

DOUGLAS COUNTY LIBRARIES BOARD BUSINESS MEETING

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 5:30 p.m., Castle Pines Library, Castle Pines, CO

Call meeting to Order

Attendance

Public Comment

Library Business

Do any board members have a conflict of interest to disclose regarding any of the matters below? If so, please recuse yourself, and return to the meeting after the discussion has ended.

Consent Agenda Recommendation(s) Memo [page 2](#)

1. Minutes August 26, 2026, Business Meeting [page 3](#)

***You Are the Color* Citizen Review Request escalated to the Library Board [page 9](#)**

Executive Session – Legal Advice on the Citizen Review Request escalated to the Library Board concerning the book, *You Are the Color* by Rifk Ebeid

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute, Section 24-6-402(4)(b) for the purposes of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions related to the Citizen Review Request for *You Are the Color*, Federal Law, State Law, Colorado Library Law, Section 24-90-122, and library policy.

Return to Open Meeting

***You Are the Color* Citizen Review Request**

Any action or direction to staff regarding the Citizen Review Request escalated to the Library Board concerning the book, *You Are the Color* by Rifk Ebeid

Trustee Comments and Questions

Upcoming Board Meetings

- September 30, 2026, Lone Tree Library, Lone Tree, Colorado
 - Board Study Session, 4:00 p.m. (Dinner at 5:00 p.m.)
 - Board Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

Other Meetings

- November 9, 2026, Partnership of Douglas County Governments Elected/Appointed Officials Reception, Philip & Jerry Miller Library, Castle Rock, Colorado, 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn

MEMO

To: Douglas County Libraries Board of Trustees

Date: September 16, 2026

From: Patti Owen-DeLay

Subject: Consent Agenda

Issue: Review and approve Consent Agenda item(s).

Discussion:

The Consent Agenda follows the process outlined below:

- Items will be added as norm or appropriate for the Consent Agenda
- Consent Agenda items are not discussed.
- It takes a motion and unanimous vote to add items to the Consent Agenda
- Any one board member can request to pull consent items for discussion, that item will be moved for discussion and action under Library Business
- Motion recommendation will be accepted as proposed; if an amended motion is needed, the item will be pulled from the Consent Agenda to accomplish this.
- To pull an item from the Consent Agenda, tell the meeting chair that you would like to pull __, stating the item number.
- Item(s) moved will be handled first as under Library Business unless the Board takes a motion to do something different with the item.

Consent Agenda Items for this meeting are:

1. Minutes 08/26/2026 Business Meeting

Recommendation: Move to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented (or as amended if an item or items were pulled).

The motion in the board meeting minutes will name all items approved as part of the Consent Agenda.

DOUGLAS COUNTY LIBRARIES
Board of Trustees Business Meeting
August 26, 2026
Lone Tree Library, Lone Tree, CO

President Nolan called the business meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

This meeting was held and was noticed in compliance with both Colorado Open Meeting Law and the Douglas County Libraries (DCL) Bylaws.

The following were present:

TRUSTEES: Pam Hampton, John Kennedy, Terry Nolan, Zach McKinney, Amy Windju, and Ted Vail

A quorum was present.

STAFF: Bob Pasicznyuk, Casie Cook, Crystal Bustillos, and Patti Owen-DeLay

STAFF PRESENT NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETING: Jill Corrente, Amber DeBerry, Amy Fischer, Laura Kennedy, Brandon Forman, Sterling Sylvester, Becky Spilver, Robb Luinstra, Robin Warnke

LONE TREE POLICE OFFICER: Sergeant James Nunn

PUBLIC: Keri Beaumont, Dawn Caldwell, Nancy Student, Todd Warnke, Gary Wachter, Lynne Wachter, Candace Head-Dylla, Kim Carroll, Jo Ann Fannon, Kerry Bowman, Kathy Dannemiller, Steve D., Emily Suyat, Betsy Holweger, Jessica Byassee, Kim Turnage, John Soo, Ruth Moline, Allyson Neville

PUBLIC COMMENT

Keri Beaumont – Douglas County resident. Cited Colorado law and library policies in favor of not removing items and keeping broad ideas available to all.

Nancy Student – Douglas County resident. Enjoyed the Sterling Ranch groundbreaking and appreciated the library. Cited the line from the book *A Love Letter to My Library* read at the groundbreaking, "Thank you for bringing stories that look just like me."

