

“The Bluest Eye” Novel About Rape and Incest Is The Latest Controversy Over Common Core

September 4, 2013

Tuscaloosa, AL: “Is it appropriate for Alabama high school students to read openly and discuss in class a pornographic book about rape and incest, written from the viewpoint of the rapist to teach literary concepts?” This is a question asked by parents and members of the Alabama Federation of Republican Women (AFRW).

“The Bluest Eye” is a book on the recommended reading list for high school students by Common Core, the new unfunded mandate for Alabama schools. The novel is about a rape of an eight-year-old girl by her father and is told from the view of the sexual offender. The book recounts actual sexual acts as described by the pedophile.

AFRW President Elois Zeanah stated, “This newest controversy is only the latest example of how Common Core takes decisions from Alabama parents and puts it in the hands of entities outside of Alabama. Books on the approved Common Core list end-run the public process. Parents, school officials, and legislators have no say in what goes on that list, which becomes part of the Alabama curriculum.”

State Superintendent Tommy Bice’s staff stated that Alabama has no required reading list, as did State Board Member Mary Scott Hunter. Zeanah pointed out how Hunter and others were parsing: “While the Alabama course of study does not list recommended books, the course of study does link to the national list recommended by Common Core. Further, the State Department of Education’s own website contains a statement that highly encourages schools to teach the selections listed by Common Core.”

Senator Bill Holzclaw, who helped defeat repeal of Common Core in the 2013 legislative session and accused critics of Common Core of seeing “bogeymen”, asked Bice to ban “The Bluest Eye” from the Alabama curriculum, after receiving heavy criticism of the book from constituents. Bice refused.

Lisa Harris, AFRW’s Education Chair and former teacher, stated, “I oppose banning books in the public setting. But within the school setting, I think we need to set boundaries, especially in what is openly taught in classrooms. Let’s turn the scenario around. If a student brought a paperback into the classroom containing the same sexual descriptions of a father raping his eight-year-old daughter as in the novel, what would be his fate?”

For more information, contact Elois Zeanah at eloisz@hotmail.com or 205/247-5389.