

<b>MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT 60-3</b>	<b>NEPN Code: KLB</b>
<b>SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS</b>	

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The School Board is responsible for the adoption of learning materials to support the curriculum. In matters relating to controversial issues, the established curriculum is the basic standard, and the School Board shall exercise final decision-making authority. Through this policy, the School Board recognizes the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of students, parents, and teachers to exercise judgment in meeting the educational goals of the adopted curriculum. In this context, the School Board recognizes that, at times, a re-evaluation of certain curriculum materials may be desirable. It is the purpose of this policy to provide a forum for the free and open discussion and re-evaluation of curriculum materials used in our school district.

### **SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The School Board believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school curriculum must be available to students and teachers. A carefully planned procedure has been established for the identification of appropriate curriculum materials. It is the responsibility of the professional staff of the school system to conduct appropriate needs assessments and study the current trends and issues in curriculum and to recommend to the School Board, for their approval, the curriculum and supporting materials needed to best meet the identified goals of the curriculum.

In considering appropriate curriculum materials, curriculum study committees shall consider the following:

1. Materials should present a balanced view of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. Materials should be provided that stimulates growth in factual knowledge, literacy appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. Materials should help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. Materials should help develop and foster and appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. Materials must provide for all students and effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, or physical ability.
6. Curriculum materials must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND APPEAL**

Any resident of the Marion School District 60-3 or parent of a child attending the Marion Public Schools may object to use of any print or non-print curriculum material. Complaints against classroom instructional materials will be considered a most serious matter and will be processed in a very deliberate manner. Therefore, the following procedures are to be followed, step-by-step. Complaints that reach step 3 will be reported to the School Board.

### Step 1 – Conference with Teacher

The material in question should first be discussed with the teacher who will report the results of this meeting to the principal. Staff members will attempt to accommodate serious religious or moral objections to particular instructional materials by providing alternate materials whenever possible. However, attempts by parents or students to control what others read and study will be subject to careful scrutiny and question by school employees and the School Board. If satisfaction is not reached, the party filing the complaint may continue to Step 2.

### Step 2 – Principal’s Conference

If a complaint is received by the school principal, an informal conference shall be held within five (5) school working days with the Principal, teacher(s) using the curriculum material, and the person filing the complaint, to discuss the purpose and use of the curriculum materials. If the complainant requests that the materials be withdrawn from use with his or her child or the material be modified in its use with his/her child, the Principal shall, if appropriate, honor the request and provide for the modification or substitution of other instructional material.

### Step 3 – Formal Challenge

Upon receipt of the formal complaint form, the Principal shall within five (5) school working days, submit copies of the form along with a written report of the Principal’s conference held with the complainant to the Superintendent.

Within ten (10) school working days of receiving the report, the Superintendent shall form a Curriculum Materials Reconsideration Committee to consist of the following members:

- a. The building principal
- b. Two (2) classroom teachers
- c. Two (2) parents
- d. A business member from the Marion community

The Curriculum Materials Reconsideration Committee shall attend to the following:

1. Study the written recommendations from the Principal and the complainant’s written form, “Request for Reconsideration of Classroom Instructional Materials.”
2. Re-examine the materials in question.

3. Check general acceptance of material by reading reviews and consulting authorities, if appropriate.
4. Invite the complainant to appear before the committee in executive session to explain the concerns. If the complainant does not appear before the committee after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so, the committee shall discontinue its review and evaluation of the material.
5. Provide opportunity for other involved instructional staff member(s) to appear in executive session before the committee.
6. Base the evaluation of the materials on the written objectives of the total program of studies, using the adopted curriculum and this policy as guidelines.
7. Prepare a written report of recommendations in accordance with this policy to be submitted to the complainant and the Superintendent within ten (10) school working days after the committee decision.

The committee's recommendation will be based on one of the following four (4) guidelines:

- a. Recommendation that the curriculum materials continue to be approved for use in the schools by all students.
- b. A recommendation that the curriculum materials be continued in the schools with the recognition that parents or guardians of the child may request that (1) substitute materials be used for their child, (2) alternative instruction will be used for their child, or (3) their child be excused from participation in the class during the time controversial materials are in use. Such parental request shall be in writing and submitted annually to the principal.
- c. A recommendation that the curriculum materials in the schools be modified or limited as specified in the committee's recommendation.
- d. A recommendation that the curriculum materials not be approved for continued use in the schools.

#### Step 4 – Appeal to the Superintendent

If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Curriculum Materials Reconsideration Committee, the complainant may request a review by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall review the "Request for Reconsideration of Classroom Instruction Materials" form submitted by the complainant and the report of the Reconsideration Committee. The Superintendent shall either uphold or overturn the recommendation of the Reconsideration Committee within fifteen (15) school working days based upon a review of the facts as presented by the complainant, the determination of the Reconsideration Committee, the Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Policy of the School Board, and the correctness of the procedures to this point. The Superintendent in his or her discretion may meet with the complainant.

### Step 5 – Appeal to the School Board

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision, he or she may request a review by the Board of Education by submitting a letter to the President of the School Board within ten (10) school working days of the date of the Superintendent's written decision.

The President of the School Board shall determine the review and/or hearing process to be employed by the School Board in each case. This may be limited to a review of the record of the documents relating to the challenge, or by the Board obtaining additional testimony and input, or by a review by a specially convened review panel.

The decision of the School Board shall be final

### **USE OF CHALLENGED MATERIALS DURING RECONSIDERATION**

It shall be the policy of the School Board to continue to use the adopted curriculum materials during periods in which materials may be challenged for reconsideration. Supplemental materials used by an individual teacher that are not part of the School Board's approved materials may be continued in use during challenges for reconsideration provided such use is approved by the building principal.

**REVISED:** February 15, 2011