

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALSEFA
(EXHIBIT)

EXHIBIT A

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Do you represent yourself? yes an organization? _____ (If an organization, please identify: _____)

Resource on which you are commenting:

- ☒ Book _____ Magazine _____ Audio Recording
_____ Textbook _____ Library Program _____ Newspaper
_____ Video/DVD _____ Electronic information/network (please specify)
_____ Display _____ Other _____

Title The Working Poor

Author/Producer David K Shipter

1. Have you reviewed the materials in their entirety? If not, please do so before completing and submitting this form.
2. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific: cite pages, and the like)
see attachment
3. What do you believe might be the result of using this material?
see attachment
4. For what age group would you recommend this material?
see attachment
5. In its place, what material of equal quality would you recommend that could be used to teach similar subject matter?
see attachment
6. What do you believe should be done with the material in question?
☒ Remove it from the curriculum.
☐ Do not allow my child to use this material.
☐ Use it as resource material or a choice selection.

Objectionable content- Chapter 6 specifically

Sexually explicit, anal sex, depiction of abortion and aftermath of body parts, degrading and offensive to women portraying them as weak, pathetic, ignorant, sexual objects and incapable beings.

"Only half an hour after I had met a young mother named Kara King, she told me her story. I had merely asked her about her family. "My father molested me as a child," she said plainly. "My husband doesn't know that. I was twelve. He fondled me over a year's time. My father was drunk. I locked myself in my room. I woke up with him on top of me, I pushed him off. He said, 'That's the way a father and daughter are.'"

"You know it's not right," Kara continued, "but you don't know who to tell. I stayed at a friend's house. I told my mother, and she said, 'That's OK, my father did that to me when he was drunk, but it won't happen again.' "

The second family provided no sanctuary. They had another foster child, Paula, and two teenage sons who ran loose and free. "These boys used to take me and Paula in the basement, pull down our panties, and do—" Wendy couldn't finish her sentence. "Stuff like that you never forget, I don't care how old you get. You never forget. Until the day you die, you never forget."

But not from everything, it turned out. When her adoptive mother regularly dropped her off with a baby-sitter, Wendy was often left alone with the baby-sitter's sons. "They used to do the same thing," Wendy remembered, "take me in the bathroom or whatever, make me do weird things.... That was the first and only time I experienced anal sex. I think I was in second grade.... And my mother never believed me. She didn't believe me. Thought I was lying 'cause when she asked the lady, the lady didn't know anything about it."

"Howard University when, on her high school graduation day, she learned that she was pregnant. She was terrified of telling her mother, and once she did, her mother insisted on an abortion. We ndy resisted, then reluctantly went ahead. She had been carrying twins, she was told later. "After the surgery I turned around, and there's a jar with these body parts all in it," she remembered vividly. "I felt that was really cruel, because if you're gonna have me go through something like that, don't leave the result right there." A chasm of disrespect opened between Wendy and her mother."

After Peaches graduated from high school, the foster family kicked her out. "The first time I had sex I got pregnant" and got a scolding, she said. " 'You're just like your mother, no good, blah blah blah.' I'm like, well, excuse me, nobody really sat and told me anything about myself to make me feel like I was worth the while for anything, so an older man had sex with me. I didn't like it. It hurt." She did not have the baby, on this or any other occasion when she got pregnant. Instead she joined the Job Corps, where she was raped by a pimp who wanted her as a prostitute, and she rapidly descended into hell. Along the way, she tried to hold onto fragments of independence. "I've prostituted myself," she confessed, but not for a pimp, she asserted, only as her own boss. "I couldn't see me doing it for nobody else."

In a desperate search for a touch of caring, Peaches picked one wrong man after another and was whiplashed between a dream and a fear—the dream of having an idyllic family and the fear of creating a home like her foster home. "I've been pregnant several times, but the only thing I think

wedlock, then to another two years later. She went on welfare, thereby extending the syndrome to three generations in a row. "Not good," Marquita observed sadly, "not really good." And yet, that newest generation was dividing itself at a fork in the road. Along the fast track of bad decisions and corrosive failures that led to poverty, there appeared an occasional exit opened by wise choices and small successes. While Kiyonna seemed to be speeding toward lifetime destitution, her teenage brother Garry took a different course, thanks to a smart move by Marquita and Garry's father. Of the three fathers of her four children, only one was able to help. Kiyonna's father was "deceased," Marquita pronounced formally, and another was "incarcerated." But the third, Garry's, was concerned enough to offer his suburban Maryland address so that his son could enroll in a good high school and escape from D.C.'s inner-city system. Marquita happily embraced the opportunity—not only for his better education but also to pull him from the whirlpool of the drug-laced neighborhood. It worked. Garry graduated, went on to college in Nebraska, and began to think about becoming a teacher.

