

Standing Committee Against Censorship

Charge: To solicit and receive reports of [censorship](#) incidents from NCTE members, constituent groups, and sources outside the Council; to serve as a resource on current patterns of censorship; supporting the anti-censorship service office at headquarters; to develop written guidelines for students' Right to Write, including advice for schools dealing with situations in which student writing is taken as threatening to the safety of other students, where freedom of expression must be weighed against individual or school security; to develop a written position on whether the narrowing of the curriculum that occurs in response to high-stakes testing can be understood as censorship. Such a position may be related to your Right to Write work, but it may also warrant a separate statement; and to develop a written position on whether the restriction of student language to English may be an act of censorship, and whether schools in which students speak multiple languages but where only English is evident in print materials is an instance of censorship.

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group since July 1, 2008?

- Sponsored 2 programs for the 2008 convention in San Antonio.
- Submitted proposals (which have been accepted) for the 2009 conference. One session will feature round table discussions on various aspects of censorship; a second session will feature noted YA authors discussing how censorship affects their work.
 - Defending Intellectual Freedom, chaired by Carol Bedard (11-20)
 - Censorship in all its forms: from dialogue to action, chaired by Joan Kaywell (11-22)
- Submitted candidate names for 4 committee openings
- Completed a revised draft of "Students' Rights to Write," submitted to Millie Davis for her review;
- Completed the revision of "Defending Instructional Methods," also submitted to Millie Davis for review.
- Resolutions on "Scripted Curriculum" and "English Only Policies" presented at annual meeting at 2008 conference were completed, submitted, and approved.

What projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

At annual we will discuss proposals for the 2010 conference. The committee will discuss the review of "Students' Right to Write" and decide how to move forward.

Strategic Governance: Over the past few years, the NCTE Executive Committee has established outcomes and priorities relating to these key topics in our field: Multimodal Literacy and Technology, Research and Teaching, English Language Learners, Professional Development, Closing the Achievement Gap, Reading Research, 21st Century Literacies, Meeting the Needs of Audiences Currently Unserved/Underserved by NCTE, Attracting, Supporting, and Advancing Early Career Educators, and International Involvement, "Global English", and NCTE. Does your group have research findings or suggestions to contribute that are relevant to on-going work on these strategic governance topics?

Censorship and its chilling effect is present in several of the aforementioned areas including Multimodal Literacy and Technology and 21st Century Literacies. The use of filters in an attempt to "protect" students often restricts the information they can obtain on a wide array of subjects. The committee suggests that NCTE conduct a study among members to ascertain how filters restrict learning.

Teri Lesesne, Chair