

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 771

EA 014 242

AUTHOR Kamhi, Michelle Marder  
 TITLE Limiting What Students Shall Read. Books and Other Learning Materials in Our Public Schools: How They Are Selected and How They Are Removed.  
 INSTITUTION American Library Association, Chicago, Ill.; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Va.; Association of American Publishers, Washington, D. C.  
 SPONS AGENCY Ford Foundation, New York, N. Y.; Scherman Foundation, Inc., New York, N. Y.  
 PUE DATE 81  
 NOTE 43p.; Summary Report of EA 014 243.  
 AVAILABLE FROM Association of American Publishers, 2005 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington, DC 20036 (\$5.00 postage included; quantity discounts).  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Administrators; \*Censorship; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; \*Instructional Materials; Librarians; \*Library Materials; Moral Values; National Surveys; \*Politics; \*Textbook Content; \*Textbook Selection  
 IDENTIFIERS Conservatism; \*Politics of Education

ABSTRACT

Censorship of books and learning materials is a growing trend nationwide, according to responses from a 1980 survey of 1,891 public elementary and secondary school administrators and library personnel from across the country and of state administrators overseeing evaluation and adoption of textbooks in 21 states. This summary and interpretation of the survey findings discusses local and state views on textbook adoptions and challenges, presents overviews of local- and state-level survey results, and gives recommendations for establishing district policy on materials selection and for formulating responses when selections are challenged. The report includes comments from individual questionnaires as well as implications drawn by the researchers. The authors conclude that challenges to classroom and library materials often result in limiting students' access to information and ideas. They found that many schools lack, or fail to follow, written policies for selecting and/or restricting instructional materials. Those schools that do have written policies, however, appear to resolve conflicts with fewer restrictions on materials and, therefore, less negative impact on the educational environment. Responses to the state-level survey suggest that local and national pressure groups, especially those considered politically right-of-center, exploit controversy over textbook and materials selection for political ends. (Author/WD)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

ED210771

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Richard P. Kleeman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy

# Limiting What Students Shall Read

## Books and Other Learning Materials in Our Public Schools: How They Are Selected and How They Are Removed

Summary Report on the Survey  
"Book and Materials Selection for School Libraries and Classrooms: Procedures, Challenges, and Responses"

Sponsored by  
the Association of American Publishers,  
the American Library Association, and  
the Association for Supervision  
and Curriculum Development

014 242



# Contents

Introduction	1
I. Selection, Challenges, and Responses: The Local View	3
Overview of Local-Level Survey Findings	9
II. Adoption, Challenges, and Responses: The State View	15
Overview of Survey Findings on State Adoptions	18
III. Summary and Recommendations	22
Notes	25
Appendix A	27
Table I Categories of Respondents in Survey Sample Compared to National Population, and Rate of Response	27
Table II Frequency and Outcome of Challenges as Indicated by Respondents With/Without Written Selection Policies	28
Table III How Challenges Were Dealt With, as Reported by Respondents With/Without Written Reconsideration Procedures	28
Table IV Outcome of Challenges Compared to Methods of Resolution	29
Appendix B Challenged Materials Cited by Survey Respondents	30
Acknowledgments	40

## Introduction

Censorship in America's public schools has become an issue of rising national concern. In recent years, reports from educators, librarians, and the press, from all sections of the country, have told increasingly of attempts to challenge or restrict the books and teaching materials available to students in the classroom and the school library. According to these reports, the pressures come from both the right and the left of the political spectrum, from individual parents as well as from organized special-interest groups, and sometimes from educators within the schools themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of censorship in our schools—its extent, the origin and nature of the challenges to books and materials, the resolution of those challenges, their perceived impact on the educational environment, and their relationship to the overall process by which instructional and library materials are selected—is too important to be evaluated solely on the basis of scattered reports, occasional headlines about book-burning, celebrated cases of high-court litigation, or unsupported claims by contestants in the educational or political arena. At the heart of the issue lie the difficult questions of what and how students shall learn—questions crucial to all who vie for influence over the future direction of our pluralistic society.

While previous surveys have dealt with either the selection of school books and learning materials or the censorship pressures on them, until now no broad survey has been undertaken to provide comprehensive data on the relationship between the censorship problem and the larger selection process. To obtain fuller, more up-to-date information on both aspects, and to examine their interaction, three national organizations closely involved with the question—the Association of American Publishers (AAP), the American Library Association (ALA), and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)—undertook, in 1980, a nationwide survey.<sup>2</sup>

The survey, "Book and Materials Selection for School Libraries and Classrooms: Procedures, Challenges, and Responses," was conducted in two parts during the spring and summer of 1980. In April 1980, a detailed (52-item) questionnaire was mailed to a randomly selected stratified sample of 7,572 public elementary and secondary school librarians, library-supervisors, principals, and district superintendents in the 50 states and the District of Columbia; a total of 1,891 respondents participated (see Appendix A, Table I). From May to August 1980, a mail-and-telephone survey was conducted of the state-level administrators who oversee the evaluation and adoption of textbooks in the 22 states that have statewide adoption procedures

for school books. (Each of the 22 "adoption" states compiles and publishes its own lists of books mandated or recommended for use in its public schools; the 28 "open" states leave school book selection entirely to their local education agencies.) All but one of the adoption states returned a completed questionnaire; and officials in 20 of the 22 adoption states participated in the phone interviews.

This report summarizes and interprets the major findings of the AAP-ALA-ASCD survey—particularly those findings which shed light on the censorship problem—and makes certain recommendations. The full report of the survey results can be obtained from the sponsoring organizations or through the facilities of ERIC (the Educational Resources Information Center).

Neither the report itself nor the survey data should be taken as precise indicators of the rate or impact of censorship pressures nationwide. Nonetheless, the experiences reported here by a meaningful number of school administrators and librarians warrant concern in themselves, and may well reflect a more general situation extending beyond the sample. (It is important to note that, since the survey requested information on the two school years preceding June 1980, the data do not reflect any intensification of pressures that may have resulted from changes in the political climate after that time.<sup>3</sup>)

What the experiences reported here do indicate is that censorship pressures on books and other learning materials in the public schools are real, nationwide, and growing.

# I

## Selection, Challenges, and Responses: The Local View

Following are some of the salient findings of the nationwide mail survey of local-level librarians and administrators.

[NOTE: Because of the length and complexity of the local-level survey questionnaire, respondents were highly selective in their answers, not only omitting items that did not apply to them but often skipping items that did. Thus the total number of respondents varied considerably from item to item. In addition, some questions permitted multiple responses; the results on these questions will be reported in percentages of *responses*, rather than *respondents*. Unless otherwise indicated, "administrators" refers to principals and superintendents, and "librarians" refers to building-level librarians and district-level library-supervisors. Administrators responded on challenges to classroom as well as library materials; librarians, only on challenges to library materials.]

### On the Overall Rate and Impact of Recent Challenges:

- *More than one in five (22.4%) of the 1,891 respondents, overall—or nearly one administrator in five (19.2%) and nearly one librarian in three (29.5%)—reported that there had been some challenge to classroom or library materials in their school(s) during the period since September 1, 1978.*

- *The percentages of respondents reporting challenges were fairly consistent across all regions of the country (Northeast, 21.4%; South, 20.3%; Midwest, 23.4%; West, 24.8%), and in both "adoption" (22.7%) and "open" states (22.1%).*

- *Challenges were reported by respondents in schools with populations drawn from all types of communities—in the following percentages: large city (pop. over 500,000), 22.6%; smaller city (pop. 50,000-500,000), 30.2%; town (pop. 5,000-49,000), 23.6%; suburban, 28.3%; village or small town (up to 5,000 pop.), 18.5%; and rural, 22.3%.*

- *Of 494 respondents reporting challenges, half (50.6%) found the rate of such incidents unchanged between the 1976-1978 and 1978-1980 periods, but one in four (26.5%) indicated that the rate of challenges was higher in the more recent period (as compared with 9.1% who responded "lower," and 13.8% who were "not certain").*

- *Of 510 respondents, almost one in three (29.4%) said that recent challenges had resulted in changes in the materials used or in the educational process or environment. The percentage of respondents reporting such changes was highest among the building-level librarians (37.8%), as compared with library-supervisors (32.4%) and administrators (26.8%).*

- In specifying which aspects of the educational environment were changed as a result of recent challenges, school administrators reported that *library materials were affected most frequently*. Of 235 responses by administrators on the aspects changed as a result of challenges, 32.7% indicated library materials—followed by supplementary classroom materials (17.9%), textbooks<sup>4</sup> (11.5%), materials selection procedure (11.1%), materials selection policy (8.1%), curriculum content (6.8%), teaching methodology (4.7%), and personnel (3.0%).

- Of 538 responses on the question of how specific challenges had affected the educational process in the school, more than half (57.4%) indicated "no effect," but nearly a fourth (22.5%) indicated "influenced selection of materials," followed by "influenced teaching content and/or style" (7.1%) and "altered students' attitudes toward materials" (3.2%).