Is requiring a student to read about sexual abuse, rape, sexual molestation, anal sex and abortion the best means for learning to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers, which is the overarching objective of AP English 3 as stated in the Rationale authored by Rand Nelson? Are there not better books from which to teach our students how to write and communicate effectively in an English class?

"The objective of the class is to address global poverty and economic inequality issues as desired by HPISD." Does this sound like an English class curricula or a government/social issues, Humanities or Sociology course? This is how Rand Nelson describes HPISD AP English III. I propose the course objective be rethought to fit the training and wheelhouse of an English teacher as opposed to a political science teacher. I propose a political science class be created to read this sort of material.

If HPISD English III is intent on teaching "social issues" and addressing global poverty and economic inequality issues as referenced by Mr. Nelson, this can be accomplished by so many better choices such as ;"Out of the Dust" Karen Hesse, "We the Living" Ayn Rand, "America the Beautiful" Ben Carson and "Nothing to Fear" Jackie French Koller. "The Working Poor" is not a great work of literature or an example of rich writing we want our students to emulate. One must ask, is this the best piece of literature our students can read to learn to write? Let us seek the highest quality of literature for our HPISD English students.

Additionally, my husband and I met with Ms. Balden, Ms. Sosbee and Dr. McClanahan in September, 2013. In that meeting, we specifically addressed chapter 6 of "The Working Poor". At this meeting, the teachers told us they had not read the book in its entirety and were unaware of the sexually explicit content of chapter 6. They acknowledged their error in the assignment of Chapter 6 from the book as a result of no prior peer review. The meeting concluded with the staff stating they

explained it to her, and she was like, 'Why would this young boy want to be in the bed with you?' So, OK, I got to leave here, you know. It was a struggle. Me and my mama, we never really got along too well. I guess it was basically because I just wanted a normal family."

A normal family was not to be, only hard memories and wistful plans. "I was basically ashamed sometimes for being without a hat and stuff," she remembered, "always swearin' [that] when I got to the point where I could do something on my own, I was gonna take my brother and my sister, they would live with me, and everything would be much better." Slowly the senior relatives died off, those who remained grew apart, and Marquita was left in that limbo of "just basically havin' to fend for yourself," as she put it.

Fending for yourself is a frightening demand that makes a child feel powerless. Marquita did not do it very well. Instead, she took another step into the decline: The first time she had sex, she got pregnant. In October of her sophomore year, she dropped out of high school to have the baby....

"Marquita went on welfare, and her poverty forced her to live in Brent-wood, a mean section of[...]"

Addicts say that crack erases even the powerful mothering instinct, and it happened to Marquita. She grew oblivious to her children, was evicted from her flat, and was taken in by a man down the street. Although her youngsters were with her, their condition so worried Marquita's sister and a girlfriend that they called D.C.'s Child and Family Services Agency. "I was still using," Marquita said. When the investigators arrived, she was out for two or three days buying and smoking crack. She returned to find the children gone, the oldest to stay with an aunt, a son to his father, and the youngest two into a foster home. It was a body blow, but not enough to knock her out of her addiction. That had to come later, and only then could she wonder how anyone could endure "what you have went through and what you put your kids through," as she told herself. "How could I have done that?"

A recovering drug user or alcoholic will often tell his story as a morality tale with elements of a religious parable: the temptation, the fall, the confession, the penance, the salvation. So it was, for example, with a tall man named Joshua, who followed his father into alcoholism, then wandered in and out of homelessness and unconsciousness. One Christmas Eve, drinking heavily with buddies in Lafayette Park across from the White House, he passed out, was stripped of his shoes and most of his clothes, and awoke Christmas Day in a hospital with doctors fighting to save his frostbitten feet. Half of each one had to be amputated, and that was enough to provoke his resurrection. Time in a hospital can also be a time of forced detoxification. He dried out and got a maintenance job.

