



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

November 8, 2021

The Honorable Mike H. Morath  
Commissioner  
Texas Education Agency  
1701 North Congress Avenue  
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

The Honorable Martha J. Wong  
Chair  
Texas State Library and Archives Commission  
P.O. Box 12927  
Austin, Texas 78711-2927

The Honorable Keven Ellis  
Chairman  
Texas State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 151453  
Lufkin, Texas 75915

Dear Commissioner Morath, Chair Wong, and Chairman Ellis:

As you are aware, a growing number of parents of Texas students are rightfully outraged about highly inappropriate books and other content in public school libraries. The most disturbing cases include material that is clearly pornographic, which has absolutely no place in the Texas public education system.

For example, Keller Independent School District was recently compelled to remove a book from a school library titled *Gender Queer: a Memoir* by Maia Kobabe after complaints of the book's pornographic drawings.

Additionally, Leander Independent School District recently removed several books from classrooms because of inappropriate content. This included a book titled *In the Dream House* by Carmen Maria Machado, which describes overtly sexual and pornographic acts.

Not only is the presence of pornography in schools inappropriate, it is also against the law. In Texas, it is illegal to provide pornography to anyone under the age of 18.

The Honorable Mike H. Morath  
The Honorable Martha J. Wong  
The Honorable Keven Ellis  
November 8, 2021  
Page 2

In a letter last week, I raised concerns about this material with the Texas Association of School Boards and encouraged the Association to work with its members to remove pornographic and inappropriate content from Texas public schools. As the only entity in Texas that represents every local school board in Texas, the Texas Association of School Boards has an obligation to hold its members accountable and ensure that school districts are adopting the best practices when it comes to vetting the content schools are making available to students.

Instead of addressing the concerns of parents and shielding Texas children from pornography in public schools, the Texas Association of School Boards has attempted to wash its hands clean of the issue by abdicating any and all responsibility in the matter.

Given this negligence, the State of Texas now calls on you to do what the Texas Association of School Boards refuses to do.

I am directing the Texas Education Agency, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, and the State Board of Education to immediately develop statewide standards to prevent the presence of pornography and other obscene content in Texas public schools, including in school libraries.

These standards must ensure transparency about the materials being taught in the classroom and offered in school libraries. They must also ensure that our schools have an appropriate and transparent process, which includes parents and community members, to vet school and library materials before they are used. Additionally, parents should be informed of the formal grievance process, in the event an inappropriate book is identified.

Your action should ensure that no Texas child is exposed to pornography or obscene content while in a Texas public school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott  
Governor

GA:cwd