

SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Salem, Connecticut

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Board members shall refer persons in making complaints about the schools to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, thence, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. The decision of the Administration regarding a student must include the next step of appeal. Any appeal from the decision of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed.

Concerns expressed by individuals may be entertained by the Board only after it has been determined that all means for addressing concerns at lower levels of responsibility have been exhausted. In addition, the Board may review such concerns only if another specific Board policy expressly provides for such review by the Board. Anonymous complaints provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that such complaints will not be pursued. The administration will not act on an anonymous complaint.

1. The immediate responsibility concerning an individual student regarding educational matters is with the classroom teacher or subject teacher. Until such time a problem has been resolved, individuals should proceed through the next levels of responsibility until an understanding is reached. In most instances levels for responsibility proceed starting with the teacher to the school Principal, and then to the Superintendent.
2. The immediate level for responsibilities regarding administrative matters is generally with the School Principal.
3. The immediate level for responsibility regarding the implementation of Board policies and District administrative matters is with the Superintendent.
4. The immediate level for responsibility regarding the formulation of Board policies and the establishment of rules and regulations as required by state law is with the Board of Education.

Challenged Material:

Instructional materials and books are selected to further curricular goals; however, the Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to and the rights of citizens who may be concerned about certain instructional materials and books. Individuals do not have the right, however, to suppress the study or examination of issues about which they hold strong beliefs or opinions.

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved materials and books shall be established and followed. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint on a form

available from the Superintendent's office. A broad-based review committee shall be appointed by the Superintendent to re-evaluate the material in question. Challenged instructional materials or books shall remain in use pending a final decision.

In all cases, the decision to retain or reject shall be made on the basis of whether the material or book furthers curricular goals, represents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with or whether the material or book has literary or social value.

(cf. 1220 – Citizens' Advisory Committees)  
(cf. 5145.2- Freedom of Speech/Expression)  
(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)  
(cf. 6161 – Textbooks and Educational Materials)

Legal Reference: *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 385 US 589,603 (1967). *President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25* 457 F.2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 US 998 (1976). *Minarcini v. Strognsville 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 US 853 (1982). Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by CT State Board of Education, 9/9/81). Connecticut General Statutes: 10-238 Petition for hearing by Board of Education.

Policy Adopted: April 19, 1996  
Policy Revised: June 26, 2002  
Policy Adopted: July 24, 2002

Revised Policy 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: June 4, 2007  
Revised Policy Adopted: July 16, 2007

Revised Policy 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: April 4, 2011  
Revised Policy Adopted: May 9, 2011

jlk