

HANDLING OF CHALLENGED MATERIAL

Citizen's Request For Reconsideration of Material

To be submitted by all citizens requesting reexamination of library/instructional materials - print or non-print.

Author Sapphire Type of Material \_\_\_\_\_

Title Push

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by Faith Casale

Telephone [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Citizen represents: Self  Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. To what material do you object? (Please be specific: cite pages, etc.)  
See attached - language + sexual content

2. Why do you find this material objectionable?  
racial slurs, foul language, sexual content

3. Did you examine all the material? yes

4. Could you recommend this material for any age group? no

5. Is there anything in the content of this material that you do like?  
Ø

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by literary critics?  
see attached

7. What do you believe is the theme of this material?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What would you like the school to do about this material?

- Withdraw it from all students.
- Do not assign it to my child.
- Use under teacher direction only (on reserve).
- Other action.

9. In its place, what material of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Faith Casale*  
Signature of Citizen

9/26/22  
Date

# Push

I believe these books are the same. Here is an excerpt from chapter 1. This was made into a movie called "Precious". It's about a girl that is illiterate and is raped by her father and beat by her mother. She gets pregnant to her father. The language is strong in this book from what I read below and the bullet points are from Wikipedia describing the sex content.

- "The average person" would find that the material, on the whole, "appeals to prurient interest in sex"<sup>[4]</sup>
- The material "is patently offensive in the description or depiction of nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, sadomasochistic abuse, or excretion"<sup>[4]</sup>
- The material, on the whole, "does not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."<sup>[4]</sup>

## Chapter I

I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my fahver. That was in 1983. I was out of school for a year. This gonna be my second baby. My daughter got Down Sinder. She's retarded. I had got left back in the second grade too, when I was seven, 'cause I couldn't read (and I still peed on myself). I should be in the eleventh grade, getting ready to go into the twelf' grade so I can gone 'n graduate. But I'm not. I'm in the ninfe grade.

I got suspended from school 'cause I'm pregnant which I don't think is fair. I ain' did nothin'!

My name is Claireece Precious Jones. I don't know why I'm telling you that. Guess 'cause I don't know how far I'm gonna go with this story, or whether it's even a story or why I'm talkin'; whether I'm gonna start from the beginning or right from here or two weeks from now. Two weeks from now? Sure you can do anything when you talking or writing, it's not like living when you can only do what you doing. Some people tell a story 'n it don't make no sense or be true. But I'm gonna try to make sense and tell the truth, else what's the fucking use? Ain' enough lies and shit out there already?

So, OK, it's Thursday, September twenty-four 1987 and I'm walking down the hall. I look good, smell good—fresh, clean. It's hot but I do not take off my leather jacket even though it's hot, it might get stolen or lost. Indian summer, Mr Wicher say. I don't know why he call it that. What he mean is, it's hot, 90 degrees, like summer days. And there is no, none, I mean none, air conditioning in this mutherfucking building. The building I'm talking about is,

of course, I.S. 146 on 134th Street between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr Blvd. I am walking down the hall from homeroom to first period maff. Why they put some shit like maff first period I do not know. Maybe to gone 'n git it over with. I actually don't mind maff as much as I had thought I would. I jus' fall in Mr Wicher's class sit down. We don't have assigned seats in Mr Wicher's class, we can sit anywhere we want. I sit in the same seat everyday, in the back, last row, next to the door. Even though I know that back door be locked. I don't say nuffin' to him. He don't say nuffin' to me, now. First day he say, "Class turn the book pages to page 122 please." I don't move. He say, "Miss Jones, I said turn the book pages to page 122." I say, "Mutherfucker I ain't deaf!" The whole class laugh. He turn red. He slam his han' down on the book and say, "Try to have some discipline." He a skinny little white man about five feets four inches. A peckerwood as my mother would say. I look at him 'n say, "I can slam too. You wanna slam?" 'N I pick up my book 'n slam it down on the desk hard. The class laugh some more. He say, "Miss Jones I would appreciate it if you would leave the room right NOW." I say, "I ain' going nowhere mutherfucker till the bell ring. I came here to learn maff and you gon' teach me." He look like a bitch just got a train pult on her. He don't know what to do. He try to recoup, be cool, say, "Well, if you want to learn, calm down—" "I'm calm," I tell him. He say, "If you want to learn, shut up and open your book." His face is red, he is shaking. I back off. I have won. I guess.

I didn't want to hurt him or embarrass him like that you know. But I couldn't let him, anybody, know, page 122 look like page 152, 22, 3, 6, 5—all the pages look alike to me. 'N I really do want to learn. Everyday I tell myself something gonna happen, some shit like on TV. I'm gonna break through or somebody gonna break through to me—I'm gonna learn, catch up, be normal, change my seat to the front of the class. But again, it has not been that day.

But thas the first day I'm telling you about. Today is not the first day and like I said I was on my way to maff class when Mrs Lichenstein snatch me out the hall to her office. I'm really mad 'cause actually I like maff even though I don't do nuffin', don't open my book even. I jus' sit there for fifty minutes. I don't cause trouble. In fac' some of the other natives get restless I break on 'em. I say, "Shut up mutherfuckers I'm tryin' to learn something." First they laugh like trying to pull me into fuckin' with Mr Wicher and disrupting the class. Then I get up 'n say, "Shut up mutherfuckers I'm tryin' to learn something." The coons clowning look confuse, Mr Wicher look confuse. But I'm big, five feet nine-ten, I weigh over two hundred pounds. Kids is scared of me. "Coon fool," I tell one kid done jumped up. "Sit down, stop ackin' silly." Mr Wicher look at me confuse but grateful. I'm like the polices for Mr Wicher. I keep law and order. I like him, I pretend he is my husband and we live together in

Weschesser, wherever that is.

I can see by his eyes Mr Wicher like me too. I wish I could tell him about all the pages being the same but I can't. I'm getting pretty good grades. I usually do. I just wanna gone get the fuck out of I.S. 146 and go to high school and get my diploma.

Anyway I'm in Mrs Lichenstein's office. She's looking at me, I'm looking at her. I don't say nuffin'. Finally she say, "So Claireece, I see we're expecting a little visitor." But it's not like a question, she's telling me. I still don't say nuffin'. She staring at me, from behind her big wooden desk, she got her white bitch hands folded together on top her desk.

"Claireece."

Everybody call me Precious. I got three names—Claireece Precious Jones. Only mutherfuckers I hate call me Claireece.

"How old are you Claireece?"

White cunt box got my file on her desk. I see it. I ain't that late to lunch. Bitch know how old I am.

"Sixteen is ahh rather ahh"—she clear her throat—"old to still be in junior high school."

I still don't say nuffin'. She know so much let her ass do the talking.

"Come now, you are pregnant, aren't you Claireece?"

She asking now, a few seconds ago the hoe just knew what I was.

"Claireece?"

She tryin' to talk all gentle now and shit.

"Claireece, I'm talking to you."

I still don't say nuffin'. This hoe is keeping me from maff class. I like maff class. Mr Wicher like me in there, need me to keep those rowdy niggers in line. He nice, wear a dope suit every day. He do not come to school looking like some of these other nasty ass teachers.

"I don't want to miss no more of maff class," I tell stupid ass Mrs Lichenstein.

She look at me like I said I wanna suck a dog's dick or some shit. What's with this cunt bucket? (That's what my muver call women she don't like, cunt buckets. I kinda get it and I kinda don't get it, but I like the way it sounds so I say it too.)

I get up to go, Mrs Lichenstein ax me to please sit down, she not through with me yet. But I'm through with her, thas what she don't get.

"This is your second baby?" she says. I wonder what else it say in that file with my name on it. I hate her.

"I think we should have a parent-teacher conference Claireece—me, you, and your mom."

"For what?" I say. "I ain' done nuffin'. I doose my work. I ain' in no trouble. My grades is good."

Mrs Lichenstein look at me like I got three arms or a bad odor out my pussy or something.

What my muver gon' do I want to say. What is she gonna do? But I don't say that. I jus' say, "My muver is busy."

"Well maybe I could arrange to come to your house—" The look on my face musta hit her, which is what I was gonna do if she said one more word. Come to my house! Nosy ass white bitch! I don't think so! We don't be coming to your house in Weschesser or wherever the fuck you freaks live. Well I be damned, I done heard everything, white bitch wanna visit.

"Well then Claireece, I'm afraid I'm going to have to suspend you—"

"For what!"

"You're pregnant and—"

"You can't suspend me for being pregnant, I got rights!"

"Your attitude Claireece is one of total uncooperation—"

I reached over the desk. I was gonna yank her fat ass out that chair. She fell backwards trying to get away from me 'n started screaming, "SECURITY SECURITY!"

I was out the door and on the street and I could still hear her stupid ass screaming, "SECURITY SECURITY!"

"Precious!" That's my mother calling me.

I don't say nothin'. She been staring at my stomach. I know what's coming. I keep washing dishes. We had fried chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, and Wonder bread for dinner. I don't know how many months pregnant I am. I don't wanna stand here 'n hear Mama call me slut. Holler 'n shout on me all day like she did the last time. Slut! Nasty ass tramp! What you been doin'! Who! Who! WHOoooo like owl in Walt Disney movie I seen one time. Whooo? Ya wanna know who—

"Claireece Precious Jones I'm talkin' to you!"

I still don't answer her. I was standing at this sink the last time I was pregnant when them pains hit, wump! Ahh wump! I never felt no shit like that before. Sweat was breaking out on my forehead, pain like fire was eating me up. I jus' standing there 'n pain hit me, then pain go sit down, then pain git up 'n hit me harder! 'N she standing there screaming at me, "Slut! Goddam slut! You fuckin' cow! I don't believe this, right under my nose. You been high tailing it round here." Pain hit me again, then she hit me. I'm on the floor groaning, "Mommy please, Mommy please, please Mommy! Mommy! Mommy! MOMMY!" Then she KICK me side of my face! "Whore! Whore!" she screamin'. Then Miz West live down the hall pounding on the door, hollering "Mary! Mary! What you doin'! You gonna kill that chile! She need help not no beating, is you crazy!"

Mama say, "She shoulda tole me she was pregnant!"

"Jezus Mary, you didn't know. I knew, the whole building knew. Are you crazy \_\_\_"

"Don't tell me nothin' about my own chile—"

"Nine-one-one! Nine-one-one! Nine-one-one!" Miz West screamin' now. She call Mama a fool.

Pain walking on me now. Jus' stomping on me. I can't see hear, I jus' screamin', "Mommy! Mommy!"

Some mens, these ambulance mens, I don't see 'em or hear 'em come in. But I look up from the pain and he dere. This Spanish guy in EMS uniform. He push me back on a cushion. I'm like in a ball from the pain. He say,

"RELAX!" The pain stabbing me wif a knife and this spic talking 'bout relax.

He touch my forehead put his other hand on the side of my belly. "What's your name?" he say. "Huh?" I say. "Your name?" "Precious," I say. He say, "Precious, it's almost here. I want you to push, you hear me momi, when that shit hit you again, go with it and push, Preshecita. Push."

And I did.

And always after that i look for someone with his face and eyes in Spanish peoples. He coffee-cream color, good hair. I remember that. God. I think he was god. No man was never nice like that to me before. I ask at the hospital behind him, "Where that guy help me?" They say, "Hush girl you jus' had a baby."

But I can't hush 'cause they keep asking me questions. My name? Precious Jones. Claireece Precious Jones to be exact. Birth date? November 4, 1970. Where? "Here," I say, "right chere in Harlem Hospital." "Nineteen seventy?" the nurse say confuse quiet. Then she say, "How old are you?" I say, "Twelve." I was heavy at twelve too, nobody get I'm twelve 'less I tell them. I'm tall. I jus' know I'm over two hundred 'cause the needle on the scale in the bathroom stop there it don't can go no further. Last time they want to weigh me at school I say no. Why for, I know I'm fat. So what. Next topic for the day.

But this not school nurse now, this Harlem Hospital where I was borned, where me and my baby got tooked after it was borned on the kitchen floor at 444 Lenox Avenue. This nurse slim butter-color woman. She lighter than some Spanish womens but I know she black. I can tell. It's something about being a nigger ain't color. This nurse same as me. A lot of black people with nurse cap or big car or light skin same as me but don't know it. I'm so tired I jus' want to disappear. I wish Miss Butter would leave me alone but she jus' staring at me, her eyes getting bigger and bigger. She say she need to get some more information for the birth certificate.

