

‘Gender Queer’ School Library Book Found to Contain Pornographic Images

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster has asked State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman to perform a systemic review of “inappropriate” materials in the state’s schools after a book containing explicit illustrations of sexual acts was discovered in a local high school library.

McMaster sent a letter asking Spearman to review Maia Kobabe’s “Gender Queer: A Memoir” which was found in the library at Fort Mill High School.

The governor says he was alerted to the issue by concerned parents and there was “either a lack of, or a breakdown in, any existing oversight processes or the absence of appropriate screening standards.”

“If school personnel had performed even a cursory review in this particular instance, it would have revealed that the book contains sexually explicit and pornographic depictions, which easily meet or exceed the statutory definition of obscenity,” McMaster wrote. “Thus, I am concerned that further examination may identify additional instances in which inappropriate materials have been introduced into our State’s public schools.”

The illustrated memoir—a previous winner of the American Library Association’s Alex Awards, which each year recognizes “ten books written for adults that have special appeal to young adults ages 12 through 18”—contains explicit illustrations of oral sex and masturbation, the Associated Press reported.

In his letter, McMaster, a former state and federal

prosecutor, also noted he had made state police aware of the book, which he referred to multiple times as “pornographic” and therefore “likely illegal under South Carolina law.”

“The book has been removed from circulation in two high school media centers and through our online catalog while the review process is completed,” Fort Mill Chief Communications Officer Joe Burke told Just the News. “While the letter references the Fort Mill School District, the Governor is requesting a statewide investigation and is not specifically targeting the district.”

According to Ryan Brown, spokesperson for South Carolina’s Department of Education, superintendents across the state began reviewing their libraries “for appropriateness” last week after being alerted about the book’s presence in one district.

Books in school libraries and media centers, he noted, “are not funded by and do not go through the state instructional materials process” and are “selected by local school and district officials.”

Last week, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott wrote to his state’s education leaders, saying a district in the state had removed “Gender Queer” following “complaints of the book’s pornographic drawings.” Similarly, he called on education officials “to immediately develop statewide standards to prevent the presence of pornography and other obscene content in Texas public schools, including in school libraries,” citing complaints about “the book’s pornographic drawings.”

The book has also become a focal point for parents in Virginia. {eoa}

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