

# Superintendent Procedure 2015SP.A Instructional Materials Complaint Procedure

Approved by: s/S. Enfield Date: 3/8/12

Dr. Susan Enfield, Interim Superintendent



It is the policy of the Seattle School Board to provide programs, courses of study, and activities, which will afford learning experiences, appropriate to the age and level of student understanding. Although great care is taken to choose instructional materials to further this goal, at times a Seattle Public Schools parent, guardian or student may identify the particular material as offensive or controversial in content or manner of presentation. Examples are materials on sexuality, vulgarity, religion, or materials that appear to not be age appropriate. In those situations the Seattle Public Schools parent, guardian, or student has the right to file a complaint about the particular material.

This procedure outlines the complaint process for both School Board-adopted materials as well as school-based supplemental materials.

If a parent, guardian or student has a complaint about an instructional material, it must first be filed with the school principal.

The complaint must be filed in writing; assistance in writing the complaint will be provided if requested.

The complaint must state:

- The complainant's name
- The nature of the complaint, including specifics about why the instructional material being complained about is offensive or controversial and should not be used within Seattle Public Schools, including identifying specific page numbers or passages that are objected to

The principal will work with the complainant and the teacher to determine if the issue can be resolved at the school level, and shall provide a decision to the complainant within 10 school days.

If the Seattle Public Schools parent, guardian or student is dissatisfied with the response of the principal, he or she may elevate the complaint to the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Again, the complaint should be in writing and should include why the principal's response was inadequate.

The Director of Curriculum and Instructional Supports will appoint an ad hoc committee to review the objection to the materials. The committee shall be composed of the school principal, the regional Executive Director of Schools, the manager of the content area in question, and two other persons ("general members") selected by the Director of Curriculum and Instructional Supports. At least one of the general members should be a non-staff member of the school community where the material was used.

The committee shall submit a written report outlining the committee's review process and its recommendation about the complaint to the Director of Curriculum and Instructional Supports within ten (10) school days after the complaint has been received.

The Director of Curriculum and Instructional Support shall review the report and send his/her decision in writing to the complainant within ten (10) school days after the ad hoc committee's written report was received.

Neither the ad hoc committee nor the Director of Curriculum and Instructional Supports is required to take testimony from witnesses about the material at issue; a paper review is deemed sufficient.

If the instructional material being appealed is a supplementary material, the decision of the Director of Curriculum and Instructional Supports is final; there are no further appeals.

If the instructional material being appealed is a School Board-adopted material, the complainant may appeal the decision to the School Board. The School Board shall send the appeal to the Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee, which shall review the Director of Curriculum and Instructional Supports' decision at the Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting and make a recommendation to the full School Board within ten (10) school days after that meeting. The School Board's decision concerning the review committee's recommendation shall be final and shall be sent in writing to the complainant within ten (10) school days after the School Board's decision.

Neither the Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee nor the School Board are required to take testimony from witnesses; a paper review of prior decisions is sufficient.

In the instance of a complaint filed during a school year vacation period (such as winter or summer break) every timeline is extended to forty-five (45) calendar days.

Approved: May 2012

Revised:

Cross Reference: Policy Nos. 2015, 2331; RCW 28A.645.010; 2015SP.B; 2015SP.C