

| First Name: | Last Name: | Topic of Comment: | Public Comment: |
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| Kristin | Adams | <p>Wednesday...1/25/23...#1...C CSD...YES To PRAYER...YES To ALL Words Being Used...US Constitution...1st Amendment...Freedom of Religion...Freedom of Speech...Thanks!</p> | <p>Wednesday - January 25, 2023 Charleston County School District (CCSD) CCSD - Board Of Trustees' Meeting - Prayer YES to PRAYER at Meetings: Freedom of Religion YES to ALL Words being Used at Meetings: Freedom of Speech YES to INCLUDE the Words: Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ, Savior</p> <p>Dear Charleston County School District - CCSD - Board Of Trustees: Ms. Leah Whatley: Ms. Carlotte Bailey: Mr. Edward Kelley: Mr. Keith Grybowski: Ms. Pamela McKinney: Ms. Darlene Roberson: Ms. Courtney Waters: Dr. Carol Tempel:</p> <p>Please Vote: - YES to PRAYER at Meetings: Freedom of Religion - YES to ALL Words being Used at Meetings: Freedom of Speech - YES to INCLUDE the Words: Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ, Savior</p> <p>The United States Constitution - 1st Amendment grants: - Freedom of Religion - Freedom of Speech</p> <p>The United States Constitution - 1st Amendment: - "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." - https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/</p> <p>The United States Constitution - 1st Amendment - Overview of First Amendment & Fundamental Freedoms: - "...The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution,1 viewed broadly, protects religious liberty and rights related to freedom of speech. Specifically, the Religion Clauses prevent the government from adopting laws respecting an establishment of religion—the Establishment Clause—or prohibiting the free exercise thereof—the Free Exercise Clause. The First Amendment also expressly protects the freedoms of speech, press, peaceable assembly, and petition to the Government..." - https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/amdt1-1/ALDE_00000210/</p> <p>"If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter." - George Washington, 1783</p> <p>Thanks So Very Much! Kristin Adams Parent of - 3 CCSD Students</p> |
| Hillary | Hutchinson | <p>Prayer at Board Meetings. Opposed.</p> | <p>To the Board of the Charleston County School District, I live in the CCSD area, and I am in complete agreement that opening school board meetings with a prayer implicitly endorses one religion over another. Minister Jeremy Rutledge eloquently expressed this opinion in his Letter to the Editor published January 20, 2023 in the Post and Courier. So far, the United States has remained a pluralistic community when it comes to religion. The separation of church and state designed to prevent a state imposed religion remains in place. As a practicing Unitarian, I believe prayer should stay out of the public education arena. With best regards, Hillary</p> |

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| Joan | Chard | Fwd: Letter To Editor: "Education vs. Indoctrination in Charleston County Schools." | <p>----- Original Message ----- From: Joan Chard <joanchard@comcast.net> To: Editor At Post And Courier <letters@postandcourier.com>, "editor@moultrienews.com" <editor@moultrienews.com> Date: 01/26/2023 2:51 PM Subject: Letter To Editor: "Education vs. Indoctrination in Charleston County Schools."</p> <p>Letter to Editor Post & Courier Letter to Editor Moultrie News</p> <p>"Education vs. Indoctrination in Charleston County Schools"</p> <p>It seems so simple. Parents and other taxpayers hire qualified teachers to show children how to read with understanding, to write clearly and concisely, to manipulate numbers necessary for adult needs, to comprehend history and government sufficiently to become intelligent voters, and to gain knowledge in achieving physical and emotional well-being.</p> <p>When did certain teachers decide to change their job description from "educating" children to "indoctrinating" children? Why did this battle begin between parents and some teachers as to who is more qualified to decide what is in the best interest of students?</p> <p>The Post & Courier states current legislation in S.C. House of Representatives "that bans the teaching of racial concepts in k-12 schools, while requiring fact-based discussion on history." "Those concepts, already banned in state law, include any race being superior to another." Time spent teaching Critical Thinking Skills would be profitable.</p> <p>The article stated the possibility that teachers would quit their jobs, fearful that they might (even unknowingly) cross the line between "education" and "indoctrination," either because their political views are so strongly held, or because they are unsure of what topics are appropriate for that age group.</p> <p>Obviously, the standards of age appropriateness need to be specifically stated, so there is no confusion. However, as professionals, teachers must be held accountable for fulfilling their job description of education, not indoctrination.</p> <p>When and how this Parent and Teacher contract became confusing to some is not as important as the need to reinstate the original agreement to specify, teach "education, not indoctrination."</p> |
| Jamond | Blake | Community outreach | N/A |
| Edwina | Nelson | EL Curriculum | EL Curriculum |
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| Carissa | Nicol | <p>EL curriculum: I would like this curriculum to be removed from CCSD. I've personally seen examples from the source that include controversial topics imbedded into the source text that push ideas related to CRT/or DEI and this in violation with current laws that state topics of such nature are not to be taught in SC public schools. This EL was established by the previous board. Not only that many of the teachers do not like the content or the method of this curriculum. Personally I would love to see the board choose an ELA curriculum that teaches the fundamental ways to build onlines, how to write, helps build vocabulary.</p> | <p>Please remove EL this curriculum is not a favorable selection. It contains many source text that promote CRT and other topics in violation with current laws that forbid the teaching of such topics in SC public schools I would prefer The Institute for Excellence in Writing methods as it actually takes students from a source text and how to build a proper online and then how to write your own paper.</p> |
| Samantha | Kurtz | Support for EL Curriculum | <p>Good Afternoon CCSD Board,</p> <p>I am an Instructional Coach in Charleston County School District and have worked implementing the EL Modules Curriculum this academic school year. My experience in helping implement this curriculum has been very positive. The students have had an incredible response academically to this new curriculum. I have never seen the students more engaged and excited to work with others collaboratively. The growth and achievement data has grown exponentially after just implementing 1 module of EL curriculum at each grade level this academic school year. The most exciting part of this growth is that ALL students are growing, not just some subgroups. Our school has academic data that shows EL has helped our students who are performing at all academic areas. We have noted specifically that our students writing has seen dramatic improvement over the course of just one semester.</p> <p>I feel it would be a great mistake to make a curriculum change at this point. We have academic data to support that students are making incredible gains academically. Additionally, these consistent changes in curriculum are making it very challenging for all stakeholders to commit to curriculums when they are constantly being changed. It gives me great pause with trusting the board's decisions. These decisions are showing more and more that the only concern is the personal agenda of the board members, instead of what is best for ALL children.</p> <p>I have worked in Title 1 schools my entire career and I care deeply about the growth and achievement of all students. I have found that EL is the curriculum that will move ALL students in the directions of success.</p> |
| Ann | Birdseye | EL Curriculum | <p>I have become aware of a move to replace the current ELA curriculum based on claims of supposed CRT. As a member of this community and former CCSD administrator in the areas of curriculum, instruction and professional development, I am deeply concerned about our students and their learning.</p> <p>I understand that . . SCDE has not adopted an ELA textbook series since 2012; consequently, teachers have been piecing together ELA materials for years; in 2018, the CCSD accreditation report from AdvancED cited a lack regarding curriculum and equitable opportunities for scholars; and all elementary schools implementing EL have demonstrated increased mid year growth in reading. I am writing you to ask that you stand strong in a tide of hysteria and fear mongering and to continue implementation of the EL curriculum for English Language Arts.</p> <p>The EL curriculum enables educators to use their discernment and choose, from a list of approved books, texts that resonate with students in their classrooms. We need as strong a curriculum as we can get to increase the reading scores of all children in this district.</p> |

