

**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT
THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

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

The School Board has approved principles governing the selection of all instructional materials, 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 materials which present controversial topics or which for other reason might be challenged:

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

- Religion – factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.
- 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.
- Obscenity – materials shall 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 materials used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. The Board recognizes the right of an individual parent to request that his 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 material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply, however, to basic program texts and materials that the board has adopted.

2. The Board shall not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but recognizes that at times a reevaluation of certain material 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 shall be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which he will document his criticism.
 - b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the superintendent shall provide for a reevaluation of the material in question.
 - c. The reevaluation shall be based on the points offered above, as well as the principles governing the selection of all instructional materials. Additionally, the Board wishes to emphasize that:
 - A book will be judged on the merits of what is contained between its covers and will not be excluded for extrinsic reasons.
 - That the value of any book or other material shall be judged as a whole, taking into account the purpose of the material, rather than individual, isolated expressions or incidents in the work.
 - d. The superintendent or his designee shall review the complaint and reevaluation, and shall render a decision in the matter. Should the solution be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he may appeal the decision to the Board.

In summary, the Board assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials 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 materials used by their own children; it will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, students' right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach shall be respected.

LONDONDERRY SCHOOL BOARD

Adopted: June 19, 1978