



**SCHOLARS**  
STRATEGY NETWORK

## School's Out but Public Education Is in Danger

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My son Mateo is 5 years old and one of his favorite books is "*Julian is a Mermaid*," by Jessica Love. The book portrays a young boy named Julian who wants to become a mermaid and participate in the Coney Island Mermaid Parade, the largest art parade in the United States. This book will certainly be banned in Florida, Texas and many other states if we are not diligent in protecting diversity within our public school curriculum.

When I put on my educator hat, the book details the story of a child curious to inhabit the world of women and gender performance. When I put on my mama hat, the book nurtures a young child's sense of whimsical, exploratory dress-up, as young Julian wears a dress, puts on pearls, shines lipstick on his lips and heads out to Coney Island with his supportive abuela.