

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge learning resources used in the district's educational program. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the school and community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

- I. Request for Informal Reconsideration
 - A. The school receiving a complaint regarding a learning resource shall try to resolve the issue informally.
 1. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
 2. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the education program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the resource.
 3. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the district instructional materials policy and a Instructional and Library-Media Materials Challenge form (IJJ-E) shall be handed or mailed to the party concerned by the principal.

- II. Request for Formal Reconsideration
 - A. Preliminary Procedures
 1. Each school will keep on hand and make available Instructional and Library-Media Materials Challenge forms (IJJ-E). All formal objections to learning resources must be made on this form.
 2. The Instructional and Library-Media Materials Challenge form (IJJ-E) shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the principal or someone so designated by the principal.
 3. The Superintendent shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
 4. The request for reconsideration shall be referred to a Reconsideration Committee at the school level for reevaluation of the resource.
 5. The Superintendent will inform the Board of Directors of the formation of the Reconsideration Committee.
 - B. The Reconsideration Committee
 1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource, the superintendent shall:
 - a. Appoint a Reconsideration Committee composed of one principal, one librarian/media specialist, one classroom teacher, the department head in the subject area of the challenged learning resource and one member of the community.
 - b. Name a convener of the Reconsideration Committee.
 - c. Arrange for a Reconsideration Committee meeting within 10 working days after the complaint is received.

2. The Reconsideration Committee may choose to consult district support staff and/or community persons with related professional knowledge.
3. The Reconsideration Committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the district's policy(s).

C. Resolution

1. The Reconsideration Committee shall:
 - a. Examine and/or read the challenged resource;
 - b. Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource (if any);
 - c. Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context;
 - d. Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program;
 - e. Discuss the challenged item with the individual questioner when appropriate; and
 - f. Prepare a written report using attached form including findings of fact.
2. The written report shall be reviewed with the individual questioner if requested.
3. The written report shall be retained by the superintendent, with copies forwarded to the Board of Directors. A minority report may also be filed.
4. Notwithstanding any procedure outlined in this policy, the questioner shall have the right to appeal (within 30 days) any decision of the Reconsideration Committee to the Board of Directors as the final and binding review panel.

D. Guiding Principles

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to learning resources used in a school's educational program despite the fact that the individuals selecting such resources were duly qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure and observed the criteria for selecting learning resources.
2. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing or listening matter for students other than his/her own children.
3. MSAD #56 supports the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the American Library Association. When learning resources are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.
4. Access to challenged material may be restricted by the Superintendent during the reconsideration process.
5. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use.
6. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment or irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

ADOPTED: April 8, 1986

MSAD #56

Code changed approved by the Policy Committee on June 17, 2003.