Prompt: The school board has decided all students will be required to read a School Wide Book. Write a letter to your principal arguing whether or not the School Wide Book project will work within your school. Justify your argument with evidence and examine the opposing view.

**Student Sample**

(missing words, spelling, grammar corrected)

**I believe it will not work because people have different types of styles of books. The reason I say that is, for example, I like adventure, but Jeremy likes mysteries, so that is why I say that. It could work if everybody liked that types of book whatever type it is. That is some of the reason. If you keep reading I’ll tell you more.**

**If you’re still reading this, this is why it wouldn’t work. For one it’s dumb and if they read independently, people will be at different places of the book. Reason two is, like again, for example, first graders have different types that they like to read than an eighth grader. Those are the reasons that it wouldn’t work.**

**The reason how it could work, if you are still with me, is say if two kids are on the same part they could help each other on the book if they are not understanding what it says. Another good reason is that little kids would have better self-esteem, because they are reading big books like us big kids.**

**That is all I have for you today. I hope you like my reasons why it would and would not work. If you think there are more reasons, think and write one for yourself. This is the end of my page on school wide books.**

**Student Sample: *Analyzed for Next Steps***

**I believe it will not work because people have different types of styles of books. The reason I say that is, for example, I like adventure, but Jeremy likes mysteries, so that is why I say that. It could work if everybody liked that types of book whatever type it is. That is some of the reason. If you keep reading I’ll tell you more.**

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**That is all I have for you today. I hope you like my reasons why it would and would not work. If you think there are more reasons, think and write one for yourself. This is the end of my page on school wide books.**

***What is “it”? Readers need the context –information available from the prompt about the new requirement should be explained. This is true even though the audience here is to be the principal.***

***Specific examples aren’t usually part of the introduction. New paragraph would be better. “Taste” becomes another reason.***

***The idea of transitioning from one paragraph to another is right, but a writer shouldn’t assume the reader isn’t reading on.***

***“Dumb” is an insulting, unprovable subclaim.***

***Reasons are introduced without explaining how and why they prove the claim. The writer’s claim is “it won’t work because people like different styles of books,” yet one reason (being at different places) has nothing to do with that, as far as we can tell.***

***The writer is trying to examine the opposing view in paragraph 3. He/she offers good reasons why the project might work. The problem is that the writer is now essentially switching sides. The move to teach is countering; the writer must show why these reasons don’t override the claim that the project won’t work. Why are these not so important after all?***

***The writer’s voice is clearly conversational, which is not forbidden, but the content doesn’t advance the argument. A strong conclusion leaves the reader with something to think about, or with a clear understanding of what the writer wants him to do or think.***

***Area for growth: a claim and reasons should be connected. In other words, if the claim is about types of books, then the reasons should all be related to types of books.***

**Possible Revision of Student Sample, Using Notes from Analysis**

**We recently learned that school board has decided to require all students to read a School Wide Book. Each of our 450 students will be reading the same selection at the same time. While there may be some advantages to this project, the disadvantages outweigh them. The school board should eliminate the School Wide Book requirement ~~I believe it will not work~~ because people ~~have~~ like different types or styles of books. The reason I say that is, for example, I like adventure, but Jeremy likes mysteries, so that is why I say that. It could work if everybody liked that types of book whatever type it is. ~~That is some of the reason. If you keep reading I’ll tell you more.~~**

**Everyone has particular types of books that they prefer reading. ~~The reason I say that is, f~~ For example, I like adventure, but Jeremy likes mysteries~~, so that is why I say that.~~ ~~It~~ A School Wide Book could work if everybody liked that type~~s~~ of book, whatever type ~~it~~ is chosen. It’s unlikely, however, that a single book will satisfy everyone’s tastes.**

**~~If you’re still reading this, this is why it wouldn’t work. For one it’s dumb and if they read independently, people will be at different places of the book. Reason two is, like again, for example,~~ Another problem is that preferences are often based on age. First graders have different types that they like to read than ~~an~~ eighth graders. The length alone will be an issue. Young students often want to read picture books, but eighth graders will not find that kind of book very challenging. They may even find it insulting or treat it as a joke. On the other hand, the first graders would be frustrated trying to read a book that is appropriate for eighth graders. Those are the reasons that ~~it~~ a School Wide Book wouldn’t work.**

**The idea of a School Wide Book does have some positives. ~~The reason~~ how it could work, ~~if you are still with me~~, is ~~say~~ if two kids are on the same part, they could help each other on the book if they are not understanding what it says. Another good reason is that little kids would have better self-esteem, because they are reading big books like us big kids.**

**These advantages do not outweigh the key issue, however, which is choice based on taste. Helping students discover their interests and allowing them to read freely is what will help us all become lifelong readers. A negative experience with a School Wide Book is not worth taking a chance on. We must put the interests first of those who might struggle with it because it’s too hard, those who might be bored because it’s too easy or on a topic that they don’t care about, and those who really dislike the genre or type of book.**

**~~That is all I have for you today. I hope you like my reasons why it would and would not work. If you think there are more reasons, think and write one for yourself. This is the end of my page on school wide books.~~**

**We must rethink this idea, however well-meaning it was, and support instead School Wide Choice Reading. Imagine the rich conversations between students who are excited about their choices and want to encourage friends to read them, too. We’ll all be reading even *more* than a single book. Give us choice instead of a mandate.**

**Annotated Revision of Student Sample: Structural Choices Help Us Make the Argument**

We recently learned that the school board has decided to require all students to read a School Wide Book. Each of our 450 students will be reading the same selection at the same time. While there may be some advantages to this project, the disadvantages outweigh them. The school board should eliminate the School Wide Book requirement because people like different types or styles of books.

Everyone has particular types of books that they prefer reading. For example, I like adventure, but Jeremy likes mysteries. A School Wide Book could work if everybody liked that type~~s~~ of book, whatever type ~~it~~ is chosen. It’s unlikely, however, that a single book will satisfy everyone’s tastes.

Another problem is that preferences are often based on age. First graders have different types that they like to read than eighth graders. The length alone will be an issue. Young students often want to read picture books, but eighth graders will not find that kind of book very challenging. They may even find it insulting or treat it as a joke. On the other hand, the first graders would be frustrated trying to read a book that is appropriate for eighth graders. Those are the reasons that a School Wide Book wouldn’t work.

The idea of a School Wide Book does have some positives. How it could work is if two kids are on the same part, they could help each other on the book if they are not understanding what it says. Another good reason is that little kids would have better self-esteem, because they are reading big books like us big kids.

These advantages do not outweigh the key issue, however, which is choice based on taste. Helping students discover their interests and allowing them to read freely is what will help us all become lifelong readers. A negative experience with a School Wide Book is not worth taking a chance on. We must put the interests first of those who might struggle with it because it’s too hard, those who might be bored because it’s too easy or on a topic that they don’t care about, and those who really dislike the genre or type of book.

We must rethink this idea, however well-meaning it was, and support instead School Wide Choice Reading. Imagine the rich conversations between students who are excited about their choices and want to encourage friends to read them, too. We’ll all be reading even *more* than a single book. Give us choice instead of a mandate.

***At least a sentence of background must be provided to give the reader the context for the writing—something is going on*** that ***prompted the writer to enter the conversation on the issue. We must remember not to assume that all readers have read the prompt.***

***“It” is a traffic light word—we must stop and explain what “it” is instead of using such a vague term.***

***Strengthening the claim statement by stating “who should do what because why” s both more specific and helps focus the entire piece.***

***Evidence is an important part of the logic of an argument. The example belongs in the body of the argument, not in the introduction. A topic sentence helps the reader understand the purpose of the example. “It” is again replaced by the specific noun, School Wide Book. The last sentence in Paragraph 2 helps tie the evidence to the claim.***

***Using transitions that are more varied (instead of first reason, second reason, etc.) sounds much more natural. The topic sentence ties the example to the claim that people like different kinds of books.***

***Here we’ve turned the statement of the opposing view into a concession—there are good things about the School Wide Book idea. Conceding is often part of the logic of an argument.***

***But the KEY logical move is then to show why these positives must be discounted; the negatives are more compelling.***

***Eliminating the inappropriate closing and substituting one which makes clear what the writer wants the reader to do or believe is essential to completing the logical chain of reasoning.***