



# Ethical Scenario #6

MARYALICE TANEYHILL

# Overview



**NON-TENURED SCHOOL  
MEDIA SPECIALIST**



**CONSERVATIVE SCHOOL  
BOARD**



**MONEY FOR NEW BOOKS**



**MORAL AND ETHICAL  
STRUGGLE OVER  
SELECTION AND APPROVAL**

# Overview

In addition to mentioning that the school board for the district is conservative, the ethical scenario also states that I have many "favorite books" that I would like to purchase for the library. This also demonstrates the need to develop and follow a selection criteria policy. For example, the ALA provides a sample:

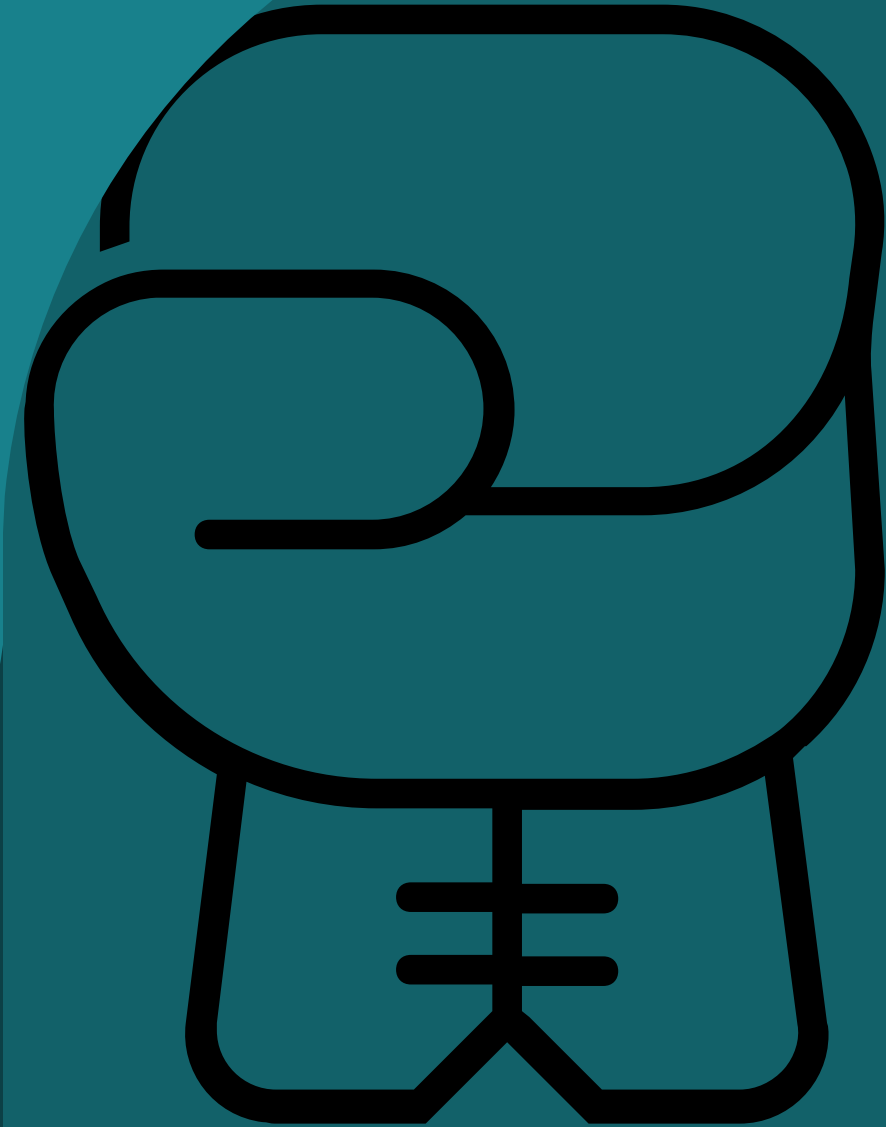
## Example: School Library Selection Criteria

### General Criteria:

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and learning
- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
- Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected
- Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
- Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues
- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures
- Include a variety of resources in physical and virtual formats including print and non-print such as electronic and multimedia (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies)
- Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use
- Balance cost with need

The implementation of a selection policy ensures that I am not swayed in any direction, neither by the board nor my own opinions.

# Core Values & Censorship



# Intellectual Freedom

- In Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The United Nations states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.



- Form own thoughts and opinions through inquiry
- Develop respect, empathy, and understanding
- Enhance intellectual climate
- Promotes discovery and innovation
- Produce a more accepting and knowledgeable society

# Social Justice

- Article 9 of the *ALA Code of Ethics* promises “We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.”

- The well-being and amplification of everyone in the community
- Develop socially responsible students
- Confront biases and misinformation
- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion



# Censorship

- Cambridge dictionary defines censorship as, “a system in which an authority limits the ideas that people are allowed to express and prevents books, movies, works of art, documents, or other kinds of communication from being seen or made available to the public, because they include or support certain ideas” (Cambridge University Press and Assessment, 2024).
- Infringes on 1st Amendment right
- Interests of the few control the rights of the many
- Narrows worldview
- Limits introspection



[This Photo](#) by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#).

# Self-Censorship or Passive Censorship

In an anonymous study of 720 school libraries conducted by *School Library Journal*, "Twenty-seven percent of respondents said a formal challenge influenced their book-buying decisions going forward". But there is also an effect on those who haven't experienced a challenge yet. 'The district book challenge policy protects most of my choices of book purchase; however, sometimes I self-select because of fear for potential challenge,' wrote one respondent.

Asked "How often do you find yourself weighing the effect of controversial subject matter when making book purchase decisions?," 97 percent said they weigh the impact of controversial subject matter. Nearly a third of those librarians "often" or "always" consider the topics, and half said they "sometimes" do. Data showed this is more common for librarians in small-town or rural schools. A third of urban school librarians said controversial subject matter is "rarely" or "never" a consideration."

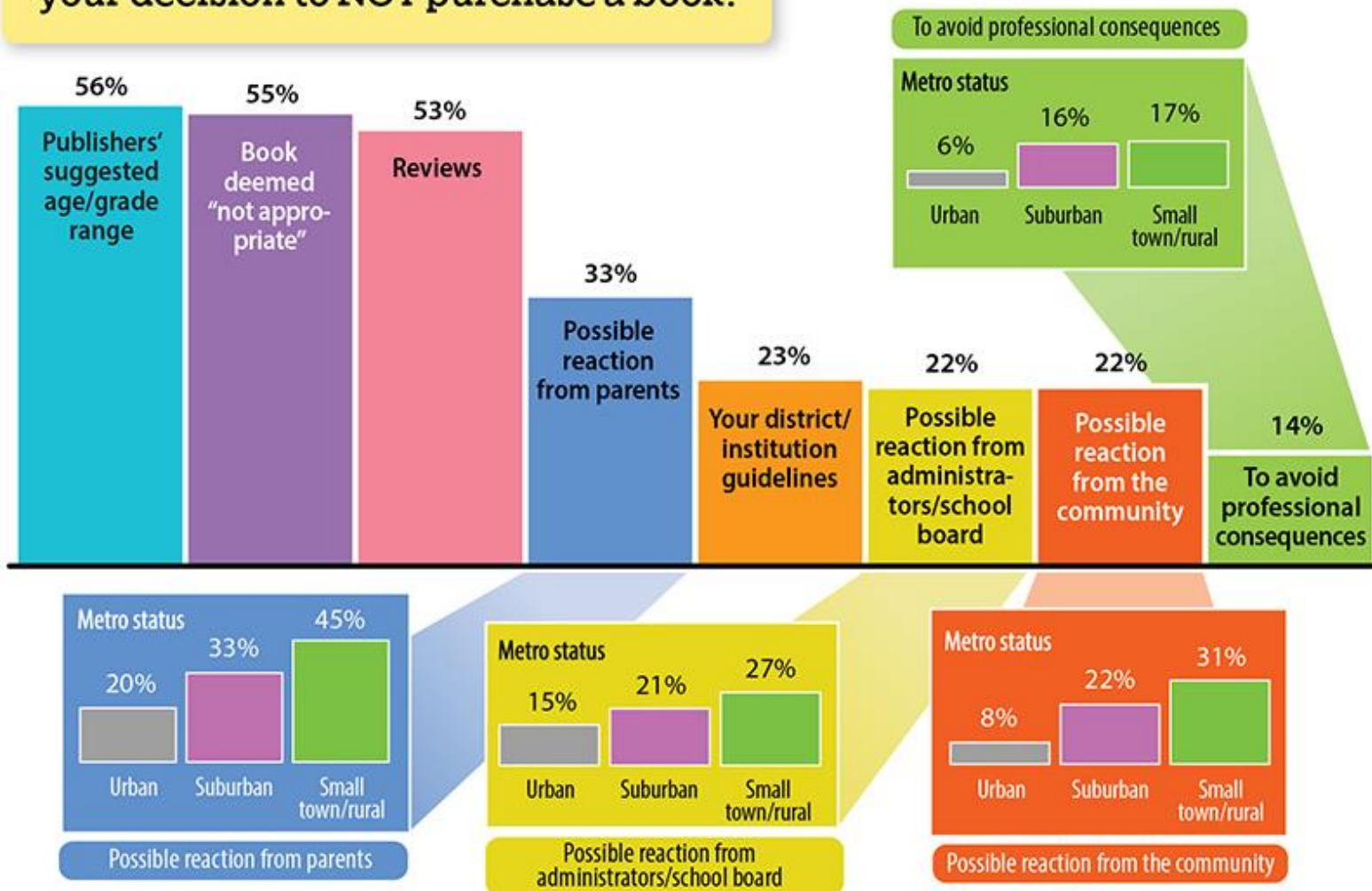
- Makes decisions born of pressure or fear rather than the best interest of the collection or community.
- Limits the inclusivity of the collection.
- Harms the intellectual freedom of the community.





# Self-Censorship: By-the-Numbers

Which of the following has influenced your decision to NOT purchase a book?

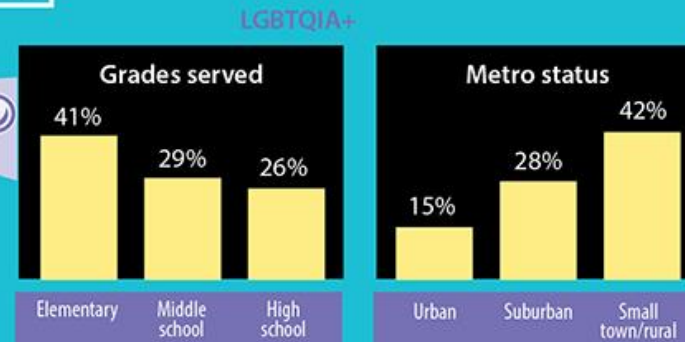
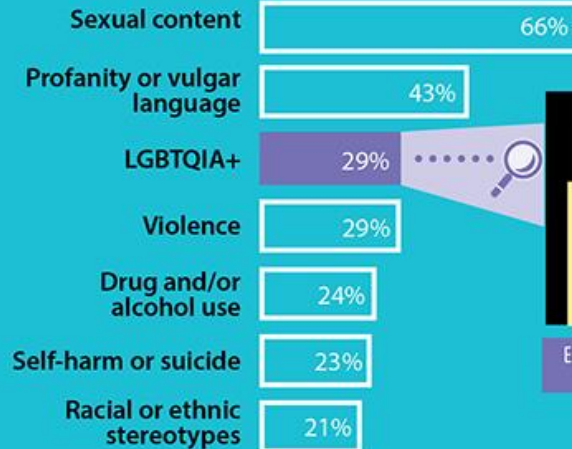


How often do you find yourself weighing the effect of controversial subject matter when making book purchase decisions?

