



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Canadian Publishers Express Concern Over Alleged Restriction of LGBTQIA2S+ Books in Waterloo Catholic District Schools**

November 10, 2023

The Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) is alarmed and deeply concerned by the alleged restriction of LGBTQIA2S+ books shortlisted for the Forest of Reading Awards by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB). It has come to our attention that at least four children's and young adult books, including titles published by our members, may be facing significant access restrictions.

A leaked memo and related emails suggest that certain shortlisted books have been placed on restricted-access shelves due to purported misalignment with curriculum. This restricts immediate access to these books for students in classrooms, opening the possibility that these titles may never be made available for students to read.

The four books identified in the memo, three of which are published by ACP member firms, all address LGBTQIA2S+ themes. They are:

- ***Princess Pru and the Ogre on the Hill***, written by Maureen Fergus, illustrated by Danesh Mohiuddin (Owlkids Books)
- ***The Mystery of the Painted Fan***, written by Linda Trinh, illustrated by Clayton Nguyen (Annick Press)
- ***Salma Writes a Book***, written by Danny Ramadan, illustrated by Anna Bron (Annick Press)
- ***Jude Saves the World***, written by Ronnie Riley (Scholastic)

We stand in solidarity with all those affected, and echo sentiments expressed by [The Writer's Union of Canada](#) (TWUC), [Forest of Reading](#), and in a joint statement by [Annick Press, Owlkids Books, and Scholastic](#) on the damaging effects of restricting students' access to diverse titles. Forest of Reading, managed by the Ontario Library Association (OLA), is a vital platform for promoting literacy and fostering a love of reading among young Canadians. Any restriction imposed on shortlisted books compromises the fairness of the competition and inhibits the opportunity for diverse voices to be celebrated in Canadian classrooms. Young readers must not be denied the opportunity to engage with meaningful and important perspectives.

ACP joins TWUC in calling on the Waterloo Catholic District School Board to address this alleged policy and urges the immediate removal of access restrictions for Forest of Reading shortlisted titles. Additionally, we advocate for a reconsideration of policies that hinder student access to books for any reason, especially reasons that are rooted in homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of hate.

Restricting access to age-appropriate books is contrary to the values of inclusiveness and diversity that our association and our members uphold. Book challenges, restrictions, and bans are a growing threat to readers across North America. The Association of Canadian Publishers remains committed to supporting our members, their writers, and readers across the country by advocating for freedom of expression, freedom to publish, and freedom to read within the Canadian book industry.

###

*ACP is the national voice of English-language Canadian-owned book publishers. ACP contributes to the development and maintenance of vibrant, competitive book publishing companies in order to support and strengthen the contribution that Canadian books make to Canada's cultural, economic, and educational landscape.*

**For more information, contact:**

Jack Illingworth, Executive Director  
Association of Canadian Publishers  
[jack\\_illingworth@canbook.org](mailto:jack_illingworth@canbook.org)