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## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 343 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGED MATERIALS**

### **Request for Informal Reconsideration:**

1. The school receiving a complaint regarding a learning resource by a parent/guardian/caregiver shall try to resolve the issue informally.
2. The principal, teacher-librarian or other appropriate staff member shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure and criteria, and the qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
3. The principal, teacher-librarian or other appropriate staff member shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the resource.
4. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the district Learning Resources Policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources form shall be provided by the principal to the party concerned.

### **Request for Formal Reconsideration:**

#### **Preliminary Procedures:**

1. Each school will keep on hand and make available Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources forms. All formal objections to learning resources must be made on these forms.
2. The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources forms shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the principal or designate.
3. The District Officer in charge of curriculum shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
4. The District Officer in charge of curriculum will meet the questioner and attempt to resolve the issue and may refer the challenge to a reconsideration committee for re-evaluation of the resource.
5. Requests for reconsideration of materials in district collections shall be referred to a reconsideration committee.

### **Reconsideration Committee Process:**

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1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource, the principal is responsible for forming a reconsideration committee and setting the date for the first meeting.
2. Membership of the committee should include persons not involved in the school where the dispute has arisen:
  - One (1) school-based administrator selected by the Chilliwack Principals and Vice-Principals Association (CPVPA)
  - One (1) member of the district staff chosen by the Superintendent or designate
  - One (1) teacher chosen by the Chilliwack Teachers' Association (CTA)
  - One (1) teacher-librarian chosen by the Chilliwack Teacher Librarians Association (CTLA)
  - One (1) parent selected by District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC)
  - One (1) student chosen by the student council of a secondary school, when the dispute exists in another secondary school.
3. The committee is responsible for naming the chair of the committee at the first meeting.
4. The reconsideration committee may choose to consult district support staff and/or community persons with related professional knowledge.
5. The reconsideration committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the District's Learning Resources policy.

## **Resolution:**

1. The reconsideration committee shall:
  - Examine the challenged resource.
  - Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource.
  - Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than passages or sections taken out of context.
  - Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program.
  - Discuss the challenged item with the individual questioner when appropriate.
  - Prepare a written report based on the criteria in the District Learning Resources Policy.
2. The school principal shall receive a copy of the report.
3. Written reports, when completed, will include the minutes of the meeting(s) and the rationale for the decision made by the committee, and shall be circulated to the

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complainant, the Superintendent, the District Officer responsible for curriculum, school principals and teacher librarians.

4. Once filed, reports will be available for examination by trustees, appropriate personnel, and parents/guardians/caregivers.
5. The written report shall be discussed by the school principal with the individual questioner if requested.
6. The decision-making process of the reconsideration committee shall be by consensus and is binding for the district.
7. Notwithstanding any procedure outlined in this policy, the questioner shall have the right to appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee to the Board of Education as the final review panel.

## **Guiding Principles:**

1. Only learning resources not on the approved list of Focused Education Resources can be challenged.
2. Any parent/guardian/caregiver of the school community may raise objection to learning resources used in the school's educational program despite the fact that the individuals selecting such resources were duly qualified to make the selection, followed the procedures and observed the criteria for selecting learning resources.
3. A challenged learning resource should not be summarily removed from circulation.
4. Access to challenged material may be restricted during the reconsideration process by the principal in consultation with the teacher-librarian and/or teacher.
5. The principal should review the selection and objection rules with the teaching staff at least annually. The staff should be reminded that the right to object to learning resources is one granted by the policies enacted by the Board of Education.
6. A parent/guardian/caregiver has the right to determine reading, viewing, or listening matter for only his/her/their own children.
7. Although it is the learning resources which are challenged, the principles of freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.
8. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its educational use.

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9. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not necessarily be interpreted as judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.