

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT LEARNING RESOURCES

Despite the care taken in selecting suitable learning resources, and despite the qualifications and expertise of persons involved in that selection process, it is recognized that occasional objections to materials will be made by the public. It is, therefore, the policy of the School Board to provide channels of communication and a fair procedure for members of the community to follow in expressing and resolving concerns about learning resources, including instructional materials, used in teaching the curriculum.

Complaints about learning resources should be presented in writing using KLB-E, "Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources" form, which may be obtained from the principal or the central office. The standards and procedure for review shall be consistently applied in recognition of the respective rights and responsibilities of all concerned. Materials shall be considered for their educational suitability and shall not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. Challenges which are not resolved at the building level may be submitted to the superintendent or superintendent's designee. The decision of the superintendent may be appealed to the School Board or reviewed at the School Board's request. The decision of the School Board will be final.

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:7.C.2.

8 VAC 20-720-160.

Cross Refs.:	IIA	Instructional Materials
	IGAH	Family Life Education
	INB	Teaching About Controversial Issues
	KL	Public Complaints
	KQ	Commercial, Promotional and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships

REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT LEARNING RESOURCES

1. Philosophy and Objectives

The Dickenson County Public Schools supports and endorses the philosophy and objectives of library media center as stated by the National Council of Teachers of English. This philosophy is "All students in public schools have the right to materials and educational experiences that promote open inquiry, critical thinking, diversity in thought and expression and respect for others. Denial or restriction of this right is an infringement of intellectual freedom."

II. Statement of Intellectual Freedom

The Dickenson County Public Schools embraces the Library Bill of Rights as presented by the American Library Association. The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all the students the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A student's right to use the library shall not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting room available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. (Reprinted with the permission of the American Library Association.)

III. Responsibility for Selection of Materials

1. Librarians use the reviews and evaluations performed by other professionals to expedite the selection process.
2. The suggestions of teachers and curriculum personnel receive priority considerations.
3. Locally produced materials which provide learning opportunities are used whenever possible.
4. The collections are continuously re-evaluated in relation to changing curriculum content, new instructional methods and current needs of teachers and students.
5. FINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS IN EACH SCHOOL IS VESTED IN THE PRINCIPAL AND HEAD LIBRARIAN.

IV. Criteria for Selection of Materials

Criteria for selection involves librarian, students and faculty of each school.

1. Materials meet the needs of the individual school.
2. Materials meet the needs of the individual student.
3. Materials make a provision for wide range of interests.
4. Materials make a provision for high quality and superior format.
5. Materials include print, non-print and technology.

V. Criteria for Evaluating Gifts to the Media Center.

Gifts must meet the requirements stated in IV Criteria for Selection of Materials.

VI. Maintenance Procedures (Weeding, Inventory, Discarding of Materials)

Inventory will be done each year by the librarian. All missing items will be marked, after three years they are removed, if not found.

Weeding and discarding the collecting. The librarian will constantly weed and discard using the following guidelines:

1. Multiple copies of any book not checked out in over 5 years.
2. Books with pages missing.

3. Titles whose popularity is long passed.
4. Old editions replaced by revisions and better editions.
5. Early printings of classics dated by binding and small print.
6. Books with out of date information, examples - science, health, economics, etc.
7. Old debate materials with questions no longer of current interest.
8. Books in poor physical condition.
9. Non book forms published in book form.
10. Magazines more than 3 years old. this is due to storage problems and usefulness as a reference source.

Once a decision has been made to discard material, the faculty of each school is notified. Faculty members are then given the opportunity to place needed materials back on the shelf, take materials for their own professional library, or take material for use in individual teacher classrooms.

Materials not chosen by teachers are open to the general public for review. A time, date and "first come-first serve" policy are announced on the school intercom for students and parents. Notices are published in the local paper and announcements are made on the local radio station.

Any books not selected by faculty or general public are sent for recycling or disposal.

VII. Procedures for Reconsideration of Challenged Materials

Even though qualified personnel have take great care to select only appropriate materials, occasional objections to a selection are made. When such objections occur, principals of freedom of information and the professional responsibility of the staff are defended rather than specific materials.

Persons requesting permission to examine materials may examine such materials in the library media center in a manner that will not disrupt the normal operation of the school.

If a complaint is made, the procedures are as follows:

- a. School personnel will be courteous to complainant, make no commitment, advise the complainant to arrange a conference with the principal and notify the principal of the complaint.
- b. It is the complainant's responsibility to arrange a conference with the principal.

- c. At this conference, the principal shall invite the complainant to file his or her objection in writing on the form Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials.
- d. A complainant who does not complete or return the form receives no further consideration.
- e. Upon receipt of the completed form, the principal requests review of the challenged material by the School Library Media Center Advisory Committee (librarian, English teacher, two parents) within 15 working days, and notifies the Supervisor and Superintendent that such review is being done.
- f. The committee takes the following steps after receiving the challenged materials:
 - 1. Reads the entire book, views or listens to the material in its entirety.
 - 2. Checks general acceptance of material by reading reviews and consulting recommended lists.
 - 3. Determines the extent to which the materials support the curriculum.
 - 4. Completes the appropriate Checklist for School Media Advisory Committee's Reconsideration of Instructional Materials, judging the material for its strength and value as a whole and not in part. (KLB-C)
- g. Upon receipt of the checklist, the principal makes a decision as to the action to be taken and notifies the complainant, the Supervisor and the Superintendent.
- h. If there is need for further review, the principal refers the complainant to the Superintendent's designated representative and forwards all pertinent documentation to the Superintendent's office.
- i. After receiving the LMAC recommendation, the Superintendent shall make a decision.
- j. The decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the School Board.
- k. The final decision is determined by the School Board.

Adopted: July 31, 1997

**DICKENSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LEARNING RESOURCES**

Request By	_____		
Representing	_____	Myself	_____
	_____	Organization or Group	_____
		(please identify)	_____
Address	_____	E-mail address	_____
Telephone	_____		
How do you prefer to be contacted?	_____		
Title or Description of Item	_____		
Author or Editor	_____		
Type of Material (book / film / record / speaker / software / other (specify))	_____		

1. Did you examine, review, or listen to this learning resource or presentation in its entirety?

YES NO

2. Have you discussed this material with school staff who ordered it or who use it?

YES NO

If yes, please identify the staff person(s) with whom you had the discussion:

[Print name of staff person(s)]

Are you aware of evaluations of this material by professional critics?

YES NO

If no, would you be interested in receiving this information?

YES NO

3. Describe what prompted your concern about the material. Please cite page numbers and/or specific information from the material to support your concerns (attach additional material, if necessary).

4. Does the general purpose for the use of the material, as described by the school staff or in the BLANK school division's program objectives, seem a suitable one for you?

- YES NO

If not, please explain (attach additional material, if necessary)

5. What action[s] would you like to see the school take regarding this material?

- Do not assign it to my child The school should reevaluate the material

Other—

Explain: _____

6. Are there other materials of the same subject and format that you would suggest for consideration in place of this material? YES NO

If yes, please identify your suggestions.

Signature _____ Date _____

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S RECONSIDERATION
OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL-- FICTION AND OTHER LITERARY FORMS**

Title _____

Author _____

A. Purpose

1. What is the purpose, theme or message of the material? How well does the author/producer/composer accomplish this purpose? _____

2. If the story is fantasy, is it the type that has imaginative appeal and is suitable for children? yes no; for young adults? yes no.
If no, for what age group would you recommend? _____
3. Will the reading and/or viewing and/or listening to material result in more compassionate understanding of human beings? yes no
4. Does it offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements and problems of various minority groups? yes no
5. Are any questionable elements of the story an integral part of a worthwhile theme or message? yes no

B. Content

1. Does a story about modern times give a realistic picture of life as it is now?
yes no
2. Does the story avoid an oversimplified view of life, one which leaves the reader with the general feeling that life is sweet and rosy or ugly and meaningless? yes no
3. When factual information is part of the story, is it presented accurately? yes no
4. Is prejudicial appeal readily identifiable by the potential reader? yes no
5. Are concepts presented appropriate to the ability and maturity of the potential readers? yes no
6. Do characters speak in a language true to the period and section of the country in which they live? yes no
7. Does the material offend in some special way the sensibilities of women or a minority group by the way it presents either the chief character or any of the minor characters? yes no
8. Is there preoccupation with sex, violence, cruelty, brutality and aberrant behavior that would make this material inappropriate for children? yes no

- 9. If there is use of offensive language, is it appropriate to the purpose of the text for children? yes no; for young adults? yes no
- 10. Is the material free from derisive name and epithets that would offend minority groups? yes no; children? yes no; young adults? yes no
- 11. Is the material well written or produced? yes no
- 12. Does the story give a broader understanding of human behavior without stressing differences of class, race, color, sex, education, religion or philosophy in any adverse way? yes no
- 13. Does the material make a significant contribution to the history of literature or ideas?
 yes no
- 14. Are the illustrations appropriate and in good taste? yes no
- 15. Are the illustrations realistic in relation to the story? yes no

Additional Comments _____

Recommendation by School Media Advisory Committee for Treatment of Challenged Materials

Date _____

Signatures of Media Advisory Review Committee

Adopted: July 31, 1997