

6:231-AP Challenges to Library Materials

Upon receiving an oral challenge to library materials, the librarian shall provide the complainant with a complaint form (Exhibit #) and directions to return the form, when complete, to the librarian.

Upon receiving a completed complaint form, the librarian shall determine that the complaint arises from a parent, student, or staff member. Outside challenges need not be considered.

Once the complaint is established as authentic, the librarian shall review the materials in question to assure they believe them to be appropriate for the target audience.

If the librarian deems the challenged material appropriate, they are to take the following steps:

- Maintain the material in circulation
- Register the complaint with the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom
- Acquire a copy of the material from another affiliated library
- Acquire copies of any professional reviews or other pertinent information
- Forward a copy of the complaint, the material in question, and all accompanying information to the Superintendent

The librarian needs to have completed the above listed steps within 10 work days of receiving the formal complaint. An extension may be granted if materials are difficult to procure from other affiliated libraries.

Superintendent

Within 5 work days of receiving a Complaint form and accompanying materials, the Superintendent shall determine if a meeting with a complainant may resolve the issue. If so, he or she will schedule such a meeting. If the complainant fails to meet, the issue shall be considered resolved and the complaint closed.

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6:231-AP2 Committee for Reconsideration of Library Materials

If the Superintendent is unable to resolve the issue, he or she shall appoint a committee to make a recommendation. The committee shall be called to an initial meeting within 20 work days of the superintendent's meeting with the complainant. A failure to appoint such a committee in a timely manner will render the challenge mute. The committee shall be comprised of:

- Two librarians. These must be selected from a facility other than the one in which the challenge arose. At least one must be an endorsed, certified, or degreed librarian. Preference shall be given to qualified individuals within the district.
- Two teachers. These shall be selected to reflect the range of ages within the building (one teaching students at the upper edge of the building's age range and one teaching student's on the lower edge of the building's age range). If the challenge is parent or student generated, the teacher(s) who currently has (have) that student in class may not be included on the committee.

The charge to the committee shall be as follows:

- Select a chairperson for the committee.
- Read or view the work in its entirety.
- Read the professional reviews available.
- Compare and/or contrast the challenged work with similar items or topics in the library.
- Consider input from the complainant and the building's librarian.
- Consider the condition, timeliness, appropriateness to grade level, critical reviews, curricular ties, and author credentials.
- Reach consensus and make a written recommendation to the Superintendent:
 - Maintain the material in circulation
 - Restrict the work for the student only
 - Restrict the work from a group of students
 - Remove the work from the library
- Appoint a spokesperson to present the recommendation to the Education Committee and/or School Board Meeting.

The committee shall render its decision within 20 work days of their initial meeting. A failure to render a decision in a timely manner shall render the challenge mute. The Superintendent shall bring the committee's recommendation to the Harlem Board of Education's Education Committee for approval consideration at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The Education Committee shall review the recommendation and raise any concerns before forwarding the recommendation to the Harlem Board of Education for consideration at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

The Superintendent shall inform all parties in writing of the decision of the Harlem Board of Education. The decision of the Board of Education shall be enforced for ten (10) years following board action.

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