



Ontario Institute for Education Leadership

*Ontario Leaders Collaborating
for Student Achievement, Equity and Well-being*

STRENGTHENING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARENESS

Curriculum Choice

A parent emailed a complaint to the principal requesting that the teacher of her son John's grade 10 English teacher be fired for reading a book in which a Black child is shot in the streets by a police officer. The parent explained that students in John's class were not adequately prepared before reading the book. In addition, parents should have been notified that this story would be included in the curriculum. The parent is upset because he did not have the opportunity to discuss this situation in advance with his son and would have appreciated a heads up in order to do so.

The parent, who identifies as Black, copied the superintendent on the email in which he threatened to go to the public and social media if the teacher is not fired. The teacher is Hispanic and identifies as being a member of a marginalized group. Most of her teaching experience is in the primary division. She did not understand what she did wrong and felt confident in having this conversation with the students since she herself is a member of a marginalized group and has been a victim of bullying. Further, since this book was endorsed by the Black Educators Network, she felt it had a lot merit.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

1. What are the issues?

2. What would the process of a formal investigation look like in this situation?

3. What stakeholders need to be considered?

4. Does being part of one marginalized group mean you can relate to all groups? Why or why not?

5. What effect will this have on other teachers who are already saying they do not want to engage in the work of equity, diversity and inclusion because they are afraid of making a mistake?

6. What type of professional development should be in place to support teacher learning?
