



# Recommended Task

## Sample Controversial Issues Policy

Controversial issues policies define how to handle challenges to materials. Paired with a sound collection development policy, a controversial issues policy will help you respond to any requests that items be removed from the school library. This supplemental is a sample you can use to write a controversial issues policy of your own. Feel free to cut and paste portions you feel are appropriate for your library (and in line with district standards) and add procedures mandated by your school or district and make it your own!



## CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES POLICY

1. If a person wants to challenge an item, they must present it in writing and it must be signed. (Challenge form available upon request).\*
2. A committee of five at the school level will be assigned to consider criticism. The committee will consist of the school librarian/paraprofessional, a PTA representative, teachers, and administration.
3. Items in question will remain on the shelf until a final decision has been made.
4. District policies and forms used for dealing with controversial materials will be used for all challenges to items in the school library.\*\*
5. The principal shall notify complainant of the decision and send a formal report and recommendation to the Superintendent. In answering the complainant, the principal shall explain the book selection system, give the guidelines used for selection, and cite authorities used in reaching decisions. If the committee decides to keep the work that caused the complaint, the complainant shall be given an explanation. If the complaint is valid, the principal will acknowledge it and make recommended changes.
6. If the complainant is still not satisfied, he or she may ask the Superintendent to present an appeal to the Board of Education, which shall make a final determination of the issue. The Board of Education may seek assistance from outside organizations such as the American Library Association in making its determination.
7. (Your School's Name) School Library supports the Library Bill of Rights when learning resources are being challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view will be defended as well.

\* Page 3 of this supplemental includes a sample challenge form.

\*\*Look up these district policies and include them in your school's controversial issues policy.

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RE-EVALUATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MATERIALS

*Personal Details:*

Request initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Complaint represents:      Myself      Group/Organization  
Name Of group/organization \_\_\_\_\_

*About the Material in Question:*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Author/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Form of material:  
 Book      Video/DVD      Recording  
 Other (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Respond To The Following Questions: (Use additional paper if necessary)*

Have you seen or read this material in its entirety?    Yes    No  
What do you believe is the theme of the material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is your objection to the material? (Please cite specific passages, pages, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything good about the material?    Yes    No   If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel might be the result of viewing, hearing, or reading the material in question? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of reviews of this material by critics?    Yes    No   If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For what age group(s) might this material be suitable? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to see happen to this material?  
 Do not assign or lend it to my child.  
 Withdraw it from all students as well as my child.  
 Other (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

In its place, what do you recommend we include in our collection to convey an adequate perspective of the theme treated by the material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Patron signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_