

Community Relations

Public Complaints

The Woodbridge Board of Education understands that, on occasion, a member of the public will wish to lodge a complaint against instructional material. Such complaints shall be addressed and resolved as close to their origin of concern as possible.

While members of the community have a right to petition the Board of Education for redress to a grievance, complaints will be referred back through the appropriate administrative channels for a solution. Exceptions will be made when the complaint directly concerns Board actions or operations.

The proper channel of complaints on matters related to discipline, instruction, or instructional materials should begin with the teacher. If the complaint is not resolved at that level, it can proceed to the department supervisor, Principal, Superintendent, and finally to the full Board.

The Woodbridge Board of Education welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from the citizens whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the schools to do their tasks more effectively. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaint. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

Since individual Board members have no authority to resolve complaints, other than by formal Board action, Board members shall refer persons making complaints about the schools to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent of Schools. The Board expects that the administration will develop a procedure for receiving complaints courteously and that it will take steps to make a proper reply to the complainant. Follow-up shall be in the form of a written memorandum to the Board members.

Anonymous complaints provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that such complaints will not be pursued. An unsigned complaint will not be read or acted upon at any meeting of the Board and anonymous telephone complaints will not be brought to the Board by any individual Board member, administrator or other District employee. The administration will not act on any anonymous complaint.

Parents should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. Complaints for which specific resolution procedures are provided shall be directed through those channels. The decision of the Principal regarding a student must include notice to the parents of the next step of appeal. Any appeal from the decision of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed.

Complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the building level, either party is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools.

If all other remedies have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the complaint may be appealed to the Board of Education. No appeal will be heard by the Board and no charges or accusations against an employee will be investigated unless the accusations are reduced to writing, signed by the party making the complaint, and presented to the Board through the Superintendent.

The Board will not consider or act upon complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate level or complaints for which specific resolution procedures have been established that do not include Board review. If the Board decides to hear the complaint, the Board shall make a decision which shall be sent to all interested parties. The Board's decision is final.

Challenged Material

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved materials shall be established and followed. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint of standard format and an appointed committee to re-evaluate the material in question.

In all cases, the decision to retain or reject shall be made on the basis of whether the material represents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the material has literary or social value. Factual material shall be included in all instructional material collections.

(cf. 1220 – Citizens' Advisory Committees)

(cf. **1312.3 – Library Material Review and Consideration**)

(cf. 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 – Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *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)

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, **Month 9
Day 9 Year 1981** 9/9/81).

Connecticut General Statutes

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

Policy adopted: ~~March 19, 2012~~

WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Title _____

Author _____ Publisher _____

Request initiated by _____

The concerning material was located in or obtained from:

Library Classroom

If classroom: Grade level _____

Course Name _____

Teacher/Staff _____

The questionable material was:

Required of all students in a class.

Required supplemental reading.

Recommended from an assigned list or staff member.

Independently selected by the student.

Other. Please specify _____

The material is best described as a:

Print Media

Book

Periodical/Magazine

Other (please specify) _____

Audio Media

Music

Podcast/Interview

Other (please specify) _____

Visual Media

Video/Online Content

Poster/Artwork

Other (please specify) _____

If available, please provide the following details about the material publication date

Title _____

Author _____

Publication date: _____

Please answer the following questions:

1. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? If not, what parts did you examine?

2. In what specific ways do you think this work is inappropriate for students?

3. What have you been told about the instructional purpose of this material?

4. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this material?

5. What age group would you recommend this material?

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this work by literary critics and/or professional educators/organizations?

7. What are the valuable aspects of this material?

8. What do you feel may be the results of student reading, listening to, or viewing this material?

9. What work/material of equal or superior value would you recommend replacing the one in question?

10. What would you like the school to do regarding this book/material?

Do not assign to my child

Withdraw it from circulation

Re-evaluate its use or availability in the school

11. Additional Notes/Comments
