

## **Suggested Guidelines for the Reconsideration of Instructional Materials in the North Carolina Public Schools**

- I. All school systems shall have in place a system-wide selection policy in compliance with **General Statute 115C-98**.
- II. The Department of Public Instruction recommends that each school have a building-level Media and Technology Advisory Committee whose members are responsible for assisting media and technology professionals in the selection process and the building-level challenge of materials. This committee, appointed by the principal and co-chaired by the school library media coordinator and the technology facilitator, should consist of:
  - Principal
  - Representative from each grade level or department
  - Representative from special areas
  - Parent representative
  - Student representative (at the middle and high school levels)

All requests for reconsideration of materials should begin at this level with the submission of a Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources (see sample).

- III. In accordance with GS 115C-98 (b1), a school system's Community Media Advisory Committee may be appointed by the local board of education to investigate and evaluate challenges. If the appointment is made, the Department of Public Instruction recommends that the committee should consist of:
  - the superintendent or his/her designee
  - the media director or his/her designee
  - the technology director or his/her designee
  - a media coordinator and technology facilitator/or teacher from each level of school within the system (i.e., elementary, middle, high school)
  - a principal from each level of school within the system
  - a parent/community member from each level of school within the system
  - a parent from the school from which the challenge originates
  - at least 1 high school student

The chair of this committee should be appointed by the board of education. If the person originating the challenge at the building level is not satisfied with the building-level recommendation, he/she should submit a *Citizen's Request for Review of Building-Level Recommendation* within one week of the publication of the building-level decision.

- IV. In accordance with GS 115C-98 (b1), "The local board, at all times, has sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged material should be retained or removed."

## Sample Media and Technology Selection Policy

### I. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTING MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

In accordance with PUBLIC SCHOOL LAWS OF NORTH CAROLINA, General Statute 115C-98 (b) "Local boards of education shall adopt written policies concerning the procedures to be followed in their local administrative units for the selection and procurement of supplementary textbooks, library books, periodicals, and other instructional materials needed for instructional purposes in the public schools of their units . . ." The Board of Education delegates the responsibility for coordinating the selection of instructional resources and recommendation for purchase to the professional media and technology professionals in the administrative unit.

Each school's Media and Technology Advisory Committee will assist media and technology professionals in the selection process and the school-level challenge of materials. The Media and Technology Advisory Committee is appointed by the principal and co-chaired by the school library media coordinator and the technology facilitator. This committee includes teachers representing all subject areas and/or grade levels, students (in middle and high school), and parent/community representatives. Under the leadership of professional media personnel, this group sets priorities for resources to be acquired based on school-wide objectives and on strengths and weaknesses in the existing collection. It is also the first level of response to any challenge of resources within the school system.

In 1996, GS 115C-98 was amended by adding a new subsection to read, "A local board of education may establish a community Media Advisory Committee to investigate and evaluate challenges from parents, teachers, and members of the public ... The local board, at all times, has sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged material should be retained or removed."

### II. OBJECTIVES FOR SELECTING MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

The primary objective of each school's library media and technology program is to enrich and support the instructional program of the school. The media and technology program makes available, through the school's collections, a wide range of print, nonprint, and technology on varying levels of difficulty with a diversity of appeal compatible with the different needs, interests, and viewpoints of students and teachers.

To this end, the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education in keeping with the ideas expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights*, asserts that the responsibility of the media program is as follows:

1. to provide resources that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, learning styles, and developmental levels of the students served.
2. to provide resources that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. to provide a background of information enabling students to comprehend their role as citizens in society and to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.

4. to provide resources on opposing sides of controversial issues so that students may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical thinking and of critical analysis of all media.
5. to provide resources representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups in our nation and the contributions of these groups to our American heritage.
6. to place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in selecting media of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for all users.

### III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

Individual teaching and learning styles, the curriculum, and the existing collection are given consideration in determining the needs for resources in individual schools.