#### On the Characteristics of Recent Challenges:

- *On the local level, by far the most frequently challenged aspects had to do with sex, sexuality, obscenity, and objectionable language* (including "dirty words" and profanity)—together totaling nearly half (47.5%) of the 1,700 responses on the aspects cited. Of the more than thirty other aspects cited—ranging from such concerns as racism and religious bias to "undermining of traditional family," criticism of U.S. history, Darwinism and evolution, and values clarification—none accounted for more than 5% of the total responses.

- *Contemporary fiction was the category of material most frequently challenged on the local level*. Of 837 responses regarding the category of challenged items, 36.8% indicated contemporary fiction—followed by textbooks (11.5%), nonfiction trade books (8.6%), children's picture books (7.5%), fiction classics (7.2%), magazines (6.2%), and 16 mm. educational films (5.5%), and a number of other categories which were each indicated in fewer than 5% of the responses. (For a list of challenged items cited by respondents, see Appendix B.)

- *Administrators and librarians indicated that, in 95.0% of 452 specific challenges cited, the challengers sought to limit, rather than expand, the information and viewpoints in the materials used*. Responding school librarians, moreover, reported such restrictive intent in all of the 31 recent challenges they specified.

- *Challenges occurred with increasing frequency at higher grade levels*. Of 576 responses regarding the grade level of challenged materials, 16.7% indicated kindergarten and lower elementary; 23.8%, upper elementary; 27.6%, junior high; and 31.9%, senior high.

- *Respondents reported that challengers had read or viewed the challenged material in full in 232 (45.5%) of 510 challenges specified,*

and that they had not read or viewed the material in full in nearly a third (31.8%) of the cases. Respondents answered "not sure" for the remainder (22.7%) of the cases.

#### On the Challengers:

- On the local level, in more than three-fourths (77.9%) of 390 challenges specified by respondents, the challenge was initiated by an individual representing him/herself only—most often a parent. Of 423 responses specifying challengers, 52.3% indicated parents—followed by teachers (9.4%), community residents (9.2%), school board members (6.4%), building-level administrators (5.7%), and a number of other categories with responses under 5%.

- While administrators reported that staff members (teachers, librarians, and administrators) totaled fewer than 10% of the challengers specified, librarians reported that over 30% of the challengers were staff members.

- Asked if challengers had referred to arguments or viewpoints developed by individuals or groups from outside the community, local-level respondents replied "yes" in 16.9% of 509 challenges specified; "no," in 69.0%; and in the balance indicated "not sure."

#### On Community Involvement in Recent Challenges:

- Respondents indicated that school or community groups or individuals became actively involved—either in support or in opposition—in only about one-fourth (26.4%) of 511 challenges cited.

- According to overall survey responses, librarians, teachers, and building-level administrators more often *opposed* challenges, while parents and school board members more often *supported* them. Librarians were reported to have *opposed* 64.1% of 103 challenges in which they took an active role; teachers opposed 61.7% of 81 challenges; and building-level administrators opposed 59.5% of 89 challenges. Parents were reported as *supporting* 55.0% of 80 challenges in which they took an active role; school board members supported 59.0% of 78 challenges.

- Respondents indicated that the local media reported on only 15.2% of 513 challenges specified. But in the majority of those cases they either remained editorially neutral on the issue or defended the use of the challenged materials: of 89 responses, 40.4% indicated "remained neutral"; 29.2%, "defended the use"; and only 7.9%, "opposed the use"—while 19.1% indicated "positions varied."

#### On Policies and Procedures:

- Only half of the 1,295 responding administrators reported that the school or district they administer has formal, written policies for the



*selection of classroom instructional materials (52.8%) and for the reconsideration (49.1%) of challenged books or materials. Approximately three-quarters of the 564 responding librarians reported that they have written policies and procedures for the selection (74.3%) and reconsideration (76.8%) of library materials.<sup>5</sup>*

- Of the 1,085 respondents who reported that they have formal selection policies, the majority (54.5%) indicated that no controversial issues are specified in the policy itself. Other respondents indicated that their policies most often specified the following controversial issues (percentages are of total responses): racism (32.5%), religion (32.3%), sexism (30.4%), minority group representation (29.5%), and sex and sexuality (28.8%).

- Of 352 responding librarians, a majority (over 60%) indicated that their selection policy statement reaffirms the A.L.A.'s "Library Bill of Rights."

- Over half (55.3%) of 1,503 questionnaire responses regarding the level(s) at which materials selection policies were *developed* indicated that they were developed at the district level; 13.1%, at the building level; 10.1%, at the departmental level; 9.3%, at the county level; 6.9%, at the state level; and 3.8%, at the city level. Of 1,273 responses regarding the level(s) at which selection policies were *approved*, the majority (64.6%) indicated the district level, with all other categories each accounting for fewer than 10% of the responses.

- The percentage of respondents reporting challenges was substantially *higher* among administrators and librarians with a written selection policy (in most cases, the selection policy entails reconsideration procedures as well) than among those *without* a formal policy. But both administrators and librarians *with* a policy (as compared to those *without*) *more often reported that challenges were overruled*, while administrators *without* a written selection policy (as compared to those *with*) *more often reported that challenged materials were removed from the school* (the most frequent of the specific actions taken against challenged materials). These findings are presented in Appendix A, Table II.

- Respondents *without* formal written procedures for the reconsideration of challenged materials—as compared to respondents *with* such procedures—*more often reported that challenges were dealt with informally and more often reported that challenged materials were altered, restricted, or removed prior to a formal review*. Such action prior to formal review was reported in 67.8% of the challenges cited by respondents who indicated they do not have written reconsideration procedures, as compared with 43.9% of the respondents indicating they do have written procedures (see Appendix A, Table III).

## On Adherence to Policies and Procedures:

- In one-fifth (20.1%) of 422 challenges specified, respondents indicated that their selection policy had not been followed in the initial selection of the material. This failure was reported most often by principals (31.2%), and least often by building-level librarians (12.5%).

- Respondents indicated that in exactly half of 500 challenges specified, the challenged material was altered, restricted, or removed prior to a formal review. Such action prior to procedural review was reported more often at the building level (58.7%) than at the district level (47.1%), more often in the challenges cited by librarians (55.0%) than in those cited by administrators (45.4%), and more frequently in the South (71.1%) than in the rest of the country (45.4%).

## On the Resolution of Challenges:

- Respondents indicated that 60.4% of 508 challenges reported were dealt with informally, rather than through formal procedures.

- In 46.2% of 465 challenges reported by administrators and librarians, no one was assigned to reevaluate the challenged material. This response was more frequent among librarians (53.7%) than among administrators (39.7%).

- In the great majority (92.7%) of 490 challenges reported, the publisher, producer, and/or author were not given an opportunity to defend the challenged material.

- In 29.9% of 493 challenges specified, the complaint was ultimately resolved at the principal's level; in 19.5%, at the superintendent's level; and in 16.2%, by the local school board.

- Of 513 responses regarding the final disposition of the incident with regard to the challenged material, about one in three (34.6%) indicated "challenge overruled," while 8.4% indicated "alternate assignment offered at parents' request." More than one in five (22.2%) indicated "removal from school," and nearly one in three (30.1%) indicated some other form of action limiting the availability of the material to students within the school (including 2.7% indicating "destruction of material"). Thus more than half of all the responses on this question indicated that some degree of restriction or censorship was ultimately imposed on the challenged material.

- Respondents without formal written procedures for the reconsideration of challenged materials—as compared to respondents with such procedures—more often reported that challenged materials were ultimately removed from the school or were subjected to some restriction or limitation of access (see Appendix A, Table IV).

- Survey responses indicated that challenges dealt with through

*formal procedures were more often overruled than challenges dealt with informally; and that challenges dealt with informally more often resulted in the removal of, or the limiting of access to, the challenged materials. Of the challenges reported as dealt with informally by respondents without written reconsideration procedures, 66.7% ultimately resulted in removal or other restriction or limitation, while only 33.3% were overruled. In contrast, 56.8% of the challenges reported by respondents with written reconsideration procedures were overruled, while only 43.2% resulted in removal or other limitations or restrictions (see Table IV).*

- *Respondents indicated that in 90.2% of 358 challenges in which use of the challenged material was at any point abridged in any way, no other material was selected or acquired to replace it.*

#### On Parental Response:

- Survey respondents indicated that in three-fourths (76.1%) of 472 reported challenges, there was no parental response at all to the resolution of the challenge. Other responses were "restricted children's access to controversial material" (7.2%), "restricted children's participation in certain class activities" (4.0%), and "filed written protests" (3.8%). In 5 cases (1.1% of the total), respondents indicated "demonstrations"; and in 8 cases (1.7%), "removed children from school."