Dawn Caldwell – Douglas County resident. Doesn't want to see change or book restrictions. Encourages board to follow processes they have had in place for years.

Gary Wachter – Not a Douglas County resident. Lived in community for 26 years; his synagogue is in Highlands Ranch. Spoke against the book *You Are the Color* as being antisemitic. Referred to similar issue with Boulder Valley School District and how they handled it.

Lynne Wachter – Not a Douglas County resident. Reiterated the importance of looking at the techniques of books coming to young children in the library. This book [*You Are the Color*] is not appropriate for children.

Candace Head-Dylla – Douglas County resident. Understands the law and cases with the ACLU, and now the Supreme Court saying that libraries choosing books are being a matter of government statement. Petition with 38 signatures against the library having the book *You Are the Color*.

Kim Carroll – Douglas County resident. In favor of the library's processes and stance. Doesn't see that cases cited are relevant to Colorado law. Trusts the library to cultivate the collection. Parents are the arbitrators of what the kids read.

Jo Ann Fannon - Decided not to speak.

Ruth Moline – Douglas County resident. Appreciates the library. Families and parents make the decision about what children read or not. The library process should continue to be used as it is.

Allyson Neville – Douglas County resident. Wants parental decisions and intellectual freedom to be the choice. Believes that parents should support and cultivate empathy and decide when to have those conversations with their children.

ADDITION TO THE AGENDA – Temporary Construction License

Sterling Ranch reached out to Douglas County Libraries requesting a “temporary construction license” on the land donation property so that liability is with the library and contractor during construction, and not Sterling Ranch LLC, until the land is transferred. Closing is scheduled the week of August 31, 2026.

Motion 26-08-01: Vail moved and the motion carried unanimously to add the Temporary Construction License to tonight's agenda. McKinney seconded the motion.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Minutes of June 24, 2026, Business Meeting
- Staff Day Closure 2027
- 2027 Board Meetings
- Ratification of Email Poll – Method to Receive Legal Advice re: Citizen Review Request *You Are the Color*
- Watson Resignation from the Library Board

MOTION 26-08-02: McKinney moved and the motion carried unanimously to approve the June 24, 2026, minutes noting that Hampton's absence was an excused absence, the 2027 Staff Day Closure, 2027 Board Meetings, ratification of the *You Are the Color* Email Poll for legal counsel advice, and Watson's resignation from the Library Board. Hampton seconded the motion.

LIBRARY BUSINESS

No one declared a conflict of interest on any of the action matters below.

2027 Budget Direction to Staff

Nolan prefaced that the board received information about the frame staff are using to build the 2027 budget during the Study Session earlier this evening. There was no other discussion.

Motion 26-08-03: Windju moved and the motion carried unanimously to approve the proposed budget boundaries for fiscal year 2027, as presented. These boundaries include estimated revenue of \$44,202,676, and expenses totaling \$53,421,123 with \$9,218,447 in expenditures funded through reserves. The budget framework supports the library's strategic priorities by maintaining and enhancing library collections, funding the Sterling Ranch library project, investing in our employees, and modernizing the Integrated Library System. Kennedy seconded the motion.

Consolidating Banking Relationships

Cook shared how over time the library has had a number of banking accounts and that those accounts, while once local, have been bought up by national chains. This motion is to simplify banking relationships.

Motion 26-08-04: Windju moved and the motion carried unanimously to approve Resolution #26-08-01, which authorizes the transfer of the banking relationship from SouthState to Wells Fargo, and further authorize library officers and designated staff to take all necessary actions to establish accounts, transfer funds, and services, update authorized signed, and complete all related documentation required to effect the transition. The transfer shall occur at a time determined to be in the best interest of the library and in a manner that ensures continuity of operations and appropriate financial controls. Hampton seconded the motion.

Value Proposition

Windju suggested some wording changes. Other members did not want to edit by committee but rather accept it as presented.

Motion 26-08-05: Vail moved and the motion carried unanimously to adopt the Value Proposition as presented. Windju seconded the motion.

Douglas County Libraries is a vibrant network of welcoming spaces where people at every stage of life can read, explore, learn, and connect. Through exceptional collections, engaging events and services, and knowledgeable staff, DCL creates premium library experiences that go beyond basic services to foster exploration, discovery, lifelong learning, and meaningful connections.

By combining broad access with personal support, DCL helps customers discover new ideas, build skills, find resources to move forward, and create meaningful connections. Every interaction is designed to support and inspire growth, enrich individual lives, and elevate the Douglas County community.

