

Matthew Lorz

From: Brooke Stephens <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 12:42 PM
To: Toone, Logan; Audit & Fraud
Subject: Re: Davis School District continues to provide pornographic literature to children

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Dr. Toone,

Thank you for sharing your response with me. Davis has been doing the best job in the state of responding to parent challenges, being transparent about the comments in the committee meetings and reporting to the USBE. I have no complaints about your process. It is truly exemplary, and I appreciate it. That is not my complaint.

My complaint is that your libraries contain explicit books despite there being a law against it. My complaint and the veracity of my reports are both substantiated by [your own committees who remove the books I challenge](#).

It appears from your below response that you desire a "legally recognized mechanism" to determine which books break the law. Currently it appears that the only one you recognize is a parent challenge and a committee review. Due to the large quantities of explicit material we are uncovering, this method is not sufficient.

I would assume that you don't provide rated R movies in school libraries and classrooms. Would you consider movie ratings a legally recognized mechanism? I know of no laws or court rulings that have recognized this system. Is it popularly accepted? Yes. So, the basis of that system must therefore be popularly accepted, would it not? The [RatedBooks Scale](#) is mirrored after the movie rating system. I would be interested to hear which [definitions](#) and descriptions you don't agree with. If it is any consolation to you, I do not personally create nor rate the reports. We have a team who has been doing this for years and giving parents and schools the objective information they need (page numbers, excerpts and a clear scale and definitions) to protect children in schools across the nation. Please see [this spreadsheet](#) for a few examples.

If DSD does not use ratings or summaries, which abound from a [multitude of websites](#), in order to ascertain the level of explicit content in their books, then I would say that is further proof you are neglecting your duty to protect children. I would love to hear about your current process for reviewing books currently in your system.

If you do not have a system to review current books in your libraries, then I ask that you let parents make those decisions for their own children. They cannot do it without information. Your opt-out policy is impotent if no information accompanies it. I ask again that you identify books in your system that have been found to be the equivalent of R and above so that parents can opt their child out of those books. I can provide that list for you with the excerpts and definitions to justify it.

My request is not for self-promotion. I detest this work. I am tired of helping to create these reports and challenge these books, but because I am too well acquainted with the problem, I feel I must contribute to the solution. I have helped to create and promulgate the best system I could in the RatedBooks website. If you know of a better system, please share it with me.

I would like Utah schools to have a process to identify and remove explicit content in their schools. AI has been helpful in reporting on violations when I put in the excerpts of concern. In fact, I got a quote from a tech firm to create an AI tool that could do this. Of course, the ideal is if publishers and authors rated themselves. Schools could be asking publishers and authors for a refund on the money spent buying the explicit books. It would send a message that notification of explicit content from publishers and authors is desired.

I hope we can work together. It will be much easier than the alternative.

Sincerely,

Brooke Stephens

From: Logan Toone <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, October 2, 2025 5:13 PM
To: Brooke Stephens <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Davis School District continues to provide pornographic literature to children

Ms. Stephens -

This is to acknowledge receipt of the information you sent to the USBE via the parent hotline. We will follow USBE's established process for hotline submissions, a part of which is a district response. I am including the district's response here for your information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Logan T. Toone
Assistant Superintendent
Davis School District

Davis School District Response

Regarding Ms. Stephens' claim that DSD is violating the law:

Davis School District (DSD) rejects Ms. Stephens' claims that DSD is retaining school library books that violate the law. Ms. Stephens' claim is based on her own personal designation that certain books contain sensitive materials. She also cites a rating system from her own website (ratedbooks.org) as evidence that a book should not be allowed in public schools in Utah. Neither Ms. Stephens' personal designation nor the ratedbooks.org system are legally recognized mechanisms for determining whether a book should be allowed in Utah schools. So her claims that DSD is violating the law are unfounded.

Utah code (53G-10-103) and DSD Policy (4I-204) require that any book which contains sensitive material be removed from the school setting. The same law and policy establish a clear process for determining whether a book contains sensitive materials. The process begins when a sensitive material review is requested for a book, and the process includes three phases of review:

1. **Plausibility Review:** The district conducts an expedited review to determine whether the requestor's claim that the book contains sensitive material is plausible. If the claim is determined to be plausible, the book is immediately removed from student access throughout the remainder of the review process.
2. **Objective Sensitive Material Review:** A committee including educators and parents (as defined in DSD policy) reviews the book's content to determine whether the book contains "objective sensitive material" [which is defined in 53G-10-103(1)(e)]. If the book is determined to contain objective sensitive material, the book is immediately removed from the school setting.
3. **Subjective Sensitive Material Review:** If a book does not contain "objective sensitive material" a committee including educators and parents (as required by Utah code and defined in DSD policy) reads the book in its entirety and determines whether the book contains "subjective sensitive material" [which is defined in 53G-10-103(1)(h)(iii)]. If the book is determined to contain subjective sensitive material, it is immediately removed from the school setting.

