



Texas Association of School Boards
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Serving Texas Schools Since 1949

November 3, 2021

Hon. Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
1100 San Jacinto Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Abbott:

This letter is in response to your November 1 correspondence to the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) expressing concerns about books and other content reportedly found in public school libraries. As an organization whose mission is to promote educational excellence for all Texas schoolchildren, please know that we take parent and community concerns very seriously. Our position at TASB has always been that parent and community member voices are vital to strong public schools.

As such, we felt it was critically important to respond to your letter to clarify the work we do here at TASB, clarify the primary responsibilities of school boards, and respectfully note that regulatory agencies like the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and State Board of Education (SBOE) are more appropriate venues for the type of monitoring that you ask for in your letter.

First, based on the requests outlined in your letter, we want to make clear that TASB has no regulatory authority over school districts and does not set the standards for instructional materials, including library books. Rather, we are a private, non-profit membership organization focused on supporting school governance and providing cost-effective services to school districts.

Second, as we work to support school boards across our great State, we always align our work to the Texas Framework for School Board Development as outlined on the [TEA website](#). This framework, which was developed through a collaborative process led by the SBOE, was approved unanimously by the SBOE on November 20, 2020. Nowhere in the Framework's bulleted list of 44 areas of focus for school boards is there a responsibility cited for the review of library books and/or other instructional materials.

That duty appears to apply to the SBOE, which sets policy and standards for Texas public schools that the TEA, in turn, implements and monitors. Specifically, the SBOE's [Committee on Instruction](#) has library standards listed as one of its nine areas of focus.

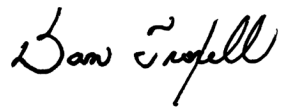
As such, we again respectfully ask that you direct requests to monitor the appropriateness of library books and other instructional materials to the TEA or SBOE. By design and authority, they are better suited to this work. We do hope that these regulatory agencies will continue to advance educational best practices in these efforts, continuing to allow professional librarians the ability to select and maintain books that meet the needs of their local communities.

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School districts and their elected boards across the State closely monitor changes to standards set forth by the Texas legislature and public-school regulatory agencies — always quickly adapting district processes and updating local policies to be in full compliance.

Should you have any other questions about TASB, we'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you more about our organization and its longstanding commitment to the schoolchildren of Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Troxell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Dan Troxell, Ph.D.
Executive Director