DCL Class I Foundation Director Appointment

Nolan stated that with Watson resigning, the representative position on the Douglas County Libraries Foundation board is open.

Motion 26-08-06: McKinney moved and the motion carried unanimously to appoint John “Chip” Kennedy as the Class I Foundation Director. Windju seconded the motion.

Xcel Easement for the Sterling Ranch Library Project

This motion is necessary to allow utility lines to be run on the property. The current easement agreement is with Sterling Ranch LLC as the landowner. The library will wait until next week when the landownership is transferred and then execute the easement.

Motion 26-08-07: McKinney moved and the motion carried unanimously to authorize Board President Nolan to execute the utility line easement with Xcel Energy (Public Service Company of Colorado) once the land transfer for the Sterling Ranch library land has closed (scheduled September 2, 2026) and the easement has been amended to reflect Douglas County Libraries as the “grantor.” Windju seconded the motion.

Temporary Construction License Agreement – added agenda item

Nolan shared that Sterling Ranch is concerned about their risk with the library doing construction on land that they still own. This document transfers that risk to the library as the one doing the work and ultimately owning the library. Pasicznyuk said that this is an issue of closing taking longer than expected.

Motion 26-08-08: Vail moved and the motion carried unanimously to authorize Executive Director Bob Pasicznyuk to execute the Temporary Construction License Agreement for the Sterling Ranch land donation. Kennedy seconded the motion.

Executive Library Director Update

Pasicznyuk shared that today is the third anniversary of our library opening in Castle Rock. Pasicznyuk is grateful for the support of the community and the ability to continue to expand facilities.

Numbers with the Key Performance Indicator report show engagement with the community, and we continue to see good retention with staff, higher than national averages.

Two big projects coming up in 2027 are the new Integrated Library System – this is the background system for all our checkouts and customer base. The second big project is the opening of the new library in Sterling Ranch.

Summer reading and camps were at capacity this summer.

Windju asked about the Roxborough Town Hall. Pasicznyuk shared that there were two: one at Louviers, with about 70 of the 200+ residents attending, and a similar event at Roxborough, with 17 attendees. These events were to share information about the

Library Facilities Master Plan and the new Sterling Ranch library. Many people like their local library and don't want to see it go away.

Windju wants to know the impact on staff, services, and attendance for Louviers and Roxborough. Pasicznyuk will include this in his September report to the board, for prior consideration before the board considers closing the Louviers and Roxborough libraries at their October 2026 Business Meeting.

PARTNER REPORTS

Douglas County Youth Initiative (DCYI)

Windju reported that DCYI meetings have been moved to the 4th Thursday of the month and are being held in Englewood (a swath of which is in Douglas County), with a virtual option, and the next meeting is tomorrow.

Partnership of Douglas County Governments

No meeting this month. Vail is excited to be working with staff in developing a strategy for informing the partnership about the library in 2027.

Douglas County Libraries Foundation

DeBerry reported on the Foundation's annual gala. Sponsorship goals have been exceeded. Only 10 tickets remain. She also noted that the largest campaign for fundraising, Colorado Gives Day, will start in early December.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

McKinney asked about the Liane Moriarty event that is coming up with attendance of 1,000. DeBerry shared that this is one of our big author events. There are still some tickets available.

McKinney asked about anything that can be done to get the Highlands Ranch library elevator complete. Pasicznyuk responded that a phone line now has to be replaced/upgraded and, hopefully, that will be the end of repairs, leaving only inspections to complete.

McKinney thought the groundbreaking went really well, and the library will be a crown jewel for the county.

Hampton asked if changing the name of the Sterling Ranch library to the Northwest Library has been considered. The board, by policy, has to make any name change, otherwise libraries are named for the community they reside in, unless the board acts.

Windju asked if attendance at the Colorado Library Association and CliftonStrengths training are in the budget. Pasicznyuk shared that they are in the 2026 budget and expanded on what is being done with staff training on CliftonStrengths.

Windju asked about the Special Meeting on September 16, 2026, for legal advice on the Citizen Review Request concerning the book *You Are the Color*. The Special Meeting is public, and then the board moves to go into private executive session, as allowed by Colorado Open Meeting Law, for advice of legal counsel.

Windju appreciated that interest income was higher than expected. Cook stated that the locked-in rates may sometimes give smaller yield but overall should give us better yield.

