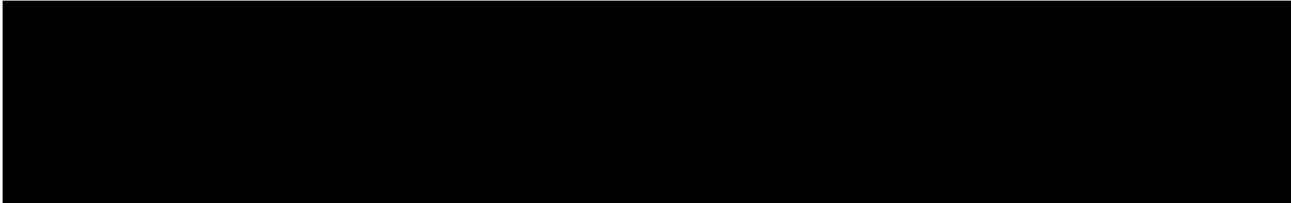


APPLICATION FOR APPEAL OF EVALUATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES TO THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

The Library Services Director ("Director") will schedule the Patron's Appeal hearing. The Patron will present their appeal to the Board of Library Trustees ("Board") and Library Staff will present its position to the Board. Members of the public will also be provided with an opportunity to comment at the hearing. Thereafter, and in keeping with the Library's *Collection Development Policy* (NBPL 2), the Board will provide final resolution of the matter.

Print Name Haley Jenkins



Resource on which you are appealing:

- Book
- Magazine
- Newspaper
- Audiovisual Resource
- Content of Library Program
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

1. Title Flamer
2. Author/Producer Mike Curato
3. Date of Director's Decision May 28, 2024
4. Briefly explain why you disagree with the Director's Decision (*attach additional pages, if necessary*):

Flamer is currently located in the teen section. The character in the book is 14 years old, so in 8th grade (middle school), which is the target audience for this book. I believe this book is AGE-INAPPROPRIATE, and needs to be moved to the adult section. I'm actually sickened that tax dollars have been spent on this, and that it's been here for this long, being shown to kids under 18.


To begin, this book contains extremely disgusting language. Just one of the many examples, "Motherfucker! You fucking faggot. You're the faggot! You're the fudge-packing fairy cocksucking queer pansy faggot!" (p. 206-207).

This book also contains several pornographic words AND pictures. A few examples, (p. 135) Picture of a boy laying in bed masturbating, (p.131) "We're busting a load into this bottle. If you don't cum, you have to DRINK IT! Hahahahah!" (The picture has a bottle and a boy pulling his pants down in front of another boy), (p.132) boy watching porn "those dicks are so big!", (p.133) boy naked sitting in front of a tv watching porn talking about other people jerking off, (p.80) Naked boy in the shower, another boy kneeling right in front of him watching, and a scene

*(cont. on p. 2)*

Please fill out this appeal application in its entirety and return it to **Central Library Administration Office, Attention: Library Services Director** (1000 Avocado Avenue, Newport Beach) or by email to [libraryadmin@newportbeachca.gov](mailto:libraryadmin@newportbeachca.gov). You may also drop it off at one of the branches so it can be forwarded to the Central Library. Thank you for taking the time to complete this application.

Newport Beach Public Library  
Newport Beach, California

Patron Signature 

Date June 8, 2024



FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY	
RECEIVED: <b>JUN 10 2024</b>	APPEAL DATE: <b>JUL 15 2024</b>

P.2

with a boy thinking "I wonder if priests jerk off."

Another concerning fact is that while the story is supposedly about bullying, there is a picture (p.306) of Aiden, the character, holding a knife to try and slit his wrist. The tag-line of the book is "this book saves lives!" but many conversations and pictures within actually give kids opposite ideas. Teens, especially, have increasingly high rates of depression and suicide. Giving them *visuals* of a 14 year old attempting to slit his wrist is very dangerous.

Overall, this book is very concerning and needs to be moved. The same exhausting talking points were given to me by Ms. Hartson regarding "seeking breadth and depth" and telling me all of the awards the book has received from Kirkus, School Library Journal, etc. I don't care if every major company gives this book 5 stars. I don't care how many libraries carry it. The book is (clearly) disgusting and should not be given to kids (people under 18). Newport Beach CAN and SHOULD do better by what they provide to children and teens. Perhaps it can be replaced by a cleaner, uplifting story. Ms. Hartson curiously states the book has "literary, artistic, and intellectual merit." I didn't know books for kids drinking cum, jerking off to porn, and slitting wrists were evidence of this. She states "materials are selected based on their content as a whole, not on selected excerpts," except the entire book is filled with this kind of stuff. Some argue that this book is about experiencing bullying, but certainly there are OTHER books that don't have this same language and pornographic pictures that can teach kids about bullying. Please work to provide better materials for kids, and move this book to the adult section. Thank you.





## ATTACHMENT B

**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH**

1000 Avocado Avenue  
Newport Beach, California 92660  
949-717-3801 | 949-717-3805 FAX  
newportbeachca.gov

May 28, 2024

Ms. Haley Jenkins  
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Jenkins,

Thank you for taking the time to express your concern for the book “Flamer” written and illustrated by Mike Curato. We received your completed Request for Evaluation of Library Resources form and have evaluated the material based on the Newport Beach Public Library’s *Collection Development Policy* (NBPL 2).

Collection development is based on specific criteria for selection and the title meets many of these criteria including community interest and demand; recommendations of reviews from professional journals and publications of national repute; reputation and qualification of author and publisher; literary, artistic, and intellectual merit; suitability of format; and suitability of subject and style to intended audience.

NBPL 2 states that “[m]aterials are selected based on their content as a whole, not on selected excerpts.” “Flamer” is a coming-of-age story of 14-year-old Aiden Navarro as he navigates friendships, deals with bullies, and seeks acceptance.

The book received favorable reviews from School Library Journal, The Horn Book, Publisher’s Weekly, The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books, and starred reviews from Booklist and Kirkus Reviews indicating it is of particularly high value. These professional review sources profile the book as suitable for youth within ranges of 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade or ages 12 and older, while the Library’s purchasing vendor recommends the title for ages 14 – 19. These criteria fit within the teen’s collection parameters. This title is categorized as a teen graphic novel and is published by Henry Holt and Co. Books for Young Readers. The book received several accolades, including the 2021 Young Adult Lambda Literary Award, a School Library Journal 2020 Best Graphic Novel selection, and a Young Adult Library Services Association 2021 Great Graphic Novels for Teens selection. The Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators granted it a 2021 Golden Kite Award Honor – Illustrated Book for Older Readers. Twenty-five other public libraries in Orange County include this book in their teen book collections. The book’s reputable reviews; esteemed awards; and peer library holdings serve as evidence to the literary, artistic, and intellectual merit of the item as well as the suitability of format for the teen graphic novel collection, which is intended for youth in 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Furthermore, Accelerated Reader, a student reading achievement and assessment takes into account qualitative factors that include levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality, clarity, and knowledge demands. These elements determine an Interest Level. The Interest Level relates to content and age appropriateness and is based on students’ abilities to comprehend the purpose and context of the text as a whole. The Interest Level for “Flamer” is rated for Upper Grades, or for students in 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The Interest Level further reflects the suitability of subject and style to the intended audience for the teen graphic novel collection.

It is the intent of the *Collection Development Policy* that we seek to provide “breadth and depth” within our collections as well as various points of view. In addition, “use of library materials is an individual and private matter. Parents and caregivers have the primary responsibility to guide and direct the use of library materials by the minor children under their care and supervision.” Patrons are free to either select or reject materials for themselves and not restrict the freedom of others to read or inquire. The title in question checks out often showing community interest and demand. This also reflects that tastes are individualized and subjective. As stated in NBPL 2, “It is the intent of the Board of Library Trustees (“Board”) that the Newport Beach Public Library provides a contemporary, relevant collection of resources in order to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of the entire community.”

Ms. Haley Jenkins  
May 28, 2024  
Page 2

After careful consideration of the book, Library Policy, and professional evaluation, "Flamer" written and illustrated by Mike Curato will remain in the teen graphic novel book collection of the Newport Beach Public Library. Per the *Collection Development Policy*, "[i]f a patron disagrees with [this decision], the patron may appeal to the Board for final resolution" in accordance with the application for appeal and procedures attachment within the policy.

Again, we do appreciate your use of the Library and that you took the time to contact us with your concerns.

Sincerely,



Melissa Hartson  
Library Services Director

Attachments:

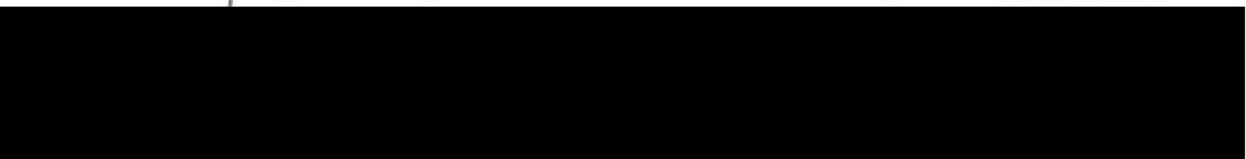
- *Collection Development Policy* (NBPL 2)
- Attachment II – Application for Appeal of Evaluation of Library Resources to the Board of Library Trustees

ATTACHMENT I

PATRON'S REQUEST FOR EVALUATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

We appreciate your interest in the materials which have been selected for inclusion in the collection of the Newport Beach Public Library. If you have a concern about a specific item, we would appreciate your assistance in addressing the matter. **Please fill out this form and return it to the Site Manager.** The staff will evaluate the material and forward a recommendation to the Library Services Director. This completed form and corresponding response from the Library Services Director will be included in the Board of Library Trustees agenda packet.

Name Haley Jenkins Date 1-24-24



Resources on which you were commenting:

- Book
- Magazine
- Newspaper
- Audiovisual Resource
- Content of Library Program
- Other

1. Title Flamer

2. Author/Producer Mike Curato

3. What brought this title to your attention?

Librarian was let go from local (NMUSD) school library for having this on shelves, and presenting to kids. It happened to be on shelves at NBPL as well.

4. Have you seen or heard reviews of this material?

Yes. Just because Kirkus reviews gave it a "starred review" (shocking) doesn't mean it is appropriate.

5. Please comment on the resource as a whole.

Depressing. Pornographic. Highly concerning that this is presented as reading material for anyone under 18.



6. Please note your **specific** concerns.

I know, I know, NBPL doesn't look at the content of books, but if there are pornographic pictures or words presented to kids under 18, you must consider obscenity laws, and move this to the adult section, just like similar titles in your collection, like Gender Queer.

• P. 306 - Boy holding knife, about to slit his wrist (Picture) →

• P. 80-81 Boy on his knees, naked in the shower, right in front  
7. What resource(s) would you suggest, to provide additional information on this topic? →

• Opening the book and reading/looking at the pictures.

• Look up rates of teen suicide/depression, then consider

8. What action are you requesting the Library to consider (remove, relocate, add, other)?  
if this book is a good choice to present to youth.

- Please move this to the adult graphic novel section.

- IS this really the type of literature NBPL is proud to carry for its local youth? Could it be replaced with anything of higher literary value??

Please use the back of this form if additional space is needed. Thank you for taking the additional time to complete this form. Your request for evaluation will be given careful consideration and a response provided.

Newport Beach Public Library  
Newport Beach, California

Corrected - October 10, 2006  
Revised - November 16, 2010  
Revised - August 20, 2018  
Revised - August 17, 2020  
Reviewed - August 15, 2022  
Revised - September 18, 2023  
Revised - October 16, 2023



Of another naked boy standing up. Next page says  
"Oh no! I'm getting a boner!?!?"

P. 135- Boy in bed lifting covers to look down at his  
Penis, saying "But I feel so... excited..." then  
a picture of him masturbating.

p. 131- Picture of a boy pulling his pants down,  
saying "We're each busting a load into this bottle.  
IF you don't cum, you have to DRINK IT!! Hahaha"

p. 207 Boys fighting "You're the faggot!!! You're the  
fudge-packing fairy cocksucking queer pansy  
faggot!!"