



Board Agenda Item 24

DATE: November 28, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Brandau, Supervisor, District 2

SUBJECT: Adopt an amended Resolution establishing a "Parents Matter" approach to reviewing age-appropriate children's books in Fresno County Libraries

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Adopt an amended Resolution establishing a "Parents Matter" approach to reviewing age-appropriate children's books in Fresno County Libraries; and**
- 2. Direct staff to return to the board within 90 days with bylaws for implementation of Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee.**

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may choose not to adopt the proposed resolution or choose to modify the resolution as written. Your board may also direct staff to return with a bylaws report by a different date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No direct fiscal impact from adoption of the resolution. However, implementation of the policies of the Resolution and Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee will result in increased use of staff and facility time.

DISCUSSION:

The Fresno County Library consists of 34 locations across Fresno County, each with a section dedicated to children's books and other reading materials. Starting earlier this year, complaints were received from parents and community groups that books containing sexually graphic and other age-inappropriate content were available in several children's sections and as a result easily accessible by young children.

Parents should be aware of and involved in the books their young children are reading, but especially so regarding content of a sexual, gender-identity, or otherwise mature nature. But as of now, these materials are available for check out without parental knowledge or consent.

The "'Parents Matter' approach to reviewing age-appropriate children's books in Fresno County Libraries" or the "Parents Matter Act" requires that the Fresno County Librarian establish procedures to identify and sequester age-inappropriate content currently available in the children's section of County libraries, including procedures that dictate how material deemed age-inappropriate would only be accessible and available to check out in the presence of a parent or guardian.

The Parents Matter Act creates the "Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee", a fifteen-person committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors representing members of the community who would be tasked with the review of current and incoming library books and materials intended for children, and determining if those materials contain age-inappropriate content as determined by this resolution and a

to-be-established community standards policy. Books and materials identified by the Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee shall be made only accessible and available for check out thereafter in the presence of a parent or guardian. This committee shall commence as soon as bylaws have been drafted by County staff and a minimum of eight members have been appointed.

Approval of this resolution directs the Fresno County Library to the procedures to comply with this Resolution, as well the bylaws of the Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee.

Implementation of the necessary Library policies and the bylaws of the Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee will require considerable resources of the County Librarian and staff. To ensure progress is being made, further direction to return within 90 days with an update to your Board is recommended.

On November 7, 2023 your board directed staff to amend the resolution to include the following additions for approval at your next meeting:

- Mandate a list of all books and materials moved from the children's section and posting said list for public access.
- Reduce the Community Parent and Guardian Review Committee from 15 members to 11, with two members chosen by each Supervisor and one chosen by the CAO.
- Creation of an appeals process for materials removed from the children's section.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Resolution (Amended)

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino