

# Comment Report

HF 2499

A bill for an act relating to education, including requiring the boards of directors of school districts to publish certain specified information and modifying provisions related to required social studies instruction.(Formerly HSB 706; See HF 2577.)

Subcommittee Members: Thompson-CH, Brink, Ehlert

Date: 03/23/2022

Time: 01:30 PM

Location: House Lounge

**Name:** Julie Zaugg

**Comment:** It is hard to understand why a bill about transparency in education, that was first introduced to the education committee, is now being debated in the appropriations committee. The majority of what this bill asks for is already being done, which makes this bill frivolous and repetitious. The first section of HF 2499 concerns syllabus which are already published by schools in student handbooks and/or online to help students decide what classes to take. The section asking for a description of how classes meet educational standards was met several years ago by every teacher at every level. These were commenced at workshops led by AEA staff and completed during professional development time. The section asking for a list of all books, articles, handouts, websites and so on to be published by August 23 and January 15 each year is an impossible task. There is no way to know in advance what types of handouts, graphic organizers or outlines will be most effective with the incoming class, and what content will need retaught in different ways to help all succeed. How many teachable moments will be lost when a student wants more information, but I can't offer them something that was not preapproved? In addition, is there software available to make these items sortable by class, grade and teacher? The section on social studies is a case of micromanagement. Did it really need to be put into code that the U.S. Constitution should be taught in government class? This is already a standard set forth by the Department of Education as is much of what is listed in the bill. There is little that is new or necessary about this HF2499 and none of it has to do with appropriations.

**Name:** Pam Gronau

**Comment:** I appreciate the efforts of this bill as it has become increasingly important for parents to know what materials are being used in the classroom. I would like to see something stronger in terms of the books being used in both the classroom and in the school libraries. There is a reconsideration process already in place but it is failing. We can already appeal to the Board of Education but the process is very lengthy and to be honest, there is little faith that they will do the right thing when we have seen the government oversight committee hearing regarding the concerns with the BOEE. Many of the books parents are opposing contain pornography. It is against the law for anyone to provide pornography to children. If anything, schools should be held to a higher standard. There is no excuse for allowing these books to remain in our schools. Please take a tough stand on the books being provided to our children!

**Name:** LeAnne Getz

**Comment:** Regarding the pornographic and obscene books, I hope these will be removed from our schools. We deem movies inappropriate for children based on one word or one scene. These books are far worse. Teachers and librarians should not be providing books that contain a father detailing their mechanics and feelings of raping his

daughter, a graphic comic book picture of a child performing oral sex on an adult male relative, and many nude and sexually arousing pictures. Parents cannot provide porn to their children. Why can teachers? Porn is covered in stores. Why is it available in schools? Please make this illegal.

**Name:** Courtney Collier

**Comment:** We need this bill and others like it to protect parental rights in the education of our children. School districts should have clear and strict policies as to what books are appropriate for instruction and class library. It is clear from the books that have been discovered some of which have been in schools for over a decade, that the previous processes are not working. Parents should be informed of each and every book that will be read or provided to their child while at school. Parents should have access to all materials used in their child's instruction. There should be no books that contain pornography and or obscenity. Parents are the legal guardians of their children not the school, not the school district, not the teachers, not the teachers union, not the special interest lobbyist groups. We should be partners and collaborate with the school districts and the school districts should ask for and welcome our input. We need the state Board of Education to make it easy with a click of a button to file a grievance. We need them to also have policies in place that protect parents rights in the education of their children. The last two years have been a crash course in the realization that public education has been infiltrated by teachers unions which are controlled by a political party and are running rampant with their agenda in our public schools. This must end. Books such as this should have no place in classroom instruction or school libraries where MINOR aged children can access this harmful content without parent consent or knowledge.  
<https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/file/QuotesPartTimeIndian.pdf?token=AWxlMYGpgOsAugMee7EQGP7POkhrq94p0ZQIn4wgGfCp3TgwR7Okje4thlnZ5hAjikiKXr13OjSl2RHO6tvVki9XinkaHHhgSx8vTXHX4aO0eiPsC4lZ3GW8GQtMFtjF7fQZrqzVvANWenxVrwDIyZBGkIV43A41c8Sga4qHHIAulhx5TuCUTvgHS45VwTrLLHgz6ogydnbKyG3F0yOmrEwK29INPoc6dqC70G2zVYAkheIlO6jTEg8c0nSw>

**Name:** Terese Grant

**Comment:** This bill is so unnecessary. As a former teacher who taught in Iowa for nearly 40 years, this type of requirement to "publish" information required in social studies instruction is just an added burden to teachers. Social studies and all teachers have a syllabus for their class that is available to anyone who simply asks. This is not complicated. But asking teachers to do this type of extra work is simply not necessary. Parents are welcome to talk to teachers in person or via email if they have questions. Laws like this are punitive.

**Name:** Courtney Collier

**Comment:** This bill needs to include penalties for schools who don't follow this law. We have seen that unless there are teeth in the bill in the way of penalties the school district has no incentive to follow. This would also make it so parents have a course of action if the district doesn't abide by the law.

**Name:** Patty SeregAlexander

**Comment:** We need stricter and stronger laws to help vet these pornographic books found in our schools. Teachers, administrators and superintendents claim that these books have literary merit. Therefore they get to ignore the Iowa Code 728 that defines obscenity. The reconsideration committees just ignore the Iowa code as well. School board policy follows suit of the laws. Bills that require transparency, parental rights and strong definitions of pornography are needed!

**Name:** Jennifer Turner

**Comment:** This bill is one of the most important. If anyone believes there is not a problem in our schools, they are not paying attention. Thank you for keeping this bill relevant. Save

our children.

**Name:** Michelle Veach

**Comment:** Parents need to know what our kids are being taught. Schools must (unfortunately) be held to a higher authority to provide curriculum and to be required to change that curriculum if it teaches CRT, woke enlightened history, or is historically incorrect. Schools will not proactively offer this info and so parents cannot work with teachers, but instead are in an adversarial position. Please restore parental power and give us the information we need to ensure our children receive the education they need to become productive citizens in the USA.

**Name:** Mandy Gilbert

**Comment:** Please support this bill to provide greater transparency across Iowa schools. Our district recently made changes to their notification policy to parents about books selected in class instruction. This change happened after a book reconsideration process took place that revealed books being selected by teachers that are obscene and divisive as defined by law (except schools interpret they have a pass to distribute obscene material). Teachers indicated this was NOT difficult to send an email to parents about books being used in class prior to instruction. This process allows parents to be better engaged in their students learning and hold educators accountable for material being taught. This should take place for all schools across Iowa through this bill, as education is a partnership with parents. Unfortunately, educators still decide to select obscene material for reading. So obscene that as the Governor said in her address, they would be X rated if made into a movie. No one seems to care about students affected by sexual abuse being in a school environment, being asked by a trusted adult to read about horrible, graphic detail of rape, incest and pedophilia. Please continue efforts to protect children from pornography and having age appropriate books accessible at school. Thank you for protecting children.

Dear Families -

In the upcoming weeks, we will begin a new Unit, ***The Social Construct Unit***.

During the course of our instruction, we will be using a collection of books that can be used to teach the standards, as well as provide specific skill related work in the areas of reading & writing. Our books are part of our Board approved English Language Arts curriculum. Our books are used within the Advanced Placement coursework, which is a college-level course; therefore, the text complexity and themes of the book are geared for college-level students.

As part of the unit, students will be able to choose from a variety of books to read. Our goal in offering these choices is to provide students with options that align to our intended instruction from the Iowa Core, while also allowing for book selections that align with interests and skill level.

For this unit/unit of study, students will choose to read one or more of the options below:

- ***The Happiness Myth*** by Jennifer Hecht
- ***A Passage to India*** by E.M. Forster
- ***Jane Eyre*** by Charlotte Bronte
- ***The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*** by Ann Fadiman
- ***Their Eyes Were Watching God*** by Zora Neale Hurston
- ***Breathless*** by Bron Stoker
- ***The Bluest Eye*** by Toni Morrison
- ***Crève the Beloved Country*** by Alan Paton
- ***Methland*** by Nick Reding
- ***The Sound and the Fury*** by William Faulkner

As a point of reference, parents may want to find out more information about their student's book choice. The following are some websites that can be used to find out more information about the books on this list. While not an exhaustive list of websites containing information about books, each of the sites below contains information to support families as they preview materials. All of these websites have a free version providing information about books, but some are "for profit" and require a subscription to unlock all of its features. The free versions of subscription based sites, coupled with the other sites provided, assist families in making informed decisions. The websites represented are either used within the district, provided by our AEA partners, or were recommended as good sites from library professionals within the state.

- **[Booklist Online](#)**: is a website that compliments the Booklist magazine. Reviews on this website are written by members of the American Library Association. There is both a free and paid subscription option on this website, with the paid subscription (\$169.00/year). With the free subscription, you receive a basic book review.
- **[Common Sense Media Org](#)**: Common Sense Media is an organization that reviews and provides ratings for media and technology with the goal of providing information

Quotes: **The Bluest Eye**, teacher selected reading material.