#### On Community Relations:

- Of 774 responding administrators, 61.5% indicated that the school or district they administer informs parents and other members of the community about its policies and procedures, while only 42.7% of 422 responding librarians reported informing the community with respect to their library policies and procedures. *Of those respondents answering IF YES, how? the majority entered comments such as "when there's an inquiry" or "only when challenged."*

- Of 1,155 responding administrators, 59.8% reported that provisions are made in their schools to explain potentially controversial materials to parents and other members of the community, but 35% of these administrators said they did so only after materials are challenged.

- In more than three-fourths (73.6%) of 472 reported challenges, respondents indicated that *the educational rationale for using the challenged material had not been made known to parents or other members of the school community before the challenge.*

- Of 1,252 responding administrators, 57.8% indicated that they have provisions for special-interest groups to make their views known to those responsible for evaluating or selecting materials.

- Of 574 responding librarians, 85.5% indicated that they have never met with representatives of special interest groups to discuss controversial aspects of their library's holdings.

- Of 83 librarians who reported they they *had* met with such representatives, 41.0% indicated that they did so only after materials were challenged, not as a matter of routine.

## Overview of Local-Level Survey Findings

Survey responses on the local level indicate that challenges to instructional and library materials in the public schools occur in all regions of the country and in all types of communities, and that such pressures are increasing (of 176 respondents indicating a change in the rate of challenges during the 1978-80 period covered by the survey, as compared to the 1976-78 period, 131 reported the recent rate as "higher," while only 45 indicated "lower").

While the frequency of challenges reported in the survey is of concern—not only to the administrators and librarians who must deal with them on a day-to-day basis but also to the authors, publishers, curriculum specialists, and others charged with the development of books and learning materials for the nation's schools—it is important to emphasize that challenges to instructional and library materials in the schools do not necessarily constitute a threat to freedom of speech or to the ability of our schools to provide quality education. On the contrary, such challenges—whether by professionals within the schools or by parents and other members of the community outside—have a legitimate place in a democratic educational system. As one state textbook administrator commented: "Opposition is one of the most healthy things that can occur—provided it's in an environment of participation, not domination."

The value of the challenge process ultimately depends on the nature and motivation of the challenges, how they are dealt with, and the impact of their resolution on the educational environment. A number of the survey findings are particularly relevant here.

*The nature and handling of challenges.* First, the challenges reported by local-level survey respondents sought, overwhelmingly, to *limit* rather than *expand* the materials available to students. Second, approximately half of the objections raised on the local level were to isolated passages or features of the material (explicit representation of sex, "dirty words," etc.), rather than to the ideas or the ideological nature of the work taken as a whole. In fact, according to respondents, a substantial number of challengers (about one in three) had not examined the material in full. Nor had the schools, in most cases, communicated their reasons for using the material. All of this suggests that local-level challenges were often made without consider-

ation of the overall educational value of the challenged material.

Third, and perhaps most disturbing, in half of the recent challenges specified, the challenged material was subjected to some degree of restriction or censorship *prior to formal review*—a finding that suggests challenged books and other learning materials are often treated as “guilty” until, or unless, proven “innocent.”

Finally, survey responses indicate that the majority of recent challenges were ultimately dealt with informally, rather than through structured procedures, and that in nearly half of the recent cases no one was assigned to reevaluate the challenged material.

Informal resolution, it should be stressed, need not necessarily result in a restrictive climate for the resolution of challenges. Professional groups such as the National Council of Teachers of English, in fact, recommend that the school staff member first presented with a complaint try to resolve it in an informal discussion by explaining to the challenger the educational rationale for using the material. And comments by survey respondents testify to the value of this approach:

We have never had to use objection form. Discussion with parent or teacher has solved the question.

Parent happy after seeing favorable reviews.

Too often, however—as indicated by write-in comments quoted below (see “Vulnerability of the school library”)—“informal resolution” may actually mean taking a book out of the classroom, or off the library shelf without an objective evaluation of the educational appropriateness of the material. In these situations, no determination of the validity of the challenge is made.

It should be noted again that the final resolution of more than half of all reported challenges involved removal or some other limitation of access or use. In some cases, respondents clearly stated that these actions were viewed as educationally valid:

We agreed it was inappropriate for grade level.

A piece of adult porn—purchased by mistake, by a teacher. We agreed—parents, librarians, teachers, administrators—that the material was not suitable. No question. Junked it.

Program purchased by Superintendent without input from anyone else, viewed as worthless by teachers and principals. Material was viewed as too difficult for pre-high schoolers.

Other respondents, however, indicated that the removals they referred to were based more on personal value judgments or a desire

to avoid conflicts than on established educational criteria (see especially the comments quoted under "Precensorship" below).

*Vulnerability of the school library.* As reported by survey respondents, school libraries are particularly vulnerable to censorship pressures. Library materials were challenged more often than classroom materials, and were more often changed as a result of challenges. Perhaps one of the most startling findings of the survey was that librarians named school personnel (teachers, administrators, and librarians) as initiating over 30% of the challenges cited—whereas administrators, who reported on classroom as well as library challenges, cited school personnel as initiating fewer than 10% of the recent challenges.

Write-in comments also indicate that, on the local level, school libraries are more vulnerable than the classroom to censorship pressures from within the system:

One librarian wrote:

I have more trouble with the teachers and principals than the parents.

Another librarian noted:

We have a request form for reconsideration. Problem is getting administration to follow this procedure.

A principal reported:

I have had 3-4 books and one magazine brought to me by staff member for the above reasons [obscenity, "dirty words," nudity, and profanity]. We removed them from the shelves.

One superintendent commented:

No challenge. Took book out of library and destroyed it.

Such evidence of censorship from within the system, apparently without attention to procedural review, may be seen, by those concerned with safeguarding students' freedom to read, as a threat to that freedom. Moreover, comments of this kind may represent only part of the problem.

*Precensorship.* Other write-in comments from the questionnaires suggest that certain controversial materials may not be selected for some schools at all, being eliminated or precensored in the selection

process—not because they fail to meet established educational criteria but because they do not conform to the personal values of the individuals making the selection.

Wrote one superintendent:

With all the good literature available, it would be my hope we could accentuate the best and leave a lot of the questionable stuff off the shelves and the reading lists. Wish the publishers could do a better job of sorting originally.

Another administrator commented:

In my opinion the Association of American Publishers is allowing too much offensive material to be presented to the schools.<sup>6</sup> Keep the material clean and morally high in quality. Free sex, stories on homosexuals, situation ethics, and other such garbage should not be placed in schools. Throw the junk in the wastebasket. Bad literature and bad television are powerful aids in tearing down the American ideal.

Still other comments indicate that some precensorship results from the "chilling effect" of previous controversy and the desire to avoid conflict:

Parental badgering has caused rifts between teachers and administrators. Extreme care is taken in selecting any material. Teachers are afraid of bringing in "controversial" subjects.

One superintendent reporting no recent challenges wrote simply:

We really try not to select controversial materials going in.

Such comments provide evidence that the difficult-to-document phenomenon of precensorship does occur in our schools, although it may be impossible to assess its full extent. In this connection, it is relevant to note that, according to survey responses, the local communities rarely became involved in recent challenges. In nearly 85% of the cases, there was no local media coverage, and in only a fourth of recent challenges did school or community groups or individuals become involved, either in support or in opposition. This lack of broad community involvement may well deprive the schools of a potential safeguard against censorship from within by administrators or staff members who may not necessarily reflect the view of the entire community.

*The impact of challenges.* While it is difficult to estimate the impact of "closet" censorship on the educational environment, survey responses on other questions provide more concrete data on the impact of challenges. As we have seen, at least half of the challenges specified by respondents resulted in some limiting of student access to materials. And in the overwhelming majority of these cases, no new material was selected or acquired to replace the challenged item. Thus the net effect of the challenges appears to be a reduction in the materials, information, and ideas available to students.

Other grave, if relatively rare, repercussions reported by respondents included the resignation of a teacher, and the following incident:

The local pressures from this situation and the harassment of the superintendent was a major factor in this person taking another job. Our entire human growth program has been challenged as being improper for not teaching morals. A small group of people with very fundamental ideas is keeping the situation alive.

*The influence of outside groups or individuals.* As indicated earlier, the majority of local-level challengers were individuals, mainly parents, representing themselves rather than a group. In about one in six of the challenges specified, however, respondents reported that challengers had referred to arguments or views developed by persons outside the community. A number of these respondents cited "church groups" (unspecified). Several respondents referred to fundamentalist groups; still others mentioned the Gablers of Texas, the John Birch Society, and other right-of-center sources. Also noted, in isolated instances, were CORE, the NAACP, and educational TV.

*The use of policies and procedures.* Educators and professional organizations have long stressed the importance of establishing, and adhering to, formal written policies and procedures for selecting instructional and library materials and for reconsidering challenged materials. The findings of this survey, as summarized in Tables II, III, and IV (Appendix A), tend to confirm that view. Though cause and effect cannot be demonstrated from these data, the pattern of findings is so striking and consistent (except for a minor anomaly in the librarians' group in Table II) that a relationship is strongly suggested. While schools with policies and procedures apparently do not manage to escape challenges to materials, and may even experience more challenges than schools without policies and procedures, they do appear to resolve challenges more equably, with less sacrifice



to the breadth of materials available to students.

