

## **INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE**

The policy of this school district related to the selection of learning materials states that any member of the school district community may formally challenge instructional materials and library materials used in the district's educational program. This policy allows those persons in the school and the district who are not directly involved in the selection of materials to make their own opinions known. The task of the reconsideration committee is to make an informed recommendation on the challenge. The meetings of the committee are subject to the Iowa open meetings law.

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 is composed of a combination of community members and licensed employees as detailed in board policy 603.8R2. The community should not, therefore, infer that the committee is biased or is obligated to uphold prior professional decisions.

The reconsideration process, the task of this committee, is just one part of the selection continuum. Materials are purchased to meet a need. It is reviewed and examined, if possible, prior to purchase. It is periodically re-evaluated through updating, discarding, or re-examination. The committee must be ready to acknowledge that an error in selection may have been made despite this process. Librarians and school employees regularly read a great number of reviews in the selection process, and occasional errors are possible.

In reconsidering challenged materials, the role of the committee, and particularly of the chairperson, is to produce a climate for meaningful discussion of disparate views. 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 committee will listen to the complainant and to those with special knowledge. The committee may include the opportunity to hear from members of the school district community. The non-voting chairperson may in special circumstances limit comments by community members. 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 of the progress of the complaint.

The committee will consider the views of all interested persons before making recommendations. In deliberating its recommendation, 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 deliberation should concentrate on the appropriateness of the material. The question to be answered by the committee is, "Is the material appropriate for its intended educational use?"

The committee's final recommendation will be:

- (1) to remove the challenged material from the total school environment,
- (2) to take no removal action, or
- (3) to agree on a limitation of the educational use of the materials.

The committee chairperson will instruct the Board Secretary to convey the committee's recommendation to the office of the superintendent. The recommendation should detail the rationale on which it was based. A letter will be sent to the complainant outlining the outcome.

Approved 12/19/2022

Reviewed

10/9/2022

Revised

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8, 280.14, 280.3, 301, 279.74, 281 I.A.X.12.3.