



REQUIRED LITERARY WORKS LIST

The following are the Texas State Teachers Association's comments delivered to the State Board of Education on the proposed required literary works list on June 22nd 2026.

The Texas State Teacher Association welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed required reading list; we also appreciate all the educators who came out to testify, their advocacy shows a strong commitment to Texas students. TSTA appreciates the goal of providing high-quality English resources to Texas educators but has concerns about the overloaded volume of the reading list.

The overwhelming volume of required reading as proposed crowds out other options for teachers and students, undermining local control and flexibility for teachers to choose literary works that are appropriate for their classrooms. The micromanagement taxes valuable instructional time, hinders the ability for students to choose their own reading materials that allow students to become more independent and critical readers, decreases the instructional time devoted to contemporary texts, and increases the number of readings eligible for high-stakes state assessment.

Reducing the list would help diversify Texas's English curriculum by giving educators the freedom to select books that reflect their local communities. Children learn best when they see themselves represented in classrooms, and cultural representation is a key factor in engaging students in reading not only in school but over a course of a lifetime. Local educators and school boards should have the ability to select books that meet their students' needs, not be forced to follow a rigid statewide mandate.

The reading list overly centers religious-themed works exclusively focused on the Christian and Hebrew bibles. Conversations about faith belong between parents, their children, and their faith communities, and should not be dictated by politicians or state education officials. When schools require specific religious texts and interpretations, it puts teachers in the impossible position of navigating conflicting beliefs among families.

TSTA appreciates the Board's work to reduce the list and the opportunity to provide input. The Board should go further to trim down the reading list to avoid content overload, provide teacher autonomy in the English curriculum, and allow students to develop a lifelong love of reading. A standard literary works list is a meaningful opportunity to connect Texas students with great literature, and the SBOE should take the time needed to ensure that list truly serves all students.