Respondents' comments testify further to the value of formalized selection processes and review procedures:

Wrote one library-supervisor:

Relatively few problems. Building selection committees and procedures followed avoid problems.

Another respondent noted:

District resolved problem to satisfaction of community and staff. District came out very strong. Used broad-based committee to study entire human development curriculum.

*Community relations.* In more than three-fourths (78.6%) of the challenges specified, respondents indicated that the educational rationale for using the challenged material had *not* been made known to parents and other members of the school community before the challenge. Whereas administrators indicated that they had made such rationales known in nearly 30% of the cases, building-level librarians reported such action in only about 10% of the cases. This disparity in practice may derive at least in part from fundamental differences between the responsibilities of librarians and administrators and between classroom and library functions.

But the question raises the important issue of the school's relation to, and communication with, the community it is established to serve. A number of educators have suggested in the literature that recent censorship pressures are at least partly due to a breakdown in communication, and a resulting polarization, between professional educators and the lay community.<sup>7</sup>

Several questions in the survey specifically addressed the issue of the schools' on-going efforts to inform the public about educational objectives and procedures. These questions related to the following: informing the community about policies and procedures for selecting and reconsidering instructional materials; communicating with special-interest groups; and informing the public about aspects of the school's educational program.

The survey responses cited above indicate that for many of the responding administrators and librarians, communication with parents is more crisis-oriented than on-going. Information about school programs, policies, and procedures seems, in many cases, to be offered mainly in response to inquiries or challenges, rather than as part of a regular public relations program. While the pattern of survey responses here is less striking than on the question of policies and procedures for selection and reconsideration, the data suggest that some schools need to improve their communication with the population they serve.

## II Adoption, Challenges, and Responses: The State View

The statewide adoption of textbooks and other instructional materials in 22 of the 50 states is of great import to public education, not only because it directly affects the range of educational materials used in the "adoption" states themselves but also because it exerts a powerful influence on the materials that will be available in the 28 "open" states. Populous adoption states like Texas and California, as major purchasers of textbooks, have the economic power to influence the development of editions suited to their particular educational curricula and preferences. School publishers will usually respond to such pressures, out of economic necessity—though often reluctantly. They can rarely afford to turn away potential sales in a major adoption state. Nor can they, in most cases, afford the luxury of maintaining two separate editions. Thus an edition prepared for Texas or California, the two largest adoption states, often becomes the sole edition available nationwide.

In order to gain more detailed information about the current state-adoption climate, a two-part survey was conducted. As on the local level, questionnaires were mailed—in this case, to the chief textbook officer in each of the 22 adoption states. These questionnaires were adapted, from the lengthier instruments used on the local level, to apply to the different circumstances at the state level, where "challenges" are primarily to materials being considered for adoption, rather than to materials actually in use in the schools. (In the adoption states, as in the open states, challenges to materials in use in the schools tend to occur on the local level, and were therefore covered by the first stage of the survey.)

The state-level mail survey was supplemented with telephone interviews to complete and clarify questionnaire items and to elaborate on individual responses regarding that state's current experience. Interviews did not follow a fixed "script," but ranged freely over many aspects. State education department officials who participated in the survey were generally cooperative, and unstinting of their time. Often disarmingly candid, they tended to indicate a high level of interest in the study, and sometimes supplied information which the interviewer could not have anticipated in a fixed script. A number of participants requested anonymity for all or part of the interview, particularly when the subject of outside pressure groups was touched on.

Response to the state-level survey was excellent. All but one state returned a completed questionnaire; 19 respondents sent copies of

their state regulations and/or guidelines pertaining to the adoption of instructional materials; and officials in 20 of the 22 adoption states participated in the phone survey. While the information gathered in the phone interviews is more difficult to quantify than the questionnaire responses (since the precise course of each interview varied from state to state), the interviews supplied valuable qualitative information about the current climate with respect to statewide adoptions. Moreover, for the reasons noted above, the experience of even one of the 22 adoption states is of significance for this study.

The adoption process differs widely from state to state. The very term "adoption" has a broad range of meanings. In some states, adoption lists are no more than lists of books "recommended" for local selection, while elsewhere the use of any basal textbook not approved and listed by the state textbook commission is prohibited. Ten out of 19 state-level respondents indicated that their states allow for local options to use state funds to purchase materials not on state adoption lists—with varying restrictions or conditions.

In a few states, only elementary basal textbooks are adopted at the state level, while in other states secondary textbooks and supplementary print or nonprint materials are included as well. The states also differ widely in their procedures for evaluating materials, in the size and number of state textbook committees and their ratio of professional educators to lay citizens; and in the number of titles included on their "adoption" lists.

Some of the salient findings of the state-adoption survey are the following:

#### **With Respect to Recent Challenges:**

- Nine out of 21 respondents reported that in the period between September 1978 and May 1980 state-level challenges to instructional materials under consideration for adoption had affected the adoption process or the materials adopted for their state. Respondents indicated that the following aspects (listed in order of total responses, in parentheses) were affected by recent state-level challenges: textbooks adopted (5), adoption policy and procedures (4), curriculum content (3), supplementary materials adopted (2), and teaching methodology (1).

- Challenges on the state level, like those on the local level, do not appear to follow any marked regional distribution patterns.

- While 12 out of 20 respondents indicated that the rate of challenges since September 1978 was about the same as the rate in the preceding two-year period, 5 respondents reported that it was higher, as compared with 3 who reported lower.

- In 17 out of 23 responses on recent state-level challenges spec-

ified, respondents reported that the challenge was initiated by a group or an individual representing a group.

- In 10 out of 14 state-level challenges cited, respondents indicated that the challengers had referred to arguments or viewpoints developed by individuals or groups from outside the state.

- All the state-level respondents who reported that their recent rate of challenges was higher than the rate in the preceding two-year period (5 out of 21) attributed the increase to the activity of the Gablers and other "New Right" groups.

#### **With Respect to the Adoption Process Itself:**

- Nineteen out of 21 respondents reported that their state informs parents and other state residents about its policies and procedures for adopting instructional materials.

- Seven out of 21 respondents indicated that no provisions are made for special-interest groups to present their views on textbooks and instructional materials to the state adoption committee(s).

- Seven out of 19 state-level respondents indicated that no provisions are made for authors, publishers, or producers to defend materials challenged during the adoption process.

## Overview of Survey Findings on State Adoptions

The survey findings on state-level adoptions differ substantially on a number of key items from the findings on the local level. Some of these differences arise out of the disparate functions of the state and local education agencies. Others, however, may be due at least in part to outside political and social factors.

*Materials affected by challenges.* As with local challenges, state-adoption challenges appear to increase with higher grade levels; however, state-level respondents reported textbooks to be affected by recent challenges more than twice as often as supplementary materials (more widely challenged on the local level). This is not surprising, since textbooks are the primary concern of state adoptions; some states, as noted above, do not even include supplementary materials in their adoptions. (Nor are library materials ordinarily included.) Moreover, the selection and editing process that takes place at the state level can eliminate some of the controversy from textbooks, so that what ultimately reaches the local education agencies is less likely to be challenged. If such "precensorship" does not occur during the state adoption process, it may still occur at the local level. One state-level respondent particularly testified to the "chilling effect" of challenges, noting that administrators in districts where protest groups are most active are reluctant to select controversial materials from the state list.

*Aspects challenged.* Whereas narrower objections related to language and sexuality were most often cited at the local level, state-level challenges were reported to focus more frequently on ideological concerns. The issues most often cited were the following: "secular humanism," Darwinism and evolution, scientific theories, criticism of U.S. history, values clarification, "undermining of traditional family," atheistic or agnostic views, antitraditional/antiestablishment views, negative or pessimistic views, and moral relativism or situation ethics.

The frequency of particular responses may have been partly influenced by the specific subject areas up for adoption in the recent period. Yet the emphasis on broader issues than at the local level may also indicate a greater degree of organization or sophistication on the part of state-level challengers.

Also in contrast with local challenges, in slightly more than half (10 out of 19) of the recent cases cited at the state level, respondents indicated that the challengers sought to *expand* (i.e., add to) rather than *limit*, the information and viewpoints in the materials under consideration. This, too, may indicate a greater sophistication on the part of state-level challengers seeking to avoid charges of censorship. For example, in the widely reported recent controversy over the

teaching of creationism vs. evolution conservative spokespersons have been careful to state that *both* views should be taught.

One respondent from a major adoption state noted that most of their recent challenges related to "conservative" issues such as creationism and right-to-life concerns, whereas a few years ago the majority of challengers pressed for bias-free materials. The same respondent—one of three who indicated that their recent rate of challenges was lower than the rate in the preceding two-year period—attributed that state's recent decrease in challenges to the current availability of bias-free materials from publishers, in response to earlier challenges.

*The challengers.* As might be expected, survey responses indicate that challenges to adoption at the state level are generally more organized than those at the local level. They also more frequently reveal the influence of national pressure groups, particularly those of the "New Right."

