

## **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING REQUESTS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Some states require public schools to allow parents to inspect instructional materials provided to students. Many schools have their own policies allowing parents to inspect instructional materials. Other schools, including most private schools, do not have inspection policies or applicable state laws, but we believe they should permit parental inspection nonetheless.

We have prepared three templates parents can use to request inspections: one for public schools in states with laws requiring disclosure; one for public and private schools with written inspection policies; and one for public and private schools with neither. Please feel free to use the templates and these guidelines.

These guidelines and templates are provided as suggestions and for general informational purposes only. They may not reflect current legal developments or your specific situation. Their contents should not be construed as legal advice and are not intended as a substitute for legal counsel. You should not act or refrain from acting based on the content of these guidelines and templates without seeking legal or other professional advice regarding your particular situation.

### **Locating Your State's Law**

1. Your state may have laws or regulations requiring schools to disclose instructional materials. These laws typically apply to public schools only. Such laws or regulations are usually found in the state's Education Code or Education Regulations, or on the state's Department of Education website. FAIR is creating a table of states with such laws, and will include that resource in the Advocacy Toolkit on our website. Laws can change, however, so please perform your own research to determine if your state has an applicable law or regulation.
2. Review the law or regulation carefully to determine which schools it applies to, what it requires schools to disclose, and whether it sets forth a procedure to follow.

### **Locating Your School's Policy**

1. Check your school's website to see if it has an inspection policy. If it does, the policy is often (but not necessarily) assigned a number, such as "Policy 6143," "Policy 627," etc. If it is difficult to find on the school website, you can try a Google search. For example, "Pleasantville school district instructional materials inspection policy."
2. Read the policy carefully, because policies can differ. Some schools have broad policies that allow parents full access to curricular materials. Others allow inspection of materials used in connection with certain surveys, or in connection with federally funded programs. Many policies provide a time frame for the schools to respond -- usually a "reasonable time."

## Completing the Templates

Most of the fields highlighted on the templates are self-explanatory, but we clarify a few below. The templates are suggestions only; please amend them or create your own, as you see fit.

1. **Name of School Official.** The school policy or law may indicate the person to whom the request should be made. Otherwise, you can choose the appropriate official, such as the principal or teacher.
2. **Name and/or Number of Policy.** You may insert the name and/or number of the school's policy, if applicable.
3. **Verbatim Policy Language/Verbatim Statutory Language.** You may wish to insert the relevant language of the school's policy or state law, if applicable.
4. **Names of Classes, Grade Number, Year(s).** To avoid receiving information you do not need, consider limiting the request to certain subjects, grades, and school years.
5. **Number of Days.** The time you specify for receiving a response is up to you, but it is generally a good idea to be reasonable.
6. The templates are written as a request from two parents. If guardians or only one parent is making the request, please amend accordingly.

## Conducting the Inspection

1. Once the school responds, they may email you the materials, but will most likely arrange a time for you to inspect them yourself on the school premises.
2. Consider having both parents attend the inspection.
3. If you conduct the inspection on the school premises, you may want to bring paper, a pen, and a fully charged phone if you wish to photograph any documents or portions of documents. If the school does not permit photos because of copyright protection, we suggest taking handwritten notes, including the name or title of the document, the grade and class in which it was used, and the specific content that concerns you or about which you have questions. You may also write down the names or titles of any documents you would like copies of, and ask for such copies.
4. We anticipate most inspections will be cordial and uneventful. However, if there are any issues, you may wish to memorialize them in writing immediately after the inspection.

## Samples of Requests

Sample One (public school in state with disclosure law)

January 1, 2021

### **REQUEST FOR INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Dear Principal Grover:

We are the parents of a child in 9th grade at Henson High School. California Education Code section 51101 provides that parents have the right to “to examine the curriculum materials of the class or classes in which their child is enrolled.” We request an inspection of those materials for 9th grade English for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please let us know within the next 7 days how we can arrange this inspection. Thank you.

Ernest and Bertrand Street

Sample Two (school with written policy)

February 1, 2021

### **REQUEST FOR INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Dear Principal Burns:

We are the parents of a child in 4th grade at Springfield School District. The school’s Policy 627, titled “Inspection of Instructional Materials,” allows parents to inspect “all instructional content in whatever format, including printed materials, audio-visual materials, and materials from the Internet.” We request an inspection of those materials for Social Studies and English Language Arts used in 4th and 5th grades for the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, if the school already has materials that will be used for 5th grade for the 2021-2022 school year, we request inspection of those materials as well.

Please let us know within the next 7 business days how we can arrange this inspection. Thank you.

Margaret and Homer Simpson

Sample Three (school with no written policy or state law)

March 1, 2021

**REQUEST FOR INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Dear Principal Caesar:

We are the parents of a child in 6th grade at Alexandria Middle School. We request an inspection of all instructional materials provided to students in whatever format (including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, materials in electronic or digital formats, and materials accessible through the Internet), except tests and assessments, for 6th grade Global Studies for the 2020-2021 school year.

To make it more convenient for you, we would be happy to conduct this inspection on the school premises.

Please let us know within the next 10 days how we can arrange this inspection. Thank you.

Cleo and Marcus Antony

Rev. June 2021