

Censorship Challenge Report – Quarter 3 FY2015

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As the numbers in the chart below tell the story, this was a very busy quarter of challenges. AND, not a one of these was “simple.” The challenges in Texas over a number of books and in Colorado over the AP History Curriculum have been on-going since the beginning of the school year. Finally the Boulder, Colorado, school board decided not to take the challenge to the history curriculum any farther and that curriculum remains in place. In Highland Park, Texas, things have not resolved, even though *The Art of Racing in the Rain* was retained. The district has been torn apart by the challenge. It’s instituted a complicated, convoluted policy for teachers to suggest texts and to have them reviewed prior to adoption. All texts, even those that have been successfully used for years, must go through the policy. This policy has required undue paperwork from the teachers and they have been subjected to undue scrutiny and bashing by some members of the community (although there is one group--fully in their support). I interviewed with a *School Library Journal* reporter concerning this case...

The two challenges to history text books in two different Florida counties demonstrate a trend we’re beginning to see. These particular challenges have been instigated by a political group --which has developed a plan of action for local communities to take to get certain kinds of historical information written out of the texts.

CENSORSHIP CHALLENGES COMPARISON Q3 FY15 AND Q3 FY14

A few things to know as you compare the numbers are the following:

- *Number of challenges = number of individuals who reported challenges.*
- *Number of works challenged is usually higher because often challenges involve more than one work.*
- *The Censorship Challenge Reports by quarter are posted on the [NCTE website](#).*

January 2015	February 2015	March 2015	Q3FY2015 Totals
4 new challenges/2 texts, 2 book policies, 1 reporter call	5 new challenges/5 texts, 3 continuing challenges/9+++texts	5 new challenges/5 texts	19 new or continuing or book policy challenges/21+++texts/1 reporter call
January 2014	February 2014	March 2014	Q3FY2014 Totals
2 challenges, text review policies	1 challenge/1 text	4 challenges/3texts/ 1 text review policy, 1 interview with student on censorship	7 challenges/4 texts/3 text review policies/1 interview with student on censorship

Listing of 3rd Quarter Challenges Reported January-March, 2015

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie (Grade 9, VA, 2/11/2015). Content and language in the book. Advised working with dept chair and others to outline in more detail a book selection policy.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie (Grade 6 and 7, IA, 3/31/2015). Inappropriate for age. Sent rationale and other supporting info to two members of district as well as to two other interested parties. **Board pulled book from all middle school but left copies in middle school libraries.**

AP US History Curriculum, (AP US History, CO, 9/26/2014). materials which may be deemed objectionable. **In February School Board retreated from proposal to review AP US history curriculum.**

The Art of Racing in the Rain, (Seven other books involved), Garth Stein (English II, TX, 9/15/2014). Sex, profanity, rape. In February, NCTE wrote letter to Principal and School Board and Signed on another letter with NCAC and others. Book was retained but a very complicated, new book adoption and review policy was instituted.

The Chocolate War, Robert Cormier (Grade 9, MN, 2/17/2015). Obscene amount of profanity, racism, and sexual content. Challenge was brought forward when assignment was due. Student was offered another book but parent didn't like that either and asked that both books be removed..

The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History, Richard W. Bulliet and others (Grade 10, FL, 1/28/2015). Contain specific inaccuracies and misrepresentations and information that is far from balanced. 2/27/15 -- Signed on letter with NCAC and others. **Text was retained.**

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini (Grade 9, NY, 3/27/2015). Language, violence, homosexual rape, pedophilia, pornography. Sent rationale and other supporting information.

Lords of Discipline, Pat Conroy (Grade 11 American Literature, OK, 2/10/2015). Language, sexual content, and hazing. Challenger was offered and accepted *Huckleberry Finn* as an alternative selection but proceeded to unofficially file a challenge with administration.

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (Grade 10 English, PA, 11/6/2014). Language, sexual innuendos, etc. 2/9/15--HS admin sent letter to community members explaining committee's rationale for keeping the book, challenge has been dropped -- 11/6/14 -- Sent rationale and other materials -- 12/15/14--MD sent letter to school board -- 1/7/15 -- Resent letter to school board. Book has been returned

Palomar: The Heartbreak Soup Stories (A Love and Rockets Book), Gilbert Hernandez (HS, NM, 3/6/2015). Child pornography. 3/9/15--Signed on letter with NCAC and others. **Review committee voted to keep on shelves of the high school library.**

Perks of Being a Wallflower, The, Stephen Chbosky (Freshman English, CT, 3/19/2015). Sexual content. **Book was removed.**

Persepolis, Marjane Satrapi (Grade 10, NC, 3/20/2015). Offensive material. Sent rationale and other supporting information.

This One Summer, Jillian and Mariko Tamaki (Grade 8 English, TX, 2/12/2015). Profanity and obscenities used to discuss sensitive topics. Principal has assembled a review committee to meet 2/16. Librarian

wants to see what happens with the review committee (will write letter if needed). **Review committee decided to keep book on the shelf.**

Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: Searching for the Roots of 9/11 (film), (, VA, 1/10/2015). Proposed policy changes to book selection. 1/12/15--Signed on letter with NCAC and others. **Policies were unanimously adopted without discussion.**

Whale Talk, Chris Crutcher (Grade 9, MN, 2/17/2015). Obscene amount of profanity, racism, and sexual content. Challenge was brought forward when assignment was due. Student was offered another choice (*The Chocolate War*) but parent didn't like that either and asked that both books be removed

World History: Connections to Today, Prentice Hall (Grade 10, FL, 1/28/2015). Contain specific inaccuracies and misrepresentations and information that is far from balanced. Signed on letter with NCAC and others. **School Board met and accepted the review committee's recommendations to make no changes.**