

Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia

School Library Book Removals in Virginia

2025



Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission

Chair

Delegate Mark D. Sickles

Vice-Chair

Senator Mamie E. Locke

Delegate Betsy B. Carr

Senator R. Creigh Deeds

Senator Adam P. Ebbin

Delegate Charniele L. Herring

Senator Ryan T. McDougle

Senator Jeremy S. McPike

Delegate Sam Rasoul

Delegate Marcus B. Simon

Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata

Delegate Luke E. Torian

Delegate R. Lee Ware

Delegate Tony O. Wilt

Staci Henshaw, Auditor of Public Accounts

JLARC director

Hal E. Greer

JLARC staff for this report

Justin C. Brown, Senior Associate Director

Jessica Sabbath, Managing editor

Information graphics: Nathan Skreslet

Commission Draft

This document is a commission draft of the JLARC report, *School Library Book Removals in Virginia*. Do not quote, publish, or release any of the material contained in this draft until it has been received by the Commission and posted on the JLARC website.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission
July 2025

School Library Book Removals in Virginia

Senate Joint Resolution 251 (2025) directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to survey school divisions about library book removals (Appendix A). JLARC worked with Virginia Commonwealth University's Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory to administer the survey. JLARC also interviewed the Virginia Association of School Librarians, Virginia Parent Teacher Association, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia School Boards Association, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

Local school boards have authority over school library book removal

Local school boards have the authority to select and remove school library books. The Virginia Constitution grants each local school board supervisory and operational authority over local schools, including over school libraries and the books they contain. The state does not have authority over division selection and removal of library books under current law, and it does not provide divisions written guidance about it.

State law and regulations do, though, have some requirements related to school libraries. For example, the Board of Education requires each school to maintain a library that includes materials that are sufficient to meet the research, inquiry, and reading requirements of instruction and general student interest. Schools are also required to have library staff with certain educational qualifications.

More broadly, state law requires divisions to set policies related to *instructional* materials, which applies to library books only when required for a class assignment or educational program (sidebar). The Standards of Quality require each school board to set policies related to the selection and evaluation of instructional materials, to set procedures for handling challenged instructional materials, and to ensure the policy considers the views of teachers, parents, and other concerned citizens. However, state law does not require school divisions to have a specific policy relating to selection and evaluation of library books or challenges to library books when they are not instructional materials.

Instructional materials and library books. VDOE guidance states that “library materials are considered instructional materials when used (i) for completion of an assignment or (ii) as part of an academic or extracurricular educational program.” Many instructional materials, including certain textbooks or virtual material, are not contained in school libraries. Conversely, many library books are not instructional materials.

Most divisions have school library book removal policies

Most divisions responding to the JLARC survey have some type of policy about removal or “challenges” of school library books. Eighty-one divisions (88 percent of divisions responding) reported having a formal policy (sidebar, next page).

In April and May 2025, JLARC surveyed school divisions about library book removals. Divisions were asked about their book removal policies and processes and the specific books removed since July 2020. Out of 131 divisions, 94 responded, a 72% response rate. These divisions educated about 1 million of the state's 1.2 million public K–12 students, or 84 percent.

Composition of non-responding and responding divisions was generally similar. However, divisions were less likely to respond if they had ≈1,000 to 3,500 students. Divisions were more likely to respond if they were in the Central Virginia and the Blue Ridge & Valley regions.

These policies vary widely in level of detail and specificity. For example, some simply stipulate that decisions about book challenges are made at the school level, and decisions can be appealed to the school superintendent or school board. Other division policies are much more detailed, with some divisions adding specific requirements such as timeframes for reviewing book challenges, limits on who can challenge a book, inclusion of school-level *and* division-level review committees, and guidance about whether a challenged book may remain on library shelves while it is being reviewed.

At least half of the responding divisions appear to base their policies on a model book challenge policy developed by the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA), though divisions have adapted and modified it to varying degrees. This model policy provides two options for school divisions to use. The most frequently used of the two

- requires that a complainant wishing to have a book removed fill out a specific form and submit it to the principal or central office;
- requires the principal to form a review committee that includes the principal, library media specialist, the classroom teacher (if involved), complainant, and parent and/or student; and
- allows the complainant to appeal the review committee's decision, first to the superintendent and then to the school board.

The vast majority of responding divisions' book removal policies have been updated in the last several years. However, three divisions reported having a policy that had not been updated in 15 years or more (2001, 2009, and 2010).

