



How to File a Book Challenge Appeal in Florida

If the review committee votes to retain the inappropriate material after evaluating your objection, you may have the option to appeal the decision in your district under procedures available in many Florida counties. In many Florida school districts, parents and residents have the right to file an appeal and continue advocating for the removal of harmful materials from school libraries.

This resource explains how to initiate the appeal process (where permitted), helps you locate the appropriate district policies, and provides sample language to submit your appeal with confidence and clarity.

Filing an appeal ensures your concerns continue to be heard and allows decision-makers at higher levels—such as the superintendent or school board—to re-evaluate the material in consideration of applicable Florida statutes and district standards.

Step 1: Review Your District's Appeal Policy

Before submitting an appeal, verify your district's procedures. Appeal processes may vary from one district to another.

- Local your district's book objection and appeal policy on your school district website.
- If your district's policy is not listed, contact your school district directly. You may reach out to the school principal, media center, library services department, or the district superintendent's office to request instructions on how to file an appeal.

In many cases, submitting an appeal may involve sending a written request by email to the school principal, and copying the superintendent, school board members, and/or the district's library services director.

Step 2: Prepare and Submit Your Appeal

When submitting your appeal, it is important to:

- Reference the specific book title, school, and date of the review committee meeting.
- Consider citing the relevant state laws for argumentative support below¹:

¹**DISCLAIMER:** This resource is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The information contained herein should not be relied upon as a substitute for legal counsel.

- [Section 847.001\(19\), Florida Statutes – Definition of “Sexual Conduct”](#): This statute defines the term "sexual conduct" used in Florida obscenity laws. It includes descriptions of sexual intercourse, masturbation, and lewd exhibition of genitals—criteria that help identify what kind of material may be considered harmful to minors.
 - [Section 1006.28\(2\)\(b\), Florida Statutes – Oversight of School Library Materials](#): This provision requires school districts to ensure that materials available in classrooms and libraries are *not* pornographic, do not depict or describe sexual conduct (as defined above), and are age-appropriate and suitable for student comprehension. This establishes the expectation that school library content should reflect community standards and educational relevance.
- Keep your language respectful, factual, and focused on the content violations that warrant removal.
 - Use the following sample template as a guide:

Dear [Principal's Name],

I would like to formally appeal the decision to retain the book [\[Book Title\]](#) at [\[School Name\]](#) following the review committee meeting held on [\[Date\]](#). The review committee voted to retain this book, despite significant concerns about whether its content is appropriate for minors under [Florida Statute Section 1006.28](#).

Florida Statute Section 1006.28 establishes that materials made available to minors in school libraries should not contain sexual conduct, as defined in [Florida Statute Section 847.001\(19\)](#). That statute defines sexual conduct as:

“Actual or simulated sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, sexual bestiality, masturbation, or sadomasochistic abuse; actual or simulated lewd exhibition of the genitals; actual physical contact with a person’s clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or, if such person is a female, breast with the intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of either party; or any act or conduct which constitutes sexual battery or simulates that sexual battery is being or will be committed. A mother’s breastfeeding of her baby does not under any circumstance constitute ‘sexual conduct.’”

The review committee was comprised of [if known, list all who apply]:

- [\[Assistant Principal\]](#)
- [\[Media Specialist\]](#)
- [\[Teacher 1\]](#)
- [\[Teacher 2\]](#)
- [\[Teacher 3\]](#)

- [Teacher 4]
- [Student Member 1]
- [Student Member 2]

Based on the content reviewed, I am concerned that the material includes sexually explicit descriptions that may fall under the statutory definition and therefore may not be suitable for minors.

To further illustrate this, please see the excerpts below.

[Insert excerpt(s) from the *[Book Title]* showing the problematic content.]

I respectfully request that this appeal be reviewed carefully to ensure the material complies with applicable Florida statutes and district standards for school library materials.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Step 3: Monitor the Appeal Process

After submitting your appeal:

- Follow up with the district if you do not receive a timely response.
- Keep copies of all communications for your records.
- If the appeal is unsuccessful, additional options may be available depending on the district, including raising your concerns directly before the school board. You may also find it helpful to review our resource "[Tips for Attending School Board Meetings](#)," which offers practical tips for preparing your remarks, understanding meeting procedures, and making your voice heard. Public comment at board meetings can help raise awareness (though it does not replace the formal objection and appeal process).