

# Reconsideration Procedures

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## Challenged Instructional Material Procedure

If a parent/guardian has questions or concerns regarding instructional materials, we urge them to discuss these concerns with the classroom teacher, counselor, library media specialist, and/or school administrator.

If further action is warranted, the following steps should occur:

- See the teacher, counselor, or library media specialist to file objections in writing.
- The challenged material will remain in circulation while the matter is under consideration.
- A Reconsideration Review Committee will be selected by the school principal to review the challenged material.

## Reconsideration Procedures

### Library/Media Centers and Selection of Instructional Materials

- **General.** The Board of Education (Board) believes that the school library/media center and classroom instructional materials area fundamental part of the educational process and supports the inclusion of a variety of print and non-print instructional materials (other than textbooks) presenting varying viewpoints in classrooms and library/media centers.
  - Selection of these instructional materials is coordinated by the Library/Media centers and teachers and is achieved through the cooperative efforts of the school faculties, school administrators, system administrators, and system directors with suggestions from parents and students.
  - Instructional materials selected should support the Alabama course of study and accreditation requirements, but should also offer students the opportunity to explore and satisfy intellectual curiosities beyond curriculum and course of study requirements.
  - Instructional materials selected should be balanced, up-to-date, accurate and factually correct, and must be age and/or grade appropriate for the levels being served.
- **Instructional Material Selection.** The superintendent shall direct the preparation and implementation of district procedures for selection of instructional materials. Procedures will cover purchased materials as well as gift, free, or sponsored items.
  - All gift, free, or sponsored items must meet the same selection criteria for inclusion as purchased items. Acceptance of these items does not guarantee their circulation or display.

- Sponsored items in which advertising and/or promotional content predominate over instructional value will not be accepted.
- Previewing of all materials available for selection is not always feasible. The superintendent may permit the use of reviews from reliable reviewing agencies and organizations as aids in material selection.
- Teachers should apply this procedure to instructional materials (beyond textbooks) before they are used in a class.
- Selected materials must:
  - Stimulate learning growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, esthetic values, and ethical standards.
  - Provide information that will help students to learn how to make intelligent choices in their daily lives and how to think analytically, logically, and critically on controversial issues.
  - Be representative of and provide accurate historical portrayals of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their participation and contribution to American heritage and daily life.
  - Foster reading and media usage as a lifelong and pleasant learning activity.
- Print and non-print media shall be selected by affirming the following questions:
  - Is the subject matter accurate, authoritative, up-to-date, and relevant to the curriculum?
  - Is the style of the media (vocabulary, sentence structure, form, diction, pacing) appropriate and effective for the subject matter and for the users for whom the materials are intended?
  - Are the physical characteristics, illustrations, and/or graphics satisfactory from the standpoint of text, clarity, art value, and durability?
  - Has the item been included in any recognized list or review of items suitable for school media centers? (A minimum of two reviews is desirable.)
  - Is treatment of the subject appropriate (i.e. is it biased, scholarly, etc.?)
- **Instructional Material Challenges**. The superintendent shall direct the preparation and implementation of system and school procedures for processing and resolving challenges to selected materials. The superintendent makes decisions on challenged materials by acting on recommendations forwarded to superintendent level for action. Challenged materials shall remain available for use until a decision on the challenge has been reached, but will be identified to users as challenged material until the challenge is resolved.
  - The superintendent's decisions on challenged materials are applicable across the district in schools and/or grade levels similar to the school and/or grade level in which the challenge

originated.

- Procedures shall assure that other schools and/or similar gradelevels in the district are made aware of challenges and are provided an opportunity to comment in the preparation of a recommendation to the superintendent.

### **I. Informal Reconsideration**

- Persons wishing to make a complaint regarding classroom and/or library resources will be asked to bring their complaint to the school's teacher, counselor, or library mediaspecialist.
- Upon meeting with the complainant, the counselor, teacher, library mediaspecialist, or administrator will first attempt to resolve the issue informally.
  - The identity of the complainant shall remain confidential duringthe informal process (only).
  - Commitments should not be made until the issue has been thoroughly explored.
  - The complaint should be treated in a courteous, objective, andunemotional manner.
  - The teacher, counselor, library media specialist, or administrator will listen to all concerns and try to resolve the issue informally. This might include explaining the selection procedures and criteria,the intended audience and educational uses of the item in question, or relevant sections of the American Library Association's Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program.
  - The teacher, counselor, or library media specialist will offer the complainant analternate text in lieu of the material in question.
  - If the complainant then wishes to proceed with a formal requestfor reconsideration, the principal will follow up the discussion with a letter. The letter will include the following:
    - MCS Selection Policies & Procedures and Reconsideration Policies & Procedures
    - ALA's Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program
    - Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form

In the event that the complainant is the principal, the superintendent of schools will perform the role of the principal inthe above process.

### **II. Formal Reconsideration**

- In the event of a formal request for reconsideration, the following steps will be taken:
  - Persons wishing to make a formal request for reconsideration

must complete the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form and submit it to the principal; in the event that more than one item is involved, a separate form must be completed for each item.

- The superintendent of schools will be informed of the request for formal reconsideration.
- The school-level committee will convene to reevaluate the material(s) in question.
- School-Level Committee
  - Upon receipt of a completed Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form, the principal will:
    - Appoint a school-level committee, to include the following members:
      - Principal or building administrator
      - One member of the school teaching staff of the appropriate subject and/or grade level
      - The school's certified Library media specialist
      - Arrange for a meeting of the school-level committee to take place within 10 working days after the complaint is received.
    - The school-level committee is charged with a thorough review of the challenged resource and will decide whether or not it conforms to the principles of selection as outlined in the Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources and other applicable policies and guidelines.
    - The school-level committee may also consult other district staff and/or community members who have relevant expertise.
  - Guiding principles
    - Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to instructional materials and/or library resources.
    - The Madison City School District supports the American Library Association's Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program. When library resources are reconsidered, the importance of the freedom to read/view/listen will be considered.
    - No parent has the right to control the reading, viewing, or listening materials of other people's children.
    - The item(s) in question will remain in circulation throughout the review process.
    - The major task before the school-level committee is to determine the appropriateness of the material in question for its intended educational use.
  - Resolution
    - Members of the school-level committee shall:
      - Examine the district's Reconsideration of Instructional

Materials procedure and the Selection of Instructional Materials Philosophy, and the Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources

- Examine the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form
- Read and evaluate the item(s) in question
- Read reviews of the item(s) in question
- Discuss the challenged material in the context of the educational program and intended audience for which it was selected
- Form opinions based on the resource as a whole, not on passages or selections taken out of context
- Discuss the challenged item(s) with the complainant as needed
- Reach a decision:
  - Retain the item,
  - Retain the item with specific restrictions, or
  - Remove the item
- Complete the Review on the Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form within fourteen (14) days of the first meeting
- The chairperson of the school-level committee will discuss and file the report with the principal, who will forward a copy to the superintendent of schools.
- The principal will send a copy of the review to the complainant and will discuss the review further, if requested.
- The principal will also send copies of the review to members of the school-level committee.
- The complainant shall have the right to appeal the decision of the school-level committee to the superintendent of schools.

### **III. Formal Reconsideration Appeals**

- Should the decision of the school-level committee not be acceptable to the complainant, the decision may be appealed, in writing, to the superintendent.
- Upon receipt of the complainant's appeal, the superintendent will
  - Appoint a committee, to include the following members:
    - Superintendent or designee
    - At least one member of the district instructional staff
    - A library media specialist
  - Arrange for a meeting of the committee to take place within 10 working days after the complaint is received to review the following:
    - The completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Instructional Materials form.

- The report submitted by the school-level committee.
- Information obtained from the complainant during a meeting held at the superintendent's discretion.
- The superintendent will issue a final decision based off the committee's report.
- The superintendent's decision is final.