

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

RESOLUTION 4518

FOR ACTION

SUBJECT: RIGHT TO READ RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the freedom to read and the freedom to select reading material for oneself is fundamental cornerstone of democracy;

WHEREAS the suppression of ideas and information through the banning of books is a direct violation of the right to free speech;

WHEREAS public schools and libraries play an essential role in the democratic process by offering free access to ideas and information;

WHEREAS book bans in public schools and libraries limit the availability of diverse ideas and perspectives, thereby infringing upon the educational rights of students and the rights of all citizens;

WHEREAS the South Orange/Maplewood School district has the responsibility to stand against activities that undermine the rule of law and infringe upon fundamental rights and freedoms;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the South Orange/ Maplewood School District as follows;

1. SOMSD hereby officially denounces any and all efforts to ban books in public schools and public libraries.
2. SOMSD urges all state and local officials, as well as school and library administrators to uphold the right to access information and to resist any efforts to ban books. If a challenge was to occur the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education requires that the district administration ensure that Policy and Regulation 9130 are followed.
3. SOMSD pledges to work collaboratively with other organizations and stakeholders to to advocate for policies that protect the freedom to read and to learn.
4. SOMSD supports the NJSBA resolution delegate assembly denouncing book bans in New Jersey Public Schools and Public Libraries.
5. SOMSD supports the NJ State bill S3907 which would ban public libraries and school libraries from banning books.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will be distributed to NJSBA members, the Governor of the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Legislature, the New Jersey School Library Association, and the New Jersey Library Association.

BACKGROUND

The South Orange Maplewood School District supports the NJ State bill S3907 which would ban public libraries and school libraries from banning books.