

First Name:	Last Name:	Topic of Comment:	Public Comment:
Eric	Lacy	Please keep the church separate from the government. Let people have their own approach to any diety or not. Do not force yours on them.	Do not have prayer of any kind at the school board meetings. This is not about religion. Let's do school business only.
Robin	Windsor	African American studies	Why would you not teach the truth in Americans history?
			I am writing today concerning an item coming up for first reading of the CCSD School Board's agenda for Monday Feb 27. This is policy BC adding opening Board meetings with a prayer. While I understand the Board's argument for using their first amendment right to exercise their freedom of speech, I am writing today to pass along legal rulings and requirements that make this not possible. The first is a ruling from the Sixth Circuit Court of Appels from the case of Coles Vs Cleveland Board of Education. The court "concluded that school board meetings should be governed by the same guidelines for religious activity that apply to in-school functions." Ergo, the Board is held to the same standards as a school property. The second is a publication from the US Department of Education dated January 16, 2020, entitled "Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools". This publication applies specifically to prayer in public school settings. This publication states that "Section 8524(a) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act and codified at 20 U.S.C. § 7904(a), requires the Secretary to issue guidance to State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and the public on constitutionally protected prayer in public elementary and secondary schools. In addition, section 8524(b) requires that, as a condition of receiving ESEA funds, an LEA must certify in writing to its SEA that it has no policy that prevents, or otherwise denies participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in public schools as detailed in this updated guidance. The purpose of this updated guidance is to provide information on the current state of the law concerning religious expression in public schools." Part II Section C entitled "Teachers, Administrators and other School employees" states "When acting in their official capacities as representatives of the State, teachers, school administrators, and other school employees are prohibited by the First Amendment from encouraging or discouraging prayer, and from actively participating in such activity with students." Since this meeting is conducted by employees of the Charleston County School District and it is reasonable that students may attend or be watching via the YouTube channel, the direction holds. Since this publication states any LEA and SEA is held to these guidelines when accepting ESEA funds, which the State of South Carolina and the County of Charleston do, it is easy to understand that the Charleston County School Board would be in violation of this rule and could be subject to losing all ESEA funding. The issue this Board is bringing to amend policy BC is in direct violation of the law. I ask the Board to have council review this policy and consider the implications of passing and participating in such actions. Losing Federal funding from the CCSD school system would currently cost approximately \$70,904,000. The people of Charleston County do not want to make up this loss nor do we wish to have students suffer the consequences of adult actions.
Misty	Walsh	Policy BC	
Jean	Howard	Council Great City Schools/ EL curriculum	Please support continued training of Council for Great City Schools training. This important training will help the Board monitor the progress of the Goals and Guardrails. Support the EL curriculum and give it more time to monitor the success of the curriculum. Data will tell us if the curriculum is making academic progress for all students.
Michelle	Wade	Everything needs public insight	The fact that prayer while conducting official business is a consideration is wasting tax payers' money. The board was elected to improve the learning outcomes of every student in CCSD regardless of religion. I am a Christian with kids in CCSD and find it reprehensible that a school board would mandate prayer within the official meeting. What I want is to take my children to church every Sunday and instill our family values at home . What I don't want is my school board praying and alienating families in our community who have the same right to feel heard I as do. I ask the board what are your action steps to show growth in every CCSD student? If prayer and partisan nonsense is part of your plans I look forward to seeing test results next year.
Randolph	Harrison	School Board Prayer	Public prayer at school board meetings is unconstitutional, excludes tax paying citizens who believe differently, and is in direct defiance to Jesus' instructions (Matthew 6:5-8)
Ashley'	McGlothlin	The school year calendar.	The school year calendar should be voted on. Half days in the middle of the week make no sense for working parents, teachers, and students. The same for teacher work days. Please get input from those affected by the calendar like teachers and parents
Autumn	Fralix	Calendar	Half days in the middle of the week? That's stupid- no one wants to start late and end in the middle summer- that's absurd! Get it together! Half days on Fridays only- end school first week of June like they have for 30 years- stop the nonsense
Jamie	Abdullah	Please submit a waiver to begin school earlier than August 23rd. There are no summer camps available through the city or county parks.	Please submit a waiver to begin school before August 23. There are no summer camps available through the county or city.
