

Appeals to Challenged Library Materials

The principles of intellectual freedom are basic to the selection of library materials. Occasionally, there may be objections to library material by concerned citizens. The Board of Education recognizes the right of an individual parent/guardian to request that his/her child's library selection be limited, and certain books or themes prohibited. Residents SHALL NOT have the right to determine library materials for students other than their own. Assuming all steps regarding the reconsideration of materials outlined in relevant policies and regulations have been completed, the procedure for the Board to process appealed challenges is as follows:

1. The Board may form an ad hoc committee or designate the appropriate subcommittee to conduct the review.
2. The Board or the subcommittee responsible for conducting the review will request copies of the completed Form #1, "Brookfield Resident's Request for Reconsideration of Materials", as well as the report completed by the school's Special Review Committee concerning the challenged material. The Board may invite members of the school Special Review Committee to present their findings.
3. The materials in question shall be read, viewed, or listened to in their entirety.
4. Determine if the materials meet the selection criteria in the library's collection development policy.
5. The subcommittee may solicit advice or opinion from District faculty, administrators, and/or relevant professional institutions such as the American Library Association and the Connecticut State Department of Education.
6. Both the values as well as the faults of the material shall be weighed, and a decision will be based on the materials as a whole and not on passages pulled out of context.
7. Challenged library materials shall remain in use in the schools pending a final decision.
8. The subcommittee will make a recommendation to the Board to either retain the material or remove it.
9. The Board of Education shall render the final decision.

Those reviewing challenged materials will give their opinion with the following guiding principles in mind:

1. Parents or guardians have the right to guide the reading, viewing, and listening of their children but must give the same right to other parents/guardians.
2. Any person has the right to express concerns about library resources and expect to have the objection taken seriously.
3. School libraries have the responsibility to provide diverse materials reflecting differing points of view, and a library's mission is to provide access to information to all users.
4. When library resources are reconsidered, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view are defended rather than specific materials.
5. All library users have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources.
6. The Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association can be used as guiding documents.
7. The reconsideration process should be completed in its entirety and not subverted or ended prematurely.