the themes in Too Bright to See. We should not be suggesting to 10 year old girls that they are really boys just because they aren't "boy crazy" yet (and may never be). I believe we should be concerned when trusted adults are interested in the sexuality of children. The innocence of our children is being attacked every day. It is the responsibility of adults to protect that innocence so that our children can grow into healthy well-adjusted adults. I do not know what the guidelines are for approval of books that are introduced to our children in our classrooms and in our school libraries.

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However, given the current political environment, in order to maintain the trust between the schools, and the parents and wider community there should be a publicly available list of books that are approved for classrooms, by grade level, and the teachers should provide the list of books that they will be using in their classrooms to the parents of their students at the start of each semester. If the district does not currently have an approval process in place, then one should be established, and members of the community should be included in that process. The school board should have final approval of the reading lists. I think there is precedent in our country for the development of parental advisories about content of media so that parents can make informed decisions about what their children are exposed to. Prior to 1968, there were no movie ratings, but as studios lost their grip on the movie industry and more graphic content made its way into films, the ratings system was created, and has been revised several times, to give people more information to determine if a film is appropriate for their children. In 1985, as lyrics became more graphic and vulgar, Tipper Gore set out to establish advisories on music, she was harshly criticized and unfairly accused of wanting to censor the First Amendment rights of musicians, but she prevailed, and now music companies voluntarily label their explicit content. I think as more graphic and controversial topics are making their way into children's books, it is time to give parents more information about the books that the schools are introducing to their children. As enrollment continues to drop in our district, I think it is imperative that the school board find ways to increase and maintain the transparency and trust between our schools, and the parents and wider community. I know that at least some of our school board members would like to see another bond measure put to the community. The only way that will be successful is if a majority in our community trust our schools. I support the establishment of a Brown Act Committee for curriculum for our district, and I think that all books that are read in class or placed on suggested reading lists for students be a part of that discussion.

Kylie Murdock

To the PV School Board:

My name is Kylie Murdock and I'm an alumna of the PV school system. I attended Lunada Bay Elementary, PVIS, and PVHS. I graduated from PVHS in 2016, went to UC Berkeley, and currently work in politics in Washington DC.

I'm writing to urge the school board to support LGBTQ students, teachers, and allies. I support the elementary school teacher at Vista Grande who read an age-appropriate book with a trans main character to her students. It's important that we expose students to diverse people and ideas, and that LGBTQ students feel seen by their school system. I am bisexual, and if attacks like these had happened while I was in school, I would have felt unsafe. When LGBTQ students are shown that they aren't welcome, they struggle much more with mental health and suicidal thoughts. We need to support students, not vilify them. We cannot allow outside groups to insert themselves and their intolerant beliefs into our school system.

I urge the school board to support LGBTQ students and oppose any policies that would ban books or education on issues like gender and race.

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Written Public Comments

Britney Warner

J(4). I moved my 4 children out of this district at the end of September. My issues for leaving stemmed from a 5th grade teacher at Vista Grande, not wanting my younger children to have to be in her classroom like my older two were. She has been teaching her gender ideology for many years., while shaming students who do not agree with her views. This is not new. She started a lesson in March of 2021 stating, yesterday, she felt like a girl, and today she feels like a boy, and proceeded to teach a lesson on pronouns. Marking children's answers wrong if they used he or she rather than they or them. An email I sent 3/16/21 to the principal and the district about a lesson she taught to 5th graders in the classroom: She said she was upset that the school only had the option for the children to select Male or Female on their school forms. She said another option should be made available for students who do not identify as male or female. She also said that some adults might prefer to use Mx. as opposed to Mr. or Mrs. because not everyone identifies as a male or female. She made the point to mark all the students wrong on their answers to get her point across. (Not actually counting it as a grade.) Just as an object lesson. I realize there are many different opinions and views. That does not mean they have a place in a fifth grade classroom. And that does not mean she has the right to introduce these new ideas to children unless it has been legislated through proper channels. Typically, those channels would allow for transparency between schools and parents. This is a pattern in her classroom. It is not a one time event. She has strong views on gender identity, same sex marriage, and many more things. They are talked about often in the classroom, if not daily. She does not mention them as a simple opinion. She makes the children feel shame if they don't agree with her. It's not flippant. It's intentional and repetitive. Remember, she has been in my home for months now. * (Zoom classroom) The district did nothing. They eventually removed my son from her class, but she continued as usual.

Amber Possemato

Dear School Board and members of our community, J.4 Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee I write as I am in support of keeping a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee. I would like the board to recognize the necessity to provide partnership and trust among the teachers, parents and students. Providing a formal process for curriculum transparency and accountability, no matter what your stance is socially, allows the district to have approval procedures in place that illuminates the outside noise. As a parent, I put a lot of trust in the teachers that spend a great deal of time educating my children and trust that our district will respect that our district's families have different ideas of what should be taught at home vs. at school.

Lisa LoGrande

Vista Grande Elem. issue - Having raised 2 children in PVPUSD and being a product of it myself, I am disturbed by the introduction of sensitive topics at the fifth grade level to children that might not be ready to process or understand what this teacher was reading out loud to her class. At the very least, she should have sent a communication to the parents to give them the option for their child to participate. Parents will always have final say over their children's education until they are adults and no institution should usurp that power, Period! If this is going to be the norm in the district, then a policy needs to be in place to allow the parents to have a voice. If not, enrollment will decline and the district will suffer financially.

Amy Marcus

Thank you to the teachers in our district who are sharing books, like Too Bright to See and others like it, with their classes that allow our students to get to know characters with experiences that might be different from their own and also allows students to see characters similar to themselves represented in books. Representation matters. This is not something that we should be shying away from, especially in public education. Also, thank you to board members, district staff, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students who have supported these teachers as well. You make our district better.

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Written Public Comments

Beth K Whittenbury

It has come to my attention that the Board pushed the District to stop reading the book: "Too Bright to See", a Newbury Honor Book, recommended by the California Department of Education. Although I have not read the book, I am very concerned that our Board has now engaged in censorship and interfered with the right to public education by disallowing commentary on subjects necessary to the growth and understanding of youth who will be the future of our country. I understand that the book deals with the experiences of a trans youth. Trans youth are a small, marginalized group, generally misunderstood by society and at a risk of suicide due to that lack of understanding and at times, basic compassion. Banning this book sends a clear message to such youth in our district that their perspectives are not valued, nor are their experiences, indeed, their very lives. I urgently appeal to you to withdraw your directives with respect to this book and to refrain in the future from taking any action or making any statement that could be viewed as censoring or book banning within our public school system which should provide free, equal, and equitable access to all students within the District.

