



To: Cromaine District Library Board

Re: Materials Request for Reconsideration *September Summary and Update*

Date: September 12, 2025

From: Sarah Neidert, Library Director

As you are aware, on March 31, 2025 I received Request for Reconsideration forms filled out by 12 individuals requesting removal of over 200 books from the Cromaine District Library collection.

Library staff worked to assess these materials over the past months. This process was interrupted and paused while the board re-evaluated and eventually updated policy #3010 Materials Selection and Reader Guidance (revised on June 18, 2025). After the changes and updates to that policy, I tasked staff with re-evaluation of each individual item, based on the changes to that policy, specifically the addition to section V. part D. noting that "Library materials may be labeled to notify patrons that materials may contain graphic violence or sexually explicit material as defined in Appendix B (in bold below)."

(f) "Sexually explicit matter" means sexually explicit visual material, sexually explicit verbal material, or sexually explicit performance.

(g) "Sexually explicit performance" means a motion picture, video game, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation that, in whole or in part, **depicts nudity, sexual excitement, erotic fondling, sexual intercourse, or sadomasochistic abuse.**

(h) "Sexually explicit verbal material" means a book, pamphlet, magazine, printed matter reproduced in any manner, or sound recording that contains an **explicit and detailed verbal description or narrative account of sexual excitement, erotic fondling, sexual intercourse, or sadomasochistic abuse.**

(i) "Sexually explicit visual material" means **a picture, photograph, drawing, sculpture, motion picture film, video game, or similar visual representation that depicts nudity, sexual excitement, erotic fondling, sexual intercourse, or sadomasochistic abuse,** or a book, magazine, or pamphlet that contains such a visual representation....

(Portion of Appendix B: MCL 722.673 Definitions. Sec. 3)

Process of evaluation:

Each title has been considered and a letter has been issued for each item, including the specific complaint, the circulation statistics of the item, and reviews or other notes about the item. Of the 218 individual materials challenged, 10 were moved to other collections (either to Teen from Juvenile, or to Adult from Teen), 8 were removed (weeded) as part of continuous review, and 13 were labeled with non-prejudicial, viewpoint neutral labels. In addition, 3 books were on order when challenged, but have been placed on backorder and cancelled by our bookseller, and eventually cancelled at the end of the fiscal year, while 4 additional books were missing.

Per Policy #3010 Section IX. Challenges to Materials:

If a patron objects to material owned by the library, they may complete a Request for Reconsideration Form for submission to the Director. The patron submitting the request must be a resident of the Cromaïne District Library service area and hold a preexisting patron card. No material shall be removed from the library's collection until all steps in the following process have been completed.

As I noted in each letter, "I understand that a group of individuals helped you fill out these forms. We discussed at our second meeting that while each person filling out the forms selected that they represent themselves as an "individual" rather than "organization" because you are not a formal group, but a group of like-minded friends with similar concerns. You indicated that you may speak for the group and that I may communicate directly with you." Therefore, each letter is addressed to the same person, who met with me twice and has been in communication with me during the process. **I feel that this adjustment of the updated policy is only fair, as she indicated she'd be willing to submit them all in her name. Going forward I will follow the policy as written, requiring each individual to live in the service area and hold a patron card.**

Part E. The Library Director shall send the decision in writing to the complainant within seventy-five (75) days of the receipt of each completed request for reconsideration form. The Director may request additional time from the Board to respond, in order to fully evaluate the material. **I sent the responses on Thursday, July 31, 2025 (43 days from June 18, 2025).**

If the decision is that the questioned material be removed from the collection, the Requestor will be notified in writing by the Library Director and all copies of the item will be withdrawn. If the material is to be retained, the Requestor will be notified in writing. If the Director determines the material may contain graphic violence or sexually explicit material (as defined in the Appendixes), the material may be: relocated within the collection, and/or labeled with "This book may contain graphic violence or sexually explicit material- Cromaïne District Library."

A written appeal of the Library Director's decision may be submitted by the Requester to the President of the Library Board within (10) business days of the written decision. The appeal must specify the library material being appealed and the reasons for requesting the reversal.

Process clarification:

As I noted in a memo to the board dated May 28, 2025 included in the board packet for the special meeting on June 3, 2025:

“After attending the May 15, 2025 meeting, the patron emailed and suggested that based on the discussion amongst the board at that meeting, she would be willing to exchange her forms to provide a new answer to #4 above: changing it from **"sexualization/exploitation of children"** to **"age-inappropriate content/material for minors."** I let her know that the process is currently paused, and I indicated that I would consider that request once the board settles on the policy language.”

At this point, there seems to have been confusion on her part and lack of clear communication on my part about how we would handle the challenge after the June meeting. I've communicated via email (enclosed) with her after reading the appeal letter to attempt to clarify where she would like to go from here. I have not received a response.

As requested by the board, I've compiled a large amount of paperwork for the board to assess in order to determine next steps. The board has had access to that material, and I will be including a link to all documents in the board packet for September 18, 2025 board meeting. I understand that this volume of material could be overwhelming, so I'm summarizing actions taken here, as well as including a list of titles sorted by location, with notes about actions taken by each title. I hope that is helpful in proceeding.

Details of actions taken by staff:**Relocated to Adult:**

Eight (8) titles that were originally located in the Teen collection were assessed to *possibly contain sexually explicit or graphically violent material*, therefore were moved to the adult section. I decided that our process will be NOT to label those books, as location in the adult section is meant to indicate potential adult content. One title which was located in the juvenile collection, along with one title which was in the Tween collection (both located in the youth room) were moved to the Teen collection, as review indicated they may circulate better in that location.

Remain in Teen-labeled:

If a title remained in the Teen Collection, it was re-assessed for “graphic violence or sexually explicit material.” If appropriate, labels were placed on the back of the item above the barcode, so that patrons would see the note before checking out the material.

Per the policy, those labels read:

“This book may contain graphic violence or sexually explicit material
– Croomaine District Library.” One book received such a label.

“This book may contain graphic violence– Croomaine District Library.” One book received such a label.

“This book may contain sexually explicit material – Croomaine District Library.” Five (5) books received such a label.

“Social Issues” Genre in Juvenile Fiction

If a title in the juvenile fiction section was assessed as fitting the “social issues” genre (*Fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel. Similar to realistic fiction, but with a direct focus on activism or dismantling the social problem*), a spine label was attached. As stated in the definition, this label was not applied to any of our non-fiction collections. Six (6) received social issue spine labels.

Parenting Collection:

If a title would fit in the “Big concerns for Little People” section of the parenting collection, then the corresponding-colored dot was affixed to the spine of that title. Each letter indicated the label that was affixed to those books. Some of these titles were already in this section, but the signage and labels are new- added to help parents find materials. This signage and labeling was added by staff after the May 15, 2025 board meeting, when Trustee Armstrong shared that she visited Howell Carnegie District Library and saw such color coded labels in the Parenting collection there. Vice President Gogoleski noted that she called and checked on that collection at Howell, and stated that there had been “no pushback and no lawsuits.”

There has been some confusion in the community about these colored dots- to clarify- there is not a colored dot on ALL books in the Library which contain LGBTQ+ themes or content. This special collection exists as a part of the parenting collection to help parents find materials to explain various topics to small children. For example, there are not blue dots on ALL books in the library about adoption or foster care- but there are blue dots in this special collection to help parents find materials on adoption and foster care that explain the topic to small children.

Removed (“weeded”) items:

Policy #3010, Section VIII: Maintenance of the Collection notes that “The collection shall be periodically examined for the purpose of eliminating obsolete, damaged, duplicate, or unneeded materials, and for binding or repair of materials, in order to maintain a balanced, attractive and useful Library Materials collection.” Croumaine uses Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding methods to weed materials, and 8 items were removed for those reasons.

Cromaine District Library Location Description (by Age)

Cromaine District Library has various material locations in the Youth Department to help parents and guardians find material based on their children's continuously expanding ability to understand words, concepts, and plotlines.

The table below is a breakdown of what age range may be expected to use each collection, although any patron may check out any book. Please note that because books are purchased prior to their publication, heavy reliance is placed on the suggested age ranges provided by the publishers and noted in professional reviews.

Location Name	General Suggested Age Range
Adult Collection	Adults, people aged 18+
Parenting Collection	Adults and parents or guardians of children 18 and under. This section includes a section of books for co-reading with children about tough topics (i.e.: death, divorce) called “Big Concerns for Little People” that has a color-coded dot system to help parents locate topics.
Teen Books (Fiction and Non-Fiction)	Ages 12/13 - 18 (grades 7 – 12)
Teen Graphic Novels and Teen Manga	Ages 12/13 - 18 (grades 7 – 12)
Tween Books (only Fiction)	Ages 10-12 (grades 5 – 6)
Juvenile Non-Fiction	Ages 2 - 12 (this is our broadest age range, and is broken into subjects by the Dewey Decimal System so that readers may choose to look at only their preferred subject section(s). (i.e.: Tractors, Animals, Biographies, Poetry)
Juvenile Graphic Novels (Fiction and Non-Fiction)	Ages 6 – 12
Juvenile Fiction	Ages 6 – 10 (grades 1 – 4)
Juvenile Easy Reader	Ages 4 – 6 (grades Kindergarten – 2)
Juvenile Picture Books	Ages 0 – 5
Board Books	Ages 0 – 3