February 1, 2022

Board of Trustees
Granbury Independent School District
217 N. Jones Street
Granbury, TX 76048

Re: Book challenge regulations

Dear Board Members:

The National Coalition Against Censorship is an alliance of national nonprofit groups dedicated to protecting freedom of expression, including the rights of K-12 students, teachers and staff. We are writing in regard to the Board’s recent decision to amend its regulations to allow certain books to be removed from use without following the district's book challenge regulations.

Book challenges are often highly contentious and emotional, and the District’s regulations are well crafted to ensure that all parties feel that they have been heard and respected, and also to ensure that decisions are made based on objective criteria which focus on the needs of students. For example, Board Policy EF (Local) provides that a diverse committee of education professionals and community members review the challenged work; that the work be considered in its entirety; and that the primary consideration in adjudicating the challenge must be the educational suitability of the work.

This policy is eviscerated by exempting from review books deemed to be vulgar or educationally unsuitable. It substitutes a single administrator applying his or her opinion for the deliberations of a committee that represents all members of the school community. Administrators are often inclined to dislike books that are causing controversy and are therefore more likely to call for their removal than a committee, which weighs their literary, artistic and political value for students.

Similarly, by exempting books that an administrator deems “vulgar,” the Board has in practice annulled the requirement that books be judged as a whole and not on the basis of isolated passages.

Therefore, we ask that the Board revisit their policy and ensure that all challenged books are reviewed by a review committee.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.
Sincerely yours,

Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: The Authors Guild
The PEN Children’s and Young Adult Books Committee