Tina Pearce

"Too Bright To See" Book Content I recently retired as the librarian at Lunada Bay Elementary after 15 years . I have been in this district for 23 years as parent, employee and still now as a volunteer. First and foremost as a trained educator and parent my goal has always been to inspire kind, empathetic, inquisitive children, to become good citizens of the world. In the library I would bring to light stories of people from around the world who had faced personal challenges, or had done amazing things in their lives to help others. Students would be mesmerized to hear how a tragic event or awful start in life could have wonderful endings. The conversations would flow after reading aloud these books. Books are an amazing way to teach empathy, wether fiction or non-fiction, sharing along on someone's life journey is a learning experience, a safe distance to watch their life unfold - but it doesn't mean what happened to the character will happen to you, so it feels safe to read. I am a proud parent of a transgender child, sharing this book can have such a positive effect on many peoples lives - even reading it now as a 27 year old trans adult, my son who had struggled all through our school system with unknown thoughts and feelings said having literature like this in 5th grade could have been a lifeline for prompting to ask for help earlier - instead of another 15 years. The depression and suicide rate for LGBTQ+ kids is so high, especially with the rise in bullying and attacks. A 16 year old trans girl was stabbed to death by school students only weeks ago in the UK. The conversations with students at an early age is so important to create a safe space for all students, no matter race, gender, sexuality- the younger we can teach them, the more tolerant adults they will be. My son Harry said "I wish I could send this book back in time for my 5th grade self to read. I would have know so much sooner that I wasn't alone in my feelings" This is not a political issue, it's an empathy issue. Children being exposed to LGBTQ+ materials does not make them gay, but it may start a conversation that prompts someone to look at their classmate with compassion.

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Written Public Comments

Suzannah Noch, LCSW

Appropriate reading material in classrooms As a licensed clinical social worker with a counseling practice that has served families and youth in RPV for over 20 years, I can attest that the continued introduction to children of material designed to normalize (or even encourage) beliefs and behaviors of sexual identity that are not in line with the child's DNA and biological gender, is increasingly harming our children. Books such as the one read to 5th graders at Vista Grande (Too Bright to See) can have the effect of normalizing or even glorifying a desire to live in a manner inconsistent with a child's DNA and physical body structure. I have seen this create great confusion, anxiety, and depression and lead to lifelong difficulties. Schools should NOT be in the role of presenting this information or suggesting to children that they must choose what gender they want to be. This intrusion into sexual identity of children is far outside the appropriate role of academics. Certainly children who are struggling with these issues need to be well cared for and provided an avenue where this can be compassionately and appropriately addressed, but presenting this material in classrooms can have the effect of confusing children who are far too young to grasp all the ramifications and are still early in their process of growth and development. Let teachers focus on academic subjects, and let the schools provide appropriate counseling resources/avenues to children who are struggling. Teachers do not have the requisite training for these issues, and can't possibly understand all the ramifications without extensive training in child psychology and exhaustive research into the long-term effects of these issues. (And it should go without saying that teachers certainly should not be discussing such potentially harmful topics without parents' awareness and explicit consent.)

Christine MacInnis

J4 I want to start by saying that I understand that we all love our kids and want them to thrive. As a school counselor for 25 years, I saw LGBTQIA+ kids bullied at school by their peers but I never expected to see it coming from a group of adults. I would tell my students when it occurred that this behavior was born of fear and lack of knowledge. That those kids who were bullying didn't have people in their life who taught them about identity and compassion in a kind way. As educators we are taught to fight ignorance with knowledge but recently I see small groups of parents deciding to limit what ALL our children should know and learn. Even more terrifying, this is coming across to our LGTQIA students not only as erasure but outright hatred and commendation. As a Marriage and Family Therapist in my current role, I have always reassured my LGBTQIA clients that their local schools were for the most part, a safe and affirming place and that we have laws in place in CA to protect them. Now I feel like I lied to them. Because right now this school environment in PVSUSD feels threatening and unsafe to LGBTQ+ students even with those laws in place to protect them. Through manipulation and nuanced ways of stating the unstated, the message becomes crystal clear to them. You are not welcome here. Adults need to model acceptance and educators need to model learning new concepts. And yet here we are. Telling teachers that an award winning novel that is on the CA department of education recommended list is off limits. That we need to form committees to police educational materials so they suit the narratives of a few. That to me is bullying in the highest order. A recent article from the Guardian in Dec of 2022, stated that in California, 44% of LGBTQ+ youth considered suicide and 14% attempted suicide, the survey found; for trans and non-binary respondents, the findings were worse, with 54% considering and 19% attempting suicide. And 70% of LGBTQ+ youth in the state said they had experienced discrimination, with 62% saying they were not able to access mental health services. Representation is vital. I will state it plainly again. Banning a moving, carefully crafted novel about a trans child's experience from being taught only highlights for these kids that not only are they not seen and heard but simply not wanted. This is unacceptable when we talk about preventive mental health for ALL students As a parent of two teens, I want my children to learn empathy and compassion and literature is a wonderful space to gain insights into an experience that differs from their own. And for the gender expansive kids in this district, literature like Too Bright to See makes them feel seen, normalized and accepted. You can't be in my therapy room and hear the pain in the voices of trans teens that I see but I do every week and I'll tell you how heartbreaking it is. They share feelings like, no one cares, no one understands, and that they don't even have a peer who knows what it is to be them. That shared experience and connection which is so crucial to a teens development is simply not there for them. To heap hate on them due to ignorance, seems like a cruelty beyond measure. We are not bullies. We are caring, loving adults who want the best for our kids, for ALL our kids. Please don't make me a liar to my clients about their local schools. Make this a safe space for all kids to learn. Thank you

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Stefani Turner

J4 - I am writing to encourage the Board to support the proposal for a FORMAL curriculum committee. Ed Code gives parents a seat at the table. The District has not proven effective at adopting curriculum that is the best for our community nor in a timely manner under the previous Superintendent's Advisory Committee and now even less so via the scaled back "working group" version. More parental input is needed and required. Any opposition to more transparency and paren involvement only creates more suspicion and speculation that there is something that the District wants to hide in this process.

Judy Chang

J4- The newly added Curriculum Webinar series offering monthly review of curriculum in all disciplines across all grade levels is stellar. I often attend live, and when I can't I rely on the archived recordings to keep up with what is being taught in our classrooms and I have to say that I was extremely impressed with the material shared and in the professional and organized manner they were presented by the Educational Services Staff, Alice Lee and Suzanne Wildey, and the many teachers who contribute to the presentation. Parents who attend the series share my sentiments in that we found the material easy to digest and believed this to be an efficient and effective, and meaningful way to offer curriculum transparency to parents. I, as a fully engaged parent who actively studies these information sessions offered by the District, absolutely do not believe the District needs to reconsider the current process or to develop a plan for another curriculum committee which includes non-credentialed parent members, especially when the Board ultimately makes final decisions anyway. Rather we should be prioritizing long-standing District challenges such as improving our facilities and increasing enrollment.

