



Bill Santiago &lt;billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com&gt;

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**Quick Update re: Poet X**

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Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>  
To: Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 31, 2024 at 8:13 PM

Mr. Santiago,

Good evening and, if you and your family observe/celebrate, Happy Easter.

While I'm happy to meet in person, it's clear to me that, for you, there is no solution to this issue that doesn't involve removing Poet X as a shared text option at our school and/or at other KIPP NYC schools.

I truly do not know where to go from here as it is my decision to stand by the offering of Poet X as an option for families, if they so choose for their child to read it.

As to your questions around not getting back to you with additional details until now, I hear your feedback.

Unfortunately, one of our 7<sup>th</sup> grade co-teachers was out of the state on bereavement for a full week and we did not feel comfortable moving forward with a plan until they were back in the building. We have, over this past shortened week, solidified that:

- 1) The 7<sup>th</sup> graders will first be doing a writing/publishing unit after the state exam. As such, the final reading unit of the year will not start until early May.
- 2) The alternate text we will be offering is Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson, another text from KIPP NYC's 7<sup>th</sup> grade book list. We plan to teach the two books in parallel, something we did last year when Ms. Schaeffer (our previous 7<sup>th</sup> grade ELA co-teacher) taught Laramie Project to a set of students in a separate room while Mr. G. taught a Raisin in the Sun to another set of students.

I know this does not answer some/most of your questions, but I hope it does provide a bit more clarity on text selection and execution.

Best,

Mr. Negron

**From:** Bill Santiago <billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 27, 2024 12:25 PM  
**To:** Joe Negron <jnegron@kippnyc.org>  
**Cc:** Sean Gilmartin <SGilmartin@kippnyc.org>; Erika Peterson <EPeterson@kippnyc.org>; Jacob Murray <JMurray@kippnyc.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Quick Update re: Poet X

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Mr. Negron,

The proposal to offer an alternate text to children of parents who object to the “Poet X” book, and similarly sexually explicit erotica, being presented to our underaged students in English class (ELA), is far from satisfactory for the following reasons:

1. While Cielo, my 12-year-old daughter, would not be assigned the “Poet X” book, she would still be in a classroom that is primarily being taught that book. She will either be marginalized and separated because her parents wish to protect her, and or still be exposed to inexcusably inappropriate content being presented in the same classroom to the rest of the class or both.
2. Isn't Cielo going to be discussing “Poet X” with her classmates who are reading the assigned book anyway?
3. Even if Cielo doesn't read “Poet X” and is offered an alternate text, as a parent, it is no comfort to know that my child is still attending a school and a school system that both insist on assigning such sexually explicit books to underaged children. Moreover, the school is so obsessed with sexualizing, and sexually harassing underged children, by having adult teachers assign such content to minor students, that parents have to protest for months, only to have to protest more, only to have our cries of objection minimized if not dismissed altogether.
4. The last update email from you, promising an alternate text, was sent March 18th, ten days ago. There is still no update on what the alternate text might be, and parents are still blind as to what is actually being offered by you and Kipps Beyond in terms of alternate class arrangements. Will there be a completely separate class? Will Cielo still be present in the class where “Poet X” is being taught? How exactly is that going to work and prevent my child from being exposed to the sexually explicit content? So far - zero details.

5. It still is quite impossible to understand what is so difficult about the school finding a book to assign in 7th grade that both serves the educational needs of a student WITHOUT containing inappropriate sexually explicit content. The school's default answer is always its commitment to "diversity." Is diversity then synonymous with inappropriate, sexually explicit content, being presented to underaged children?

6. Mr. Negrón, when asked if you yourself would read aloud the sexually explicit content being assigned to 12-year-olds in your school, you said, "No." You refused to read it out loud to the parents who met with you in protest, and said you would not read it to your own students. But you defend such egregiously sexually explicit "content" being taught to my daughter as the school's first choice. It's unbelievable. It's wrong.

7. Every day we are addressed as "founding families," with the implicit promise that we have a real say in the education of our kids. Kipps sells itself as giving parents more input over their children's education. But in fact, it gives parents less input over anything they object to. And they use that leverage, made possible by its status as a charter school, to do whatever they want over parental wishes.

8. Moreover, I still bet that most parents at Kipps have no idea about the actual specific explicit content presented to their children. Most parents simply do not have the time or energy to be reading entire texts before their children do – to do the research necessary to identify inappropriate content in books being assigned to their children. They are counting on the school to do right by their children, to serve them educationally without sexually harassing them with such books. And I am sure there are those parents who assume there is nothing they can do even if they do have objections. So Kipps Beyond simply bulldozes these "founding families" under whatever plan they have in mind for the minds of the students. No matter how wrong or unpleasant or abusive those plans are.

9. One last point - any academic benefits afforded by Kipps Beyond do not excuse the wrongs being done here.

- William Santiago, Cielo's father.

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The original sender of this email is [billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com](mailto:billsantiagocomedy@gmail.com)