

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Series 600

EXHIBIT INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE No. 605.3E1

The policy of the Johnston School District related to selection of learning materials states that any resident or employee of the district may formally request a review of instructional materials used in the district's educational program. This policy allows those persons in the school and the community who are not directly involved in the selection of materials to make their opinions known. The task of the Review Committee is to provide an open forum for discussion of such materials and to make an informed decision on the request to review.

The most critical component of the reconsideration process is the establishment and maintenance of the Committee's credibility in the community. For this purpose, the Committee includes community members. The community should not, therefore, infer that the committee is biased or is obligated to uphold prior professional decisions. For this same reason, a community member will be selected to chair the committee.

The reconsideration process, the task of the Committee, is just one part of the selection continuum. Material is purchased to meet an educational need. It is reviewed and examined, if possible, prior to purchase; it is periodically reevaluated through updating, discarding, or reexamination. The Committee must be ready to acknowledge that an error in selection may have been made despite this process. Teacher-librarians and school personnel regularly read great numbers of reviews in the selection process, and occasional errors are possible.

In reconsidering materials, the role of the Committee, and particularly the chairperson, is to produce a climate for a free exchange of ideas. The Committee should begin by finding items of agreement, keeping in mind that the larger the group participating, the greater the amount of information available and, therefore, the greater the number of possible approaches to the problem.

The party asking for review of materials may choose to make an oral presentation to the Committee to expand and elaborate on the request. The Committee will listen to the complainant, to those with special knowledge, and any other interested persons. In these discussions, the Committee should be aware of relevant social pressures which are affecting the situation. Individuals who may try to dominate or impose a decision must not be allowed to do so. Minority viewpoints expressed by groups or individuals must be heard, and observers must be made to feel welcome. It is important that the Committee create a calm, nonvolatile environment in which to deal with a potentially volatile situation. To this end, the complainant will be kept informed continuously of the progress of the request for review.

The Committee will listen to the views of all interested persons before reaching a decision. In deliberating its decision, the Committee should remember that the school system must be responsive to the needs, tastes, and opinions of the community it serves. Therefore, the Committee must distinguish between broad community sentiment and attempts to impose personal standards. The deliberations should concentrate on the appropriateness of the material. The question to be answered by the Committee is, "Is the material appropriate for its designated audience at this time?"

The Committee's final decision will be: (1) to take no removal action, (2) to agree on a limitation of the educational use of the materials or (3) to remove the challenged material from the total school environment, (4) to provide alternative choice that supports meeting learning target.

The Committee chairperson will instruct the secretary to convey the Committee's decision to the Superintendent. The decision should detail the rationale on which it was based. A letter will be sent to the complainant and to the appropriate attendance centers, outlining the Committee's final recommendation.

Date Approved: August 28, 1995

Last Date Reviewed: January 25, 2021

Last Date Revised: August 27, 2018