Most divisions have school library book removal committees

Regardless of their specific policies, about three-fourths of divisions responding to the survey have a group to review and make recommendations about whether to remove books from school libraries (typically formed in response to complaints as they are made). Sixty-seven divisions (73 percent) reported having a designated committee to review the content of school library books and make recommendations for removal. These committees consist of various combinations of school staff, division staff, parents, students (at the high school level), and sometimes the complainant. Some of these are school-level committees, while others are at the division level.

The study resolution directed JLARC to ask whether these committees include librarians and media specialists. Nearly all of the divisions with committees had either a librarian and media specialist (49 percent), librarian but not a media specialist (37 percent), or media specialist but not a librarian (12 percent) participate in the committee.

Majority of divisions maintain book removal records; few publicize meetings

About two-thirds of divisions reported keeping records about book removals. Sixty divisions (65 percent) reported they maintain information centrally about books that have been removed. However, 32 divisions (35 percent) reported they do not maintain

records. Six of these divisions that do not maintain central records reported having removed at least one book. (Five of these six divisions could not report how many book titles had been removed; one division that did not maintain central records reported information about two books that had been removed.) In addition, two divisions reported they did not know whether books had been removed.

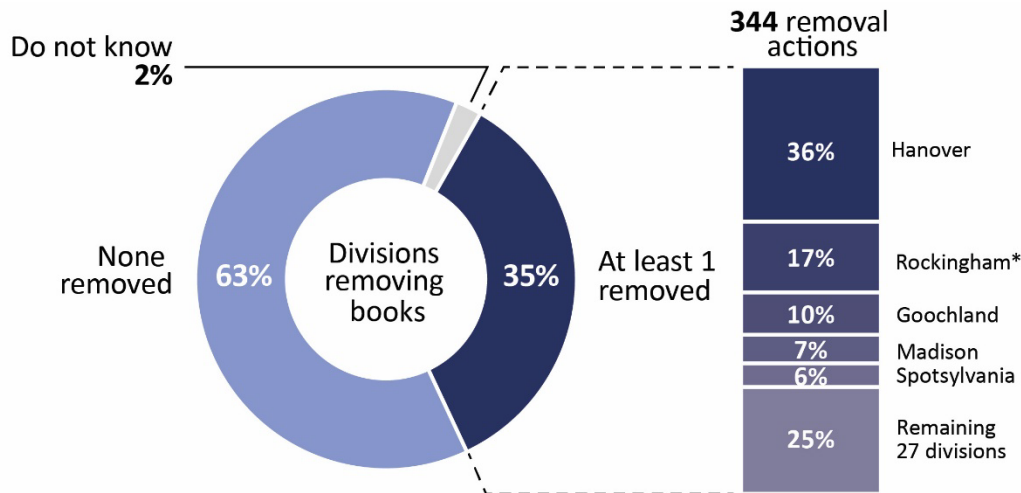
Relatively few divisions (11) reported publicizing meetings of their review committees.

Almost two-thirds of divisions report not removing any library books, but several removed a substantial number of books

Almost two-thirds of divisions responding to the survey reported they did not remove any books from school libraries between July 2020 and March 2025. Fifty-eight divisions (63 percent) did not report removing any books based on content during the time period (excluding books that were removed because they were in poor condition or infrequently checked out). As noted above, two divisions did not know whether they had removed any books.

However, 32 divisions (35 percent of divisions responding) reported removing at least one book (Appendix B). A substantial proportion of book removals were heavily concentrated in a small number of divisions (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Book removal activity has been concentrated in several divisions



Source: JLARC survey of school divisions about library book removals, spring 2025.

Note: Rockingham County Public Schools indicated removals were temporary pending formal policy approval.

Hanover County Public Schools reported removing the most book titles (125) of any division. Rockingham County Public Schools reported removing the second most (57), but noted these removals were potentially temporary pending the approval of an updated policy. Goochland County Public Schools reported removing the third most

books (34). The five divisions that removed the most books accounted for 75 percent of all removal activity.

Library books were removed from individual schools and entire divisions. About 60 percent of all book removals were division-wide, based on school divisions who responded to the survey question about whether book removals applied to a specific school or the entire division. The remaining removals were reported across individual high, middle, and elementary schools. Most, but not all, divisions have policies that contemplate challenges being made and resolved at the school level. Many of these still require schools to inform the division when books are removed from a school.

Book removals occurred in all but one region of the state and in divisions of all sizes

Divisions removed at least one book in all but one region of the state, according to the survey. At least five divisions removed at least one book in Northern Virginia, the Northern Neck, and the Blue Ridge & Valley. No divisions in Southside Virginia responding to the survey reported removing any books (Table 1).