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| Alicia | Tackitt | EL Curriculum | <p>I am the Literacy Coach at Stono Park Elementary which is one of the CCSD Acceleration Schools. This is our second year of implementation of EL. Have there been some challenges? Of course. Is it perfect? No curriculum will ever be perfect. This is reminiscent of the first few years of implementing Bridges when there was a lot of pushback. This is a very different way of teaching reading and writing from what many teachers are used to doing. In order for our district to provide an equitable education to our students, they ALL need to be taught using the same high-quality curriculum. EL has some of the highest scores according to EdReports. We have many transient students in our school district therefore they deserve to have consistency in what and how they are being taught to read and write.</p> <p>Stono Park and many other Acceleration Schools have seen significant growth according to SCReady after only one year of EL. We have seen tremendous growth from fall to winter this school year according to iReady.</p> <p>You may be hearing negative comments from teachers across the district. However, please keep in mind that they have not even implemented it for a full year yet. They will likely need more time and professional development to give a valid opinion on its efficacy.</p> <p>I work closely every day with all of our Stono Park teachers to support EL implementation. We internalize the lessons and examine student work using the Data Driven Instruction Protocol at PLC each week to inform the next instructional steps. If teachers have strong support at the school level then they will have a successful experience and will see the value of a knowledge-building curriculum.</p> <p>I am happy to talk with you if you have additional questions regarding the curriculum. I also encourage you to visit schools and talk with students and teachers to see EL in action.</p> <p>I also have the perspective as a parent of two CCSD students and an aunt of two CCSD students. I want my own children and nephews to have this rigorous curriculum in their education experience. Please do not make any changes to EL. Thank you for taking the time to read my comment!</p> |
| Jennifer | Savage | ELA Textbook Adoption | <p>I would like to make a public comment in regards to agenda item #6A CCSD Literacy Overview/ Textbook adoption.</p> <p>This year our school has been using the EL curriculum in our PreK-8th grade Montessori classrooms, and as the lead instructional/ literacy coach and a person with a strong literacy background, I have truly embraced and appreciated this process. Here at CCSD we say that the students are the heart of our work, and I have seen so much growth and joy in learning that EL Education has brought to our students. Students are engaged in rigorous, academic conversation, have a deep sense of ownership over the work that they are doing, and are being taught not only to read, but to collaborate, think critically, and to write effectively. The EL curriculum has offered a rich complement to our Montessori philosophy, methodology, and curriculum as well.</p> <p>As a Montessorian, a passion of mine is educating the whole child and meeting students where they are. The EL Curriculum embeds scaffolds so that all learners can access grade level content and achieve results that may have been previously unthinkable or unattainable for some students. I have seen firsthand the deep thinking and deep learning that has occurred in our classrooms. EL to me is more than just a curriculum but is a way of educating educators about best practices that are needed in today's global society. Education has evolved from the time of producing factory workers, and EL Education takes into consideration what students need to know and do to be successful in our modern world. Students engage in authentic learning and authentic assessments. Just last week our adolescent students were creating podcasts to educate and inform others about social and medical epidemics; our 2nd grade students were creating and demonstrating presentations for our kindergarteners about schools around the world, and our kindergartners were writing their own narratives that incorporated elements of their deep study on the weather. In my 17 years in education, I have not seen a curriculum that so beautifully integrates real world application with English Language Arts instruction.</p> <p>There is a lot of research now on the Science of Reading and the best ways that our brains learn and retain information. EL Education is in alignment with these best practices, and as I mentioned before, is not only a curriculum but a professional development tool to support teachers as they make the shift to research-based best practices in literacy instruction. It is a sort of one stop shopping that takes all of the best practices in literacy, social emotional learning, and service opportunities and delivers it to educators and students in a way that is accessible to them. EL emphasizes project based learning and even has an initiative called Better World Day where students and schools have the opportunity to submit their projects and receive funding to carry out these big ideas.</p> <p>Finally, as we live in a society where we are inundated with information and opinions, I want to say that it is important that we take a step back to reflect and make sure that we are forming our own opinions instead of just being swayed by the loudest voices. If you are not sure whether to adopt and endorse EL Education, take that step back to research it yourself. Read the books. Listen to the podcasts. Understand how this curriculum came to be and how it has the potential to continue to positively impact our students in an equitable manner across all schools and all subgroups. Consider the true purpose of education in this modern day society and the mission of our work here at CCSD. When we take that step back and make sure that students are, in fact, the heart of our work instead of listening to outside noise and outside chatter, it is amazing the clarity which we can find.</p> |

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| Jean | Howard | Reading Curriculum and continued training for Goals/Guardrails | <p>1. Based on data/ feedback from the staff, parents, student surveys, classroom observation and preliminary assessment results from 2 pilot schools the recommendation from the District is to adopt and implement the EL ELA curriculum. PLEASE CONTINUE TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF EXPERTS. Keep the curriculum!!</p> <p>2. Continue with the training for Council of Greater City Schools. The goals and guardrails need to be monitored. This Board needs to enter the training process and continue to focus on the adopted goals and guardrails!</p> |
| Karen | Urbanic | EL Curriculum | <p>It is important for the new board to understand that having been in the district for over 25 years CCSD has continually adopted and removed curriculum without just cause over the years. This inconsistency gleans the district as unreliable and that is not a desirable trait to have in the middle of a teacher shortage. As to the EL Curriculum itself, since its inception in CCSD students are showing growth in reading and are truly enjoying the inquiry based nature of the materials. Teachers are finding the curriculum very easily lends itself to real world experiences and is making profound connections for students of all ages and skill levels. Wouldn't it make more sense to take a deep look at EL and if necessary take out material that may be deemed by some as offensive. Teachers are professionals and if given the opportunity could without a doubt find other materials to use that would be viewed as appropriate by all. Let's talk about the money for a minute - are you really as newly appointed board members going to send the message that millions of dollars can be spent and just thrown away without thought when teachers are so poorly paid? And what about the time that teachers have put in to learning a new curriculum that they were told the 'must' use? Most of that time was without compensation. If the new board truly wants to make an impact on the lives of ALL children in CCSD then it is time to slow down and take a better look at the EL curriculum and not make a rash decision to just 'dump' a curriculum that is creating growth within in students and teachers.</p> |

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| | | <p>At Chicora Elementary we vote to continue using EL Education Curriculum because it is a comprehensive reading curriculum that helps connect students to real issues and needs. For example, in 3rd grade the students' first module focused on reading challenges and access to books around the world. Students enjoyed learning about countries like Kenya, Thailand, Finland, etc. Students did lots of research about other places in the world. Students began researching other places and looking at maps, asking questions, and discussing the information that they found. EL supports critical literacy and addresses key academic standards as well as promoting character development and foster ethics through the complex text that children are given. Some students had a hard time reading the books at first but the texts were so engaging that it pushed students to decode words, stop and jot, determine the gist of what they were reading , and helped to promote discussions using a variety of protocols. The result of this curriculum has students experimenting and going beyond the information that they are given. The learning is challenging and has meaningful collaboration daily. In module 3 of EL students are learning about literary classics like Peter Pan. Everyday we read a chapter from this book and everyday the students are eager to read the chapter and discuss the events that took place in the story. Everyday the students beg to continue reading another chapter. Since we have been using the EL Curriculum, we have students who are becoming better readers and helping others with the complex text. I love EL and I hope that we get to keep this curriculum! With</p> | |

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| Darshawn | Mitchell | Item 6A | <p>Dear Superintendent Donald Kennedy, Jr. and Charleston County School Board,</p> <p>I am a proud parent of a fifth-grader at Hunley Park Elementary School. My child, Cam, has been a student at Hunley since CD. I have been pleased with Hunley's focus on improving in reading and math, because I want Cam to grow up to be a successful adult who can read, write, and manage his money well. I want him to have the ability to choose what he wants to do in life, and all choices require him to be literate. However, I was sad to hear that a small group of people are criticizing the books selected for reading instruction at Hunley Park. Last year, when Hunley teachers began using these books, I noticed that what Cam was expected to learn seemed much more challenging than before. At the end of that year, Cam's SC Ready results increased from his third-grade level of "Does Not Meet Expectation" to "Approaching Expectation." Cam began that year reading one grade level below his own in i-Ready, and now he is on grade level. Not only does Cam like to be challenged, he needs it; he is now identified as a SAIL student. Until Hunley began teaching EL, I had never seen Cam come home with books. EL is good for students like Cam and, in fact, for all students. Because Hunley has made such great progress since teaching EL, I am asking that the board not vote to take EL away from our teachers and students. They deserve to have the best education possible, but North Charleston schools rarely get the best resources. A vote against EL is a vote against what is best for the students in North Charleston.</p> <p>Respectfully, Ms. Darshan Mitchell Ms. Latisha Gethers</p> |