Nolan echoed that the groundbreaking was an excellent event.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

- September 16, 2026, Board Special Meeting, Castle Pines Library, Castle Pines, CO, 5:30 p.m.
- September 17, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting, Castle Pines Library, Castle Pines, CO, 8:00 a.m.
- September 30, 2026, Lone Tree Library, Lone Tree, CO
 - Board Study Session, 4:00 p.m. (Dinner at 5:00 p.m.)
 - Board Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURN

Nolan adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Vail, Board Secretary
Minutes prepared by Patti Owen-DeLay
Approved

August 11, 2026

Mr. Terry R. Nolan, President
Douglas County Libraries Board of Trustees
100 S. Wilcox Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

For many months now, Douglas County Library (DCL) patrons have been asking the library to remove, replace, or move the book entitled *You Are the Color* by Rifk Ebeid. Since February 25, 2026, community members have shared their concerns about, fears over, and objections to this book with the DCL Board of Trustees at each of their monthly meetings. Director Bob Pasicznyuk's responses to our concerns have not fully addressed the procedural and developmental issues raised, and we are hereby escalating these matters directly to the Board of Trustees. Within this letter, we outline clear policy gaps regarding curation, self-published materials, and age-appropriateness, while highlighting established cognitive development science (*ACLU v. Miami-Dade*) and the library's clear authority under recent precedent (*Little v. Llano County*). We respectfully ask the Board to review these findings and direct that the book be replaced or relocated out of the children's section to the Young Adult area, while counterbalancing DCL's collection with titles that positively represent the Jewish indigenous connection to the land and humanize Israelis.

POLICY BREECHES

- DCL's BRAND STANDARD (welcoming, non-judgmental, and thorough) was violated in that:
 - The Executive Director's response was not thorough. Some questions were answered by the Executive Director. Others were not. We have been given no written evidence that he conducted fact-finding about the book's curation, legal review, or any other inquiries. We were not given a thorough and written summary of his review process with sufficient detail, including this book's relationship to the existing inventory of related books.
 - Several times the Executive Director has cited Colorado Law prohibiting a reconsideration of a challenged book within a two-year period to stop the conversation about the process. This is far from welcoming.
 - Neither has he shared how his "market -based" (Policies, p. 1) approach to curation was applied to this book.
 - He has not addressed what seems to be clear bias based on national origin in contravention of the library's commitment not to discriminate in that way.
- CENSORSHIP
 - The DCL Access Policy states: "Censors use the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable, on everyone else." (Policies, p.2) We submit herein that DCL "censors" have used a flawed curation process and thus the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable on the citizens of Douglas County.
- CHILDREN AND PARENTS POLICY
 - ...content will be placed within the recommended area of the Library using commonly accepted professional resource recommendations (Policies, p.4) Additionally, the Executive Director has written in his review (February 2, 2026) that *Library peers and reviews locate this [You Are the Color] as an easy-reader or picture book*. Please provide that information in full. The book is self-published, thus the author chose the metadata and thereby the categories, including "picture book" under which it is listed and the Library simply accepted that classification. The Executive Director has tried to obfuscate that fact several times by citing BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications) and Ingram (Company for self-publishers) but this fact remains. There is likely a very good reason this book had to be self-published. It violates norms accepted by most publishing companies. First, it is a "picture book" which includes a glossary. Normally, picture books for children use the pictures and the story context to help readers understand words used in the book. Glossaries are normally for non-fiction informational texts, or for explaining

“magical” universes (think Tolkien) or science fiction worlds where the author creating the fiction is inventing words for the fictional universe described. Glossaries are therefore normally found in non-fiction works and are essentially simplified dictionary definitions. This book not only uses the “picture book” format to address a highly charged political topic but then adds a glossary with extremely contested definitions. Pretending to be a picture book, it uses disturbing political images and “definitions” to lead children to a political viewpoint with inaccurate information.

- CITIZEN REVIEW REQUEST POLICY—The Process

- Under item 5 in this policy, *the Board of Trustees may determine to have a verbal or written report presented from staff involved in the review process, require a written summary of the review process, and consider application of its policies to the request.* (Policies, p.6) Because many of our questions remain unanswered, we ask for a written report from staff involved in the review process and a written summary of the review process itself.

