

Section I: Instructional Goals and Objectives	Knox County Board of Education Policy		
	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued:
	Reconsideration of Textbooks, Instructional Materials, and Library Materials	I-212	7/95
		Reviewed:	Revised:
		7/26	8/26

The Board supports principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and charges educators with the review of instructional and library materials through regular consideration of:

1. Whether the materials comply with all applicable federal and state laws;
2. Whether the materials are appropriate for the age and maturity levels of the students who may have access; and
3. Whether the materials are suitable for and consistent with the educational mission of the school.¹

Because opinions differ, there may be questions concerning some instructional and library materials despite the quality of the selection processes outlined in Board Policies I-211 and I-241.² This policy outlines the processes through which material may be identified for reconsideration.

DEFINITIONS

- “Textbook” means a print or electronic resource adopted for use as a principal source of instruction for a course or grade level.
- “Instructional material” means a print, audiovisual, digital, online or other resource used a part of a course curriculum, classroom lesson, schoolwide instructional activity, intervention, enrichment activity, or student assignment.
- “Library material” means a resource made available to students through a school library or classroom library for voluntary access and that is not assigned or provided as part of a course curriculum.

INFORMAL RESOLUTIONS

Schools should make a reasonable effort to resolve concerns elevated by a parent/guardian information when appropriate. A parent/legal guardian may request in writing to the teacher that a student not be required to read a book, use certain materials, or participate in an activity. The request should include grounds or basis for exemption. The teacher should respond in writing with alternative plans to accommodate the informal request or notify the parent/legal guardian if the request is denied.

If the request is approved, any alternative assignment offered shall receive the same level of instructional and assessment rigor as the primary assignment. Additionally, a student who is granted an alternative assignment shall not be penalized academically for failure to participate in the original assignment.

If the request to the teacher is denied, then a written request may be submitted to the principal.

If an informal resolution does not address the concern, a formal request for reconsideration may be submitted.

FORMAL REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

A formal request for reconsideration of a textbook, instructional material, or library material may be submitted by any of the following:

- A Knox County Schools student;
- The parent/legal guardian of a Knox County Schools student; or
- An employee of the school in which the material of concern is located.

A separate request must be submitted for each piece of material requested for reconsideration, as the process for reconsideration is unique and specific to the nature of the concern identified. Unless the immediate removal or restricted access of challenged material is required by law, material requested for reconsideration shall remain available during the review process.

For Reconsideration of Textbook or Instructional Material

Formal concerns regarding a textbook or instructional material shall adhere to the process outlined in Administrative Procedure AP-I-212-1, "Reconsideration of Instructional Materials, Library Materials, or Textbooks." At a minimum, this process shall adhere to the following steps:

1. The complainant notifies the school principal of the request for reconsideration and submits the necessary documentation identifying the material and specific basis for the concern.
2. The principal notifies the Executive Director of Teaching & Learning, who reviews the request for completeness and confirms that the identified material falls within the scope of this process.
3. A school-level committee consisting of administrators, educators, and parents/guardians reviews the material in its entirety; evaluates its alignment to the curriculum, intended use, age and maturity of students, and educational value; and makes a written recommendation to the Board of Education.
4. The committee's recommendation is reviewed by the Academics Division for completeness and adherence to the established procedure, and is elevated to the Board of Education for consideration at the next scheduled voting meeting.
5. The Board of Education uses the submitted recommendation to render the district's final determination.
6. The complainant is notified of the decision within sixty (60) days of the receipt of required paperwork for reconsideration.

For Reconsideration of Library Material

Under the Age-Appropriate Materials Act (AAMA), all classroom and school libraries are expected to be suitable for the age and maturity of the students who have access to the material and be consistent with the educational mission of the school. Any material that contains content identified as prohibited under law must not be maintained in the library collection. Prohibited content is defined as any material that:

- In whole or in part contains nudity, or descriptions or depictions of sexual excitement, sexual conduct, excess violence, or sadomasochistic abuse, as those terms are defined in T.C.A. § 39-17-901; or
- Is patently offensive, as defined in T.C.A. § 39-17-901; or
- Appeals to the prurient interest, as defined in T.C.A. § 39-17-901.

All formal requests for reconsideration of library material shall be initiated according to the process outlined in Administrative Procedure AP-I-212-1, "Reconsideration of Instructional Materials, Library Materials, or Textbooks."

Requests must be directed to the school principal and will be considered formally received upon completion and submission of Form MC-114A to the Executive Director of Teaching & Learning. Upon receipt of the form, the Executive Director of Teaching & Learning will initiate one of two formal review processes based on the nature of the concern.

Review for Age-Appropriateness

1. The Executive Director of Teaching & Learning directs the school principal to form an ad hoc committee composed of the following school-level representatives:
 1. Administrator(s)
 2. A certified school librarian
 3. Classroom teacher(s)
 4. Parent/guardian(s)
 5. Student(s), at the discretion of the principal
2. The ad hoc school-level committee reads or listens to the identified material in its entirety for age-appropriateness and alignment to the educational mission of the school, and submits a recommendation to the Board of Education.
3. The Board of Education uses the submitted recommendation to render the district's final decision.
4. The complainant is notified of the decision within sixty (60) days of the receipt of required paperwork for reconsideration.

If, at any time in the reconsideration process, a concern regarding the presence of potential prohibited content is identified, the following process will be initiated and serve as the primary mechanism for reconsideration:

Review for Prohibited Content

1. In accordance with Administrative Procedure AP-I-212-2, "Evaluation for Prohibited Content" potential prohibited content will be reviewed by the District Content Committee, which consists of a representative from the Board, educators, and parents/guardians from across the district's five regions and three grade bands (K-5, 6-8, 9-12). Identified content shall be reviewed by the committee at their next scheduled meeting, with the review consisting of a comparison of the submitted material to the definitions of prohibited content identified in the AAMA and defined in T.C.A. § 39-17-901.
2. The District Content Committee makes a determination as to whether the identified material is compliant or non-compliant with state law. Material determined to be non-compliant shall be shared with the Board and posted on the Board of Education webpage no less than ten (10) days prior to the publish date of the Board's next scheduled voting meeting.
3. At the request of any member of the Board, material identified by the District Content Committee as being non-compliant with the AAMA may be elevated for Board consideration prior to the material's scheduled removal date. If elevated, a formal decision regarding compliance will be made by the Board at their next scheduled voting meeting. All other material identified as non-compliant will be flagged for removal from circulation at the end of the designated ten (10) day window for Board intervention.
4. The complainant is notified of the decision within sixty (60) days of the receipt of required paperwork for reconsideration.

APPEALS

If a concern cannot be adequately resolved through the district's local reconsideration procedure, it may be referred to the Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission for further action in either of two ways:

1. If a determination is not made within sixty (60) days from the date on which the feedback was received, the student, parent/guardian, or school employee who submitted the feedback may request the State Commission to evaluate the material.³
2. After a determination has been made, a student, a student's parent or legal guardian, or employee may request to appeal it to the State Commission within five (5) days of the report of determination.⁴

STANDARDIZING PROCESSES

To standardize the district's process for evaluating prohibited content concerns, any material removed from library circulation due to identification of prohibited content, as defined under the AAMA, will be subject to review according to the above-listed process for reviewing material for prohibited content. The District Content Committee should process all such material according to this process no later than July 1, 2027.

All library materials submitted for review for prohibited content between June 1, 2026 and the first meeting of the District Content Committee in 2026 will be processed according to the process identified within this policy.

This section of the policy shall sunset on July 2, 2027.

Legal References:

1. T.C.A. § 49-6-3803.
2. T.C.A. § 49-6-3803(e).
3. Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission (2025). Retrieved from [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/textbook-commission/documents/library/Library Guidance Document.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/textbook-commission/documents/library/Library%20Guidance%20Document.pdf).
4. T.C.A. § 49-6-1019.

Cross References:

- Knox County Board of Education Policy I-211.
- Knox County Board of Education Policy I-241.
- Knox County Schools Administrative Procedure AP-I-212-1.
- Knox County Schools Administrative Procedure AP-I-212-2.