As noted earlier, the majority (17 out of 23) of the recent challenges specified were initiated by groups rather than individuals; and in the majority (10 out of 14) of the recent cases cited, challengers were said to have referred to the views of groups outside the state. Approximately half of all state-level respondents felt that the activities of Mel and Norma Gabler's Educational Research Analysts of Longview, Texas, had influenced recent adoption proceedings in their state. Finally, all of the respondents who reported the recent rate of challenges as higher than the rate in the previous two-year period attributed the rise to the activities of the Gablers and other "New Right" groups.

Some state-adoption administrators said that they had received mailings directly from the Gablers in Texas, asking for information on their adoption cycles and schedule of hearings. Of particular interest is the marked difference, from one state to another, in the response to such outside inquiries. One textbook officer distinguished between in-state and out-of-state pressure groups, and flatly refused to provide information to outside groups, though he would make it available to any group or resident within the state. But an education department spokesman for another state, while viewing outside queries askance, admitted that he had reluctantly sent information directly to the Gablers' Educational Research Analysts. When asked why he had not withheld the information, he replied: "They could easily get it through a local affiliate anyway, so there didn't seem to be any point in not sending it."

*Lay participation in the adoption process.* The issue of lay participation in the adoption process at the state level emerged as particularly controversial. Some respondents stated that the involvement of lay persons is appropriate and valuable at the state level—though

nonprofessionals must not be allowed to "dominate" the process, and procedures for their orderly participation must be worked out.

While one administrator in a key adoption state credited community participation with returning published materials to a "sounder" basis—away from an "over-liberal," relatively uncritical use of "street materials," another administrator deplored the extent to which adoption proceedings in some states have become a political arena, and suggested that media coverage of state-level hearings contributed to exploitation of the process for political ends. As an example, the respondent related an incident in which a publisher's representative notified a protest group that they could drop their objections because the challenged titles were being withdrawn. The head of the protest group quickly responded that they would appear at the hearing anyway as they had prepared their speech and wanted it to be heard.

Whereas some states—such as Texas and California—have for some time involved laymen, officially or unofficially, in the adoption process, several adoption administrators were quite outspoken in stressing the professionalism of their committees. When asked about "parent participation," they simply replied that many of the educators on the state committees are parents. They further maintained that the appropriate place for lay involvement in the selection of materials is at the local level. Still other states, however, have recently yielded to pressure from the community to include lay citizens on the state adoption committees.

On this question, one textbook administrator commented:

New Right pressure groups have forced us into a defensive position. That may be partly our fault. We might have avoided it if we'd done things differently five or ten years ago. . . . We could have added lay people to the State Textbook Commission. Admittedly, it would have been a form of tokenism, but it would have been good public relations and I think it would have headed off some of the controversy we're having to deal with now. We had the option back then—the suggestion was made [to include lay people] but was not acted on. Then, two or three years later, the State Legislature mandated lay representation, as a result of pressure from the New Right. But strategically, that was bad, for it to come about in that way, because then we were put on the defensive and we've been on the defensive ever since.

*Impact of challenges.* As already noted, challenges to materials under consideration for state adoption have a substantial impact, both direct and indirect, on the educational process. (Media coverage of state-level adoption proceedings and challenges—in contrast with challenges at the local level—is the rule, rather than the exception.

State-level respondents reported media coverage in all of the recent challenges they cited.) Survey respondents indicated that state-adoption challenges have influenced not only the selection of materials but the content and/or style of teaching as well—in addition to influencing publishers to make changes in their materials.

Some respondents viewed challenges as having a positive impact on education; others, as negative. While one respondent noted that challenges "made people more aware of importance of instructional material," another commented that they "created bad publicity and adverse opinions about textbooks and education in general."

Not infrequently, state-level challenges—particularly if not resolved to the satisfaction of the challengers—lead to legislative action. Recent instances cited by survey respondents include the following:

The State Textbook Law was changed in 1980 to include three lay citizens as members of the State Textbook Commission. A resolution was [also] passed to study the state textbook selection process and possibly introduce other legislative changes in the 1981 session of the General Assembly.

Fundamentalist groups have lobbied for the introduction of a bill in the State legislature requiring that equal time be given to the teaching of their views in the schools. The bill was killed in committee last year, but will be presented again this year.

One respondent related that his state's Department of Education had succeeded in killing a bill (proposed by business lobbyists) requiring the teaching of a course on free enterprise. The Education Department met with the legislative committee responsible for the bill and convinced them that the legislature should not regulate curriculum. The State Board of Education then passed a new high school requirement—one semester of consumer economics. Commented the respondent:

We feel better about having a course in consumer economics (which includes budgeting, financial planning, etc.) than we did about one in free enterprise. We also feel better about having the course proposed by the Board of Education than by the legislature.



### III

## Summary and Recommendations

In summary, the survey findings analyzed in this report point to the following conclusions:

- challenges to classroom—and, more frequently, library—materials occur in schools in all regions and in all types of communities across the nation;

- such challenges arise from within as well as from without the educational establishment;

- the challenges often result in limiting students' access to materials, information, and ideas;

- many schools not only lack, or fail to follow, written policies and procedures for selecting materials but also lack, or fail to follow, written procedures for reconsidering materials when challenges arise; and

- schools that do have written selection policies and reconsideration procedures appear to resolve conflicts with fewer restrictions on the instructional and library materials available to students, and therefore with less negative impact on the educational environment.<sup>8</sup>

The survey findings also indicate that

- many schools fail to communicate their educational objectives and methods to the local community;

- the public relations efforts of many schools are more often crisis-oriented than ongoing; and

- finally, responses to the state-level survey in particular have suggested that local and national pressure groups, especially those of the political right-of-center, increasingly attempt to exploit the controversial arena of school book selection for political ends.

In our pluralistic society, choosing what students shall read and learn can never be an easy process. Nor can it be free of controversy. In that difficult process, challenges to instructional and library materials in our public schools have a legitimate function. As a check both on unavoidable human error and on the occasionally arbitrary exercise of authority, such challenges may be viewed as an essential element in the overall selection process.

While administrators and librarians should not expect the school arena to be free of such challenges, they can take steps to ensure that the entire selection process, including the procedures for challenge and review, will be carried on both professionally and equita-

bly; and that the range of materials thereby made available to students will not only reflect established professional criteria but also reflect the values, and address the needs, of the entire school community. To that end, the following recommendations are offered:

## Recommendations

Before challenges arise, school districts should:

1. *Establish, in writing, a materials selection policy.* The policy statement should specify the local criteria and procedures for selecting curricular and library materials. School personnel, including administrators at all levels, should strictly adhere to the established policy and procedures in the selection of all materials.

2. *Establish, in writing, a clearly defined method for dealing with complaints.* Formal procedures for the review of challenged materials should be an integral part of the selection policy statement. Survey data strongly suggest that review procedures include the following provisions:

a. That a "request-for-review" form be used to identify, in writing, the complainant's specific concerns and objections, for evaluation during the review process:

b. That a broad-based committee including parents and other community residents, as well as school personnel, be established to review challenged materials; and

c. That no restrictions be placed on the use of challenged materials until the entire review process has been completed.

3. *Establish continuing communication with the public served by the schools.* School personnel should keep the local community informed, on a regular basis, about educational objectives, curricula, and classroom and library programs, and should be accessible to all concerned local residents to hear their views. It is especially important that the community be informed about the policies and procedures for selecting and reviewing books and other instructional and library materials, since these materials form the basis for the school's educational program.

If a challenge arises, school districts should:

1. *Attempt to resolve the challenge informally.* When the complaint is first received, appropriate personnel should meet informally with the complainant to hear the specific objections being raised and to explain how and why the challenged material was selected. If, at the end of this informal discussion, the complainant still wishes to challenge the material in question, the request-for-review form should be provided.

2. *Take no action to review challenged materials until a written request for review is filed.* When the formal request has been filed, established review procedures should be implemented immediately. At this time, the school board or other governing body should be fully informed of the details of the complaint. If there is no standing review committee, the necessary committee should now be established.

3. *Strictly adhere to established procedures throughout the review process.* All school personnel should be reminded that no restrictions are to be placed on the use of the challenged materials until the entire review process has been completed.

4. *Inform the general public.* Any review of challenged materials should be conducted openly, and the community the district serves should be kept informed through the media and/or local organizational channels, such as the parents' association or school newsletters.

5. *Seek support.* Many local and national groups can offer advice and support.<sup>9</sup> It is best to alert such groups when a complaint is first received. They can often help schools resolve challenges equitably; at the very least, they can provide moral support. Publishers in particular, through the Association of American Publishers, may be able to provide assistance in resolving challenges.