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| | | | <p>Members of the CCSD Board of Trustees,</p> <p>Due to the strong concerns from teachers and parents across Charleston County, please vote on Monday to allow each school to immediately drop the EL Curriculum and select another state-approved English Curriculum that best meets the needs of their students.</p> <p>Here are a few quotes from teachers found on the Charleston Teacher Alliance Survey about the EL Curriculum. I did not see one comment from a teacher that likes this Curriculum - not one! Link to the survey results: https://www.charlestonteacheralliance.com/surveys.html</p> <p>"This curriculum will single handedly drive teachers out of the profession."</p> <p>"EL---- awful!!!! The current book for my class is completely inappropriate for 8/9 year olds with the subject matter being scared of the Taliban!!!! The only thing I can imagine is somebody got PAID to implement this terrible program. This is the first time in my 23 years that teachers had ZERO input...and the money they spent on these books!!! One book is \$18! Times that by all the kids in CCSD. No wonder 3rd grade doesn't have science or social studies textbooks. They spent all the money on EL."</p> <p>"Brand new to EL but so far we HATE it. No room for creativity. Maybe this curriculum is good for extremely low achieving schools but our district is not one size fits all. "</p> <p>"This is the worst curriculum I have ever taught. Open court was MUCH more teacher friendly and kid friendly I do not feel like the texts are grade level appropriate, teachers were not properly trained, and the user guides are in 3-4 different places. The "guided reading books" are the lowest quality I have ever seen and they are already falling apart. We were not given time or proper materials to implement this effectively."</p> <p>"The EL curriculum does not challenge my students. There is no writing nor grammar component to the curriculum."</p> <p>"It doesn't provide teachers any room or option to implement proven/successful (based on test scores/student data) materials and students are getting burnt out from the 2 hours of daily reading instruction it "requires." It doesn't teach isolated reading skills, which are fundamental to students' reading development. The reading level of the main texts used for each module are too high (750 Lexile level for the beginning of 5th grade) for students to comprehend. It seems to squash any creativity in teaching (teachers can't select student assignments or age appropriate texts) and incorporates very intense/serious topics at such a young age for students. "</p> <p>"This is the worst curriculum I have ever taught. It is not appropriate for our grade level, and it is not rigorous enough."</p> <p>"I have been a reading teacher for 25+ years. The EL curriculum is so labor intensive to plan, that I find I'm spending over an hour planning a daily lesson. The fifth graders have to read/interpret the Human Bill of Rights, which contains CONTROVERSIAL material for a teacher to present to students. If I use this in my classroom, we will have parental consequences. Much of this document is for parents to teach their own children, not teachers. The entire document is in the workbook, so I haven't given my students the workbook. The graded assessments are few and very far between. I've come up with quick quizzes that I know I can use as graded material. There's a component to ALL Block which requires the fifth graders to work in small groups (centers) while the teacher works with a small group. When there are at least 26 students in a 5th grade class, this is impossible. Redirecting students takes up teacher time that should have been spent with the group she's working with. Student safety is at risk without teacher monitoring. This is a ridiculous curriculum consisting of at least 5 teacher books to utilize. I know that a classroom teacher wasn't involved in choosing EL!"</p> <p>"EL is not engaging. The modules and skills block independent stations are not developmentally appropriate. Students are disengaged and bored."</p> <p>"The EL curriculum is not a literacy curriculum. It is a political agenda filled with propaganda. The lessons are well over and hour to ninety minutes. However, teachers are expected to do the module lesson in an hour at most then come to a "hard stop". We were told not to continue the previous day's lesson if left unfinished but to move on. With a novel being read, we cannot just move on without finishing the lesson. There's also a second component that we are being forced to do called ALL Block. This is an hour's waste of time where students are supposed to do centers. I've been teaching fifth grade for 13 years. Centers do not work in fifth grade or at least my classroom. This component is forcing me to do the opposite of what I believe are best teaching practices. When I piloted the curriculum last year, the EL rep said it was a "liberal" curriculum and laughed about being in the South. Why should ANY curriculum for reading have any type of political agenda? The books the company provides for me to put in my classroom library as additional reading resources for my students are filled with pro LGBTQ, BLM, and illegal immigration. All of these themes are not appropriate for 10-11 year olds. I voiced my opinions last year about the activities and websites my students were being forced to use, and the response I got was "Maybe public school isn't for you."</p> <p>"We should be teaching standards NOT programs."</p> <p>"We should have never gotten rid of Open Court. We needed a reading program that allows children to read. I'm doing all the talking, for the most part. Way to much fluff. Very difficult to follow. It should all be in one place. I leave school at 5, then bring home EL every night trying to figure out the next day's lesson. Prep time is ridiculous. If it helped the students become better readers, I would be willing to go the extra mile. I do like skills block stations, but I often add my own activities. What about teaching grammar...nouns, verbs, etc.?"</p> <p>There are around 200 responses from the teachers with none that want to keep this curriculum. The children are already behind from the loss of teaching during COVID and this is another wasted year of teaching for any student that has a teacher following the EL Curriculum how it is designed. Please put a stop to this</p> |

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| Nathalie | Rodriguez | EL Curriculum Adoption | I have been a public school educator for 16 years. In that time I have taught in 2 different states and have implemented new curricula in every district I have taught in. When I first came to CCSD we had no ELA curriculum. We had "Genre Units". I was excited when I found out we were going to adopt an ELA curriculum as it had been my experience that having an actual curriculum, with teacher and student resources, led to the most student growth and achievement. I didn't know much about EL when I heard it was what we were going to pilot, and I was even a little skeptical when I started doing my own digging around to find out what the modules of study were all about. I still have the texts I sent to our literacy coach. I was NOT on board. Fast forward and we are a full year and a half into using EL in my school. The students in my 3rd grade classroom are engaged, talking, writing, reading, and doing hard things! The curriculum is rigorous, thorough, and builds student knowledge. And, students are meeting their growth goals...PLUS! Some students are far surpassing their growth goals. I have no problem scaffolding and differentiating the work so that all students can participate and access grade level material. It is also very easy to enrich and extend activities for our highest achieving students. My students have written informative paragraphs, a 4 paragraph reading contract, and a pourquoi. Do you know what a pourquoi is? I didn't! But, now I do...and my third graders do too! I strongly encourage the CCSD board to vote to continue with the adoption of the EL Education curriculum for our district. It is working! |
| Renee | Greene | EL Curriculum | I ask that you REMOVE the EL Curriculum from all Charleston County schools. This divisive, social justice curriculum is hurting and dividing our children. We should be working to unify our kids. Our youth are not responsible for things that happened many years ago. The teachers responses on the CTA survey are very telling of how terrible this curriculum is. That children are not learning to read because of time because this curriculum takes so long. That this curriculum is boring the kids and they are not learning. This curriculum is dumbing our kids down. Let's make a change and educate our children not indoctrinate them. |
| Kelly | Cooper | EL EDUCATION | I want to share that I am vehemently opposed to the EL Curriculum. After reading extensively on their website, I am astonished that this curriculum was implemented in the first place. This victimhood and shame-based instruction is not related to reading, writing and arithmetic, and shouldn't be allowed anywhere near children. Children as young as five shouldn't be learning from these politically charged programs. I hope you will take my rights into consideration and end this harmful form of instruction. |
| Megan | Seminaroti | EL | I am so exhausted by this board and education in general whitewashing history and acting as though racism isn't something our peers and students have to continually deal with in every aspect in their days. It is uncomfortable and hard but essential for our future to face history, understand it and recognize privilege in hopes for a kinder world. It is my feeling that anyone that does not support an accurate, truthful representation of our collective past needs to hold themselves accountable for the continuing divide of this country and has no business pushing their beliefs/agenda into our curriculum. These agendas are not best practice for our children and have gone on far too long in our system. We can not and should not rewrite history but honor it by accurately reporting the facts. We have a chance to make sure we are the right side of history now and I truly hope that comes from training our teachers to present the truth to our children and provide our children with an accurate depiction of the world around them and not just one that is curated in their homes. |

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| Cava | Compton | EL | <p>Hello,</p> <p>I am writing in regards to the EL Curriculum. I've reviewed 15 pages of concerns from CCSD teachers who have attempted to use this Curriculum and then responded to the CTA Curriculum Survey..</p> <p>The central themes that are repeated over and over by these teachers are as follows: It creates more work for teachers It is boring and / or not developmentally appropriate for the students It is a waste of time It is a Social Program rather than and Academic Program It teaches gender ideology to 3rd graders and critical race theory to 5th Graders It doesn't meet academic standards</p> <p>The words "terrible"," boring" and "awful" were used over and over again by these teachers. The theme of veteran teachers claiming this as the worst curriculum ever repeats itself - as does the fact that it seems to take away the joy of teaching. I fear adoption of this sub-standard social curriculum may push some of our best teachers into retirement (or private schools).</p> <p>If there is no joy left in teaching, there can be no joy in learning for the students.</p> <p>It is also my understanding that CCSD "does not push CRT". I'm wondering why this claim does not seem to be the case with this new curriculum - and whether its implementation may break current state laws. Why haven't the tax payers (who fund this) been advised that this new "curriculum" that is being pushed on our students is actually social activism and racism? I suspect most tax-payers and parents would have much to say about this!</p> <p>Please stop this curriculum now - and put it in the furthestest dumpster in the back of the school yard where it belongs!</p> <p>Thank you! Cava Compton</p> |
| Valerie | Schmalian | EL Curriculum | <p>EL Curriculum will be divisive and a detriment to our school, children, parents, and the entire community. Let's be a leader for our country here in Charleston and stop this dangerous curriculum. Respectfully, Valerie Schmalian</p> |
| Jennifer | Pecoraro | <p>EL/ CRT/SEL: enough with the race baiting curriculum. Children need to be taught academics in a safe loving environment. I'm tired of my children being brainwashed and beaten over the head with race-baiting, and sexual material at school. I'm very close to pulling all 4 of my children from CCSD. I know I'm not alone. I would imagine there would be a major financial impact on the district if families such as mine were to do the same.</p> | <p>No</p> |

