



4.403.2p School Library Materials Reconsideration

Standard Operating Procedure Outline

Category:	Instructional Services	Department:	Chief of Schools		
Procedure:	School Library Materials Reconsideration Procedure				
Policy Reference # :	4.403	Version:	2.0	Date Revised:	July 1, 2025

Operational Objective(s)

To outline the process for reviewing and responding to a formal request for reconsideration of a library resource.

Concerns regarding the age-appropriateness of library materials should begin informally at the school level.

The reconsideration procedure aligns with the expectations set forth by the Age-Appropriate Materials Act (Public Chapter 744) and the Age-Appropriate Materials Act Amendment (Public Chapter 782).

Background Information

- In accordance with Public Chapter 744, a complainant, who is defined as a current parent/guardian, employee, or student of the MNPS school district, has the right to express concerns about library resources and to expect to have the objection taken seriously. If the concern is not from a complainant who is a current MNPS parent/guardian, employee, or student, the concern will not be considered.
- A request for reconsideration can be filed on an item to be considered as a whole or in part.
- Items requested for reconsideration will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.
- 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.”
- All library users have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources.
- 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.
- Students have a wide variety of books to choose from to support academic needs and independent reading interests.
- Libraries have diverse materials reflecting differing points of view, and a library’s mission is to provide access to information to all users.

Procedures

1. Only a current parent/guardian, student, or staff member may submit a formal request for reconsideration or submit a written appeal.
2. Only one formal request for reconsideration submitted by a complainant who is a parent/guardian, student, or staff member can be submitted and reviewed at a time.
3. The complainant must complete the reconsideration form in its entirety and submit it to the school's principal. If a completed reconsideration form is not submitted within five business days following an informal meeting with the school principal, the matter is considered closed.
4. The principal will inform the Coordinator of Library Services and the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction that a formal reconsideration form has been received.
5. A district level reconsideration committee will be formed and will follow the reconsideration protocol; it has up to thirty days to meet, reach a decision, and make a recommendation in writing to the Board of Education.
6. No library resources should be removed or restricted from use while the book is under reconsideration.
7. A decision on the complaint will be made at the next regular board meeting or special meeting in order to meet the 60-day timeline outlined in P.C. 782.
8. The Board decision will serve as the final decision from the district and will potentially impact all schools in MNPS. The Director of Schools or designee will implement the decision.
9. Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for five years before new requests for reconsideration of those items will be entertained.
10. The Board Chair or Director of Board Relations will respond to the complainant that the request has been granted or denied.
11. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the results of the decision and/or the decision was not made within the 60-day time frame, the complainant may appeal to the State Textbook Commission.
12. Decisions made at the State Textbook Commission level will impact and/or override any decision made by the MNPS Board of Education.

Protocol

1. If a completed reconsideration form is received by the principal within five business days of the informal meeting, the reconsideration process at the district level will occur.
2. The principal will inform the Coordinator of Library Services and the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction that a formal reconsideration form has been received.
3. No library resources should be removed or restricted from use during the reconsideration process.
4. The district level committee will be appointed by the Director of Schools or his/her designee as follows:
 - o Coordinator of Library Services
 - o Director of Elementary or Secondary Literacy, as appropriate
 - o Curriculum coordinator specializing in reading from the appropriate level
 - o School librarian from the appropriate level and each quadrant
 - o A teacher from the appropriate level and each quadrant
 - o A student from the level in which the challenged material resides (high school level only)

- A current parent/guardian of a student in the district
 - Other district-level instructional directors selected by the Director of Schools or his/her designee.
5. 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 appointed by the chairperson at each meeting.
- The chairperson will be the spokesperson for the committee and before the Board of Education when decisions are made.
 - The secretary will record the minutes and decisions of the committee, which should be filed with the chairperson, who will communicate decisions in writing to the Director of Schools and the Director of Board Relations, as appropriate.
6. The procedures for the district level reconsideration committee will be as follows:
- The chairperson will secure copies of the resource for the committee to review.
 - The chairperson will provide the committee with a short formal intellectual freedom training that explains a packet of materials, which includes the school mission statement, selection procedure of library materials, the Library Bill of Rights, the completed reconsideration form and written appeal, reviews of the resource being reconsidered, and a list of merit, awards, or honors, if any.
 - If the committee finds that the resource contains one or more of the prohibited topics outlined in Public Chapter 782, the item must be removed from school libraries in MNPS.
 - All committee members should fully review the resource (read or view the entire work) before voting.
 - The committee reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision-making process.
 - The complainant may not participate in or observe the committee's deliberations.
 - During this meeting, 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.
7. The committee's written decision shall be presented by the Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction to the Board of Education within thirty school days of receipt of the completed reconsideration form.
8. A decision on the complaint will be made at the next regular meeting or special meeting within 30 days of the submission of the formal complaint.
- The Board reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision making.
 - The Board decision will serve as the final decision from the district and will potentially impact all schools in MNPS.
 - The Director of Schools will implement the decision.
 - Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for five years before new requests for reconsideration of those items will be entertained.
 - The Board Chair or Director of Board Relations will respond to the complainant that the request has been granted or denied.
 - If the complainant is unsatisfied with the results of the decision and/or the decision was not made within the 60-day time frame, the complainant may appeal to the State Textbook Commission.

The prohibited subjects, as defined in § 39-17-901:

(4) "Excess violence" means the depiction of acts of violence in such a graphic or bloody manner as to exceed common limits of custom and candor, or in such a manner that it is apparent that the predominant appeal of the material is portrayal of violence for violence's sake;

(9) "Nudity" means the showing of the human male or female genitals, pubic area, or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering or the showing of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering of any portion below the top of the nipple, or the depiction of covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state;

(11) "Patently offensive" means that which goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in describing or representing such matters;

(12) "Prurient interest" means a shameful or morbid interest in sex;

(13) "Sadomasochistic abuse" means flagellation or torture or physical restraint by or upon a person for the purpose of sexual gratification of either person;

(14) "Sexual conduct" means:

(A) Patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated. A sexual act is simulated when it depicts explicit sexual activity that gives the appearance of ultimate sexual acts, anal, oral or genital. "Ultimate sexual acts" means sexual intercourse, anal or otherwise, fellatio, cunnilingus or sodomy; or

(B) Patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, and lewd exhibition of the genitals; and

(15) "Sexual excitement" means the condition of human male or female genitals when in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal.

Documents Referenced:

[MNPS Board Policy 4.403](#)

[MNPS School Library Materials Selection](#)

[Rules of the Tennessee Department of Education The State Board of Education; Chapter 0529-02-02 District and School Operations](#)

[Library Bill of Rights](#)

[TN Public Chapter 744](#)

[TN Public Chapter 782](#)

[Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission Library Guidance Document](#)