

REVIEW OF CHALLENGED LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER MATERIAL

Statement of Purpose

The Wakefield School District supports the principles of intellectual freedom protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and encourages the free expression of opinions. The right of dissent, also protected by the First Amendment, allows objections to materials in the library media center to be raised. Any resident or employee of the school district, therefore, may formally challenge books. This regulation details the process to be used when a citizen, parent/guardian, or student challenges the inclusion of a specific item in the school library/media center.

Statement of Regulation

Upon receiving a complaint regarding instructional material the principal shall try to resolve the issue informally. The principal, or other appropriate administrator or staff member shall explain to the complainant the district's selection process and criteria, as well as the qualifications of those persons responsible for selecting the material.

It is hoped that all challenges can be resolved informally; however, if that is not possible, the following procedures will be used:

1. The complainant shall be supplied with a packet of materials, consisting of the materials selection policy (IJL) and a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form (IJL-E). In addition, copies of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement from the American Library Association will be provided to the complainant.
2. The complainant returns the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form to the Principal. If the request has not been received by the principal within ten (10) school days, the matter shall be considered closed.
3. No questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the child/children of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire. The questioned material is to remain in circulation.

4. Upon receipt of a completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form, the Principal notifies the Superintendent within 48 hours. A Reconsideration Committee composed of a certified library media specialist, not assigned to the school in question, two teachers, an administrator, and the Superintendent will be formed.

5. The committee will prepare a final recommendation on the disposition of the matter. Once convened, the reconsideration committee shall:

- Examine the challenged material by reading, viewing, or listening to it in its entirety;
- Determine general acceptance by reading critical reviews of the material;
- Weigh values, strength, and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context;
- Receive testimony from any or all parties involved;
- Review the challenged material in the context of the library media program noting that the criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended use.

If the committee decides to keep the work in question, the complainant shall be given an explanation. If the objection is found to be valid, the principal will acknowledge it and make recommended changes.

6. The Principal shall notify the complainant of the committee's decision in writing.

7. The complainant has the right to appeal the decision of the committee to the School Board. The School Board will review the complaint and the decision rendered by the reconsideration committee. If the decision requires further consideration, the School Board may schedule interviews with the complainant and the committee. The School Board will reach a decision regarding the complaint and inform the complainant and committee in writing. The results of the appeal are final, and the same material cannot be reconsidered for a period of three years.

8. The entirety of the Request for Reconsideration process shall take no longer than 30 school days to complete.