Ann Gotthoffer

J4 I have a strong concern regarding agenda item J4 to create a Board appointed Curriculum Review Committee. I believe in most cases it is our professional educators who are the most qualified to make these decisions, and it seems a fair process is already in place. Additionally, there has been a political movement nationwide to push censorship and limit the freedom of choice in reading materials and instruction for our children. It has included eliminating literature with gay or trans characters, to even limiting instruction of history that might "potentially" make some students "uncomfortable." Censorship is a very slippery slope and what might seem reasonable to you one day, can lead to extreme and damaging restrictions of our rights in the future. I am a resident in Hermosa Beach and care about all of the South Bay school districts. PV has been known for their excellent schools for the 50 years that I've lived here. I am not familiar with most of the PV Board members, nor certain of their intention regarding the curriculum; but it is a dangerous framework to initiate and will leave the district open to political manipulation of education and the degradation of the quality of education. PLEASE VOTE NO on establishing a new curriculum committee, and protect the schools and our educators. Thank you, Ann Gotthoffer

Crystal L.

Too Bright to See by Kyle Lukoff - I am appalled to hear of the controversy over an award winning book being read by two fifth grade teachers at Vista Grande. It is sad to see that extremists have invaded our own school district and are attempting to circumscribe the education of our children according to their own narrow, intolerant, and bigoted world views. This is something our Board should not stand for. Do not allow the extremist playbook to be run in our community. Be clear-eyed about what they are trying to do. Support our teachers and educators in doing their jobs. We do not need a so-called "committee" to review what books are/are not acceptable in our district (i.e. book banning), as proposed by Julie Hamill. Additionally, Save PV Schools published the names of one of the Vista Grande teacher's in order to instigate the firing of this teacher? This type of bullying must not be tolerated. Do not allow the education of children in our district to be harmed by this small minority of extremists attempting to impose their bigoted and intolerant world views onto the rest of us

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Melina DeAnda

In regards to agenda item J(4): As a parent of two elementary aged students attending a PVPUSD school, I feel that it is vitally important that parents are made aware of and get a say on what exactly is being taught/read to our kids. Especially when the subjects being taught have anything to do with sex, gender, gender identity, sexuality and any other personal and highly politicized topics. Allowing teachers the option to openly discuss these social topics in a class room of young children opens a door to abuse, grooming, persuasion and coercion. It's been clear that the district has tried to keep quiet about the teacher that was arrested for child exploitation and pornography. How can they ensure that someone like him isn't bringing up these sensitive topics with our kids? What is the motivation to broach these subjects with children that are so young and innocent that they hardly have a grasp of what any of these ideas mean? Why would any of these topics need to be up for discussion without parent's knowledge or consent? When these topics are raised without parent's knowledge or consent there is almost certainly no room for discussion of differing opinions, there is no option to opt out. This amounts to indoctrination and the push of an agenda by an individual educator who's focus should be on education rather than social/political ideas. Our school board needs to ensure a parents right to protect their children, to allow parents to determine when their child is mature enough and ready to learn about certain subjects in a safe and controlled environment with a trusted adult. The school board needs to ensure that teachers have clear boundaries that will not be crossed and if they are, the teacher should face immediate disciplinary action.

Kirsten Poulin

TOPIC: 5TH GRADE CLASS MATERIAL Dear PVPUSD, I am mortified to learn that a teacher in our school district presented young children with controversial material including transgender ideology and sexual identity. Our family moved to PV 16 years ago solely for the purpose of raising our children in a safe, traditional environment. This is a smack in the face to all families in our district. It is my understanding district policies require parents be notified before presenting something like this to the class. I agree with Dr. Cherniss, no teacher should be using this book. I am incensed with the teacher's union, who claims that this book and others like it should be included in schools, and that teachers shouldn't need to notify parents. According to California law, parents have the ultimate authority in imparting values around sexuality to their children. It is not up to the school board!

Lisa Paolucci

Re: K4, the district already has a curriculum selection process that includes review by parents. I have attended school functions where I was allowed to review and comment on selected materials. I feel this process could be better communicated, but there is no need for an additional process or committee. This creates an undue burden for faculty and district in an already slow process. In addition, parental representation on this committee would be extremely difficult in this divided climate.

LGBTQI+ Parent

J4. I am a member of the LGBTQI community in PV and have two school age children. I'm angry that there are transphobic people in the community, like newly elected BOE member Julie Hamill, who wants to establish a district Curriculum Committee in the name of school safety. Their argument that topics like gender and being gay are "sensitive" and "controversial" is rooted in their prejudice—the irrational fear and aversion to people like me. Anyone who would consider LGBTQI+ people dangerous or have mental illness is homophobic and transphobic. If the district decides to limit the inclusion of LGBTQI people, fictional or real in the schools, this would be discrimination and hurt all students and open the district up for lawsuits. I'd imagine some of these activists grew up in conservative religious homes like I have, where religious indoctrination happens from birth and was taught that anyone who is not in their religion is less than and needs saving. Now that we are adults, please think critically for a moment: how hypocritical is your religion preaching love and peace when it is rooted in the exclusion and marginalization of your fellow community members? How blessed can you be when others who are different from you can thrive just as much and live just as fully as you who is restricted by your religious beliefs? Perhaps that is exactly what these people are afraid of: if everyone who is different can be awesome, then they will lose power of being supreme. In any rate, the PV community has room for all people but its public schools needs to be inclusive and compliant to anti-discrimination laws. I strongly reject the formation of any district Curriculum Committee because I believe it is politically and ideologically motivated and will not best serve the kids.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Susan Casty

I have a concern about setting up a Board appointed curriculum review committee. I believe in most cases our educators are the most qualified to make these decisions. Additionally, there has been a political movement nationwide to push censorship and limit the freedom of choice in reading materials for our children. It has included eliminating literature with gay or trans characters, to preventing instruction of factual history that might make some "uncomfortable." Censorship is a slippery slope and what might seem reasonable to you one day, can lead to extreme and damaging restrictions of our rights. I am a resident in Hermosa Beach and care about all of the South Bay school districts. PV has been known for their excellent schools for the 50 years I've lived here. I am not familiar with most of the PV Board members, nor their intention regarding curriculum; but it is a dangerous framework to initiate and will leave the district open to political manipulation of education. Please vote no on this item and protect the schools and our educators.

Nicole Gonzalez

This is in regards to the subject of transgender books in our schools. Completely overstepping the boundary of what should be taught at school vs. what I choose to teach my children in our household. Sexuality is not the schools job, as a parent, I will teach them where babies come from, how they are produced, gender and etc. How about the school focus on drug addiction and disabilities to educate put it where it will be helpful. Helping my kid be persuaded to become a : he, She, They or them is not something that you need to teach.

E. L.

J4: We don't need a board-appointed curriculum committee in PVPUSD. My understanding is that no other district in the state has such a committee. There is no benefit to our students to have PVPUSD dive into the culture wars in this way and be the first district to do so. Let's please strive to keep politics out of the classrooms and focus on topics that will keep our schools strong. Labeling books as "potentially controversial" would also send a terrible message to students that characters of certain backgrounds in those books were somehow abnormal or offensive based on who they are (e.g., the trans character in the Too Bright to See book). Proceeding with this would also bring unwanted attention to our district, which seems to be Board Member Hamill's objective by posting on national social media discussions requesting support from anti-trans activists: https://twitter.com/hamill_law/status/1632807107459448832 This behavior by Board Member Hamill is disturbingly unprofessional and unwelcome in our community. The other board members should keep in mind that they were elected with large majorities by voters who rejected the candidates "hand picked" by Ms. DiMaggio to bring these culture wars into our school district. You have our support and encouragement to move forward without allowing this group to further distract you. We support our wonderful teachers, who have completed extensive education and training. What truly worries me is the concept of people with no experience in education, like Board Member Hamill, appointing other inexperienced individuals from her political activist circle of friends to make decisions about what my child will be allowed to read. Parents who have questions or concerns about curriculum should be encouraged to speak directly with teachers and school administrators, rather than seeking to limit the curriculum for all students in the district. Please focus on the important work before the Board to strengthen our district's infrastructure and safety of our kids, and ignore the distractive behavior by the small group that seeks to divide our community with their culture wars. Again, there is no benefit to our students and teachers by dragging PVPUSD into this discourse or spending further time on evaluating a board-appointed curriculum committee.

Protect the Children

The Board of Education needs to be aware that there is an activist substitute teacher who is teaching gender ideology to unwitting elementary aged children. If the substitute does not want to be called "Mr." and instead wants to be called "Mx.", that seems fine. When children ask why the sub should NOT go into explaining their gender dysphoria issues and instead should respond with "because I prefer that name" and leave it at that. Parents are unaware of that a session of gender ideology is being taught to their children. This type of "education" should always come with prior parental approval.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

River Pilger

My name is River Pilger. I was raised in Rancho Palos Verdes and graduated from Palos Verdes Peninsula High School in 2013, but it wasn't until after I graduated that I realized I was a transgender man. As a child, I wanted to die from the pain I experienced. Not because I was transgender, but because I didn't know I was transgender. Labeled as a girl, I lived a nightmare I couldn't explain, escape, or recognize. All I knew was that I was forced to perform a gender that felt like a death sentence - so dissonant with my inner truth that I felt like an empty shell playing dress up - and I couldn't understand why others didn't seem to feel the same. I remember one Oprah episode featuring a transgender man, but it was so poorly explained that I had no idea what being transgender actually meant. With no representation that being transgender was a possibility, my child brain concluded that ending my life would remedy me, as I saw zero hope in a future where I could never feel like myself. The only thing keeping me here was not wanting to harm my family with my death. But I couldn't will away my underlying transgender identity. By denying my truth, my physical health crumbled until Lyme disease took over my weakened immune system, attempting to take my life instead. It was on oxygen and bedridden that I came across an authentic representation of a transgender person, and a light switch flipped in my brain. Labeled as a boy, the future suddenly felt livable. I felt true happiness for the first time in over a decade at eighteen, granting me the strength to fight Lyme and even attend college. Banning teachers from reading "Too Bright to See" by Kyle Lukoff will damage your community. It's already degrading to have to write a statement to my hometown's school district on why people like me should be allowed to be seen - especially in a book that is recommended for grades 3-5 by California's Department of Education. In addition to not moving forward on banning this book, you owe your community an apology that rectifies the message this action has shared; that you see us as too shameful, monstrous, or dangerous to be seen despite every major scientific organization verifying our existence and the safety of it. Providing a welcoming community will save the lives of children who just want to feel accepted for who they are and see their future as bright. Thank you for your time.

Lorraine

Agenda Item J4. Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee. I am a parent and asking the school board to reconsider the need for a board appointed Curriculum Committee. The unfortunate request for this committee seems to arise from the concern over two teachers who read Kyle Lukoff's award winning book called Too Bright to See which includes a transgender character. I ask that the school board rise above the noise of those who wish to incite fear. School boards should welcome diverse books about different characters with different experiences; it is what helps students educate themselves, empathize with others, and reflect upon themselves as they grow to be mature, educated, and loving adults. We should support our teachers and their professionalism in choosing a book they felt would be appropriate for their students. If the school board chooses to appoint a committee in an effort to ban diverse books such as these, then we would need to pull all the books that include characters of different races, cultures, genders, and special needs. Once again, I ask that the school board rise above the noise and not move forward with a board appointed committee. Thank you for your time.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Heather Fowler

G1, public comment on non-agenda item "I Don't See Me" I was always told, "Just don't talk about Aunt Susie at school." When I would ask why, my mom would say, "People just don't understand." I spent most of my time between ages 4 to 12 at my Aunt Susie's house as my brother spent months on end at either Cedars Sinai or UCLA hospital. Aunt Susie had cats. So many cats. Maybe too many? She read to me at bedtime, something my overburdened parents couldn't add to their plates. She knew how to cook, like really cook. She always had friends coming and going that were always so kind to me. Aunt Susie was always helping friends - sick friends who needed rides or errands ran, friends who didn't have family help, and adopting cats that her friends would find. She was busy but she seemed to be doing work that made her happy. Luckily, Aunt Susie lived with her best friend, Peighton. Peighton liked cats too. Peighton helped carry the load of household work and take care of me while Aunt Susie was taking care of others. Peighton taught me to paint and work with clay. She hobbled together a kiln in their side yard/cat haven. Peighton would make herself scarce when my grandma and grandpa were around. I guess it was family time and she wasn't family. But wasn't she? Aunt Susie and Aunt Peighton were a couple. They were lesbians. They were my Aunts. But if you recall, my mom forbade me to talk about the 2 adults I was spending most of my time with. Don't talk about it at school, don't talk about it at your friends house, definitely don't talk about it in front of grandma and grandpa. In the 80s, my mom feared retribution and retaliation. Our Catholic church, still performing Mass in Latin, would definitely not let us through the doors. My friends, classmates' parents, and teachers would think I had contracted AIDS, as the fear of AIDS and homophobia was rampant across the US. My grandma and grandpa would damn us all to Hell. My grandparents died believing Aunt Susie and Peighton were "best friends." My mom gave up trying to keep the secret as my brother got sicker and her plate got fuller. A teacher, Mr Reider, at Fairmont Elementary in Yorba Linda told me it was OK to talk about my family because all families are special. Please don't allow close minded people to take us backwards. LGBTQ+ community has always been here and will always be here.

Paul DiCarmine

Non-agendized item: Acceptance. My father was born different than other babies. It wasn't easy for people to tell, but his parents knew. A small proportion of kids are born this way. It wasn't his choice, or because of something anyone did, it just was. Nevertheless, he was discriminated against. He was told that his way of being wasn't right; told outright by some, and implicitly by how people reacted to him and how the world was organized. My father was born left-handed. At the time, being left-handed was becoming more accepted in America, but not where he was born. He was forced to do his schoolwork with his left hand in a bucket of sand. When caught using his left hand, it was smacked with a strip of leather. Society tried to make him conform and force him to be what he was not. My father did not conform. He couldn't. Thankfully, his story has a happy ending. Today, he is ambidextrous. He writes with his right hand and shoots (hockey) on the left. I feel comfortable sharing this story because being left-handed is no longer "controversial." It is a fact of life. When I was in school, things were much better for left-handed kids. My best friend from elementary school is left-handed. Rather than forcing him to conform, he was accepted for who he is and given special scissors. I know there are important stories from trans people that will not be shared today, or will be shared with the board in private, because sadly there is a lack of acceptance for something that is a totally normal biological reality. You might ask, why are more and more people coming out as trans? What is happening? In the early 1900s, approximately 3% of Americans were left-handed. But around 1910, the trend of left-handedness began to increase until about 1960 when a full 12% of people were recognized as being left-handed. That rate holds true today. So why are there more left-handed people today than 100 years ago? What caused the increase in left-handedness? Did teachers start reading books featuring lefthanded characters? No, obviously. But if they did, that would be to confuse correlation with causation. So what changed? What changed is that people are no longer made to feel ashamed of being left-handed and are free to stand up and be counted. Being left-handed is accepted as a totally normal biological reality. There have always been left-handed people, and there always will be. (source for the data: google "left handed graph" and you will find several graphs and many discussions)

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Heather Fowler

Re: BOE Mtg Mar 8, 2023 Agenda Item J4 - Creation of Board Appointed Curriculum Committee I am writing today in opposition to creating a Board appointed curriculum committee. I am not of this belief because I don't want parents in the classroom or involved in curriculum decisions. I believe the district is doing an excellent job in the process of adopting a new curriculum in accordance with Ca Dept of Ed, piloting in the district, and allowing parent participation in many steps along the way. My 2 children have been in classrooms where the new curriculum was being piloted and it was always communicated to our family at the beginning of the year with updates throughout as needed. Creating a committee will cost time and money the district doesn't have. Ms Gotanda mentioned in their curriculum adoption process presentation to the board in Jan 2022 that the district is behind in the adoption process and one of the barriers is fiscal. I have appreciated the Curriculum Town Halls that have occurred this year and have additionally heard about new courses at PTA meetings, specifically the Data Science class coming available at the high schools. In both instances, parents are able to ask questions. As someone who spends a lot of time volunteering with fellow district parents, I can tell you the #1 and #2 concerns I hear about from parents - Mental Health and degrading Facilities. Our children and families need you to make their mental health and safe, well-maintained facilities the priority of the Board of Education.

J4 - I am a parent of two elementary school aged children. I wouldn't want a teacher operating on my leg, at the same time, I don't want a neurosurgeon selecting curriculum for my child. Teachers go to school for many years to specialize in what they do. Let's let teachers and educators pick our curriculum, not community members who have private agendas.

Not A Medical Professional

Medical Advice. During a recent board meeting Ms. Hamill said something to the effect of "we are not medical professionals, we should not be giving medical advice." She then went on to say something to the effect of "everyone is going to get COVID and we should all just get used to it." Over 1,000,000 Americans have died of COVID and approximately 2,000 are still dying each week (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>) which is over 100,000 Americans each year. So, no, I personally will not get used to it. Ms. Hamill continues to not take her own recommendation to refrain from giving medical advice by making and/or sharing multiple, despicable comments on her many social media accounts on the appropriateness of the medical care that transgender people get for themselves in consultation with actual medical professionals. Here, again, Ms. Hamill (not a medical professional) knows better. Ms. Hamill, if you have a political consultant, fire them. If Erin DeMaggio is your guiding light, who's views you seem to parrot, then my condolences to your political career.

Anonymous PVPUSD Parent

non-agenda item: Regarding the "Too Bright to See" book controversy. While these teachers are actively trying to make safe spaces for kids struggling with gender identity with a book, I've read, that has spooky and controversial content, they are at the same time actively making unsafe spaces for kids who come from conservative religious or cultural backgrounds that appeal to a higher authority than themselves (God or cultural Elders/histories) who teach traditional, binary roles. Students should be allowed to maintain their personal religious or cultural views, as long as they are not imposing them onto others, in the same way that LGBTQ+ students should be allowed to have their personal views without imposing them onto others. School should be safe for everyone and controversial topics such as gender identity should not be forced upon our diverse group of students. Instead, we can teach them the skill of having opposing ideas in the same space, but still treating one another with respect and kindness. This was a prideful assumption on the part of the teachers that it is their role to parent our children. It should be left to families to decide when and how to talk about sexuality and gender expression and religious and cultural differences should be respected by the staff.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Brisa Nelson	<p>trans hate - i am a student at pvphs and all of this makes me feel like school will be an even more hateful and unsafe place than it already is. there are already plenty of people who will bully you for being trans if you are out and if you are not then you are in constant fear of people finding out and bullying you. school is already a really stressful and harmful place for everyone's mental state. people are constantly self-harming and unaliving themselves , but this will put out so much hate to trans people who are already so hated. making children also think that being trans is weird and illegal/not allowed and making kids hate themselves if they feel that way and they can't even help it so you will make them feel like there is something wrong with them.</p>
A Parent	<p>How are we to believe that Ms Hamill is motivated by what the PV community wants and what is best for PV kids when she has a habit of soliciting "help" from heavily biased state-wide groups and her heavily biased personal twitter following. How can we be sure that her view of what the students of PV need is a reflection of reality and not an effect of a warped view she receives from her twitter bubble? She will no doubt consider this a personal attack. It is not. It is a criticism of how an elected official, not a private citizen, does their job.</p>
Kate B.	<p>J4 Students deserve to learn about all aspects of life, even the things that may make certain community members uncomfortable. Knowledge is how people grow into thoughtful, compassionate, effective adults making their own choices and their own way in life. Learning about gender identity, just like racial, ethnic, religious identity, is an important part of a full, complete, quality education. Something the PVPUSD rightfully takes pride in. Limiting access to these lessons, whether through curriculum committees or book banning, does ACTUAL harm to our children. Please do not allow a bigoted, closed-minded effort based in ignorance and fear to limit the rightful education of ALL students. Curriculum should be decided by professionals, not vigilantes. I fully support the teachers of Vista Grande, and all teachers everywhere fighting for the inclusion of ALL of our students</p>
Anna Littleford	<p>Greetings, My name is Anna Littleford, I'm am a parent of twin third graders at Dapplegray Elementary and I'm writing to oppose the additional "parent" curriculum advisory committee. For the most part curriculum should be determined by educators. There are multiple touch points that parents can offer input but ultimately, educators who have the education and experience in curriculum design should be setting the curriculum. In closing, I'd like to thank our district and teachers for safeguarding our students curriculum.</p>
Richard Cook	<p>Agenda Item J4, Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee In regards to Agenda Item J4, Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee, please consider NOT creating a new committee. There are already avenues available for parents to submit their opinions on district curriculum. Perhaps make those avenues more visible so that those who feel they are not being included can be made more aware of them. Creating a new committee will add more workload to the district and remove focus on the more pressing matters that the district faces such as infrastructure. We have elections to elect our board members, and they represent the views of the community as a whole. I trust those members to make the decisions we elected them to do.</p>
Gary N Boston	<p>J4 As a stakeholder in this school district, I am dismayed by the recent attempts by outside funded hate groups like "Save" PV Schools to censor materials in the classroom and to publicly harass PVUSD staff. The Board should condemn these deplorable smear campaigns and effort by bigots in our community. Teachers should be empowered to devise their curricula within the guidelines set by the state in whatever manner they believe will best serve their students. We should treat them as the professionals they are, instead of taking authoritarian steps to micromanage their classrooms. History has never looked kindly on the book burners</p>
Megan Padilla	<p>Agenda Item J4. I support the district forming a Brown Act Curriculum Committee.</p>

