

A decorative border surrounds the central text area, featuring various colorful books and papers in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and pink, some open and some closed, set against a teal background.

Soft Censorship:

How to Recognize It and How to
combat It

A decorative border of various books in different colors (blue, yellow, orange, pink) and orientations (open, closed) surrounds the central text area.

District Reconsideration and Collection Development Policies



Develop and Use a Clear Reconsideration Policy

- Some places require your reconsideration policy to be updated every few years to be legally binding.
- Use the policy as a shield



My Favorite Things in Our Reconsideration Policy:

- Books must be read cover to cover by the person challenging them
- The challenge must include page numbers and references
- Only stakeholders can challenge a book
- Materials stay on the shelf while being challenged
- The challenge must go through official channels with official paperwork



My Least Favorite Things in Our Reconsideration Policy:

- The superintendent can pull a book at their discretion.
- The board hears challenges with no teachers or librarians involved
- Challenges can be anonymous



Try to Include these Ideas in your Reconsideration Policy:

- What is the purpose of your policy
- Who is eligible to bring a book challenge
- Who will review the challenge and what are review procedures
- What criteria is being used to review the book?
- Accessibility during review



Try NOT to Include these Ideas in your Reconsideration Policy:

- Vague or subjective language
- Anonymous and/or unlimited challenges
- Automatic removal of book upon challenge
- Lack of educational evaluation criteria
- Excluding librarians and/or teachers from the review process
- No clear appeal process



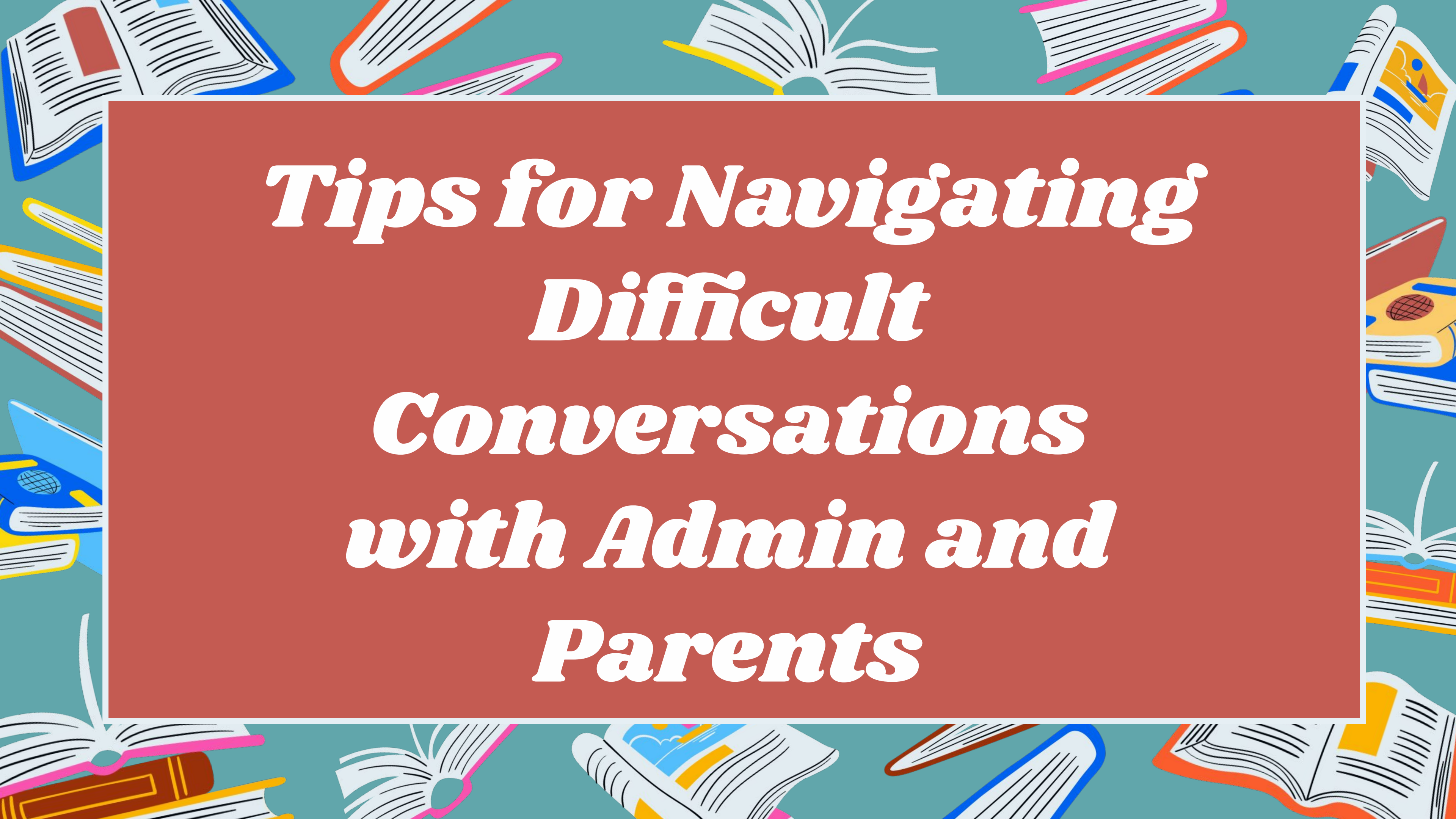
Collection Development Policies that Can Help with Challenges:

