

Selecting Resources For and Teaching About Sensitive Issues



Jeffco Public Schools Values Belonging: In Jeffco, we cultivate environments where all students, staff, families, and members of our community are safe, accepted, respected, included, encouraged by others, and feel that their voices and perspectives are valued.

"Controversial issues include matters characterized by significant differences of opinion usually generated from differing underlying values, beliefs, and interests, which produce significant social tension and which are not necessarily resolvable by reference to accepted facts. Matters usually become controversial not so much due to disagreement about facts but as to the interpretation or values to be applied to facts.

Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues IMB

Family Resources



Jeffco District Policy IMB-R Highlights

- Issues and learning resources selected for discussion and study must be appropriate for instructional use and contribute to the attainment of the content standards and educational objectives of the course.
- Teachers will follow the approved district curriculum subject matter.
- All course content and activities must be consistent with relevant content standards and stated course objectives.
- In teaching about controversial issues or using controversial learning resources, student achievement in the content standards and understanding of the democratic process will be the primary goals.
- Teaching strategies and materials should be fairly employed so that all sides of the issues are explored.

Helpful Links

- [Jeffco Academic Resource Review and Adoptions](#)
- 5th grade: Growing and Changing Resources (*Updated Resources Coming Soon*)
- [Colorado Department of Education Family Guides For Academic Standards](#)
- [Public Concerns/Complaints about Instructional Resources](#)



Instruction that involves controversial issues and/or materials must be within the Board adopted content standards and curricula. IMB

Guidelines for Teachers



Instructional Resources and Materials Selection, Adoption, and Discarding - IJ

District Learning Resources Review Process

The District Learning Resource Review shall include a multi-step process in which major support resources are evaluated through public comment and three committees: A Resource Review Committee, a Content Committee, and a Cross Department Review Committee.

1. The Resource Review Committee shall ensure resources are challenging, accessible to students and usable within schools;
2. The Content Review Committee shall ensure resources are aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS), National Standards, and/or Jeffco Curriculum;
3. The Cross Department Review Committee will compile Resource Review Committee recommendation, Content Review Committee recommendations, student data security findings, public comments, and any additional evidence determined to be necessary to fulfilling the aims and goals of the district prior to presenting final recommendations to the Board of Education.

Possible Sensitive Topics Include:

5th Grade Science Growing and Changing

[5th Grade Health
Education
Resources](#)



8th Grade U.S. History

- US Civil War
- Slavery and Sectional Differences
- Civil Rights

10th Grade U.S. History

- US Involvement in World War II
- Post-war Society and Economy

Guidelines For Teachers



Teaching about controversial issues and use of controversial learning resources are permitted in accordance with this regulation as long as the issue or resource is relevant to the content standards and curriculum objectives of the course. IMB-R

1. Controversial learning resources include learning resources which are not included in the approved learning resources of the district and which are subject to disagreement as to appropriateness because they refer or relate to controversial issues or present material in a manner or context which is itself controversial. Examples of such materials include, but are not limited to, those that depict explicit sexual conduct, graphic violence, profanities, drug use, or other socially undesirable behaviors, or materials that are likely to divide the community along racial, ethnic, or religious lines. If a teacher has a question as to whether a resource is controversial within the meaning of this policy, he or she shall contact the principal.
2. R, PG-13, or PG rated films and/or videos shall be considered controversial within the meaning of this policy and regulation and shall require prior approval of the principal according to the guidelines listed below. X rated and NC-17 rated films and videos shall not be used in Jefferson County Schools.
 - PG, PG-13, and R rated films and videos shall be considered controversial at the elementary level.
 - PG-13 and R rated films and videos shall be considered controversial at the middle level.
 - R rated films and videos shall be considered controversial at the senior high level.
3. Issues and learning resources selected for discussion and study must be appropriate for instructional use and contribute to the attainment of the content standards and educational objectives of the course.
4. Teachers will follow the approved district curriculum subject matter. All course content and activities must be consistent with relevant content standards and stated course objectives.
5. The issues and learning resources should be within the level of the student's ability and maturity and consistent with community standards.
6. In teaching about controversial issues or using controversial learning resources, student achievement in the content standards and understanding of the democratic process will be the primary goals.
7. Teaching strategies should be fairly employed so that all sides of the issues are explored.
8. Suitable materials including facts and concepts relating to all aspects of the issue should be available.
9. If the application to the principal is approved, then the teacher will plan for alternative learning activities at the request of any student and/or the student's parents.

"The overriding educational purpose of teaching about controversial issues or using controversial materials must be student achievement in the content standards rather than reaching conclusions as to the correctness of any particular point of view." - IMB



It is the policy of the district to provide channels of communication concerning the learning resources used in the Jefferson County School District. Learning resources include instructional materials and human resources used in the district. Appeals concerning learning resources may be brought by any Jefferson County citizen, student, parent or guardian of district student, or district employee. - KEC

Guidelines for Libraries and School Principals



Library Materials Selection and Adoption - IJL

The teacher librarian, along with district personnel, using established criteria, have shared authority for selecting and weeding library materials.



Selection Criteria for School Library Resources

- > Resources shall be appropriate for the range of emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the students.
- > School Library Resources are also choice materials to support individual interest and learning.
- > Resources shall be integral to the district's instructional programs and shall support and be consistent with the district vision, Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP), and content standards.
- > Assessment of the quality of each resource shall be based on its scope, alignment with CAP, arrangement and organization, accuracy, authority, intended audience, relevance and timeliness of information, special features, physical qualities, and overall value to the collection.
- > School library resources shall provide a diversity of appeal and points of view.



"The teaching of controversial issues and the selection and use of controversial learning resources requires the recognition of responsibilities by the teacher to students, by the principal to the school, and by the school to the community."

Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues IMB-R

Principals

In reviewing a specific request from a teacher for teaching about controversial issues or for use of controversial materials, the principal will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The principal will approve or disapprove the teaching of controversial issues and the use of controversial learning resources on the basis of the teaching guidelines listed in this regulation under guidelines for teachers. The principal must pay particular attention to how the request relates to student achievement of the content standards.
2. If the principal approves the teaching of controversial issues or the use of controversial materials, then he/she will also ensure that parents are informed about the planned instruction. The principal will also determine whether parental permission should be obtained. The principal shall review all correspondence to parents.

Jeffco Board Policy IMB-R