



MINNESOTA LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

12 May 2016
Dr. Jeremy Olson
Superintendent
Henning School District
500 School Ave
Henning MN 56551

Dear Dr. Olson and Members of the Henning School Board:

I am contacting you on behalf of the Minnesota Library Association to voice our concern over the recent removal of *This One Summer* from your library shelves. It is our understanding that a concerned parent complained about the book, that school administration agreed with the complaint, and that the title was removed from your shelves. It is also our understanding that your school district has no formal policy for reconsideration of library materials, unlike many other school districts in the state of Minnesota. While I sincerely believe that you have your students' best interest at heart, the small group of people who made this decision represents only one perspective on this book. In addition to the numerous awards and positive reviews it has received, *This One Summer* is available at countless school libraries like yours across the country. Certainly that speaks to the possibility that others may find value in the story this book has to tell.

You have a library that is accessible to a wide range of ages, including older students who have the right to explore a variety of materials appropriate to their needs. We know you are already aware of *This One Summer's* positive reviews in all the key reviewing tools for school libraries, and that it received in addition to several other national and international awards, both a Caldecott Honor and Michael C. Printz Honor from the American Library Association in 2015. With these endorsements, it is hard to believe that you willingly chose to remove access to this title from your students. It is antithetical to the education process to limit exposure to ideas, which is what you have done by removing this title from your library.

What is very troubling is your lack of a formal reconsideration process. It is a firm principle in a democratic society that citizens have both the right to express their concerns, as well as have due process when the concerns expressed impact themselves and others. Without a method of formal reconsideration, you have made no allowance for voices to be heard from your students, parents, and community in defense of the book. Do you know how many parents object to *This One Summer* and, do you know how many parents object to its removal?

We stand with the American Library Association in asking you to reconsider both your decision and the process by which it was made, and we are happy to provide resources to help you in developing a formal reconsideration process if you choose to do so. As an association that includes both librarians and educators, we want to be sure someone speaks up for the students within your school district. Limiting access rarely does anyone good, particularly students.

Sincerely,

Megan Kocher
Chair, Intellectual Freedom Committee
Minnesota Library Association

Margaret Stone
President
Minnesota Library Association