- CURATING LIBRARY COLLECTIONS AND CONTENT POLICY

- *Customer demand is our priority and guide in selecting and retaining items for the inventory. Library staff are charged with using usage patterns, sales data, publisher marketing investments, and customer requests to ground decisions to select, locate, and retain items. Letting the marketplace ground curation is the best way to mitigate staff or customer pre-conceived philosophies or biases.* (Policies, pp.7-8) Though this question was never actually answered by the Executive Director, we found through our CORA request that this book was recommended by a member of staff who heard about it from another staff member at the Arapahoe County Library not from a customer request. The book was purchased approximately 2 weeks later. Because this is a self-published book, publisher marketing investments would be limited, and, we believe, current usage data is skewed by interest in the book from people who are borrowing it to better understand the controversy and possibly by friends of the author—who appears to have ties in Colorado having graduated with a degree in Speech Language Pathology from the University of Northern Colorado.
- *In addition to demand, the Library will employ additional and customary professional criteria in making specific decisions about titles* Policies, p.8):
 - *Documented community needs and interests.* We are asking for that documentation...
 - *Attention from bona-fide critics and reviewers with expertise in relevant fields.* The Executive Director has stated that *beyond the demand for this title, staff consulted multiple reviews and sources in the selection. Reviewers recommend the title.* In emails dated March 25, April 27, May 2, and May 24, 2026, we asked the Executive Director for professional reviews of the book. We received no reply. What we did discover in a memo from the Executive Director to the Douglas County Libraries Foundation Board of Directors [Date unknown], the Executive Director specifically mentions *You Are the Color* and shares the curation criteria and process, which includes asking the questions: *are there reviews of the title? what are the critics saying? what are the sources of the reviews? has the title won any awards?* The memo then gives the names and statements of the “reviewers,” all of whom are extremely biased activists.

Including:

Mazin Qumsiyeh (also spelled **Mazin Qumsiyeh**) is a Palestinian-American biologist, author, and activist. He has been a prominent critic of Israeli government policies for decades. Some of his better-known positions and statements include:

- He has repeatedly described Israel as a **settler-colonial** and **apartheid** state.
- He has argued that Israel is engaged in **ethnic cleansing** of Palestinians, particularly with respect to displacement in the West Bank and Gaza.

- He has accused Israel of committing **war crimes** and, more recently, **genocide** in Gaza.
- He has supported the **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)** movement against Israel.
- He has advocated replacing Israel as a Jewish state with a **single democratic state** encompassing Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza in which Jews and Arabs would have equal citizenship.
- He has argued that Zionism is a form of **colonialism** and has criticized political Zionism as incompatible with equal rights for Palestinians.
- He has accused Israel of violating international law through settlement construction, military occupation, and restrictions on Palestinian movement.
- He has compared Israeli policies toward Palestinians to **South African apartheid**

Sahar Mustafah, a Palestinian-American author and educator, frequently writes and speaks about Israeli policies, the Palestinian occupation, and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Her public critiques include:

- **Categorization of Israeli Actions as Oppressive:** Mustafah has described the Israeli occupation and treatment of Palestinians as a form of colonialism, characterizing it as calculated efforts to displace Palestinians through checkpoints, land seizure, and restricted movement.
- **Criticism of Zionism:** She has characterized Zionism as an oppressive ideology aimed at achieving "maximum land with minimum Palestinians," resulting in the systemic alienation and displacement of the Palestinian people.
- **Denunciations of the War in Gaza:** She has sharply criticized Israel's military campaign in Gaza, citing reports and referring to the violence as an active genocide that has "thoroughly debunked" the perception of Israel as a democratic nation. [1]
- **Criticism of Pro-Israel Advocacy:** Mustafah has specifically targeted institutions like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), arguing that they weaponize Jewish historical trauma and the Holocaust to manufacture fear, shield Israel from criticism, and silence the Palestinian narrative in American schools.

Ramzy Baroud is a Palestinian author, journalist, and editor of *The Palestine Chronicle* whose writings fundamentally reject Zionism and the State of Israel. A summary of his core anti-Israel statements and political stances includes:

- **Accusations of Genocide and Annihilation:** Baroud frequently characterizes Israel's military actions and policies in Gaza as an ongoing "slow-motion genocide" and a policy of "annihilation," citing the extensive destruction of homes, hospitals, and universities. He has argued that these military campaigns are designed to make life unsustainable for Palestinians. [1, 2, 3, 4]
- **Support for Armed Resistance:** He views armed resistance (*mukawama*) as a fundamental, legitimate right and an integral part of Palestinian history. He defends this stance against Western interpretations, arguing that Palestinians have been marginalized and betrayed, and therefore rely on self-liberation. [1, 2]
- **Condemnation of "Zionism and Colonialism":** He regularly attacks the ideological foundations of Israel, identifying Zionism as a form of settler-colonialism. Baroud has called on global civil society to actively resist Zionism and colonialism. [1]
- **Criticism of the "Jewish and Democratic" Contradiction:** He argues that the concept of a "Jewish and democratic state" is riddled with irreconcilable contradictions and inherent racial supremacy, which Palestinians are actively resisting. [1]
- **Militarism and Territorial Liberation:** In his geopolitical and historical commentary, he has compared the liberation of Jerusalem to the Crusades and expressed a desire for a time when the Muslim nation (Ummah) will possess the "courage and spirit and power and resources" to "storm in" and overtake the State of Israel. [1]

Malak Mattar has frequently condemned Israel's destruction of Gaza's cultural infrastructure, including the bombing of ancient churches, museums, and historical sites, and criticized international institutions for remaining silent.

- **Boycott and Divestment:** Mattar has publicly called for cultural boycotts against Israel and demanded the exclusion of Israel from international platforms, comparing the situation to apartheid in South Africa.
- **Critique of the International Community:** She has expressed deep disillusionment with the "international community," stating that she lost faith in their willingness to protect Palestinians when she was just eight years old.

COLORADO LAW

- The Executive Director has also cited support for his decision in Colorado Law C.R.S. 24-90-122, (g) *A public library shall consider the perspectives of marginalized groups, including those identified in section 24-1-104 (1)(a)* [which was a mistaken citation.] The correct citation is C.R.S. 22-1-104 (1)(a) which states: *The history and civil government of the United States and of the state of Colorado, which includes the history, culture, and social contributions of minorities, including but not limited to American Indians, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans, the lesbian, gay bisexual, and transgender individuals within these minority groups, and the intersectionality of significant social and cultural features within these communities, and the contributions and persecution of religious minorities must be taught in all the public schools of the state.* We would request clarification of how the Executive Director sees this citation supporting his decision regarding this book. Additionally, we seek an understanding of how the Executive Director would justify the use of this statute in acquiring this book and retaining this book given that it places imagery that advocates for the geographic and political elimination of a sovereign state into the hands of a young child. This sovereign state also happens to be a nation to which a well-established Colorado religious minority has a strong attachment, many with children who visit relatives there on a regular basis. This is essentially placing propaganda in the hands of children, in a state where peaceful protestors walking in solidarity to return hostages taken from that nation were set on fire, killing one protester and injuring others on June 1, 2025, by a perpetrator expressing the exact same sentiments expressed in this book.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

- Additionally, the Executive Director has stated that the library includes multiple works handling content about the “nakbah” from a different perspective. We would like a list of those titles to ensure none contains information for young children—no matter the viewpoint—that is inaccurate or equally indoctrinating as we do believe in balance and fairness for all.
- Also, once purchased, how was *You Are the Color* displayed, who made those decisions and why?
- The Executive Director states *BISAC and peer libraries locate this item with similar picture books instead of the Young Adult collection.* According to the Executive Director’s email to us on April 30, 2026, 90 libraries in North America carry this title. So since over 99% of the libraries in North America do not carry this title and since this is a self-published book, he needs to better explain this reasoning and why this precludes it being immediately moved to the “Young Adult” section.
- Libraries in general prefer to purchase titles from reputable publishers over self-published books, for many of the reasons we are pointing out here. They regularly remove books that are factually incorrect as better knowledge becomes available and big publishers work to assure informational text from their authors is accurate. They generally do not include glossaries in picture books, perhaps another reason this book was self-published. Libraries also promote media literacy, highlighting sources that combat misinformation. This book flies in the face of those widely accepted practices.

- The Executive Director states that *the library has multiple works handling similar content from differing perspectives*. We would like to have that list. Are there any “picture books” that define Palestinians as terrorists that do not deserve a state of their own, which would seem to be and “equivalent,” if reprehensible, and opposite view.
- Listening to speakers during the Citizens’ Comments section of the Board meetings starting in February, we have been struck by the unwillingness of the Executive Director to acknowledge or address the following concerns by community members who appear knowledgeable in these areas:
 1. Lack of cognitive capacity: Children between the ages of 4 and 8 are very impressionable and accept what they are told by adults, including authors. This is compounded by a glossary that provides inaccurate information.
 2. Inability to discern and lack of basic information for context: We discuss this further below.