- Have multiple professional ready
- Have clear criteria for choosing material, like:
 - Educational Value
 - Accuracy, and currency of information
 - Literary and Artistic Merit
 - Representation of diverse perspectives and cultures
 - Relevance to student interests and needs
 - Age-appropriateness



Collection Development Policies that
Can Help with Challenges:

READ THE BOOKS

A decorative border of various books in different colors (blue, yellow, orange, pink) and orientations (open, closed) surrounds the central text area.

Tips for Navigating Difficult Conversations with Admin and Parents

An illustration on the left side of the slide shows a stack of books and a notepad. At the top is a blue book with a red bookmark. Below it is a white notepad with a blue cover and a yellow pencil. Underneath the notepad is a red book. To the right of the red book is a blue book. In front of the blue book is a yellow book with a red bookmark. At the bottom is an orange book. The books are stacked in a way that they appear to be open and ready for use.

Tips for Conversations with Admin

- Assume that they are coming from a place of good intention
- Try to have these conversations over email, if you can't summarize in person or text conversations in an email so that there is a record
- Have professional reviews ready!
- Remain Calm. Which is the hardest thing ever asked of you, but try.
- Bring your union rep and your reconsideration policy to the meeting if necessary.

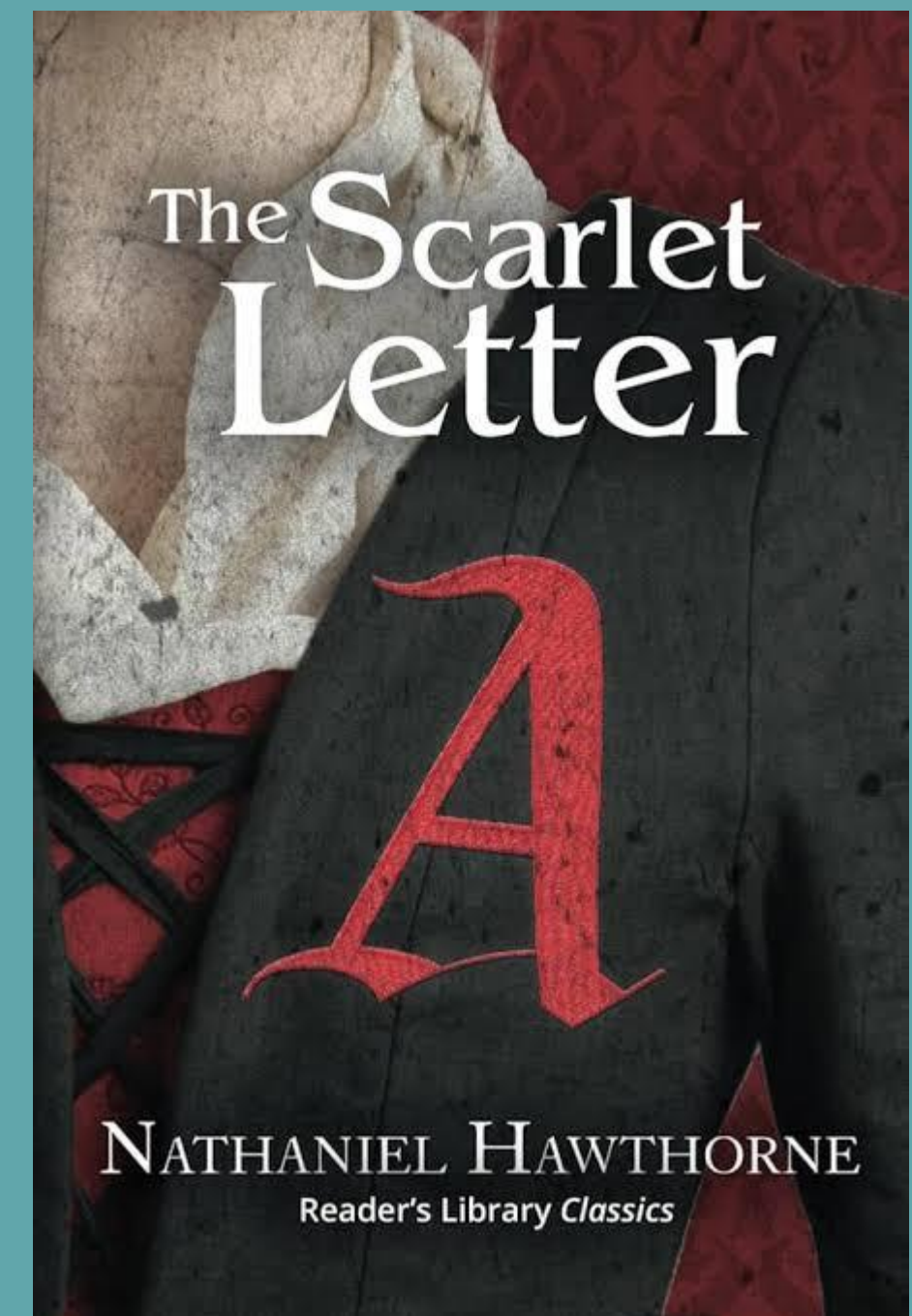
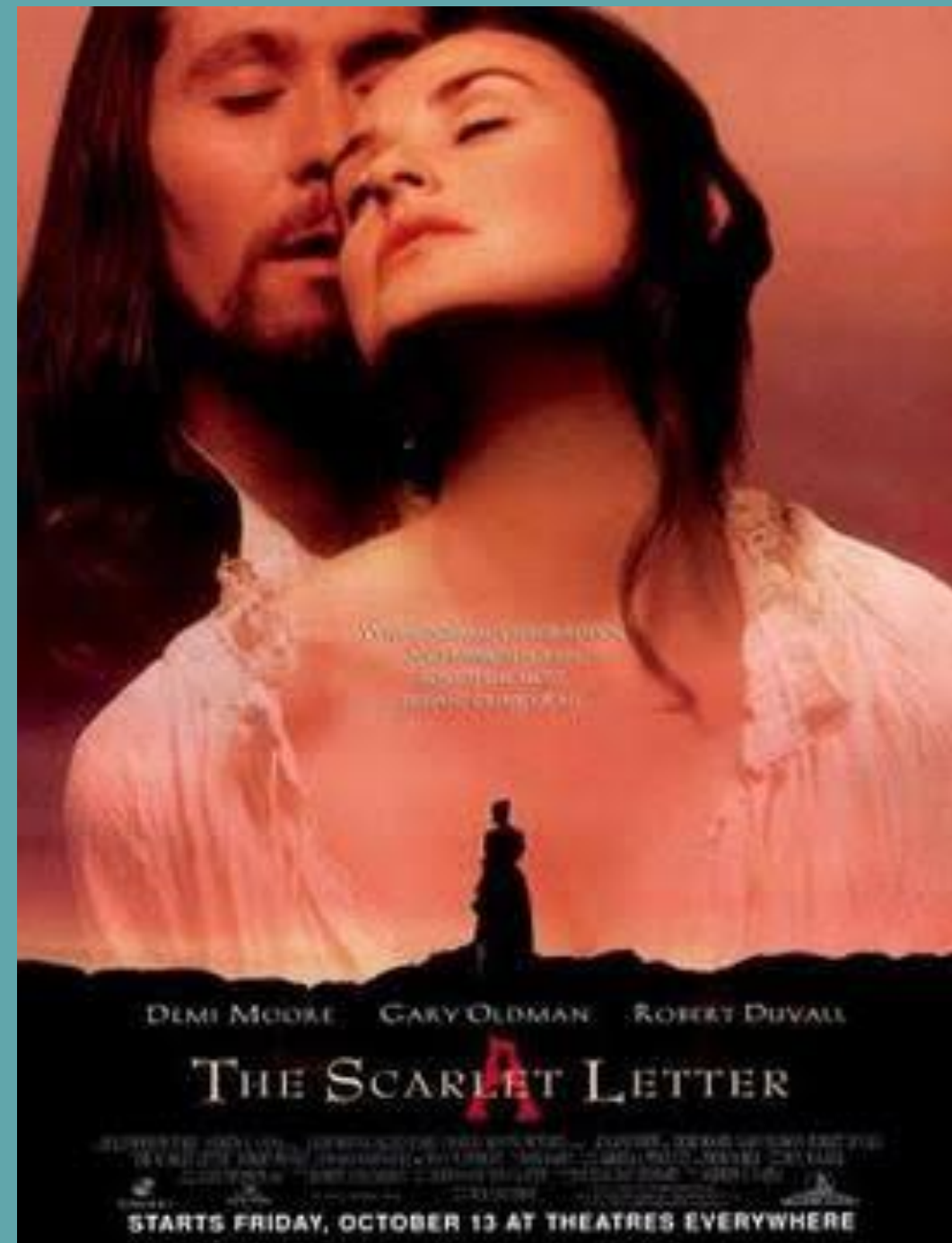


