

## Students

### Administrative Procedure – Responding to Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs

| <b>Actor</b>                                                                                    | <b>Action</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Parents/Guardians, Employees, and/or Community Members                                          | Submits any feedback or complaints about the District’s curriculum, instructional materials, or programs to the Building Principal, using 6:260-AP, E, <i>Curriculum Objection Form</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Building Principal                                                                              | <p>Directs any parent/guardian, employee, or community member wishing to submit formal feedback or a complaint regarding curriculum, instructional materials, or programs to complete 6:260-AP, E, <i>Curriculum Objection Form</i>.</p> <p>If the complaint alleges a violation of law or board policy, refers the complaint to the District Complaint Manager for processing under policy 2:260, <i>Uniform Grievance Procedure</i>, and refers the Complaint Manager to the review criteria in this procedure, to the extent they may be relevant to resolution of the complaint.</p> <p>Transmits the <i>Curriculum Objection Form</i> to the Superintendent or designee for further action.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Superintendent or designee (such as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction) | <p>Informs the Board Attorney of the objection and discusses options for response to the complaint.</p> <p>Contacts the complainant as needed to clarify the nature or scope of the objection and/or the accommodation being requested.</p> <p>Except for complaints involving a parent's religious objection (see below), determines on a case-by-case basis what action, if any, will be taken in response to a complaint about curriculum, considering the following criteria, as applicable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The curriculum, instructional material, or program is aligned with the criteria set forth in Board policy 6:40, <i>Curriculum Development</i>, specifically, regarding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The district’s educational philosophy and goals;</li> <li>b. Student needs as identified by research, demographics, and student achievement and other data;</li> <li>c. The knowledge, skills, and abilities required for students to become life-long learners;</li> <li>d. Minimum requirements of State and federal law and regulations for curriculum and graduation requirements;</li> <li>e. The curriculum of non-District schools that feed into or from a District school, provided that the necessary cooperation and information is available;</li> <li>f. Illinois State Learning Standards and any District learning standards; and</li> <li>g. Any required State or federal student testing.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |

| Actor | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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|       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The law and/or the District already provides a means for parents/guardians to opt their child out;</li> <li>3. The curriculum, instructional material, or program is optional or supplemental in nature;</li> <li>4. Reasonable and appropriate alternatives exist; and</li> <li>5. Individual circumstances that support a need for an accommodation exist.</li> </ol> <p>If the complaint is based on a parent's religious objection, determines on a case-by-case basis what action, if any, will be taken in response to the complaint, considering the following factors: <sup>1</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The religious beliefs and/or practices identified by the parent and if they are sincerely held. <b>Note:</b> Religious beliefs/practices are generally presumed to be sincere, but if the District has objective reasons to question the religious nature or sincerity of the religious belief/practice, a limited inquiry into this issue may be appropriate.</li> <li>2. The nature of the material at issue, e.g., is it communicating a normative message that is hostile to a religious viewpoint and designed to pressure students to conform to that viewpoint?</li> <li>3. The age of the students, e.g., elementary students may be more impressionable and likely to accept moral messages conveyed by instruction without question compared to high school students.</li> <li>4. The specific context in which the materials is being presented, e.g., is it being presented in a neutral manner or in a manner that is hostile to a religious viewpoint?</li> </ol> <p>If factors #1-4 above, considered together, pose a real threat of undermining the religious beliefs and practices that the parent wishes to instill in their child, determine if the District has a compelling interest that would justify the burden on the parent's free exercise right to direct the religious upbringing of their child. <b>Note:</b> In <u>Mahmoud v. Taylor</u>, 145 S.Ct. 2332 (2025), the administrative burden that resulted from permitting opt-outs from instruction was not a compelling interest. It is unsettled whether State law curriculum mandates, graduation requirements, or instruction otherwise required by State learning standards may establish a sufficient compelling interest. <b>Consult the Board Attorney for guidance.</b></p> <p>In consultation with the Board Attorney, prepares and sends a written response to the person who submitted the <i>Curriculum Objection Form</i>, informing the person of the District's decision.</p> <p>Notes on the <i>Curriculum Objection Form</i> the date on which the response was provided and attaches the response to the form.</p> |

<sup>1</sup> These factors are based on the U.S. Supreme Court case Mahmoud v. Taylor, 145 S.Ct. 2332 (2025). See sample policy 6:260, *Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs*, at f/n 3, for further discussion.