

CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Background

The Division believes that intellectual inquiry requires material representing the widest range of interests so that students may freely explore the world of ideas. The process of instruction is a responsibility of the professional staff. Consequently, the Division respects the right and responsibility of teachers to use supplementary materials and to modify prescribed curricula to meet the educational needs of their students. It expects that sound, professional judgment will be exercised and that there will be consultation with others, including parents and other professional colleagues where deemed appropriate.

Procedures

1. The Division recognizes that parents may criticize teacher selection of materials.
2. This procedure is established to deal with criticism of teacher selected materials to achieve these ends:
 - a. to provide broad, basic guidelines for the selection of supplementary materials.
 - b. to set procedures in the case of an appeal of teacher-selected instructional materials. Such appeals shall be in accordance with Board Policy 14, Appeals Regarding Student Matters.
3. Materials used in schools should:
 - a. enrich and support the Program of Studies in a way that considers the varied interests, abilities, maturity levels and learning styles of students.
 - b. provide variety for students as they seek to gain factual knowledge, and develop literary appreciation and aesthetic values.
 - c. cause students to critically examine the information in the material(s) so that they are challenged to think clearly, reason logically, examine different points of view open-mindedly, and through these processes develop skills associated with arriving at sound judgments.
 - d. be representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural perspectives that contribute to our national heritage.
4. The [Alberta Human Rights Act](#) (Section 11.1) requires Boards to provide parents with notice where courses of study, education programs or instructional materials, or instruction or activities, include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion, human sexuality or sexual orientation. If a parent makes a written request, teachers shall exempt the student from such instruction, course of study, education program or use of instructional material.

December, 2003
Updates: July 2011, April 2020

References

Education Act Section 58.1, 58.2
Section 11.1, Alberta Human Rights Act