

Responding to Challenges

There have been several instances of resources being challenged at the school board level. What can you do when resources are challenged in your school division?

- The most important part of responding to a challenge is to ***read or view the entire work*** so that you have the entire context and your comments are informed.
- You can speak up for school library collection diversity and intellectual freedom by writing a letter to your local school board, or by asking to present at a school board meeting.
- If you choose to present at a school board meeting, make sure you register ahead of time, understand the format of the school board meeting and any requirements for your presentation, including time limitations. *Be respectful of the procedures and expected personal conduct.*
- Consult your school division's policies on Selection of Learning Resources and Reconsideration of Resources. These should be published on your division's website. Ask that your school division's policies be followed and not circumvented. Some school divisions have procedures that are not published under official policies. Ask your administrators or school trustees for more information.
- You can speak up for collection diversity, citing the school division's diversity policies, the province's [Safe and Caring Schools Legislation and Policy Guidelines](#) which includes guidelines on [Respect for Human Diversity](#), the [Human Rights Code of Manitoba](#), the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child](#) as a basis for the inclusion of diverse learning materials in schools.
- Articulate why this issue is important to you. If you have a personal story or connection that you are comfortable sharing and that helps emphasise your call for collection diversity or intellectual freedom, share it.
- Be prepared to write more than one letter and attend more than one school board meeting. Consider writing to your MLA and to the Minister of Education as well.
- Please feel free to use and edit the letter below when expressing your concerns about maintaining collection diversity, whether you are a concerned parent, student, educator, professional library staff or community member.

Sample Letter to Speak Up for Collection Diversity

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, Province, Postal Code]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]
[Date]

[Recipient's Name]
[Recipient's Position]
[School or School Board Name]
[Address]
[City, Province, Postal Code]

Subject: Opposition to Book Banning and Support for Diverse Materials

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding recent discussions surrounding the potential banning of certain books within our school community. As an advocate for intellectual freedom and inclusive education, I firmly believe that book banning undermines the principles of respect, diversity, and the fundamental rights of individuals.

Our province's *Safe and Caring Schools* Legislation and Policy Guidelines, which include guidelines on Respect for Human Diversity, clearly emphasise the importance of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity. By banning books that represent different perspectives, cultures, and experiences, deny students the opportunity to develop a well-rounded understanding of the world around them. This directly contradicts the spirit of our legislation and the principles of respect for human diversity.

Furthermore, it is crucial to note that book banning infringes upon the rights and freedoms protected by the Human Rights Code of Manitoba, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. These important documents emphasise the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and the right to receive education in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner. By banning books, we not only limit students' access to information but also stifle their ability to exercise their rights to explore diverse ideas and develop critical thinking skills.

I strongly urge you to reject any plans to ban books within our school community. Instead, let us embrace the opportunity to engage in dialogue, educate, and promote critical thinking. By providing students with access to diverse materials, we empower them to become well-informed and active participants in our democratic society.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter. I look forward to your response and to working together to uphold the principles of inclusivity and intellectual freedom.

Yours sincerely,
[Your Name]