

To the members of the Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education:

We, the undersigned advocacy organizations and authors, **are writing to urge you to reverse your ban of *Young Palestinians Speak* and return the title to your middle school libraries.**

As we understand it, *Young Palestinians Speak* was available in Chappaqua Central School District middle school libraries for several school years, but became the subject of controversy this year when it was included in a library display in April for Arab American Heritage Month. We are aware that since then, the book has been moved from middle school libraries to the district high school, effectively banning the book from middle school students in the district.

PEN America's [definition](#) of a book ban states: a school book ban occurs when an objection to the content of a book leads to that volume being withdrawn either fully or partially from availability. Book bans can be both permanent and temporary. When titles are aged up to older grades as a result of these complaint processes, they are no longer available to the intended readers and those most likely to engage with the content. The book is thus banned for the readers who were once able to access it. **As [listed](#) in PEN America's 2023-2024 banned books index, we categorize *Young Palestinians Speak* as *banned by restriction in Chappaqua Schools*.**

As authors and advocates concerned with free expression and young people's access to literature, we know access to diverse stories and representative literature makes a difference in the lives of all students. Children's literature expert Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop once said: "Literature transforms the human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience." **We find it especially concerning that this book was removed from libraries during Arab American Heritage Month, an opportune time for Palestinian voices to be heard, not censored.**

As signatories of this letter, we represent a diverse group of authors and experts working on supporting free expression and young people's access to literature that opens hearts, minds, and doors. Forms of suppression and the censorship of ideas at the behest of some ideologies or viewpoints threatens the freedom to read, and puts students' opportunity to feel seen or learn about difference in jeopardy—things needed now more than ever.

We urge you to review and revise your actions regarding *Young Palestinians Speak*. This will protect and respect the rights of all students and parents in your community, and support your district's library professionals who facilitate students' freedom to read and learn every day.

The middle school students of Chappaqua Central School District deserve access to diverse literature like *Young Palestinians Speak*, the same as they have had for years. **Books aren't harmful – censorship is.**

Signed:

Organizational signatories:

PEN America
Interlink Publishing
Authors Against Book Bans
National Coalition Against Censorship
New York Civil Liberties Union

Author signatories:

Anthony Robinson and Annemarie Young, authors of *Young Palestinians Speak*
Maggie Tokuda-Hall, author of *Love in the Library, Squad*, and more
Adib Khorram, author of *Darius the Great Is Not Okay*
Ashley Shesley, author of *Child of the Dragon*
Alix E. Harrow, author of *Starling House*
TJ Alexander, author of *Chef's Kiss*
yves., author of *Something's Not Right*
Ann Zhao, author of *Dear Wendy*
Sarah MacLean, author of *Knockout*
Sydney Langford, author of *The Loudest Silence*
Nino Cipri, author of *Dead Girls Don't Dream, Finna, Defekt, and Homesick*
Keezy Young, author of *Hello Sunshine*
Sarah Zachrich Jeng, author of *The Other Me*
Janae Marks, author of *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*
Caroline Kusin Pritchard, author of *Gitty and Kvetch, What Jewish Looks Like* and *Where Is Poppy*
Katta Kis, author of *Love in the Liner Notes*
Fin Leary, editor of *Future States of Stars* (OwlCrate Press, 2025); contributor to *These Bodies Ain't Broken* (Page Street Publishing, 2025)
Maia Kobabe, author of *Gender Queer: A Memoir*
J. Anderson Coats, author of *The Loss of the Burying Ground*
Kelly Jones, author of the *Unusual Chickens* series
P. H. Low, author of *These Deathless Shores*
Rob MacWolf, author of *You Look Lost, Pup*
Erika Swyler, author of *The Book of Speculation, Light From Other Stars, We Lived on the Horizon*
Ellen Hopkins, author of *Crank* and other YA novels
Kelly Jensen, author of *Body Talk: 37 Voices Explore Our Radical Anatomy*