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| Theresa | Ray | EL Education Curriculum | <p>Good Afternoon CCSD Board of Trustees,</p> <p>My name is Theresa Ray and I am a lower elementary teacher at James Simons Elementary. I would like to address the EL curriculum and how beneficial it has been to providing students with a content-rich informational and fictional texts. It is based on the science of reading and the students have enjoyed every book immensely! I hear them in the hallways talking about paleontology; " Who is your favorite paleontologist? " First grade students tell me what books I should be reading about the phases of the moon. Third grade students make connections about geography and economy with their immersive studies with cultures across the world. The curriculum language dives, close reading activities, and writing blocks are so important to have on a daily basis. It is rich with supports for all reading levels and I have invested many hours reading the manuals, taking the professional development training, and adding content to my library that correlates with the various units. The students enjoy everything about EL and will be deeply affected by the loss of it if that were to happen. It is such a well-rounded curriculum . Perhaps step into the classroom and observe how this science based curriculum really works . The students can answer your questions, too!</p> |
| Nicole | McCarthy | English language curriculum | <p>Dear Board Members, Our current EL curriculum is an abject failure as measured by the literacy rates of our district's most disadvantaged students. Phonics is a tried and true program that gives children the keys to unlock the world of learning through reading. I respectfully request that that current EL system be replaced by a phonics based program that will enable the success of our student. I learned recently about the correlation between third grade literacy and incarceration. We not only need to switch to an effective program immediately but also offer one on one tutoring to help students gain ground. Perhaps the ESSER funds could be applied to this endeavor?</p> |
| Susan | King | EL Curriculum | <p>Good evening,</p> <p>My name is Susan King, and I have served as the principal at Sullivan's Island Elementary since 2004.</p> <p>Our school began the EL pilot last February. Since then, our teachers have planned and collaborated extensively to teach the curriculum as designed. In doing so, we have observed a dramatic increase in consistent student engagement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.</p> <p>At Sullivan's, we have worked with staff and parents to unpack EL and transparently delve into questions and concerns regarding views expressed on the EL website and social media versus the actual nuts and bolts of the EL curriculum. I encourage all stakeholders to engage in this deep discussion and better understand what the curriculum is and is not.</p> <p>EL does NOT tell students what to think about an issue. Instead, it sharpens students' thinking skills and helps them form evidence-based ideas. In education, we talk about the four C's of 21st Century education: creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. In the hands of capable professionals, EL handily checks the box for these specific skills that students need to participate fully in a global community.</p> <p>It would be a shame to discard a program that is igniting student learning without first looking at ways to find common ground and understanding. We can all agree that we want our children to love learning, crave reading, and express themselves intelligently through writing and speaking. The EL rollout may provide the perfect opportunity for us to work together to finally move closer to this reality for ALL students in CCSD. The work is complex but so very important. Go Team!</p> |
| Sandra | Goodwin | EL Curriculum | <p>As parents of a child who attended CCSD schools for 13 years, and Charleston County taxpayers, we are very much opposed to the adoption of the EL Education curriculum by the CCSD Board of Trustees last summer. Further, we are appalled by the apparent absence of professional review and public comment that accompanied this action.</p> <p>From the CTA 2022-2023 Curriculum Survey, it is clear that most educators who are required to use the curriculum do not support it, and do not believe it will have positive impact on students. For example,</p> <p>Responding to the statement "This curriculum is rigorous enough to consistently challenge my students," of a total of 133 respondents, 25 (18.8%) Mostly Agreed or Strongly Agreed, while 86 (64.6%) Mostly Disagrees or Strongly Disagreed. A similar pattern of responses was shown for all other statements in the survey.</p> <p>Further, EL Education's web site makes it clear that a significant portions of its curricula present a biased, uninformed, and non-critical perspective to advance a political agenda. For example, one of its web pages includes a graphic showing "a non-comprehensive list of deaths at the hands of police in the U.S. since Eric Garner's death in July 2014" with no additional context, insight or perspective.</p> <p>Because the EL curriculum clearly is not supported by CCSD's educators, and because of its biased political agenda, we urge you to do all you can to remove this material from CCSD schools.</p> |

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| | | | <p>The EL program is ideologically driven - it's full of politics. A simple review of the publisher's website corroborates what many have identified as CRT. See the following links:</p> <p>The program's foundation is built on Ibram X. Kendi who believes that everything is about race and if you don't agree - you're a racist. Ibram X. Kendi (formally known as Roger Kendi) is a race provocateur. A simple search of his opinions leads me to believe he is a racist. Why are we using this publisher? This reference to Kendi has recently been removed; however, I have a screen shot and other copies. I wonder why it was removed.</p> <p>Scroll down at this link to see the major focus on equity where the words racism, xenophobia, internment, segregation, enslaved people and persecution dominate the literacy discussions. Almost every book highlighted is saturated with discussions about race. For example (from the link):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider proactively addressing related current events including racism and xenophobia against African Americans and Asian Americans. Consider providing background information and discussion on racial segregation, racial prejudice, and civil rights. 2. Consider proactively addressing current events and use these connection points to consider how the story could be reimagined to center the Black experience and the intersectionality of experiences and social identities. 3. Consider providing background information and discussion on racial prejudice, immigration, and civil rights as it applies to other marginalized groups, including Indigenous and Latinx communities. Monitor students and determine if there are issues surfacing that need to be discussed in more detail. 4. Consider proactively addressing related current events including racism and xenophobia against African Americans and Asian Americans. Consider providing background information and discussion on racial prejudice, immigration, and civil rights. <p>A highlighted author at the site believes the best practice is to build culturally responsive teaching by ignoring white children. (https://eleducation.org/news/center-students-with-culturally-responsive-teaching-jamila-j-lyiscott-ph-d)</p> <p>From her article:</p> <p>"CRT creates opportunities for us to undo the harm that educational inequity continues to perpetuate by casting the cultures and identities of students and their communities outside of the intellectual arena of schooling. It creates opportunities for students to understand their cultural practices and histories as valuable and essential for their educational and social development and calls teachers to the responsibilities of de-centering whiteness while centering cultural diversity. Thus, the greatest opportunity afforded to students is the space created for their identities and cultures to function as powerful and necessary for the co-creation of knowledge within any discipline while disrupting the pervasiveness whiteness...We center these practices as a means to disrupt whiteness, to draw on the power and intellect of Black and Brown communities, and to stay deeply connected to the interests and cultures of students in the program."</p> <p>(My observation: Notice that white is always lowercase while black and brown are capitalized.)</p> <p>The EL group is not above board and has lied about its motives for literacy for all children. See the link that follows. An EL representative who visited and helped to implement its literacy program was caught on audio admitting that it has "co-conspirators" in its ranks. What does that mean? I encourage you to read the article and listen to the audio. It's very disconcerting.</p> <p>https://www.foxnews.com/media/audio-education-specialist-allegedly-touting-critical-race-theory-raises-concerns-south-carolina</p> <p>There is a video that corroborates the audio. Ms. Sullivan has visited CCSD schools. There is no doubt to the validity of this audio.</p> <p>I want to address the following quote that I received from a teacher who teaches the EL curriculum:</p> <p>"Many of the teachers complaining about EL are at schools that have high achievement scores but low growth scores"</p> <p>The key words are high achievement. Despite the three years of COVID disruption, schools in Mt. Pleasant did well. In fact, Charles Pinckney Elementary earned the highest overall rating of all elementary schools in Charleston County; the point is - even without a defined county curriculum successful schools built one that worked for them as evidenced by state metrics.</p> <p>The complaints from high achieving schools are valid. The EL program is not as rigorous as the programs developed by experienced teachers in high achieving schools; the CTA survey results bear that out. It lacks an adequate spelling program, vocabulary program, detailed and consistent grammar lessons, and novel study that higher achieving children need and deserve. The writing portion of the curriculum does not directly teach TDAs or text dependent analysis of reading texts that is specifically tested by the state at the end of the year.</p> <p>I believe intimidation has been used to force fidelity to the program. Many teachers complain privately and whisper in the hallways lamenting the scripted and time consuming lessons that leave no room for social studies, sciences, or individual creativity. In fact, the smothering theme of racism lessons leads many teachers to say nothing out of fear; if one is not an "anti-racist", then according to Kendi, you're not in a "safe-place". Meaning - if you don't agree with EL, you're not safe - from what, I wonder.</p> <p>A colleague of mine said an EL representative remarked to a room full of English language teachers that the EL curriculum is a politically liberal oriented program and laughed that she was in the South. Another colleague after voicing concerns was told that public education might not be the best place to be teaching.</p> |

