

# Williamson County Board of Education



**Adopted Date:**  
10/15/01  
Editorial 6/3/14

4.403

## RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS and TEXTBOOKS (Page 1 of 2)

- 1 A. The Board of Education supports principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First  
2 Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.  
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- 4 B. The Board of Education, though it is ultimately responsible for all instructional material  
5 purchased, recognizes the student's right of free access to many different types of materials.  
6 The Board also recognizes the right of teachers and administrators to select instructional  
7 materials and to make those materials available in the schools. It is therefore the policy of the  
8 Board to require instructional materials selected for and used in the schools to be in accord with  
9 the following:  
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- 11 1. Instructional materials shall be chosen for values of interest and enlightenment of all  
12 students in the community. Instructional materials shall not be excluded because of the  
13 race, nationality, political or religious views of the writer or of its style and language.
  - 14 2. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present many points of view concerning  
15 the problems and issues of our times--international, national, and local. Instructional  
16 materials of sound factual authority shall not be proscribed or removed from library shelves  
17 or classrooms because of partisan or doctrinal approval/disapproval.
  - 18 3. Censorship of instructional materials will be discouraged in order to maintain the school's  
19 responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
  - 20 4. Such media (films, videos, electronic media, etc.) should be used only to supplement, not  
21 supplant, other instruction. There must be a stated instructional purpose related to  
22 approved curriculum objectives to support the use of any media.
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- 24 C. In accordance with number three above, the Board of Education has adopted the following  
25 policy when dealing with complaints about or censorship of instructional materials:  
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- 27 1. That the final decision concerning controversial instructional materials shall rest with the  
28 Board of Education after careful examination and discussion of the instructional materials  
29 with school faculties or anyone else the Board of Education wishes to involve;
  - 30 2. That no parent, group of parents, or non-school group has the right to determine the  
31 instructional materials for students other than their own children;
  - 32 3. The Board of Education does, however, recognize the right of an individual parent to  
33 request that his child not have to use a given instructional material, provided a written  
34 request is made to the Principal;
  - 35 4. Any parent or other citizen who wishes to request review or reconsideration of the use of  
36 any instructional material in the school must make such a request in writing through the  
37 Principal of the school where the material is used.
- 38
- 39 D. Complainants who bypass the review/reconsideration procedure and who initially seek action  
40 from the Board of Education or Superintendent of Schools shall be informed of the policy and  
41 instructed first to seek solution to their problem with the involved teacher, librarian, or Principal.  
42 When a complaint is made, the following procedure is to be followed:  
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- 1 1. Provide the complainant with a copy of this policy and make no commitments.
- 2 2. Request the complainant to submit a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional
- 3 Materials" form.
- 4 3. When a complaint is filed, the Principal and teacher will review the validity of the
- 5 complaint. The complaint will then be processed through the following steps to determine
- 6 a final resolution.
- 7 4. Inform the Superintendent of Schools and other appropriate personnel.
- 8 5. Keep challenged materials available for use and review during the reconsideration
- 9 process.
- 10 6. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Principal requests review of the challenged
- 11 material within fifteen working days by an ad hoc materials review committee composed
- 12 as follows:
- 13 a. Appropriate Director (who serves as chairperson);
- 14 b. President of the PTA/PTO or other parent organization of the school involved;
- 15 c. Principal of a county school serving the same grade levels as the school in which
- 16 d. Board of Education member (to be appointed by the Chairman of the Board);
- 17 e. WCEA representative (to be appointed by WCEA president).
- 18 7. The review committee takes the following steps after receiving the challenged materials:
- 19 a. Reads, views, or listens to the material in its entirety.
- 20 b. Checks general acceptance of the material by reading recognized evaluative
- 21 reviews.
- 22 c. Holds a hearing including complainant and any affected school employee.
- 23 d. Determines the extent to which the material supports the curriculum.
- 24 e. Judges the material for its strengths and values and/or objectionable content.
- 25 f. Presents decision in writing to Principal, to the complainant, to affected school
- 26 employees, and to the Superintendent of Schools (for information).
- 27 8. If the complainant or any affected school employee wishes further action after receiving
- 28 the decision of the committee, an appeal may be made to the Board of Education within
- 29 fifteen (15) working days of the date of committee decision. This appeal should be made
- 30 in writing to the Superintendent of Schools who shall schedule the matter on the agenda of
- 31 the next regular meeting of the School Board. If no appeal is filed within the above
- 32 deadline, the determination of the review committee shall be final.
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37 **\*NOTE:** Textbooks, library books, reference books, newspapers, magazines, films, audio or  
38 videotapes, live or recorded radio or television programs, computer programs, etc.  
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43 Legal Reference:

44 *Island Trees/Union Free School District v. Pico*. 457 U.S. 853, 102 S. Ct. 2799 (1982)  
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