

## Educational Program

Series 600

Policy Title Objection to Instructional Materials Code No. 603.6

- A. Any resident of the school district may raise objection to instructional materials used in the district's educational program despite the fact that the individuals selecting such material were duly qualified to make the selection and followed the proper procedure and observed the criteria for selecting such material.
1. The school official or staff member receiving a complaint regarding instructional materials shall try to resolve the issue informally. The materials generally shall remain in use unless removed through the procedure in Section B.6.d. of this rule.
    - a. The school official or staff member initially receiving a complaint shall explain to the complainant, the school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the material.
    - b. The school official or staff member initially receiving a complaint shall explain to the best of his or her ability the particular place the objected material occupies in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the complaining party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the material. The complaint should be informed the material in question will be judged in its entirety.
  2. In the event that the person making an objection to material is not satisfied with the initial explanation, the person raising the questions should be referred to someone designated by the principal or person in charge of the attendance center to handle such complaints or to the teacher librarian for that attendance center. If, after private counseling, the complainant desires to file a formal complaint, the person to whom the complainant has been referred will assist in filing out a Reconsideration Request Form in full.
  3. The individual receiving the initial complaint shall advise the principal or person in charge of the attendance center where the challenged material is being used, of the initial contact no later than the end of the following school day, whether or not the complainant has apparently been satisfied by the initial contact. A written record of the contact shall be maintained by the principal or other person in charge of the attendance center.

## B. Request for Reconsideration

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge instructional materials used in the district's educational program on this basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the school and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.
2. Each attendance center and the school district's central office will keep on hand and make available Reconsideration Request Forms (1FAB-E). All formal objections to instructional materials must be made on this form.

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3. The Reconsideration Request Form shall be signed by the complainant and filed with the superintendent or someone so designated by the superintendent.
4. Within five business days of the filing of the form, the superintendent or person so designated by the superintendent, shall file the material in question with the Reconsideration Committee for reevaluation. The Committee shall recommend disposition to the office of the superintendent.
5. Generally, access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process. However, in unusual circumstances, the material may be removed temporarily by following the provisions of Section B.6.d. of this rule.
6. The Reconsideration Committee
  - a. The Reconsideration Committee shall be made up of 11 members plus the Director of Curriculum as an ex officio member.
    1. Two teachers designated annually, as needed, by the superintendent.
    2. One school teacher-librarian designated annually by the superintendent.
    3. One member of the administration team designated annually by the superintendent.
    4. Five members of the community appointed annually, as needed, by Board action.
    5. Two high school students, selected annually by the high school principal.
  - b. The chairperson of the committee shall not be an employee or officer of the District. The secretary shall be an employee or officer of the District. Both shall be selected at the first meeting of the committee each year.
  - c. The committee shall meet at the request of the Superintendent.
  - d. Special meetings may be called by the board to consider temporary removal of materials in unusual circumstances. Temporary removal shall require a three-fourths vote of the committee.
  - e. Notice of meetings shall be made public through appropriate student publications and other communications methods.
  - f. The committee shall receive all Reconsideration Request Forms from the superintendent or person designated by the superintendent.

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- g. The procedure for the first meeting following receipt of a Reconsideration Request Form is as follows:
  - 1. Distribute copies of written request form.
  - 2. Give complainant or group spokesperson an opportunity to talk about and expand on the request form.
  - 3. Distribute reputable, professionally prepared reviews of the material when available.
  - 4. Distribute copies of challenged material as available.
  - 5. Inform all parties that the material will be judged in its entirety.
- h. At a subsequent meeting, interested persons, including the complainant, may have the opportunity to share their views. The committee may request that individuals with special knowledge be present to give information to the committee.
- i. The complainant shall be kept informed by the secretary concerning the status of his or her complaint throughout the committee reconsideration process. The complainant and known interested parties shall be given appropriate notice of such meetings.
- j. The individual filing the challenge is kept informed by the Reconsideration Committee secretary on the status of the Reconsideration Request form throughout the reconsideration process. The individual filing the challenge and known interested parties is given appropriate notice of meetings.
- k. At the second or subsequent meeting the committee will make its final recommendation. The committee's final recommendation may be to take no removal action, to remove the challenged material from the school environment, or to limit the educational use of the challenged material. The sole criterion for the final recommendation is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use. The written final recommendation and its justification are forwarded to the board, the individual and the appropriate attendance centers. The superintendent may also make a recommendation but if so, it should be independent from the committee's.

Following the superintendent's decision with respect to the committee's recommendation, the individual or the chairperson of the reconsideration committee may appeal the decision to the board for review. Such appeal must be presented to the superintendent in writing within five days following the announcement of the superintendent's decision. The board will promptly determine whether to hear the appeal.

- l. The recommendation to sustain a challenge will not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the individuals involved in the original selection or use of the material.

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- m. Requests to reconsider materials which have previously been reconsidered by the committee must receive approval of two-thirds of the committee members before the materials will again be reconsidered.
- n. If necessary or appropriate in the judgment of the committee, the committee may appoint a subcommittee of members of nonmembers to consolidate challenges and to make recommendations to the full committee. The composition of this subcommittee will approximate the representation of the full committee.
- o. Committee members directly associated with the selection, use, or challenger of the challenged material are excused from the committee during the deliberation of the challenged instructional materials. The superintendent may appoint a temporary replacement for the excused committee member, but the replacement must be of the same general qualifications as the member excused.
- p. Persons dissatisfied with the decision of the board may appeal to the Iowa Board of Education pursuant to state law.

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Policy Title Objection to Instructional Materials Code No. 603.6**Instructions to the Reconsideration Committee**

The policy of this school district related to selection of learning materials states that any resident of the district may formally challenge 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 Reconsideration Committee is to provide an open forum for discussion of challenged materials and to make an informed recommendation on the challenge. The meetings of the committee maybe subject to the 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 primarily of 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 presence of the committee of a school teacher-librarian and an administrative staff member will assure continuity from year to year as well as lend professional knowledge of the selection process. Student members are essential since they are the closest to the student body and will be immediately affected by the decision of the committee.

The reconsideration process, the task of this committee, is just one part of the selection continuum. Material is purchased to meet a 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 challenged materials, the role of the committee, and particularly the chairperson, is to produce a climate for disagreement. 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.

If the complainant chooses, he/she may make an oral presentation to the committee to expand and elaborate on the complaint. 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 the potentially volatile situation. To this end, the complainant will be kept informed of the progress of his complaint.

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The committee will listen to 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 deliberations should concentrate on the appropriateness of the material in its entirety. The question to be answered by the committee is, "Is the material appropriate for its designated audience at this time?"

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 decision will be reached through secret ballot.

The committee chairperson will instruct the 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.

Adopted 6/18/90  
Revised 1/17/94  
Reviewed 8/21/00  
Reviewed 5/19/03  
Revised 6/21/04  
Reviewed 6/19/06  
Revised 6/16/08  
Reviewed 6/15/09

Reviewed 6/18/12

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§279.8; 280.3,  
.14; 301 (2007) 281 I.A.C. 12.3 (12)

## RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

### *RECONSIDERATION REQUEST FORM*

Request for re-evaluation of printed or multimedia material to be submitted to the superintendent.

REVIEW INITIATED BY:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

School(s) in which item is used \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to school (parent, student, citizen, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### BOOK OR OTHER PRINTED MATERIAL IF APPLICABLE:

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Hardcover \_\_\_\_\_ Paperback \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Publication \_\_\_\_\_

### MULTIMEDIA MATERIAL IF APPLICABLE

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Producer (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material (filmstrip, motion picture, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSON MAKING THE REQUEST REPRESENTS: (circle one)

Self

Group or Organization

Name of group \_\_\_\_\_

Address of group \_\_\_\_\_



RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

1. What brought this item to your attention?

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2. To what in the item do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, or frames, etc.)

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3. In your opinion what harmful effects upon students might result from use of this item?

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4. Do you perceive any instructional value in the use of this item?

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5. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

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6. Should the opinion of any additional experts in the field be considered?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ no

If yes, please list specific suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. To replace this item, do you recommend other material, which you consider to be of equal or superior quality for the purpose intended?

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RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

8. Do you wish to make an oral presentation to the Review Committee?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes (a) Please contact the Superintendent

(b) Please be prepared at this time to indicate the approximate length of time your presentation will require. Although this is no guarantee that you'll be allowed to present to the committee or that you will get your requested amount of time.

\_\_\_\_\_ minutes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

SAMPLE LETTER TO INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Dear:

We recognize your concern about the use of \_\_\_\_\_ in our school district. The school district has developed procedures for selection of instructional materials but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made.

To help you understand the selection process, we are sending copies of the school districts:

1. Instructional goals and objectives,
2. Instructional Materials Selection policy statement, and,
3. Procedure for reconsideration of instructional materials.

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the Reconsideration Request Form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. If I have not heard from you with in one week, we will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

## RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

### *RECONSIDERATION REQUEST FORM*

Request for re-evaluation of printed or audiovisual material to be submitted to the superintendentt

REVIEW INITIATED BY:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

School(s) in which item is used \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to school (parent, student, citizen, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### BOOK OR OTHER PRINTED MATERIAL IF APPLICABLE:

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Hardcover \_\_\_\_\_ Paperback \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Publication \_\_\_\_\_

### AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL IF APPLICABLE

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Producer (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material (filmstrip, motion picture, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSON MAKING THE REQUEST REPRESENTS: (circle one)

Self

Group or Organization

Name of group \_\_\_\_\_

Address of group \_\_\_\_\_

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

1. What brought this item to your attention?

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2. To what in the item do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, or frames, etc.)

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3. In your opinion what harmful effects upon students might result from use of this item?

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4. Do you perceive any instructional value in the use of this item?

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---

5. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

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6. Should the opinion of any additional experts in the field be considered?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ no

If yes, please list specific suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

---

7. To replace this item, do you recommend other material, which you consider to be of equal or superior quality for the purpose intended?

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RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

8. Do you wish to make an oral presentation to the Review Committee?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

(a) Please call the office of the Superintendent

(b) Please be prepared at this time to indicate the approximate length of time your presentation will require. \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

\_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature