

“Books won’t stay banned. They won’t burn. Ideas won’t go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost.”

A. Whitney Griswold, 1959

After the Censor Comes

Take the time to figure out what happened, what follow up steps to take, and what may be needed to help in future challenges.

1. Review what happened, the actions taken, the interactions and the timeline. Get input from those involved.
2. Communicate what happened to library staff, volunteers, and members of the library’s governing body: trustees, school/academic administrators and affiliated organizations: Friends, parent-teacher associations. Use this as an opportunity to educate everyone about intellectual freedom and libraries.
3. Thank any individuals or organizations that provided assistance.
4. If the media became involved, communicate what happened to them. Emphasize the library’s mission and its role in supporting intellectual freedom.
5. Write to the individuals and/or organizations that posed the question or challenge. Thank them for their concern and explain the basis for the outcome.
6. Evaluate what happened and formulate a plan to reinforce skills and knowledge to deal with future challenges. Provide educational materials and workshops for anyone involved in formulating policies or providing library services: staff, volunteers, Friends, trustees, and administrators.
7. Promote activities that inform and educate the public regarding libraries and intellectual freedom: Banned Books Week, National Library Week, and Bill of Rights Day.
8. Support local, state and national organizations that share the library’s concerns regarding the intellectual freedom.