Since the policy in its current format was adopted (July 2024), DSD has successfully processed many sensitive material reviews - which have resulted both in retention and removal. Throughout that process, DSD has strictly adhered to Utah code and its own policy in processing all requests to review books for sensitive materials. No book that has been determined to contain sensitive materials remains in our libraries.

Regarding Ms. Stephens' stated concern about the timeframe for completing reviews:

Since each phase of the review entails a different process, some reviews take longer than others. The plausibility review phase is typically completed within a week of receiving the request for review. Objective sensitive materials reviews are processed in regular meetings of the objective sensitive materials committee. The objective review committee meets monthly during the months when school is in session (with exception of the first month of school when committee members are being identified and trained). Subjective sensitive materials reviews can take quite a bit longer because they require a committee to read the book in its entirety. Specific timelines for titles Ms. Stephens mentioned in her hotline report are addressed in more detail below.

Request received on 5/13 (Blood & Honey)

- **Plausibility review completed on 5/22**
 - Determination: remove from student access during review
 - Time between request and plausibility determination: 7 school days
- **Objective committee review completed on 9/26**
 - The request was received after the final objective review committee of the prior school year, so it was considered at the first meeting of the current school year.
 - Determination: remove from the school setting
 - Time between request submission & final determination: 37 school days

Requests received on 5/25 (*10 Things I Can See from Here* and *Bronxwood*)

- Plausibility review completed on 6/3
 - Determination: remove from student access during review
 - Time between request and plausibility determination: 0 school days
- Objective committee review completed on 9/26
 - The request was received after the final objective review committee of the prior school year, so it was considered at the first meeting of the current school year.
 - Determination: remove from the school setting
 - Time between request submission & final determination: 28 school days

Requests received on 9/27/2025 (all other titles listed in the table in Ms. Stephens' report)

- These requests were received just a few days ago
- Plausibility reviews for these books were immediately started, are still underway, and are expected to be completed sometime this week
- Objective committee review for these books is scheduled for the next meeting on Monday 10/27/2025

Regarding Ms. Stephens' recommendation to require "illegal book detection" training for non-compliance:

DSD is currently compliant with Utah law and DSD policy regarding sensitive materials in schools, so this training is unnecessary. Should compliance training become necessary in the future, DSD would collaborate with USBE to provide that training rather than engaging a private citizen in the community to provide training to schools librarians.

Regarding Ms. Stephens' recommendation to include [ratedbooks.org](https://www.ratedbooks.org) ratings and summaries on DSD website:

DSD does not use [ratedbooks.org](https://www.ratedbooks.org) ratings or summaries to make determinations about sensitive materials, so DSD will not be posting [ratedbooks.org](https://www.ratedbooks.org) documents on the district website.

Regarding Ms. Stephens' concern for the mental health and well-being of the students in DSD

Student mental health and well-being remain a top priority for DSD. While we disagree with Ms. Stephens' claims regarding the presence of illegal material in DSD schools, we agree that harmful sensitive materials do not belong in our schools. To this end, we remain committed to strict adherence to DSD policy and Utah code regarding sensitive materials.

End of District Response

On Sep 28, 2025, at 9:31 PM, Brooke Stephens <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear USBE Parent Hotline,

Despite a [law being passed in 2022](#) that "descriptions or depictions of illicit sex or sexual immorality" have no serious value to minors, Davis School District continues to make illegal content available to minors. Due to my consistently discovering illegal books month after month, I am left to conclude that they have not been sufficiently proactive in discovering and removing it, nor alerting parents to the reports which could be used to opt their child out of harmful content. I have attached screenshots below showing that the schools have the content in their libraries, and attached reports, which show illegal content.

I have offered to work with my district to help train the librarians on the many resources they can use to find illegal content, but was told that the librarians are already too busy. I am hoping that the USBE may want to create a solution as the schools cannot find the time or resources to protect children from harmful, addictive and illegal content. I assert that [matters of mental health and lifetime addiction](#) are no trivial matter and should be considered worth the time and energy to prevent. It is absurd that schools are allowed to break the law until parents call them out on it.

Another concerning lack of action is the delay in returning results on challenges. There are book challenges from 5/13, and two from 5/25 that still have not reported any results. Tooele school district has also been failing to report results on challenges in a timely matter, and I fear it is due to not wanting to report to the USBE and therefore contribute to the statewide removal law.