A division's size did not appear to be related to whether it removed books. For example, both very small divisions (fewer than 1,000 students) and very large divisions (more than 25,000 students) removed books. The state's largest division, Fairfax County, did not remove any books during the time period.

TABLE 1
School library book removal by VDOE region

Region	# of divisions in region removing at least one book
1. Central Virginia	4/11
2. Tidewater & Eastern Shore	4/10
3. Northern Neck	5/11
4. Northern Virginia	8/14
5. Blue Ridge & Valley	5/17
6. Western Virginia	3/9
7. Southwest Virginia	3/11
8. Southside Virginia	0/7

Source: JLARC survey of school divisions about library book removals, spring 2025.

Note: Shown as number of divisions / total number of divisions from region responding to survey.

Divisions reported removing 223 unique book titles from school libraries

Collectively, divisions responding to the survey reported that 223 unique book titles had been removed between July 2020 and March 2025. Most of these book titles were removed from only one school division. Sixty-six book titles were removed by at least two divisions (Appendix C). *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe was removed by

the most divisions (seven) (Table 2). Accounting for the removal of the same title in multiple divisions, there were at least 344 removal actions during the time period.

TABLE 2

Book titles most commonly removed from school libraries in Virginia

Book title	Author	# of divisions removing
<i>Gender Queer: A Memoir</i>	Maia Kobabe	7
<i>Tilt</i>	Ellen Hopkins	6
<i>Identical</i>	Ellen Hopkins	5
<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	Stephen Chbosky	5
<i>Beyond Magenta</i>	Susan Kuklin	4
<i>Burned</i>	Ellen Hopkins	4
<i>Fallout</i>	Ellen Hopkins	4
<i>Lawn Boy</i>	Jonathan Evison	4
<i>Me and Earl and the Dying Girl</i>	Jesse Andrews	4
<i>Smoke</i>	Ellen Hopkins	4
<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>	Sherman Alexie	4
<i>The Bluest Eye</i>	Toni Morrison	4
<i>Tricks</i>	Ellen Hawkins	4

Source: JLARC survey of school divisions about library book removals, spring 2025.

Divisions and schools removed the most books during school year 2023–24—about one-third of the removal activity occurred during the time period. The second most active school year for removals was 2022–23, followed closely by 2024–25. There was very little removal activity in the 2020–21 school year.

No divisions without a book removal policy reported removing any school library books between July 2020 and March 2025. Conversely, about half of the divisions with a book removal policy did not remove any books.

Primary reasons for removal were sexually explicit content or local policy

Sexually explicit content or local policy were by far the two most prevalent reasons why divisions reported removing books. As directed in the study resolution, JLARC asked whether books were removed because of §22.1-16.8 of the Code of Virginia, which requires that schools notify parents when instructional material will contain sexually explicit content and allow them to review and request an alternative assignment. (More information on this law is available in the last section of this report.) JLARC's survey also asked whether each book was removed for a different reason. In part due to lack of central recordkeeping, not all divisions consistently reported specific reasons why individual books were removed. Divisions that cited the reason for removing books typically said they did so for one of two reasons: their own policies or state law (§22.1-16.8 on sexually explicit material). Specific reasons given for book removals included

The Code of Virginia defines sexually explicit content. §2.2-2827 stipulates that sexually explicit content means “(i) any description of or (ii) any picture, photograph, drawing, motion picture film, digital image or similar visual representation depicting sexual bestiality, a lewd exhibition of nudity, as nudity is defined in §18.2-390, sexual excitement, sexual conduct or sadomasochistic abuse, as also defined in §18.2-390, coprophilia, urophilia, or fetishism.”

- §22.1-16.8 of the Code of Virginia (instructional material; sexually explicit content) (sidebar)
- “Sexually explicit content”
- “Division regulation”
- “Local policy”
- “No longer supported by district policy”
- “Determination of developmental inappropriateness”
- “Anti-religious”
- “Recommended for removal by board member”
- “Vulgar language”

State provides minimal guidance about library book challenges; divisions had mixed opinions about benefits of more state guidance

The study resolution directs JLARC to identify state-level resources available to divisions about making decisions to remove library books. VDOE’s website includes a “Library & Media Services” page, which includes links to relevant laws and regulations regarding libraries, but none specifically address library book challenges. However, VDOE reports that staff are available upon request to help librarians if they need assistance. VDOE indicated that the most frequent questions they receive from school divisions about libraries are typically related to librarian qualifications rather than about guidance on school division book removals.