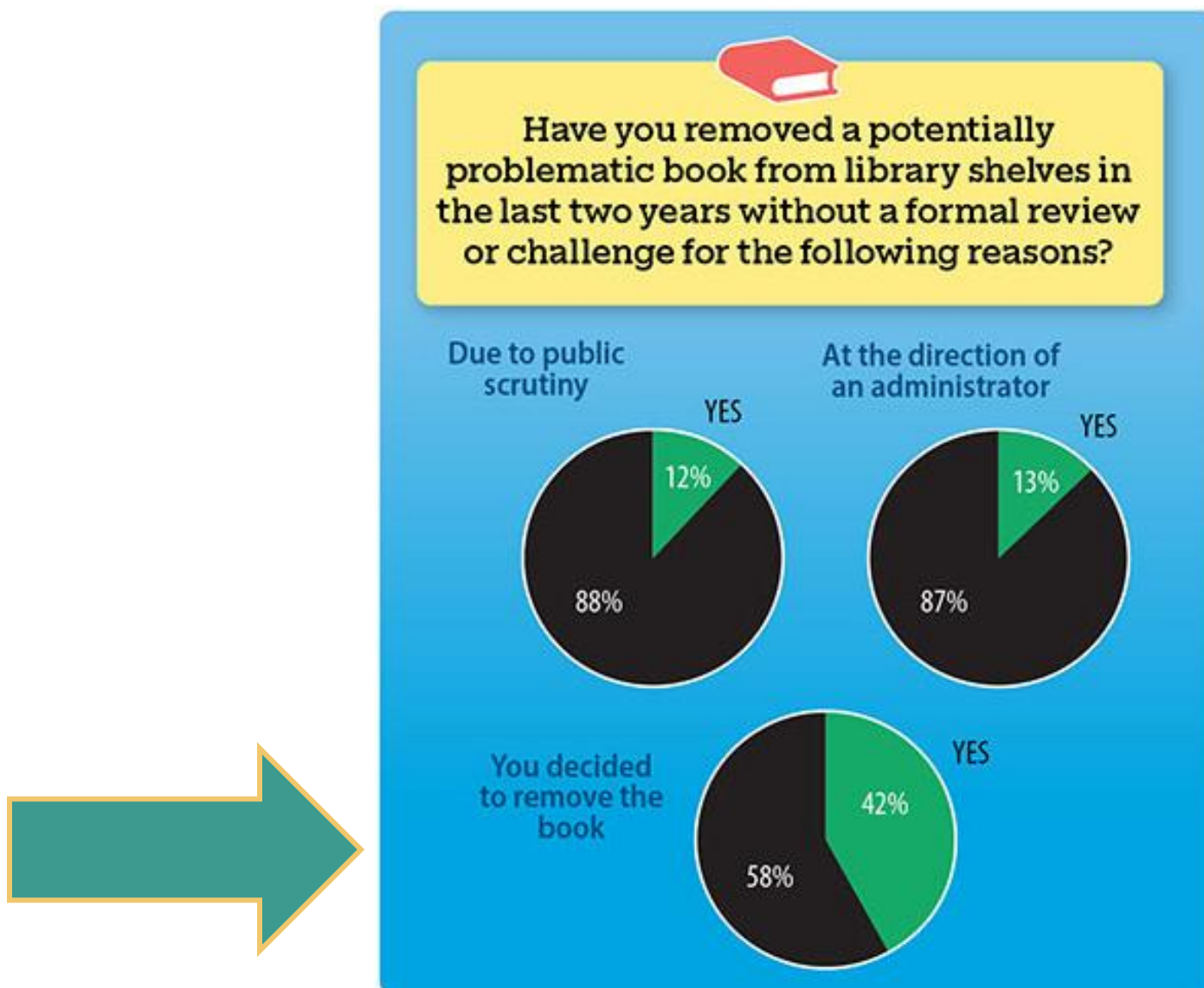


# Self-Censorship: By-the-Numbers

What subject matter has led you to pass on purchasing a book?



# Self-Censorship: By-the-Numbers





# Current Events

THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL  
TRENDS OF SIMILAR  
SITUATIONS.



