

PARENTAL RIGHTS: CURRICULUM TRANSPARENCY

KEY POINTS:

- Informed parents and guardians drastically improve educational outcomes, and educational transparency benefits students, parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators alike.
- Transparency deters or exposes those who wish to use their government positions to coerce and indoctrinate students with political, social, and sexual ideologies.
- School Boards should update their Parental Review Policies to provide digital access to instructional materials, and to require that any additional supplemental material a teacher gives to children that was not part of approved curriculum is placed in a digital folder accessible to parents for review.
- Pennsylvania should update the transparency law to require more digital access for parents to further increase transparency and save districts and parents time and money.

Informed parents and guardians drastically improve educational outcomes. Transparency in education benefits students, parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, and in the end, society. Transparency also deters or exposes those who wish to use their government positions to coerce and indoctrinate students with political, social, and sexual ideologies. Even involved parents have been disturbed to discover activist, ideological, and outright sexually explicit material being taught to their children, without their knowledge or consent.

Parental Rights to Review Materials in Existing Law

Pennsylvania and Federal law requires schools to give parents the opportunity to review all instructional materials and have access to information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, teacher manuals, films, tapes, supplemental instructional materials, evaluations and assessment techniques. 20 U.S. Code §1232h and 22 Pa Code §4.4. Your local Pennsylvania public school has policies regarding parental rights to review materials. These policies are often found on their website and usually begin at Board Policy 105.

Two Problems with the Status Quo

First, many public schools make it extremely difficult to review materials. There are waiting periods, in person review requirements, and requirements that an employee be taken away from their usual tasks in order

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to watch a parent review material, among other unnecessarily burdensome limits.

The Pennsylvania legislature passed the Educational Transparency Act in 2021, which would have required that a portion of the materials that parents are entitled to review would be accessible on the district's website. Parents who don't have time to go to the school to sit and read would have been able

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to review the material from their homes. Furthermore, schools would no longer have had to use its employee hours pulling together information and sitting and watching the parents read the materials. Governor Wolf vetoed this common-sense legislation.

In 2026, Republicans in the Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee passed the SB 128 curriculum transparency bill (SB 128) on a 7-4 party line vote.

The second problem, which is not addressed by the proposed state bill, is that even when all of the hoops are jumped through, a good portion of what is placed before your child **WILL NOT BE GIVEN TO YOU** to review. This is because teachers often use materials that are not part of curriculum or any approved supplemental materials. Current events, such as the war in Ukraine, may necessitate for instance, that a history teacher assign an article or watch a video about the current event. But this material, or links to internet-based content, is important for parents to be able to review. Yet it is often difficult for parents, board members, and even administrators to know this material even exists. And the opportunity for abuse is unlimited.

School Boards should update their parental review policies to provide digital access to instructional materials, and to require that any additional supplemental material a teacher gives to children which was not part of approved curriculum is immediately placed in a digital folder accessible to parents and administrators for review. If you are a school board member who desires to implement such a policy, we are glad to assist you.

