

Book Banning Bans Voices

By:Lily Valla

26 states, 1,100 books, 1 debate. School districts in 26 states have banned or are looking into banning over 1,100 books. Jefferson County is one of the districts that are discussing book bans.

On July 28, 2022, parents met with the JCPS board and expressed their concerns about certain themes present in books. Two of the books brought into question were *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison and *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe.

Parents claimed that these books contained inappropriate themes and

were too graphic. The board responded to these concerns by telling parents to contact the schools' principals and to forward a complaint to the School Board Decision Making Council if they were unhappy with the school's response.

Megan Palmer, a student at Southern New Hampshire University, wrote a paper discussing book banning. In *Book Banning Bans the Future*

she states that "it is critical to understand that books are banned not necessarily for their ideologies or content, but for the ideologies of those who have the power to ban." Both *Lawn Boy* and *Gender Queer* include LGBTQ characters and sexual themes. JCPS parents claim that the sexual themes are "inappropriate and vulgar." According to the American Library

into the human condition and serve as models for students' own thinking and writing." By banning stories about minorities they are going against these standards. This limits the range of genres, cultures, and centuries that students have access to. JCPS board member Joseph C. Marshall, who graduated from University of Louisville with his Bachelors of Arts in English, gave his opinion on the topic.

In response to questioning how he felt the book banning would impact the English curriculum, Marshall said "Banning books attempts to silence creative minds. Only making them more dedicated to sharing their message. English curriculum

is all about seeing the world through the eyes of the author and their message. Those voices matter when creating a mosaic of historical messaging, it's important to the English curriculum to still allow that author to have their story told." Mr. Tucker, an English teacher at Atherton, stated that his curriculum hasn't been impacted yet, but he is afraid that it will be in the future.

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Association, the top ten most challenged books of 2021 included stories of minorities. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Education states that in order "to become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights



