



December 10, 2019

Secondary Principal [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] High School
[REDACTED] Main Street
[REDACTED], MN [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

Child Protection League is a nonprofit focused on protecting children from exploitation, indoctrination and violence. It has been brought to our attention that the book, *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson, is being assigned as required reading in your 7th grade English class. We are writing to express our serious objections to this book in the hope that your school would reconsider its appropriateness for 7th graders.

While *Brown Girl Dreaming* is a captivating historical and poetic narrative of one black woman's growing up in the throes of our nation's era of the civil rights movement, at the same time, however, an indisputable political agenda is woven throughout its story line. One has to consider whether that leftist political framework is the reason for choosing this particular book for impressionable 13-year-olds to study literature and writing. The fact that the author's statements are her genuine, factual experience, doesn't remove the objection that this book becomes a form of political and ideological indoctrination.

For example, the book casts well-known violent Communist agitators Angela Davis and the Black Panthers, who overtly called for revolution, as heroic freedom fighters, while the FBI and law enforcement are depicted as an enemy. It portrays revolution as good. (Example: "So Maria and I walk through the streets, our fists raised in the air Angela Davis style.")

Brown Girl Dreaming also crosses the line between teaching religion and teaching *about* religion. Rather than being neutral and objective, the book draws the student into the author's personal experience, portraying Muhammad and Mecca as the strength of Black people and describing Muslim worship in emotionally affirming detail. The descriptions of Jacqueline's Jehovah Witness experiences meanwhile are presented through emotional personal experience, making it impossible for a 7th grade student to understand the distinction between what might appear to be 'Christianity' and what most Christians consider to be a false non-Christian religion.

As the Anti-Defamation League (ADF) states, "A public school curriculum may not be devotional or doctrinal. Nor may it have the effect of promoting or inhibiting religion...religion must be discussed in a neutral, objective, balanced and factual manner." And as you are well aware, Minnesota's Constitution states, "In no case shall any public money or property be appropriated or used for the support of schools wherein the distinctive doctrines, creeds or tenets of any particular Christian or other religious sect are promulgated or taught." [Article XIII, Sec. 2. *Prohibition as to aiding sectarian school.*] The book clearly promotes Islam while it presents a distorted view of Christianity. It violates both our state constitution and the guidelines of the anti-defamation league.

Even more objectionable are the worksheets that accompany the assigned reading. Under the pretense of studying literary structure, extremely politicized paragraphs are written *about* the story and then studied—just in case the readers didn't draw all the politically correct conclusions from the book itself. (See attached samples.) These paragraphs are overt propaganda, portraying with greater emphasis the Black Panthers as heroic, the police as enemies, and introducing today's Black Lives Matter movement as freedom fighters. All



of this commentary is written as if it is objective historical fact when it, in reality, is promotion of an ideology—an ideology most Americans consider false.

What would be the purpose of choosing this book? One compelling explanation appears to be the shift in education from teaching knowledge and skills to transforming the world by transforming the political and cultural paradigm of young people. That objective is what this book is all about.

For that reason, it was no surprise to find that *Brown Girl Dreaming* is recommended by a group called Social Justice Books. The purpose of socialjusticebooks.org/, in its own words, is to teach “diversity, power relationships among different groups of people, and various social identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, and disability).” “Social justice,” as can be seen from that purpose statement, is fundamentally opposite of the meaning of “justice” toward individuals regardless of race, color or creed, as enshrined in our Constitution.

As used today, the words “social justice” divide people into groups and pit each group against another. It is an ideological lens that interprets America’s historic struggles against injustices as evidence that we are a foundationally corrupt nation. “Social justice” is a narrative that teaches that our founding ideals are inherently racist, and that wholesale social, political and cultural transformation is necessary. “Social justice” books turn classrooms into vehicles for “transformational change.” Most Americans would call that indoctrination.

“Social Justice Books” is a project of “[Teaching for Change](#),” a non-profit group that [defines its mission](#) as providing the tools for teachers to create schools where students learn to change the world. Taxpayers and parents do not consider training kids to be leftist activists as the mission of education.

To get a sense of the vitriolic mindset of *Teaching for Change*, another group it sponsors is the [Zinn Education Project](#) where we find statements like this: “the U.S. president’s racist rhetoric and policies have provided an increasingly encouraging environment for attacks on Black people and other communities of color.”

Presenting this perspective of our President as factual is outrageous.

Brown Girl Dreaming is promoted by and is part of this ideological, politically driven movement in education, as described above, making it a more alarming choice for [REDACTED] schools. We urge you to choose curriculum and materials that avoid promoting a divisive ideological agenda in the classroom. You are doing tremendous harm to your students and your community. Perhaps there are other books your school is currently using that also fall into this category. We recommend a review of other literary choices, as well.

Sincerely,

Child Protection League