

Reject Teachers

by Laurie Higgins Who Exploit Position



Although taxpayers must address the issue of objectionable curricular material directly, which will involve challenging the specious “book banning/censorship” arguments employed by school boards and administrations, there is something parents can do in the meantime to minimize their children’s exposure not just to inappropriate texts but to ideologically biased classroom proselytizing. Parents can object to teachers rather than texts. Here are some suggestions for parents who are fed up with the subtle and not so subtle messages that “progressive” activist teachers work into their classroom teaching through their classroom comments, curricular and supplementary materials (including textbooks, novels, plays, short stories, essays, newspaper and magazine articles, films, and speakers), and even their desks and classroom displays:

1 Parents can go to their middle school and/or high school websites and find out which teachers sponsor gay and straight alliances and liberal political activist groups (e.g. AWARE).

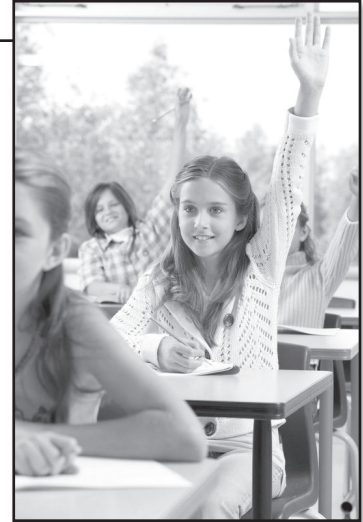
2 Parents should ask what texts will be assigned, performed or recommended (e.g. *The Chocolate War*, *Fat Kid Rules the World*, *Angels in America*, *The Laramie Project*, *Rent*, or *The People’s History of the United States*) by a particular teacher. Parents should ask for the reading list for the entire year. Teachers who have a reasonable degree of respect for the values and beliefs of all parents will not select highly controversial texts for either required or recommended reading lists.

3 Students usually know who the liberal, activist teachers are. Liberal activist teachers develop reputations, often as the “cool” teachers who express antipathy toward traditional and conservative views. Parents with children who have already completed a year or more of school should ask those children, their friends, or friends’ parents which teachers are known for expressing their moral and political beliefs in the classroom through, for example, their comments or by displaying symbols associated with homosexuality on their desks, classroom doors, or walls. Those symbols include “Safe Space” stickers,

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inverted pink triangles, rainbow flags, and the lower case Greek letter “lambda.” These symbols are not used centrally to ensure safety, which *all* teachers support, but rather to announce affirmation of “progressive” views of homosexuality.

4 If parents have concerns that a particular teacher uses their classroom comments, curricular materials, and supplementary resources to express their moral or political views, they should email the appropriate department chair and/or their child’s counselor to request a teacher reassignment, explaining that they will not permit their child to be in the classroom or under the tutelage of any teacher who has made their moral or political beliefs known in the classroom.



Parents should no longer accept the unacceptable choices of either tolerating polemical, biased, and vulgar texts, or opting their child out of reading them, which results in an isolated, diminished academic experience for their child.

Parents are entitled to have their children placed in apolitical, ideologically neutral academic contexts in which critical thinking is actually fostered. Insisting that their children be placed in classes taught by teachers who truly respect diverse voices, including conservative voices, will prevent parents from getting involved in specious “book banning/censorship” discussions. Parents are not challenging texts; they are challenging teachers. Furthermore, administrations and department chairs, faced with these scheduling problems, may eventually decide to rein in their ideologues.

If administrators believe that teachers, who are in positions of power, including the power to grade, have the right to express personal views on controversial moral and political issues in class, and have the right to assign resources that espouse only one set of beliefs on controversial issues, then those administrators must grant parents the right to remove their children from such dubious academic contexts. Parents must be granted the right to have their children placed in the classrooms of teachers who voluntarily demonstrate academic integrity. ■

