

From: Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 11/22/2021 5:22:28 PM
To: Laura Holder <[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]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Josh Brown <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>;
Subject: RE: Thank you very much for voting to end the mask mandate - now it's time to evaluate the curriculum and library materials

Ms. Holder,

Thank you for your email last week. We have in fact had in the past a request to remove "To Kill a Mockingbird". Part of the arguments against that book included that "n..." was included in the text, along with depiction of rape. What is appropriate for some or even considered a classic may be entirely unacceptable to someone else, to the point where someone believes needs to be removed from a library. We have already received messages asking us not to remove books that are being criticized. That's why we have a Board Policy in place, Board Policy 4.403, [Reconsideration of Instructional Materials](https://tsba.net/williamson-county-board-of-education-policy-manual/#_board-operations). Here's a link to the online policy manual: https://tsba.net/williamson-county-board-of-education-policy-manual/#_board-operations. When someone brings a request to the Board to remove a book, our obligation is to refer that person to the policy. The first step in that policy is for our trained professionals with expertise in the question of removing books to evaluate any requests for removal; the policy starts with teachers, Principals and librarians. The top of page two of that policy gives that detail. We're doing that for those who came to the Board last week. We have also let our librarians know that questions were coming about the particular books mentioned last week. Knowing that questions of books in school libraries often include sharply divided opinions, we're going to make sure we honor the standards set for us by the Board Policy.

Jason Golden
Superintendent
Williamson County Schools
[REDACTED]

From: Laura Holder <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 10:16 AM
To: 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]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Josh Brown <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Thank you very much for voting to end the mask mandate - now it's time to evaluate the curriculum and library materials

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

Dear Superintendent Golden and Williamson County Board Members,

First, thank you for voting to end the mask mandate in favor of parental choice for mask-wearing (for those of you that voted in favor). I sincerely appreciate the careful consideration that went into this decision, particularly in light of our district and county's very low case numbers, availability of vaccines for those that make that choice, and no current cases in Williamson Medical Center. This issue has caused a tremendous amount of confusion, frustration and disruption, and it's time to move on to other things.

Now it's time for the district administration and board to turn their attention to the issues related to the Wit and Wisdom curriculum as well as an in-depth review of the many age- and material-inappropriate materials in WCS. I hope that each and every one of you took the time to review the materials circulated at Monday's board meeting. This type of reading matter has no place in our schools, and I think you all know that.

Superintendent Golden, your disingenuous attempt to compare "To Kill a Mockingbird" and similar classics that contain occasional profanity with the types of graphic pornographic depictions contained in the book excerpts that were shared to the board is uninformed and foolish. It is your responsibility and that of the board to stop approving curriculum and library materials without actually reviewing them yourselves, instead of relying on the endorsements of other organizations and school districts. Librarians must not purchase books relying on the recommendations of the American Library Association, but should reach each new book that enters our school's library system. I am grateful for the parents that actually did this evaluation, spending significant time and effort to review the Wit and Wisdom curriculum as well as many library offerings in great depth and detail to provide all of us with information that you should have already been aware of. As I am sure you have heard many, many times by now, reading materials that Carol feels need to be censored during board meetings shouldn't be readily available to young students.

Please do not minimize this issue as just another irritation from parents that you are tired of hearing from and tired of challenging your decisions. We as parents have every right to participate in the education of our children. You would be better served by viewing us as partners, rather than sources of frustration - particularly in light of the fact that many parents have done your jobs for you in evaluating the current curriculum and bringing these critically important issues to light.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters! I sincerely appreciate the time and effort that goes into running an exemplary school district like WCS, and realize that you are in difficult positions trying to navigate a variety of differing viewpoints. Your efforts to listen to constituents is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laura Holder

From: Eric Raciti <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 12/22/2021 11:01:27 AM
To: angela durham <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Josh Brown <[REDACTED]>;
Subject: Curriculum

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

Dear Board:

Referring to a piece in yesterday's Williamson Herald on pamphleting at schools, I noted this quote:

"As we tell our students, when you see something that doesn't look right, say something." - Carol Birdsong

I'm new to this district, and it looks to me like Wit and Wisdom's curriculum doesn't "look right," so I'm saying something on Ms. Birdsong's advice. It seems that the curriculum that WCS has chosen for its students contain many propagandistic elements intended to instruct students in "woke" ideology. The very notion that WCS believes it should properly be instructing students in the area of social policy seems to be the root of the problem here, and perhaps you don't see that.

To quote Elon Musk: "At its heart, wokeness is divisive, exclusionary and hateful. It basically gives mean people a shield to be cruel, armored in false virtue." That WCS perhaps does not recognize this is disappointing, after having escaped a part of the country where woke zealotry has become a secular religion. Further, the not-subtle veiled threats in Ms. Birdsong's language is frankly objectionable. WCS seems by her rhetoric to want to suppress parental involvement in curriculum decisions. If Ms. Birdsong's communications accurately reflect the position of WCS on these matters, then the problem from my perspective is grave indeed. If Ms. Birdsong is inaccurately speaking out of turn, then some tightening of WCS's messaging is in order, it seems to me. Pouring gasoline on a fire is seldom a good idea.

I regret that I am witnessing a mean and impatient tone in WCS's communications against groups like Parents' Choice Tennessee and Moms for Liberty. I don't know much about these groups, but Ms. Birdsong's curt statements on behalf of WCS has provided me with a clear incentive to learn more about them. So for this awakening, I am thankful. From the defensiveness in Ms. Birdsong's statements, I now know I must pay much closer attention to WCS and its curriculum decisions and its critics. Sunlight, after all, is the best disinfectant.

Merry Christmas!

Eric Raciti
[REDACTED]