



MEMO

Nick Grove

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TO: Jeffrey Kohler, Board Chair

FROM: Nick Grove, Library Director

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

DATE: 10/29/25

RE: Request for Reconsideration - *Gender Queer*; Library Director Response and Recommendation

Overview

On October 1, 2025, Meridian Library District ("District") staff received a Request for Reconsideration form regarding the book *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe (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

In 2014, Maia Kobabe, who uses e/em/eir pronouns, thought that a comic of reading statistics would be the last autobiographical comic e would ever write. At the time, it was the only thing e felt comfortable with strangers knowing about em. Then e created *Gender Queer*. Maia's intensely cathartic autobiography charts eir journey of self-identity, which includes the mortification and confusion of adolescent crushes, grappling with how to come out to family and society, bonding with friends over erotic gay fan fiction, and facing the trauma and fundamental violation of pap smears. Started as a way to explain to eir family what it means to be nonbinary and asexual, *Gender Queer* is more than a personal story: It is a useful and touching guide on gender identity—what it means and how to think about it—for advocates, friends, and humans everywhere. (<https://www.onipress.com/titles/gender-queer-a-memoir>)

Requestor

The requestor is a resident within the boundaries of the Meridian Library District and identified themselves on the form as a "citizen, retired educator, parent, and grandparent." The requestor did not indicate on the Request for Reconsideration form that they are either a minor or the parent/legal guardian of a minor who has obtained the material.

Request for Reconsideration Report

Staff Member: JP

Date: 10/21/2025

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: Gender Queer

Call Number: GRAPHIC 306.766 KOBABE

Categorized in collection (i.e., Children, Youth, Adult): Adult Graphic Novel - Non-fiction (Print)

Patron confirmed they read Material: Yes

Patron request for Material: Make available only with parent written permission – not available on open shelves.

Reason given by patron for removal or reassignment as it relates to Section B of Collection Development policy:

Patron marked they did not read the Collection Development Policy.

In response to how the Material meets the definition of *Material Harmful to Minors* the Requestor wrote: "*Visual oral sex with sex toy (dildo), same gender sex, masturbation. Available on the shelf to anyone – children of all ages.*"

In response to how the Material appeals to the prurient interests of Minors the Requestor wrote: *“Through peer pressure, student texting, salacious gossip, etc. And/or classroom discussion.”*

In response to how the Material is patently offensive to prevailing standards of the adult community with regard to what is suitable for Minors the Requestor wrote: *“Though a graphic novel (cartoon type drawings), this is easily soft porn. It exposes children of any age to visual images of masturbation, sex toys, teenage sex (nothing mentioned about prevention of pregnancy or transmission of sexual diseases).”*

In response to whether the Material, when considered as a whole and in the context in which it is used, possesses serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for Minors the Requestor wrote: *“Not for young minors. Definitely not middle school or younger.”*

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

Explain: The Material is an introspective coming-of-age memoir discussing gender and sexuality. The work is not prurient, though sexual content is present. Age-appropriate discussion of and information about adolescence, puberty, and sex are suitable topics for Minors, and this Material may be suitable for some Minors and therefore does not meet the definition of Material Harmful to Minors. Per the publisher, “Started as a way to explain to [Kobabe’s] family what it means to be nonbinary and asexual, Gender Queer is more than a personal story: It is a useful and touching guide on gender identity—what it means and how to think about it—for advocates, friends, and humans everywhere.”

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: **16**

Awards:

- Great Graphic Novels for Teens 2020
- Rainbow Book List 2020
- One of ten Alex Award winners in 2020

Previous Year to
Date Circulation: **10**

- 2020 Stonewall–Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award Honor Book

Lifetime Circulation:
47

Reviews

Reviewed by School Library Journal and recommended for grade 9 and up:
(<https://www.slj.com/review/gender-queer-a-memoir>).

Reviewed by Publisher's Weekly and recommended the book for older teens
(<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-5493-0400-2>).

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 majority of the following criteria outlined in Section B under “Development and Maintenance” within the Collection Development Policy (Material need not meet every selection criteria to be considered a valuable addition to the collection):

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 type="checkbox"/> Material meets criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Material does not meet criteria <input checked="" 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

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 not be kept on open shelves and only be accessed by Minors with written permission from a parent. Meridian Library District does not restrict access to any individual Material or Type of Material from any cardholder. Minors may only obtain library accounts with permission of a parent or legal guardian; this permission to obtain a library card indicates permission for the Minor cardholder to access all library Materials.

Findings:

- The Material comports with the criteria outlined in “Collection Development and Maintenance, Section B” of the Collection Development Policy.

- The Material is shelved with the Adult Graphic Novel collection.
- The Material was well reviewed by industry experts.
- Circulation statistics for the Material show that the item is being used by the community.
- The Material is an award-winning memoir recommended for teen and adult audiences.

Conclusion:

After reviewing the Material as a whole, it is recommended that the Request for Reconsideration for *Gender Queer* 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).