



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

DRAMA/THEATRICAL PRODUCTION SELECTION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

6190

Procedure No.

November 4, 2019

Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this procedure is to provide a comprehensive framework for the operation of the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Drama Production selection process. The primary purpose of the selection process is to provide students with the very best instructional materials possible, in an atmosphere of freedom and creativity, while ensuring that those instructional materials are deemed appropriate by professional judgment, and made with consideration for the developmental level of the performers as well as students to be exposed to them.

This procedure is created to ensure appropriate selection of instructional materials to be used for a school Drama Production. Any school personnel acting in the role of Drama/Theatre teacher responsible for school Drama productions is required to follow this Administrative Procedure.

- II. **INFORMATION:** The Department of Creative and Performing Arts encourages theatre and drama teachers to provide students with opportunities to present drama presentations that challenge, nurture, and extend students' skills while adhering to the basic educational mission of teaching students the boundaries of socially appropriate behavior, the rights and responsibilities of the exercise of free speech, and the importance of taking into consideration the sensibilities of the community. The Theatre/Drama teacher has the primary responsibility and the principal has the final authority for ensuring that this policy is followed.

School personnel providing Drama/Theatre instruction are expected to choose instructional materials that:

- meet the National Core Arts Standards for Theatre and the Maryland State Arts Standards;
- expose students to age and grade appropriate topics;
- meet the needs of a diverse student population;
- provide opportunities for students to showcase skills learned in the classroom, innate talents, and enthusiasm for performance and technical theatre;
- encourage creative and artistic expression;
- foster self-discipline, focus, and critical thinking skills; and
- prepare students for college and careers.

III. **PROCEDURES:**

A. **TYPE OF PROGRAMS, APPROVED VENDORS, AND PRODUCTION TITLES**

1. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DRAMA

- a. **Alice in Wonderland** adapted by Jason Pizzarello
- b. **Bedtime Stories (As Told By Our Dad) (Who Messed Them Up)** by Ed Monk
- c. **Goldilocks on Trial** by Ed Monk



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d. **Aesop's Fables Redux** by Susan Pennington

2. MIDDLE SCHOOL DRAMA/THEATRE

- a. **Miss Nelson is Missing** by Jeffrey Hatcher
- b. **Lion King Jr.** (Broadway Jr. Musicals)
- c. **Fiddler on the Roof Jr.** (Broadway Jr. Musicals)
- d. **Junie B. Jones is Not a Crook** by Allison Gregory
- e. **The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs** by Robert Lauzkaric, Paul Gilvary, William Rush
- f. **The Neverending Story (Atreyu and the Great Quest)** by Michael Ende/Adapted by David S. Craig

3. HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA/THEATRE

- a. **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** by Roal Dahl
- b. **Shrek the Musical** by Jeanine Tesori, David Lindsay-Abaire
- c. **Raisin in the Sun** by Lorraine Hansberry
- d. **High School Musical** by Peter Barsocchini
- e. **Our Town** by Thornton Wilder
- f. **Shakespeare** (public domain - copyright purchase not needed)

4. The production titles listed above for elementary, middle and high schools are the **only approved production titles**. Any other titles must be approved by the Department of Creative and Performing Arts.

5. **Approved vendors for production titles are:**

- Dramatic Publishing
- Dramatists Play Service
- Music Theatre International (MTI)
- Playscripts, Inc.
- Samuel French, Inc.

B. SELECTION AND MONITORING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Students shall be afforded protection against censorship. Such freedom does not extend to the following five classifications of materials that are considered unprotected speech because they are prohibited by law or not protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Additional detail is provided below under "**Definitions - Unprotected Speech**" for each of the following types of materials:

- a. Obscene as to minors;



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- b. Defamatory, including libel and/or slander;
- c. Materially and substantially disruptive of school activities (as defined in the Supreme Court decision Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier);
- d. Infringes on “separation of church and state”; or
- e. Bullying, harassment, intimidation.

