



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**POLICY BULLETIN**

**TITLE:** Guidelines for the Use of Audiovisual Materials Not Owned, Broadcast, or Recommended by the District

**NUMBER:** BUL-5210

**ISSUER:** Judy Elliott, Chief Academic Officer  
Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Support

**ROUTING**  
 Local District Superintendents  
 Local District Directors  
 Principals  
 Library Media Personnel  
 Teachers  
 ITAFs

**DATE:** August 13, 2010

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District to provide students with appropriate instructional materials that are relevant to the curriculum being studied and appropriate for their age and maturity levels. Because of the widespread use of videocassette recorders, ease of home videotaping, and availability of rental videotapes and films, the Board of Education on October 17, 1988, established guidelines for the use of videotapes and films **not** owned, broadcast, or recommended by the District.

Because of the emergence of new technologies, this policy now applies to the use of filmed programs in any format, including videocassette, 16mm film, DVD, CD-ROM, broadcast television, or streamed file. The term “audiovisual media” is used in this bulletin to refer to all formats. The rating system of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), established in 1968, is the basis for the Board guidelines.

**MAJOR CHANGES:** This revision replaces BUL-1270, of the same title, dated August 31, 2004, to reflect personnel and contact information changes and the impact of new media and technology.

**GUIDELINES:** The following guidelines are in effect:

1. Audiovisual media shown at a school must be relevant to the curriculum being studied and appropriate for the age and maturity level of students being taught.
2. Audiovisual media shown at a school must use the established District and State criteria for the evaluation of instructional materials, especially with respect to racial and gender stereotyping and the depiction of violence, even in animation. Refer to *California Education Code* Sections 60040 - 60045 and Section 60048 for the law that governs standards for evaluating instructional materials for social content or access the California Department of Education website to review the *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content* at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/socialcontent.pdf>
3. Audiovisual media must be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility and must not reflect advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship.
4. Audiovisual media which have not been MPAA rated and are not owned, broadcast, or recommended by the District must be thoroughly reviewed by the instructor prior to their use.



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5. **MPAA NC-17-rated** (No children under 17 admitted) audiovisual media, or any unrated material that might fall into this category, shall not be shown in any elementary or secondary school classroom or as part of any District activity involving elementary or secondary school students.
6. **MPAA R-rated** (Restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian) audiovisual media, or any unrated material that might fall into this category, may be used in high school Grades 9-12 and in middle school Grades 7 and 8 with principal and parent/guardian written approval prior to the scheduled viewing date and must comply with the school's policy on the evaluation and selection of instructional materials. (See Attachment A for the prior approval letter for parent/guardian and Attachment B for the prior approval form for the principal. Note: The parent/guardian approval letter should include the MPAA rating of the material.) MPAA R-rated audiovisual media may not be shown in elementary schools or in middle school Grade 6.
7. **MPAA PG-13-rated** (Parents strongly cautioned; some materials may be inappropriate for children under 13) audiovisual media, or any unrated material that might fall into this category, may be used in high school Grades 9-12 and in middle school Grades 7 and 8 with principal and parent/guardian written approval prior to the scheduled viewing date and must comply with the school's policy on the evaluation and selection of instructional materials. MPAA PG-13-rated audiovisual media may not be shown in elementary schools or in middle school Grade 6.
8. **MPAA PG-rated** (Parental guidance suggested; some materials may not be suitable for children) audiovisual media, or any unrated material that might fall into this category, may be used in elementary schools or in middle school grade 6 with the prior approval of the principal and parent/guardian and must comply with the school's policy on the evaluation and selection of instructional materials. **MPAA G-rated** audiovisual materials may be used in elementary schools with principal approval and teacher review.
9. If opinions differ over the appropriateness of the materials, the appeal process outlined in Article XXV, Sections 1.0 and 1.2 of the Agreement between the District and UTLA shall be followed.
10. The website for the Motion Picture Association of America (<http://www.mpa.org/>) contains a database of film ratings (<http://www.filmratings.com>). When searching for a title, it is important to know as many details about the film as possible, such as producer, production date, and cast, because there are many films with the same title and the MPAA rating may be different for each one. For example, a search for *Hamlet* yielded six film titles with four different ratings – G, PG, PG-13, and R. Search results will show the film title, distributor, production date, rating, and the reason for the rating. Many titles also contain a link to further descriptive information that will help identify a film.



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Under the “Resources for Parents” tab, the MPAA website also provides links to sites about the TV Parental Guidelines, a rating system for all television programs which is modeled after the MPAA ratings. The TV Parental Guidelines may provide additional assistance in determining whether a film is appropriate. However, caution is necessary since the TV Parental Guide rating of a given film will most likely be based on an edited broadcast version and not the original uncut version, which may have received a harsher MPAA rating.