When asked, divisions who responded to the JLARC survey had mixed opinions about whether they needed the state to provide additional guidance or information about book removals. Relatively few (13 percent) divisions believed they could “greatly” benefit from additional guidance from the state on decisions about removing school library books. Most divisions reported they could benefit “somewhat” (43 percent) or “very little” (33 percent). The remaining divisions (11 percent) reported they would not benefit at all. (There was a slight tendency for smaller divisions to report more frequently that they could greatly benefit from additional guidance; eight of the 12 divisions that said they could greatly benefit from additional state guidance had fewer than 3,800 students—the median number of students for responding divisions).

Statute cited as reason for removing many books not applicable to school library book removal; yet divisions have discretion over books

As noted above, divisions that removed books frequently cited §22.1-16.8 of the Code on the JLARC survey as a reason why a book was removed. The 2022 law requires school divisions to develop a policy to ensure parents are notified when sexually explicit material will be taught and allows any parent to review the material and request

alternatives to such material for their child or children (sidebar). VDOE was directed to issue model policy guidance, which it did. The 2022 law applies to library books that meet VDOE's definition of instructional materials, such as those used for a classroom assignment.

However, the law does not indicate that any instructional materials or other books including sexually explicit content should be removed from school libraries. The law does not include the words "library" or "remove." Moreover, the final bill includes an enactment clause that clearly indicates it was not the General Assembly's intent for this law to apply to removing books from school libraries. The enactment clause states, "that the provisions of this act shall not be construed as requiring or providing for the censoring of books in public elementary and secondary schools."

Two factors may have contributed to the incorrect citing of the 2022 law by some divisions as the reason for removing a book. First, because the enactment clause is in the final bill but not the legislation text in the online Code of Virginia, division or school staff who refer to the legislation text online may not be aware of the enactment clause expressly stating legislative intent. Second, in an attempt to clarify broader confusion about the 2022 law, VDOE released superintendent's memo #108-23 in June 2023: *Clarifications on School Library Management*. The memo re-states the provisions of §22.1-16.8 and provides some additional information about instructional materials but does not specifically address or clarify that §22.1-16.8 is not applicable to removing books for all students or from libraries.

The practical effect of this may be minimal given that divisions already have discretion over the selection of library materials and their library book removal policies. However, it may be useful (at least for some divisions) for VDOE to more directly clarify that the 2022 law does not apply to removing school library books.

Partially in response to §22.1-16.8, some divisions report giving parents options related to library books. For example, some school divisions allow parents to request that their child not be able to check out certain books from the school library. Others will inform parents of books their children check out.

Appendix A: Study resolution

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 251

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the removal of certain books from public school libraries. Report.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 29, 2025

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2025

WHEREAS, the libraries in the Commonwealth's public schools are an important source of learning and exploration for students in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the books in circulation in the libraries of the Commonwealth's public schools are selected and curated by professionally trained school librarians and media specialists; and

WHEREAS, there are times at which some parents of public school students object to the inclusion of certain books in public school libraries while other parents support or approve the inclusion of such books in public school libraries; and

WHEREAS, § [22.1-16.8](#) of the Code of Virginia was enacted by the 2022 Session of the General Assembly for the purpose of directing the Department of Education to adopt model policies, and each school board to adopt policies consistent with but that may be more comprehensive than such model policies, for ensuring the parental notification of any instructional material that includes sexually explicit content, as that term is defined in applicable law, and to provide parents the opportunity to request their children be provided, as an alternative, nonexplicit instructional material; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education adopted the model policies required pursuant to § [22.1-16.8](#) of the Code of Virginia in August of 2022, which focused on books used in the classroom and specifically clarified that any books contained in public school libraries would, under such policies, be considered "instructional material" only if students were required to read such books for completion of an assignment or as a part of an academic or extracurricular educational program; and

WHEREAS, some school divisions subsequently removed books from circulation in public school libraries based on the school division's determination that such books contained sexually explicit content, in accordance with § [22.1-16.8](#) of the Code of Virginia, or based on the school division's determination that other content contained in such books was objectionable; and

WHEREAS, some of the decisions by school divisions to remove certain books from public school libraries were made upon the recommendation of "challenge committees," consisting of parents of students in the school division and school librarians or other media specialists, while in other cases, such decisions were made without any recommendation of a school librarian or media specialist and were, instead, made upon the direction of a school board, individual school board members, individual school principals, division superintendents, or other school administrators; and