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| Jill | Cragg | EL curriculum | <p>I am writing to share student comments that I recently received from several fifth grade students. I currently work in two different CCSD schools Belle Hall and James B. Edwards, the comments were similar and are a direct result of one of the 5th grade EL units in which the focus is on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</p> <p>During class discussions in our new study on law (the Think Law program the Gifted & Talented Department uses), students told me that their "rights" were protected by same UN Declaration discussed in their language arts classes. Additionally, they told me that the main character in the novel (required reading in the EL program) also had rights guaranteed by the declaration, and that the character's rights were "broken" when she was fleeing Mexico and illegally came into the United States. I politely corrected the students saying that their natural rights are protected by the US Constitution - not the UN Declaration.</p> <p>My concern for this particular EL unit is that students are learning things that are undermining the truth of their own rights as American citizens. Students in Charleston County schools should be learning American history which includes the founding documents that govern this country and truly protect their rights. Children who are in elementary school are purposefully being confused and mislead about the laws that protect the rights of American citizens.</p> <p>I would encourage the Board of Trustees to take a thorough look at the units that compose this elementary-level program before expanding EL into the middle school.</p> |
| John | Read | EL Schools ELA Curriculum | <p>I am a Charleston resident with nearly 10 year's direct experience with Expeditionary Learning Schools and almost as many with CCSD.</p> <p>The EL curriculum supporting ELA in Charleston schools is at its roots, 'experiential'. It was selected by experienced educators on the basis of its success in other districts and it has been in place long enough for preliminary results that establish its effectiveness here to be available. One of its attributes is the use of materials that relate to the experience of our children, holds their attention, and deepens their interest in what they have been given to read.</p> <p>The board has chosen to review this curriculum, which is commendable. It should do so however only on the basis of whether or not that curriculum is contributing to student 'growth' in their reading ability and to eliminating the disparities in success, so long a part of public education here and elsewhere.</p> <p>Some may be uncomfortable with the extent to which the parent organization's commitment to anti-racism and equity is a matter of public record on its website and blogs. That discomfort should have no bearing on your review. Rather the board is encouraged to support whatever decision CCSD educators make in respect to the future of this curriculum.</p> |
| Cara | Ernst | CCSD Literacy Review: EL Curriculum | <p>I am teaching at a school that uses the EL materials. I am using the 1st grade curriculum. The books are appropriate and engaging to the students. One of the first books students study is "A Most Magnificent Thing". The students learn to have persistence, initiative and cooperation. These are positive learning skills as well as life skills. Students have short discussions about books and how to respectfully listen to their classmates. The program also incorporates informational texts that directly correlate to South Carolina 1st grade state standards in science. Students read both fiction and nonfiction books about the phases of the moon. We also incorporate a skills block section that focuses on phonics that uses the same methods that teachers are getting trained on through the Lets program.</p> |
| Gregory | Taylor | EL Curriculum potential modifications | <p>Superintendent Kennedy, I do appreciate your informative letter indicating your support of educators' instructional discretion. My concern is the idea that adjustments could be made due to concerns that stakeholders may take issue with certain content. If the stakeholders are familiar with best practices, and value educators' instructional discretion, then I can't imagine what their concerns would be. This being said after delving into the EL Curriculum this year and seeing the response, engagement and growth with my multicultural class of students.</p> |
| Kalila | Wilson | African American Studies | <p>Good Afternoon Board Chair, Vice Chair, Superintendent Kennedy & board. I am Kalila Wilson, a graduate of CCSD (K-12), 22 year Educator, 17 in CCSD where I have served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, athletic coach, and support services provider. Today I would like to speak about the African American studies curriculum, a course I wish had the opportunity to take during my time as a student here in Charleston county. In 2023, we can allow our high school students who have space in their schedules to take an elective course, which they themselves elect to take to learn about African American History, or as I like to call it Black Joy! Yes, there are some pivotal historic moments that are not joyous, but are important to learn and discuss. However, most of the local board approved curriculum is a celebration of the legacies of kingdoms, individuals, the arts, literature, culinary delights, and cultures of those of the African Diaspora. I had the opportunity to participate in the building of that curriculum with both History and English teachers, as well as observe classes. This elective course is as appropriate as the elective locally approved Holocaust and Current events classes. As a board you set the stage for our students, families, educators, and community. You were elected as non-partisan officials to guide us appropriately, with skill and will, with and for, to serve students in becoming college and/ or career ready. This course is not only wanted but needed as a reminder of Black Joy. Today, I choose Joy!</p> |

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| Kassie | Kellett | Removal of EL Curriculum | <p>To The Board Members of Charleston County School District, We are parents of two children both attending Jenny Moore Elementary School. We are grateful for the opportunity to comment in support of removing "EL" curriculum from our children's education program.</p> <p>We had long heard comments from teachers and parents on the shortcomings of this program, but it took a few years for us to truly understand the true detriment the program brings to our children's education. First, the overall pacing of instruction is inconsistent with the educational needs to prepare our children for a competitive future. Our older child has struggled to even be able to iterate exactly what she is learning in this program mostly due to lost attentiveness. The pace of reading is so slow, we have to supplement her education with other books from home and from tutoring just so she can read at the expected grade level. Her writing ability has long been poor and was also required to attain supplemental instruction to be able to write at her grade level. We saw early on her structure and form were based more on regurgitating neo-socialist ideals than her ability to develop and argue her own critical thoughts in an organized and coherent manner.</p> <p>Which brings us to the second point on how this program is failing our children. In reading the mission statement of the EL organization, we read of tactics and goals we could all generally agree with at surface level. But in reviewing further, we see massive overreach- a mission statement that goes well beyond education and shows this is not an education program but a social engineering action group with very controversial and untested belief system. It's very clear this is nothing short of a cancerous indoctrination program, teaching children (poorly at that) how to parrot illogical and immoral one-sided versions of critical race theory. They are overwhelmingly being introduced to literature suggestive of thoughts and ideas not in alignment with the belief system of the vast majority of the households in our district and in fact regardless of beliefs should not be taught without some form of balance, period.</p> <p>With our concerns considered, we implore the board to focus on turning our schools back to the simple roll of education. We ask you to bring back conventional, time-tested methods of teaching methodology so they can attain the basic skills of reading and writing on par with not only a national but global standard. We ask that different versions of "history" are taught equally so that students can learn to determine truth from multiple sources of input. We ask that they are introduced to a broad spectrum of thought so they might gain the ability to organize their own thoughts into coherent words.</p> <p>Until then, every day we are failing our children and educators. Statistics show parents are rapidly pulling their children from the public school system and teacher attrition is at all-time highs. On top of that child depression rates are "inexplicably" spiking. In reading the objectives of EL organization along with the vast majority of comments on this curriculum, it's not difficult to understand the root of the problem. We are strong advocates of the importance of public education but enough is enough. Understanding what is being taught and the true mission of this organization I don't see how any of us could feel comfortable with our children in public school.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of our comments, Jordan and Kassie Kellett parents of Charleston County School District Students</p> |
| Casey | Sullivan | EL Curriculum | <p>My students love the EL curriculum. They love the topics and my students' confidence have grown and started to truly blossom. I like the inclusivity and diversity that is shown in the curriculum, because it truly represents the students I teach. I appreciate that the curriculum follows the science of reading, and have truly seen great growth in my students' reading skills by following is curriculum. Between using EL modules and Skills Block, my students have truly shown growth this school year.</p> |
| Melissa | Zahler | EL | <p>I am an elementary school librarian and I had worked pretty extensively with the EL curriculum to understand the material being taught and how I can best support students and teachers. As an acceleration school, we were among the first school to begin using EL and in that short time I have seen a lot of positive influences. From the librarian aspect there has been an increase in the checkout of fiction books and a HUGE increase in the amount of nonfiction books being checked out. I have noticed that the kids have grown a sense of curiosity and interest in learning about things. With the curriculum I have been able to collaborate with more teachers then ever before. I am able to help build schema and to extending the learning of topics. The amount of times a student has said, "I know about this! We learned this is class." or they have been able to connect something being taught in the library to what they are learning in the classroom has also increased exponentially. Throughout my conversations with classroom teachers they have mentioned that the students are enjoying the material, they are engaged, and writing more than they ever have. In closing, I would like to remind the board that there is no such thing as a perfect curriculum. There will always be aspects that are favored and aspects that we would like to change. I do know that it would be a huge disservice to our students and teachers to completely abandon using EL.</p> |

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| Cassidy | Harris | EL Curriculum | <p>To Whom it May Concern:</p> <p>Seventh grade was weird. Especially in the early 2010's when selfies were the determining factor of beauty and how much money your parents had determined how smart you were. I remember vividly walking into my seventh grade English class one day, head down in hopes that no one would even dare to look at me for the fear of embarrassment (aka spotlight effect– very common in the adolescent years). My teacher started class by presenting us with the opportunity to speak at the annual "God, Flag, and Country" contest that was local to my hometown. Gasp– I know– imagine we bring the idea of "God" into our schools. Anyway... I will come back to that as this letter continues.</p> <p>Seeing that I spoke maybe five words a day in a public setting, I looked past this opportunity until my teacher pulled me aside and begged me to take the chance. The chance changed me as a student and person. I won. My speech was based on how Martin Luther King Jr. represented God, Flag and Country. Remember the "gasp" at the God situation? I wonder if you would have that same gasp if I told you of the many attendees of the event who said my speech was invalid or continued to whisper in shock as I accepted my trophy. Did you even gasp at the thought of God? Or were the comments on the topic of my speech more shocking? I think your answer to these questions means something.</p> <p>When it was brought to my attention that EL would be the curriculum I would be taking on this school year, I was annoyed at first because I thought it would take away my freedom to educate students how I please. I can say with humility that I was wrong. EL has guided me through intentional conversations that not just should, but need to be had with middle school students.</p> <p>Students at my school feel represented by the EL curriculum. Rather than the classic "To Kill a Mockingbird being the book of representation" tradition taking place, we have been provided with literature that is a representation of each and every student in our classrooms. Students are finally able to see themselves within characters, no adaptation necessary. My question when I first heard of the grave concern of the EL curriculum is where was this concern when To Kill a Mockingbird was being taught in school? Is there no controversy in the common themes within the book such as, "people of color are not capable of representing themselves" and "white people must be the saving grace to the injustices people of color face?" While I do not agree, Harper Lee was not shy in presenting these lessons throughout her novel. I have found my answer to my question, and that is people in society, specifically those on CCSD's board, are insecure of the realities that we have so often looked over within our history as a society.</p> <p>I am a white teacher. I refuse to speak for any minority group because that is not my place. I will never understand what it means to be black. I will never understand what it means to be black in America. However, I love my students. I respect my students' cultural backgrounds. I have taken an oath to prepare my students to be global thinkers. I refuse to be a part of a district that silences the "uncomfortable" parts of history. Frankly, I refuse to be a part of a district that silences the reality of the present. By removing EL, the board of Charleston County School District is declaring that they do not respect my students. They do not respect their teachers. And that we have people on our board who actively support a movement to silence reality and to rewrite history.</p> <p>I am a teacher. I refuse to follow the decisions of a few. The decision regarding EL will heavily influence my decision to stay working in CCSD– and I know I am not alone.</p> <p>Signed, Cassidy Harris</p> <p>7th Grade English Language Arts Teacher Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science Appalachian State University Graduate Undergraduate Degrees: Middle Grades Education, English Language Arts Middle Grades Education, Social Studies Master's Degrees: Special Education: Reading Special Education: Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Special Education: Autism</p> <p>Comments from Seventh Grade Students at Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science: "It does not just shine the light on one race, each book shines the light on a different race and what they have to go through." "I like how we get to have conversations and people understand each other better." "I like how everyone is treated equally and no one is treated differently." "I like that the Harlem Renaissance talks about bringing people together, like different races." "I like in A Long Walk to Water that Salva grew up to be successful despite what he came from." "I like the history that we are talking about, stuff people actually went through back in the day."</p> |