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

I'm a parent of 2 daughters in the community, ages 10 and 13. I am outraged that a teacher in our district would think a book such as Too Bright To See is an appropriate and educational book for 5th graders. It has zero educational merit and isn't a topic teachers should be discussing. These topics are ones to be addressed by parents at home. Sexuality should not be a topic discussed in the classroom and should be left for parents to discuss with their children. Teachers should not take liberties to push personal agendas and PVPUSD is expected to hold teachers responsible for sticking to the curriculum as set by the district. Teachers should stick to teaching academic topics -what they are hired to do. I, as a parent, choose to send my daughters to private school rather than place them in an environment where teachers are taking away parental rights and control.

Molly Thorn

Item J4- I vehemently oppose a parent curriculum committee. We as parents need our kids to have a full well rounded knowledge of the world. Representation (G1, non-agenda item)- As the parent of a brown children in this school district it is imperative that my children see themselves represented and critical for other children to learn about life experiences that are different from theirs. Mental health (G1, non-agenda item)-Transphobia is not always overt, it can be expressed by choices or lack there of. The mental health of EVERY person regardless of what they identify as is hugely important for us to have a thriving community.

Ashley Bryant

Agenda Item J4: As a parent of two elementary-aged children, I am concerned about the faux outrage over the reading of "Too Bright To See" in a classroom. This "outrage" has now led the board to consider a parent-led committee to determine curriculum - a curriculum which should be decided upon by experts, not a group of parents with pitchforks. We parents already can review textbooks and involved parents are always able to review the syllabus teachers gives students. The PVPUSD School Board plays a critical role in setting the standard for an inclusive and supportive educational experience. Principals, teachers, and staff should be encouraged to provide equitable resources and support to all children so they can feel safe, respected, and appreciated in their learning environment. Banning books or ridiculing teachers who demonstrate support for LGBTQ or trans children undermines the progress we have made in creating a culture of safety and acceptance. Moreover, it sends a message that only certain identities or perspectives are valid or allowed amongst students and faculty within our schools. It is essential to celebrate inclusivity through respectful representation of all human identities within the books being read by students so that children from all walks of life can feel seen and supported.

Jen Hecker

I support the District forming a Brown Act Curriculum Committee.

It has come to my attention recently that a fifth grade teacher in the District asked that their class read a book about,a transgender individual I feel, this is an unnecessary topic to be discussed in school. We are blessed to live in a time where there is so much amazing literature at our fingertips, Why choose a book just to push some sort of agenda, because that is what it feels like to me. If you were to search online for quality fifth grade literature, I would imagine that the book in question would not be found. However, if you were to ask for literature that promotes a social agenda about a certain topic, that book would definitely be found. I go back to the plethora of excellent literature throughout history. What is wrong with using the tried and true books? What fifth grader would feel comfortable reading a book about transgender? None that I know and I have a fifth grader myself, along with three older children. Put Anne of Green Gables or Hatchet in front of these children. That is what they want to read. Why the Teacher's Union thinks they can make the decisions for our families and children is beyond me. As a former educator myself, I chose not to join the Teacher's Union, because I felt like it didn't truly represent me or the ideals I held. I imagine it is much the same here. I don't see the Union representing how teachers really feel, but somehow they have all the power? That makes no sense. How is this issue even a teacher's Union issue? Should we not, as the families, be included in the educational decisions of our children? This district would be nothing without the support of its families. In your haste to bow to the Union, you are driving people away.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

Steve g Fowler	3/8/2023 Agenda Item J4 - Creation of Board Appointed Curriculum Committee Today I am writing in opposition to the creation of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee. The last thing our district needs is more bureaucracy. I trust teachers and administrators to choose what is best and have always felt communicated to when a new curriculum was being adopted.
Yvette Delia	J4 Curriculum committee I am submitting a written statement today to encourage our Board to allow our teachers to dictate what can be taught in our schools. Non-educators, yoga instructors and the like should let educators and trained professionals do what they do best. I support our community. We are better when we work together and we need to be inclusive of ALL students' needs. Thank you.
Nattaly licon	Every child should have the opportunity to be able to express themselves. It is not our obligation to tell them how they feel or who they should be or to put down their feeling. But it is our responsibility to give them the tools they need to help them find themselves and give to give them comfort in asking questions. It is important to educate tomorrows people about all aspects of life, and to allow them to do that in a safe environment.
Sierra	Book choice for inclusion.
Juan Thorn	Curriculum (K4, Establishment of a Board Appointed Curriculum Committee) It is essential that curriculum be developed and decided upon by experts in education and childhood development. Not parents who are citing feelings and instead fact based research. Representation (non-agenda item) To truly experience a sense of connection to a community, all children need to see themselves represented. As an African American man growing up in a largely white area it was crucial that my classmates had an idea about my history as well. Mental health (non-agenda item) Transphobia is not always overt, it can be expressed by choices. Our choice to piegonhole a group of people and push their feelings to the side will have a negative impact on us all in this community.
Linda Kenney	Non-Agenda Item: Dr. Cherniss and PVPUSD School Board, Thank you for your service to our community and for taking time to thoughtfully consider these comments I am concerned about the role that the school district may be taking in providing evangelism of unproven and unscientific social positions in our school district. I believe that they are not in the best interest of the students. The PVPUSD has had the reputation of excellence in academics over many decades. This academic excellence should be the continued focus of the school district. It should embrace the conveyance of basic information and skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, history and life skills of computers and communication. It should not be the role of the school to indoctrinate, proselytize or provide political or social pressures and influence. Further, it is not the role for the school to have ultimate authority over children and to leave parents out of notification and decisions. Sexual fluidity and choosing genders are new and unproven social ideas. These behaviors are out of scope and responsibility for faculty and school. The parents are still the legal guardians of their children and are responsible for their care – physical, social and emotional.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING 3-8-23

