

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES OF INSTRUCTION POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE: The Barbour County Board of Education holds the belief that controversial issues may and should come up at appropriate times during classroom instruction. Such controversial instruction allows students to use critical thinking skills to examine and ultimately understand other cultures, religions, political thought, etc.

2.0 SCOPE:

- 2.1 Controversial issues may be presented during classroom instruction provided factual materials related to both sides are presented in an objective, non-biased manner.
- 2.2 Issues of local, state, national and international importance shall be presented within the proper relationship of subject matter.
- 2.3 Teachers shall obtain advance approval from the building principal and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction prior to presenting the controversial issue.
- 2.4 The specific content methods to be used and possible implications shall be outlined and discussed with the principal and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction. Upon obtaining approval, the controversial issue may be presented according to the conditions of the approval.

3.0 Procedures for Reconsideration of Reading/Media Materials

- 3.1 A parental request for review or reconsideration of any reading/media materials in the school shall be presented in writing to the principal.
- 3.2 The request shall include a full description of the work in question along with specific items, passages, excerpts, or parts of the material to which objection is being made.
- 3.3 Reasons for objections shall be given and the statement shall be signed and dated. The request should be completed to the best of the complainant's ability and knowledge.
- 3.4 The signatory will further identify his/her group association or affiliation, if any.
- 3.5 The principal, the teacher and/or media/technology specialist shall meet within 5 school days of receipt of the request outlining the objection. At this time, an alternative reading assignment shall be presented to the student. If the parent accepts, the alternative assignment will be completed in lieu of the offending assignment. The grade for the alternative assignment will stand in lieu of the grade for the original, objectionable assignment.
- 3.6 If the parent does not agree to accept an alternative assignment, the building principal shall answer the request. His/her response shall be based, in part, on documentation provided by the teacher and/or the media/technology specialist.
- 3.7 The principal shall forward a copy of the request for reconsideration of material and the response to the county superintendent.
- 3.8 The challenged material shall be kept on the Reserve Shelf during the reconsideration process.
- 3.9 Upon receipt of the request, the principal shall request a review of the challenged material by a Materials Review Committee within fifteen (15) working days, and shall notify the teacher and/or media/technology specialist and the superintendent that such review is being done.
- 3.10 The review committee shall be appointed by the principal. The committee will include media/technology professionals, classroom teachers, no less than two parents (not the complainant), and at least one student. Other committee members may be added at the

discretion of the principal. Consideration can be given to the Local School Improvement Councils serving as the Materials Review Committee.

- 3.11 The review committee shall take the following steps after receiving the challenged material:
 - 3.1.1 Read, view or listen to the material(s) in its entirety;
 - 3.1.2 General acceptance of the materials by reading reviews and consulting recommended lists;
 - 3.1.3 Determine the extent to which the material(s) support(s) the curriculum;
 - 3.1.4 Determines the extent to which the material(s) support(s) the community values;
 - 3.15 Judge the materials for its strength and value as a whole and not in part.
 - 3.16 Present a written recommendation of the review committee to the Superintendent.
- 4.0 Upon receipt of the recommendation, the Superintendent shall decide whether to retain or withdraw the challenged material.
- 5.0 If the citizen feels that his/her objections have not been dealt adequately, he or she may make final appeal to the Barbour County Board of Education via the Citizen's Appeal Process.

Source: **Board of Education Minutes**

Adopted: **1974**

Revised: **06/28/10; 1983**