

## 7. SPECIAL CURRICULUM ISSUES

- References:
- (a) United States Constitution, Amendment I
  - (b) Section 1232 of title 20, United States Code
  - (c) DoDEA Regulation 2000.1, "High School Graduation Requirements," July 29, 2004
  - (d) DoDEA Regulation 2992.1, "Information Center and Classroom Supplemental Materials Selection Policy and Challenge Procedures," October 27, 2004

### a. Ethical/Moral/Religious

(1) Principals should be aware of issues in the area of First Amendment Rights. The selection of courses for students is shared by students, school personnel, and parents/sponsors. Students cannot be required to take courses if they are over 18 years of age or their parent/sponsor objects to the course on the grounds that it is in violation of their freedom of religion (Reference (a)). The burden of proof in such a situation rests with the individual. If an objection is levied and a decision is reached that the course is in violation of a student's freedom of religion, then an alternate course can be selected. This course selection is shared by students, school personnel, and parents/sponsors.

(2) When students reach the age of 18, they are granted additional rights relevant to their education. Specifically, all rights formally afforded to parents concerning access to educational records and the making of educational decisions will transfer to the students at this time. This same transfer of rights is applicable to students with special education services identified in an Individual Education Program, and students with disabilities identified in individual student accommodation plans (e.g., 504 plan) (Reference (b)).

(3) Students and parents/sponsors should be aware that graduation from a DoDEA high school is contingent upon the successful completion of certain required courses for which waivers or substitutions may not be granted (Reference (c)).

### b. Challenged Materials

(1) DoDEA has established a system-wide policy and procedures for selecting supplemental materials for information centers and classrooms and for challenging the suitability of these materials (Reference (d)).

(2) Information specialists are responsible for facilitating the review and selection of materials for the information centers consistent with DoDEA policy.

(3) Teachers are responsible for reviewing and selecting classroom supplemental materials consistent with DoDEA policy.

(4) Parents/guardians are afforded the opportunity to request the use of alternative materials for their student.

(5) If a parent/guardian wishes to challenge materials placed in an information center, the information specialist will attempt to resolve the concern informally by offering to locate alternative information materials for the student. In addition, the specialist must inform the parent/guardian that he or she (the parent/guardian) is responsible for overseeing and restricting the student's access to the challenged materials.

(6) If a parent/guardian requests that a student not be permitted to use particular supplemental materials, the teacher will attempt to resolve the issue informally by offering to locate and assign alternative instructional materials, or by providing an alternative assignment that meets classroom educational objectives.

(7) If a concern cannot be resolved informally, the parent/guardian may initiate a formal challenge by filing a Request for Reconsideration of Information Center or Classroom Supplemental Materials with the school principal. The procedures described in DoDEA Regulation 2992.01 (Reference (d)) will be followed.

c. Contests

(1) Contests are organized competitions for a prize or title, especially one in which the entrants appear or demonstrate their skills individually and a winner is chosen.

(2) Many contests, including sponsored contests, are of doubtful educational value. Principals should carefully evaluate all proposed contests in the school. These are the conditions required for contest approval in DoDEA:

(a) Class time will not be used to conduct contests.

(b) Student participation cannot be required; it must be voluntary.

(c) Staff members cannot be involved in any capacity during school hours.

(d) No contest may be considered by the school without prior approval of the district superintendent.

d. Antiterrorism Awareness

(1) The antiterrorism awareness program for students is integrated as a permanent part of the school curriculum.

(a) At the elementary level, in classes, and through the guidance program, antiterrorism awareness addresses the basics of personal safety and security. All students must receive annual training at the start of each school year.

(b) At the secondary level, students discuss personal security and the broader issues of global terrorism as part of the social studies curriculum, the school guidance program, and peer helper activities. All students must receive annual training at the start of each school year.

(2) Host installation security personnel may be requested to participate (e.g., in an “officer friendly” segment for young children, or as a source of information about local security issues).