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| | | | To whom it may concern, My name is Christina and I am a 3rd grade teacher at a Title 1 school in North Charleston. I am writing today to discuss how exhausting it is to work at a school where curriculum is constantly forced upon us to then be taken away. It is only my third year as a teacher and I have already had to learn 8 new curriculums. On top of affecting teacher retention drastically, I pose the question: How am I supposed to give my students quality education when I am not given the opportunity to master something for longer than a year? Studies show it takes 5 years for a curriculum to start showing a difference in test scores, and I can confidently say that EL is already doing so in year one. EL has proven to me to be so effective in teaching writing, research, reading, science, and just instilling an overall confidence in my students in their own abilities. I have seen so much growth from August to now that I did not see in years past. My students work extremely hard and also face many challenges such as speaking different languages, not getting enough food to eat outside of school, or being exposed to dangers in the real world. If there is a 3rd grade curriculum that helps these students by focusing on overcoming challenges (Module 1), researching frogs (Module 2), and studying fairy tales (Module 3), why take it away from them? I urge you to think about my 8 and 9 year old kids from all over the world when making this decision that affects their teachers and in turn affects them. I emailed each board member a video I made for you to get to know them a little better, we appreciate your attention on this matter! Thank you so much! |
| Christina | Percario | Support for EL | Ms. Percario |
| Sara | Ancrum | EL curriculum | EL curriculum has opened so many windows into the lives of our students. The curriculum weaves and build cultures of respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness, where students and adults are committed to quality work and citizenship. It provides a framework to encourage and is directly related to the Profile of a South Carolina graduate. Why would we discourage using a curriculum that provides life skills, 21st century skills, create rigorous tasks for students to stretch their abilities? |
| Jenna | Tenaglia | EL Curriculum | Hello, in reading the teacher feedback regarding the EL Curriculum, I am incredibly concerned. It looks like the district bought a very expensive and poorly designed curriculum for our students that is greatly inhibiting their ability to learn to read. My eldest daughter is in 4th grade and she has consistently struggled to keep up in this subject. Having a confusing curriculum that the teachers can barely understand will be devastating for her. My youngest daughter is in first grade and she is just learning the building blocks of reading. I fear that this will set her back years. Please take the teachers advice and drop this harmful curriculum and reinstate one of the phonics based programs the teachers speak positively about. |
| Miles | Williams | EL Curriculum | Hi - I am a parent with three sons in CCSD schools (Laing, Academic Magnet and Wando). I would like to voice my concerns with the EL Curriculum and give my support for its removal. It is clear from the teacher survey that this curriculum is onerous, poorly organized, and does not help our children learn effectively. In addition, it is designed to be divisive and focus on social justice -- not the fundamentals our children need to be successful. Our children and our teachers deserve better. Listen to the teachers and implement a curriculum which lets them teach and prepares our children. Thank you |
| Shannon | Wischusen | EL Education | I strongly urge the board to reject the notion that EL Education promotes CRT. For those who are lobbying against EL Education, I ask you to please take the time to delve into the curriculum and associated texts fully (K - 8th grade) before alleging this. Taking away this evidence based, child-centered curriculum harms teachers, schools, and most importantly, students. This decision will have dramatic and lasting effects for the studnets who are using EL Education this year, and would be unable to complete it. The curriculum is designed to be taught from start to finish in order to achieve state standards. Please consider the students who we are here to serve before making this extremely important decision. |
| Kim | Clark | Please continue to support the EL curriculum | I'm Kim Clark with Charleston RISE. I hope that your discussion on the EL curriculum will focus on how effective the curriculum has been for the faculty who spent countless hours being trained to implement the materials and methods. Also, according to faculty and staff, particularly at acceleration schools, the EL curriculum is very effective for students, allowing students to see significant improvement in their reading abilities and helping students stay engaged in learning. Another issue I have with the possibility of removing this necessary and, again, effective curriculum is the money that was already spent. CCSD does not have money to spare or waste frivolously. It would be a waste of \$10 million dollars to throw this curriculum away. Kim Clark |

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| | | | <p>Over the past six years, Charleston RISE has been advocating for policies that improve the academic outcomes of black and brown students. We were strong supporters of Mission Critical because it had a focus on increasing the number of black children in the magnet schools and establishing the Acceleration zoned schools. Charleston RISE stood strong at every Board meeting, many times, the lone public voice in the room. Our School Board Accountability Team has watched every Committee of the Whole and regular Board of Trustees meetings, monitoring updates on the Acceleration zoned schools. When necessary, the SBA Team has corresponded with District leaders to obtain additional explanations when information was not clearly presented or concerns were raised among our staff and Alumni. We have had District representatives speak at our Alumni meetings to share the progress of the Acceleration zoned schools and answer questions. In essence, Charleston RISE has been following and supporting this process since it became public.</p> <p>One of Charleston RISE's hallmarks is its focus on data and the disparities that exist within it. We examine the data, specifically the outcomes on SC READY, and rank schools based on that data. The achievement gap that exists in Charleston county is staggering, if not criminal. All efforts should be made to eradicate this illegitimacy in our education system. The EL curriculum is a proven solution as the remarkable gains in achievement have shown in Acceleration zoned schools. Should this trend continue and increases in learning are shown across the schools who have adopted this curriculum, the use of the EL curriculum should be continued.</p> |
| Cheryl | Cromwell | EL Curriculum | As the Executive Director for Charleston RISE and on behalf of our 252-members, I implore you to continue the use of the EL Curriculum in all schools. |
| Andrea | Sasser | EL Curriculum | <p>I firmly believe in the EL Education curriculum. The module is transformational for scholar's learning and understanding of the world around them. The EL module provides the opportunity for scholars to learn the skills needed to become solution-oriented, globally competent individuals in a competitive world. The EL Module encourages global awareness, curiosity, and a genuine interest in learning about the functionality of the world and its people. The EL module creates an open and safe space for scholars to engage in important discussions on a daily basis and come to conclusions with actionable steps on their own. This curriculum honors scholars' diverse learning styles while providing rich opportunities for social-emotional learning. Deeper connections are created with each other and an expanded worldview is valued through the EL module. I feel strongly that keeping this EL curriculum in place is vital to our scholars' academic, emotional, and social growth and development. To quote the CCSD Acceleration Schools' vision, "We must focus on serving the academic, social, and cultural needs of our students, and work alongside staff, families, and our community to develop and support the whole child. We will work to equip students with the skills needed to thrive and impact the world, while prioritizing equity and building systems that will sustain success and ensure endless possibilities for all scholars. We will empower teachers and school leaders to close the opportunity gap between our communities' most vulnerable and chronically underperforming schools, and ensure all students have access to a world-class educational experience."</p> <p>A strong parallel can be drawn between CCSD's vision and the EL curriculum design. Keeping this curriculum firmly in place across all CCSD schools will not only promote teacher retention and prevent teachers from having to adopt and internalize an entirely unfamiliar curriculum on top of various other challenges, but will also support us in reaching our CCSD vision. This curriculum has the opportunity to be the pillar required to support our school district in its growth to become a top competitor across the state.</p> |
| Lindsay | Phillips | Board meeting Monday, February 13 | Possible immediate elimination of EL Curriculum |