## Notes

1. A complete list of the recent books and articles dealing with the issue of censorship in the schools would fill several pages. Some of the outstanding titles are Stephen Arons, "Book Burning in the Heartland," *Saturday Review*, July 21, 1979, pp. 24-29; "The Crusade to Ban Books," *ibid.*, June 1981, pp. 17-19; Gene Bryant, "Entanglement by the New Right," *Tennessee Teacher* (Nashville, TN: Tennessee Education Association), April 1980; James E. Davis, ed., *Dealing with Censorship* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1979); Donna Hilts, "Censorship: What Johnny Can't Read," *The Washington Post*, Summer Education Review, April 19, 1981. Edward B. Jenkinson, *Censors in the Classroom. The Mind Benders* (University of Illinois Press, 1979); Dena Kleiman, "Parents' Groups Purging Schools of 'Humanist' Books and Classes," *New York Times*, May 17, 1981; Terry J. Larsen, "The Power of the Board of Education to Censor," *Educational Leadership*, November 1980, pp. 139-142; J. Charles Park, "Preachers, Politics, and Public Education: A Review of Right-Wing Pressures against Public Schooling in America," *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 1980; Barbara Parker, "Meet the Textbook Crusaders: Your Schools May Be the Next Battlefield in the Crusade against 'Improper' Textbooks"; "In Warsaw, Ind., Educators Are Told to Cut Offensive Words out of Books"; "Sound Policies and a Well-Informed Public Can Ward Off Censorship Controversies," *The American School Board Journal* (June 1979), pp. 21-28.

Recent challenges are reported bimonthly in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* published by the American Library Association.

2. In the past decade, only two other major nationwide mail surveys have addressed these issues, but both were far more limited in design and scope than the present study. One, by the Educational Research Service (ERS), in 1976, dealt primarily with materials selection, devoting only one question to the issue of challenges to materials. The ERS questionnaires were mailed only to *district administrators* in the "open" states—states without statewide adoption lists for school books. Librarians and principals were not included, nor were the "adoption" states. Of 1,275 districts sampled, 414 responded.

The other recent survey, conducted by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), in 1977, dealt only with censorship pressures, not with the initial selection process, and was limited to secondary school teachers of English who were NCTE members. Of 2,000 teachers sampled, 630 responded.

In addition to the three organizations which sponsored the present study, five other groups in the school and library fields served in an advisory capacity on the project: The American Association of School Administrators, the American Association of School Librarians, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National School Boards Association.

3. In addition, the wording of the survey instrument itself may have contributed to an underreporting of recent challenges by the responding population. The term "challenge," used throughout the questionnaire, was interpreted by some respondents (as indicated by their marginal comments) as referring only to incidents dealt with through formal channels, rather than—as was intended in the survey design—to informal objections and complaints as well.

4. "Textbooks" are generally defined as the "principal book or set of materials, the subject matter of which is designed to support a course of study," while "supplementary classroom materials" are additional books and instructional materials used to "support, expand, and enrich the curriculum." In most school systems (though by no means all), the classroom teacher has greater autonomy in selecting supplementary materials than in the choice of textbooks—which is generally made, or at least narrowed, at a higher administrative level (departmental, building, district, or state).

5. On request, about 400 respondents enclosed copies of their policy statements. The terms and concerns of these statements vary substantially. Many are quite brief

and general, outlining selection criteria applicable to all materials, for example: support of the school's educational program, authority and accuracy of presentation, age-appropriateness, relatedness to the curriculum (or, for library materials, support and enrichment of the school's educational program), quality of presentation (readability, clarity, style, organization, aesthetic qualities, reader appeal, etc.); and serving to inform students about local, national, and international affairs. Some statements stipulate that textbooks must offer a balanced presentation, especially on "controversial issues." Others go beyond that to specify selection criteria in particular subject areas. Some library policies also note that the school library serves a recreational, as well as educational, purpose.

6. This comment ascribes to the Association of American Publishers more power over its members than it actually has. As a trade association the AAP does issue certain policy statements from time to time, but these positions are in no way binding on its members, nor does the AAP exercise any control over the content of materials published by its members.

7. See especially "Some Thoughts on Censorship in the Schools," by Robert F. Hogan (former executive secretary of NCTE), and "Teach the Parents Well: An Anti-Censorship Experiment in Adult Education," by June Berkley—both in *Dealing with Censorship* (NCTE, 1979).

8. A number of education-related organizations stress the value of sound selection policies and reconsideration procedures, and offer guidelines and samples. Among them are the American Library Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National School Boards Association.

9. For individuals who become involved in censorship disputes, a number of national organizations offer information and, in some cases, legal advice or other assistance: the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 944-6780, the Association of American Publishers, One Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016, (212) 689-8920, and 1707 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 293-2585, the National Coalition Against Censorship, 132 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036, (212) 944-9899, the Freedom to Read Foundation, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 944-6780, ext. 331, the American Civil Liberties Union, 132 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036, (212) 944-9800, and the American Association of School Administrators, 1801 No. Moore St., Arlington, VA 22209, (703) 528-0700.

In addition, the following organizations maintain state and local affiliates which may provide assistance in censorship disputes: the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Library Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Education Association.

## APPENDIX A

TABLE I

### Categories of Respondents in Survey Sample Compared to National Population, and Rate of Response

Group	National Population	Mail Sample		Return	
		N	% of National Population	N	Rate of Response
Principals	83,755 <sup>1</sup>	2,482	3.0%	576	23.2%
Superintendents	15,258 <sup>2</sup>	2,498	16.4%	738	29.5%
Librarians	39,980 <sup>3</sup>	1,249	3.1%	170	13.6%
Library-Supervisors	<u>14,891<sup>4</sup></u>	<u>1,343</u>	9.0%	<u>407</u>	30.3%
Total	153,884	7,572	4.9%	1,891	25.0%

<sup>1</sup>Source: *1977-1978 School Year* (published by Curriculum Information Center, Inc. now Market Data Retrieval—see below, note 3), p. 5, table: School Building—Level Personnel, fall 1977 National Count.

<sup>2</sup>This figure is based on the number of Chief School Administrators/Superintendents listed in *ibid.*, p. 4, table: District-Level Decision-Makers, fall 1977 National Count.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Kenneth Lerner, Market Data Retrieval, Ketchum Place, Westport, CT 06680; telephone communication, April 13, 1981. This figure, based on the number of building-level librarians in public schools, grades K-6 and 7-12, as of February 5, 1981, may be somewhat lower than the actual population at the time the survey was conducted (spring 1980).

<sup>4</sup>This figure is the sum of elementary and secondary public school personnel listed under Instructional Media Services—Library (7,835) and Instructional Media Services—Audiovisual (7,056) by Market Data Retrieval (see note 3 above) as of January 1981. Because these positions are often filled by one individual per district, the total figure given here for the national population of district-level library-supervisors may be somewhat inflated, even allowing for some attrition from 1980, when the survey was conducted.

**TABLE II**  
**Frequency and Outcome of Challenges as Indicated<sup>1</sup> by**  
**Respondents With/Without Written Selection Policies**

	Administrators		Librarians	
	Yes/ Written Policy	No/ Written Policy	Yes/ Written Policy	No/ Written Policy
Percentage of respondents reporting recent challenges	25.6	12.1	32.5	20.8
Percentage of challenges indicated as dealt with informally	52.5	77.8	57.4	81.1
Percentage of challenges in which respondents indicated challenged material was altered, restricted, or removed prior to formal review	40.9	58.9	54.6	64.7
Percentage of responses indicating final disposition of incident as				
Challenge overruled	36.7	31.5	33.2	20.0
Challenged material removed from school	17.4	30.2	26.5*	23.4

\*Only figure departing from the overall trend observed.

**TABLE III**  
**How Challenges Were Dealt With, as Reported by**  
**Respondents With/Without Written Reconsideration**  
**Procedures**

	As Reported by Respondents Indicating		As Reported by All Respondents
	Yes/Written Reconsideration Procedures	No/Written Reconsideration Procedures	
Percentage of recent challenges dealt with informally	52.7	84.3	60.4
Percentage of recent challenges in which challenged material was altered, restricted, or removed prior to formal review	43.9	67.8	50.0

**TABLE IV**  
**Outcome of Challenges Compared to Method of Resolution**  
 (figures given are percentages)

	As Reported by Respondents Indicating				As Reported by	
	Yes/Written Reconsideration Procedures		No/Written Reconsideration Procedures		All Respondents	
	Challenge Overruled*	Material Removed or Restricted	Challenge Overruled*	Material Removed or Restricted	Challenge Overruled*	Material Removed or Restricted
Challenges dealt with informally	39.3	60.7	33.3	66.7	37.5	62.5
Challenges dealt with through formal procedures	56.8	43.2	50.0	50.0	56.2	43.8
All challenges	47.6	52.4	36.0	64.0	45.1	54.9

\*Counted with Challenges Overruled are the relatively small number of challenges in which respondents indicated the final disposition as alternate assignment offered at parents request —an action which honors the individual parent's prerogative with regard to his/her child, without imposing restrictions on access to materials by other students.



## APPENDIX B

The following is a partial list of the challenged materials cited by survey respondents. Many respondents who reported challenges did not identify the materials challenged. Others gave titles in such cryptic form that they cannot be clearly identified. Still other respondents used generic terms to identify challenged materials, for example: "an advanced biology text," "all science textbooks," "history books"; "books on divorce, evolution, English, creationism, health," etc. None of these items are included in the following list.

Items cited by more than one respondent are indicated by an asterisk in the grade-level column. Materials which were removed from the school or whose availability to students was otherwise limited as a result of challenges are marked in the appropriate column. (Here, as earlier in the report, materials were not considered restricted for general use if respondents indicated that the challenge was resolved by the offering of an "alternate assignment at parent's request.")

## PARTIAL LIST OF CHALLENGED MATERIALS

Challenged Material	Grade Level				Restricted, Altered, or Removed
	K & Lower Ele.	Upper Ele.	Jr. High	Sr. High	
Allard, Harry		X			X
<i>Stupids Step Out</i>					
American Cartoon Album, The			X		X
American Heritage Dictionary, 1969 ed.				X	
Andress, Lesley	X	X		X	
<i>Cuper</i>					
Anonymous		X	X*	X*	X
<i>Go Ask Alice</i>					
Anson, Jay			X		X
<i>The Amityville Horror</i>					
Asimov, Isaac				X	
<i>Isaac Asimov's Treasury of Humor</i>					
Babbitt, Natalie		X			
<i>The Devil's Storybook</i>					
Baby Brother		X			X
Bannerman, Helen	X				X
<i>Little Black Sambo</i>					
Benchley, Peter			X		X
<i>Jaws</i>					
Benford, Gregory			X		X
<i>In the Ocean of Night</i>					
Berrigan, Daniel				X	
<i>Trials of the Catonsville Nine</i>					
Bentley, Thomas		X			X
<i>Adventures of A Young Outlaw</i>					
Bishop, Claire H.	X*				X
<i>The Five Chinese Brothers</i>					
Blume, Judy	X*	X*	X*		
<i>Are You There, God? It's Me. Margaret</i>					
Blubber		X*			
Deenie		X*	X*		X
Forever			X*	X*	X
<i>It's Not the End of the World</i>		X*	X*		X
<i>Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself</i>		X*			
<i>Then Again. Maybe I Won't</i>		X*	X*		X
Wifey			X*		X
Bomans, Godfried		X			X
<i>Witch &amp; All The Other Fairy Tales</i>					

Challenged Material		Grade Level			Restricted, Altered, or Removed
		K & Lower Ele.	Upper Ele.	Jr. High Sr. High	
Bonnars, Susan	<i>Panda</i>	X			
Boston Women's Health Book Collective	<i>Our Bodies. Ourselves</i>			X*	X
Bradbury, Ray	<i>Vacation (Film)</i>		X		
Bradsky, Mimi	<i>The House at 12 Row Street</i>	X			
Brandwein, Baur, et al.	<i>You As An Individual (Film)</i>			X	
Branscum, Robbie	<i>Johnny May</i>	X	X*		X
Brautigan, Richard	<i>The Pill vs. The Springhill Mine Disaster</i>			X	X
—	<i>The Revenge of the Lawn</i>			X	X
Bricklin, Mark	<i>The Practical Encyclopedia of Natural Healing</i>				X
Briggs, Raymond	<i>Father Christmas</i>	X*	X		X
Brown, Claude	<i>Manchild in the Promised Land</i>			X	X
Bury, Ed	<i>Vagabonding in the U.S.A.</i>				X
Chamberlain, Wilt	<i>Wilt Chamberlain</i>			X	X
Chelminsky, Rudolph	<i>Paris</i>			X	X
Chittum, Ida	<i>Tales of Terror</i>		X	X	
<i>Christmas Deer (Film)</i>		X	X		
<i>Christmas Story</i>		X			X
Cleaver, Eldridge	<i>Soul on Ice</i>				
Clifton, Lucille	<i>Anifika</i>	X			
Colby, C. B.	<i>Colby—2nd WW Aircraft</i>		X		
Cole, William	<i>Oh, That's Ridiculous (Film)</i>				X
Colman, Hilda	<i>Diary of a Frantic Kid Sister</i>		X	X	X
Coombs, Patricia	<i>The Magic Pot</i>	X			
Coppel, Alfred	<i>Thirty-Four East</i>				X
Corbett	<i>Mystery (Film)</i>		X		X

Corley, Edwin	<i>The Genesis Rock</i>			X	X
Corman, Avery	<i>Kramer vs. Kramer</i>			X	
Cormier, Robert	<i>The Chocolate War</i>			X	
Cosby, Bill	<i>Bill Cosby on Prejudice (Film)</i>			X	X
D'Arcy, Anne Jeanne	<i>One Woman's War on VD in the Nursery School</i>			X	
Darrow, Whitney	<i>I'm Glad I'm A Boy, I'm Glad I'm A Girl</i>	X			X
Davenport, Basil	<i>Famous Monster Tales</i>		X	X	X
Davies, Peter	<i>Fly Away Paul</i>			X	X
Davies, Hunter	<i>The Beatles</i>			X	
DeFelitta, Frank Paul	<i>Audrey Rose</i>			X	X
Diagram Group	<i>Man's Body</i>			X	X
<i>Dictionary of Slang</i>				X	X
Donovan, John	<i>I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip</i>				
Eagan, Andrea B.	<i>Why Am I So Miserable If These Are the Best Years of My Life?</i>		X		
<i>Ebony Magazine</i>	<i>"Ray Charles' Sex Life"</i>		X		
Elfman, Blossom	<i>The Girls of Huntington House</i>		X		X
Ellison, Harlan, ed.	<i>Again, Dangerous Visions (Film)</i>			X	X
Elwood, Roger	<i>Future City</i>			X	
Emrich, Duncan	<i>The Hodgepodge Book (Film)</i>		X		
<i>Esquire Magazine</i>				X	X
<i>Essence Magazine</i>				X	X
Eyerly, Jeannette	<i>He's My Baby Now</i>			X	
<i>Families</i>				X	
<i>Family Living (Film)</i>				X	X
<i>Family Living Pamphlets</i>				X	
Fields, Jeff	<i>A Cry of Angels</i>			X	
Fitzhugh, Louise	<i>Bang Bang, You're Dead</i>				X

Challenged Material	Grade Level				Restricted, Altered, or Removed
	K & Lower Ele.	Upper Ele.	Jr. High	Sr. High	
Flannery (Film)				X	X
French, Marilyn	<i>The Women's Room</i>			X	
Fromm, Erich	<i>The Art of Loving</i>			X	X
Ginn & Company	<i>Literature 7 and Literature 8</i>		X		
	<i>Responding Series</i>			X	X
Godey, John	<i>The Snake</i>		X	X	X
Goodby	<i>Great Shark Stories (Film)</i>		X		X
Gordon, Sol	<i>You: The Psychology of Survival</i>			X	X
Govt. of South Africa	<i>South Africa (Film)</i>				
Gray, Genevieve	<i>Ghost Story (Film)</i>	X			
Greene, Constance	<i>I Know You, Al (Film)</i>			X	
Haining, Peter	<i>Necromancers</i>		X		X
Hall, Lynn	<i>Sticks and Stones</i>			X	X
Hannam, Charles	<i>A Boy In That Situation</i>		X		
Harcourt Brace		X			
Jovanovich Inc.	<i>Level 1 Reader</i>				
Hawthorne, Nathaniel	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>			X	
Head, Ann	<i>Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones</i>			X	
Hemingway, Ernest	<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>			X	
Henry, Marguerite	<i>The Little Fellow</i>	X			
Hentoff, Nat	<i>This School Is Driving Me Crazy</i>		X	X	X
Hesse, Herman	(Several titles)			X	
Hinton, S. E.	<i>The Outsiders</i>			X	X
Hoenig, Gary	<i>Reaper: The Inside Story of a Gang Leader</i>			X	
Hoffman, Elizabeth	<i>This House Is Haunted</i>		X		X

Holt Data Bank 4th Grade

Text

Hooks, William H.  
Humanities, Center for

*Inquiring into Culture*  
*The Seventeen Gerbils of Class 4-A*  
*How To Live With Your Parents and*  
*Survive (A-V material)*

Hunter, Evan  
Huxley, Aldous  
*Illicit and Licit: Drugs*

*Sons*  
*Brave New World*

Ipcar, Dahlov  
Jackson, Shirley  
Johnson, Eric W.

*Cat Come Back*  
*The Lottery (Film)*  
*Sex: Telling It Straight*

*Junior Great Books Reading and Discussion*

Kantor, MacKinley  
Kennedy, Richard

*Valley Forge*  
*Inside My Feet: The Story Of A Giant*

Keogh, Rash J.  
Kerr, M. E.

*Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco (Film)*  
*Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack*

Kesey, Ken  
King, Stephen

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*  
*Salem's Lot*

Kingston, Jeremy  
Klein, Norma

*Carrie*  
*Witches and Witchcraft*  
*It's Not What You Expect*

—  
—

*Naomi in the Middle*

—  
Knight, David C.

