

## Appendix C

## PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR LEARNING RESOURCES

An Albemarle County citizen who has a concern about a learning resource will first discuss the concern with the teacher/staff member and the principal. After a conference with the principal, if the complainant requests the material be withdrawn from use for his child, the principal may honor the request if (s)he determines that the substitution of other instructional material is appropriate. If the concern cannot be resolved, the following process will begin:

1. The principal will:
  - a. inform the complainant that he has the right to file a formal complaint;
  - b. provide the complainant with the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources" form and review the form and the complaint process with the complainant;
  - c. inform the Superintendent of the situation and forward a copy of the completed form to the Superintendent;
  - d. maintain the materials in use pending a final decision.
2. Within 10 working days of receiving the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources" from the principal, the Superintendent will have staff review the Reconsideration Request to see if issues raised have been covered "in principle" by previous decisions. This staff review and recommendation will be sent to the Superintendent within 10 working days. If it is determined that the issue has been covered "in principle", the Superintendent will either render a written decision or ask that a reconsideration committee be established. If it is determined the issue has not been covered "in principle," a reconsideration committee will be established.
3. The committee will be composed of the following members:
  - a. the Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, who will serve as the Chairperson of the committee;
  - b. two high school students (if high school materials are involved);
  - c. one teacher, one building principal, and one media specialist who has not previously considered the material for inclusion in the media collection, if possible;
  - d. three community members who are not division employees who are selected from

a division wide pool; two of the community members will be parents from the specific level receiving the challenge, i.e., elementary, middle, or high school level. The division wide pool will consist of nominees from each school PTO which will annually name two people to be part of this pool.

4. The committee Chairperson will convene the committee and appoint a secretary responsible for keeping minutes of the committee's proceedings. The purpose of the committee is to examine the disputed materials, to review the written complaint and to make a recommendation concerning the use of the material. The complainant and a representative from the school will be invited to speak directly to the review committee. The committee must make their recommendation to the Superintendent within 20 working days of the establishment of the committee.
5. The reconsideration committee shall:
  - a. read the challenged materials, review the materials in terms of the Criteria for Selection of Learning Resources (Policy IIAB: *Learning Resources Selection and Adoption*), study the complaint form, and read reviews and other pertinent information about the materials;
  - b. attempt to reach a consensus on their recommendation. If consensus cannot be reached, the committee's recommendation will be based on a majority vote. The committee's recommendation will include specific rationale based on the Criteria for Selection of Learning Resources, information on the material from reviews and other sources, and the educational value of the material;
  - c. sign a report of the committee's recommendation prepared for the Superintendent by the Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, or sign a minority report if applicable;
  - d. send the committee's report, including any minority report, to the School Board's legal counsel for review prior to submission to the Superintendent. The School Board's legal counsel shall advise the Superintendent regarding the recommendation within 10 working days of receiving the reconsideration committee's recommendation.
6. Upon receiving legal counsel's review of the recommendation of the reconsideration committee, the Superintendent has 10 working days to forward his written decision and rationale along with a copy of the committee's report(s) to the complainant and the School Board. The complainant may appeal within 10 working days the decision to the School Board.

7. If the complainant does appeal the decision, the appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Clerk of the School Board. The School Board will consider this within 20 working days of the filing of the appeal.
8. If no appeal is filed:
  - a. If the Superintendent's decision does not cause a change in the use of the material, the School Board may at its discretion review the Superintendent's decision, but shall not be required to do so.
  - b. If the Superintendent's decision causes a change in the use of the material, the School Board shall review the decision. The Board will consider the Superintendent's decision within 20 working days after the 10 working day appeal period has expired.
9. If the School Board reviews the Superintendent's decision, the School Board shall:
  - a. affirm, reverse, or modify the Superintendent's decision. The Board's decision shall be final;
  - b. inform the complainant and the principal in writing of the action taken;
  - c. communicate any changes in the use of material at a School Board meeting, through a media release and through a division-level publication.
10. Any of the time lines set forth in this regulation may be extended by the Superintendent for cause. Any change in this time line will be communicated to the School Board and the complainant.