WHEREAS, the variations in procedure, process, and standards for the removal of certain books from public school libraries by school divisions across the Commonwealth presents significant questions relating to compliance with § [22.1-16.8](#) of the Code of Virginia and the protection of the opportunities for learning and intellectual exploration created by public school libraries; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the removal of certain books from public school libraries. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall focus its study on any books removed from public school libraries after July 1, 2020, based on certain content included in such books.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall survey each of the 135 school divisions in the Commonwealth to identify (i) which school divisions removed any books from a library in any of its public schools on the basis of certain content contained therein after July 1, 2020; (ii) for each removed book identified pursuant to clause (i): (a) the title, author, and any other identifying information; (b) the fiscal year of removal; (c) the name of the school from whose library such book was removed; (d) whether it was removed upon the recommendation of a "challenge committee" and, if not, whether it was removed at the direction of the school board or one or more school board members, a school principal, a division superintendent, or another school administrator; (e) how the review was initiated, the role of the school's librarian or media specialist in the removal process, and which, if any, other school board employees were involved in the removal process and the role each individual played; and (f) if § [22.1-16.8](#) of the Code of Virginia or a policy adopted in accordance therewith was used to justify such removal; (iii) which school divisions have appointed a committee or other body to review the content of books currently contained in or proposed book purchases for inclusion in public school libraries and, if so, whether (a) such committee or body includes a [school] librarian or media specialist employed by the school division and (b) the meetings of such committee or body are advertised and open to the public; and (iv) in consultation with any relevant state agencies, what resources are available at the state level to support school administrators in making decisions relating to the removal of books from public school libraries.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by local school divisions in the Commonwealth. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by August 1, 2025, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than October 1, 2025. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Appendix B: All divisions, survey response and book removal

Legend:

Yes = Responded “yes” to question about whether removed books since July 2020.

No = Responded “no” to question about whether removed books since July 2020.

Don’t know = Responded “don’t know” to question about whether removed books since July 2020.

No response (NR) = No survey response submitted.

-- = Survey response submitted, but question not answered.

School division	Any book(s) removed?	# removed
Accomack County Public Schools	No	0
Albemarle County Public Schools	No	0
Alexandria City Public Schools	No	0
Alleghany Highlands Public Schools	No	0
Amelia County Public Schools	No	0
Amherst County Public Schools	No	0
Appomattox County Public Schools	No	0
Arlington Public Schools	No	0
Augusta County Public Schools	Yes	4
Bath County Public Schools	No	0
Bedford County Public Schools	No	0
Bland County Public Schools	No response (NR)	n.a.
Botetourt County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Bristol Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Brunswick County Public Schools	--	--
Buchanan County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Buckingham County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Buena Vista City Public Schools	No	0
Campbell County Public Schools	Yes	5
Caroline County Public Schools	Yes	1
Carroll County Public Schools	Yes	1
Charles City County Public Schools	No	0
Charlotte County Public Schools	No	0
Charlottesville City Schools	No	0
Chesapeake Public Schools	Yes	2
Chesterfield County Public Schools	Yes	1
Clarke County Public Schools	No	0
Colonial Beach Public Schools	No	0
Colonial Heights Public Schools	No	0
Cumberland County Public Schools	No	0
Craig County Public Schools	NR	n.a.

School division	Any book(s) removed?	# removed
Culpeper Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Cumberland County Public Schools	No	0
Danville Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Dickenson County Public Schools	No	0
Dinwiddie County Public Schools	No	0
Essex County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Fairfax County Public Schools	No	0
Fairfax City Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Falls Church City Public Schools	No	0
Fauquier County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Floyd County Public Schools	No	0
Fluvanna County Public Schools	Yes	1 ^a
Franklin City Public Schools	NR	0
Franklin County Public Schools	Yes	13
Frederick County Public Schools	Yes	6
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	No	0
Galax City Public Schools	No	0
Giles County Public Schools	No	0
Gloucester Public Schools	Yes	--
Goochland County Public Schools	Yes	34
Grayson County Public Schools	No	0
Greene County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Greensville County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Halifax County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Hampton City Schools	No	0
Hanover County Public Schools	Yes	125
Harrisonburg Public Schools	No	0
Henrico County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Henry County Public Schools	Yes	1
Highland County Public Schools	No	0
Hopewell City Public Schools	No	0
Isle of Wight County Schools	No	0
King George County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
King and Queen County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
King William County Public Schools	Yes	1
Lancaster County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Lee County Public Schools	No	0
Lexington City Schools	Yes	2
Loudoun County Public Schools	Yes	2
Louisa County Public Schools	--	--
Lunenburg County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Lynchburg City Schools	No	0

