

# LIBERTY COUNSEL



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Reply to: Virginia

July 24, 2018

**Via E-Mail Only**

Nathan T. Lee, Esq.  
Glover & Davis  
10 Brown Street  
Newnan, Georgia 30264  
NLee@gloverdavis.com

Re: “Propaganda” assignment and NCTE classroom ideology

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you for your response on behalf of the Coweta County School System (“District”), regarding parental rights concerns related to the “dossier” assignment from Language Arts teacher Kima Brown. I appreciate your confirmation that the District has destroyed the dossiers, including the DNA information and other personally identifiable information contained therein. Thank you as well for your assurances that the District will send a letter via certified mail advising all parents about the assignment and that the District has shredded those assignments. For now, we may agree to disagree about how the “dossier” contradicted the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) 34 C.F.R. § 99 and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 USC § 1232(h) (“PPRA”) (and how the “propaganda” assignment violated the latter).

Your letter did not address the steps the District is taking to remedy the other concerns set forth in Liberty Counsel’s letter of June 26, 2018. Liberty Counsel had requested a response regarding Ms. Brown’s “propaganda” assignment that likewise implicated student privacy interests regarding political and religious beliefs. Liberty Counsel had also requested assurances that the District would counsel Ms. Brown and all District teachers regarding parental rights **and the requirement of remaining politically and ideologically neutral in the classroom**. Teachers may not inject personal ideologies into assignments, notwithstanding the “how-to” workshops at the 2017 National Council of Teachers of English Conference.

As you know, Ms. Brown and other Northgate High School English teachers did not merely attend the Conference, but were all workshop “presenters.” The Agenda items of the

[NCTE 2017 National Conference](#)<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter, “Conference”) encourage teachers to go far beyond teaching English and writing skills. NCTE promotes classroom “propaganda” from a radical, critical theory perspective, in matters of economics, race, sex, morality, history and faith, all in violation of parental rights. The 2017 conference topics including the following activist political and ideological goals inappropriate to public education:

- **“Rejecting Neutrality: Literacy & Political Engagement in the ELA Classroom”**
- **“Enacting Social Justice–Focused English Curricula”**
- **“Who Are We as Activist Allies? Storying Our Work as Social Justice Educators”**
- **“Using LGBTQ Texts in Middle School...”**
- **“Why Are All the Trans Youth So ‘Normal’? Intersectionality and Absence in Current Trans[gender] Fiction for Youth”**
- **“Race Radical Literacies”**
- **“Evangelical Purity and Classroom Engagement”**
- **“Social Justice Teaching in an Inquiry Setting”**
- **“Using Graphic Novels to Spark Political Activism”**
- **“Reclaiming Racial Justice: English Education in the Wake of Racial Violence”**
- **“Sexuality, Power, and Rape Culture: Understanding Feminism in Adolescence”**
- **“Consciously Designing Culturally Situated Resistance Pedagogy for 21st Century Youth”**
- **“Decolonizing English Literacies in the Classroom,”** which explains **“how the English classroom is”** supposedly **“a colonized space,”** and shares “strategies...to begin to decolonize that space.”
- **“Public Education in Troubled Times,”** declaring **“There is no apolitical classroom. Teachers must examine how racism has shaped their beliefs.”** Critical voices in the field will explore issues related to ... **the privileging of English.**

One of three “Featured Sessions” at the Conference was entitled **“Queering English Studies: Navigating Politics, Policies, and Practices.”** The session description stated **“Queer K–12 teachers and students must continue... constructing learning spaces, creating projects, and pursuing research agendas that move English studies from “preservation to transformation”** so that participants can “be proactive in their schools and communities.”

NCTE declares “there is no apolitical classroom,” and promotes “rejecting neutrality” in favor of “political engagement in the ELA Classroom,” yet these contradict U.S. Supreme Court precedent and Georgia teacher ethics guidelines. Classrooms must be politically neutral.

In light of Ms. Brown’s presence at this conference and the Conference’s assertions that there “is no apolitical classroom,” the District must disavow Ms. Brown’s “Propaganda” assignment to “Create a Propaganda Meme” regarding the “Syrian Crisis and War.” Teachers who attended (much less “presented”) at this conference can be presumed to be

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<sup>1</sup> <https://convention.ncte.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/program-Friday1.pdf>

in agreement with the above objectives, and must be specifically counseled against abusing their classroom positions with impressionable children, in violation of parental rights.

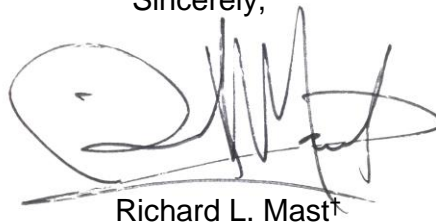
The U.S. Supreme Court has stated that agents of the state have no power to **“standardize...children by forcing them to accept instruction...The child is not the mere creature of the State...”** *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925) (Emphasis added). **“The history and culture of Western civilization reflect a strong tradition of parental concern for the nurture and upbringing of their children.** This primary role of the parents in the upbringing of their children is now established beyond debate as an enduring American tradition.” *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972) (Emphasis added). The “propaganda” assignment and indoctrination methods set forth by NCTE run roughshod over these fundamental parental rights principles.

In light of the serious violations that your July 23, 2018 letter does not address, please also specifically confirm in writing to Liberty Counsel that:

- 1) The District will forbid teachers from requiring students to create “propaganda;”
- 2) The District will counsel Ms. Brown and other District teachers regarding parental rights and the requirement of remaining politically and ideologically neutral in the classroom, without injecting personal ideologies into assignments; and
- 3) The District will inform Ms. Brown and other District teachers that the NCTE conference workshop suggestions set forth above (“Queering English Studies;” “Enacting Social Justice-Focused English Curricula;” “Using [non-school-board approved] LGBTQ Texts in Middle School;” promoting “Political Activism” and “Resistance Pedagogy”) are examples of “what not to do” in the classroom, and will otherwise subject teachers to professional discipline if they engage in them during instructional time.

If I do not receive the requested responses, Liberty Counsel will take further action to prevent irreparable harm to the rights of parents and students.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Mast<sup>†</sup>

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