So, too, Marquita had to hit a low before she could rise again. There, on the bottom, came flashes of lucidity and common sense. She was awakened by two realizations: One, her addiction had cost her the affection of her father. "When I started using drugs, our relationship died," she said sadly, "and that hurt me a lot, because I was always Daddy's little girl. He would do anything in the world for me." Two, she ended up in the hospital, and that cleared both her body and her mind.

"I had went with this guy one night," she said. "He had bought me some stuff, and when we got to his house I did what I had to do with him, and he went to sleep.... I took his keys and took his car and went and got myself some. My intentions were good—to bring his car back." But

when she arrived in the drug-selling neighborhood and asked someone there to park the car, he drove it off, popped the trunk, and stole her friend's tools. She exploded into a fury, driving her fist through one car window and her leg through another. She was so high she felt no pain. "With my hand bleeding, my leg bleeding, I still wanted to smoke, I didn't want to go to the hospital, none of that crap."

"To make matters worse, Marquita's daughter Kiyonna began to duplicate some of Marquita's patterns. The girl hated school, dropped out in her junior year, and went to work cleaning houses. Marquita, seeing her own mistakes being replayed, grieved and raged and pleaded with Kiyonna to go back into the classroom. The girl stubbornly refused. At least she wasn't pregnant, Marquita noted, but that consolation did not last long. Within a couple of years, Kiyonna gave birth to one child out of

would instruct the rest of the English classes to exclude chapter 6 from their reading and assuring us the book would be replaced with a different piece of literature the following school year, 2014-2015. It is currently required Spring 2015 reading despite the staff's assurances it would no longer be used.

This book first entered the curriculum in 2013 as required reading. This book entered curriculum without any community review and prior to a rationale being written for it. The rationale was written by Rand Nelson in May 2014, after being taught in 2013 and after we were told it would no longer be used.

Please see attached referenced letter.

that kept me from having children was the fact that all of this replayed in my mind. And if I was not going to have a man and have a home like I envisioned that a home could be from watching TV—'Hello, honey, I'm home,' instead of, 'M-F, you so and so,' ... I was not going to bring a child into this world," she declared.

Now, I wanted that textbook family with the husband and wife and home and maybe a dog and a cat, two kids, and a car and a house. But I could never really get ahold of it. I could never get ahold of it. That thing eluded me. I fought, I cried, I agonized over it, but it just eluded me, because I had too many things going on with me. I didn't know what it was. I just exist through life, go from day to day, just work, go have your drink, party every Sunday through Saturday.... If someone would just come in and at least pretend that they love me, I can make it work. I would give and give and give and give until it hurts. And it did. It hurt me."

Without much sense of self, she gravitated to men who enjoyed controlling her—men who evidently had no control over anything else in their lives. One of them, with whom she spent many years, off and on, shared her view of herself as a person of little value. "The gentleman that I stayed with, he got me to the point where I wished I could just fade into the wall," she said. "Please just don't let him say anything else to me."

If she put a sweater on, he would say, "You don't need that. Take it off." If she left the house, he would shout, "Where you goin'?"

No fresh light or clean air relieved the stale darkness. She sat uncomfortably on a folding metal chair. A bike in her kitchenette was draped with clothes, and clean laundry lay folded on the brown couch in her living room. She had a gray cat, a fish tank, pictures of her kids in cardboard frames, and a phone that never stopped ringing. It was usually for her teenage daughter, who had followed Marquita's example by dropping out of high school. The glowering girl answered her mother, and others, in curt monosyllables."

This family had turned the American Dream on its head. Over three generations, and now into a fourth, it had experienced declining achievement and well-being, defying the country's ethos of optimism about upward mobility. "I always thought my grandparents were rich," Marquita said. "Every time we went over there, we could have whatever it was that we wanted, you know, and there was plenty of food. My grandmother had about eight kids, and there was still plenty." Her other grandparents "always had, too," she remembered, and one of her favorite places had been her grandfather's workshop in a garage "that he had made hisself," loaded with "stuff you could mess with in there." The recollections made her laugh with a nostalgic warmth that she could not summon up about her later life.