I have some suggestions. I would like to see offending districts, meaning districts that are found to have illegal content, be required to enroll their librarians in an "Illegal book detection" training and commit to one hour a month serving in this capacity. The process isn't difficult, and many hands make light work. If librarians are not open to protecting children, then new librarians should take their place. **For potentially illegal books, such as books rated a 3, which is equivalent to an R rating, objective reports with page numbers and excerpts, such as ours, should be listed on the website so parents can opt their children out of checking out these books.** Having an opt-out policy without any way to see what they would be opting them out of is just a jest at transparency. I can provide a list of rated 3 books, as well. You can view all of our reports on my website, RatedBooks.org

Schools can and should do better, but it appears they need more motivation than just the health of children or the opportunity to do right by them and their parents. A monetary fine may also work to motivate them, and could be used to fund a separate entity that reviews these books for them.

Please help districts follow the law, and be more proactive and transparent in this process. They are failing to protect our children.

Sincerely,

Brooke Stephens

Below are the reports of books I have found just last week, and does not include books from past months. I can provide those if requested. Some are even worse. Unfortunately, I have found I cannot paste anything in these emails or it will be rejected. But it's not rejected from being given to kids.

Americanah	Chimamanda N Adichie	https://tinyurl.com/3pc6hxyz
Eat, Pray, Love	Elizabeth Gilbert	https://tinyurl.com/mpsevrpr
Brave New World (Book)	Aldous Huxley	https://tinyurl.com/mtj3usyd
Lonesome Dove	Larry McMurtry	https://tinyurl.com/ypsmxuah
Bronxwood	Coe Booth	https://tinyurl.com/yc5xfm2a
Rainbow Boys	Alex Sanchez	https://tinyurl.com/3wsf4arb
The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo(sex between adult and a minor)	Taylor Jenkins Reid	https://tinyurl.com/4z7ekutr
Rabbit & Robot	Andrew Smith	https://tinyurl.com/42jdj9ub

 Kingdom of the cursed

Kerri Maniscalco.

(Series: Kingdom of the wicked ; 2)

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 7 of 7

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description
FIC MAN	30704992201229	Available	
FIC Maniscalco (K)	30708922201944	Available	KOW Bk. 2
FIC MAN	30709922200019	Available	Book 2
FIC MAN	30710922400328	Available	
FIC MAN	30711922200929	Available	No. 2, Wicked .
FIC MAN #2	30716992200928	Available	
Fic Maniscalco	30714262300080	Available	

Copies: 1 - 7 of 7

 Lonesome dove

Larry McMurtry.

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 5 of 5

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description
F MCM	30706991820073	Available	
S FIC McMurtry, L	30710001008398	Available	
S FIC McMurtry, L	30710001008414	Available	
FIC MCM	30716260718254	Available	
FIC MCM	T 15937	Available	

Copies: 1 - 5 of 5



Brave new world

Aldous Huxley ; with an introduction by John Sutherland.

(Series: Everyman's library ; 359)

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 23 of 23

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description
FIC Huxley, A	30704321500358	Available	
FIC Huxley (A)	30708922100187	On Hold	
FIC HUX	37092619004355	Available	
Fic Huxley	30410991907663	Available	
Fic Huxley	30410991907671	Available	
FIC HUX	30710991509850	Available	
FIC HUX	00730000004996	Available	
F HUXLEY	30413261307481	Available	
Fic Huxley	T 10994	Available	
Fic Hux	30711582200001	Available	
Fic Hux	30711582200002	Available	
FIC HUX	3042899230233	Available	
CLA FIC HUX	34209200803366	Available	
FIC HUX	T 9330	Available	
FIC HUX	T 20555	Available	
FIC HUX / HONORS COLLECTION	T 18519	Available	
Fic Huxley	30714991303207	Available	
Fic Huxley	T 6550	Available	
Fic Huxley	T 14389	Available	
Fic Huxley	T 17162	Lost	
Fic Huxley	T 17164	Available	
Fic Huxley	T 17224	Available	
Fic Huxley	T 17314	Lost	

Copies: 1 - 23 of 23

 Eat, pray, love : one woman's search for everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia
Elizabeth Gilbert.

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 3 of 3

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description
910.4 Gilbert	30704990802192	Available	
BIO 92 Gilbert (E)	30708581503770	Available	
910.4 GIL	30711990902708	Available	

Copies: 1 - 3 of 3

 Kingdom of the feared

Kerri Maniscalco.

(Series: Kingdom of the wicked ; 3)



Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 4 of 4

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description	Site
FIC Maniscalco (K)	30708582300341	Available	KW Bk. 3	Davis High School
FIC MANISCALCO	30710992400083	Available		Layton High School
FIC MAN	30711922200938	Available	No. 3, Wicked .	Northridge High School
Fic Maniscalco	30714262300098	Available		Woods Cross High School

Copies: 1 - 4 of 4

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 Americanah : a novel

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 4 of 4

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description	Site
F ADI	30706991819992	Available		Cl
FIC ADI	30711922201030	Available		Nc
FIC ADI	T 22607	Available		Vi
Fic Adiche	30714321700726	Available		Wi

Copies: 1 - 4 of 4

