

**NATIONAL
COALITION
AGAINST
CENSORSHIP** **KIDS'
RIGHT
TO READ**

February 21, 2023

School Board
Kutztown Area School District
251 Long Lane,
Kutztown, PA 19530

Dear Members of the School Board,

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 Superintendent Temchatin's decision to cancel the district's One-Book Project after some people complained about the climate change themes of the book that was selected for that program, Alan Gratz's *Two Degrees*.

Under the One-Book Project, the Kutztown Area Middle School selects a book to be read by all students and subsequently discussed at school. This year, middle school educators selected *Two Degrees*, which is described by Common Sense Media as "offer[ing] a powerful message about the dangers of climate change told through the stories of four young teens."

Our concern is that the Superintendent has circumvented board policy by unilaterally ending the project. Board policy 119.1 requires that objections to instructional materials or topics be adjudicated by a committee that includes "the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, a teacher(s), a librarian, a community representative chosen by the principal, and a department leader." Therefore, the superintendent's action violated the policy.

We understand that challenges to educational materials are often emotionally charged. As a result, it is important that districts adjudicate challenges in a manner which ensures that all parties feel that their views have been considered and that decisions about educational material are made in an objective, nonpolitical manner. NCAC has created a resource to help school officials address the problem of book challenges, *Material Review and Policy Guidelines and Examples*. It is attached.

Therefore, we urge the district to reinstate the project and adjudicate any challenges pursuant to the district's policy.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship

Co-signed by: American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Authors Guild
Children's and Young Adult Books Committee, PEN America
National Council of Teachers of English
PEN America

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