

Guidelines and Resources to Help You Support Your Reading/Graphic Novel Choices

Getting community/administration/library approval for your classroom/reading selection choices:

1. **Review school/library policies** regarding reading selections. If your school or library doesn't have an explicit policy, you may want to work with colleagues to create them. If there is an outdated policy, review and update it. Be sure to include and relate the school/district's educational goals within this policy. In the long run this will help avert questions, challenges and bans.
2. **Offer "parent education" programs and workshops** to introduce graphic novels. Choose wisely. Make sure to relay that there are outstanding kids' graphic novels that:
 - a. Have been awarded prestigious literary awards such as the Newbery and Caldecott Awards, the National Book Awards;
 - b. They are getting starred reviews from *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus Book* and *Horn Book*; and
 - c. They are found on "Best" Reading lists including the American Library Association's *School Library Journal*
3. **Be prepared.** Read the book from cover to cover to vet the book's appropriateness for your reader(s) and to prepare for any possible objections.
4. **Research.** You may want to do a media/online search to see if there have been issues or objections in the past about either the book you want to use as well as to search to see what, if any, objections have recently been raised towards reading choices in your community. Furthermore, you may want to research awards and accolades garnered by the book you hope to use. Be prepared to tell stories or quote comments from parents and children about how the book has touched them.
5. **Know your audience** (which again is where having a school/library policy will be helpful). Make sure you understand both individual and community concerns and be prepared with responses to those concerns.
6. **Provide hand-outs** with information on relevant policies, statistics, and/or other relevant data/information.
7. **Find support** from colleagues, other parents, teachers, librarians, and/or administrators who can stand with you. Know also that there are organizations and resources that are set up to help you with just such challenges. We list them in the resources below.

For more help, please refer to the resources below:

- Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) at <http://www.ftrf.org/>

- American Library Association (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) and the Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q and A (brochure) <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorshipfirstamendmentissues/ifcensorshipqanda>
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Intellectual Freedom Center <http://www.ncte.org/action/anti-censorship>
- NCTE “Students’ Right to Read” Guideline <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/righttoreadguideline>
- NCTE Guideline for Defining and Defending Instructional Methods <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/defendinginstrmethod>
- NCTE Guidelines for Selection of Materials in English Language Arts Programs (dated 2014 – you may want to use this as a template for your own policies) <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/material-selection-ela>
- Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF) Resources <http://cbldf.org/resources/>