Adopted: July 1, 1993  
Amended: October 10, 1994, July 8, 1996, September 8, 1997; May 11, 1998; February 9, 2006  
Reviewed: July 12, 1999

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Cross Ref.: Policy IIAB, Learning Resources Selection and Adoption

## PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR LEARNING RESOURCES

It is the responsibility of the School Board to establish and apply the curriculum of the Albemarle County School Division. The selection of learning resources is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the Division. Despite the care taken to select valuable and educationally suitable learning resources for student and teacher use, and despite the qualifications and expertise of the persons involved in the selection process, it is recognized that occasional objections to materials will be made by the public. It is, therefore, the policy of the School Board to provide a channel of communication and procedures for Albemarle County citizens to follow in expressing and resolving concerns about the learning resources, including printed or audio/visual materials and speakers.

Formal complaints about learning resources shall be presented in writing in accordance with the supportive regulations of this policy. The standards and procedure for review shall be consistently applied in recognition of the respective rights and responsibilities of all concerned. Learning resources shall be considered for their educational suitability according to criteria listed in Policy IIAB: *Learning Resources Selection and Adoption* and shall not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

All written challenges will be reviewed by staff to determine if the request has been covered "in principle", meaning the complaint falls into a category about which the Superintendent or School Board has taken a formal stand. If it is determined that a matter has been covered "in principle" the Superintendent will not typically call a reconsideration committee. A reconsideration committee will only be called if an issue has not been covered "in principle", or at the request of the Superintendent. The reconsideration committee makes recommendations to the Superintendent regarding the learning resources. The Superintendent, upon receipt of the committee's recommendation, will review the complaint and the committee recommendations and forward the committee recommendations and his decision to the School Board. The decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the School Board or reconsidered by the Board, if it votes to do so. No material will be removed or restricted without the approval of the School Board. The decision of the Board will be final.

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## CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LEARNING RESOURCES

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Material: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Request Initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Represents:     Self  
   Organization (please name: \_\_\_\_\_)  
   Other Group (please identify: \_\_\_\_\_)

1. To what in the material do you object: (Please be specific; cite instances)
  
2. What do you feel might be the result of using this material?
  
3. For what age group would you recommend this material?
  
4. Is there anything good about this material?
  
5. Did you read, view or listen to the material in its entirety? What parts?
  
6. Are you aware of the judgement of material by reviewers?
  
7. What do you believe is the theme of this material?
  
8. What would you like your school to do about this material?  
 Do not assign it to my child                     Send it to a committee for reevaluation  
 Withdraw it from all students as well as my child
  
9. In its place, what material of equal quality would you recommend?

Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed:        July 12, 1999; February 9, 2006

## LEARNING RESOURCES/TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

### A. Learning Resources

The Board delegates the responsibility for the selection and use of learning resources to its professionally trained staff. The Superintendent/ Designee shall be responsible for the selection of learning resources identified for division-wide use and principals shall be responsible for the selection of resources utilized by their respective schools. "Learning resources" are textbooks and other instructional materials used by schools and teachers to assist in the teaching and learning process and include such items as, but are not limited to, textbooks, text media, tradebooks, reference books, magazines, newspapers, charts, pictures, maps, globes, computer software, on line databases, workbooks, kits, videos, DVD's games, and instructional materials that are used to implement curriculum programs, including audio visual material and instructional technology. Selection and use will be in accordance with policies and regulations established by the Board and shall consider requests from faculty and students. The same care shall be exercised in the selection of learning resources as in the selection of other types of instructional materials (Policy IIA – Instructional Materials). This policy and its provisions are applicable to any resource, regardless of whether it is a school-purchased, student-provided, or teacher-provided resource.

### B. Textbooks

The Board is empowered to adopt textbooks subject to regulations of the Virginia Board of Education. The Virginia Board of Education adopts a multiple list of textbooks for each grade level and subject from which the Board may select textbooks for adoption. The Board may adopt books which are not on the state-adopted list, provided the selection is in accordance with specified guidelines.

The Albemarle County School Board will adopt textbooks for use in the division based upon recommendations presented by the Superintendent. The evaluation of textbooks will be conducted by committees of teachers and parents appointed by the Superintendent/Designee, will involve students when appropriate, and will use the criteria in section C, below, for selection. The procedures for textbook adoption are established in the regulations for this policy.

