

# Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Resources

The Board, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional resources including library books, recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and resources. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other resources supportive of the district's educational philosophy and goals.

The Board has approved principles governing the selection of all instructional resources including library books and has established policies pertaining to the selection process. However, the Board wishes to amplify its principles on the selection of books and other resources which present controversial topics or which for other reasons might be challenged.

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of three basic categories: religion, ideology or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas will be as follows:

1. Religion - Factual, unbiased material on all major religions has a place in school libraries.
2. Ideologies - Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students, on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

3. Profanity/obscenity - Resources will be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality by media specialists and teachers who will take into consideration the maturity of students and the standards of the community.

Criticism of a book or other resources used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. The Board recognizes the right of an individual parent/guardian to request that their own child not read a given book. When such a request is presented, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative resources meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply, however, to basic program texts and resources that the Board has adopted.
2. The Board will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional resources and library collections but recognize that at times a re-evaluation of certain resources may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:
  - a. The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form to document the criticism.
  - b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent, or designee, will provide for a re-evaluation of the material in question.

- c. The re-evaluation will be based on the points offered above, as well as the principles governing the selection of all instructional resources. Additionally, the Board wishes to emphasize that:
  1. A book will not be excluded on the basis of the author's disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.
  2. A book will not be excluded because of the author's viewpoint.
  3. The value of any book or other material will be judged as a whole, taking into account the purpose of the material, rather than individual, isolated expressions or incidents in the work.
  4. The Board's decision will be based on the educational merit or suitability of the resources.
- d. The Superintendent or designee will review the complaint and re-evaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the solution be unsatisfactory to the complainant, the decision may be appealed to the Board.

In summary, the Board assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional resources it makes available to students. It holds its professional staff accountable for their proper selection. It recognizes rights of individual parents with respect to controversial resources used by their own children. It will provide for the re-evaluation of resources in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, student's right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

Thompson School District R2-J, Loveland, Colorado

Any challenges, objections or requests for re-evaluation by individuals or groups will be handled in accordance with the accompanying procedures.

A file will be kept on resources questioned or requested for evaluation.

Adopted prior to 1985

Revised August 17, 1988

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## **Cross References**

- BEDH, Public Participation at Board Meetings
- IHAL, Teaching about Religion in the Schools
- IJ, Instructional Resources
- IJJ, Textbook Selection and Adoption
- IJL, Library Resources Selection and Adoption
- IMB, Teaching about Controversial Issues