Whitney	Windsor	Thank you	Thank you to those of you that voted against the motion to exclude the EL curriculum from the adoption process. I listened to all of the public comments from people currently using the EL curriculum. In addition, after seeing the data from the schools currently using the curriculum, it is clear that there is no reason to exclude the EL curriculum from the adoption process. I hope that you will continue to respect and value the opinions of the teachers and students that are currently using the curriculum.
Misty	Walsh	Charleston Charter School for math and science	I would like for the Board to consider renewing the Charter for Charleston Charter School for math and science. This is a wonderful school who deserves the full support of CCSD

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Joan	Chard	Ltr. to Editor, "CCSD Board Members Divided re: EL Reading/Writing Curriculum."	<p>Letter to Editor Post & Courier Letter to Editor Moultrie News</p> <p>"CCSD Board Members Divided re: EL Reading/Writing Curriculum"</p> <p>Charleston County Board Members are divided regarding the adequacy of the current EL Literacy Program (teaching Reading/Writing/Phonics Grades K-8), with a failing motion "to review other Literacy Curricula and to recommend one for adoption, but not EL Curriculum."</p> <p>There was obvious displeasure over EL, as evidenced by Board Member Ed Kelly's comment that he had received hundreds of emails from parents and teachers complaining about the EL Program. Kelly expressed his personal objections regarding EL's excessive emphasis on racism and sexism, citing EL instructions to teachers to ask students intrusive personal questions. Other members agreed they had received emails critical of EL.</p> <p>Sample comments from teachers who have taught EL's Language Arts are: "EL is the worst reading curriculum I've encountered in my 30 years of teaching." "Teachers were given zero input in the selection of this EL Program." "The EL phonics program is not nearly as good as Open Court Program." "EL teacher preparation is too time-consuming (posters, etc.)." "I feel very stressed and burnt out because of the extra workload in EL Program." "We were not supplied necessary EL materials, nor purchase money." "EL assignments are either too complicated, or not complicated enough." "EL does not teach reading skills fundamental to their reading development." "Students find EL curriculum boring." "In 5th grade, EL introduces Critical Race Theory."</p> <p>One teacher warns that this EL Curriculum will drive teachers out of the profession. Reject this EL Curriculum immediately and completely!</p>
Tucker	Lentz	Policy change RE prayer at board of trustees meetings	<p>I am opposed to the change in policy to allow the board to open meetings with prayer (item 11A on the agenda for this meeting). I used to have a boss that opened every meeting at my job with a prayer, and as a non-Christian, I found that very alienating. It told me I don't belong...this place is not for me. I didn't feel like I could say anything without negative repercussions for my career, so I bowed my head and went along. It was inappropriate when my boss opened our work meetings in prayer, and for the same reasons, it is wrong for the board of trustees to hold prayers at Charleston County Schools Board of Trustees meetings. I know that it is hard for people in the majority to see the harm in the practice of their faith, but when you do it from positions of leadership and power, you are sending a message to everyone in the minority that this is not a place for them...that they don't belong. You are signaling that people of minority identities are secondary to those in the majority. That may be exactly what some of you want, but I don't believe it is what the majority of you want. I don't believe that you want to hurt people, to alienate them, and push them aside. I don't believe your intent is to marginalize. But please know that is what you are doing. And please don't do it.</p>
