



School Library Materials Reconsideration

4.403.2p

LAST REVIEWED: December 10, 2021

Standard Operating Procedure Outline

<i>Category:</i>	Instructional Services	<i>Department:</i>	Chief of Schools		
<i>Procedure:</i>	School Library Materials Reconsideration Procedure				
<i>Policy Reference # :</i>	4.403	<i>Version:</i>	1.0	<i>Date Revised:</i>	December 10, 2021

Operational Objective

To outline the process for reviewing and responding to requests for an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource.

Background

Despite the careful selection of library resources and the qualification of those involved in the selection process, objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any current parent/ guardian, employee, or student of the MNPS school district may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource.

1. In accordance with Board Policy 4.403, “The board supports principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and expressed in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association.”
2. All library users have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources.
3. MNPS library materials are selected by librarians according to the MNPS selection procedure and through collection development support from the Nashville Public Library through our Limitless Libraries partnership.
4. Students have a wide variety of books to choose from to support academic needs and independent reading interests.
5. Libraries have diverse materials reflecting differing points of view, and a library’s mission is to provide access to information to all users.

6. Any current parent/ guardian, employee, or student of the MNPS school district has the right to express concerns about library resources and expect to have the objection taken seriously. If the concern is not from a current MNPS parent/ guardian, employee, or student, the concern will not be considered.
7. A questioned item will be considered in its entirety, not judged solely on portions taken out of context.
8. Questioned items will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.

Procedure

- I. Those wishing to submit an informal complaint may contact the school librarian and the principal.
 - a. The librarian and/or principal will listen to the concern and attempt to resolve the issue informally.
 - b. As part of the discussion, the school employee will explain the library's selection procedure, selection criteria, diversity of the collection with resources from many points of view, and the selection process.
 - c. Additionally, each parent/guardian has the right to determine the appropriateness of library resources for their children and should accord the same right to other families.
 - d. All complaints to staff members shall be reported to the building principal, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation.
 - e. No library resources should be removed or restricted from use as a result of the informal complaint.
- II. If the complaint is not resolved informally, and a formal reconsideration process is preferred, the parent/guardian, employee, or student may contact the librarian or principal.
 - a. The librarian will explain the formal reconsideration process and provide the individual with a copy of the school district's library selection procedure with reconsideration procedures and a request for reconsideration of library resources form.
 - b. If there is concern about multiple items, a separate form must be completed for each item.
 - c. The complainant is required to complete and submit the reconsideration form to the principal within ten business days.
 - d. If a completed reconsideration form is not submitted within ten business days, the matter is considered closed.
 - e. The reconsideration form should be completed in its entirety and submitted to the principal.
 - f. Principals shall notify and work in consultation with their executive director.
 - g. The principal will contact the librarian to understand the nature of the request and any attempts at informal resolution that have been made.
 - h. Executive Directors will notify the Chief of Academics and Schools, the Executive Director of Technology Services, the Executive Director of

Teaching & Learning, and the Coordinator of Library Services of the request and will consult with appropriate departments as necessary.

i. The work in question will remain on library shelves and in circulation until a formal decision is made.

j. The Reconsideration Committee will be appointed by the principal and consist of a teacher, a building level administrator, a school librarian, a reading specialist or language arts teacher, and a member of the community.

k. The school librarian will secure copies of the resource for the committee to review.

l. The school librarian will provide the reviewing committee with a short formal Intellectual Freedom training that explains a packet of materials, which includes the library's mission statement, selection procedure, the Library Bill of Rights, the completed reconsideration form, reviews of the resource being reconsidered, and a list of awards or honors, if any.

m. The Reconsideration Committee should schedule a formal reconsideration meeting within 10 school days after the principal receives the written request for reconsideration. The principal should notify the Chief of Academics and Schools, the Executive Director of Technology Services, the Executive Director of Teaching & Learning, and the Coordinator of Library Services as to this schedule.

III. The school level Reconsideration Committee should follow the procedures listed below:

a. At the initial meeting, the principal and committee will review reconsideration committee guidelines and procedures.

b. A member of the committee should keep minutes.

c. All committee members should fully review the resource (read or view the entire work) before voting.

d. The committee reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision-making process.

e. The complainant may make an initial verbal presentation about the resource under reconsideration or may choose to share the written form. The complainant is asked to provide sources for quotes used during this presentation.

f. The complainant may not participate in or observe the committee's deliberations unless invited to do so by the committee. The committee chair may choose to give committee members time to ask questions.

g. During the initial or subsequent meetings, the committee will make its decision determined by the simple majority to retain, move the resources to a different level, or remove the resource. This will be a secret ballot vote.

h. The committee's written decision (including a minority report if needed) shall be presented to the complainant, the Superintendent, Chief of Academics and Schools, the Executive Director of Technology Services, the Executive Director of Teaching & Learning, and the Coordinator of Library Services within five school days after the decision is made.

i. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at the school level, a written appeal can be made within 10 school days to a District-Level Reconsideration Committee. This request should be delivered to the Superintendent.

IV. The District-Level Reconsideration Committee will consider any appeals from the school level. The committee will be appointed by the Superintendent or his/her designee as follows:

- a. Coordinator of Library Services
- b. Director of elementary, middle, or secondary education, as appropriate
- c. Curriculum coordinator specializing in reading from the appropriate level
- d. District-level library services staff
- e. School librarian from the appropriate level
- f. A teacher from the appropriate level
- g. A student from the level in which the challenged material resides (middle or high school level only)
- h. Other district-level instructional directors selected by the Chairperson

V. The organization of the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will be as follows:

- a. Policy, committee guidelines, and procedures should be reviewed at each meeting.
- b. The chairperson will be the Coordinator of Library Services (or other appropriate central office supervisor of school libraries). The secretary of the committee will be elected at each meeting.
- c. The chairperson will be the spokesperson for the committee at all meetings and before the Board of Education when decisions are made.
- d. The secretary will record the minutes and decisions of the meetings.
- e. These should be filed with the chairperson, who will communicate decisions in writing to the superintendent. Meetings will be called at the discretion of the chairperson or when an appeal is requested by a complainant.

VI. The procedures for the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will be as follows:

- a. The chairperson will call the meeting within 10 school days after the written appeal is filed with the superintendent.
- b. The committee shall read and/or examine the challenged resource, read the written reconsideration form, and read copies of the professionally prepared reviews and list of awards provided by the school librarian on the committee. The chairperson should forward these materials to the committee members at least three days prior to the meeting. The procedures for these meetings are the same as those for the school-level meeting.

VII. The procedures for an appeal to the Board of Education will be as follows:

- a. An appeal of the decision made by the District-Level Reconsideration Committee must be made in writing to the superintendent within 10 days of the system-level committee decision.

- b. A decision on the complaint will be made at the next regular meeting or special meeting within 30 days of the written request to the superintendent.
- c. The board reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision making.
- d. The chairperson for the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will present the committee's decision to the board.
- e. The complainant or designee will present the petitioner's position.
- f. The board decision will be final, and the superintendent will implement the decision.
- g. Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for five years before new requests for reconsideration of those items will be entertained.
- h. The principal will respond to the resident, parent or guardian, or student that the request has been granted or denied.

Reconsideration of School Library Materials Form

The school board of Metro Nashville Public Schools has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the school library professional staff and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request a formal reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to the school librarian (or principal).

Date _____

Name

Address

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Do you represent self? ____ Or an organization? ____

Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:
____ Book (e-book) ____ Movie ____ Magazine ____ Database
____ Audio Recording ____ Digital Resource ____ App
____ Newspaper ____ Game ____ Streaming Media ____ Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

Is the resource part of the curriculum, library collection, or other?

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined or read the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting the committee to consider?

