

REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FLAGLER COUNTY SCHOOLS MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHALLENGE OF LIBRARY LITERARY MATERIALS

Title: The Black Flamingo

Author, compiler, or editor: Dean Atta

Publisher: Blazer + Bray (an imprint of Harper Collins)

Basis of Objection: "Materials contain pornography, Materials are not appropriate for the age of student"

What is objectionable about the material? (Please be specific, cite pages, chapters, etc.):

This book contains references to sexuality, inexplicit sexual nudity and sexual activities, illegal drug

use, alcohol use; references to alternate genders, racism and racist commentary.

Pages: 3, 47, 57, 107, 109, 113, 124, 129, 130, 174, 207, 209, 222, 226, 230, 231, 232, 235, 240,

242, 272, 282, 298, 299, 307, 314, 316, 333, 367, 368, 370, 371, 376, 378, 380, 386

Please read the title listed in its entirety. Please also read SB Policy 411.

FCSD Board Policy 411

- I. Objectives of Selection for Media Center Materials - The primary objective of the school's educational media center is to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the school. The center shall provide a wide range of educational media materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the representation of different points of view. The School Board asserts that the responsibility of the media center is to provide:
 - A. Materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interest, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
 - B. Materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
 - C. A background of information enabling students to make intelligent judgments in their daily life.
 - D. Materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to the American heritage.
 - E. A comprehensive collection appropriate for the maturity levels of the students served by the media center which places principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality.
- II. Criteria for Selection of Media Center Materials -
 - A. The standards to determine the propriety of the educational materials shall be pursuant to Florida Statutes.
 - B. First consideration shall be given to the needs of the individual school based on knowledge of the curriculum, of the existing collection, and of the needs of children and youth. Requests from users of the collection (i.e., administrators, faculty, parents, and students) shall be given high priority.

- C. Materials shall be considered on the basis of accuracy of content, overall purpose, timeliness, importance of the subject matter, quality of the writing/production, readability and popular appeal, authoritativeness, comprehensiveness of material, reputation of the publisher/producer, reputation and significance of the author/artist/composer/producer, etc.; and, format and price.
- D. Gifts of media materials or money shall be accepted with the understanding that their use or disposition shall be determined by those persons having the responsibility for acquisitions, according to the same selection criteria and procedures as purchased materials.

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7. "Harmful to minors" means any reproduction, imitation, characterization, description, exhibition, presentation, or representation, of whatever kind or form, depicting nudity, sexual conduct, or sexual excitement when it:

- (a) Predominantly appeals to a prurient, shameful, or morbid interest;
- (b) Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material or conduct for minors; and
- (c) Taken as a whole, is without serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

Please answer all applicable questions.

PURPOSE:

1. What do you feel is the purpose, theme, or message of the material?

Please explain.

Coming of age story about a young member of the LGBTQ+ community. He finds his identity, not just racial but also cultural and sexual. Self-acceptance and community acceptance. Being true to yourself despite being torn down. Protagonist doesn't fit into society's norms and finds who he is without compromising himself. Combats dangerous false narrative about trans and drag communities. Depicts how to work through challenges within relationships.

2. Does the material support and/or enrich the curriculum?

Please explain.

BEST ELA 12.R.1.3- evaluate development of character perspective including conflicting perspectives
 BEST ELA 11.R.1.4- analyze ways in which poetry reflects themes and issues of the time period
 This makes poetry accessible to students- supports ELA curriculum as self-selected text.

3. Does the material stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and/or ethical values?

Please explain.

Page 245- reminiscent of Langston Hughes's poetry
Ethical- treat others well. Accept identities that don't infringe upon consent and existence.
Factual- knowledge of the drag community
Realistic because most characters have stereotypes and they learn to move beyond tolerance to empathy.

4. Does the material enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives?

Please explain.

Students who would self-select this would learn from this.
Protagonist puts himself in risky situations but REFLECTS upon them to make changes.

5. Does the title offer an opportunity to understand more of the human condition?

Please explain.

Drag culture is presented in a way that is not brow-beating. It says "I exist. I am not threatening you; do not threaten my existence." He lives between worlds: multiple cultures, multiple races, etc.

6. Does the material offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and history of diverse groups of people?

Please explain.