Sharyn	Sandstrom	Prayer at board meetings	<p>prayer should never be allowed at any public entity. It should never be allowed to mix with matters of the public. It's a dangerous road to go down</p>
Allison	Wood	Schedule/curriculum	<p>I would like the board to revisit the modified year round schedule, and please to allow our kids to read material that may be uncomfortable- they need to know historical facts and make up their minds accordingly about what is right and wrong- critical thinking is the skill set we are striving for.</p>
Steve	Gilbert	Vote to allow board to pray publicly before each meeting	<p>Item 11 on the February 27, 2023 CCSD Board Meeting</p> <p>Passage of a board member publicly praying before each meeting would be in violation of the constitutional separation of Church and State and uncomfortable for the portion of public attendees that do not practice religion. If you have to, you can substitute a moment of silence to think about the importance of improving schools for our students.</p>
Daniel	O'Neal	School board prayer	<p>Post & Courier, Letter to the Editor, February 7, 2023:</p> <p>RESPECT NONBELIEF</p> <p>A recent letter from a former Air Force chief of chaplains hit home with me.</p> <p>He wrote: "Almost every commander starting the weekly staff meeting asked the chaplain to begin the meeting with a prayer." I have no doubt that this is true.</p> <p>As an Air Force pilot I attended countless staff meetings that began with a prayer. The problem for me was that I have been an atheist for as long as I can remember and a religious skeptic before that.</p> <p>At my last assignment before retirement as a staff officer at the headquarters of the U.S Air Forces in Europe, I had many conversations and even debates around religion with fellow officers. They were always interesting and respectful and never acrimonious.</p> <p>It was more or less common knowledge that there was at least one atheist on staff. Nevertheless, whenever I attended a staff meeting, I was expected to stand and bow my head during the prayer like everyone else. I stood out of respect for others' beliefs but did not bow my head.</p> <p>Research shows that a quarter of Americans now have a secular worldview. Their belief, or non-belief, should be respected, too.</p> <p>An opening prayer at a public school board meeting is inappropriate, unnecessary and an invitation to costly lawsuits.</p> <p>A moment of silence would allow for both prayer and contemplation.</p> <p>Daniel O'Neal Major, U.S. Air Force (retired)</p>
Jerome	Heyward	School curriculum	<p>Public comment</p>

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Herb	Siiverman	Public Prayer	I ask the school board to please refrain from praying in public school board meetings. You hold a public office and represent everyone in the district. This includes people of all faith traditions and none (atheists, agnostics, humanists, etc.). Praying before or during your meetings will alienate many people, make them feel like second-class citizens, and distract everyone from the real work of improving our schools and student outcomes. For the Christians on the school board, I ask you to take to heart the words in Matthew 6:6, about not being a hypocrite by praying in front of many. It tells you to pray in secret. Please vote no on praying at these public meetings.
Sharon	Frategie	Starting meeting with a public prayer	I want to comment on the board's dilemma about whether to open a meeting with a prayer or not. You can have your cake and eat it, too. During a moment of silence, anyone can make a silent prayer—or just meditate on the seriousness of education matters to be considered at the meeting. You volunteered to represent people with and without religious beliefs, and the voters who elected you also have or don't have religious beliefs. Also, I imagine you know the words of Matthew in the New Testament of the Christian Bible : "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Thank you for considering my comments."
