

April 19, 2023

Dear:

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the Lapeer District Library regarding the book *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe. I have reviewed your request and am writing to share with you my decision and the reasoning behind it.

The Lapeer District Library added *Gender Queer* to our adult nonfiction collection in September 2022 after a patron request for purchase. The request was reviewed by our professional staff and the book was purchased based on criteria set forth in our Materials Selection Policy. Those criteria include; diversity of viewpoint, portrays issue sensitively, scarcity of information in subject area, contemporary significance, and popular demand. The book is a well-written, scientifically based narrative of one person's journey with gender identity that contains information and perspective that is not widely represented. The resources referenced in this book provide access to additional, reliable information.

Library staff also consider reviews, awards and author credentials when making purchases. *Gender Queer* is favorably reviewed in both professional and commercial sources with starred reviews being the norm. It has won both the Alex Award and The Stonewall Book Award. Prior to writing *Gender Queer*, Kobabe was already an established comic artist and graphic novel contributor. The book has literary value in its structure, voice and themes. *Gender Queer* is held in over 120 Michigan libraries of all sizes and locations.

Since being added to the LDL collection, *Gender Queer* has circulated 4 times with additional renewed check outs and has a current waiting list of 10 Lapeer District Library patrons. This is indicative of both community demand and interest.

It is important that all users of the Lapeer District Library see themselves in our collection. The Lapeer District Library will not withhold material solely on the basis that some in the community might find it confusing, objectionable, explicit, offensive, or inappropriate for minors. *Gender Queer* has not been declared to be obscene by any court or otherwise in violation of any law. Its inclusion in a public library collection is not illegal. It is entitled to First Amendment protection. Removal of this book would amount to an act of censorship and would expose the library to potential liability.

To be clear, the Lapeer District Library recognizes and supports the right of parents and guardians to promote their own beliefs and values within their respective households, as well as the responsibility for the reading, viewing and listening choices of their children. The Lapeer District Library requires a parent or guardian be present and provide permission for any minor (under 18) to apply for and receive a library card. As stated previously, this book is in the adult nonfiction collection and parents are responsible for monitoring their child's use of the library. The possibility that minors may encounter the book while in the building is also not a sufficient basis to remove it.

In conclusion, I have determined that *Gender Queer's* inclusion in the Lapeer District Library collection is supported and justified by our Materials Selection Policy and the First Amendment. I determine that it shall remain in the Lapeer District Library collection. I understand and respect that you may not agree with my decision. If you wish to appeal my decision to the Lapeer District Library Board of Trustees, you may do so in writing within 10 days of receipt of this letter. The Board of Trustees has 60 days to place your appeal on an agenda and you will be notified when that happens. You will also be notified of the board's decision in writing. The Lapeer District Library Board of Trustees' decision is final. Thank you for being part of the Lapeer District Library community.

Please direct your appeal to
Gary Phillips, Board Chair
201 Village West Dr.
Lapeer, MI 48446

Sincerely,

Amy Churchill
Director Lapeer District Library