

The Madison Board of Education welcomes constructive criticism of the school system when it is motivated by the desire to improve the quality of educational programs and operations. The Madison Public Schools have implemented systems for the evaluation and professional development of staff, as well as for the monitoring of curriculum. The Board therefore has confidence in the professionalism of its staff and the value of its curriculum, and recognizes its responsibility to protect the district from unnecessary or negative criticism.

The Board advises the public that complaints about the schools should be addressed to the most immediate level at which problems can be resolved. Parents and other members of the community should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. Complaints concerning Board actions or operations shall be dealt with directly at the Board level.

The Administration shall develop procedures for receiving and responding to complaints, in a prompt and courteous manner. If resolution of the problem is not possible or satisfactory at the building level, the matter may be referred or appealed to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The Board of Education will consider hearing citizen complaints only when they cannot be resolved by the Superintendent. Complaints that have reached the level of the Superintendent or the Board must be submitted in writing and signed.

In addition to the process outlined above, the following guidelines will also apply to these specific areas of complaint:

Educational materials and subject matter:

Procedures for handling criticism of approved materials and subject matter will include a signed complaint form, and a committee to review and re-evaluate the material(s) in

#1312 (cont.)

question in a timely manner. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and a representative from the Board of Education will be included in such committees. Challenged materials may remain in use in the schools, pending final disposition of the complaint.

The decision to retain or reject shall take into consideration the educational value of the materials and/or subject matter, as well as the challenge to academic and personal freedoms.

In accordance with State statutes, no student in the Madison Public Schools shall be required to participate in any family life or AIDS education program, either in its entirety or any portion thereof. A written request must be submitted by the parent / guardian to the building principal in order to exempt a student from such a program. In addition, a parent / guardian may request in writing to the building principal that their child not be required to read or view specific educational materials. The approval of the Superintendent is required for such an exemption.

School personnel:

The Board of Education will hear complaints about employees of the Madison Public Schools in executive session, when requested in writing by the Superintendent or the employee. Complaints about the Superintendent of Schools must be signed and submitted directly to the Board in writing. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the employee must be notified of such a hearing, and afforded the opportunity to hold the session with the Board in public. All parties involved, including appropriate administrators, will be requested to attend the hearing for the purpose of presenting and clarifying the facts.

(cf. 5120.3.2 HIV Infection)

(cf. 6130.2.2 Exemptions from Instruction)

(cf. 6130.7 Animal Dissection – Dissection Alternatives)

(cf. 6144.2 Reevaluation of Challenged Instructional Materials and Library Media Center Resources)

Legal References:

Keyishian v. Board of Regents 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25 457 F.2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976)

#1312 (cont.)

Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District, 541 F. 2d 577 (6th Cir. 1976).

Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81).

Connecticut General Statutes

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

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