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Sent: 1/17/2022 6:03:49 PM
To: Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; angela durham <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Josh Brown <[REDACTED]>;
Cc: Kathy <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Books, curriculum, and related topics

WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS

Dear Williamson County School Board Members,

Between Thanksgiving and year-end holidays, I am a little behind in catching up on the last school board meeting (Nov. 2021). But I would like to share some thoughts with you ahead of tomorrow's meeting. I do not see any agenda items related to topics below. But given comments made at recent meetings, I want to make sure our voices are heard as well.

Something that is very important to my wife (Kathy) and I is to ensure that our kids (and all students) are exposed to a diversity of ideas and perspectives. Given this, we are very concerned about some comments that have been made at recent meetings, specifically related to library books, Wit and Wisdom, "critical race theory", and similar topics.

It feels to us as though the core argument against certain books, the W&W curriculum, and some discussions around teachings of race relations in our country is that some books (or other resources) lay out the facts a little too pointedly for some parent's tastes. Or perhaps it is that some books share a perspective that some parents have not been exposed to in the past - and so the new perspectives are discomfoting. But here's the thing - our kids are very capable of taking in different perspectives and learning from them. And this taking in and processing of various perspectives should be encouraged, not suppressed. This should be especially so if there are new perspectives worthy of our consideration.

Our country has a less-than-ideal history when it comes to race relations. Slavery played a very significant role in the formation of our country. And the fact is that since the end of the Civil War, race has played a large role influencing our laws and who we are as a country. This history can be difficult and uncomfortable to discuss. But downplaying our history, and suppressing various perspectives about our history, is absolutely NOT the best way to move forward. Our students need to fully appreciate how our history led us to where we are today - it is the only way we are going to help our students receive an education that tells the full story of who we are as a country. And it is the only way we are going to continue to collectively improve our society in the future. Again - our kids are very capable of taking this all in; we should give them a chance to do so.

Lastly, as I'm sure you're aware, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is NOT taught in our schools. I would like to ask that you please reinforce this and make this clear whenever some parent (or other party) brings this topic up. *Talking about race relations from multiple perspectives is NOT the same as teaching CRT.* Further, I would like to ask that the Board also make clear that it is important that we need to teach a "full" history about race as part of our overall curriculum.

Pretending that our country has a perfectly rosy history as it relates to race - and teaching our kids this is the case - are not how we are going to continuously improve our country. Sometimes our past requires difficult discussions. And naturally we should approach these discussions differently for first-graders vs. tenth-graders. BUT, we need to have these discussions.

Thank you for your time. And thank you for all you do to support our kids' education.

Best regards,

Tony Caudill

Sent from my iPhone - please excuse typos