**ALA reports highest number of  
challenged book titles ever  
documented in 2023.**



OFFICE FOR  
Intellectual Freedom  
American Library Association

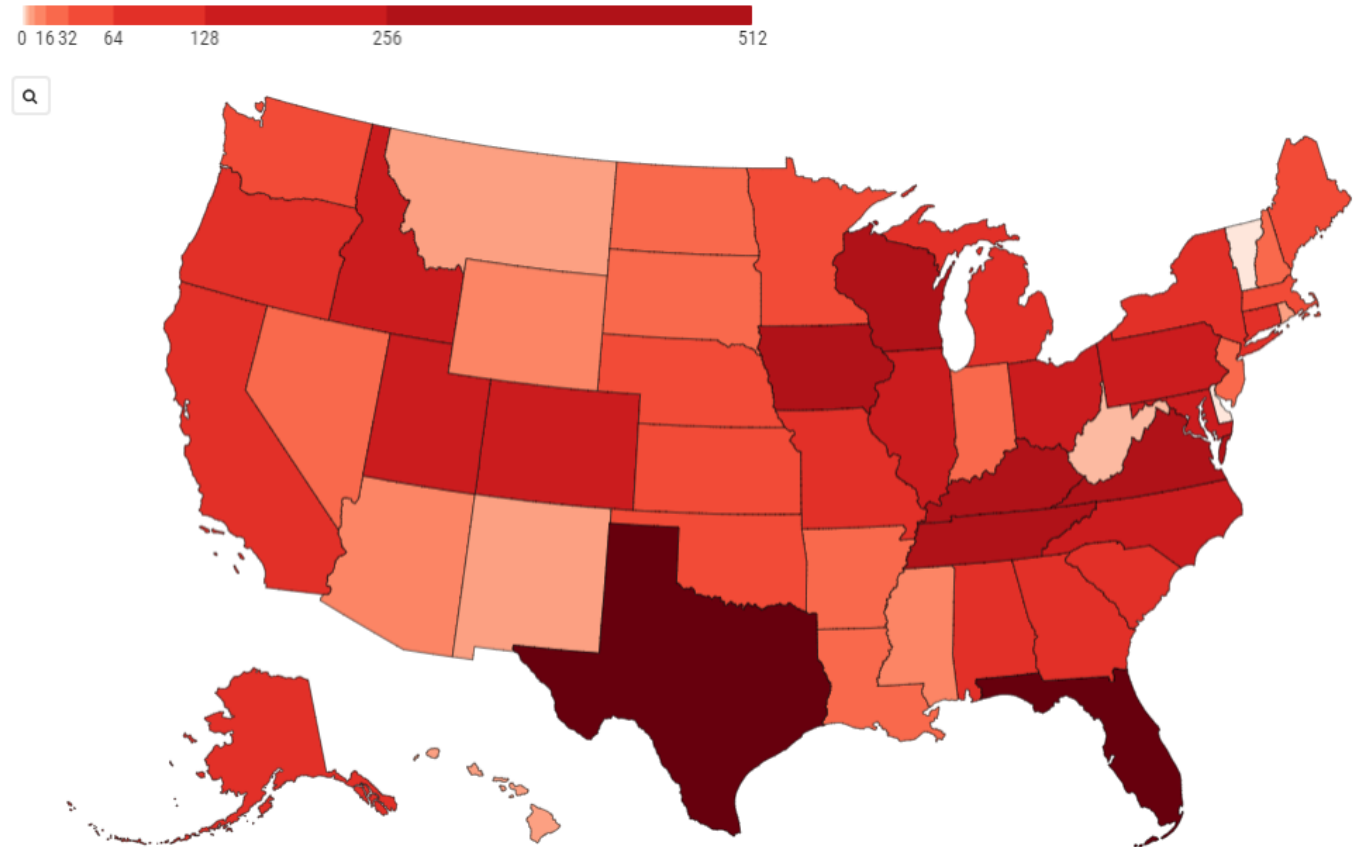
# Current Events

THOUGH MICHIGAN IS NOT OFTEN CITED AS A “HOT SPOT” IN THE MEDIA, ITS TOTAL IS TRENDING HIGHER THAN MANY STATES AROUND THE COUNTRY.

## Titles Challenged in Public Schools and Libraries During 2023

Attempts to censor books during this period: 938. Total titles challenged in those attempts: 9,021. Unique titles: 4,240.

A challenge may result in access being retained, restricted, or revoked at a school or public library.



Data compiled by: [American Library Association -- Office for Intellectual Freedom](#)

# Current Events

THOUGH THE DISTRICTS SIDED IN FAVOR OF THE BOOKS IN BOTH OF THESE INSTANCES, IT SHOWS HOW STRENUOUS THE PROCESS CAN BECOME.

## 8 challenged books will stay in Northview Public School libraries, school board rules

Updated: Mar. 07, 2024, 12:26 p.m. | Published: Mar. 06, 2024, 9:13 p.m.



The Northview Public School community member who challenged books from library shelves. Melissa Fri

Advertisement

## Judge dismisses lawsuit against Michigan school district over 'explicit' books in library

Updated: Oct. 26, 2023, 9:09 a.m. | Published: Oct. 25, 2023, 2:56 p.m.



