

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE

The policy of this school district related to selection of instructional materials states that any member of the school district community may formally challenge instructional materials used in the district's education program. For the purpose of this policy the term "instructional materials" includes printed and audiovisual materials (not equipment), whether considered classroom materials or media center materials; the term "text materials" includes textbooks and other print and non-printed material provided in multiple copies for use of a total class or major segment of a class. This policy allows those persons in the school and the community who are not directly involved in the selection of materials to make their own opinions known. The task of the reconsideration committee is to provide an open forum for discussion of challenged materials and to make an informed recommendation on the challenge. The meetings of the committee may be subject to the open meetings law.

The most critical component of the reconsideration process is the establishment and maintenance of the committee's credibility in the community. For this purpose, the committee is composed of administrators from the building and district levels, teachers, and parents. The community should not, therefore, infer that the committee is biased or is obligated to uphold prior professional decision.

The reconsideration process, the task of this committee, is just one part of the selection continuum. Material is purchased to meet a need. It is reviewed and examined, if possible, prior to purchase. It is periodically re-evaluated through updating, discarding, or re-examination. The committee must be ready to acknowledge that an error in selection may have been made despite this process. Teacher librarians and school employees regularly read great numbers of reviews in the selection process, and occasional errors are possible.

In reconsidering challenged materials, the role of the committee, and particularly the chairperson, is to produce a climate for agreement. The committee should begin by finding items of agreement, keeping in mind that the larger the group participating, the greater the amount of information available and, therefore, the greater the number of possible approaches to the problem. The sole criterion for the final recommendation is the appropriateness of the instructional material for its intended educational use.

The committee will review the instructional materials in question and the request for reconsideration. Passages or parts of materials should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole. After this initial review of the materials, the committee may seek additional input from the individual submitting the request, a representative from the original selection group, external expert opinions or reviews, professional organizations' reviews or evaluations of the materials in question. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive of additional information the committee may seek. In these discussions, the committee should be aware of relevant social pressures which are affecting the situation. Individuals who may try to dominate or impose a decision must not be allowed to do so. Minority viewpoints expressed by groups or individuals must be heard, and observers must be made to feel welcome. It is important that the committee create a calm, nonvolatile environment in which to deal with a potentially volatile situation. To this end, the complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the submitted request.

In deliberating its recommendation, the committee should remember that the school system must be responsive to the needs, tastes, and opinions of the community it serves. Therefore, the committee must distinguish between broad community sentiment and attempts to impose personal standards. The deliberations should concentrate on the appropriateness of the material. The question to be answered by the committee is, "Is the material appropriate for its designated audience at this time?" Once again, the committee's final recommendation is based on the appropriateness of the instructional material for its intended educational use.

The committee's final recommendation will be (1) to remove the challenged material from the total school environment, (2) to take no removal action, or (3) to agree on a limitation of the educational use of the materials.

The committee chairperson will be responsible to convey the committee's recommendation to the office of the superintendent, the individual, and the appropriate attendance center(s). The recommendation should detail the rationale on which the decision was based. The superintendent may also make an alternate recommendation but if so, it should be independent from the committee's. Following the superintendent's decision with respect to the committee's recommendation, the individual or the chairperson of the reconsideration committee may appeal the decision to the board for review. Such appeal must be presented to the superintendent in writing within five days following the announcement of the superintendent's decision. The board will promptly determine whether to hear the appeal.

Adopted:	11/02/09
Modified:	08/16/21; 10/17/22
Reviewed:	08/02/21; 10/17/22