After a careful needs assessment, resources considered for purchase are judged on the basis of the following criteria:

**Purpose:** Overall purpose and its direct relationship to instructional objectives/curriculum

**Reliability:** Accurate, authentic, up-to-date, authoritative treatment: Clear, skillful, well-organized, unbiased, comprehensive, well-balanced

**Technical Quality:** Relevant to content, sound and visuals consistent with state-of-the-art capabilities

**Format:** Well-organized, attractive, appropriate

**Construction:** Durable, manageable

**Possible Uses:** Individual, small group, large group, introduction, in-depth study, remediation, enrichment

### IV. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING AND MAINTAINING THE MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTION

In coordinating the selection of resources, the media and technology professionals, assisted by the Media and Technology Advisory Committee, should:

1. use reputable, unbiased selection tools prepared by professional educators and arrange, when possible, for firsthand examination of resources to be purchased
2. judge gift items and classroom collection purchases by standard selection criteria
3. weed continuously and purchase replacements for worn, outdated, damaged, or missing resources basic to the collection

## V. PROCEDURES FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Occasional objections to some resources may be voiced by the public despite the care taken in the selection process and despite the qualifications of persons selecting the resources. If a complaint is made the following procedures should be observed:

1. Inform the complainant of the selection procedures and request that the complainant file his/her objections in writing by completing the *Request for the Reconsideration of Instructional Resources* form to be submitted to the building-level Media and Technology Advisory Committee.
2. The building-level Media and Technology Advisory Committee will:
  - examine the item and the objection(s)
  - survey reviews of the item in professional reviewing sources
  - determine the extent to which the item supports the curriculum
  - weigh the merits against the alleged weaknesses, considering the whole item instead of isolated passages
  - discuss the item and prepare a written report of the findings and recommendations of the committee
  - send copies of the report to the principal, the media director, and technology director. The media director and technology director should discuss the report with the superintendent, who may present it to the board.
3. If the complainant is not satisfied, he/she may file a *Citizen's Request for Review of Building-Level Recommendation* with the Community Media Advisory Committee if such a committee exists. Following the steps outlined above, the community-level committee will re-examine all documentation from the original reconsideration decision. They will prepare a written report of their findings and recommendation and report directly to the local school board.
4. In accordance with GS 115C-98 (b1), "The local board, at all times, has sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged material should be retained or removed."

## Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources

Name of person making request \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents: \_\_\_\_\_ himself/herself or \_\_\_\_\_ organization  
 (name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Are you a parent or guardian of a student in this school? \_\_\_\_\_ Child's grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school owning the item to be reconsidered \_\_\_\_\_

Title of item \_\_\_\_\_ Format \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Please complete separate form for each individual title to be reconsidered) (book, video, etc.)*

Author/artist/composer, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher/producer \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright date \_\_\_\_\_

How did you acquire this item? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire item? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, what parts? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this item part of a series or set? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ . If yes, did you examine other items in the series or set? \_\_\_\_\_

To what in the item do you object? (Please be specific: cite pages, frames, etc.)

What do you feel might be the result of a student's reading, viewing, or listening to this item?

Are you aware of any evaluations of this item by authoritative sources? \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ . If yes, did those sources agree with your opinion? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ ; No \_\_\_\_\_

List the sources \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want other persons in the community to determine the kind of materials your child may or may not use in school? \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Citizen's Request for Review of Building-Level Recommendation

Name of person making request \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents: \_\_\_\_\_ himself/herself or \_\_\_\_\_ organization  
(name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Are you a parent or guardian of a student in this school system? \_\_\_\_\_ Child's grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school owning the item to be reconsidered \_\_\_\_\_

Title of item \_\_\_\_\_ Format \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Please complete separate form for each individual title to be reconsidered) (book, video, etc.)*

Author/artist/composer, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher/producer \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright date \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of the reasons for the building-level decision regarding this resource?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ ; No \_\_\_\_\_

What aspects of the decision are you requesting be reviewed? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have additional comments or information about the resource that you did not include on the building level Request for Reconsideration form? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ ; No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please include:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date