

# administrative guidelines

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PORT WASHINGTON-SAUKVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## CONTROVERSIAL PRINT / NON-PRINT MATERIALS

- I. The school and library stand for the freedom of communication, for the freedom of intellectual activity and for the freedom of thought. Materials used in the schools should provide information on various points of view on controversial issues.
- II. The major areas of controversial materials are race, sex, politics, religion, literature, and economics. In selecting materials on any of the above subjects, the following criteria are given special consideration:
  - A. The materials on controversial issues should be representative of a particular point of view and a sincere effort made to select equally representative materials covering contrasting points of view.
  - B. The material does not unfairly, inaccurately, or viciously disparage a particular race, religion, or nationality. A writer's expression of a certain viewpoint is not to be considered a disparagement when it represents the historical or contemporary views held by some persons or groups.
  - C. The materials on religion are chosen to represent the field as widely as necessary for the school purpose.
  - D. The selection of materials on political theories and ideologies, or on public issues is directed toward maintaining a balanced collection representing various views.
  - E. In a literary work of established quality, the use of profanity or the treatment of sex is not adequate reason of itself for the elimination of materials from the school.
  - F. Materials on physiology, physical maturation, or personal hygiene should be accurate and in good taste.
  - G. Materials should be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.
- III. Freedom to Read – “The parent has the right to judge whether the material is acceptable for his child. However, no parent or other group of citizens of the community has a legal right to abridge the rights of other parents and teachers or children to have access to the information which is a part of the educational program.” (Letter from State Superintendent, Barbara Thompson, 2/27/75.)

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- IV. Occasional objections to a selection will be made by the public despite the care taken to select valuable materials for student and teacher use and the qualifications of persons who select the materials.
- V. The principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the staff must be defended rather than the materials.
- VI. If a complaint is made, the procedures are as follows:
  - A. Be courteous, but make no commitments.
  - B. Invite the complainant to file his objection(s) in writing using the Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Material form. This form should be submitted to the building principal. (See "Forms" in this handbook.)
  - C. Inform the Superintendent.
  - D. A committee shall be appointed and chaired by the principal. The committee shall be composed of the building library media specialist and teachers from the grade level(s) or subject area(s) involved. Representative students, parents, and other citizens of the school community may be consulted if it is deemed necessary.
  - E. The committee will:
    - 1. Read and examine the material referred to it.
    - 2. Check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews.
    - 3. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on pages pulled out of context.
    - 4. Invite complainant to meet with the committee.
    - 5. Meet to discuss the material and prepare a report on it.
    - 6. File a copy of the report in the school and administrative offices and mail copy to complainant.
  - F. Following consideration by the principal and committee, if it is the desire of the complainant, the request will be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration.
  - G. Following consideration by the Superintendent, if it is the desire of the complainant, the request shall be submitted to the Board of Education for consideration and action.

Approved: 8/18/04  
Revised: 6/14/10