

## **Series 1000 – Community Relations**

### **3. Public Activities Involving Staff, Students or School Facilities**

#### **A. Relations between Public and School Personnel**

##### **(2) Public Complaints**

The Board of Education welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from citizens whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the schools to do their tasks more effectively. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaint. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board or as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

#### **Instructional Materials**

The Board of Education is responsible for approving the textbooks used in the district. The Board delegates to the Superintendent or his/her designees the authority for the selection of texts and other instructional materials in order to meet the educational objectives of the district.

In accordance with the above, the following guidelines for dealing with complaints regarding texts or other instructional materials shall be followed:

1. Any person who wishes to request re-evaluation of the use of any text or instructional material shall be encouraged to talk with the appropriate teacher, preferably in person. An individual parent has the right to request that his/her child not be required to use a specific text or instructional material, provided a qualifying written request to excuse the child is made with notifications to the appropriate building principal. Alternative texts or instructional materials will be provided when circumstances warrant such action. A decision in such matters will be guided by state laws and regulations where applicable.
2. If there is need for further appeal, the complainant should present, in writing, any objections to the Principal for discussion. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the conference with the Principal, he/she may request, in writing, a conference with the Superintendent. The complainant shall include in this request a brief explanation of the reason for the conference.
3. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall offer to meet with all parties involved in an attempt to mediate the issue.

4. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting with the Superintendent, the complainant may file a written complaint to the Board of Education through the Superintendent on the appropriate form. These forms are available in the office of the Superintendent.
5. The Superintendent shall then present all written materials to the Board of Education for review. The Board of Education may decide to direct the Superintendent to convene an administrative review to make appropriate recommendations.
6. After reviewing the recommendation of the review panel, the Superintendent shall bring his/her recommendations to the Board for final disposition.
7. The final decision regarding texts or other instructional materials that have been questioned will rest with the Board after careful examination of discussion of the text or other instructional materials with school officials, the complainant, or anyone else the Board may wish to involve.

### **Classroom Methods**

The Board of Education recognizes the right and responsibility of the teacher to use the methods necessary to meet the educational objectives of the established curriculum. In course of delivery of curriculum, members of the public may experience differences of opinion, misunderstandings or misinterpretations regarding instructional methods. In light of the possibility of such situations, the following process has been devised for information and clarification.

1. The complainant will be encouraged to talk with the teacher first, preferably in person.
2. If there is need for further discussion, the complainant shall present his/her objections, in writing, to the Principal for discussion. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the conference with the Principal, he/she may request, in writing, a conference with the Superintendent. The complainant shall include in this request a brief explanation of the reason for the conference.
3. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall offer to meet with all parties involved in an attempt to mediate the issue.
4. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting with the Superintendent, the complainant may file a written complaint to the Board of Education through the Superintendent of the appropriate form, which is available in the office of the Superintendent. The Superintendent will bring the complaint along with a recommendation for resolution to the Board of Education for review and possible action.

(cf. 5145.2 Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference:     *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

*President’s Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25* 457  
F. 2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976)

*Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District*, 541 F. 2d 577 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
1976)

*Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v.*  
*Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982)

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of  
Education, 9/9/81)

Connecticut General Statutes

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education

Policy adopted:     August 15, 2006

SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Suffield, Connecticut