One grandmother had been a nursing assistant, Marquita recalled, and a grandfather had worked at the water department. His son—Marquita's father—had followed in those footsteps, but that was where the security of job and home had come to an end. Her father never lived with her mother, and her mother's sporadic work—at the Government Printing Office and doing laundry—had placed her and the children on welfare from time to time. "My mother was an alcoholic," Marquita said bluntly."

As the older daughter in the middle of three children, Marquita was taxed with undue responsibility for her age, and unwanted embarrassment as well. When her mother descended into drunkenness and stopped performing basic chores, Marquita took her older brother and younger sister grocery shopping. She went on search missions for her mother at neighbors' apartments, banged on doors, and threatened to call the police in the hope of getting her home before she was too far gone. "I didn't want any of my friends to see her acting like that," Marquita said. Children saddled with grown-up burdens cannot succeed, and that is often their first failure, the root of inadequacy."

"I ran away a lot," she recalled. "I ran away a lot to go and stay with my father. And once I got to stay with my father, I didn't want to stay with him either.... I went and stayed with my grandmother. I wound up back with my mother. [Then I] went to stay with some friends and come to find out that a good friend I was staying with, her nephew was trying to creep into bed with me at night, and I



September 23, 2013

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Meg and I would like to thank each of you for your time last Friday. We found the discussion helpful in understanding what the English AP department is attempting to accomplish with its curriculum, how it aligns to broad recommendations by the AP college board and where it deviates from our acceptance as our children's primary educators. While the College Board curricular for AP English Language & Composition calls for students to write analytically on subjects pertaining to public policies, popular culture and personal experience, it does not call for inappropriately positioned and written social awareness subject matter.

While you acknowledged an error in the assignment of chapter 6 from the book "The Working Poor" as a result of no prior peer review, it is in our judgment a deliberate decision was made to advocate and pass this and other inappropriate readings off as "non-fiction" or as the status quo. Abortion, sexual orientation and rape have no place in the high school classroom and especially under the guise of Honors English.

The Working Poor- "take me in the bathroom or whatever, make me do weird things...That was the first and only time I experienced anal sex. I think I was in second grade."

The Five Faces of Oppression- "Across the world, sexuality is a common example of cultural imperialism. The dominant group in society is heterosexual,..."

Blessed is the Full Plate – "Enough about the pious sanctimony about gay marriage and abortion..."

If class material cannot be read aloud without offending someone, cannot be listened to in a song without an expletive labeling and or cannot be viewed in a movie without an R or NC17 rating with parental consent, then it is simply not appropriate. If this is social awareness, this is not English and should be reconsidered as a teaching pillar for our children. The teaching of social awareness is the responsibility of parents, not the school or honors AP English committee.

If the overarching objective of this class as documented in the AP English Course Description is "to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers," then help me understand how a teenager can dissect and write appropriately about someone who was raped, looked at body parts after an abortion or is trying to figure out why heterosexuals are the dominate class? There is no means for administering obscenely written social awareness subjects as a starting point from which to teach effective writing strategies and techniques. In reality, the introduction of this type of material unnecessarily exposes young impressionable minds to become corrosive and distorted processors of information.



Meg and I would like to take Ms Sosbee's recommendation and move our son to another teacher within the English AP department. While I am sure Ms Sosbee is an excellent teacher, we feel the lack of acknowledgment and or admission of her error is troubling and not a conducive learning environment for the subject of English. Our son is grounded in his views, original in his thoughts and respectful in his dialogue. An environment, which allows him to exercise these skills of life, will enable him to flourish. In addition, we are formally recommending his quiz grade for chapter 6 be removed and or replaced with a new reading composition assignment.

Upon speaking with multiple parents and researching other school district English 3 AP reading materials, it has become clear that a broader discussion is in need to reconsider the intent and guidance permitted for this AP syllabus at HP. A broader parental influence is clearly needed to aid the decision making process of permitted subject matter and reading materials to help ensure our future generation is learning how to think critically with well written, appropriate and character enriching materials.

For next steps, I propose we meet again 1) to understand what controls will be put in place to govern reading assignments, 2) to agree on when controversial topics will be communicated to parents and 3) how we can improve the syllabus framework to create the best learning environment for our future generation.

Best Regards,

