



February 17, 2016

Dr. Walt Griffin
Superintendent
Seminole County Public Schools
400 E. Lake Mary Boulevard
Sanford, FL 32773

Dear Dr. Griffin:

It has come to the attention of the Florida Association for Media in Education (FAME- the state professional organization of school librarians) that the award-winning book *This One Summer* by Mariko and Jillian Tamaki has been removed from high schools in Seminole County due to a complaint of a parent who objected to the book being found in her daughter's elementary school. FAME supports the American Library Association's policies on Intellectual Freedom and the ALA Library Bill of Rights and strives to ensure complete access of school libraries and materials to all students where appropriate.

What concerns FAME is that high school students for whom this book is written are being denied access due to the book being found at the elementary level. It is also very concerning that Seminole County Public Schools has in place a collection development policy that addresses challenged materials, however that policy was apparently not adhered to during the removal of *This One Summer* from the shelves of the high school libraries. Attention to the policy could have prevented the book from being placed in an elementary library in the first place. Every collection development policy should include the methods a librarian pursues in determining the best books for his or her community and collection. This should be a multi-step process and include having an understanding of one's school community and reading reviews, interest levels, and recommendations prior to selecting titles. One should never rely on book jobbers, award lists, or even reviews as a single source of recommendation.

In this particular case, *This One Summer* has four different starred reviews, a Caldecott Honor, and a Printz Honor, in addition to having been on SLJ's Battle of the Kids Books 2015. It is obviously a worthy book for school collections for the appropriate school level. The Caldecott Award "shall be awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published by an American publisher in the United States in English during the preceding year." The term "children" covers all of our youth, not just students in elementary schools, and illustrators of graphic novels would certainly be considered. Just as this year the Newbery was awarded to a picture book, a Caldecott can be awarded to a YA book, as *This One Summer* is classified (thus the Printz Honor). Mistakes of assuming that a book belongs in an elementary school based on the award without reviewing the interest level of the book is one very important reason a certified professional school librarian should be in each and every school.

FAME understands that Seminole County has many schools without a full-time school librarian. We endorse having a full-time certificated professional school librarian in every school so that every student has access to quality age-appropriate materials and active library media programs to ensure our students are future ready.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lucretia D. Miller".

Lucretia D. Miller
President, Florida Association for Media in Education