*Tomboy*  
*Poltergeists: Hauntings and the*  
*Haunted*

Le Guin, Ursula K.

*The Left Hand of Darkness*

Levine, Joan Goldman  
Levitin, Sonia

*The Santa Claus Mystery*  
*The Mark of Conte*

Lewis, Elby

*There Are Two Lives: Poems by*  
*Children of Japan*

Lexau, Joan M.

*Benjie On His Own*

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X\*

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X\*

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

35

Challenged Material	Grade Level				Restricted Altered, or Removed
	K & Lower Ele.	Upper Ele.	Jr. High	Sr. High	
Lindgren, Astrid <i>Children on Troublemaker Street</i> (Film)		X			X
<i>The Littlest Angel</i> (Film)	X	X			
Lowry, Lois <i>Find A Stranger, Say Goodbye</i>					X
McCary, James <i>Human Sexuality</i> (Film)	X		X	X	X
McCullough, Colleen <i>The Thorn Birds</i>				X	X
MacDongell <i>The Cheerleader</i>				X	X
McKuen, Rod (Several titles)					
MacLean, Alistair <i>Goodbye, California</i>			X		X
McNally, Terrence <i>Bringing It All Back Home</i>				X	
<i>Mad Magazine</i>		X			X
<i>Mademoiselle Magazine</i>				X	X
36 <i>Man: A Course of Study</i> (Film)			X		X
<i>Man, Myth &amp; Magic</i>				X	X
Manley, Seon, and Gogo Lewis <i>Sister of Sorcery</i>	X				
Mayer, Henry <i>A Baby Is Born</i> (Film)	X				
Mazer, Norma F., and Harry Mazer <i>Solid Gold Kid</i>					
Meriwether, Louise <i>Daddy Was a Numbers Runner</i>			X		X
Millhiser, Marlys <i>The Mirror</i>				X	X
Minear, Richard <i>Through Japanese Eyes</i>			X		
Moon, Man, Otto <i>The New Biology</i> (Film)				X	
Morrison, Lillian <i>Best Wishes, Amen: A New Collection of Autograph Verses</i>	X				X
Myers, Walter D. <i>Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, &amp; Stuff</i>		X			
Naylor, Phyllis R. <i>The Witch's Sister</i> (Film)	X		X		
Neufeld, John <i>For All the Wrong Reasons</i>			X		X

Nilsson, Lennart	<i>How Was I Born? A Photographic Story of Reproduction and Birth for Children</i>		X			X
Noel, Janet	<i>The Human Body</i>			X		
Orgel, Doris	<i>The Devil in Vienna</i>		X			
Orwell, George	1984		X	X		
PP&L Screening Digest Magazine	<i>Energy Channel (Film)</i>			X		X
Parents Magazine			X	X		X
Parks, Gordon	<i>The Learning Tree</i>				X	
Paterson, A. B.	<i>The Man from Ironbark</i>	X				
Paterson, Katherine	<i>Bridge to Terabithia</i>		X			
Peck, Richard	<i>Are You in the House Alone?</i>			X		
Peck, Robert N.	<i>A Day No Pigs Would Die</i>		X*	X*		
Perkins, Al	<i>Soup</i>		X			
Pevsner, Sheila	<i>Don and Donna Go to Bat</i>	X				X
	<i>Footsteps on the Stairs</i>		X			
	<i>Keep Stompin' Till the Music Stops</i>		X			
Planned Parenthood	<i>The Key to Your Future (Film)</i>			X	X	X
Platt, Charles	<i>Twilight of the City</i>				X	X
Pomeroy, Wardell B.	<i>Girls and Sex</i>			X	X	X
Pronzini, Bill	<i>Snowbound</i>				X	X
Puzo, Mario	<i>The Godfather</i>				X	
Raucher, Herman	<i>Summer of '42</i>				X	
Rayner, Mary	<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Pig's Evening Out</i>	X				
Reiff, Stephanie Ann	<i>Visions of the Future: Magic Numbers &amp; Cards</i>	X				
Rhine, J. B., and J. G. Pratt	<i>Parapsychology: Frontier Science of the Mind</i>					X
Roberts, Nancy	<i>Appalachian Ghosts</i>		X	X		
Roberts, Willa D.	<i>Don't Hurt Laurie</i>		X			



Challenged Material	Grade Level				Restricted, Altered, or Removed
	K & Lower Ele.	Upper Ele.	Jr. High	Sr. High	
—			X		
Roden, Cuban	<i>View From the Cherry Tree</i>		X		
Roth, Philip	<i>Promise of America</i>		X		
Roughsey, Dick	<i>Portnoy's Complaint</i>			X	
Royko, Mike	<i>The Giant Devil-Dingo</i>	X			
Sachs, Marilyn	<i>Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago</i>				
Salinger, J. D.	<i>Bears' House</i>		X		
Samuels, Gertrude	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>			X*	X
Scholastic	<i>Run, Shelley, Run</i>			X*	X
Schul, Bill, and Ed Pettit	<i>Scholastic Book of Ghosts</i>		X		
Scoppeltone, Sandra	<i>Secret Power of the Pyramids</i>			X	X
Segal, Eric	<i>Trying Hard to Hear You</i>			X	X
Selden, George	<i>Love Story</i>		X		
Sendak, Maurice	<i>The Genie of Sutton Place</i>		X		
—	<i>Where the Wild Things Are</i>				
Shakespeare, William	<i>In the Night Kitchen</i>	X*			X
Shapers of Things Unknown (Film)	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>			X	
Shearer, John			X		X
Sheehy, Gail	<i>I Wish I Had An Afro</i>		X		
Shepard, Ray A.	<i>Passages</i>			X	X
Shulman, Ali. K.	<i>Sneakers</i>		X		
Simon, Sidney	<i>Memoirs of An Ex-Prom Queen</i>			X	
Snyder, Anne	<i>Values Clarification</i>			X	
Snyder, Zilpha K.	<i>My Name Is Davy: I'm An Alcoholic</i>			X	
Solzhenitsyn, Alexander	<i>The Witches of Worm</i>		X*		
Sports Illustrated Magazine	<i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i>			X	X*
Stanley, Michael			X*	X*	X
	<i>The Swiss Conspiracy</i>			X	X

Staurianos, L. S.	<i>Man the Toolmaker (Film)</i>		X		
Steinbeck, John	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>				X
—	<i>Of Mice and Men</i>			X	X*
Steptoe, John	<i>My Special Best Words</i>	X			X
<i>Sunshine</i>				X	
<i>Superman</i>					X
Taves, Isabella	<i>Not Bad For a Girl</i>		X		X
Terkel, Studs	<i>Working</i>				X
Thomas, Marlo	<i>Free to Be—You and Me</i>	X			X
Thompson, Thomas	<i>Richie</i>			X	X
Tibbits, Albert B.	<i>Let's Dance</i>		X		X
Toffler, Alvin	<i>Future Shock (Film)</i>			X*	X
<i>The Toilet</i>				X	X
Twain, Mark	<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>		X*	X*	X
<i>The Twelve Days of Christmas</i>				X	
<i>UFOs (Film)</i>			X		
Ungerer, Tomi	<i>Zeralda's Ogre</i>	X			
Vandermeer, Ron and Atie	<i>Oh Land!</i>	X	X		
Vasiliu, Mircea	<i>Once Upon A Pirate Ship</i>	X			
Vonnegut, Kurt Jr.	<i>Breakfast of Champions</i>		X		X
—	<i>God Bless You. Mr. Rosewater</i>				X
Wahl, Jan	<i>Crabapple Night</i>	X			X
<i>Webster's Collegiate Dictionary</i>				X	X
<i>Weekly Reader</i>	<i>Our Freedom</i>		X		
White, E. B.	<i>Stuart Little</i>	X			
Wilder, Laura I.	<i>Little House in the Big Woods</i>		X		
<i>Winter of the Witch (Film)</i>		X			X
Wojciechowska, Maja	<i>Tuned Out</i>			X	
Volcott, Patty	<i>Super Sam and the Salad Garden</i>	X			
Volfe, Tom	<i>Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test</i>			X	X
Woods, George A.	<i>Catch A Killer</i>			X*	
Zindel, Paul	<i>My Darling, My Hamburger</i>			X*	X

## Acknowledgments

The principal author of this report was Michelle Marder Kamhi, who served as research consultant on the survey. A New York-based writer, researcher, and editor, Ms. Kamhi has worked on numerous educational publishing projects, has served as a consultant to the New York City Board of Education, and is a parent actively involved in the city's public schools. In addition to writing a variety of print and audiovisual educational materials, she has contributed to the *New York Times*, *Ms.*, and the Rockefeller Foundation's *RF Illustrated*, among other publications.

Technical support, assistance with evaluation, and physical facilities for this study were generously provided by the Research and Evaluation Department of the McGraw-Hill Book Company—to which the Association of American Publishers, the American Library Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development wish to express their deep appreciation.

This study was supported by grants from the Scherman Foundation and the Ford Foundation.