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# Sioux City Journal

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## Jimmy Carter, 39th U.S. president, enters hospice care

**BILL BARROW**  
 Associated Press

ATLANTA — Former President Jimmy Carter, who at 98 years old is the longest-lived American president, has entered home hospice care in Plains, Georgia, a statement from The Carter Center confirmed Saturday.

After a series of short hospital stays, the statement said, Carter “decided to spend his remaining time at home with his family and receive hospice care instead of additional medical intervention.”

The statement said the 39th president has the full support of his medical team and family, which “asks for privacy at this time and is grateful for the concern shown by his many admirers.”

Carter was a little-known Georgia governor when he began his bid for the presidency ahead of the 1976 election. He went on to defeat then-President Gerald R. Ford, capitalizing as a Washington outsider in the wake of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal that drove Richard Nixon



Carter

from office in 1974. Carter served a single, tumultuous term and was defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980, a landslide loss that ultimately paved the way for his decades of global advocacy for democracy, public health and human rights via The Carter Center.

The former president and his wife, Rosalynn, 95, opened the

center in 1982. His work there garnered a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

Jason Carter, the couple’s grandson who now chairs The Carter Center governing board, said Saturday in a tweet that he “saw both of my grandparents yesterday. They are at peace and — as always — their home is full of love.”

Carter, who has lived most of his life in Plains, traveled extensively into his 80s and early 90s, including annual trips to build homes with Habitat for Humanity and

frequent trips abroad as part of the Carter Center’s election monitoring and its effort to eradicate the Guinea worm parasite in developing countries. But the former president’s health declined, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic limited his public appearances, including at his beloved Maranatha Baptist Church where he taught Sunday School lessons for decades before standing-room-only crowds of visitors.

Please see **CARTER**, Page A4

### SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS



TIM HYNDS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Chris Tomlinson, Teacher Librarian at North High School, right, talks about the process that is used to determine what books to add to the library as Kate Michaelson, Sioux City Middle Schools Librarian, looks on during an interview Thursday in the media center at North High School.

## Librarians ‘vigilant’ in book selections

**CAITLIN YAMADA**  
 cyamada@SiouxCityJournal.com

SIOUX CITY — When it comes to knowing which books are age-appropriate for schools, teacher librarians are the experts.

School teacher librarians can tell a student which books to read based on their interests and classwork, and are at the forefront of deciding which library books are age appropriate.

“We’re very vigilant when it comes to choosing books,” said

Sioux City Middle Schools Librarian Kate Michaelson.

As legislatures around the country and in Iowa discuss implementing stricter rules on what books kids are and are not allowed to read, Sioux City school librarians say district standards meet or exceed some of the proposed bills’ standards.

On Monday the Sioux City School Board conducted a final hearing on a series of library material board policies. The policies discuss what consti-

tutes library materials, how those materials are selected when materials are removed and what happens when materials are challenged.

Michaelson said these policies have been in practice in the district for years, but they felt it was time to put those policies in writing.

North High Teacher Librarian Chris Tomlinson said because the legislature is discussing library materials, they felt it was important to have a separate

library policy versus an instructional materials policy. After approaching Amy Denney, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, the policies were brought to the board.

Please see **LIBRARIANS**, Page A4

**LISTEN:** Leran about how the book selection process works, point your smartphone camera at the QR Code and tap the link. **NEWSVU**

## Prosecutors worry bill usurps local decisions

‘It is infringing on our prosecutorial discretion,’ leader says

**ERIN MURPHY AND TOM BARTON**  
 Journal Des Moines Bureau

DES MOINES — The Iowa Attorney General’s authority to take action in criminal proceedings — regardless of the county attorney’s decision — would be enshrined in state law under a provision in Gov. Kim Reynolds’ sweeping proposal to reorganize state government.

While the proposed language restates what already exists in Iowa law, some county attorneys are concerned it could open the door to the state attorney general being able to overrule their local decisions and actions.

“It is infringing on our prosecutorial discretion,” said Tina Meth-Farrington, the Calhoun County Attorney and president of the board of directors of the Iowa County Attorneys Association, describing the process by which county attorneys use their professional judgment to preserve limited government resources necessary to achieve just and fair outcomes in individual cases.



Reynolds

Please see **PROSECUTORS**, Page A8

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 Congratulations to all the Siouxland wrestlers competing at the state tournament.  
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## Carter

From A1

In August 2015, Carter had a small cancerous mass removed from his liver. The following year, he announced he needed no further treatment, as an experimental drug eliminated any sign of cancer.

Carter celebrated his most recent birthday in October with family and friends in Plains, the tiny town where he and Rosalynn were born in the years between World War I and the Great Depression.

The Carter Center last year marked 40 years of promoting its human rights agenda.

The Center has been a pioneer of election observation, monitoring at least 113 elections in Africa, Latin America, and Asia since 1989. In perhaps its most widely hailed public health effort, the organization recently announced that only 14 human cases of Guinea worm disease were reported in all of 2021, the result of years of public health campaigns to improve access to safe drinking water in Africa.

