Looking for Alaska
by John Green
978-0-375-94238-2
Miles “Pudge” Halter falls in love with the gorgeous, clever, funny, sexy, self-destructive, screwed-up, and utterly fascinating Alaska Young, who is an event unto herself. She pulls Pudge into her world, launches him into the Great Perhaps, and steals his heart. [Reasons: Drugs/alcohol/smoking, sexuality explicit, offensive language, unsuited for age group.]

The Outsiders
by S. E. Hinton
978-0-679-82642-2
After suffering rejection from seven major publishers, The Chocolate War made its debut in 1974, and quickly became a bestseller—and provocative—classic for young adults. This chilling portrayal of an all-boys prep school casts an unflinching eye on the pitfalls of conformity and corruption in our most elite cultural institutions. [Reasons: Adult language, frequent sexual references, and violence.]

The Chocolate War
by Robert Cormier
978-0-375-20871-5
One of the most controversial YA novels of all time, The Chocolate War is a modern masterpiece that speaks to fans of S. E. Hinton’s Looking for Alaska.

Invisible Man
by Ralph Ellison
978-0-679-52826-2
Invisible Man is a milestone in American literature, a book that has continued to engage readers since its appearance in 1952. The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of “the Brotherhood”, and retracting amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. [Reason: Obscene language.]

The Golden Compass
by Philip Pullman
978-0-060-18322-0
Philip Pullman takes readers to a world where humans have animal familiars and where parallel universes are within reach. Lyra is rushing to the cold, far North, where witch clans and armored bears rule. North, where the Gobblers take the children they steal—including her friend Roger. North, where her fearsome uncle Asriel is trying to build a bridge to a parallel world. [Reason: Anti-Christian messages.]

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Slaughterhouse-Five
by Kurt Vonnegut
978-0-440-45229-6
Slaughterhouse-Five is one of the world’s great anti-war books. Centering on the infamous fire-bombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim’s odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we are afraid to know. [Reasons: Promotes anti-Christian activity and sexuality.]

Prep: A Novel
by Curtis Sittenfeld
978-0-8129-7235-1
Curtis Sittenfeld’s debut novel, Prep, is an insightful, achingly funny coming-of-age story as well as a brilliant dissection of class, race, and gender in a hothouse of adolescent angst and ambition. [Reason: Pornographic.]

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The Face on the Milk Carton
by Caroline B. Cooney
978-0-365-92382-2
No one ever really paid close attention to the faces of the missing children on the milk cartons. But as Janie B. Jones book, it’s Junie B.’s first day and she doesn’t know anything. She’s so scared of the school bus and the meanies on it that when it’s time to go home, she doesn’t. [Reasons: Poor social values, lacking good role models, mounthness and bad spelling/grammar.]

The Flamingo Rising
by Billy Pilgrim
978-0-8129-7235-1
Billy Pilgrim’s odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we are afraid to know. [Reasons: Promotes anti-Christian activity and sexuality.]

I Am Jazz
by Jessica Herthal, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas
978-0-8037-4007-2
The story of a transgender child based on the real-life experience of Jazz Jennings, who has become a spokesperson for trans kids everywhere. Jazz’s story is based on her real-life experience and she tells it in a simple, clear way that will be appreciated by picture book readers, their parents, and teachers. [Reasons: Inaccurate, homosexuality, sex education, religious viewpoint, unsuited for age group.]

Two Boys Kissing
by David Levitian
978-0-307-31900-0
Based on true events—and narrated by a Greek Chorus of the generation of gay men lost to AIDS—Two Boys Kissing follows Harry and Craig, two seventeen-year-olds who are about to take part in a 32-hour marathon of kissing to set a new Guinness World Record. While the two increasingly dehydrated and sleep-deprived boys are locking lips, they become a focal point in the lives of other teens dealing with universal questions of living, wrestling, and belonging. [Reasons: Homosexuality, and condoning public displays of affection.]

Jumping the Spotlight on Diversity

‘At the heart of banned books is intellectual freedom. It is so important for readers to have the ability to access books that express all different points of view, without censorship. Support the First Amendment: the freedom of speech!’
—Jessica Herthal

‘People attack books because they think books can’t defend themselves. But time and time again, readers will defend their freedom to read—which is just as essential as their freedom to speak, think, love, and live.’
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