

2525 – SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL, INCLUDING MOVIES

The Pequannock Township Board of Education encourages teachers to use supplementary instructional materials which are relevant to curriculum objectives and compatible with district goals and objectives. By using such materials, teachers can introduce content and instructional strategies that enrich the curriculum, enhance learning, help students make critical judgments, and stimulate their intellectual growth.

Teachers shall carefully preview all supplementary instructional materials in order to ensure that, in their professional judgment, the materials are:

- A. Directly related to the course of study in which they are being used;
- B. Appropriate for students' ages and maturity levels.

Supplementary instructional materials must also be consistent with criteria developed for the selection and evaluation of other instructional materials. If the teacher believes that the materials may be in conflict with district criteria, the teacher shall confer with the principal or designee before using them.

When using supplementary materials, teachers shall provide appropriate introductory and follow-up activities. In addition, teachers shall ensure that supplementary materials do not supplant the use of basic texts or teaching activities.

All materials must be used within legal copyright limits.

Films/Videos

When a teacher desires to show a film/video that has not been approved by the district or county for use in the grade level taught, the teacher shall preview the film/video to determine whether in his/her professional judgment it is consistent with district criteria for the selection of instructional materials. All films/videos must be appropriate for the curriculum and the students' ages.

- A. Guidelines for avoiding gratuitous violence:

Whether the violence in a film/video disqualifies it from being shown to children is a matter of judgment. In making this judgment the adult should determine that:

1. The violence does not appear to have been included in the film/video for the shock or thrill of the violence itself;
2. The plot and theme of the film/video are significantly advanced by the violence;

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3. The violence is shown to be the wrong choice or the option of last resort;
4. The story told by the film/video is sufficiently important to subject children to the desensitizing effects of the brutality shown;
5. The film/video is an excellent method for teaching the information contained in the film/video;
6. The children who will be shown the film/video are of a sufficient age that the violence will not scare them or give them nightmares; and
7. The adult showing the film/video does not frequently suggest violent films/videos to his or her charges. Only if each and all of these criteria are clearly met, should the film/video be shown to children.

B. Teachers will avoid rationalizing about gratuitous violence:

Teachers will comply with district policy by not showing films/videos with unnecessarily graphic violence. Some teachers may attempt to justify such films/videos by pointing to other educational and artistic strengths of the films/videos, saying, "We don't want to lose the benefits that can come from this, especially since the kids are so fascinated by the violence. We can go there with them and use it to keep their interest." But like physicians, teachers and parents should first do no harm. Children are harmed when trusted adults tell them by word or by example that viewing the infliction of pain as entertainment is acceptable.

If the teacher has any questions about how established district criteria apply to the film/video, he/she shall confer with the principal or designee before showing the film/video.

In addition to avoiding movies with scenes of violence, teachers will avoid showing movies with obscenities, course language not suitable for a school, or racially inflammatory epithets. Movies with sexual scenes including nudity are generally not appropriate for children in schools. Teachers should be aware that gratuitous sexual content is often inserted into PG-13 movies for commercial reasons, and it is not simply a problem with R-rated movies. When considering showing even portions of R-rated or PG-13 rated movies, teachers should obtain permission from the parents as well as the school principal.

C. Providing a balanced presentation of ideas and themes:

Teachers will avoid showing movies that are inherently propagandistic or make one-sided presentations of controversial topics, unless competing concepts, points-of-view and ideas are also presented in a fair and balanced way that advances the critical thinking and analytical skills of students.

Adopted: 4 May 2015