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When Schools Erase Books, They Erode Public Trust

By Dale Jodoin
 Columnist

Parents across Ontario are reacting with anger and growing concern after learning that more than 10,000 books were removed from a high school library in London, Ontario. What many first assumed was a routine cleanup has turned into a serious public debate about censorship, education, accountability, and who controls what children are allowed to learn. Schools are meant to prepare students for the real world, not protect them from it. That belief is now being openly questioned.

The decision came from the Thames Valley District School Board, which oversees schools throughout the London area. At H B Beal Secondary School, the library collection dropped from roughly 18,000 books to about 8,300. More than half the books were removed in a short period of time. This was not caused by flooding, age, or lack of space. It was an intentional decision made by administrators responsible for public education.

The financial cost alone has alarmed many families. School library books are purchased with taxpayer money. A conservative estimate places the average cost of a school library book at around 20 dollars, with many costing more. At 10,000 books, that represents at least 200,000 dollars in public funds removed from use. This comes at a time when school boards routinely state they are underfunded and in need of more resources. Parents are asking how destroying paid-for educational material can be justified while classrooms continue to face shortages.

The anger deepened once it became clear which books were removed. This was not limited to outdated or damaged material. Many of the books taken out are widely recognized classics that have been taught in schools for generations. Among them were *Animal Farm* and *1984* by George Orwell, books often used to teach students about propaganda, power, and the dangers of unchallenged authority. Other reported removals include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Brave New World*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. These works are foundational to literature and education. They are meant to challenge students and provoke thought.

Parents argue that education is not supposed to be comfortable. Difficult books lead to difficult conversations, and those conversations are how students learn to think critically. Shielding young people from ideas because they may cause discomfort does not make them stronger. It leaves them unprepared for the real world.

What has caused even greater outrage is how the books were handled. Some were destroyed. Others were removed without clear plans for donation or redistribution. Parents question why usable books were not offered to families, public libraries, or community organizations. The lack of transparency has damaged trust. To many, this feels less like routine library management and more like erasing ideas.

The school board has described the removals as part of an effort to make libraries more inclusive and culturally responsive. Many parents reject that explanation. They argue that inclusion means adding perspectives, not removing history. Expanding a library does not require destroying what already exists. Parents say they support new voices and new stories. What they oppose is removing established literature because it challenges modern sensitivities.

This is where fear enters the conversation. Book removal is not new. History provides clear warnings. In Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler, books were burned because they challenged the state and its ideology. Writers and thinkers were silenced so citizens could not question authority. Under Joseph Stalin, books were banned or rewritten to fit government narratives. History itself was reshaped. Education became a tool of control rather than truth.

Parents are not claiming Ontario is becoming a dictatorship. They are pointing out that the method is disturbingly familiar. When those in power decide which ideas are acceptable, education shifts away from learning and toward obedience. Controlling books controls discussion. Controlling discussion limits thought.

The removal of Orwell's work has not gone unnoticed. Parents argue that *Animal Farm* and *1984* warn precisely against this behaviour. These books show how language can be manipulated and how dissent can be quietly erased. Removing them sends a message, whether intended or not, that questioning authority is unwelcome.

Another major concern is the lack of parental involvement. Many families say they were never consulted. There were no meaningful public meetings, no votes, and no advance notice before the books disappeared. Parents trust schools with their children for most of the day. They expect transparency. They do not expect decisions of this scale to be made without their knowledge.

After public backlash intensified, Ontario's education minister ordered a pause on further library removals while the issue is reviewed. While some parents welcome the pause, many say it came too late. They want accountability. They want to know who approved the removals, what criteria were used, and why families were excluded from the process.

This issue goes far beyond one school or one city. Families across Ontario are now questioning what may be happening in other districts. They are asking how many libraries are being quietly reshaped and under what standards. Education depends on open debate. When debate disappears, trust disappears with it.

What parents are demanding now is straightforward accountability. Public schools do not belong to boards or administrators. They belong to the public. Transparency is not optional. It is a responsibility. Trust between schools and families is fragile, and once broken, it is difficult to restore. Decisions that affect education, history, and access to ideas must be made openly, not behind closed doors.

Education works best when it is honest, challenging, and accountable. When schools quietly remove books and call it progress, they risk losing the confidence of the people they serve. If public trust is lost, no review process or policy statement will easily bring it back.

