

Resource Review Public Meeting #2 Minutes

Monday, September 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. at Brainerd High School Large Conference Room

In Attendance:

- Mr. Timothy Murtha- Director of Teaching and Learning
- Ms. Andrea Rusk- Brainerd High School Principal
- Ms. Kathy Johnson- Elementary School Principal
- Mr. Jonathan Anderson- Forestview Middle School Principal
- Ms. Robin Knutson- District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School
- Ms. Amanda Small- District Advisory Committee Member #1
- Mr. Mike Stanek- Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2
- Ms. Michelle Brekken- ISD181 School Board Member
- Ms. Erin Karlgaard- Elementary School Teacher
- Ms. Paula Rossum- Forestview Middle School Teacher
- XXXXXXXXXXXX- Student Liaison at Brainerd High School
- Ms. Karla Shepherd-Johnson- Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary

Meeting Notes:

- The Committee Chairperson started the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and conducted a roll call. Everyone was present.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning spoke about the agenda for the meeting today. The committee cannot interrupt the speakers during their ten minutes, but the committee will have time to ask questions. More than one person will be talking about the value of the book.
- The Committee Chairperson read the purpose of the meeting: “to re-evaluate the resource, *Empire of Storms*- Sarah J. Maas by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Revaluation of Resources pursuant to BP 606 for Brainerd Public Schools”.
- The Committee Chairperson read the expectations for proceedings and he reviewed committee responsibilities.
 - The Committee Chairperson said he assumed everyone read the book. The committee members nodded “yes” that they all have read *Empire of Storms*.
 - The Committee Chairperson asked if every committee member had read the e-mail last week that the Director of Teaching and Learning received, and then forwarded to the committee members. All committee members acknowledged that they did read the e-mail, so the letter was not read aloud.
 - The Committee Chairperson said he assumed everyone had an idea as to how each committee member wanted to answer questions #1-7.
- The Committee Chairperson asked if anyone on the committee had questions before the committee members heard the testimony.
 - No one on the committee had any questions.
- The Committee Chairperson said there would be a ten minute testimony for removing the book. This testimony will go first. Then, the committee will have five minutes to ask the person questions.
- The Committee Chairperson called forth testimony for the removal of the book.

- Ms. Shirley Yeager greeted the committee. She said today the committee members will make a decision. She read a quote. “God will hold us responsible.” When you read something questionable, the issue is whether it is pleasing to you, those around you, and to God. What will it do to your relationships? How will you feel afterwards? Will you have a clear conscience? Part of your job as educators is to help students develop their own personal convictions. Discipline is essential for success in the adult world. A policy that needs a rewrite. She challenged the committee members to go beyond 606. She acknowledged the ISD181 mission statement for student equity: “...by providing the highest-quality programs and resources...” Does this book meet this mission statement? It is a choice book; library book; optional reading. She said that library books are essential. Literacy is essential. Every book is a critical tool. Libraries have limited budget and limited space. “Highest-quality program and resources”- Does this book meet this criteria? She shared a story that she was moved by a boy that spoke at the ISD181 School Board meeting. “Partnership between the school and the parent.” If the book is approved and OK, that is the message the committee is sending to students. Does this book meet this criterion? This book was initially ordered to be housed at the Forestview Middle School. It is classified as Y.A. in the young adult category because of its content; she said it is marked as “mature.” Since so few students could read it at Forestview Middle School, she stated the book was moved to Brainerd High School, where it is also limited at BHS. She asked why the district provides books that only limited students can read. She stated that everyone on the committee are professionals and are all well-aware. She stated the biology of sex does not include the techniques of sex. She said the committee members are sanctioning the early sexualization of students if the book is kept. Is it beneficial to a student’s development? She said she was not asking the committee members to ban this book. It will still be available at the Brainerd Public Library. She stated she was asking if the book is necessary, critical, essential for the ISD181 district’s goal. The district has many policies (there is a video policy). She said if the book was made into a video, it would not be able to be shown. She mentioned policy 504 and if scenes from the book were printed on a t-shirt, she said the t-shirt would not be allowed to be worn by a student in school. She encouraged the committee members to seek counsel from Above. She said the committee members’ vote is between us and God, not to those around us. She acknowledged everyone in the room wants to protect students and that we all care about students. She ended her testimony with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: “The time is always right to do the right thing.”
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said that Ms. Shirley Yeager had two minutes left if she wanted to add anything. She stated that she was good with what she said.
- The Committee Chairperson asked if there were any further questions.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said that in the preamble, Ms. Shirley Yeager mentioned that “God will hold us responsible.” He inquired if somebody does not believe in God, are they still a part of this community?
 - Ms. Shirley Yeager answered that yes, they are still a part of this community.

