

Consideration of objections to controversial materials

When needed the principal of each school will appoint an Instructional Materials Committee that will be called into session whenever complaints are registered against materials used in the instructional program.

The high school and middle school committee shall consist of:

1. The principal.
2. The chairperson of the English department.
3. The chairperson of the Social Studies department.
4. The chairperson of the Science department.
5. The secondary media specialist.
6. Two patrons from the school community.
7. The Curriculum Director.

The elementary school committee shall consist of:

1. The principal.
2. One teacher from each grade.
3. The elementary media specialist.
4. Two patrons from the school community.
5. The Curriculum Director.

The principal is encouraged to select a number of patrons of the school community that are representative of the school's demographics as well as other staff members who are familiar with the material in question.

If a member of the committee is directly involved in the complaint, that member is to be replaced. The alternate is to be elected by the group represented by the person removed except in the case of the media specialist where a replacement is appointed at-large by the principal.

To insure that concerns expressed are handled promptly and successfully staff members must always follow instructions in this policy as closely as each circumstance will allow.

First, staff members shall always be courteous when complaints are lodged. Each building will have a supply of the form, "Citizens Request for Reconsideration of Books and Instructional Materials". Invite the complainant to file their objections in writing using this form.

Action will be initiated when the form is filed with the principal by a complainant who has read the entire work objected to. Employees should always inform their principal of concerns expressed even if the form is not filed. The principal will inform teachers of challenged materials and action to be taken until the matter is resolved. Library materials will continue in use until a final decision regarding the challenge is made.

When the principal receives the completed form, (s)he will forward copies to the superintendent and any staff member involved with the use of the challenged materials. The principal will set dates for the Instructional Materials Committee to meet that will be within two weeks of receiving the complaint.

Committee members must study carefully the material in question and be provided as much information about the complaint as is known before the initial meeting.

The principal will notify the complainant and faculty members affected and invite them to present their views to the committee.

The Instructional Materials Committee will elect its own chairperson for each complaint. The chairperson will submit a brief written report to the superintendent and the Board of Trustees.

The committee should discuss the concerns and weigh them against the value of the material as a whole and its relevance to educational objectives.

The criteria for considering the value of material used in the classroom are somewhat different from the criteria for considering the value of library materials. The criteria for materials in the library environment, which is characterized by voluntary inquiry, are distinct from those of the compulsory environment of the classroom. Library materials should be valued based on their authentic value, honesty, readability for a particular group of students, appeal to the age group of the school, etc.

The committee will vote on all matters with all members having equal votes.

The Board of Trustees will distribute their decision to the complainant and to staff members involved. A log of complaints will be maintained by the principal with the recommendation of the committee and the final decision of the Board noted.

If the media is printed material and recommended for disposal by the Board of Trustees, authorization for such disposal must be secured from the superintendent. After authorization is given, the material will be removed from the shelves or classroom, packaged and labeled "Objectionable Materials – For Disposal", but will not be destroyed for thirty days which will allow time for an appeal. In the event of an appeal, the material will remain packaged until a final review and decision is made by the Board of Trustees.

Legal Reference: I.C. Real and Personal Property – Acquisition, Use or Disposal of the Same.

Policy History:

Adopted on: 02/27/2007

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