Lydia	Gastin	Curriculum	<p>I am writing to voice my concern over the EL curriculum. I do not believe CCSD should be considering a plan that is financially extravagant and so controversial.</p> <p>I would prefer to see a more reasonably priced curriculum that is tested and has worked/is working in another school district. From what I understand there is not yet an accurate cost as all the materials are not included in the initial stated price.</p> <p>More importantly there is such a split over the decision, this is extremely concerning to parents and members of the Charleston community.</p> <p>We have been hearing that teachers are afraid to speak up and speak out against this material. They are being held hostage by fear of reprisals. Parents are afraid to speak up because they are concerned their children will be targeted and bullied.</p> <p>This decision excludes a major portion of our community. It is being made under duress and threat of punishment and is being made without transparency. Any decision like that is not only a failure and irresponsible, but rather should be understood for what it is: a hostile action against Charleston and its children.</p>
Leila	Gable	Concerns for the book 'Stamped Racism Antiracism and You' as part of my daughters 8th grade curriculum	<p>I do not know if the book that my daughter's class is assigned to read during their 4th quarter is a part of the EL Education debate that is going on, however I do have concerns about the book and its use in the classroom at such a young age. The book is called 'Stamped, Racism, Antiracism, and You'. It is an adult book rewritten for youth. It will be taught along side of the state's history textbook to offer the class a differing opinion of history. I do not know if any or all of you have read the book but I do have concerns as a parent. In my opinion the language is negative in tone, biased, and expresses harsh character judgements of historical figures.</p> <p>I expressed these concerns with my daughter's teacher and we have held a meeting with administrators and teaching staff to go over these concerns. I asked that it be removed, but later asked that she not be assigned or exposed to the book at this age. I do not believe in banning books. However I do believe as a parent I have a right to approve or disapprove of the concepts that my daughter is exposed to as part of her school assignments. The negative tone, character judgements and concepts of the book Stamped do not support my parental values. I am the only parent in my daughter's class to express concerns over the book.</p> <p>Her teacher has suggested to me alternative book for her to read, An Indigenous People's History of the United States. I was reading it in advance of the assignment but have not had time to finish it before the class started their book study. So she is now utilizing the textbook only to the best of my knowledge</p> <p>I am told that my daughter will be isolated from the class to read her book while the rest of the class reads Stamped. The school is trying to honor my request while still teaching the book. My child attends James Simons Montessori.</p> <p>I watched the school board meetings that occurred the last two weeks via You Tube and the teachers and community members that spoke. It seemed that most of them came from the age of 5th grade students and younger. I am sending this email as a single mother and community member that has a child in the 8th grade to lend a voice of the middle school parent. Thirteen is a very vulnerable age to tackle emotionally heavy subjects, something that parents should be available for and counted on for. My child has not learned what 'bias' is yet or how to determine if a writing is biased. I have asked her and then had to go over what the word meant and give age appropriate examples.</p> <p>I will close this letter with an excerpt from the book that gives the author's opinion of the movie Rocky and how it pertains to racism. As you read this please try to put yourself inside a 13 yr old's mind. This excerpt is taken from page 198 in the book.</p> <p>" And while the idea of Black masculinity was being challenged by Black women, White masculinity was being threatened, constantly, by Black men. So, once again, White America created a symbol of hope.</p> <p>Of "man." I mean, MAN. Of macho. Of victor. And plastered it on the big screen. Again. This time his name was Rocky.</p> <p>I'm sure you've seen at least one of the movies, even if it's one of the new ones. And if you haven't, you know the fight song. The song playing while Rocky runs up a set of museum steps, training, tired, but triumphant. Yeah.</p> <p>Rocky, played by Sylvester Stallone, was a poor, kind, slow-talking, slow-punching, humble, hardworking, steel-jawed Italian American boxer in Philadelphia, facing off against the unkind, fast-talking, fast-punching, cocky African American world heavyweight champion. I mean, really?</p> <p>Rocky's opponent, Apollo Creed (the new movies are about his son), with his amazing thunderstorm of punches, symbolized the empowerment movements, the rising Black middle class, and the real-life heavyweight champion of the world in 1976, the pride of Black Power masculinity, Muhammad Ali.</p> <p>Rocky symbolized the pride of White supremacist masculinity's refusal to be knocked out from the thunderstorm of civil rights and Black Power protests and policies.</p> <p>Weeks before Americans ran out to see Rocky, though, they ran out to buy Alex Haley's Roots: The Saga of an American Family. Haley, who was known for working with Malcolm X on his autobiography, had now basically written the slave story of all slave stories. It was a seven-hundred-page book, then made into a miniseries that became the most watched show in television history. It blew up a bunch of racist ideas about how slaves were lazy brutes, mammies, and sambos, and how slave owners were benevolent and kind... landlords.</p> <p>But as much as antiracist Black Americans loved their Roots, racist White Americans loved—on and off screen—their Rocky, with his unrelenting fight for the law and order of racism. And then, in 1976, their Rocky ran for president."</p> <p>While a decision has been reached and my child is isolated from the rest of the class, I do believe a more inclusive one could have been reached. I would have preferred this experience to not have been a part of the learning process for the eighth grade curriculum.</p>