

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

It is the policy of the School Board to require that books and other reading matter shall be chosen for values of interest and enlightenment of all students in the community. A book shall not be excluded because of the race, nationality, political, or religious views of the writer or of its style and language. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national, and local, and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority shall not be prescribed or removed from library shelves or classrooms because of partisan, doctrinal approval or disapproval.

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 reasons 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 all major 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.
- Profanity/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/guardian to request that his own child not read a given book or take part in a specific learning activity. The parent or legal guardian must notify the school principal in writing of the specific material to which they object and an alternative will be agreed upon between the parent/guardian and the school district. The alternative will be at the parent's expense and will be sufficient to meet state requirements in that specific subject area.

2. The Board shall not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over the 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 uses:
 - (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 Principal 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 shall not be excluded because of the writer's race or nationality or his political or religious views.
 - 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 the 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/guardians 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.

Adopted by Conway School Board – October 1, 1984

Revision Adopted – March 13, 2000

Reviewed with no change – May 6, 2004

Revision Adopted – March 12, 2012

CONWAY SCHOOL BOARD
CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

(Complete in triplicate, sending the original and one copy to the principal.)

Author _____ Hardcover Book _____ Paperback Book _____

Filmstrip _____ Record _____ Film _____ Other _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Request initiated by _____

Telephone _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Complainant _____ Individual
represents _____ Name of Organization _____
Identify other group _____

1. To what do you object? (PLEASE BE SPECIFIC; CITE PAGES OR PARTS)

2. Why do you object to this material? _____

3. For what age group would you recommend this material? _____
4. What are the strengths of this material? _____
5. Did you review all of the material? _____
6. Are you aware of the judgment of this media by literary and authoritative critics? _____
7. What do you believe is the function of this media? _____

8. What would you like the school to do about this media? _____

9. In its place, what media of equal quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization? _____

10. Where was the media located in the school system? School Media Center
Classroom _____ Area Media Center _____ Other _____

Signature of Complainant _____ Date _____