- The Elementary School Teacher committee member asked a point of question. She inquired if it was accurate the statement Ms. Shirley Yeager spoke about the book being labeled as “mature” and limited to students at BHS.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that there are not any books at BHS that are labeled as “mature.”
 - The Committee Chairperson said she had the same question for clarification as the Elementary School Teacher committee member had. The Committee Chairperson stated that Ms. Shirley Yeager made a lot of valid points in her testimony that the committee members will all consider.
- The Forestview Middle School Principal committee member asked if this book was equated to a movie, is there information what it would be rated too?
 - Ms. Shirley Yeager responded that she was just relating it to what she read in the book.
- The Committee Chairperson called forth testimony for the retention of the book.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said he would also speak for a few minutes as well for the retention of the book.
 - Ms. Dorian Eiesland stated that she has been in a book club for many years. She said she is open to other points of view. The first week of October is banned book week. She mentioned that the slogan is “Let freedom read.” She said we are all aware of the increase of banned books in the United States. She provided the statistic that in 2022-2023, there was a record number of 4,000 bans, which consisted from three states primarily. She mentioned the removal of books from libraries and mentioned examples of how some books have been tossed in the trash, which is alarming to her. This is what prompted her to be here and speak to this committee. She mentioned the book that was in question last week in Carver County, MN. She cited another case in the United States in 1969 and she read the constitutional statement:

“The Supreme Court has long recognized that the vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in the community of American schools, which serves as a ‘marketplace of ideas’ *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist.* , 393 U.S. 503, 512 (1969) That is because ‘the Nation’s future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth out of a multitude of tongues, rather than through any kind of authoritative selection.” *Id.* “School libraries are where students discover new areas of interest and engage in voluntary inquiry outside the context of required curriculum. As the Supreme Court has emphasized, it is fundamental to our understanding of what schools are that, ‘students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding.’ *Pico*, 457 U.S. at 868. And, ‘the school library is the principal locus of such freedom.’ *Id.* at 869. That is because, “in the school library, a student can literally explore the unknown, and discover areas of interest and thought not covered by the prescribed curriculum. The student learns that a library is a place to test or expand upon ideas presented to him, in or out of the classroom.”
 - Ms. Dorian Eisland shared that she is a mother, grandmother, and she read those banned books to young people. She said they are functional, capable adults now. She stated that in the 1970s, Kurt Vonnegut books were banned because of what was spoken about the

war zones. She stated that she does not think we are raising informed, intelligent students of the future if we do not teach them the real truth, now or in the past. She mentioned historical events, such as the Japanese internment camps and the plight of the Navajo people in history. She stated that she thinks American citizens face threats to our democracy every day, and she believes this is one of them (referring to the removal of *Empire of Storms* from the BHS library).

- The Director of Teaching and Learning shared his perspective as a former teacher. He said that particularly of *Empire of Storms*, so many of his students gravitated to fantasy literature. He stated that it offered students something different. It brought development of their imagination and vocabulary. There is a direct educational matter. The Director of Teaching and Learning said he found four passages in *Empire of Storms* that were controversial. He shared that he raised two boys and that he had to endure ages of curiosity and ages of immaturity. They are nice young men today. He said he would prefer a conversation with his boys about the content. He shared that he would have had no problems with his boys reading this book. He acknowledged that not every parent or guardian communicates with their students. He stated that he would prefer each and every child to be given a full, supportive, and loving home; collectively to have the wisdom to let the decisions be left to the family structure. He reiterated that he would have no problem with his children reading this book. He stated that the vast majority of parents do communicate with their children. He stated the ISD181 school policy is clear on the totality of the book, not four scenes. He said as a reading teacher, it is hard to reach some students, and he wants to lift that up as options for our students; this is why I report retaining *Empire of Storms*.
- The Committee Chairperson asked if anyone had any questions for Ms. Dorian Eiesland.
- The Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary asked about the Supreme Court policy and the Carver County reference in her testimony.
 - Ms. Dorian Eiesland said she would e-mail the Secretary the Supreme Court policy, which she did. She also shared that Carver County in MN voted to retain a book in the library. It was a book that has been challenged frequently in other areas that is LGBT+ or race related.
- The Committee Chairperson read the agenda for item #7 (Committee Discussion). He stated that this will last 20 minutes. He asked every committee member to take out their Report of Reevaluation Committee handout. Each committee member did. The Committee Chairperson read each of the seven statements and each committee member said “Yes,” “No,” or “N/A.”
 - #1: “The Resource supports and is consistent with the general educational goals of District ISD181 and the goals and objectives of the individual school and specific course.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: Yes.

- Elementary School Teacher: Yes.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: Yes.
- #2: “The Resource was selected to support and enrich the individual school curriculum and to meet the personal needs of the students.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: N/A.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: N/A.
 - Elementary School Teacher: Yes.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: No.
- #3: “The Resource is appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles and social development of students for whom the materials are selected.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: Yes.
 - Elementary School Teacher: Yes.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2:
- #4: “The Resource provides a background of information which will motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behavior, to comprehend their duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in our society, and to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: N/A.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.

- Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: N/A.
 - Elementary School Teacher: N/A.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: No.
- #5: “The Resource was selected for the atypical students as well as the average student.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: Yes.
 - Elementary School Teacher: Yes.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: Yes.
- #6: “The Resource was selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses, and shall be judged as a whole.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: Yes.
 - Elementary School Teacher: Yes.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: Yes.
- #7: “The Resource supports the academic standard for age, grade and content area.”
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: N/A.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School:
 - Elementary School Teacher: N/A.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.

- Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: No.
 - The Committee Chairperson tallied the totals for each of the seven statements and he read off the information
 - # 1: 12 “Yes” from the committee members.
 - #2: 9 “Yes,” 2 “N/A,” and 1 “No”
 - #3: 12 “Yes” from the committee members.
 - #4: 8 “Yes,” 3 “N/A,” and 1 “No”
 - #5: 12 “Yes” from the committee members.
 - #6: 12 “Yes” from the committee members.
 - #7: 9 “Yes,” 2 “N/A” and 1 “No”
- The Forestview Middle School Principal reminded the committee that the purpose is to evaluate the text at Brainerd High School as an independent reading source.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning reiterated that *Empire of Storms* is not a required text.
- The Committee Chairperson said each committee member will have time to speak for a minute and a half.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he wanted to thank everyone in the community for having a conversation in a respectful and transparent manner.
 - The Principal at Brainerd High School said she wanted to listen to the other committee members first.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 said she wanted to listen to the other committee members first.
 - The Forestview Middle School Teacher said she wanted to listen to the other committee members first.
 - The Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary read the following to the committee: “I have the pleasure of teaching English Language Arts to high school students. It is such a joy seeing students pick up a book and relating characters to their own lives, or escaping in a fantasy world to have reprieve from their stressful lives. Taking *Empire of Storms* out of the high school library would be a disservice to students at BHS. The overarching theme of this novel has nothing to do with sexual scenes. The message is about perseverance and having grit, even in the most difficult circumstances, such as war. This is a lesson that is vital for all high school students. In a world where so many teenagers only read what is on Snapchat or what is assigned to them in class, we should be praising students for reading an independent novel. The more literature students read, the better readers they become. This book is recommended for students 14 years old and up, according to Children's Book Review, Bloomsbury Reviews, and Common Sense Media, which is why this book is not at Forestview Middle School, only BHS. The book also has a high lexile level of 860 according to Booksource.com, and this text has a multitude of characters in it, which requires extreme critical thinking skills of keeping track of who is who in the plot. In the future, I encourage the ISD181 school district and community members to spend this kind of time and resources on helping BHS teenagers with their mental health and anxiety, which is a more prevalent issue, as opposed to spending time and resources on an

independent choice book that the complainant has not read in its entirety, and that has been checked out of the high school library by merely three students.

The public education system in the United States was designed to represent and educate everyone from all walks of life, and we never know which students will be positively impacted by fantasy books, such as *Empire of Storms*, which is why I recommend to keep this novel as an independent choice read selection at BHS, and I hope the school board comes to the consensus to keep the entire series in the school library, so that more time and resources are not spent on the other Sarah J. Maas' books that are being challenged. Thank you for your time.”

- The ISD181 School Board Member passed on speaking.
- The ISD181 Student Liaison said the portions in *Empire of Storms* that some people found controversial were with consenting adults. The ISD181 Student Liaison said she has read *Speak*, which is about a true story how the author was raped. She said this led her to have a positive conversation with her mom. She said reading can lead a person to take someone to a trusted adult or guardian. She thinks it can help people fit into their back pocket and mature and grow. It will help people in the long run and help people learn more.
- The Elementary School Teacher said she wished she would have written down something like the Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary did. She shared that one of her greatest joys is the partnership between families of her students. She said when she thinks of all the very different circumstances her students come from, she stated that she believes now is a good time with her younger students to have conversations. She feels confident that those conversations have happened with students and their families. She said that her high school child is registering to draft and vote. She trusts that families are having those conversations with their children.
- The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School read the following speech: “Respecting diverse opinions and allowing each family to make their own decisions regarding reading material is a fundamental principle of a democratic society. While people may have different views on what is appropriate to read, it’s crucial to uphold the right to read and the freedom to make those choices without imposing one’s own beliefs on others.
Ultimately, school libraries serve as hubs of learning, exploration, and intellectual growth. The First Amendment protects the right to access information and ideas, even when those ideas are controversial or unpopular. By upholding these principles, we can ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with a diverse array of materials that reflect the rich tapestry of human thought and experience. This, in turn, helps prepare them to become informed and engaged citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to society.
- The Forestview Middle School Principal said he did not have a statement right now.
- The Committee Chairperson went around again to see if anyone else wanted to speak on the committee.
- The Brainerd High School Principal thanked the ISD181 Student Liaison and said that this student is so fortunate to have a mom that opens up those conversations. The Brainerd High School Principal shared that her parents are Scandinavian folks and their

family did not talk about many things. She said she picked up books herself and it is important as a community to have these processes. She said she hopes the ISD181 school board will look at its policy. As a leader at BHS, she said she looks differently with choice books. This is different from a book that is brought in the classroom. She shared that BHS has a solid plan for parents, guardians, and students that are not comfortable with curriculum literature. There is support available and alternative options to read. She said she personally did not like *Empire of Storms*. It was a struggle to read with all of the characters and their names. She also thanked all the members of the committee and shared that this was a 25 hour commitment to read and listen to this long book, and it was not easy.

- The Forestview Middle School Teacher said challenging this book is asking us to filter what literature these students are asking through one lens. She said that sexual conduct is at their fingertips with cell phones. Adults cannot pretend to protect young people from. She said she agreed with what the ISD181 Student Liaison said that some students will face uncomfortable experiences in life. Books are an emotionally safe way for students to process.
- The ISD181 School Board Member said it is her belief that books are tools for understanding complex issues. She said young people deserve to see themselves reflected in library books. She believes that we all have intellectual freedom and we need to respect individual freedom. Every person has the right to access information from all points of view, in all formats, and without restriction.
- The Forestview Middle School Principal said he had one last thing to say. To be clear, he said to him, it comes down to a resource at Brainerd High School and he stated this resource is developmentally appropriate. For him, that is the question for this committee to decide.
- The Committee Chairperson said he has two minutes to speak.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said if the Committee Chairperson needed more time to speak, the committee can make a motion.
- The Committee Chairperson said he was OK.
- The Committee Chairperson said he has been conflicted from the beginning of this process due to the book being a choice read, as opposed to a curriculum text. His feelings are still the same. He said he follows policy, due to his background in the military. This committee was not formed to ban the book. He shared that he wants to echo what the Brainerd High School Principal said. When he read the book, he shared that he was uncomfortable with some of the scenes. He mentioned that there are other areas where people can get the book, such as the public library. He asked if it was our job to provide that book when it is so readily available at a student's fingertips? It is all about the policy. He also mentioned that context is a real thing. He stated that he truly believes no one on the committee has any ill intent towards any child; context matters and all committee members' hearts are in the right spot. He stated that each opinion is just as important as the next. He encouraged everyone there that their opinion matters, no matter how the vote turns out. He reiterated that everyone's opinions are appreciated. He almost mentioned that the book *Empire of Storms* was checked out a total of three times at BHS. He inquired how long the book has been at BHS. He is taking that into consideration.

- The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School said since the book was bought in 2018, it has been checked out a total of three times at BHS.
- The Committee Chairperson read agenda item #8: “Roll Call Vote on the question,” whether the resource will be retained or not retained for use.
- The Committee Chairperson stated that this vote was solely for *Empire of Storms*. He stated that he would not be comfortable getting rid of the whole series, if it was voted to remove this resource. He has heard that the book *Empire of Storms* is the most graphic from the series. He reiterated that the committee is looking at the individual resource.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that his question of procedure is, does the committee feel like they want to make a decision on this book first, and then look at the series as a whole? He stated that the committee would need a second motion, if this were the case.
- The Committee Chairperson asked if he could restate his motion. First, look at this book *Empire of Storms*. Then, have a secondary vote based on the series.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that the dialogue after the vote will be very important afterwards. He tabled the motion after this vote on *Empire of Storms*. He asked if that was fair to everyone.
 - The Committee Chairperson asked if that was clear to everyone.
 - There was noded agreement that the committee would vote on *Empire of Storms* first.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated to follow the agenda as written.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning clarified if this vote was to retain the resource or not retained. He was wondering what the expected response was.
 - The ISD181 School Board Member motioned to vote for the retention of this resource in the media center.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 seconded the motion.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that just to be clear to everyone here, if a committee member says “yes,” that means to retain the resource; if a committee member says “no,” that means to not retain the resource. He stated the vote will be roll call.
 - Director of Teaching and Learning: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Principal: Yes.
 - District Advisory Committee Member #1: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Teacher: Yes.
 - Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary: Yes.
 - ISD181 School Board Member: Yes.
 - Student Liaison at Brainerd High School: Yes.
 - Elementary School Teacher: Yes.
 - Elementary School Principal: Yes.
 - District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School: Yes.
 - Forestview Middle School Principal: Yes.
 - Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2: Yes.
- The Committee Chairperson stated that it was a unanimous “yes” to retain the resource.

- The Committee Chairperson asked if the committee allows discussion. He also stated that the committee recommends the retention of this book to the ISD181 School Board.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that this is something the committee does not make the decision on, but the recommendation can be made to the ISD181 School Board. The Director of Teaching and Learning said he personally recommends that the committee recommends all books of this series by Sarah J. Maas to be retained at BHS. He stated that if a committee does the series for each book one at a time, it would consist of 33 days, 25 hours, and the committee would be here for the next 15 months.
 - The Elementary School Teacher commented that copies of each book would have to be purchased as well for all committee members.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he is halfway through the next book in the series. He feels like *Empire of Storms* is the most graphic of the series; it seems to follow logically that the series is retained at the high school level only.
 - The Elementary School Teacher said that the ISD181 School Board makes the final decision.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that the complainant has the right to go to the ISD 181 School Board. If the complainant needs help with the process, they should let him know, and he can help.
- The Committee Chairperson said every committee member needed to go around and sign the form.
- The Brainerd High School Principal stated that she referenced 25 hours of time spent on reading the book and the Elementary School Teacher mentioned the cost of books for the committee members, but she wanted to make clear that time and money is not why she would support the whole series. She has many other reasons for retaining the series and she spoke with a teacher who has read the whole series, so that she was well-informed on making this decision.
- The Committee Chairperson stated that in his own point of view, he does not believe this resource should be at BHS, but he said how the policy is written, that is how he made his decision.
- The ISD181 School Board Member stated that she thinks it would be unfortunate if BHS allowed part of the series, and not the entire series because context is so important.
 - The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School pointed out that this is why the book was such a challenge to read.
 - The Elementary School School Teacher stated that she had to Google what happened at the end of the last book because she was curious.
- The Elementary School Teacher motioned to recommend to the ISD 181 School Board to retain the whole Sarah J. Maas series.
 - The Committee Chairperson said there was a second motion from the Forestview Middle School Principal.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that he will write the recommendation and findings to the ISD181 School Board Committee that the entire series should be retained.
 - The Elementary School Teacher inquired if the committee needed to vote.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he believed a voice vote was fine.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal agreed that this was a separate motion, so the committee could do a voice vote.
 - The Committee Chairperson stated, “All in favor say, ‘Ay.’”

- All committee members said “Ay.”
 - The Committee Chairperson stated, “All opposed same sign.”
 - There was no one on the committee who opposed it.
 - The Committee Chairperson stated that the motion carries.
- The Elementary School Teacher motioned to adjourn the meeting.
 - The Elementary School Principal seconded to adjourn the meeting.
- The Committee Chairperson reiterated that every voice matters and he thanked everyone for their time, and to continue to make those voices heard.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said to the committee members that if they have their folders and papers, he will collect them, as well as collecting the copies of the book *Empire of Storms*.
- The meeting concluded.