It still tripping me out that I had a baby. I mean I knew I was pregnant, knew how I got pregnant. I been knowing a man put his dick in you, gush white stuff in your booty you could get pregnant. I'm twelve now, I been knowing about that since I was five or six, maybe I always known about pussy and dick. I can't remember not knowing. No, I can't remember a time I did not know. But thas all I knowed. I didn't know how long it take, what's happening inside, nothing, I didn't know nothing.

The nurse is saying something I don't hear. I hear kids at school. Boy say I'm



lauffing ugly. He say, "Claireece is so ugly she lauffing ugly." His fren' say, "No, that fat bitch is crying ugly." Laff laff. Why I'm thinking about those stupid boys now I don't know.

"Mother," she say. "What's your mother's name?" I say, "Mary L Johnston" (L for Lee but my mother don't like Lee, soun' too country). "Where your mother born," she say. I say, "Greenwood, Mississippi." Nurse say, "You ever been there?" I say, "Naw, I never been nowhere." She say, "Reason I ask is I'm from Greenwood, Mississippi, myself." I say, "Oh," 'cause I know I'm spozed to say something.

"Father," she say. "What's your daddy's name?"

"Carl Kenwood Jones, born in the Bronx."

She say, "What's the baby's father's name?"

I say, "Carl Kenwood Jones, born in the same Bronx."

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ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION 105.4

HANDLING OF CHALLENGED MATERIAL

Guide for Material Review by the Special Review Committee

A letter from the Chairman of the Review Committee, including the findings and recommendations, shall be attached to this Guide and sent to the complainant and the Superintendent.

TYPE OF MATERIAL IN QUESTION: Textbook \_\_\_\_\_ Library Book X \_\_\_\_\_

A-V Material \_\_\_\_\_ Curriculum Program/System \_\_\_\_\_

Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

TITLE Push \_\_\_\_\_

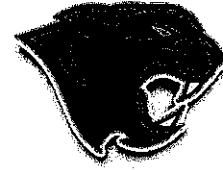
AUTHOR Saphire \_\_\_\_\_ PUBLISHER Vintage Books \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 1 -11 are to be completed by appropriate School Official(s).

1. Please provide a brief descriptive synopsis of questioned material.

Precious Jones, an illiterate sixteen-year-old, has up until now been invisible to the father who rapes her and the mother who batters her and to the authorities who dismiss her as just one more of Harlem's casualties. But when Precious, pregnant with a second child by her father, meets a determined and radical teacher, we follow her on a journey of education and enlightenment as she learns not only how to write about her life, but how to make it truly her own for the first time.

2. Intended grade level of material \_\_\_\_\_ At what grade level is material actually being used or taught locally? High School Library \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of school(s) using (or intending to use) questionable. Central York High School
4. Name and title of person(s) responsible for selection of material. Unknown \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was involved in the review and selection of this material? Unknown \_\_\_\_\_
6. Were the teachers using this material given ample opportunity and time to review and evaluate entire material before approval or adoption for local classroom use?  
(Yes or No) Unknown \_\_\_\_\_



**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION 105.4**

**HANDLING OF CHALLENGED MATERIAL**

7. Content

- A. Is the basic purpose of this material academic or sociological? (Circle the appropriate designation.)
- B. What are the positive aspects of this material? (Please attach to this form: citations - page, paragraph, lines, and/or other references.)- See attached
- C. What are the negative aspects of this material that are critical of (1) Individuals? (2) Ethnic, racial, or religious groups? (3) Institutions? (4) Cultural, social, political, and/or economic beliefs, practices, or traditions? (5) Our own American national heritage? (Please attach to this form citations - page, paragraph, lines and/or other references.)- See attached
- D. Academic skills
  - 1. How specifically does this material improve students' basic academic skills? (Please attach to this form a detailed explanation of how this material will improve students' skills.)- See attached
  - 2. Is this particular material superior to other available material in teaching basic academic skills? (Yes or No)     No

If so, according to what authorities? \_\_\_\_\_

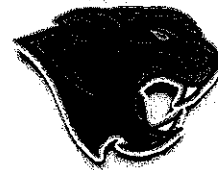
\_\_\_\_\_

If not, why was this material selected for use in this school district?