In closing, education is certainly at the heart of what libraries do. This is codified in statute and is exhibited in standard library practices. However, this book is more about indoctrination than education. Young children cannot contextualize this information. Thus, presenting a highly disputed geopolitical viewpoint—the literal erasure of an existing sovereign nation—appears to be indoctrination not education.

Because DCL policy has not been properly followed, the book *You Are the Color* by Rifk Ebeid, is still, technically, undergoing the full review process and we are hereby requesting, in writing, that the Board of Trustees direct the Executive Director to reconsider replacing the book and, in the meantime, to relocate the book to the Middle School or Young Adult section for readers who have the cognitive capacity to understand it. Our request for replacement and relocation is grounded in established cognitive developmental standards and, if required, we will rely on expert psychiatric testimony regarding how early elementary-aged children might process such complex geopolitical messaging. Please also consider the following:

1. Standard of Developmental Appropriateness

- 1.1. Public library collection development policies heavily weigh the age and developmental appropriateness of materials cataloged in children’s sections. In the closely related federal appellate case *ACLU v. Miami-Dade County School Board* (552 F.3d 1223), the court examined the impact of presenting highly complex, disputed adult geopolitical conflicts to early elementary students. The court relied upon expert psychiatric testimony, specifically from child psychiatrists, establishing that:
 - 1.1.1. Lack of Cognitive Capacity: Children between the ages of 4 and 8 are “very impressionable” and accept what they are exposed to at face value.” They are entirely “unable to question or challenge it.”
 - 1.1.2. Inability to Discern Context: Early elementary children “do not have the cognitive ability to analyze and discern the nuances of international border disputes, historical land claims, or the realities of violent geopolitical conflict.
- 1.2. Risk of Indoctrination vs. Education: Because young children cannot contextualize this information, presenting a highly disputed geopolitical viewpoint as an absolute, unchallenged moral truth is developmentally inappropriate and borders on indoctrination rather than education.

2. Application to *You Are the Color*

- 2.1. This book concludes with a striking visual of a young boy painting a canvas labeled “Free Palestine,” featuring a map that entirely covers and erases the recognized borders of the State of Israel, replacing it with a conflicting flag.
- 2.2. Geopolitical Complexity: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most complex geopolitical, historical, and religious disputes in modern history.
- 2.3. Cognitive Mismatch: Placing imagery that advocates for the geographic and political elimination of a sovereign state into the hands of a 5-year-old represents a severe cognitive mismatch. A child of this

age cannot comprehend the United Nations partition plan, sovereign borders, or the history of the Middle East. They lack the critical thinking skills required to contextualize the erasure of a nation.

3. Standard holding that materials in a public library constitute government speech and are therefore exempt from First Amendment speech challenges. (See; *Leila Green Little, et al. v. Llano County, Texas* 138 F. 4th 834 [5th Cir. 2025])
 - 3.1. Right to receive information: According to the ruling above, this right is not implicated by a public library procuring, moving, or removing books.
 - 3.2. The Library Collection is not a public forum: While any and all ideas must be allowed within a public forum, this is not the case regarding decisions to purchase, remove, replace, or move library books. In fact, libraries regularly “weed” collections, particularly children’s books that might contain information that might once have been acceptable but no longer fits with society’s view of acceptable norms as well as information that has been found to be inaccurate.
 - 3.3. Shurtleff factors: Again, based on the above ruling, these factors “show that libraries’ collection decisions have traditionally expressed libraries’ own views about what constitutes worthwhile literature.”
4. Application to *You Are the Color*
 - 4.1. The right to receive information does not mean a library cannot remove a book and in this case there is ample reason to remove/replace *You Are the Color*. The executive director has stated emphatically and repeatedly that procurement is based on consumer/market/customer demand. Yet there was no customer demand for this book. It was recommended by a staff member, who heard about it from another staff member at the Arapahoe Library. The executive director has also stated that decisions to purchase/remove/replace/move books must not be from a political, religious, social or activist view. Yet we have been given no information as to the political, religious, social, or activist views of the staff member who recommended the book or the friend in another library who recommended it to the staff member.
 - 4.2. The library collection is not a public forum, and it would be entirely reasonable to remove a book that consumer/customers have shown to be inaccurate and indoctrinating. In fact, as outlined above, the reviews cited in favor of this book are from very dubious, and extremely biased reviewers with no expertise but a good deal of activist ideology maligning Jews.
 - 4.3. According to the Shurtleff factors cited in the case above, a library’s collection/removal decisions reflect the libraries’ own views on the value of collected titles and the Executive Director assures the DCL Foundation Board of Trustees [date unknown] that “customer demand is tied to the long-standing, conservative values of citizen freedom and self-determination.” But there was no demand for this book from “customers” and the reviewers consulted represent a very strong anti-Israel view with no apparent request from patrons for books with that viewpoint—at least none that have been cited or shared in the many communications about this book that have now circulated between the Executive Director, Library Board Trustees, and Foundation Board Trustees. Further, “customers” in other libraries do not seem to be requesting the title either. The executive director has stated that 90 libraries in the U.S. carry the title. If you count entire systems as one library, the ALA reports 9,074 libraries which means about 1% of libraries have purchased it. Considering the conservative nature of our community as stated by the executive director and the much more liberal nature of other communities, it seems assumptions were made that fly in the face of “self-determination” the Executive Director espouses.