11. For ready-reference, a chart summarizing the key points of this bulletin appears on Attachment C.

### **RELATED RESOURCES:**

The following bulletins related to instructional media can be accessed on Inside LAUSD:

- BUL-5208, *Procedures for Reviewing Challenged Materials*, Office of Instruction, Curriculum, Instruction, and School Support, August 13, 2010.
- BUL-5209, *Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials and Off-Site Instructional Activities*, Office of Instruction, Curriculum, and School Support, August 13, 2010.
- BUL-714, *Compliance With the 1976 United States Copyright Law*, Information Technology Division, January 8, 2004

### **ASSISTANCE:**

For assistance or further information, please contact:

- Esther Sinofsky, Director, Instructional Media Services, at (213) 207-2255 or [esther.sinofsky@lausd.net](mailto:esther.sinofsky@lausd.net)
- Nancy Reich, Specialist, Library Services, at (213) 207-2255 or [nancy.reich@lausd.net](mailto:nancy.reich@lausd.net)
- Rick Hassler, Specialist, Textbook Services at (213) 207-2280 or [rick.hassler@lausd.net](mailto:rick.hassler@lausd.net)



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ATTACHMENT A

SAMPLE LETTER

SAMPLE LETTER

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Date

Dear Parents or Guardians:

Your child is currently involved in studying [describe unit of study and class]. It is our intention to show [title of program] which has an MPAA rating of [rating] on [date] because [describe the use of the audiovisual media in relation to the academic goals and objectives].

This letter is being sent to you in compliance with the District policy requiring parents/guardians to approve the intended use of filmed programs in any format (including videocassette, 16mm film, DVD, CD-ROM, broadcast television, or streamed file) which are not owned, broadcast, or recommended by the District prior to their scheduled showing. As part of that policy, we ask you to complete the form below, authorizing or exempting your child from the audiovisual showing.

Please return your completed form to your child’s teacher. Students exempted from this showing will be required to complete an alternative assignment. Should you have any questions regarding the program listed above, please contact me.

Signature of principal: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Name of School)

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check A or B:

- A.  I give permission for my child to view [program title].
- B.  I prefer that my child be given an alternative assignment.

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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ATTACHMENT A

CARTA DE MUESTRA

CARTA DE MUESTRA

MEMBRETE DE LA ESCUELA

FECHA

Estimados padres de familia o tutores:

Su hijo(a) es implicado corrientemente a estudiar [describa unidad de estudio y clase]. Es nuestra intención de mostrar [título de programa] cuál tiene una calificación de MPAA de [clasificado] en [la fecha] porque [describe el uso de los medios audiovisuales en relación con las metas y objetivos académicos].

Se les envía esta carta a ustedes en conformidad con los reglamentos del Distrito, los cuales requieren que los padres o tutores aprueben el uso planeado de los programas filmados en cualquier formato (incluidos los videocasetes, las películas de 16mm, los DVD, los CD-ROM, la televisión de transmisión y archivo corrido) que no sean propiedad del Distrito ni transmitidos o recomendados por el Distrito antes de la hora programada para su proyección o transmisión. Como parte de este reglamento, les pedimos que completen el siguiente formulario, autorizando o eximiendo a su hijo(a) de la muestra audiovisual.

Devuelva por favor su forma completa al maestro de su hijo(a). Los estudiantes eximidos de esta presentación serán requeridos a completar una tarea alternativa. Si tienen cualquier pregunta sobre el programa detallado arriba, hagan el favor de comunicarse conmigo.

Firma de (el/ la) director(a): \_\_\_\_\_

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(Nombre de la escuela)

Nombre y apellido de (el/ la) estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_

Verifique por favor A o B:

- A.  Doy mi autorización para que mi hijo(a) mire [título de programa]
- B.  Prefiero que mi hijo(a) se le asigne una tarea alternativa.

Firma del padre, la madre o el tutor: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_



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ATTACHMENT B

SAMPLE FORM

SAMPLE FORM

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
\_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL

**STATEMENT REGARDING USE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA WHICH IS  
NOT OWNED, BROADCAST, OR RECOMMENDED BY THE DISTRICT**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Title or description of program: \_\_\_\_\_

Producer (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Network (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Material:      Rented \_\_\_\_\_      Purchased \_\_\_\_\_      Taped at home/school \_\_\_\_\_

Parental permission is required:    Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_      MPAA Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

If parental approval is required and/or the rating is R, explain what content may be considered objectionable.

I plan to use the above program in my classroom on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) for the following reason  
(describe its use in relation to your academic goals and objectives):

This program complies with the school's policy on the evaluation and selection of instructional materials. It is appropriate for the grade level, and the instructional content enhances the curriculum. If this program has been recorded off-air or from a streamed site, I affirm that it will be erased according to "fair use" interpretations of federal copyright regulations.

Teacher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature



**Summary of LAUSD Policy Regarding the Use of Audiovisual Media**

<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>MPAA RATING</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>Elementary School</b>	NC-17, R, and PG-13	May not be shown
	PG	Needs Principal and parent/guardian approval
	G	Needs teacher review for appropriateness and principal approval
<b>Middle School</b>  Grade 6  Grades 7 and 8	NC-17, R, and PG-13	May not be shown
	PG	Needs principal and parent/guardian approval
	NC-17 R and PG-13  PG	May not be shown Needs principal and parent/guardian approval Needs teacher review for appropriateness
<b>High School</b>  Grades 9-12	NC-17	May not be shown
	R	Needs principal and parent/guardian approval
	PG-13	Needs principal approval
	PG	Needs teacher review for appropriateness