

RANDOLPH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Special Called Session

September 25, 2013  
Minutes

The Randolph County Board of Education met in a special called session on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Central Services Board Room at 2222-C South Fayetteville Street, Asheboro, North Carolina. Board members in attendance were as follows: Tommy McDonald-Board Chair, Emily Coltrane-Vice Chair, Tracy Boyles, Gary Cook, Todd Cutler, Matthew Lambeth, and Gary Mason. Also present were Superintendent, Stephen Gainey, Board Attorney, Jill Wilson, and the leadership team.

**Open Session**

**Call to Order**

Board Chairman, T. McDonald called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Moment of Silence**

The Board observed a moment of silence before beginning the meeting.

**Introductions**

Superintendent presented introductions

**Legal Framework**

Board Chairman, T. McDonald, called for Board Attorney, Jill Wilson, to present the legal framework. Ms. Wilson reviewed for the Board of Education the legal perimeters of removing books from a high school library as well as the considerations for removing a curricular resource from a high school course of study. Outlining the First Amendment guidelines represented by United States Supreme Court cases on the issue of removal of school materials and the considerations for selection of school materials included in Board policy, Ms. Wilson suggested that the board vote on whether to re-consider their earlier vote to remove Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. T. Cutler made a motion seconded by G. Cook to re-consider the previous action of the board. Motion passed unanimously. 7-0.

**Book Challenge Process and recommendation of committees**

Catherine Berry, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, presented to the Board of Education the current process already in place. She stated a committee at the school level met regarding the parental input followed by a team at central services based a parental complaint, and respected the concerns and values of others. After review at both levels, the committees elected to leave the book in place. The committees at each level realizes the content may not be appropriate for every student, but allows students to advance in AP exams and college level work connecting English and Social Studies. Ms. Berry highlighted some areas the novel has received

recognitions over time. She stated the book challenge was based on objectionable language and content. Ms. Berry then read on behalf of the parent a statement that was submitted by the parent on 9/25/13. Ms. Berry then asked two teachers, Ms. Justine Carter and Courtney Davis to present how the book has been used in the curriculum. Ms. Carter presented the ways the book could be used as a cloak of invisibility, diverse background and beliefs, 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, compare and contrast of narrator, and gives an opportunity for students to look beyond the content. She stated it is the number one reference novel for preparation of the Advanced Placement exams. Ms. Courtney Davis shared the books place in the literary cannon for 42 years. She stated it is in the top 25 novels listed on the reading list at the Department of Public Instruction, a novel for upper level students, and is the number one reference novel for preparation of the Advance Placement exams. Upon conclusion, the superintendent thanked each of the teachers for their presentations. Ms. Berry thanked the teachers and the Board of Education for allowing additional information to be presented. Ms. Berry shared that in the future the schools will distribute a synopsis of all the books to the parents and students in the order according to the level of difficulty to assist in making inform decisions.

Board members delivered comments. Upon conclusion, the superintendent shared his appreciation of the comments from the board members and staff. He stated the number one prize possession is taking care of kids.

Ms. Berry thanked the board for the time to be allowed to present the information.

With no further discussion, M. Lambeth made a motion seconded by G. Cook to reinstate the book entitled Invisible Man back into RCSS libraries. Motion carried: 6-1.

### **Adjournment**

G. Mason made a motion seconded by E. Coltrane to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary