



W. Guy Schumacher, Ed. D., Superintendent

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January 11, 2011

Richard B. Solecki
President, WNY Division
108 Cromwell Drive
Depew, NY 14043-4462

Dear Mr. Solecki,

Thank you for your recent correspondence and offer of resource support.

It is unfortunate that you and your organization have been misled and misinformed. The text, of which you speak, *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman, is not as you quote, "**required**" reading at Highland Middle School. The text is, in fact, one of thirteen book choices that eighth grade students may select to read as part of the Holocaust unit. As such it is unfortunate that you have been misguided by your contacts, causing a sense of concern and unrest.

To clarify, Libertyville School District 70 does not use the *Maus* text as part of its formal curriculum. As required by the Illinois Legislature, the Holocaust and other crimes of genocide, are taught within the District 70 curriculum. Specifically, and given the distressing nature of the subject matter, the Holocaust is taught within eighth grade language arts and literature. Students may choose to read *Maus* or many other works of literature to support their understanding of this historical event in conjunction with ongoing instruction occurring within the classroom. As a result of students' readings, difficult topics and discussions ensue regarding intolerance, bias, anger, racism and prejudice, all of which are considered integral central themes to understanding the Holocaust. While *Maus* certainly explores these issues, it is not and has never been considered required reading. Nor is it used to promote or condone such actions or sentiments. I am hopeful this clarifies the use of this resource.

I also share with you that the text, once brought to my attention and subsequent address to the Board of Education, was placed through a process, a District 70 Literary Review committee. The checklist used by the School Media Advisory Committee is used as a method for Reconsideration of Library/Media Material. The findings of the Committee reflect the groundbreaking work of Mr. Siegelman that was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1992. It recognizes one man's memoir and provides insight into the aftermath of surviving the war. The book, as written, recognizes one individual's perspective and recollections. Perspective, as shared by the Committee,

is a critical element to any story and students are encouraged through a variety of text options to build awareness of perspective as part of critical literacy.

Again, I thank you for your dedicated input and hope that this clarifies any misunderstanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Schumacher', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Guy Schumacher
Superintendent

Cc: Christine Lukaszewicz Kibler, National Director WNY Division