Written Public Comments

The school and the faculty have temporary and specific responsibilities to provide instruction in information and skills and to provide a safe and supervised environment while in their care. Please do not allow these social experiments on our children. It is inappropriate to provide content regarding of gender selection, fluidity and alternate lifestyles in school. This is basically evangelism for a certain political and social viewpoint that is now popular but not proven or based in science. The current trends of choosing genders, pronouns and sexual attractions is creating more mental and emotional challenges for students in their developing years. It is challenging enough to grow up, make friends and find your place without these additional pressures and decisions. Anyone who chooses these lifestyles should be accepted or cared for in the school. However, there should not be a recruitment and educational effort to suggest choosing your sex or sexual preference. It is the role of the school to educate on the basic subjects. It is the role and responsibility of the parents to provide the political, social and religious education for their children. The time to listen and set reasonable policy is now. PVPUSD should not be influenced by the pressures to virtue signal and hop on board with social trends that are not in the best interest of the children, our community or our society at large.

Chad Ratner

J4 Transgender people deserve equal rights. I am a transgender male who works in education and I believe books can change the way we are perceived. Books can also save our lives by teaching people that we are equal. We have lives and jobs and families, and deserve to live free from discrimination and harassment. Uneducated people have often committed violent offenses against us because they have not been taught tolerance and acceptance.

Richard Cook

J6. Board Policy/Regulation 1330: Use of School Facilities Please consider allowing alcohol to be sold/present on campus facilities for events. It should not be a problem if the event is held during non-school hours and the event is properly permitted by the local laws. Events that benefit the district should especially be considered, as having alcoholic beverages are the social norm for fundraising events. They could use the school facilities to save on operating costs, thereby increasing the return to the district.

AR

Protect our children. Parents should always be notified prior to reading a book that covers controversial content. Parents need to have the opportunity to preview ALL books that will be read aloud or available to students. This will allow parents the option to communicate with teachers and staff of their approval or disapproval of anything that could be upsetting, offensive, or confusing to their child. This is not about taking a political stance. This is about protecting the innocence of our children and protecting their rights to a free and appropriate education. Children should never be afraid to stand up for what they believe is right just because it isn't what is popular at the moment. Protect our children's rights and freedom of speech for every student.

Scott Lewallen

My name is Scott Lewallen, Peninsula High School class of 1998, and former ASB President. I am an entrepreneur, artist, activist, and out gay man with close ties to LGBT causes. My parents still live on the hill, my mom was a college counselor at PVPHS, and I love them. I speak as a product of the Peninsula education system, where I was blessed with a warm and wonderful upbringing surrounded by a close knit family, a group of supportive friends, and a journey of compassionate educators from Pt Vicente, through Peninsula High School, and onto USC. I knew I was gay at a very young age. If it weren't for the embrace of peer groups through my formative years, I would not have the mindfulness and success I enjoy today, and I probably would not be alive. Some of the vicious transphobic, and anti-queer rhetoric I've heard and read regarding this board issue is quite frankly terrifying. I worry for the safety of any child who is raised by parents living in that quandary between fear and ignorance. You should want your child to be exposed to a variety of worldly ideas, concepts, and scenarios so that they may grow up to make their own decisions as awesome adults and exemplary leaders anchored in a reality of love, kindness, and compassion in whatever career path they pursue.

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. Family is a primary vector to nurture healthy development of one's self. All too often, especially as a gay man, I see family blood fail. When family fails, education becomes that vector, and literature is one of the most wonderful ways to expose a mind to fresh concepts, abstractions, and narratives about the world we live in. In this era of global, domestic, and now local hate, I urge the Board to see beyond the small minds of hate groups, and understand the role of education, the importance of free speech and expression, and the value of exposing our young progenies of the Peninsula to vast amounts of knowledge, so that every kid growing up on the hill is armed with experience and mindfulness to go out into the world and spread light and do good. If your child ends up being part of the LGBT community, embrace it. It is a gift and blessing to you as parents. And if not, please impart your family with empathy and strength to be a good ally to those of us who have no one else. Love is love, and it's the heart that really matters in the end.

Jennifer Jordan

As a member of the Palos Verdes community, a homeowner, taxpayer, and parent who volunteered hundreds of hours in my children's elementary school classrooms and, donated thousands of dollars to benefit our teachers, students and programs; I am shocked, saddened and outraged to learn that one or more elementary school teachers in our district have taken it upon themselves to purposely disregard PVPUSD's rules, regulations, and policies by reading, discussing, and promoting controversial and inappropriate sex and gender materials to the children in their classrooms. Elementary school children are innocent, vulnerable, and trusting. And, they are a captive audience for teachers. It is beyond appalling that children in our district were forced to sit quietly in their classroom as they were taken advantage of and mentally abused by a teacher or teachers pushing a distorted gender ideology that has absolutely no place whatsoever in our PVPUSD classrooms. I'm also shocked the PV Teachers Union would support the abhorrently deviant actions of these teachers in an effort to push a politically motivated agenda at the expense of the well-being of our children. The PV Teachers Union should be apologizing instead of continuing to support the sexual grooming of our children – especially considering the recent conviction of a former PVPUSD school teacher for sexual deviancy. The teacher or teachers involved have proven their complete disregard for the policies of our district and the mental health and welfare of our students. I ask you to respond to their insubordination and lack of basic decency with the immediate termination of their positions as teachers for the PVPUSD.

Anthony Arellano-Kruse

Please don't sexualize 5th grade young children or try to encourage them to be trans gender. Everyone is entitled to an opinion but it's completely inappropriate and disgusting to push this on kids and disregard the parents. Just because it's trendy doesn't mean it's ok or appropriate. Shame on the teachers who think any kind of sex talk by an adult with innocent kids is anything but sexual harassment.

Kaitlin Lewallen

J4 - I am a product of PVPUSD. I was blessed to have an incredible education, which took me all the way to my Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. From my education and lived experience in the classroom with my students, I've learned the power of helping children build their identities, especially in the formative years of early childhood, where rapid brain development takes place. Contrary to popular belief, at a very young age, children are already beginning to explore their identities, as well as how to respect and care for the individuals in their immediate and larger community. As adults, it is our job to help them in that exploration, affirming their positive beliefs and attitudes about themselves and who they are, as well as their interactions and empathy toward their peers, to ensure they grow up to be confident, self-assured individuals that contribute to a loving caring community. I know in my heart parents ultimately want what's best for their children. There is no handbook that will truly prepare you for being the perfect parent. However, if there were a handbook, I know the first and most important rule would be that parents support and love their children, unconditionally, for who they are. My assumption is that the parents who are pushing against queer-positive literature and curriculum in the classroom are acting out of fear, with the underlying goal of protecting and supporting their child.

