



MEMO

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TO: Jeffrey Kohler, Board Chair

FROM: Nick Grove, Library Director

CC: Meridian Library District Board of Trustees (the "Board")

DATE: 3/4/25

RE: Request for Reconsideration - *Two Boys Kissing*; Library Director Response and Recommendation

Overview

On February 4, 2025, Meridian Library District ("District") staff received a Request for Reconsideration form regarding the book *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan (the "Material"). This Memo constitutes the Library Director's written response and recommended decision regarding the submitted Request for Reconsideration, as required by the District's Collection Development Policy (the "Policy"). More specifically, this Memo provides a synopsis of the Material, its circulation history, an analysis of the Material through the lens of the District's Collection Development Policy, and a recommendation to the Board for consideration and decision at the March 2025 monthly Board meeting.

Synopsis of the Material

Based on true events—and narrated by a Greek Chorus of the generation of gay men lost to AIDS—*Two Boys Kissing* follows Harry and Craig, two seventeen-year-olds who are about to take part in a 32-hour marathon of kissing to set a new Guinness World Record. While the two increasingly dehydrated and sleep-deprived boys are locking lips, they become a focal point in the lives of other teens dealing with universal questions of love, identity, and belonging.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/217499/two-boys-kissing-by-david-levithan/>

Requestor

The requestor is a resident within the boundaries of the Meridian Library District and has marked on the Request for Reconsideration form that they are a parent of the Minor who obtained the Material.

Request for Reconsideration Report

Staff Member: TG

Date: 2/24/2025

Director: Nick Grove

Formal Review Initiated

Per the District's [Collection Development Policy](#), when MLD receives a Request for Reconsideration for an item in the District's collection, the Library Director shall endeavor to submit to the Board a written response to the submission and a recommended Board decision within twenty-eight (28) days of receipt. The Board shall give the Library Director's written response and recommended decision substantial deference and endeavor to issue a written decision within sixty (60) days of receipt of the submission explaining the Board's rationale for approving or denying the submission. The Board can adopt the Library Director's written response and recommended decision as its own, with or without modification, or the Board can issue its own decision. Board deliberation must be done openly on the record at noticed Board meetings. As provided in the Policy, the Board shall always take the most narrowly-tailored action necessary.

The challenged material must be considered as a whole and individual passages cannot be taken out of context. Supporting materials should also inform the analysis. In determining whether material possesses serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value, the proper inquiry is not whether an ordinary member of any given community would find serious value in the allegedly obscene material, but whether a reasonable person would find such value in the material, taken as a whole.

This Memo constitutes the Library Director's written response and recommended decision regarding the submitted Request for Reconsideration.

Title: Two Boys Kissing

Call Number: Levithan

Categorized in collection (i.e., Children, Youth, Adult): Teen Book - Teen Fiction

Patron confirmed they read Material: No, "I skimmed the entire book"

Patron request for Material: Move to the Adult section

Reason given by patron for removal or reassignment as it relates to Section B of

Collection Development policy:

Patron marked they did read the Collection Development Policy but did not cite any specific part of the Material that violates the Policy.

In response to how the book meets the definition of *Material Harmful to Minors* the Patron wrote: *"This book contains sexual excitement and describes sexual conduct and sexual acts which in violation of ID Code 18-1514(6)".*

In response to how the book appeals to the prurient interests of Minors the Patron wrote: *"The book has material in violation of ID Code 18-1514(6)".*

As provided within the Definitions section on page 6 of the Policy Prurient Interest means, *"as defined by the U.S. Supreme Court, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion, and goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters, and does not include a normal, healthy interest in sex."*

Does the reasoning take into consideration the literary work as a whole? No

Explain: Patron wrote *"Two Boys Kissing has material in violation of ID Code 18-1514(6)"*

Material Harmful to Minors is described in Idaho Code § 18-1514(6), material that contains nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sado-masochistic abuse that (1) appeals to the prurient interest of minors as judged by the average person, applying contemporary community standards; (2) depicts or describes nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sado-masochistic abuse that is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community with respect to what is suitable material for minors and includes, but is not limited to, patently offensive representations or descriptions of (i) intimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual, or simulated, or (ii) masturbation, excretory functions or lewd exhibition of the genitals or genital area; **and (3) when considered as a whole, and in context in which it is used, does not possess serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors. All three prongs of the definition must be met for material to be Material Harmful to Minors.** "Nudity," "sexual conduct," "sexual excitement," and "sado-masochistic abuse" as used herein are as defined in Idaho Code § 18-1514.

Research:

MLD Circulation

Statistics:

Year to Date

Circulation: **2**

Previous Year to

Date Circulation: **0**

Lifetime Circulation:

49

Awards:

- Lambda Literary Awards; Winner; Children/Young Adult 2014
- New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association Award; Winner; Young Adult 2014
- National Book Awards; Nominee; Young People's Lit. 2013
- Stonewall Book Award; Honor Book; Children Young Adult 2014
- Nutmeg Book Award; Nominee; High School 2016
- Nevada Young Readers' Award; Nominee; Young Adult 2016
- Capital Choices: Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens; Recommended; Fourteen and Up

Reviews

Received a starred review by Publishers Weekly and was recommended for ages 12+ on 6/3/13: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780307931900>

Reviewed by Kirkus and recommended for ages 14+ on 6/25/13:
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/david-levithan/two-boys-kissing-levithan/>

Reviewed by BookPage without an age recommendation on 8/22/13:
<https://www.bookpage.com/reviews/15419-david-levithan-breaking-record-past-present-future-childrens/>

Reviewed by School Library Journal on 9/1/13 and recommended for grade 7+. This review is accessible using the publication finder on <https://lili.org/dbs/publication-finder/>.

Reviewed by Booklist on 8/1/13 and recommended for grades 9-12. This review is accessible using the publication finder on <https://lili.org/dbs/publication-finder/>.

Does the reason given by the patron justify action requested based on “Collection Development and Maintenance, Section B” of Collection Development Policy? No

Explain: Based on staff and Library Director review of the Material and the selection criteria set forth in the Policy, the Material meets the following criteria outlined in Section B under “Development and Maintenance” within the Collection Development Policy:

Literary or stylistic quality;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Reputations, qualifications, and significance of author, producer, or publisher;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Accuracy, currency, timeliness, and validity;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attention of critics, reviewers, awards, and public;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;	<input type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Physical quality and effectiveness of format and appropriateness of format to subject;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Cost, as measured against competing materials on the same subject;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities;	<input type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Availability of discounts and efficiency in vendors used for purchasing;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Suitability for intended audience;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Availability of subscriptions and standing orders for popular materials, reference, and nonfiction items published or released annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

If the patron requests alternative placement of the Material, is there an option that is suitable without making the Material inaccessible to other patrons? No.

Explain: The patron requested the item be moved to the Adult section. The format of the Material is intended for the Teen collection and there is not another collection it would be suitable for in the library. As such, removing the Material would make it inaccessible to the patrons for which it is intended.

Findings:

- The Material meets a majority of the criteria outlined in “Collection Development and Maintenance, Section B” of the Collection Development Policy.
- The Material was well reviewed by industry experts.
- Circulation statistics for the Material show that the item is being used by the community.
- *Two Boys Kissing* is regarded as a significant contribution to the literary canon of LGBTQIA+ literature.

Conclusion:

After reviewing the Material as a whole, it is recommended that the Request for Reconsideration for *Two Boys Kissing* be denied and that the Material stay in its currently assigned collection and location.

The Material aligns with the District's Collection Development Policy. It has positive reviews and circulation statistics that demonstrate its relevance to the community. Additionally, the Material doesn't meet the legal definition of "material harmful to minors" as outlined in Section A. under Reconsideration of Materials within the Collection Development Policy, which references Idaho Code § 18-1514.

A determination to remove the Material based on a portion of the contents that an individual finds disagreeable would be counter to the District's Collection Development Policy and an affront to the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read statement as well as a violation of the First Amendment.

Section 2 of the form constitutes “written notice” to the District for a request to relocate the Material pursuant to the “Children’s School and Library Protection Act” (see Idaho Code § 18-1517B(3)(b)). This Memo treats the patron’s submitted Request as formal written notice under the Children’s School and Library Protection Act and the Material has been reviewed for compliance with the Act. As stated herein, review of the Material has led to the conclusion that the Material does not meet the definition of “harmful to minors” under Idaho Code § 18-1514(6).