"Gender Queer: A Memoir," written and illustrated by Maia Kobabe, is one of 14 books that were targeted for removal in a lawsuit against Rockford Public Schools. The lawsuit claimed the books were "sexually explicit" and contained descriptions of violence and sexual activity. (Cory Morse | MLive.com) Cory Morse | MLive.com

# Current Events

THESE NUMBERS FOCUS  
SOLELY ON BANS IN SCHOOLS  
RATHER THAN THE COMBINED  
TOTAL OF SCHOOL AND  
PUBLIC LIBRARIES FROM ALA.

**3,362**

**The instances of book bans that PEN America  
recorded in the 2022-2023 school year**

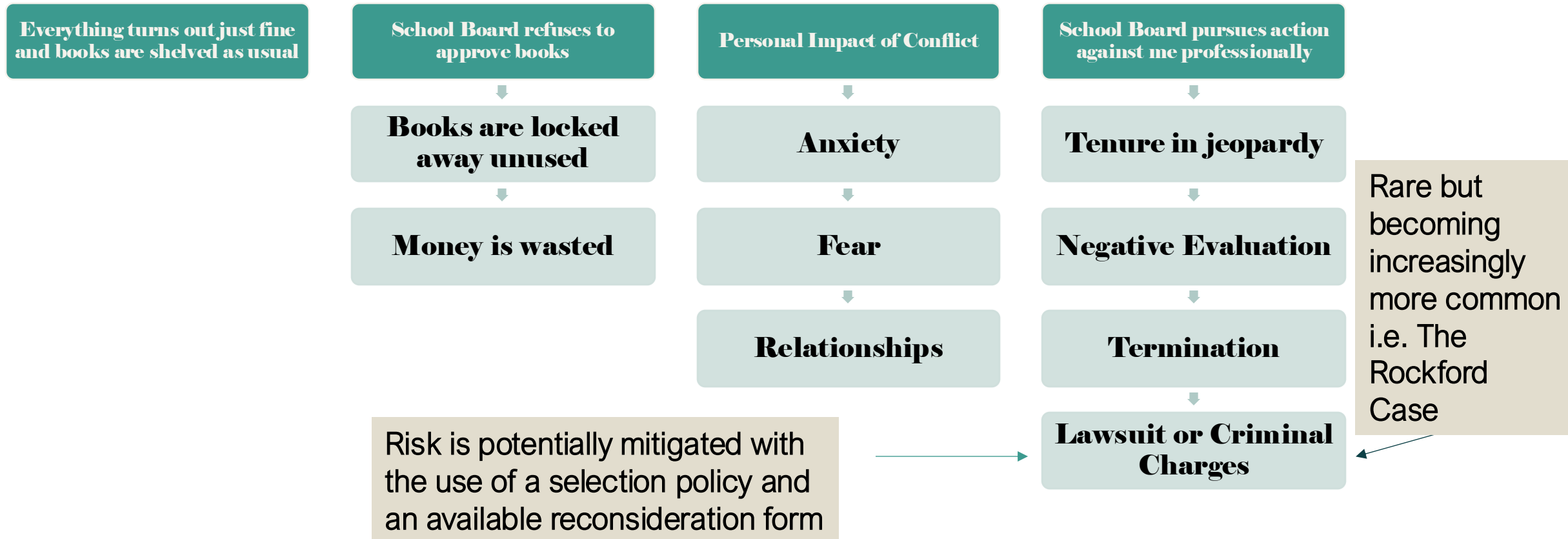


# Potential Outcomes

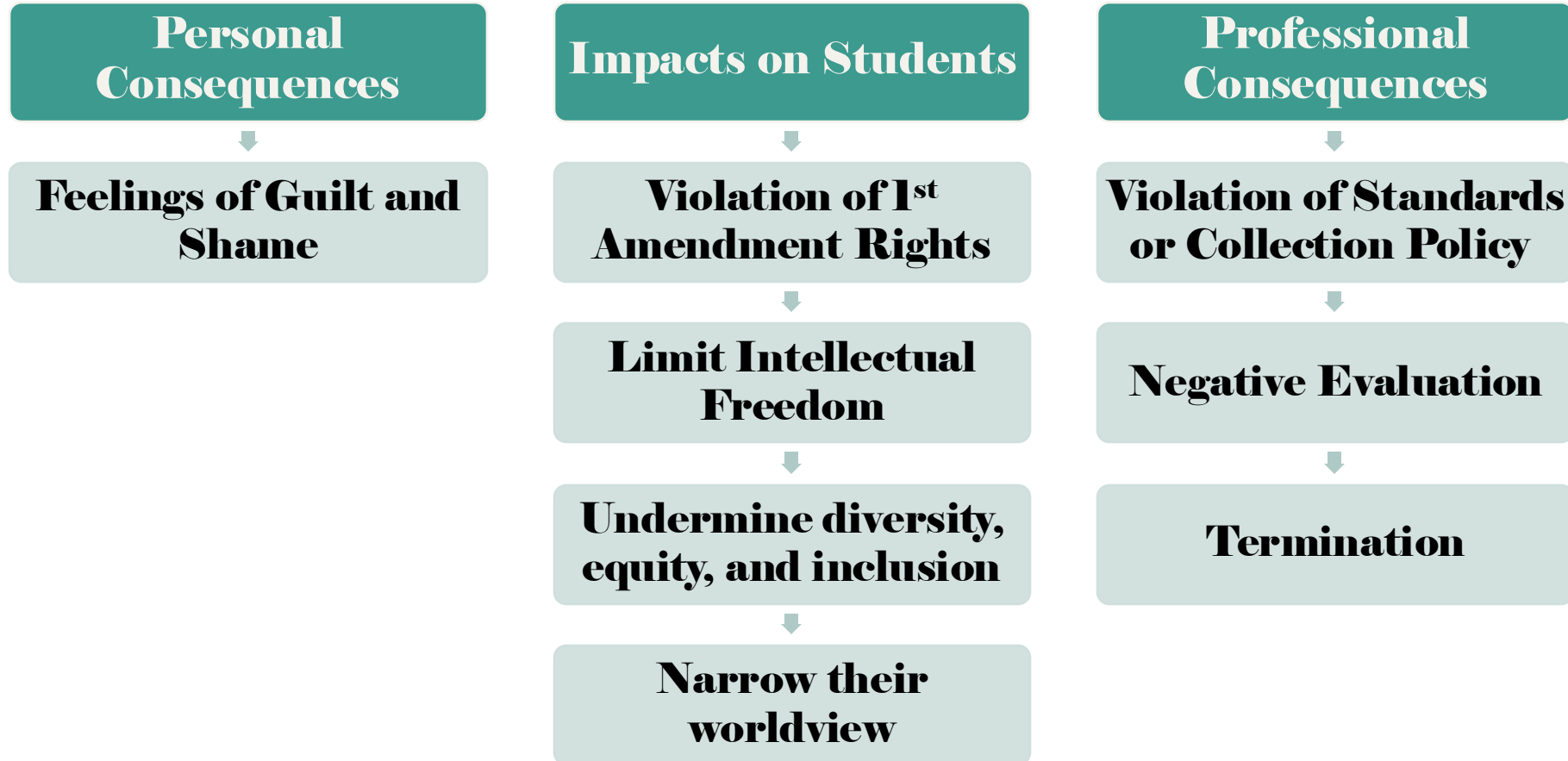
To order or not to order?



# Make the Order using a Selection Policy



# Self-Censor the Order



# What does the ALA Codes of Ethics have to say?



#2 We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

#7 We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

#9 We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

# Resolution

- I order the books. I choose informational freedom, social justice, and the wellbeing of the students over myself. I use a selection policy to keep my personal feelings out of the process.
- I attend the school board meeting prepared with the ALA Code of Ethics, the school's selection policy, the school's reconsideration policy, and a copy of MCL 722.676 which provides exception for school librarians from punishment for disseminating sexually explicit material.
- If the school board decides to ban the selected books, I contact the ALA and Michigan Library Association for support and next steps.
- If the school board tries to pursue action against me professionally, I contact my union representative.



# References

Michigan Legislature. (2006, February 1). *MCL - Section 722.676 - Michigan Legislature*. Michigan Legislature. Retrieved May 27, 2024, from <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-722-676>

United Nations. (1948, December 10). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations*. The United Nations. Retrieved May 27, 2024, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

\*These sources are in addition to the articles and sources already cited on the reference page for my outline. These sources were only referenced in the PowerPoint presentation and not the outline.