School division	Any book(s) removed?	# removed
Madison County Public Schools	Yes	23
Manassas City Public Schools	Yes	2
Manassas Park City Schools	Yes	1
Martinsville Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Mathews County Public Schools	No	0
Mecklenburg County Public Schools	No	0
Middlesex County Public Schools	No	0
Montgomery County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Nelson County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
New Kent Public Schools	No	0
Newport News Public Schools	No	0
Norfolk City Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Northampton Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Northumberland Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Norton City Public Schools	No	0
Nottoway Public Schools	No	0
Orange County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Page County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Patrick County Public Schools	No	0
Petersburg Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Pittsylvania County Schools	No	0
Portsmouth Public Schools	No	0
Poquoson County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Portsmouth Public Schools	No	0
Powhatan County Public Schools	Yes	9
Prince Edward County Public Schools	No	0
Prince George County Public Schools	Don't know	n.a.
Prince William County Public Schools	Yes	4
Pulaski County Public Schools	Don't know	n.a.
Radford City Public Schools	--	--
Rappahannock County Public Schools	No	0
Richmond City Public Schools	No	0
Richmond County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Roanoke City Public Schools	No	0
Roanoke County Public Schools	Yes	1
Rockbridge County Public Schools	No	0
Rockingham County Public Schools	Yes	57 ^b
Russell County Public Schools	Yes	n.a.
Salem City Schools	No	0
Scott County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Shenandoah County Public Schools	Yes	1
Smyth County Public Schools	NR	n.a.

School division	Any book(s) removed?	# removed
Southampton County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Spotsylvania County Public Schools	Yes	19
Stafford County Public Schools	No	0
Staunton City Schools	No	0
Suffolk Public Schools	No	0
Surry County Public Schools	No	0
Sussex County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Tazewell County Public Schools	No	0
Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Yes	16
Warren County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
Washington County Schools	Yes	--
Waynesboro City Public Schools	No	0
West Point Public Schools	Yes	--
Westmoreland County Public Schools	No	0
Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools	Yes	1
Winchester Public Schools	Yes	4
Wise County Public Schools	No	0
Wythe County Public Schools	NR	n.a.
York County Public Schools	Yes	7

SOURCE: JLARC survey of school divisions about library book removals, spring 2025.

NOTES: Divisions not responding were generally similar in size and region of the state, when compared to divisions responding. However, divisions were less likely to respond if they had about 1,000 to 3,500 students. Divisions in the Central Virginia and Blue Ridge & Valley regions were more likely to respond than divisions in other regions.

^a Book removed from library but put into counseling office.

^b Rockingham County Public Schools indicated removals were temporary pending formal policy approval.

Appendix C: All book titles removed

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
Gender Queer: A Memoir	Maia Kobabe	7
Tilt	Ellen Hopkins	6
Identical	Ellen Hopkins	5
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Stephen Chbosky	5
Beyond Magenta	Susan Kuklin	4
Burned	Ellen Hopkins	4
Fallout	Ellen Hopkins	4
Lawn Boy	Jonathan Evison	4
Me and Earl and the Dying Girl	Jesse Andrews	4
Smoke	Ellen Hopkins	4
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian	Sherman Alexie	4
The Bluest Eye	Toni Morrison	4
Tricks	Ellen Hawkins	4
A Court of Mist and Fury	Sarah J. Maas	3
A Court of Silver Flames	Sarah J. Maas	3
All Boys Aren't Blue	George M. Johnson	3
Crank	Ellen Hopkins	3
Fade	Robert Cormier	3
Felix Ever After	Kacen Callender	3
Glass	Ellen Hopkins	3
Juliet Takes a Breath	Gabby Rivera	3
Looking for Alaska	John Green	3
Lucky	Alice Sebold	3
Milk and Honey	Rupi Kaur	3
Nineteen Minutes	Jodi Picoult	3
Push	Sapphire	3
Red, White and Royal Blue	Casey McQuiston	3
Slaughterhouse-Five	Kurt Vonnegut Jr.	3
Sold	Patricia McCormick	3
Speak	Laurie Halse Anderson	3
The Handmaid's Tale	Margaret Atwood	3
The Haters	Jesse Andrews	3
Thirteen Reasons Why	Jay Asher	3
This Book is Gay	Juno Dawson	3

