

## **CHALLENGED MATERIALS**

### **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CHALLENGED MATERIALS**

Since opinions may differ in a democracy, the review of questioned materials should be treated objectively, unemotionally, and as a routine matter. Therefore, the following procedures will be observed in recognizing those differences in an impartial and factual manner. Citizens of the school community will register their criticism with the local school authorities and through them to the district school board. When a citizen chooses to register a complaint regarding a material being used in school, the procedure described in School Board Policy 4.30 shall be followed.

1. The school principal shall establish a Challenged Materials Review Committee at the beginning of each school year to evaluate challenged materials and to make recommendations of any changes. This committee will be inserviced according to the requirements specified later in this section. Verification of this inservice will be documented on MIS 62A 008 01/18/07.
2. If a challenge occurs at a school, the complainant should be referred immediately to the principal. The Media Specialist or teacher should NOT give the complainant the district level form or communicate their personal opinion.
3. All criticism of instructional materials shall be presented in writing on printed form *MIS 62A013 05-01-07 RVS (Complainant's Request Regarding Instructional Materials/Media)*. The statement must include specific information on any material as to author, title, publisher, page number, and definite citation of objection.
4. The statement must be signed and identification given which will allow proper reply to be made. A complainant who does not complete and return the form receives no further consideration.
5. A challenge does not necessarily mean a ban.

Challenged materials shall not be removed pending a final committee decision, unless the principal determines the material to be inappropriate or unacceptable for use in the school. If the principal determines the material inappropriate, the material will be removed and the challenger informed.

During the normal challenge review process, the materials shall be readily available for committee use. Teachers who had planned to use a book as a class reading assignment should continue to do so, and the media specialists should keep the book in circulation in the media center, according to School Board Policy (SBP 4.30).

6. Upon receipt of the completed Complainant's Request form, the principal requests a review of the challenged material by the school Instructional Materials/Media Review Committee and notifies the District Administrator in charge of Media and the Superintendent that such review is being done. The review process must be completed within 15 working days of the challenge being received in the principal's office. The complainant should also be notified of this process. (*See Sample Letters to Committee Members and Complainant.*)
7. The Instructional Materials/Media Review Committee should each receive a copy of the *Complainant's Request*, a copy of the challenged material in its entirety, and a *Checklist for Media Committee's Evaluation*.
8. The Instructional Materials/Media Review Committee should convene, discuss their findings, complete the *Instructional Materials / Media Challenge Review Committee Recommendation Form MIS 61A016 1/18/07 REW*, and return it to the school principal with the committee's recommendations. (*See School Challenge Meeting Guidelines, Sample Agenda, Media Committee Meeting Notes, and Ballot.*)
9. Upon receipt of the Recommendation Form, the principal makes a decision as to the action to be taken and provides written notification to the complainant, the Superintendent and the District Administrator in charge of Media. (*See Sample Letter to Challenger after Committee Meeting.*)
10. If the complainant wishes to appeal the school's decision, the principal refers the complainant to the Superintendent and forwards all pertinent documentation to the Superintendent's office.
11. After receiving the request for appeal, the Superintendent or designee must then convene a District Instructional Materials/Media Review Committee, consisting of specific representation outlined in school board policy.
12. The request for appeal and the local school committee's decision and recommendation is provided to the District Committee. The committee should then be given time to read or review the challenged material. The committee will make its recommendations to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the appeal using the form *MIS 62A 016 01/18/07 REW*.
13. Upon receipt of the review form, the Superintendent makes a decision as to the action to be taken based on the recommendations of the two review committees' work and notifies, the complainant, in writing, within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the district committee's recommendation.
14. The complainant may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the School Board.
15. Should an appeal be requested, the Superintendent will present the reports of both the local school committee and the district committee to the School Board. The School Board reviews the concerns of the complainant and the

recommendations of both committees. The School Board then makes the final decision as to whether the material may continue to be used in the district. If the school is a charter school, the Charter Board will make the final decision.