

Meeting Minutes
NJLA Intellectual Freedom Subcommittee
Friday, February 10, 2023

1. Welcome
 - a. In attendance: Judith Pissano (chair), Jen Fitzgerald, Chip McAuley, Leah Kloc, Kiana Kirby, Richard Kearney, Lisa Bruckman, Jessica Trujillo
2. Old Business
 - a. Approved minutes from January meeting
 - i. one edit from Judith
 - ii. Chip approved; Leah seconded
 - b. Conference proposal
 - i. Intellectual Freedom Takes a Village: Boards, Friends, and Public Education Right to Read
 - a. Was not accepted
 - b. Richard and/or Judith might reach out to state library to offer this as a training for Directors and/or Boards (as part of their required 7 hours of training per year)
 - ii. Book Challenge Toolkit
 1. Approved
 2. Partnered with Collection Development and Technical Services committee
 - c. Washington Township HS
 - i. Board voted to remove *The Bluest Eye* from the 9th grade curriculum but might go into 11th grade curriculum; however, no further information has been provided. Concern that it will fall through the cracks. Judith and an NJASL colleague from the Rapid Response Team as well as a teacher gave a media interview about this situation. There was also a vote to remove the book from the school library but that did not pass.
 - d. Honors & Awards nominations
 - i. Judith recommends that we nominate the two educators from Washington Township HS affected by the book challenge issue. Were harassed for advocating for keeping it in the curriculum.
 - ii. Not due until March so we have time to think about it.
 - e. Tips & Tools complete
 - i. Judith will seek to have it added to the IF area of NJLA website for folks to use across the state.
 - f. Regional Response Team / EveryLibrary partnership update

- i. LibraryLinkNJ brought in as another partner. Working on MOU document as a next step. Financial concern from NJLA perspective and also who will process the data that is received. Hope to vote yes/no by the end of February. At the last Executive Board meeting, NJASL presented a proposal on how important this project is as a statewide IF coalition. Hope to become self-sustaining over time with donations, etc. Lawyer will review contracts if/when time comes. Might have to wait until the new director of NJLA is in place. The current interim director is supportive so far.
- ii. New platform to utilize for addressing book challenges.

3. Public Policy Update

- a. NJ Information Literacy Bill
 - i. Request for some language updates; hopefully more information to share at the next meeting
- b. <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislative-roster/407/assemblywoman-timberlake>
 - i. She attended the Glen Ridge book challenge on Tuesday night and spoke out against the challenge. She is looking to promote legislation to ban book bans. Not sure yet how it will look but she is a strong supporter of IF. No information on her website just yet about proposed bill.

4. NJLA Executive Board update

- a. Narrowing down on candidates for NJLA director. Hope to have someone in place by April.
- b. Executive Board elections coming soon.

5. New Business

- a. Glen Ridge Public Library
 - i. Ban didn't work – Board voted to keep all books in place. Judith sent in a letter on behalf of our committee and NJLA membership that was included in Board packet.
- b. Sparta
 - i. Challenge here. Judith will share a link: Fight for the First petition where you can submit a signature.
- c. Meeting room policy
 - i. Next project for us to work on. Make a generic one that can be used as a template that all libraries in NJ could access. Hope to complete by June. Leah shared an example from her library and

others can also share their library's meeting room policy with Judith. ALA has additional information.

- d. Lots of responses in the reporting form (for example, Monroe Public Library, Gloucester County Library System, etc.). Probably means there are more that are going unreported. Encourage others to report any challenges they encounter – we can be as involved as much or as little as they want (e.g., writing letter, speaking to press, meeting attendance)
 - e. Rainbow List
 - i. NJ librarian on committee noted online harassment by “SafeLibraries” group towards those who selected these best of LGBTQ books for youth.
 - ii. Jen will encourage the librarian to use our reporting form to talk about the incident.
 - iii. Judith shared an email from the librarian with the Rapid Response Team as they can be a support.
6. Discussion
- a. Judith will share slideshow from NJLA YASS toolbox in case folks don't have time to watch the presentation.