

Email conversation with Sarasota School's spokesperson Gary Leatherman

Hello Gary,

It's Roy De Jesus from Bay News 9...

Just wanted to get an email response from you on what we talked about over the phone...

1-What is the process for the challenge to the *World History: Patterns of Interaction* textbook...how did it get to this point?

[Leatherman Gary]

The process requires that a community member who does not believe that the content of a textbook or other instructional material is appropriate submits a written request for the material to be reviewed. The district policy allows for a school-level or district-level committee to review the material and decide if the complaint is valid. If the person who submits the challenge does not agree with the decision of the committee, he or she may file an appeal with the Board of Education.

Because textbooks are reviewed and approved by the Florida Department of Education before they may be considered for adoption at the district level, having a textbook challenged is unusual. Most challenges involve supplemental materials assigned by teachers or available in school media centers.

In the current case, a district-level review committee was convened. The committee members read the text in question and discussed the two primary issues raised in the challenge:

1. Information in the text was historically inaccurate.
2. The text showed a preference for Islam over other major religions.

The committee determined that the text was historically accurate and did not demonstrate a preference for one religion over another. Therefore the committee recommended that the book should continue in use for the remaining two years of the current adoption cycle.

2-Does the challenge come as a surprise...when was the last time a textbook was challenged this way in Sarasota County's School District?

[Leatherman Gary]

As mentioned above, challenges to textbooks are unusual. I have asked the administrator responsible for convening challenge review committees for information about when a textbook was last challenged.

It may be worth noting that 40 of the 67 school districts in Florida use this textbook.

3-I have that the meeting is July 20th...pm or am?

[Leatherman Gary]

The School Board meeting at which the appeal is scheduled to be heard will be at 3 p.m. Tuesday, July 20.

Thanks Gary,
Roy

[Leatherman Gary]
You are welcome.
Gary