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| Lindsay.W.Philips1@gmail.com | Phillips | Do not eliminate the EL curriculum | <p>Writing this in reference to: the article about "Moms for Liberty" who are suing the CCSD</p> <p>I am writing this to give a voice to the voiceless and to defend the rights of innocent children who should be exposed to the realities of our modern world that is progressing to include an awareness, appreciation, and respect for our differences and also to celebrate how we are all one human family.</p> <p>The earlier you teach children empathy, kindness, and an introduction to metacognition, based on what is age appropriate, the more they will be well rounded citizens who do not entertain extreme ideologies.</p> <p>My Masters Degree in Second Language Acquisition was completed in 2015 and I have been a professional educator on the elementary and early childhood level for over fifteen years.</p> <p>How ironic that the name of the not for profit organization "Moms for Liberty" chose to use "liberty" in the name.</p> <p>Liberty connotes Freedom... Which should include one of the most important civil rights and the reason this country was founded. This most important civil right is freedom from the oppression to not think for ourselves. One of the main goals of educators is to teach self-awareness, autonomy, and critical thinking; to be open to the ideas and thoughts of others while respecting the will of ourselves and others to choose for themselves.</p> <p>For too long, history has been written to favor one story over another. I am an advocate for teaching the story of all people in this country. I do not know if it has to be called "critical race theory" but that is the term applied so far.</p> <p>To have an extremist group sue CCSD over a curriculum that they assume they know anything about, is insulting to my profession. To take action upon an entire curriculum, is incomprehensible and does not make sense to me. The time it takes for me and other professional educators to study and apply our pedagogy (the art of teaching) in order to best serve all of our students, who come from many diverse backgrounds, takes time, skill, and years of experience.</p> <p>This curriculum was implemented two years ago and I am very skeptical to believe that any outside group has a true understanding of it's value and goals for our diverse students in Charleston County School District.</p> <p>I clearly believe that the choice of texts and educational materials are appropriate and valuable especially to our diverse students.</p> <p>I would like to share that today, I heard the story from two of my 4th and 5th grade students about their journey to America.</p> <p>When I first met both of them, one student had not achieved the English discourse to communicate his experience and the other young elementary child was too young, a first grader, and was not able to explain what they had experienced as young, innocent children who have experienced what happens in an adult world.</p> <p>I beckon "Moms for Liberty" and everyone else to please sit down and listen to the story of innocent, young, children whose families are seeking a better life and education in the best country in the world. Please listen to their struggle and story before you take away a story such as "Esperanza Rising".....When children read and hear this story they feel less alone and confused and I hope they feel heard.</p> <p>History will repeat itself if we do not teach children to empathize with and hear the real stories of people who are not them. Yet, we are all one human family.</p> <p>The fifth grade text, "Esperanza Rising", is a book that I have heard may be used as a tool to compromise with "Moms for Liberty". I am disappointed that this is potentially going to be cut out from the curriculum because this is a story that has a narrative of many Hispanic people who come to this country in order to receive one of the best educations in the world.</p> <p>If only M for L would take a look in the mirror and come back to reality and see that the EL curriculum is specifically designed by highly qualified educational professionals with years of experience and whose goal is to bring people together and not to divide into extremes.</p> <p>If we are to progress and live together, you have to be taught how to accept the opinions of others, learn from others, and decide for yourself while also respecting a diverse opinion.</p> |
| Bonnie | Cleaveland | African American history | <p>Winston Churchill is reported to have said something along the lines of "History is written by the victors." Not in South Carolina. Here, the civil war losers wrote the history and continue to wave the losers' battle flag. When schools were integrated, Charleston refused to comply, and they whitewashed the history of slavery and reconstruction.</p> <p>As a White CCSD parent, I'm in favor of truth in all our courses. Getting the truth requires understand all sides of an issue, as we all know when we're negotiating a conflict between our children. We don't ask only one of our children what happened, because we know each person in a conflict has a different perspective.</p> <p>Teach African American perspectives, because it's not "African American history." It's our history. And it's our present, as well.</p> <p>Our children deserve to know what has really happened, and not just from one perspective. Truth is important, however painful it may be. We can never understand absolute truth, but if we only get one perspective, we can be pretty sure we're nowhere near the truth.</p> |
| Aimee | Herring | ELA Curriculum | <p>If there is one idea that has stayed with me upon completion of a Master of Education degree, it is this: "If your students aren't learning the way you teach, teach the way they learn." As the parent of a CCSD student and a PhD student in Education, I would ask the Board to respect the expertise of those who have the experience, education and relationships necessary to make informed decisions about curriculum and instruction. Students need to feel safe, seen and connected to learn. The "EL" curriculum which the Board seeks to displace was chosen with diligence and careful consideration by a Task Force which had the expertise to do so. It was vetted and well-received at schools where literacy remediation has been a top priority - the Acceleration Schools. Most significantly, it has been embraced by those who should be our foremost concern - students. Let's keep the needs of CCSD students - nearly half of whom come from populations that have historically been under-served by this District - foremost. Let's respect the expertise of the professionals. Let's teach the way our students learn. Thank you for your time.</p> |

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| Anya | MarsalekLeveille | EL language arts curriculum | My daughter attends Stono Park Elementary School. The EL language arts curriculum they have used the past two years is an excellent curriculum that really has the students engaged in learning. It had been so good for my child and her classmates. They books they read are a wonderful introduction to cultures around the world and to topics in social studies and science that are really interesting to elementary school students. I encourage the school board to listen to the teachers and continue the use of the EL curriculum. |
| Henry-Harrison | Clarke | Proper curriculum review of EL curriculum must be conducted before implementation is lawful | The proposed EL curriculum has not undergone proper review and cannot lawfully be implemented. I suspect that this is being attempted to be implemented without review because implementation would not be likely, given the public disdain for CRT material in primary school classrooms. |
| Alexia | Ferrara | EL curriculum | I am a parent of a child at Mt. Pleasant Academy. The EL Curriculum needs to be removed. It is clearly ineffective and not well thought out based on the feedback from many teachers. We need to have a curriculum in schools that is appropriate for children and focuses on teaching them what they need to know for their grade level. This is of the utmost importance if we want our children and schools to exceed. |
| Nicole | Clarke | EL Curriculum does not allow for student differentiation, not all students learn the same. | The actual lessons and the materials used are not good for students that are on or above grade level. There is no differentiation. They give the higher level gifted students extra work and that is not how the gifted program and gifted education works. Which goes against the federal law on GT material, I am not sure if that would affect the money that the school receives for GT curriculum, that would be something to look into. This needs to be removed for academic magnet schools at a minimum. |
| Kelsey | Dutcher | EL Curriculum | The EL curriculum gives a chance for all students to build the skills they need to be contributing members of society. My goal for my students is for them to be informed thinkers. To have the skills to be informed thinkers. And to be able to contribute to the world. With EL students are given the chance to explore and grow. I hope the board will decide based on educators' knowledge and what is best for our children and our society. EL is a great curriculum, that should be taught to all children. But at least allow students in the accelerated schools to continue its use. |
| Katharine | Nagel | To delay the vote on implementing the ELA curriculum until the board has had time to investigate further. | As a great grandmother of a district 4th grader, I attended a majority of CCSD meetings last year. With specific regard to this curriculum, I found the rushed implementation of this highly suspicious. It was tried at 2 schools in the district, then out of the blue in the spring of 2022, with very little notice, public meetings were organized throughout the district with very little notice and at inconvenient times. When one of the meetings was held close to me, I was told that I could not attend. The meetings were only for parents. In the fall of 2022, the board raced through to push this ELA in wider use in schools, citing overwhelming teacher and parent support, parent support based upon those public meetings(?). I don't think we heard what kind of attendance there was from the parents, percentage of parents who attended to actual parents. I do not believe there was enough time or actual public input to back up a rushed vote on this today. Over and over, last year, with the possibility of a new board being elected, I saw the old board try to push a number of highly questionable changes in the district like "Reimagine", which would have turned over the running of certain CCSD schools to an outside group with overseeing boards, but essentially set up to take control out of this board's hands, the funding of which would still be from the CCSD. The "Goals and Guardrails" were an effort to give more power to the superintendent in another last ditch effort before the elections to circumvent the powers of this new board. There are many other examples of questionable moves by the old board, so much so that I would urge this board to go slowly and carefully investigate before going along with what the old board set in place. Please take time with the ELA curriculum. |

