

COMPLAINTS/RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Despite the care taken by the staff in the Holmdel Township Public Schools to select instructional materials for student and/or staff use, occasional objections to a selection may be made by the public.

Review and reconsideration of instructional materials will be treated objectively in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Concerns about instructional materials should first be directed to the staff members most immediately involved with the materials in question for possible resolution on an informal level. Even while the concern/complaint is being discussed at this level, the staff member should keep the building principal informed about the situation.
2. If the concern is not resolved informally with the staff member, the complainant should be requested to file his/her objections in writing (Exhibit 6161.11) to the building principal.
3. The building principal or his/her designated representative (i.e., subject area supervisor) will contact the complainant to discuss the objection and attempt to resolve it in accordance with the philosophy and goals of the school district.
4. No questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. While the objection is acknowledged on a personal basis, the parent or guardian shall be informed that the material services the rest of the population. However, pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, access to questioned materials can be denied to the child (or children) of the parents/guardians making the complaint upon written request to the principal.
5. The objection moves to the Superintendent's level if (a) the resident or (b) the staff member is dissatisfied with the principal's decision. The principal submits to the Superintendent the written objection from the resident, the decision of the principal in writing, and any other supporting documentation.
6. The Superintendent will convene a committee of administrator(s), teaching staff member(s), media specialist(s), and other individuals as appropriate for the situation. The committee will:

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File Code: 6161.11

- a. Read and examine the materials under reconsideration;
 - b. Refer to professional reviews of the materials, if available;
 - c. Consider the material as a whole and not as passages removed from context;
 - d. Refer to the principles of the **Freedom to Read** and other appropriate guidelines;
 - e. Meet to discuss the material and prepare a report of the group's findings; and
 - f. File a copy of the report and recommendation with the Superintendent within fifteen (15) calendar days of the complaint being filed.
7. The Superintendent will notify the complainant of his/her decision.
 8. The complainant may pursue his/her concern to the Board of Education which has the right to make the final decision regarding the selection, rejection and/or reconsideration of instructional materials.

Please refer to attached documents when reconsidering instructional materials.

- A. Library Bill of Rights
- B. Freedom To Read Statement
- C. School Library Bill of Rights
- D. Excerpts from Affirmative Action Regulations

Source: Regular Public Meeting

Date: March 22, 1995

Revised: May 28, 1997

APPENDIX A

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

"The Council of the American Library Association reaffirms its belief in the following basic policies which should govern the services of all libraries.

1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.
2. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information or enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of age, race, religion, national origins or social or political views.
6. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available equally to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings be open to the public."

Adopted: June 18, 1948

Amended: February 2, 1961, and June 27, 1967, by the A.L.A. Council

APPENDIX B

FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

"The Holmdel Township School System subscribes to the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, May 2nd and 3rd, 1953. The seven propositions of this statement are:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
2. Publishers and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, oral or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of the personal history or political affiliation of the author.
4. The present laws dealing with obscenity should be vigorously enforced. Beyond that, there is no place in our society for extra-legal efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment to a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read statement by providing books that enrich the quality of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one."

Adopted: June 25, 1953, by the A.L.A. Council

APPENDIX C

SCHOOL LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

School libraries are concerned with generating understanding of American freedoms and with the preservation of these freedoms through the development of informed and responsible citizens. To this end the American Association of School Librarians reaffirms the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association and asserts that the responsibility of the school library is:

To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served.

To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.

To provide a background of information which will enable pupils to make intelligent judgements in their daily life.

To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.

To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Adopted by the American Association of School Libraries, a division of the A.L.A., and endorsed by the Council of the American Library Association, July 1955.

APPENDIX D

EXCERPTS FROM "AFFIRMATIVE ACTION" REGULATIONS PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

EQUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

6:4-1.1 Purposes and Objectives

The New Jersey Constitution and implementing legislation guarantee each child in the public schools equal educational opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, or social or economic status. To assure these basic rights the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education have developed these regulations which specifically implement N.J.S.A. 18A:36-20 and the State Board of Education Resolution concerning sex equality in educational programs. These regulations have also been developed in conformity with relevant Federal and State statutes concerning discriminatory conduct.

from 6:4-1.3 Policy Development

(d) As part of its affirmative action programs or plans, each local school district shall arrange for or provide in-service training for school personnel on a continuing basis to identify and resolve problems arising from prejudice on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, or social or economic status.

(e) Each Board of Education shall adopt and approve courses of study, instructional materials, and programs designed to eliminate discrimination and promote understanding and mutual respect between children of different races, colors, creeds, religions, sexes, ancestries, national origins, or social or economic status. Community involvement in this process shall be encouraged.

(f) The local school district shall evaluate courses of study and instructional materials already in use to determine whether they are designed to achieve the objectives set forth in (e) and shall supplement them as necessary where they are not so designed. As the use of such courses and materials is discontinued in the normal course of events, the local school district shall replace them with courses and instructional materials designed to meet the objectives set forth in (e).