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. Unfortunately, this fear stems from misguided and incredibly harmful rhetoric around the Trans/LGBTQ community. But this type of education that is in question, the type that teaches inclusivity, love and empathy, is actually the safest path forward. Consider the opposite: education that denies children of their identity and lived experiences, that makes anything but being a straight cisgender individual, unacceptable. This type of education is incredibly dangerous. For students to go their entire educational career without curriculum that affirms their identity is extremely dangerous. Why not foster positive self-identity and provide children with opportunities to be able to fully express themselves and their unique individual characteristics that make them special? Children are going to grow up and become the human they know themselves to be. No curriculum, or text book, is going to “trick them” into being someone they are not. Education will either function as a tool to support them and help them grow, or serve as a tool that others them and makes school an unwelcoming, unsafe place to be. It is our responsibility as the adults to ensure the former.

Lisa Turek

It has been brought to my attention that a teacher at Vista Grande disregarded the district's policies pertaining to Regulations 6144 and 6141.2 and read a book that falls under "controversial materials" (6144) and "sexual health" (6141.2). I am concerned as whether the BOE and district staff are following the bylaws which state that controversial materials must FIRST be presented to Superintendent Cherniss, and books about sexual health be taught only in a sexual health class. It would be useful for the BOE form an office that encourages district families to report violations of the laws and civil rights. I furthermore recommend that the district broaden their code of conduct to include sexual/gender grooming. What occurred at Vista Grande is a form of gender grooming taught by a teacher who undoubtedly is not a clinician on gender dysphoria or even DSM diagnostic classifications. The district should also offer psychological counseling to the families of children who were affected by this teacher.

Constance Mueller

Parental rights in knowing what is taught or read in class. As a 24 year resident of Palos Verdes, and our kids attending school here, I was appalled to learn of the teach that was reading a controversial topic such as transgenderism to a 5th grade class. The Board has every right to direct teachers to stick to the basics curriculum and ADVISE parents when a topic of such concern is being brought to the students. Not everything is beneficial to our kids, and it is the parents right to know and to choose if a topic is not ready for their student. Please keep transgender topics OUT of our schools. You would not promote books about pro-drugs or smoking - so why bring this topic into classrooms now?

Keith Vander Putten

Transgender book teaching: I am adamantly against bringing this type of teaching into the classroom. These concepts and emotions should be reserved for parents to hold if they so choose.

Neekta Baghoolizadeh

My name is Neekta Baghoolizadeh, and I am a sophomore at Palos Verdes Peninsula High School. Recently, concerns were raised regarding 5th grade teachers who read aloud a book with a transgender character. A group called “Save PV Schools” chose to press this issue, calling this “sex abuse” and attempting to get the teachers involved “canceled”. The book being read was “Too Bright To See”, a coming-of-age novel by Kyle Lukoff with a transgender main character. This book is labeled and marketed as a middle grade novel, with an age range of 8-12. This book does not contain sexually explicit material, it is not inappropriate for children to read, and being exposed to it, in no way, shape, or form, constitutes sex abuse. The California Framework for History and Social Sciences itself states “By studying the stories of a diverse collection of families—such as ... families with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parents and their children ... students can both locate themselves and their families in history and learn about the lives and historical struggles of their peers.” I would like all parties involved to be aware this is stated in the guidelines for second grade classes, and concerns were raised regarding books read in a fifth grade classroom. The existence of transgender people is not something to shield children from, and the California state guidelines agree.

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What the group titled Save PV Schools calls for, and what they hope to achieve, is censorship. They wish to censor discussion of transgender people and LGBTQ centered issues. What message do we send to trans children, when we label their existence as inherently sexual? By preventing trans children from knowing there are others like them, we are telling them that they are wrong. We are telling them that they should be ashamed of themselves, that no one like them exists, that they are alone. We are inviting them into a future of self-esteem issues, social isolation, and mental health struggles. By failing to educate children about transgender people, we breed prejudice and transphobia among our youth, and further sentence transgender children to an increasingly bleak future. To the group "Save PV Schools", I raise this counterstatement: Save PV Students. Save PV students from transphobia and censorship. Save trans PV students from the horrifyingly high suicide rates that this kind of discrimination breeds. Censorship will not cause trans children to disappear, but it will cause them to suffer. Save PV students. Thank you.

Mike Yang

G1 – Inclusivity I want to share a personal story that highlights the importance of promoting acceptance and inclusivity in our schools, especially as it relates to transgender students. My cousin's child, who is transgender, attended a high school in the Midwest where there was very little discussion regarding gay and transgender people. Parents were generally fearful of any such discussion because of a false belief that indoctrination would occur. While her family was supportive, she found that her classmates were less accepting. She often felt isolated and excluded. This took a toll on her mental health where she told her parents repeatedly that she no longer wanted to be alive. This is a parent's worst nightmare - I can't imagine the pain that my cousin and her husband went through during this time. This culminated to the point where one day, she attempted suicide because she felt like nobody saw or understood her for who she was. Thankfully, she survived, recently moved to California and is now thriving in a new loving and accepting school and community. It is heartbreaking to think that other transgender students in our district may be experiencing similar struggles and thoughts of suicide.

As a member of this community, I believe that it is our responsibility to foster an environment of inclusivity for everyone, including for transgender individuals. I fully understand the concerns about exposing children to certain content and I do believe that certain topics are not age appropriate at certain grade levels, but some members of our community (as well as outside influences) are attempting via a petition to ban literature and discussion on anything related to human sexuality (defined in the most broad and vague terms possible) even at the high school level. I won't even begin to get into the legalities of such a policy if it were to become adopted, but at its core, I find it incredibly offensive. This type of extreme "Don't Say Gay" policy has no place in our community and should be rejected full stop. It is important to remember that literature can serve as a powerful tool for educating students about the world around them. Books that include gay or transgender characters can help promote understanding, acceptance, and empathy, and can provide an opportunity for students to see themselves and others that may be different from them in a positive light. On the other hand, attacking books that include gay or transgender characters sends a harmful message that the experiences and identities of these individuals are not valid or worthy of representation.

Finally, I want to address the concerns raised by some members of the community about the supposed "indoctrination of gender ideology" of the children in our schools. I want to emphasize that, at least from my kids' perspective (Point Vicente and PVIS) and the many families that I've spoken to, I have not seen any evidence of any such indoctrination in our schools.

Renee Jaco

The PVE Foundation is interested in doing a summer benefit concert at Malaga School for the 100 year celebration of "The Palos Verdes Project" with proceeds going to the PVE safety initiative, community and the school. We feel this change would allow for more money to be raised toward these goals and we in turn would significantly increase money raised for our community.