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| Anna | Mims | ELA Curriculum for Elementary Schools | <p>My name is Anna Mims, and I'm the proud principal of Mt. Zion Elementary on Johns Island, as well as the former professional development coordinator for CCSD.</p> <p>Our journey at Mt. Zion to begin implementing the EL Education Curriculum began in spring 2021. Our students were showing great gains in mathematics thanks to the Bridges Curriculum and OGAP training, but we weren't seeing similar results in reading and writing. Our teachers were creating reading lessons from scratch every day, and were asking for a curriculum so that they could spend their time more wisely, thinking about how to support their students to access grade level content, rather than creating all of the content. We piloted lessons from EL and other free curricula that were available online. We were debating how to purchase our own curriculum when the SC Department of Education told us that they would be purchasing something for us as a Palmetto Literacy Project school; EL Education was on the state-provided list.</p> <p>With support from CCSD staff and EL, we officially began implementation of the EL Curriculum in January 2022, and teachers have spent multiple days over the past year engaged in professional learning provided by EL and the district, as well as spending additional time at the school level working to prepare lessons and to understand the different elements of the curriculum. We have invested Title I and ESSER funds to support our teachers in the implementation of EL, ensuring that they are compensated for this extra work. The SC Department of Education has also required our teachers to attend LETRS training, and we have found that the EL Curriculum is aligned with that training, particularly now that we are implementing the Skills Block portion, which teaches phonics and phonological awareness.</p> <p>Implementing a new curriculum, particularly one that is quite different than what we have done in the past, is challenging, and takes considerable time, energy and funding to do well. Research has shown that it takes 2-4 years to fully implement a new curriculum and see the true benefits, and that in order to see these benefits, we must allot sufficient time and space for teachers to learn the curriculum and determine where to tailor it for their students. We are just over a year into our implementation at Mt. Zion, and already we have seen growth in our students, even beyond iReady scores, and we are seeing this growth throughout our student population, which is one of the most diverse in CCSD, and includes a significant number of multilingual learners.</p> <p>Over the past year, I have witnessed reluctant 4th grade writers become inspired by poetry, producing stunningly rich poems, and 1st graders becoming astronomers, able to discuss patterns of the sun and moon in such detail that they blew away the staff from the SC State Museum's mobile planetarium. Our 5th graders have written and performed monologues that reflected a deep understanding of the events surrounding the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, and our significant population of students from immigrant families connected to the immigration stories they read about. Our students have become deeply interested in the topics they have explored so far, from meteorology to fossils to animal defense mechanisms to human rights.</p> <p>Our 5th grade students have reflected on their experience with this new curriculum. One student shared, "What I like about EL Education is the real world problems." Another student stated, "What I like about EL Education is how the students collaborate throughout the units and modules. They help the student by helping them socialize and help them become teams to learn and collaborate about these topics. These topics let the children understand what big problems are happening right now in society." A third student shared that she likes the vocabulary lessons, stating, "EL Education doesn't just smack the words in your face and tell you the meaning. It breaks it down for you and tells you the meaning of each part. For example: it taught us ethical. Ethical means to show goodness."</p> <p>As one of our Mt. Zion teachers stated, "In EL's own words, "We promote a three-dimensional view of student achievement -mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality work-that offers a vision for education we would want for every child." (Woodfin & Plaut, 2017)</p> <p>Really think about what that quote states. We are teaching our students to be global citizens who will effectively and compassionately solve the problems of the world. We are giving students the tools they need to advocate for themselves, understand how to work collaboratively, respectfully agree to disagree, effectively find evidence in texts to support their ideas and beliefs, and most importantly problem solve their way through the issues they will face when they are no longer in school.</p> <p>As a parent, educator, and community member, I want the children I engage with to have the skills they will need not only to survive but thrive. I genuinely feel EL Education does a phenomenal job of preparing our learners to make our world a better place for all."</p> <p>Our teachers have dedicated countless hours to learning this curriculum so that they can best support their students, and our students are genuinely excited to learn more about the topics they are exploring through the EL curriculum. Before you make any decisions regarding this curriculum, I implore you to honor our teachers' hard work by visiting our classrooms and speaking to our students and teachers. I think you'll be blown away by the deep knowledge our students are building about the world around them while also growing as readers and writers.</p> |

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| Saurikhane | Konekeo | The EL Curriculum | The EL Curriculum exposes student to other world views. In addition, EL instills critical thinking among the students. Removing it will not be fair to the teachers who spent hours upon hours to learn this new ELA Curriculum, not to mention the students have dug deep into it as well. The district spent a ton of money and seeing EL removed would be the biggest wasteful spending ever! I implore the board to reconsider. As a parent, EL is a great curriculum. |
| Shelby | Olinger | EL Curriculum | <p>I am writing about my concerns with the EL Curriculum in Charleston County schools. Children learn at different rates and in different ways. A one size fits all program will not take that into consideration in its lessons, and because of that, will probably not be a very effective teaching program. The EL Curriculum does not allow teachers any flexibility in teaching, so they cannot move ahead if their students have gotten the concepts and are ready to move on, and they cannot stay longer on topics if their students need extra time to fully understand the material. This is a disservice to the students who will either become bored, uninterested, and disengaged in learning and to the students who aren't given the time they need to understand concepts before moving on to other topics. The teachers presumably know what pace their students can learn at and also what teaching methods will keep them engaged and learning. A third party, out of the box curriculum should not take the place of teachers actually knowing and teaching their students.</p> <p>I also am concerned with the political bias in the content of the EL Curriculum. It is not the school's job or place to take a side on issues with competing viewpoints. Children, especially elementary aged children, should have their childhoods protected from that, and not have adult ideas that are above their maturity level forced on them. The students deserve an education that teaches them how to read and write, not what to think.</p> <p>Going forward, please fully vet any programs you may wish to use in Charleston County schools to make sure it is in the best interest of the students.</p> |
| Daniel | Layfield | No curriculum should be adopted without required review | No school, nor the district, should adopt or encourage the adoption or use of any curriculum that has not gone through the required process of review by parents, community members, etc. This is a basic requirement and should not be circumvented. |
| Liza | Layfield | Any curriculum to be used/adopted should undergo a full, required review | No curriculum should be used that has not undergone the appropriate and required review by parents, community members and other stakeholders. This is basic procedure and should never be circumvented as it is the legal method of implementing new curriculum in this state. |
| Marian | Gathers | Curriculum | <p>02/13/2023</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>I found learning to be difficult and challenging when I was younger during grade and middle school for the following reasons: first, due to way the content was taught and presented and the assumption that teachers at the times assume that everyone was quick to understand and was learn at the same pace Secondly, Not able to process the content properly in the way in which it was being presented, the curriculum guide not fully planned out for all students to be able to adapt, and lack of assistance to provide additional help to ensure comprehension. Thirdly, the teaching profession at certain schools was develop diversely with inclusively representation for students in that their culture identity and needs would foster the need content that the student could identify and want to learn. As an educator and a representative of Charleston County School District as an employee, I would like to see changes to the curriculum and instruction for student to want to be engaging in their learning and to be enthusiastic about the education journey to be successful. It is impactful for each student to walk through the education halls and see representative of themselves whom they can identify with so that they have want to engage and excel in the course work. These changes would allow for students to see themselves in the curriculum which can bring about engaging, be able to address challenges in a way that is not offensive and will gain a comprehensible learning of the subject matter. The EL Curriculum was something that I viewed as challenging and different, but remarkable things are always that way, right? The EL curriculum can reach students who have a struggle with learning. Not only that, but the curriculum easily guides students through the final task and assessment for which they are preparing. Most importantly, the curriculum presents meaningful content for discussions that enhances engagement to aspire learning to excel for educational purposes.</p> <p>The EL curriculum fully reflects and represents all students. By saying this, students can see representation of themselves in the content that they can cognitively identify, engage, and learn successfully. The district should want a curriculum that not only represents their students, but also reflects their teachers that are teaching the content. I would hope that as a Black/ African American teacher at Charleston County School district that you fully support the representation of students like me. Failure to do so would make me reflect on the people that I am working for and with. Eliminating this curriculum would show me exactly how much you care and respect the students and teachers within the district.</p> <p>Sincerely, Marian Gathers, MEd 7th Grade English Language Arts Teacher Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science USC Upstate Graduate Capella University Graduate</p> |

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| Natrice | Henriques | Greg Mathis Charter High School's Space Request | <p>Good evening CCSD Board Members, Mr. Kennedy and Staff Members, The administration of Greg Mathis Charter High School is aware that the Board of Trustees will be hearing findings from the school district's staff this evening. Regrettably, I am not able to attend in person this evening but would like to reiterate the fact that despite the traditional metrics applied to analyzing the school's achievement data, our students are making strides daily by persevering through their personal odds and making gains in Reading, Math and other core subjects. The traditional metrics will depict a picture of students who have underachieved; but I ask that you bear in mind that our students are all below grade level in Reading and Math when they come to us and by the end of the school year they register an average of 1.5 grade level's growth in both Reading and Math. In addition, as an open enrollment campus, a significant portion of our student's test data is inherited when they come to us from their former schools. We ask that you look at both the qualitative and the quantitative data as you make decisions about the structural support that will be offered to our school.</p> <p>Sincerely, Natrice Henriques- Principal</p> |
| Thomas | Clarke | EL curriculum was introduced across the district illegally. | Proper vetting and review was not done legally before the EL curriculum was rolled out just days before the new 2022-2023 school year. Pending litigation I feel this curriculum needs to be pulled ASAP |
| Sheran H | Moore | EL. I am one of the parents that attended the meeting at Hunley Park Elementary on 2/9/2023. The collaboration between School Administrators, teachers and staff was very promising and encouraging. Our children are doing very well with the curriculum and pared with the great Deas from the staff I certainly envision much continued success and growth. | Please leave our curriculum it is wirking |