

Movies and Licensing--Showing movies at school

Our office receives many questions about showing movies at school. This memo provides guidance about the most frequently asked questions.

Educational and age appropriateness

Does the movie have to be directly related to and a supplement of the lesson or curriculum?

Movies can provide educational value when used along with other curriculum and teaching materials. Movies shown in the classroom must have a direct correlation to a lesson plan as a part of face-to-face instruction. Things to consider:

It is not appropriate to show movies solely for entertainment purposes in the auditorium or during lunch or recess. Doing so violates copyright law (see below). In general, if the movie isn't a part of a lesson plan, don't show a home-use designated video even if it is from the Multimedia Library or your school's media center, and even if there is cultural value or intellectual appeal. For example, even though *Schindler's List* may have an important and valuable historical perspective, you would not show the movie at school unless it was related to topics being taught in the classroom. Movies that have minimal educational or historical value should not be shown.

Is the movie age appropriate?

The use of videos with a "G" rating is ordinarily fine. However, videos with other ratings (or unrated) should always be previewed prior to classroom use. Parents should be notified prior to classroom use of a movie with more than a "G" rating. If parents do not want their student viewing the movie, the student must be given an alternative activity and cannot be responsible for any assignments based on the content of the film. Teachers should also be highly sensitive to the diverse cultures of their students. What may be acceptable in the homes of some students may not be acceptable in the homes of other students, and great sensitivity must be given to the choice of video materials used in the school. Images are powerful communicators and many parents are concerned about the content and effect of media materials used with their children. The building administrator should always be informed when a teacher will show a movie.

Licensing Agreements and Copyright

Can I show an entertainment movie at school?

If the film is a part of direct classroom and curriculum instruction, even entertainment type films can be shown without a license or permission under 17 U.S.C. § 110(1). An example of this would be showing *Saving Private Ryan* in American History class or *Romeo and Juliet* in English class. But if the school or teacher shows these same films for entertainment or reward, a license or

permission is required. Examples of this are class parties, club activities. It is better to find alternative ways to reward or entertain students during these occasional events.

Videos available from the Multimedia Library are generally curriculum related if they are appropriate to the grade level and subject matter of the class, and they don't require a license. The fact that many videos are now easily obtainable or may be brought into school by students does not remove the responsibility from teachers and administrators to evaluate these materials prior to their use.

What about the PTA? Can they show the students an entertainment movie?

The same rules apply. PTAs, Booster Clubs, School-sponsored clubs, CUB permit holders, etc. must have a license for showing movies for entertainment purposes on school grounds. However, it is not the primary responsibility of the school district to enforce these rules for non-school groups.

The multimedia library has more detailed information on movies in schools and copyright laws on its website:

http://www-av.pps.k12.or.us/lcl_copyright.htm

If a school does want to purchase a one-time use copyright license you may go to:

<http://www.movlic.com/k12/onetime.html>

You must have principal permission.

As always, if you have additional questions about showing movies in school please feel free to call me at (503) 916-3570. –Jollee Patterson, General Counsel