

## **PUBLIC CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES**

Instructional resources that are subject to challenge usually belong to one of three basic categories: religion, ideology or profanity/obscenity. The Board's policy regarding these areas shall be as follows:

1. Religion—Factual, unbiased material on all major religions has a place in Centennial BOCES libraries.
2. 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.
3. Profanity/obscenity—Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit 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 Centennial BOCES schools or programs may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. Centennial BOCES recognizes the right of an individual parent/guardian to request that his/her child not read a given book. When such a request is presented, the teacher and/or Centennial BOCES administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative materials meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply, however, to basic program texts and materials.
2. Centennial BOCES shall not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections but recognizes that at times a re-evaluation of certain materials may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from use: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 that person will document the criticism.
  - b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the executive director or designee shall provide for a re-evaluation of the material in question.
  - c. The re-evaluation 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:
    - (1) A book shall not be excluded because of the writer's race or nationality or political or religious views.
    - (2) 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 executive director or designee shall review the complaint and re-evaluation and shall render a decision in the matter. Should the solution be unsatisfactory, the complainant 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 re-evaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request.

CROSS REFS.: IJ, Instructional Resources  
and Materials  
IMB, Teaching about Controversial Issues and Use of  
Controversial Materials

Adopted: January 18, 2018  
Centennial BOCES