Little, et al. v. Llano County 138 F 4th 834 (5th Cir. 2025) specifically states:

... a library expresses itself by deciding how to shape its collection. As one court put it: “With respect to the public library, the government speaks through its selection of which books to put on the shelves and which books to exclude.” *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals v. Gittens*, 414 F.3d 23, 28 (D.C. Cir. 2005) [“PETA”]. What the library is saying is: “We think these books are worth reading.”

Citizens of your community—your customers—have been expressing since February 2026, the shocked, confounded, and disturbed state that your actions have placed us in as the DCL disregards accurate information about Israel and places a book in the children’s section with propaganda about the only Jewish state in the world, a state which was a haven for the small number of Jews not murdered during the Holocaust, where so many American citizens from our county have friends and family, a state where they visit regularly and that they know intimately, a state that the cover of this book shows very clearly it would wipe off the face of the earth and replace with a Palestinian state. The DCL chose this book using only reviews by Palestinian activists. The executive director now says he is “balancing” this decision by placing other less controversial books about the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the collection. There is no “balance” while this book remains. *You Are the Color* tips that scale in a way that cannot be overcome. The DCL is telling us through the speech of their collection that our people will not be represented with accurate information, but rather by indoctrination of the county’s children against us.

REQUESTED ACTION

- Replace with alternative title: We are not requesting that Douglas County Libraries ban or remove this topic from their collection. We recognize the library’s role as a public forum for diverse ideas. However, the library also has a fundamental duty to properly choose and catalog materials according to cognitive and developmental appropriateness, to provide accurate information, to eschew indoctrination, to recognize that a library collection is a form of government speech and to thus proceed cautiously when deciding what information and ideas will be supported by this important government role and how it reflects on our community.
- Immediate relocation: Until an alternative title is found, *You Are the Color* must be re-cataloged and moved to the Middle School or Young Adult section, where readers possess the cognitive development and historical education necessary to process, analyze, and debate complex geopolitical conflicts and border disputes.
- Collection Balance: DCL is ethically obligated by its own Collection Development Policy to provide viewpoint balance. This book not only unfavorably tips that balance, it allows for no alternative view and actively calls for the elimination of the other side of the equation. As such, this book can only be considered a provocation masquerading as a children’s book. Would a children’s book that obliquely calls for the elimination of any other state in the world be purchased and retained by DCL?

In conclusion, the detailed policy breaches, developmental evidence, and governing legal precedents presented throughout this letter demonstrate that maintaining the status quo is both professionally indefensible and harmful to our community's youth. Because this self-published title entered our system via an internal staff bypass rather than legitimate patron demand or neutral peer evaluation, the Board of Trustees has a clear mandate and the full legal authority as a legislative body to correct this curatorial error today. We urge the Board to take swift, decisive action at the upcoming meeting by directing the Executive Director to immediately replace with an alternative title or re-catalog and relocate *You Are the Color* to the Young Adult section, order the recommended counterbalance titles, and restore DCL’s commitment to age-appropriateness, procedural integrity, and equal representation for all Douglas County families.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Gilad Shwartz
Larkspur, CO

Felice Entratter
Sedalia, CO

Candace and Steve Dylla
Parker, CO