*The tenderness welled up in him, and he sank to his knees, his eyes on the foot of his daughter. Crawling on all fours toward her, he raised his hand and caught the foot in an upward stroke. Pecola lost her balance and was about to careen to the floor. Cholly raised his other hand to her hips to save her from falling. He put his head down and nibbled at the back of her leg. His mouth trembled at the firm sweetness of the flesh. He closed his eyes, letting his fingers dig into her waist. The rigidity of her shocked body, the silence of her stunned throat, was better than Pauline's easy laughter had been. The confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him, and a bolt of desire ran down his genitals, giving it length, and softening the lips of his anus. Surrounding all of this lust was a border of politeness. He wanted to fuck her – tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold. The tightness of her vagina was more than he could bear. His soul seemed to slip down to his guts and fly out into her, and the gigantic thrust he made into her then provoked the only sound she made – a hollow suck of air in the back of her throat. Like the rapid loss of air from a circus balloon. Following the disintegration – the falling away – of sexual desire, he was conscious of her wet, soapy hands on his wrists, the fingers clenching, but whether her grip was from a hopeless but stubborn struggle to be free, or from some other emotion, he could not tell. Removing himself from her was so painful to him he cut it short and snatched his genitals out of the dry harbor of her vagina. She appeared to have fainted. Cholly stood up and could see only her grayish panties, so sad and limp around her ankles. Again the hatred mixed with tenderness. The hatred would not let him pick her up, the tenderness forced him to cover her. So when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quilt, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her. (162-163)*

Soaphead Church is a self-declared “Reader, Advisor, and Interpreter of Dreams” who Pecola asks to give her blue eyes. He is also a pedophile. This has made a lot of people who have challenged *The Bluest Eye* uncomfortable, so we felt him to be worth mentioning here. *He could have been an active homosexual but lacked the courage. Bestiality did not occur to him, and sodomy was quite out of the question, for he did not experience sustained erections and could not endure the thought of somebody else's. And besides, the one thing that disgusted him more than entering and caressing a woman was caressing and being caressed by a man. In any case, his cravings, although intense, never relished physical contact. He abhorred flesh on flesh. Body odor, breath odor, overwhelmed him. The sight of dried matter in the corner of the eye, decayed or missing teeth, ear wax, blackheads, moles, blisters, skin crusts – all the natural excretions and protections the body was capable of – disquieted him. His attentions therefore gradually settled on those humans whose bodies were least offensive – children. And since he was too diffident to confront homosexuality, and since little boys were insulting, scary, and stubborn, he further limited his interests to little girls. His sexuality was anything but lewd; his patronage of little girls smacked of innocence and was associated in his mind with cleanliness. He was what one might call a very clean old man. (166-167)*

He could have been an active homosexual but lacked the courage. Bestially did not occur to him, and sodomy was quite out of the question, for he did not experience sustained erections and could not endure the thought of somebody else's. And besides, the one thing that disgusted him more than entering and caressing a woman was caressing and being caressed by a man.

His attentions therefore gradually settled on those humans whose bodies were least offensive – children.

He further limited his interests to little girls.

Why do I have to die? The little girls. The little girls are the only things I'll miss. Do you know that when I touched their sturdy little tits and bit them – just a little – I felt I was being friendly? I didn't want to kiss their mouths or sleep in the bed with them or take a child bride for my own. Playful, I felt, and friendly. Not like the newspapers said. Not like the people whispered. And they didn't mind at all. Not at all. Remember how so many of them came back? No one would even try to understand that. If I'd been hurting them, would they have come back? No one would even try to understand that. If I'd been hurting them, would they have come back? Two of them, Doreen and Sugar Babe, they'd come together. I gave them mints, money, and they'd eat ice cream with their legs wide open while I played with them. It was like a party. And there wasn't nastiness, and there wasn't any filth, and there wasn't and odor, and there wasn't any groaning -- just the light white laughter of little girls and me.

With little girls it is all clean and good and friendly.

**Name:** Samantha Fett

**Comment:** Transparency is important in our school districts. We need to continue to make sure parents can have access to what is being taught in schools. I understand that many believe that we already have access, but as a recent school board member in a rural district, I can say that the process as it currently stands does not work. It is inconsistent, and with the recent attention from parents questioning certain books in our schools, The reconsideration process is outdated and districts are unwilling to improve or change them. This bill does some good things, however it needs more meat in it for accountability. I do support this bill and have also attached two files that layout to recent book so I havent found in school libraries across the state of Iowa.

Attachment is 0 Bytes - has been excluded.