

(introduce yourself), I am here to address some community concerns surrounding the announcement of having a black literature course. The introduction to this course presents an amazing opportunity for students to broaden their knowledge and learning experience surrounding black culture.

In all of my years in the district, I have not been offered a single book written by a black author, nor have I read a proper book about a black life. The only introduction I have had to race, through schooling, has been *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we all know how this book follows the wrongful conviction of Tom Robinson, a black man. But this book does not provide an accurate account into this man's life and his mistreatment, as it was written through the perspective of a white girl. May I also add that this book conveys a savior complex towards Atticus Finch, the perceived 'brave white man who tried his absolute hardest to save the black man'. It is almost sickening that kids are not properly being taught this book, as the underlying messages regarding race are so often overlooked, or just plainly not taught. Furthermore, I think that teachers and students would benefit from additional guidance and professional development regarding how to address these topics and the complexities of said messages. It is important, especially in today's recovering society, to ensure that principles of diversity and inclusion are integrated into not just the Language Arts curriculum, but all courses.

It has not been until recently that I had come across a true story about a black man, written *by* a black man. This book gave me more than just perspective, it gave me a broader understanding of the society that other cultures experience. It is important to remember that the society we may know, is not the same as the society that other races or cultures may know. This class is not in place to make students think one way or the other, it is in place to educate, to broaden awareness and more importantly to develop an understanding and appreciation of these other experiences. We should welcome this community dialog as an opportunity to extend these learnings beyond the walls of the school as well. It is in the community where these perspectives are most needed. Thank you.