

Policy 871 – Rule Procedures for Handling of Instructional Materials Complaints

(A)12-14-15

The review of questioned materials will be treated objectively, unemotionally, and as an important routine action. Every effort will be made to consider objections, keeping in mind the best interests of the student, the school, the curriculum, and the community. Since differences of opinion do exist in our society, the following procedure shall be observed to recognize those differences in an impartial and factual manner.

Request for reconsideration:

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge instructional materials used in the district's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the schools and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.
2. Each school and the school district's central office will keep on hand and make available reconsideration request forms. All formal objections to instructional materials must be made on this form.
3. The reconsideration request form shall be signed by the complainant and filed with the superintendent.
4. Within five business days of the filing of the form, the superintendent or person designated by the superintendent shall file the material in question with the reconsideration committee for re-evaluation. The committee shall recommend a disposition position to the office of the superintendent.
5. Generally, access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process. However, in unusual circumstances, the material may be removed temporarily.
6. The reconsideration committee.
 - a. The reconsideration committee shall be made up of seven members.
 1. One teacher designated annually by the superintendent.
 2. One school media specialist designated annually by the superintendent.
 3. One member of the administrative staff designated annually by the superintendent.

4. Three members from the community appointed annually by the Board of Education.
 5. One high school student, selected annually from and by the student council.
- b. The chairperson of the committee shall not be an employee or officer of the district. The secretary shall be an employee or officer of the district.
 - c. A calendar of subsequent regular meetings for the year shall be established and a chairperson and a secretary selected at the first meeting. All meetings of the reconsideration committee come under the open meeting law.
 - d. Special meetings may be called by the superintendent to consider temporary removal of materials in unusual circumstances. Temporary removal shall require majority vote of the committee.
 - e. The calendar of regular meetings and notice of special meetings shall be made public through appropriate student publications and other communication methods.
 - f. The committee shall receive all reconsideration request forms from the superintendent.
 - g. The procedure for the first meeting following receipt of a reconsideration request form is as follows:
 1. Examine the challenged resource;
 2. Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource;
 3. Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of the context;
 4. Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program;
 5. Discuss the challenged item with the individual complainant.
 6. Prepare a written report.
 - h. At a subsequent meeting, interested persons, including the complainant, may have the opportunity to share their views. The committee may request that individuals with special knowledge be present to give information to the committee.
 - i. The complainant shall be kept informed by the secretary concerning the status of the complaint through the committee reconsideration process. The complainant and known interested parties shall be given appropriate notice of reconsideration committee meetings.
 - j. At the second or a subsequent meeting, as desired, the committee shall make its decision in open session. The committee's final decision will be, (1) to maintain on open shelves, (2) to remove the challenged material from the total school environment, (3) to allow students to use alternate titles, approved by school

personnel involved, or (4) to limit the educational use of the challenged material. The sole criteria for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use. The written decision and its justification shall be forwarded to the superintendent for appropriate action and to the complainant and the appropriate attendance centers.

- k. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection or use of the material.
- l. Requests to reconsider materials which have previously been before the committee must receive approval of a majority of the committee members before the materials will again be reconsidered. Every reconsideration request form shall be acted upon by the committee.
- m. In the event of a severe overload of challenges, the committee may appoint a subcommittee of members or non-members to consolidate challenges and to make recommendations to the full committee. The composition of this subcommittee shall approximate the representation on the full committee.
- n. Committee members directly associated with the selection, use, or challenge of the challenged material shall be excused from the committee during the deliberation on such materials. The superintendent may appoint a temporary replacement for the excused committee member, but such replacement shall be of the same general qualifications of that person excused.
- o. If not satisfied with the decision, the complainant may request that the matter be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education.

From the State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
February 27, 1975

“At times persons in your school district may raise questions over appropriateness of specific instructional material. The option is always open for a parent to object to materials being used with his/her child as part of the educational program. The parent has the right to judge whether the material is acceptable for his/her child. **HOWEVER**, no parent or group of citizens of the community has a legal right to abridge the rights of other parents and teachers or children to have access to the information which is part of the educational program.”