That's a staggering drop from when The Carter Center began leading the global eradication effort in 1986, when the parasitic disease infected 3.5 million people. Carter once said he hoped to live longer than the last Guinea worm parasite.

Carter was born Oct. 1, 1924, to a prominent family in rural south Georgia. He went on to the U.S. Naval Academy during World War II and pursued a career as a Cold War Naval officer before returning to Plains, Georgia, with Rosalynn



CAROLYN KASTER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former President Jimmy Carter, left, and his wife, Rosalynn, stand for the National Anthem on March 21, 2011, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, before a performance in honor of former President George H.W. Bush.

and their young family to take over the family peanut business after Earl Carter's death in the 1950s.

A moderate Democrat, the younger Carter rapidly climbed from the local school board to the state Senate and then the Georgia governor's office. He began his White House bid as an underdog, connecting with many Americans because of his promise not to deceive the American people after Nixon's disgrace and U.S. defeat in southeast Asia.

"If I ever lie to you, if I ever make a misleading statement, don't vote for me. I would not deserve to be your president," Carter said as he campaigned.

Carter, who came of age politically during the civil rights movement, was the last Democratic presidential nominee to sweep the Deep South.

He governed amid Cold War pressures, turbulent oil markets



JOHN BAZEMORE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former President Jimmy Carter welcomes visitors June 8, 2014, at Maranatha Baptist Church before teaching Sunday school in Plains, Ga.



CHARLES TASNADI, ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Jimmy Carter takes his seat Oct. 25, 1978, in the White House Oval Office in Washington before he began an address outlining his guidelines designed to combat inflation.

and social upheaval over racism, women's rights and America's global role.

At home, Carter partially deregulated the airline, railroad and trucking industries and es-

tablished the departments of Education and Energy, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He designated millions of acres in Alaska as national parks or wildlife refuges. He appointed a then-record number of women and non-whites to federal posts. He never had a Supreme Court nomination, but he elevated civil rights attorney Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the nation's second-highest court, positioning her for a promotion in 1993.

Carter's electoral coalition splintered under double-digit inflation, gasoline lines and the 444-day hostage crisis in Iran. His bleakest hour came when eight Americans died in a failed hostage rescue in April 1980, helping to ensure his landslide defeat.

"I'm perfectly at ease with whatever comes," he said in 2015. "I've had an exciting, adventurous and gratifying existence."

## Librarians

From A1

"Now we can put them on the website so that everyone can look them up and see what our procedures and processes are," Michaelson said.

While some may think librarians just buy books for students at random, based on New York Times bestsellers or popularity, Michaelson and Tomlinson state that it is a more thought-out process.

### Selecting school library books

Michaelson and Tomlinson have their master's degrees in librarianship, as well as history in teaching English literature.

"We know what we're looking for and we're very cautious in doing that because these are our kids," Michaelson said. "We would never put anything in our libraries that we wouldn't feel comfortable with a student taking home."

Michaelson said they are very careful about ensuring the books in each grade school are appropriate for that level.

The district subscribes to various professional library journals that come out with recommendations each year. The librarians can then look up books they are interested in purchasing in the online catalog "Destiny." The catalog has an option for librarians to read professional reviews, learn recommended age ranges for the book and understand which types of readers the book is good for.

"Those are written by teachers, they're written by librarians, they're written by publishers, so we really can find everything we need from those reviews," Michaelson said.

The district selection process requires each book to have a minimum of two quality reviews for the targeted age group. The district uses sources such as the Children's Catalog, Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog, Senior High School Library Catalog, School Library Journal and more.

Even if the books have good reviews, Michaelson said she wants to know exactly what is in the book, in case there is something that could trigger students with difficult experiences.

When asked if they read many of the books they purchase, both Michaelson and Tomlinson said yes.

"I don't think I've read adult fiction in 10 years," Tomlinson said.

If the librarians don't have time to read the books, there is a network of teachers and staff throughout the district who are willing to read the books and sticky note potential issues.

When choosing books at the high school level, Tomlinson balances what topics the teachers are teaching, what students want to read and what are award winners. She then reads the reviews for the books and determines which are appropriate.

"I have a Venn diagram," she said.

She then takes those books and looks at the North High library. Is she short on mystery novels?



TIM HYNDS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Chris Tomlinson, Teacher Librarian at North High School, right, and Kate Michaelson, Sioux City Middle Schools Librarian, middle, listen as Amy Denney, Sioux City Community School District Director of Curriculum, speaks during an interview Thursday in the media center at North High School. The Sioux City Community School District has recently changed its procedure in handling complaints about books available in the district's school libraries.

Thrillers? If so she buys more books for those categories.

"Just slapping together a book order does not happen," she said. "It takes a month, two months."

They also don't place one single book order. They want new books coming into the library throughout the year, Michaelson said.