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
What Girls are Made of	Elana K. Arnold	3
Yolk	Mary H.K. Choi	3
A Court of Frost and Starlight	Sarah J. Maas	2
A Court of Thorns and Roses	Sarah J. Maas	2
A Court of Wings and Ruin	Sarah J. Maas	2
Allegedly	Tiffany D. Jackson	2
Attention Hijacked	Erica B. Marcus	2
Dead End	Jason Myers	2
Empire of Storms	Sarah Maas	2
Flamer	Mike Curato	2
Forever	Judy Blume	2
How Beautiful the Ordinary	Michael Cart	2
Human Body	Various	2
I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter	Erika L. Sanchez	2
Impulse	Ellen Hopkins	2
Last Night at the Telegraph Club	Malinda Lo	2
One of Us is Lying	Karen M. McManus	2
Out of Darkness	Ashley Hope Perez	2
Perfect	Rachel Joyce	2
Red Hood	Elana K. Arnold	2
Shine	Lauren Myracle	2
Shout	Laurie Halse Anderson	2
The Art of Racing in the Rain	Garth Stein	2
The Carnival at the Bray	Jessie Ann Foley	2
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo	Stieg Larsson	2
The Human Body Encyclopedia	Linda Cernak	2
The Infinite Moment of Us	Lauren Myracle	2
The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue	V.E. Schwab	2
The Poet X	Elizabeth Acevedo	2
The Sun and Her Flowers	Rupi Kaur	2
Valiant Ladies	Melissa Grey	2
Water for Elephants	Sara Gruen	2
11/22/63	Stephen King	1
A Clash of Kings	George R. R. Martin	1
A Dance with Dragons	George R. R. Martin	1
A Feast of Crows	George R. R. Martin	1
A Game of Thrones	George R. R. Martin	1
A Lesson Before Dying	Ernest J. Gaines	1

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
A Queer History of the United States for Young People	Richie Chevat/ Michael Bronski	1
A Storm of Swords	George R. R. Martin	1
All American Boys	Jason Reynolds, Brendan Kiely	1
Anatomy of a Boyfriend	Daria Snadowsky	1
Anatomy of a Single Girl	Daria Snadowsky	1
Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging: Confessions of Georgia Nicolson	Louise Rennison	1
Assassination Classroom	Yusei Matsui	1
Back When You Were Easier to Love	Emily Wing Smith	1
Bag of Bones	Stephen King	1
Beautiful	Amy Reed	1
Beloved	Toni Morrison	1
Blankets	Craig Thompson	1
Blazed	Jason Myers	1
Body Marks: Tattooing, Piercing, and Scarification	Christine Whittington, Kathlyn Gay	1
Boy Toy	Barry Lyga	1
Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World	Penelope Bagieu	1
Breathless	n.a.	1
Bumped	Megan McCafferty	1
Caster	Elsie Chapman	1
Choke	Chuck Palahniuk	1
Collateral	Ellen Hopkins	1
Concrete Rose	Angie Thomas	1
Damsel	Elana Arnold	1
Defy Me	Tahereh Mafi	1
Destroy Me	Tahereh Mafi	1
Dig	A.S. King	1
Dime	E.R. Frank	1
Dizzy in Your Eyes: Poems about Love	Pat Mora	1
Drag Teen	Jeffery Self	1
Drama	Raina Telgemeier	1
Eleanor & Park	Rainbow Rowell	1
Empire of Thrones (Throne of Glass series)	Sarah J. Maas	1
Encyclopedia of the Human Body	Richard Walker	1
Exit Here	Jason Myers	1
Flor Fights Back, A Stonewall Riots Survival Story	Joy Michael Ellison	1
Forever For a Year	B.T. Gottfred	1
Friends Forever	Shannon Hale and LeUyen Pham	1

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic	Alison Bechdel	1
Furyborn	Claire Legrand	1
Gabi, A Girl in Pieces	Isabel Quintero	1
Go Ask Alice	Beatrice Sparks	1
Golden Boy	Abigail Tarttelin	1
Good Trouble	Christopher Noxon	1
Grit	n.a.	1
Grown	Tiffany D. Jackson	1
GRL2GRL	Julie Ann Peters	1
Guyaholic	Carolyn Mackler	1
Half of a Yellow Sun	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	1
Haunted	Chuck Palahniuk	1
Heartstopper	Alice Oseman	1
Hell phone	William Sleator	1
Homegoing	Yaa Gyasi	1
House of Earth and Blood	Sarah J. Maas	1
If I Stay	Gayle Forman	1
I Never	Laura Hopper	1
Ignite Me	Tahereh Mafi	1
I'll Give You the Sun	Jandy Nelson	1
Imagine Me	Imagine Me	1
Infamous	Elana K. Arnold	1
Interview with the Vampire	Anne Rice	1
It	Stephen King	1
Jack of Hearts (and other parts)	Lev A. C. Rosen	1
Jesus Land: A Memoir	Julia Scheeres	1
Julian is a Mermaid	Jessica Love	1
Kingdom of Ash	Sarah J. Maas	1
Kiss Number 8	Colleen AF Venable	1
L8r, G8r	Lauren Myracle	1
Leah on the Offbeat	Becky Albertalli	1
Let's Talk About It	Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan	1
Life is Funny	E.R. Frank	1
Like a Love Story	Abdi Nazemian	1
Living Dead Girl	Elizabeth Scott	1
Love	Toni Morrison	1
Love is love	Mette Bach	1
Man O' War	Cory McCarthy	1

