

OCPTA Statement on Scholastic Book Fair

It has been brought to our attention that the Intermediate School Scholastic Book Fair was discussed at the most recent Board of Education meeting. We would like to take this opportunity to address some of the misleading claims being printed and distributed online. Every year for the last 15 years the OCPTA has facilitated the Scholastic Book Fair at the Ocean City Intermediate and Primary Schools. As was discussed at our recent General Membership Meetings, Scholastic sends a selection of books based on the grade levels in the school; the PTA does not choose the books. Contrary to what was stated during Thursday's Board meeting, only elementary school fairs have the ability to opt-in for what is called the *Share Every Story, Celebrate Every Voice* selection. The Intermediate School Book Fair is considered a middle school-level fair. More information about Scholastic's process is available at <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/press-release/message-scholastic-book-fairs>

At the most recent OCIS Scholastic Book Fair, one book out of the \$5,000 worth of books sold was brought to the attention of the OCIS administration and was deemed inappropriate for profanity. This book is the first in a series of four graphic novels and had received no prior complaints. The sixth grader who purchased the book was given a refund and the book was removed from the selection.

As always, the PTA supports parents' rights to review and choose what books their children may buy at the Book Fair. Any parent who is dissatisfied with their child's purchase has always had the option to make a return for a full refund. For the record, we would like to state that no parent reached out directly to PTA to raise any concerns regarding a specific book during the Book Fair.

Since the Book Fair, the PTA has been subject to relentless social media bullying and harassment. The general maligning of PTA Officers has been devastating to us as we are all volunteers who dedicate countless unpaid hours to support the teachers and students of this district. We are also completely discouraged that some Board of Education Members, who were in attendance at our most recent PTA meetings would allow misinformation to continue to be shared. This situation continues to pull our focus from where it belongs, which is on the children of Ocean City.

We appreciate the Ocean City School District administration being in dialogue with Scholastic along with us regarding the selection of books received. The PTA will continue to be in close communication with the Board of Education, school administration, and parents regarding the Book Fair, as we are for all PTA-sponsored events at the Ocean City Primary and Intermediate Schools. The PTA has and continues to organize so many wonderful activities for our children and we look forward to bringing the joy of the upcoming holiday season into our schools.