Parents are watching closely. They are asking questions. And they are making it clear that silence is no longer acceptable.



Employers Are Not Rejecting You; They Are Choosing Better

By Nick Kossovan
 In terms of hiring, I have this, admittedly somewhat idealistic, holistic view:
 STEP 1: Candidates apply to a job opening.
 STEP 2: Candidates who applied according to the employer's application instructions and based on their resume, appear qualified are selected for further assessment.

STEP 3: The selected candidate's LinkedIn activity and digital footprint are reviewed to assess their online behaviour. If no controversial behaviour is found, they're scheduled for a telephone screening call.

STEP 4: Those who pass the screening call are scheduled for face-to-face interviews (a maximum of three).

STEP 5: The candidate most likely to be the best option, often considered the least painful, is hired.

"Sometimes all you can do is choose the least painful option." - Michael Kouly, Journalist
 As a side note, my hiring philosophy is to accept candidates as they present themselves and hire them if they belong. Looking back, most of my hiring mistakes have been in giving candidates the benefit of the doubt.

"When someone shows you who they are believe them; the first time." - Maya Angelou
 Choosing [whatever] is simply selecting the best available (keyword) option you have at the time.

At any stage of an employer's hiring process, especially during telephone screenings and face-to-face interviews, an employer may decide not to pursue an applicant's candidacy because they've identified other applicants whose qualifications, experience, and potential better align with the role's specific requirements and desired outcomes. The candidate's personality is also considered. Those seen as a good match for the company culture and team are preferred. Ultimately, employers aren't eliminating candidates; they're searching for and selecting the candidate they feel is the optimal fit to achieve the position's goals without disrupting their culture or the team.

This hiring dynamic offers several perspectives:

- Hiring is a relative comparison. Job seekers tend to forget they're being compared to other candidates. In 2026, given the complex economic climate employers face, hiring, as it has been for quite some time, isn't about finding a candidate "who'll do"; it's about finding the best match from the available pool of candidates, which is quite large. Employers can't afford to make bad hires. While you might be a highly qualified candidate, if another applicant presents themselves as a closer match—someone more in sync with the company and industry, easier to manage, and more relevant—the employer is likely to choose them.
- Recruiters and hiring managers are increasingly focusing on a position's expected results and the value those results add to the company's profitability. A "position value"—the impact on company goals and revenue, along with the cost of labour versus productivity gain—is the primary factor, more than the skills and experience required, that determines the compensation package offered.
- Assessing candidates for cultural and team fit has become paramount. The fit needs to be glove-like. Employers, understandably risk-averse, want to avoid hiring candidates who'll be challenging to manage, underscoring that, as an employee, being a good soldier is often the best strategy for long-term employment.
- The degree to which a candidate demonstrates interest in the job and in joining the company (e.g., by including a compelling cover letter, sending a thank-you note after every interview) strongly influences hiring decisions. Employers regard genuine interest and enthusiasm as signs of long-term commitment and motivation.

Job seekers keep refusing to acknowledge that they aren't the only game in town, that there's always someone younger, hungrier and more qualified than them. When your interviewer says they'll get back to you, it means they're not concerned about losing you. If you aren't formally notified of being rejected within a week, assume that you've been placed in the "keep them warm" pile, or that you've been ghosted, and the employer is okay with losing you. You may have been solid, but you didn't "blow them away." I've seen this happen time and time again. It's common for employers to leave a position open until the right candidate is found, especially if the role isn't critical to profitability. Speed doesn't beat finding the perfect candidate.

A job seeker's best job search strategy today is to demonstrate to an employer that they're an excellent option by showing:

- They can follow instructions.
- They don't harbour a sense of entitlement.
- They're friendly and cooperative, and easy to manage.
- They want to contribute to the employer's business profitability.
- They're a lifelong learner.

Two final candidates. One role. Both interviewed well and are qualified. Who gets hired if not for the candidate's resume, LinkedIn profile and "perfect" answers? The candidate who asked questions that showed they were more interested in what they could do for the employer than what the employer could do for them. The candidate who followed up after every interview. The candidate who showed genuine interest in the employer's products and/or service offerings and challenges. The candidate who appeared more interested in contributing to the company's success than just seeking a job.

When job hunting, keep in mind that employers evaluate you based on the signals you send through your resume, application, digital footprint, and interview behaviour. Employers use your signals to determine whether you'll be the least painful option.