Yes. This is a unique voice we do not always have an opportunity to hear, which is valuable. The protagonist is unique and we have diversity among the other characters in the novel. The drag community is an underrepresented community in literature and is currently under fire. This book handles issues in an age-appropriate way.

CONTENT:

1.) Is the content timely and/or relevant?

Please explain.

Yes. The drag community is an underrepresented community in literature and is currently under fire. This book handles issues in an age-appropriate way.

2.) Is the subject matter of importance to the students served?

Please explain.

Yes, we have students at high schools who identify with this character in multiple ways and they can see themselves reflected in this text. Even if a student doesn't identify with this character, they can read this to build empathy. Our community is full of students who are from other countries and can see themselves in this text as well.

3.) Is the writing of high quality?

Please explain.

Yes, it is an excellent example of a novel in verse. It is accessible as well.

4.) Does the material have readability and popular appeal?

Please explain.

Yes, very readable and has popular appeal. Struggling readers can access the text.

5.) Does the material come from a reputable publisher/producer?

Please explain.

Yes, this imprint of Harper Collins is highly regarded. Kirkus, SLJ, & Publishers Weekly starred. Florida Teen Read last year. It is listed as most conservatively 9th grade and up according to peer-reviewed sources.

6.) If presented as factual, is the content accurate?

Please explain.

N/A

7.) If the text is informational, is the text comprehensive?

Please explain.

N/A

APPROPRIATENESS:

- 1.) Does the material take into consideration the students' varied interests, abilities, and/or maturity levels?

Please explain.

Yes. It also takes into account maturity levels of readers; it is not explicit or vulgar. It is appropriate for most high school students. Depiction of characters' behaviors are appropriate for high school aged students.

- 2.) Does the material help provide any of the following:

- A resource that represents a level of difficulty accessible to readers at the school?
- Diversity of appeal?
- Representation of diverse points of view?

Please explain.

Diversity of appeal- there is a lot students can relate to. Protagonist is finding his identity but it goes beyond racial identity and sexuality.
This book is set in the UK, so it gives a completely different view.

- 3.) Does the material help to provide representation for varied religious, ethnic, and/or cultural groups and the contributions of these groups to American Heritage?

Please explain.

The novel is not set in the USA.
It does provide diverse representation of religious, ethnic, and cultural groups.
Won the Stonewall Award from the US, so it represents groups that also are in the USA.

4. Does this material provide representation to students based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, political or religious beliefs, national or ethnic origin, or genetic information?

Please explain.

Yes to all. We see a wide variety of representations without being tokens. It is an authentic representation of complex, nuanced characters who grow throughout the text.

5. Do you feel the material has a purpose for a school library collection?

Yes

No

Comments Specific to the Objection

No explicit depictions of any sexual activity nor is it meant to arouse.
Speaking about race and commentary about racism is not racism. Racism is about power. The character is expressing his thoughts about his lived experience as a mixed, gay male.
The characters often have difficult conversations. Difficult conversations are okay. They allow the reader to examine multiple points of view.
Existence of non-cisgendered genders is not harmful.
Nothing is written to make any reader feel "bad" or guilt.
Marijuana is Schedule B in the UK, where the novel is set; usage is not glorified. There are several instances where there are negative consequences stemming from it.
All characters who were drinking were of UK legal age. Also, the use of alcohol in the novel is not glorified.
The novel is about finding one's self, and for many teens, this is a part of it.
Hard conversations need to be had, and this is one possible avenue to have those conversations.
Novel ends with resources and supports for readers.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

It is appropriate as a self-selected high school library book.

Procedures for Committee Vote:

- If the committee consists of two or more schools, the committees for each school will vote separately.
- Each committee member will complete the ballot below.
- The vote will be determined by the majority (50% +1).
- If the committee consists of an even number of people and the result is a tie, the challenge will be escalated to the district level.

RECOMMENDATION BY SCHOOL MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR TREATMENT OF CHALLENGED MATERIAL:

FPC Vote: 4 votes to retain (unanimous)

MHS Vote: 6 votes to retain (unanimous)

☐ **Retain in collection**

☐ **Remove from collection**

☐ **Other**

Explanation overall reasoning for recommendation

Recommendation Date

SIGNATURE OF MEDIA ADVISORY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS