

Lower Merion School District

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

No.: 119
Section: PROGRAMS
Title: CONTROVERSIAL AND VALUE ISSUES/
OBJECTIONS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
Date Adopted: 10/20/14

R119 CONTROVERSIAL AND VALUE ISSUES/ OBJECTIONS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Both principals and department chairs shall be responsible for informing all staff members of the policy on coverage of controversial issues in the curriculum. In doing so they shall emphasize the basic assumption that the ideas that may transcend traditional curricular topics and raise questions about current social, political, technical, philosophical, religious and other problems are appropriate for incorporation to the curriculum regardless of the controversial nature of the topic as long as, on divided issues, differing views are carefully presented.

A teacher who is in doubt concerning the advisability of discussing certain issues and materials in the classroom shall confer with the principal as to the appropriateness of doing so. The principal should involve the department chair or establish a special review procedure. If the teacher and principal are unable to agree, the issue should be referred to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

An individual student may be excused from class activities involving the controversial issue in question. The teacher will then assign the student alternate activities of equal merit. Although individuals may be excused from the activity, the continuation of the activity by class, school or District shall not be restricted until final disposition has been pursuant to the following process:

1. Staff members shall attempt to resolve objections to instructional materials informally. If unable to do so, the objection shall be reported to the building principal.
2. The principal shall contact the person who has objected to the instructional material to discuss the objection and attempt to resolve it by explaining the philosophy and goals of the course of study or library/information center.
3. If the objection is not resolved, the person who objects shall be supplied with information including Policy 119, the administrative regulations, and a standard formal objection form (Attachment A). This form must be completed and returned to the Office of Elementary Education or Office of Secondary Education, whichever is applicable, within ten school days of receipt.
4. If the formal objection has not been received by the Office of Elementary Education or Office of Secondary Education, whichever is applicable, within ten school days, the objection shall be considered closed.

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5. In accordance with Policy 119, no materials shall be removed from the school until a final determination is made. However, access to objectionable materials can be denied to the child(ren) of the parents making the challenge, if they so desire. If access is denied, an appropriate alternative assignment will be made.
6. Within ten school days of the receipt of a completed formal objection, the appropriate central office administrator as designated by the Superintendent shall convene and chair a committee to consider the objection. This committee shall consist of a teacher(s), a librarian, a representative from the Home and School Association where the objection originated, and a department chairperson (secondary).
7. After the committee meets to discuss the objection, a written report containing the recommendations and disposition of the matter shall be prepared and forwarded to the Superintendent.
8. The Superintendent shall respond to the person who has raised the objection after reviewing the committee's report. The Superintendent may also seek the advice of authorities outside of the District before responding. If a decision is made to maintain the materials that cause the objection, a written explanation shall be provided to the person who made the objection. If the objection is valid, the Superintendent shall acknowledge it and direct the appropriate adjustments.
9. If the person who objects is still not satisfied, he/she may ask the Superintendent to present an appeal to the Curriculum Committee of the Board of School Directors.
10. If the Curriculum Committee is unable to resolve the objection, a review of the appeal will be presented to the Board. In making its final determination, the Board may seek assistance from outside educational organizations and/or legal counsel.

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ATTACHMENT A

**LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT
OBJECTION TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL OR TOPIC**

Author _____ Type of Instructional
Material/Topic _____

Title _____

Publisher and Date (if known) _____

Objection initiated by _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

Person objecting represents:

_____ self
_____ (organization) _____
_____ (other group) _____

1. To what in the instructional material/topic do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, use additional paper if needed.)

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2. What do you feel might be the result of learning from this instructional material/topic?

3. For what age group would you recommend this instructional material/topic?

4. Is there anything of educational value in this instructional material/topic?

5. Did you read the entire instructional material/topic? If not, what parts did you read?

6. Has a member of the staff informed you of the value of the instructional material/topic and the reason for its selection?

7. What do you believe is the theme of this instructional material/topic?

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8. What would you like the School District to do about this instructional material/topic?

- _____ do not assign it to students
- _____ withdraw it from the school
- _____ refer it to an official committee for re-evaluation
- _____ make its use optional
- _____ other

9. In its place, what instructional material/topic of equal literary or educational quality would you recommend?

Signature

Date