### C. Criteria for Learning Resources and Textbook Selection

The criteria for selection of Learning Resources/textbooks shall include the following:

- educational suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter
- timeliness
- quality of the writing/production, format
- readability
- authoritativeness and reputation of the publisher/producer, author/artist, composer, etc.

- supplemental sources indicated
- favorable reviews as well as recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- high degree of potential user appeal
- value commensurate with cost/need

Resources used by students under the guidance of teachers to extend, expand, and supplement basal materials constitute an integral part of the instructional program. Resources selected for instructional use must relate directly to the established essential understandings, knowledge and skills of the SOL Curriculum Framework content area in which they are used.

Professional staff, to include teachers and library/media specialists, must carefully review materials prior to use and exercise a high degree of professional judgment in their selection and use of learning resources, to ensure that the use of such resources serves to both support and complement the basic instructional objectives within the specific subject areas and classrooms. A common learning resources review form will be used for this purpose. This form shall guide the evaluation and shall follow, at minimum, the selection criteria outlined in this policy. (See *IIAA-F2: Learning Resources/ Textbook Review Criteria Form.*)

The Board precludes the showing of movies, videos and DVDs rated as R in all schools and PG 13 in middle and elementary schools without first securing permission from parents. Written permission to view the film/video/DVD must be obtained from the parent on the permission form contained in *IIAA-F1: Film/Video/DVD Opt-In Permission Form*. Parent permission is not required when showing teacher-selected excerpts edited or downloaded for instructional purposes.

Adopted: June 22, 2006  
 Amended: October 14, 2010

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Legal Refs: Constitution of Virginia, Art. VIII, Sec.3, Virginia Code §§22.1-238 through 22.1-243; 8 VAC 20-230-10 *et seq.*

Cross Refs: IIA, *Instructional Materials*



## Learning Resources/Textbook Review Criteria Form

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Format: (circle one) textbook book software video/DVD online resource maps globes, charts, textbook peripheral material other: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ (if software, indicate single user/ lab pack/network version)

\_\_\_\_\_ OSX \_\_\_\_\_ Windows \_\_\_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria/Considerations

Rating (Highest to Lowest)

Educational suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter 4 3 2 1 0

- Are the language and content appropriate for the intended audience?
- Does the resource address skills such as independent and critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration?
- Does the resource avoid religious, sexual, racial, or other cultural biases?
- Does the resource address a variety of modes, levels and styles of learning?
- Does the resource minimize commercial references, promotions, and endorsements?
- Does the resource support SOL, County curriculum goals and power standards?
- Is the resource useful in making interdisciplinary connections?

Timeliness 4 3 2 1 0

- Is the information current?
- Does the material address issues which are of current interest?

Quality of writing/production 4 3 2 1 0

- Is the resource well-written or produced?
- Has it won any awards or special recognition?
- Is the resource objective in its presentation?
- Are facts presented accurately?
- Does the resource have literary value?
- Are the text, text features, graphics and multimedia of high quality?
- Is the information well organized and the content logically developed?

Readability 4 3 2 1 0

- Is the vocabulary at the intended user’s reading level?
- Are the concepts at the intended user’s level of understanding?
- Is the layout appropriate for the reading level of the material?

Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer, etc. 4 3 2 1 0

- Is the writer/ producer, author/artist, composer, etc. an authority in the subject area?
- Is the publisher reputable?
- Has the creator won any awards or special recognition for this or other works?

Supplemental sources 4 3 2 1 0

- Are information sources well documented?
- Does the resource include supplemental resources for teachers?
- Is there adequate technical (local and vendor) support available for software?

Favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel 4 3 2 1 0

- Have you personally reviewed the material recently?
- Have you received recommendations from colleagues?

Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources 4 3 2 1 0

- Has this resource been favorably reviewed by experts in the field?
- Does the resource appear on one or more reputable book lists or selection aids? (Two favorable reviews are recommended.)

High degree of potential user appeal 4 3 2 1 0

- Is the resource relevant to the intended user’s experience?
- Does the resource provide intellectual challenge?
- Does the resource satisfy the intended user’s curiosity and encourage the use of imagination?
- Does the resource allow students to make choices and provide appropriate feedback?

Comments:

Professional Staff Member(s): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s)/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Original to principal and copies to originating teacher(s) and instructional coordinator