    Unknown    

E. Violence

- 1. Please list instances where violence is included in the material. (Please attach to this form detailed citations - page, paragraph, line, and/or other references.)- See Attached



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2. Is violence treated in the context of cause and consequence? (Yes or No) \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

If so, please specify page, paragraph, lines and/or other references to document that this is the case on the attached listing.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION 105.4**

**HANDLING OF CHALLENGED MATERIAL**

F. Profanity and Immoral Conduct

1. Please list instances where profanity and immoral conduct are included in the material. (Please attach to this form detailed citations - page, paragraph, lines, and/or other references.)- See attached

2. Are profanity and immoral conduct treated in the context of cause and consequence? (Yes or No) \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

If so, please cite examples in context on the attached listing to document that this is the case.

8. Teaching Methods and Outcomes

A. Could any content, exercise, questions or other aspect of the material in question be used to change attitudes, values, or religious or political beliefs of students? (Yes or No) \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

B. Are psychological techniques such as personality or attitude profiles, questions or interviews in areas of social, emotional, mental, or personal problems used in connection with this questioned material? (Yes or No) \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

9. What specific action does the school take to protect students from feeling odd, peculiar, or isolated from their peers when a parent or guardian refuses to allow a student to participate in programs using material they feel is objectionable?

\_\_\_ N/A- Not classroom material. \_\_\_\_\_

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CENTRAL YORK  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Educational Service Center



ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION 105.4

HANDLING OF CHALLENGED MATERIAL

[Signature]  
(Special Review Committee Member)

Principal  
Title

1/17/23  
Date

Tara Goodrich and Amanda Goodrich  
(Special Review Committee Member)

Teacher  
Title

1/17/23  
Date

[Signature]  
(Special Review Committee Member)

Librarian  
Title

1/17/23  
Date

Laurie Madey  
(Special Review Committee Member)

Teacher  
Title

1/17/23  
Date

[Signature]  
(Special Review Committee Member)

Asst. Supt.  
Title

1/17/23  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Special Review Committee Member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

CREATED 12/11; modified 8/2017 (moved under Policy 105)

Book Challenge Evidences

Sold

By Sapphire

7.

B. The intention of this book is to bring awareness to the struggles some members of society and their experiences.

C. The material is not critical is based upon experiences of some members of society such as abusive households, poverty, illiteracy, and a lack of action by adults to intervene and support.

D.

1. This material does not improve students basic academic skills due to the incorrect spelling and language structure within in the text.

E.

1. There are multiple scenes of violence (verbal, physical, and sexual). The mother in the story physically and emotionally abused the main character. The father also was portrayed as sexually abusing the main character of the text.

2. For example, a scene from the text reflects a negative interaction between a student and teacher causing the child to be removed from school. However, another adult intervenes to recognize her potential and support her in being placed in a different school.

F.

1. Profanity is used throughout the duration of the text. Immoral conduct takes place in the depictions of abuse being perpetrated against the main character.



January 17, 2023

Dear Dr. Aiken,

The purpose of this communication is to inform you of the decision of the Selection Review Committee established under Board Policy 105.1 pertaining to the request for removal of a text from the Central York High School Library. Under this policy, the committee is responsible to inform you in writing within five days of our decision pertaining to instructional material that has been challenged.

In regard to the matter submitted for the library text Push by Sapphire, it is the decision of this committee that this text be removed from Central York High School Library. Through the evaluation of the text, and specifically the material outlined in the challenge, it is the opinion of this committee that this text lacks quality literary structure and standards, as well as, contains sexual content, and descriptions of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse that do not meet the standard of developmental appropriateness for independent reading material available in our library. While the text describes the authentic, real-life experiences of the author, the independent reading of this text without supports is not recommended by this committee for this selection. This decision has been rendered through the discussion of the committee comprised of administrators, classroom teachers, and a librarian. In addition to dialogue, the committee researched outside reviews, of which some, also recommended the content of this text be consumed by readers aged outside of the high school level.

At this time, the committee recommends the removal of this text from the Central York High School Library, and make it no longer available for student check-out. If you have additional questions regarding this decision, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Youcheff', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Youcheff, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent