

**NATIONAL  
COALITION  
AGAINST  
CENSORSHIP** **KIDS'  
RIGHT  
TO READ**

October 14, 2021

Board of Trustees  
Katy Independent School District  
6301 S. Stadium Lane  
Katy, TX 77494

Re: Challenge to Jerry Craft books

Dear Board members:

The National Coalition Against Censorship is a coalition of literary, artistic and educational organizations dedicated to promoting free expression. We are writing in regard to news reports that the District is adjudicating a challenge to two books by Jerry Craft, *New Kid*, (a winner of the 2020 Newbery Medal), and *Class Act*. The challenge seeks to have the books permanently removed from school libraries because they purportedly promote Critical Race Theory. News reports also indicate that the District has removed the books from school libraries pending the outcome of the District's review of the books.

The District cannot remove those books, nor any books, on the basis that they endorse "Critical Race Theory", because almost forty years ago, the Supreme Court held that that is impermissible:

We hold that local school boards may not remove books from library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to "prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion." *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, 872 (1982).

Thus, the removal of books from public school libraries to suppress any political ideas, including Critical Race Theory, is a violation of the First Amendment.

Please note as well that recent amendments to Texas law regarding the teaching of certain principles that are commonly associated with Critical Race Theory do not apply to school libraries and would be void pursuant to *Pico* even if they purported to do so.

Therefore, we urge the District to dismiss this challenge and return the books to school libraries immediately.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Finan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Finan  
Executive Director  
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: The Authors Guild  
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund  
National Council of Teachers of English  
PEN America Children's and Young Adult Books Committee  
Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

CC: Dr. Ken Gregorski, Superintendent

A project of the National  
Coalition Against Censorship

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