

Policy KEC Public Concerns And Complaints About Instructional Resources

Issued 9/13

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for receiving and handling public concerns and complaints about instructional resources.

The board recognizes its responsibility in the matter of selection and provision of instructional materials. Any parent/legal guardian or citizen who resides within the district's boundaries may lodge a complaint against any books or instructional materials being used in the school system.

The complainant must submit criticism of books or other instructional materials in writing to the superintendent using the "Citizens Request for Review of Educational Materials" form [KEC-E](#). Committees will review all complaints (building level and district level) in accordance with approved administrative rule [KEC-R](#).

The board directs that any challenged materials remain in the school pending final action upon the complaint. However, the school may observe the request of a parent/legal guardian that his/her own child not be assigned a specific book or instructional resources.

The superintendent will inform the board of all complaints about instructional materials.

Adopted 3/17/75; Revised 6/7/82, 4/16/90, 9/23/13

Legal references:

S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

[Section 59-19-90\(7\)](#) - The board of trustees shall control the educational interests of the district.

Case Law:

[Board of Education v. Pico](#), 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties

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Two committees will review all complaints about instructional materials. The principal will name a school level committee. The superintendent will name a district level committee.

The superintendent will submit the written complaint to the appropriate building principal for review by a school level committee. The school level review committee will meet within 10 school days of the receipt of a completed book action request form to consider the complaint. The committee will review the complaint and formulate a recommendation and the principal will send the recommendation to the district level review committee within three days of the school level review committee's decision.

The superintendent will appoint the district level review committee annually. The district level review committee will meet to consider all school level review committee recommendations within 10 school days of their receipt of the school committee's recommendation. As a part of the review process, the committee may invite the complainant to appear before it to discuss the nature of the complaints. Following their review, the district committee will forward a recommendation to the superintendent for review and transmittal to the complainant. The superintendent will have five school days to respond.

The complainant may appeal the committee's decisions in writing through the superintendent to the board. Following notification, the board must respond no later than five school days after the second board meeting.

Instructions to evaluating committees

The board directs the evaluating committees to bear in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read. The committees must base their decisions on these principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.

The committee should study all materials thoroughly and read available reviews. The committee should check the general acceptance of the materials by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools.

The committee must not pull passages or parts out of context. The committee must weigh values and faults against each other and base its opinions on the material as a whole.

Should a committee recommend the removal of a book, the committee's final report must demonstrate that its decision was not intended to remove books to deny students' access to ideas which committee members find to be repugnant. Such an intention would violate Constitutional standards. The committee must further demonstrate that the books in question are not educationally suitable.

The committee report, reflecting the majority opinion, will be given to the complainant at the conclusion of the committee's discussion on the questioned materials. Dissenting committee members must not publically challenge/attack the consensus decision of the entire committee.

The following is the suggested format or outline for report from evaluating committee.

- list of committee members and their positions
- statement ensuring that each committee member read the material in its entirety
- list of review source(s) consulted
- statement of majority opinion

- committee's final decision

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School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF EDUCATION MATERIALS

Author _____ Type of material _____

Title _____

Publisher or producer _____

Request initiated by _____

Telephone _____ Address _____

City and state _____ ZIP code _____

Do you represent Yourself ___ An organization (name) _____

Other group (name) _____

1. To what in the work do you object? Please be specific. List pages. _____

2. What of value is there in this work? _____

3. What do you feel might be the result of using this material? _____

4. If you did not examine the entire body of this work, why not? _____

5. Are you aware of the judgements of this work by literary critics? _____

6. If the material was obtained from the media center as a result of a class assignment, are you aware of the teacher's purpose for using it? _____

7. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this work? _____

8. What do you prefer the school to do about this material?
_____ Do not assign/lend it to my child.
_____ Re-evaluate this material.
_____ Withdraw it from the use of all students.

Other (Explain) _____

9. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

Model Policy for Library/Media Center Materials Selection and Reconsideration Process

Purpose.

To establish the local board's direction for selection and use of library/media center materials and the basic structure of handling questioned or challenged library/media center materials.

Role of the School Library/Media Center Professionals.

The function of the school library/media center is to support and enrich the instructional program and recreational reading needs of the school and must provide a broad range of materials.

The local board has the legal responsibility for the approval of all instructional materials. The selection and ordering of library books, audiovisuals, electronic resources, and other materials for the library/media centers are the responsibility of the school librarian in accordance with this adopted policy.

The school librarian will identify, order and organize materials that will implement, enrich and support the educational program of the school district. Principals, teachers, supervisors, students, and members of the community may give suggestions, recommendations and other assistance.

Materials Selection Criteria.

Materials should be consistent with the district's general educational goals and the educational goals and objectives of each individual school. Consideration should be given for purchase based on the work as a whole and on the basis of the following:

1. educational significance;
2. appropriateness for students in each school, such as grade and age level;
3. needs of the school and value to the collection;
4. reputation and significance of author and producer;
5. clarity, adequacy, and scope of text;
6. validity, accuracy, objectivity, currency, and appropriateness of text;
7. organization and presentation of contents;
8. high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility;
9. high artistic quality and/or literary style; and
10. value commensurate with cost.

The school librarian shall use their professional training and expertise to evaluate the existing collection and consult reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aides when selecting materials for the library/media centers.

Procedures for Handling Questioned or Challenged Library/Media Center Materials.

Any individual residing within the attendance area of the school district or who has a child who attends a school in the school district may lodge a complaint against any material used in the

school library/media center within the district. Prior to lodging the complaint, the complainant shall read the material in full. A student who objects to or finds offensive any material located in the library/media center should be provided alternatives. If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily during an informal conference with the principal and school librarian or teacher concerned, then the following procedure will be used:

A materials challenge shall be filed by completing and returning to the principal of the school in which the material is being used a form entitled "Reconsideration of Library/Media Center Materials Form". (See attached for sample form.) A separate form must be completed for each material being requested for reconsideration. This form shall be attached to this policy, posted prominently on the district website, and available upon request at schools.

To evaluate the challenged resource(s), the Superintendent shall annually appoint a review committee composed of an odd number of individuals. Depending on the membership size of the district, there may be a school level and/or district level committee established. An example of an appropriate composition for the committee(s) is the following:

1. The district supervisor of library media services (if applicable);
2. At least one school library media specialist within the district/school;
3. At least one teacher within the district/school;
4. At least one parent representing a school family other than complainant;
5. At least one principal within the district/school; and
6. At least one member of a School Improvement Council within the district/school.

Members of the committee shall read the materials referred to them in its entirety. Pending review by the committee, the challenged books or materials shall be withdrawn for use throughout the district.

The committee shall complete its review and issue a report within fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the complaint. A copy in writing shall be sent to the complainant, the district Superintendent, and the local board.

If the materials are deemed to be inappropriate, the district must ensure no other copies exist in circulation within the district for the school level(s) in which it is found to be inappropriate. If the materials are deemed to be acceptable and appropriate, the district must immediately place such materials back into circulation.

The local board shall be responsible for determining an appeals process. Such process shall not extend longer than 15 business days, effective from the date the appeal is requested.

The committee's decision, and if applicable, the local board's review, regarding the appropriateness of a book or reading material cannot be challenged again until the expiration of five years from the original challenge date.

Local board policies shall list all relevant policies connected to library/media centers to this policy. Local boards shall periodically review and update this policy.

Reconsideration of Library/Media Center Materials Form

School in which the material is being used: _____

Your Name (*please print and sign*): _____

Date: _____

Do you currently reside within the attendance area of the school district? **(Yes/No)**

Telephone #: _____

Address: _____

Do you have a student who attends the school listed above? **(Yes/No)**

Please check the type of material in question:

- Book
- Magazine
- Pamphlet
- Video
- Audio
- Software
- Kit
- Other

Title of material: _____

Author/Distributor: _____

Copyright Year: _____

The following questions are to be answered after the complainant has read, viewed, or listened to the material. If sufficient space is not provided, attach additional sheets. (Please sign your name to each additional attachment.)

1. Did you read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety? If not, why?

2. Are students required to use the material? (Yes/No/Unsure)
3. Have you read reviews of this material by reputable sources? If so, please list sources.

4. To what do you object? (Please be specific. Cite pages or particular sequences of material.)

5. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this material?

6. What do you feel might be the result of a student using this material?

7. Would you recommend this material for a different age group? If so, which age group?

8. What other materials of the same subject and format would you recommend?

9. What is your request in regard to this material?

- Do not assign/lend this material to my student
- Refer to an official committee to re-evaluate material for use by all students