Addressing parental or administrative concerns about using graphic novels.

As kids' graphic novels are now recipients of coveted starred reviews and book awards, the need to explain or address parental and/or administrative concerns is becoming less necessary. That said, we've found that many teachers, librarians, parents, and/or administrators still find the need to advocate for their inclusion in classroom curriculum. In this section we address how best to do this.

Be Prepared. First and foremost, be prepared. Regardless of whether you're a scout (whose slogan is "Be Prepared"), *Lion King*'s Scar (lusting for or maintaining a position of power), or are simply a humble albeit talented teacher, it's important to:

A. Read whatever book you're advocating for (from cover to cover);
B. Understand your audience and community culture and why there may be objections;
C. Know what is so important about using this particular graphic novel and why/how it's inclusion will benefit your students; and
D. Know your school's policy regarding your inclusion of potentially challenged books to your curriculum (or even classroom library). If there is no written policy, speak to anyone who may appropriately (and safely) guide you (and think about talking to administrators about creating one for your school).

Being able to address each of these issues will empower you to more effectively advocate for the use any new addition to your classroom and curriculum.

Helpful Resources. Here are some links to resources that can help you prepare.

> **The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC)** has a number of tools and resources to assist educators and librarians in their online guide, "*The First Amendment in Schools: A Resource Guide*" (http://ncac.org/resource/first-amendment-in-schools).
> More specifically it addresses:
> * **The First Amendment and public schools**. It reproduces the First Amendment and provides a deeper understanding of how this document protects your ability to exercise your professional judgment when addressing educational goals and standards as well as student needs.
> * **Censorship** - understanding censorship, distinguishing censorship from selection, detailing the harmful consequences of censorship to individual and community needs.
> * **The Roles and Responsibilities** of school officials, school boards, and state mandates.
> * **Censorship policies**. This site provides various censorship policies - which may be used to both help you address concerns

and challenges as well as establish policies of your own. It also details how you may avoid censorship in your schools.

The American Library Association has the following tools and resources to assist educators and librarians:

- "Censorship & First Amendment Issues" providing valuable links - found at: http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorshipfirstamendmentissues.
- "Challenge Support" providing advice, links, and resources for personal support during a Reconsideration Process; and guiding documents to safeguard intellectual freedom and better prepare you against challenges. It can found at: http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport.

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund has tools and resources for educators. They provide:

- On ongoing column "*Using Graphic Novels in Education*" which highlights specific graphic novels for kids. More specifically it provides: a synopsis of the targeted book; age/grade appropriateness identify potential issues to consider; lesson and discussion suggestions; suggested prose and other graphic novel pairings; and additional resource links. These can be found at: http://cbldf.org/?s=using+graphic+novels+in+education.
- **How to Manage Challenges** providing guidelines and resource links for making strong policies, coping with challenges and reporting challenges. This can be found online at: http://cbldf.org/managing-challenges/.