Tips for Conversations with Parents

- Keep records of every conversation
- Stay respectful and listen to their concerns
- Know the policy, reference the policy
- Explain that the library serves a diverse student body with wide-ranging interests and maturity levels.
- Emphasize that not every book is right for every student—but every student should be able to find books that are right for them.
- Send the parent your official reconsideration policy and send them to your admin



Let me tell you a silly story



The background of the slide is a teal color with a decorative border of stylized, colorful books. The books are shown in various orientations, some open and some closed, with different colored spines and pages. The books are scattered around the edges of the slide, creating a border that frames the central text area.

Balanced, Diverse, and Age Appropriate Materials



Balanced and Diverse Materials are NEEDED!

A Balanced Collection Reflects All Students' Identities

- Helps students see themselves, their families, and their communities represented.
- Builds a sense of belonging and validates personal experiences.

A Diverse Collection Promotes Empathy and Understanding

- Exposes students to experiences, cultures, and perspectives different from their own.
- Encourages curiosity, empathy, and open-mindedness.



Balanced and Diverse Materials are NEEDED!

A Balanced Collection Prepares Students for a Global Society

- Helps students navigate a diverse world with cultural competence and sensitivity.
- Encourages respect for others' beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of life.

A Diverse Collection Counters Stereotypes and Bias

- Provides positive representations of historically marginalized or misrepresented groups.
- Challenges prejudices and broadens worldviews.



Balanced and Diverse Materials are NEEDED!

A Balanced Collection Inspires Lifelong Reading and Learning

- A varied collection means every student can find something they love—regardless of background, reading level, or interest.
- Promotes joyful discovery and academic engagement.

A Diverse Collection Protects Intellectual Freedom

- Upholds students' rights to access a wide range of information and viewpoints.
- Prevents gatekeeping based on subjective beliefs or values.



Age-Appropriate Material

- The weaponization of this term is... obnoxious.
- Publishers are a good place to start for content and them information, but less so for ages
- Trusted platforms like *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *Booklist* offer age recommendations and content notes.
- These reviews often flag sensitive topics like violence, language, or mature themes.
- **A book with challenging content is often still appropriate**

The background of the slide is a teal color with a pattern of stylized, colorful books and papers. The books are depicted in various orientations, some open and some closed, with colors including blue, yellow, orange, and pink. The papers are also stylized, with some showing text and others showing diagrams or illustrations. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on educational themes.

Internal & External, Pressures that Lead to Self-censorship



External and Internal Pressures

External:

- Community and admin pushback
- State and Legislative Constraints

Internal:

- Lack of confidence in their own ability
- Personal beliefs and bias
- EMOTIONAL FATIGUE



Final Thoughts

Self-censorship may feel like self-preservation—but over time, it erodes the heart of what school libraries stand for: access, discovery, and truth. The antidote is courageous, intentional leadership.



Final Thoughts

We're the librarians!

Let's go save the world.