

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

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The School Committee, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other materials supportive of the educational philosophy and goals of the schools.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. If a parent/legal guardian requests that his/her child not read a given book, the teacher and Principal should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative materials which would meet the same instructional purpose. This does not apply to basic program texts and materials that the School Committee has adopted.
2. The School Committee will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials or 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 Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:
  - a. The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which he/she will document his/her criticism. Forms are available from the Principal.
  - b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Principal will provide for a reevaluation of the material in question. He/she will arrange for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty to consider the complaint.
  - c. The Superintendent will review the complaint with the Principal and the review committee's reevaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the decision be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he/she may appeal it to the School Committee.

The Superintendent assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials made available to students and he/she holds the professional staff accountable for their proper selection. He/she recognizes the rights of individual parents/legal guardians with respect to controversial materials used by their own children. He/she will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. The right of students to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

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Massachusetts General Law References:

- M.G.L. 71:48 – Textbooks and School Supplies
- M.G.L. 71:49 – Purchase of Textbooks by Pupils
- M.G.L. 71:50 – Change of School Books

Westford Public Schools Policy References:

- P6118 – Library Materials Selection and Adoption
- P7109 – New Member Orientation

Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001  
Policy Reviewed:  
Policy Revised:

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Westford, Massachusetts 01886