Definitions of Unprotected Speech:

1. *Obscene to minors* – Minor includes any person under the age of eighteen. Obscene is defined as:
 - a. where the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the performance and/or production, taken as a whole, appeals to a minor’s prurient interest;
 - b. where the performance and/or production depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct such as actual or simulated sexual acts or excretory functions; or
 - c. where the performance and/or production taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
2. *Defamatory including libel and/or slander* – Defamatory is defined as the depiction of false unprivileged communication about an individual which injures that person’s reputation in the community or good name. If it is written, it is libel; if it is spoken, it is slander.
3. *Materially and substantially disruptive of school activities* (as defined in the Supreme Court decision Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier):
 - a. Disruption is defined as student rioting; unlawful seizures of property; destruction of property; widespread shouting or boisterous conduct; or substantial student participation in a school boycott; sit-in; stand-in; walkout; or other related activity.
 - b. In order for a student production to be considered disruptive, there must exist specific facts which could be used to reasonably predict that a clear and present likelihood of an immediate, substantial, material disruption of normal school activity would occur if the production were presented.



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- c. When determining whether a student performance and/or production is disruptive, consideration will be given to the context of the presentation as well as the content of the material. Consideration will also be given to past experiences of the school in dealing with:
 - i. similar material;
 - ii. supervising students;
 - iii. current events that influence student attitudes and behavior; and
 - iv. instances of actual or threatened disruption to the performance in question.
4. *Material that infringes on “separation of church and state.”* – Certain religious activities, such as proselytizing, have been held unconstitutional if conducted within the context of a school-sponsored activity. Proselytizing is defined as any action attempting to convert someone from one religion, belief or opinion to another.
5. *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation* is defined as:
 - a. anti-social behaviors that are conducted with the intent to cause harm and are characterized by an imbalance of power;
 - b. intentional conduct, including verbal, non-verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being;
 - c. motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socio-economic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability;
 - d. threatening or seriously intimidating; and
 - e. occurring on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or, substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Drama/Theatre teachers will:
 - a. guide students to an understanding of the nature, function, and ethics of free artistic expression;



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- b. nurture among students a realization and vision that encompasses intelligent choices, focused and unified production, and a central concept based on cultural, artistic, and educational growth;
 - c. function as a liaison between administration and students to ensure full communication of administrative guidelines;
 - d. ensure that theatrical productions are grade level appropriate; and
 - e. Submit Attachment A (PGCPS Theatre/Drama Production Standards Compliance Form) for each production prior to performance.
2. School administrators will:
- a. communicate to the Drama/Theatre teacher any PGCPS guidelines that may affect student performances and/or productions;
 - b. provide final approval of the selected theatrical work ; and
 - c. Require Attachment A (PGCPS Theatre/Drama Production Standards Compliance Form) for each production prior to performance.

D. APPROVAL TIMELINE AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The Drama/Theatre teacher will present the script for a proposed play to the Theatre Supervisor and the Principal at least six weeks before any auditions are held or technical crews chosen. The final decision regarding a play's production will not be announced until it has been cleared by the Theatre Supervisor and the Principal.
2. When the proposal is presented to the Principal, a discussion will be held as to the play's appropriateness. The discussion should consider the following:
 - the educational value of producing the play;
 - whether modes of expression expose minors to vulgar, indecent, lewd, or offensive language or acts;
 - whether thematic content of the play is appropriate to the emotional maturity of the target audience;



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- whether the play involves obscenity or advocates the commission of illegal acts or the violation of school rules or policies;
- matching the version of the script presented to the Theatre Supervisor and the Principal to the version to be performed (unless modifications have been presented to the Theatre Supervisor and the Principal before the script is approved);
- ensuring all student written scripts are completed (with any modifications) before being submitted for review;
- ensuring all required copyright permissions have been obtained by the Drama/Theatre teacher;
- the Principal's right to convene an advisory panel (include student if student-generated) to discuss the play;
- the Principal's responsibility to make the final decision to produce the play; and
- the Principal's responsibility to review all printed programs, including artwork.

E. COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES:

1. When copyright protected theatrical works are presented as a live performance in front of an audience, whether or not admission is charged, a performance license must be obtained from the publisher of the work. A performance license is an agreement, in which a payment is made to permit the use of an author's script for a live performance to take place for a particular purpose and at a specified date and location.
2. It is impermissible to make changes to a theatrical performance once a license is obtained without the prior consent of the author and/or publisher who has granted the license to perform the work. Any proposed changes to the performance should be reviewed with the license grantor and permission should be obtained in writing prior to the performance. There is no requirement or guarantee that a publisher will permit changes to a theatrical performance.
3. Performances or displays of a dramatic work by instructors or students in the course of face-to-face teaching activities of a nonprofit educational institution, in a classroom or similar place devoted to instruction do not require a performance license; however, in performing or displaying a



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copyright protected work in a classroom, the material must have been lawfully obtained to be performed or displayed without purchasing a license to use the material. For example, you cannot unlawfully photocopy a script to use with students in a classroom. 17 U.S.C.S. §110.