District policy states library materials should:

- Be chosen for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses;

- Be chosen to enrich and support the curriculum and the educational, emotional, personal, and recreational needs of the users;

- Be evaluated for standards of quality in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format;

- Be appropriate for the range of age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of students;

- Represent differing viewpoints of controversial issues so that users may be motivated to engage in critical analysis of such issues, to explore their own beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, and to make intelligent judgments in their everyday lives;

- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures;

- Incorporate current, accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources, as appropriate and;

- Provide students with the opportunity to investigate, analyze, and evaluate social issues from multiple perspectives.

### Ensuring students are reading age-appropriate books

One of the pillars of librarianship is ensuring everyone has access to educational material, Michaelson said, but sometimes the students need to be protected from reading inappropriate materials for their

age. She said some of the middle school kids may think they are ready for higher-level books, but they aren't.

Michaelson said if a middle school student requests a book that is only available at the high school level, she looks at why. Is it for school work, is it a higher-level book that middle schoolers don't typically read or is it inflammatory?

If she doesn't know, she'll ask Tomlinson or other high school librarians before requesting the book.

Social media sites such as TikTok and Instagram are popular places for adults to share book recommendations, calling the sites "booktok" or "bookstagram," respectively. With the high number of kids and teens also using those social media sites, they can end up being recommended extremely inappropriate books.

Coleen Hoover is a popular adult romance author who is frequently featured on these sites. Her adult fiction books have sexual scenes and triggering content that wouldn't be considered appropriate for school libraries. She also has a few teen fiction books.

Tomlinson and Michaelson have had students request books such as Hoover's. They both said they explain that the book is not appropriate for their age, and instead recommend an age-appropriate romance novel.

### Removing old, irrelevant or inappropriate books

Once books are purchased and placed on the shelves, they don't always stay there. A topic that may have been appropriate a few years ago may not be now and librarians are constantly reviewing their catalogs.

"We know more than we did the year before," Michaelson said. "We always have standards for weeding out any books that are really old."

It is more important to have books that are current and rele-

vant, than having a large number of books, she said.

Michaelson said for example they don't want a five-year-old book on the Middle East because the information will be inaccurate. She also said they pull books based on trends or issues. They have pulled older books on people who have since become problematic, such as Bill Crosby.

"We don't want to have kids getting the wrong information, getting old information," she said. "It's really important for us to replace those books, to find new books, find new stories."

At the elementary school and middle school level, books might move up to middle school and high school if there are topics that may now be inappropriate or have a scene that is too much for the kids.

Every year Michaelson says she has books that she offers to the high schools that she is removing from the middle school.

The teacher librarians also keep track of how often a book is being checked out, and whether or not students are whispering about it.

"That causes us to stop and say 'ok let's look at this book a little bit more closely, is there a reason this book is being read so much,'" Denney said. She said sometimes it's amazing literature that connects with kids and sometimes it has scenes that are not appropriate for that age group.

District policy allows librarians to remove items that are outdated, obsolete, racist, sexist or culturally insensitive.

### Addressing challenged library material

If a parent or guardian of a current student objects to library materials, they can speak with the teacher librarians and explain why they don't want their child reading those books.

Tomlinson and Michaelson said they have not had any recent contact from parents concerned about

the library materials. Michaelson said for the most part, students don't check out books their parents would not approve of.

At the elementary level, Denney said there have been concerns from parents and there have been some books pulled.

"We're following our policy," she said.

If parents or guardians want books removed from the library completely, the district has a policy in place to address those concerns. A committee, called the reconsideration committee, would read the material and then meet to discuss the material and complaint.

The committee would be comprised of:

- The director of curriculum, instruction and assessment;

- Director of elementary or secondary education, depending on what level the challenged material is;

- One district-level instructional director;

- One building administrator other than the building administrator who received the complaint;

- One teacher librarian;

- One parent or guardian of an enrolled student and;

- One student.

At the open, public meeting, the committee will listen to the complaint as well as the opinions of others, determine the appropriateness of the material and whether to keep the material, remove the material or limit its use.

### National attempts at book banning

Nationally, groups of people and legislators are attempting to get a variety of books banned, both historically challenged books, and books that discuss gender and sexuality.

Tomlinson said at the high school level there needs to be books that kids can identify with and understand what they're feeling.

Whether it's religions, race relations, mindfulness, making friends, domestic violence or gender, Tomlinson and Michaelson said the library is a resource for students to seek understanding.

"For the kids that don't have answers, that don't know what they're doing, that don't know, this might be the only place they get that validation," Tomlinson said.

She said kids don't have to read it, but for those who are searching for that information, a school library is a safe place where the librarians know what content is in the book and that it is age-appropriate, unlike if the student sought out information on the internet.

Gov. Kim Reynolds has proposed a bill that if a book is removed by one school due to content, all other schools in the state should restrict it. It also states a book removed from one school library would be available for students at other schools with parent permission.

Some Republicans in the state suggest there should be age restrictions on books, similar to movie ratings. Certain ratings would require parental permission to be checked out under this proposal.