



## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: February 4, 2022

TO: Williamson County Board of Education  
Jason Golden, Superintendent

FROM: Dana M. Ausbrooks, General Counsel

RE: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Williamson County Schools received 40 complaints from 37 different individuals concerning the *Wit and Wisdom* curriculum, which includes a total of 115 core texts for kindergarten through fifth grade. The complainants requested reconsideration of 31 specifically identified texts out of the 115 cores texts. Multiple complainants also submitted a document which was directly related to the teacher's editions used in the state of Florida and not used in the state of Tennessee.

Pursuant to Board Policy 4.403, Superintendent Jason Golden convened an *ad hoc* materials review committee to address the requests. As required by Board policy, each committee member read every book submitted that contained as a text of concern. Additionally, the committee held two sessions where all complainants were invited to attend and speak to the committee regarding their concerns. The first session was held on September 17 to hear concerns that arose from quarters one and two. The second session was held on October 5 to hear concerns that arose from quarters three and four. In the first session, 14 people attended and spoke to the committee, and in the second session, there were 11 people who attended and spoke to the committee.

Per Board Policy 4.4.03, in addition to hearing from parents and community members, the committee also consulted a variety of resources. This included recognized evaluative reviews of the materials—*Wit and Wisdom* in its entirety as well as the texts of concern in isolation. They engaged in multiple conversations with resources available to them including affected school employees as well as multiple classroom teachers who have implemented *Wit and Wisdom* during the year and half since its adoption. These teachers shared their experiences as well as those of students in their classroom. The committee also met with other instructional personnel including curriculum specialists in both ELA and history/social studies. Additionally, they consulted with counseling specialists who

were able to offer perspectives related to mental health specifically in the school setting. In addition to reading the disputed texts and teacher's edition materials, the committee met for approximately 60 hours in face-to-face or Zoom meetings to complete the review process. Additional time was necessary to compile the findings into the Conclusion Report.

The committee ultimately concluded: that one book, Walk Two Moons, should be removed from the curriculum; 6 books: Feelings, Hatchet, Love that Dog, Sea Horse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea book and video, Separate is Never Equal, and The River Between Us, should have required adjustments that all classroom teachers, without exception, are expected to follow and implement in their classrooms. The findings of the review committee have been provided to you separately.

One of the complainants has submitted a written appeal to the Board, specifically requesting "an appeal of all books (and curriculum) put forth to the committee that were not 100% removed." The other recommendations made by the committee are not referenced in the appeal, and thus the committee's decision shall stand.

With respect to the issues on appeal ("all books (and curriculum) that were not 100% removed), The Board may (1) uphold the decision of the review committee based upon the record; or (2) overturn the decision of the review committee based upon the record. Procedurally, the decision must be made by majority vote following an appropriately raised motion and second.