

Two Charlotte schools pull books after complaint about sexually explicit content

Anna Maria Della Costa February 17, 2023 [Story source: Yahoo News](#)

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools removed two books from libraries at [Palisades High](#) and West Charlotte High Thursday after they were deemed inappropriate by school officials.

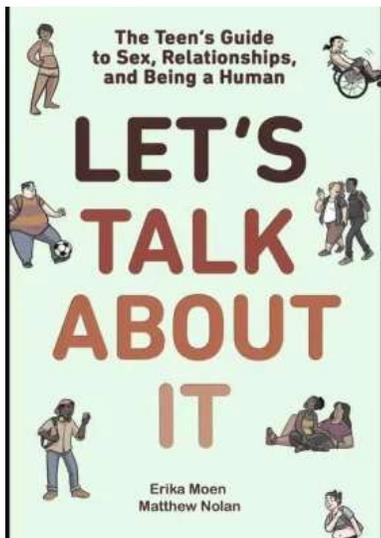
Shayla Cannady, the district's chief communications officer, confirmed copies of "Let's Talk About It" and "Sex Plus: Learning, Loving and Enjoying Your Body" were available at both schools to check out. But there is no record of the books being checked out by any students, she said.

Brooke Weiss, leader of the conservative activist group Moms for Liberty-Mecklenburg, emailed school board members and Interim Superintendent Crystal Hill earlier Thursday, demanding answers to why "Let's Talk About It" was in schools.

Hill responded Thursday evening, letting her know the books were removed.

"We were not aware that these books were included in the media center bundle purchased for the opening of our two new high schools this school year," Hill wrote in an email to Weiss. "Steps have been put into place to ensure this does not happen again."

Cannady said the district temporarily removed access for CMS students to check out any materials through its digital platform linked to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library because the books were available there, too.



What's in the books?

The book "Let's Talk About It" by Erika Moen was one of two removed from shelves in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Interim Superintendent Crystal Hill said they were not appropriate for an educational setting.

["Let's Talk About It"](#) - The Teens Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human," by Erika Moen, is a graphic novel published in March 2021. The book covers relationships, friendships, gender, sexuality, anatomy, body image, safe sex, sexting and more, according to publisher Penguin Random House.

It also contains graphic sexual illustrations and illustrations of sexual positions with commentary.

[Broward school libraries](#) in Florida are removing "Let's Talk About It" this month after Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration categorized the book as pornographic, the South Florida Sun Sentinel reported. Orange and Seminole counties in Florida also have removed the book.

In Laci Green's ["Sex Plus: Learning, Loving and Enjoying Your Body,"](#) she covers issues and concerns that go along with sexuality: anatomy, consent, LGBTQ issues, pregnancy prevention, sexual empowerment, healthy relationships and more, according to Harper Collins Publishers. It's described as a book that will "help you take control of your sex life," according to Harper Collins.

"These books encourage teens to use porn, give instructions on how to sext and get away with it, and are literal manuals for sex acts," Weiss said.

CMS will review bundle of 8,500 books The books came in a bundle of 8,500 from Mackin, an external vendor, for the opening of the new campuses for the 2022-23 school year, Cannady said. The books were advertised as appropriate for grades 9-12 (students aged 14-17), she said. There

was no indication of the level of content included in the book, Cannady said. Publishers of both books categorize them as being young adult nonfiction.

“To further ensure student safety, the district has established a process to review all 8,500 books that might have special considerations,” Cannady said.

Cannady told the Observer CMS is developing processes and procedures to prevent “this from happening again.”

Parent: CMS libraries have a problem

Weiss told the Observer she saw a news report about a man who read excerpts from a book at a school board meeting in Alaska and decided to see whether CMS had the book, too.

“Lo and behold, I found the book in the library of the first school I searched,” Weiss said.

[Fox News reported Thursday](#) a school board member in Alaska stood up against the board’s vice president when he attempted to stop a dad from speaking out against sexually explicit materials in school libraries. The dad cited “Let’s Talk About It.”

Weiss said she’s grateful for Hill’s quick response, but she has questions about the process of how the books ended up in a CMS library.

“This situation reinforces my feeling that there is a problem in CMS libraries that needs to be addressed,” Weiss said. “I know of many more books like those two that are on CMS shelves. Parents should not have to worry about their child being exposed to something like that when they send their child to school.”

What does CMS policy say?

Administrators, teachers, and library media coordinators in each school have the responsibility for “coordinating the selection of library media center resources and supplementary instructional materials for their,” according to [district policy](#).

Each school’s advisory committee also assists in addressing challenges to the use of certain materials, according to policy. Members include teachers who represent all subject areas or grade levels, two students in middle or high schools and two parent/community representatives.

“To the extent possible, the Committee will be reflective of the religious, ethnic, and cultural makeup of the school’s community,” the policy states.

Weiss wants new rating system

[Weiss met](#) with Matt Hayes, CMS’ deputy superintendent of academics, and Nancy Brightwell, chief academic officer, in October to pitch the idea of a review committee and rating system as solutions to controversial books circulating in school libraries and classrooms.

She says books containing controversial content, particularly explicit sex, should be rated with age restrictions to give parents the choice about whether their child should have access to the book.

School districts nationwide are seeing an uptick in complaints about book content. Parents want school boards to ban books from campus libraries or have them removed from required reading lists because of complaints ranging from racism in American history to information about LGBTQ+ identities or sex education.