Parents may have concerns about instructional materials used in the school system. Thus, the Board provides opportunities for parents to review instructional materials and a process for parents to use when they object to instructional materials.

A. PARENTAL RIGHT TO INSPECT MATERIALS

Parents have a right under federal law to inspect all instructional materials which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any applicable federally funded programs. Parents ordinarily also may review all other instructional materials following procedures provided by the school or Superintendent. The term “instructional materials” does not include academic tests or assessments. Some materials available through the Internet and used in individual classes to provide up-to-date information or information on current events may not be available for advance review; however, all materials used in reproductive health and safety education shall be available for review as provided in policy.

B. PARENTAL OBJECTION TO MATERIALS & PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINT

Despite the quality of the selection process, the care taken in the process, and the qualifications of persons selecting the resources, occasional objections to instructional materials may be made. The Cleveland County Board of Education supports principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and expressed in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association and the Students’ Right to Read of the National Council of Teachers of English. Parents may present an objection to the principal regarding the use of particular instructional materials following the procedure listed below:

Procedure Following a Complaint

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally with the principal, the following formal steps will be taken:

1. The principal or designee will provide the complainant with a copy of this policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form. This form must be filled out and returned to the school principal by the complainant before any consideration is given.

2. The principal shall keep challenged material in use during the review period and no material shall be withdrawn or made unavailable to students whose parents do not object as a result of any such request.

3. If the complainant seeks to excuse only his/her child from use of the challenged material, the principal shall make a decision based on consideration of the basis of the parent’s objection, the availability of curriculum alternatives, and the degree to which
the requested change would significantly disrupt the educational program or place a substantial burden on instructional staff.

4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the principal and/or seeks to remove the challenged material from school use, the complainant may submit an appeal to the school-level Media and Technology Advisory Committee. The school-level Media and Technology Advisory Committee will:
   a. read, view or listen to the material in its entirety;
   b. survey reviews of the material in professional reviewing sources;
   c. determine the extent to which the material supports the curriculum and the selection criteria;
   d. weigh the merits against the alleged weaknesses, considering the whole item instead of isolated passages or portions; and
   e. provide a written report of the committee’s decision to the principal and the media supervisor;
   f. review the complainant’s objections to the challenged materials;
   g. use checklist for school Media and Technology Advisory Committee; and
   h. retain or withdraw the challenged item upon completion of this process.

The principal will notify the complainant in writing of the Media and Technology Advisory Committee’s decision. A copy of the report will be filed in the principal’s office.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the committee’s decision, he/she may file a Request for Review of Building-Level Recommendation with the school principal within fifteen (15) days of notification of the building-level decision.

**Procedure Following a Challenge to a Building-Level Recommendation:**

1. Upon receiving a completed Request for Review of Building-Level Recommendation, the principal shall inform the Superintendent that a formal complaint has been received.

2. The Board, upon notification from the Superintendent that a review of a building-level decision has been requested, may create a system level Media and Technology Advisory Reconsideration Committee if one does not exist. The committee should consist of:
   a. the Superintendent or designee, who shall serve as the committee chair;
   b. the media supervisor;
   c. a media coordinator and/or teacher from each level of school within the system;
   d. a principal from each level of school within the system;
   e. a parent/community member from each level of school within the system;
   f. a parent from the school from which the challenge originates; and
   g. at least 1 high school student.
3. The Media and Technology Advisory Reconsideration Committee will re-examine all documentation from the original reconsideration decision and prepare a written report of the findings and recommendation directed to the Board. Specifically, the members of the committee will:
   a. review the report of the building-level committee;
   b. read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety;
   c. check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews and consulting recommended lists from reputable agencies;
   d. record and consider any statement or explanation requested of the complainant; and
   e. review the objections of the complainant as stated in the Request for Review of the building-level recommendation form.

4. The Board will decide whether to continue using the challenged material based upon the considerations outlined in this policy, the statement of findings by the Media and Technology Advisory Reconsideration Committee, and other legitimate educational factors.

5. The Board shall, at all times, have sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged materials should be retained or removed.

The Superintendent or designee will include notice of the right to inspect and object to instructional materials set forth in this policy in the student/parent handbook distributed at the beginning of each school year.


Adopted: February 12, 2018

Replaces: Board policy 3330, Parental Review of Instructional Material and Board policy 3310, Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Material (in part)