

Williamson County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in November	Descriptor Term: Reconsideration of Instructional Materials and Textbooks	Descriptor Code: 4.403	Issued Date: 04/16/19
		Rescinds: 4.403	Issued: 06/03/14

1 The Board of Education supports principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of
2 the Constitution of the United States.¹

3 The Board of Education, though it is ultimately responsible for all instructional material purchased,
4 recognizes the student's right of free access to many different types of materials. The Board also
5 recognizes the right of teachers and administrators to select instructional materials and to make those
6 materials available in the schools. It is therefore the policy of the Board to require instructional materials
7 selected for and used in the schools to be in accord with the following:

- 8 1. Instructional materials shall be chosen for values of interest and enlightenment of all students in
9 the community. Instructional materials shall not be excluded because of the race, nationality,
10 political or religious views of the writer or of its style and language.
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- 12 2. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present many points of view concerning the
13 problems and issues of our times--international, national, and local. Instructional materials of
14 sound factual authority shall not be proscribed or removed from library shelves or classrooms
15 because of partisan or doctrinal approval/disapproval.
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- 17 3. Censorship of instructional materials will be discouraged in order to maintain the school's
18 responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
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- 20 4. Such media (films, videos, electronic media, etc.) should be used only to supplement, not
21 supplant, other instruction. There must be a stated instructional purpose related to approved
22 curriculum objectives to support the use of any media.

23 In accordance with number three above, the Board of Education has adopted the following policy when
24 dealing with complaints about or censorship of instructional materials:

- 25 1. That the final decision concerning controversial instructional materials shall rest with the Board
26 of Education after careful examination and discussion of the instructional materials with school
27 faculties or anyone else the Board of Education wishes to involve;
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- 29 2. That no parent, group of parents, or non-school group has the right to determine the
30 instructional materials for students other than their own children;
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- 32 3. The Board of Education does, however, recognize the right of an individual parent to request
33 that his child not have to use a given instructional material, provided a written request is made
34 to the Principal;

1 4. Any parent or other citizen who wishes to request review or reconsideration of the use of any
2 instructional material in the school must make such a request in writing through the Principal of
3 the school where the material is used.

4 Complainants who bypass the review/reconsideration procedure and who initially seek action from the
5 Board of Education or Superintendent of Schools shall be informed of the policy and instructed first to
6 seek solution to their problem with the involved teacher, librarian, or Principal. When a complaint is
7 made, the following procedure is to be followed:

8 1. Provide the complainant with a copy of this policy and make no commitments.

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10 2. Request the complainant to submit a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials"
11 form.

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13 3. When a complaint is filed, the Principal and teacher will review the validity of the complaint.
14 The complaint will then be processed through the following steps to determine a final
15 resolution.

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17 4. Inform the Superintendent of Schools and other appropriate personnel.

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19 5. Keep challenged materials available for use and review during the reconsideration process.

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21 6. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Principal requests review of the challenged material
22 within fifteen working days by an ad hoc materials review committee composed as follows:

23 a. Appropriate Director (who serves as chairperson);

24 b. President of the PTA/PTO or other parent organization of the school involved;

25 c. Principal of a county school serving the same grade levels as the school in which the
26 material is being challenged.

27 d. Board of Education member (to be appointed by the Chairman of the Board);

28 e. WCEA representative (to be appointed by WCEA president).

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30 7. The review committee takes the following steps after receiving the challenged materials:

31 a. Reads, views, or listens to the material in its entirety.

32 b. Checks general acceptance of the material by reading recognized evaluative reviews.

33 c. Holds a hearing including complainant and any affected school employee.

34 d. Determines the extent to which the material supports the curriculum.

35 e. Judges the material for its strengths and values and/or objectionable content.

36 f. Presents decision in writing to Principal, to the complainant, to affected school
37 employees, and to the Superintendent of Schools (for information).

38
39 8. If the complainant or any affected school employee wishes further action after receiving the
40 decision of the committee, an appeal may be made to the Board of Education within fifteen
41 (15) working days of the date of committee decision. This appeal should be made in writing to
42 the Superintendent of Schools who shall schedule the matter on the agenda of the next regular
43 meeting of the School Board. If no appeal is filed within the above deadline, the determination
44 of the review committee shall be final.

Legal References

1. *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, 102 S. Ct. 2799 (1982)

Cross References

Textbooks 4.401
School and System Websites 4.407
Controversial Materials 4.801