

Controversial Materials

Step 1 for Use of Supplemental Instructional Materials

Internal Preview

1. If a teacher is considering the instructional use of supplemental material such as, but not limited to, a novel, video, website, drama selection, or music that may be controversial, the material should be evaluated by one or more of the following groups:
 - Library Media Technology Specialist with PK-12 Educational Media Specialist certification (*required)
 - Other teachers of the grade level or subject area involved
 - The teacher and the department head, team leader, etc.
 - Other appropriate groups such as the School Instructional Review or Library Media Selection Committee.
2. The group should first determine whether the material is controversial. This can be determined by considering the following:
 - Is the material age-appropriate for the students who will have access to it?
 - What is the educational purpose of the material?
 - How much would the material need to be explained by the teacher to make it age-appropriate?
 - Do the materials reflect the broad racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity of students in the state of Florida?
3. If the group determines that the material is not controversial, they do not need to continue the process. If the material is controversial, the group should proceed to step 4.
4. Next, the group should determine whether the controversial material is appropriate for the grade level involved. If the material is not appropriate for the grade level involved, it should not be used for instruction. If the group determines that the controversial material is appropriate for the grade level involved, it should be presented to the principal for preview.
5. If the principal agrees that the material is both controversial and appropriate for the grade level involved, a letter should be sent to parents/guardians (see Step 2 for details).

Guidelines:

1. **Purpose:** All supplemental materials should be read, viewed or listened to in their entirety prior to internal preview or inclusion in the curriculum by the teacher. Videos and movies may not be used for entertainment, reward, or behavior modification purposes.
2. **Ratings:** Movies, videos, animation, and other streaming or video content with a rating of PG13, Y14 or PG (or similar) may not be used unless the principal approves the content and communicates the educational purpose to the community. It is the responsibility of the school to determine if the content requires a public performance license for viewing.

Controversial Material Letter to Parents/Guardians

Step 2 for Use of Supplemental Instructional Materials

Required Elements

8 Required Elements for Teacher's Letter to Parents

Regarding Controversial Material to Be Used for Instructional Purposes

1. Name and description of the novel, video, website, drama selection, music, or other material with potential controversy
2. Educational standard(s)
3. Controversial issues involved with the material, such as the following cautionary warning codes:
 - Violence
 - Profanity
 - Sexual situations, activity, or innuendo
 - Sensuality
 - Suggestive dialogue
 - Nudity
 - Drug abuse
 - Other
4. Example of the material causing concern
5. Ratings, if available (movies, videos, streaming content, etc.)
6. Copy of the material available for parental review
7. Option for an alternate work and instruction
8. Parent signature for alternate work and instruction

Related State Law and School Board Policies: F.S. 1006.28, 1006.34, 1006.40; Policy 2235, 2240, 2510