For more information on copyright guidelines see Administrative Procedure 6160.

4. Permission is also required for a school to create video recordings of a live performance and such permission should be requested from the publisher who has the authority to grant a license for the live performance to take place.
5. Failure to adhere to copyright guidelines will be a violation of copyright laws as well as a specific violation of the policy of Prince George's County Public Schools. Performances that take place without a license violate Federal Copyright Law and are subject to penalties.

F. APPEAL PROCEDURES:

1. Following a principal's decision, determinations regarding eligibility and placements under this administrative procedure shall be made by the Department of Creative and Performing Arts. However, a person adversely affected by the decision may appeal to the Office of the Chief of Academics, or designee. The Office must receive in writing any appeal within five business days of the date of the principal's decision letter. The appellant should indicate the reason for seeking review of the decision and may include additional information for consideration.
2. The Office of the Chief of Academics will determine if there was a material departure from the policies and procedures by the Department of Creative and Performing Arts which adversely impacted the appellant. In addition, the Office of the Chief of Academics should determine if the appellant's circumstances are sufficiently unique to justify deviating from the adopted rules and procedures.
3. The appeal may be approved if either of these circumstances are found to exist or at the discretion of the Chief of Academics.
4. An appeal from the decision by the Chief of Academics must be made in writing within ten days of the date on the decision letter to the Office of Appeals, which serves as the Chief Executive Officer's designee. If there is additional information in the appeal, the Chief of Academics will be



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given an opportunity to respond in writing and provide a copy of its response to the appellant and the Office of Appeals. The final decision from the Office of Appeal shall be rendered in writing.

G. **MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:**

1. The Principal will view production rehearsals and view performances at least 6 weeks prior to public performance.
2. Each Principal will maintain a list of all drama/theatrical productions requested for his or her building, approval status, and the final script for a period not to exceed four school years in a location available for central office review. Attachment A (PGCPS Theatre/Drama Production Standards Compliance Form) must be included for each approved performance.
3. The Theatre Supervisor will maintain a list of all drama/theatrical productions requested for all schools, approval status, and the final scripts for a period not to exceed four school years in a location available for central office review.
4. Theatre/Drama teachers shall provide a copy of all copyright licenses or approvals required for productions to the Creative Arts Officer. The copies shall be maintained by the Creative Arts Officer for at least five school years.

IV. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** Administrative Procedure 6160, Copyright Guidelines; Administrative Procedure 10101, Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook; Administrative Procedure 5143, Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation.

V. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** The Department of Creative and Performing Arts in the Division of Academics is responsible for the maintenance and update of this procedure.

VI. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** None, this is a new procedure.

VII. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 4, 2019

Attachment: PGCPS Theatre/Drama Production Standards Compliance Form



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Attachment A

PGCPS Theatre/Drama Production Standards Compliance Form

School

Principal

Title of Play

Author

This play has been reviewed to ensure its compliance with Administrative Procedure 6190. This play has been carefully examined and the script and production are approved for presentation by the students of our school and are acceptable in our community. It has been determined to:

- meet the National Core Arts Standards for Theatre and the Maryland State Arts Standards;
- expose students to age and grade appropriate topics;
- meet the needs of a diverse student population;
- provide opportunities for students to showcase skills learned in the classroom, innate talents, and enthusiasm for performance and technical theatre;
- encourage creative and artistic expression;
- foster self-discipline, focus, and critical thinking skills; and
- prepare students for college and careers.

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- b. Defamatory, including libel and/or slander;
- c. Materially and substantially disruptive of school activities (as defined in the Supreme Court decision *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*);
- d. Infringes on "separation of church and state"; or
- e. Bullying, harassment, intimidation.

Principal's Signature

Date

NOTE: Send one copy electronically to the Theatre Supervisor in the Department of Creative and Performing Arts.