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
Marriage of a Thousand Lies	S.J. Sindu	1
Medical Discoveries: Medical Breakthroughs and the People who Developed Them	Travers, Bridget and Fran Locher Freiman, editors	1
Melissa (George)	Alex Gino	1
Monday's Not Coming	Tiffany D. Jackson	1
More Happy than Not	Adam Silvera	1
My Friend Dahmer	Derf Backderf	1
Neanderthal Opens the Door to the Universe	Preston Norton	1
Negima - volumes 1-8	Ken Akamatsu	1
Nichijou: my ordinary life	Keiichi Arawi	1
Nick and Charlie	Alice Oseman	1
One Foot in Eden	Ron Rash	1
One of Us is Next	Karen M. McManus	1
Open Me Up	Laura Buller	1
Orynx and Crake	Margaret Atwood	1
Outlander: Dragonfly in Amber	Diana Gabaldon	1
Outlander: Voyager	Diana Gabaldon	1
People Kill People	Ellen Hopkins	1
Picture Day	n.a.	1
Populazzi	Elise Allen	1
Rage	Richard Bachman	1
Rainbow Party	n.a.	1
Red at the Bone	Jacqueline Woodson	1
Restore Me	Tahereh Mafi	1
Rethinking Normal	Ariel Schrag and Katie Rain Hil	1
Rumble	Elle Hopkins	1
SAGA	Brian K. Vaughan	1
Sex is a Funny Word	Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth	1
Sexual Health Information for Teens: Health Tips About Sexual Development	n.a.	1
Shatter Me	Tahereh Mafi	1
Snow Falling on Cedars	David Guterson	1
Someone Like You	Sarah Dessen	1
Stars in their Eyes	Jessica Walton	1
Sula	Toni Morrison	1
Tar Baby	Toni Morrison	1
The Bear and The Trolls	Beverley Randell	1
The Black Mage	Rachel E. Carter	1
The Duff	Kody Keplinger	1

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
The Freedom Writers Diary	Erin Gruwell	1
The Girl in the Spider's Web	Stieg Larsson	1
The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest	Stieg Larsson	1
The Girl Who Played with Fire	Stieg Larsson	1
The Girl Who Takes an Eye For an Eye	David Lagercrantz	1
The Glass Castle	Jeannette Walls	1
The Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish, Swish, Swish	Lil Miss Hot Mess	1
The Invisible Boy	Trudy Ludwig	1
The Kite Runner	Khaled Hosseini	1
The League of Super Feminists	Mirion Malle	1
The Medical Advisor: the Complete Guide to Alternative & Conventional Treatment	Time Life Books	1
The Midnight Lie	Marie Rutkoski	1
The Nowhere Girls	Amy Reed	1
The One Summer	Mariko Tamaki	1
The School for Good and Evil	Soman Chainani	1
The Schwa was here	Neal Shusterman	1
The Summer of Owen Todd	Tony Abbott	1
The Swallows: A Novel	Lisa Lutz	1
The Tale of the Body Thief	Anne Rice	1
The Upside of Unrequited	Becky Albertalli	1
The Way We Work: Getting to Know the Amazing Human Body	David Macaulay	1
The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle	Haruki Murakami	1
Tower of Dawn	Sarah J Maas	1
Triangles	Ellen Hopkins	1
Tropical Fish	Robert Hirschfeld	1
TTFN	Lauren Myracle	1
Turtles All the Way Down	John Green	1
Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines	Nic Sheff	1
Under the Moon A Catwoman Tale	Lauren Myracle	1
Unravel Me	Tahereh Mafi	1
Verity	Colleen Hoover	1
We are the Ants	Shaun David Hutchinson	1
When Aidan Became a Big Brother	Kyle Lukoff	1
When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS	James Cross Giblin	1
Who am I Without Him?	Sharon Flake	1
Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West	Gregory Maguire	1
Wings of Fire	n.a.	1

Appendixes

Title	Author	# of divisions reporting removing title
Winterdance	n.a.	1

Source: Source: JLARC survey of school divisions about library book removals, spring 2025.

n.a.: Not available

Note: Books listed are titles divisions reported that at least one school removed between July 2020 and March 2025. Books may have been removed from a school and not an entire division.



JLARC.VIRGINIA.GOV

919 East Main Street Suite 2101 Richmond, VA 23219