

## **Instruction/Community Relations**

### **Library Material Review and Reconsideration**

#### **Statement of Policy:**

The Bristol Board of Education understands that, on occasion, a member of the public may wish to register a complaint against library and other educational materials as defined in this policy. Consideration of requests to reconsider and remove material, displays, or student programs is limited to individuals with a vested interest. An individual with vested interest may challenge any library and other educational materials, display or student program by initiating a review of such material via the submission of a request for reconsideration form.

It shall be the policy of the Bristol Board of Education that the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book shall not occur on the sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive. No library and other educational material, display, or program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be canceled, because of the origin, background, or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display, or program. Library and other educational materials, displays, and student programs shall only be excluded for lack of legitimate pedagogical purposes or for failing to meet professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and maintenance policy or the display and program policy.

Until a final decision is made by the review committee, any library and other educational material being challenged shall remain available in the school library media center according to such material's catalog record and be available for a student to reserve, check out, or access.

Bristol Public School district may consolidate any requests for review and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other educational material. Once a decision has been made by the review committee on any library and other educational material, such material cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a period of three years.

Through this policy, the Board of Education ensures that all library materials shall be evaluated and made accessible in accordance with protections against discrimination set forth in section §10-15c of the Connecticut General Statutes, ensuring that no person is discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or any other category protected by law. The Bristol Board of Education will review and update this policy as necessary every five years.

#### **Definitions**

***"Library and other educational material"*** means any material belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a school library media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material, software and other material not required as part of classroom instruction.

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#### Definitions (continued)

**"School library staff member"** means a school library media specialist, school librarian, any certified or non-certificated staff member whose assignment is in the school library or any individual carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media specialist or school librarian.

**"Individual with a vested interest"** means any school staff member employed by the Bristol Board of Education, parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school in Bristol Public Schools at the time a reconsideration form is filed, or any student currently enrolled in a school in Bristol Public Schools at the time a reconsideration form is filed.

**"Remove"** means deliberately taking library material out of a library's collection. **"Remove"** does not include the process of clearing such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

#### Material Review and Reconsideration Procedure

The Bristol Board of Education has established the following procedure for addressing complaints regarding the utilization of library and other educational materials:

1. Individuals with a vested interest may initiate the review or reconsideration of any library and other educational materials, display, or student program by submitting a request for reconsideration form to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational materials are being challenged.
2. Individuals with a vested interest shall be required to read the library and other educational materials cited on the request for reconsideration form in the work's entirety.
3. The Principal, or the Principal's designee, shall promptly forward the request for reconsideration to the Superintendent of Schools for the school district.
4. The Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, shall appoint a District Library Review Committee consisting of:
  - a) the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee;
  - b) the Principal of the school in which the library and other educational material is being challenged, or the Principal's designee;
  - c) the Director of curriculum, or a person in an equivalent position;
  - d) a representative from the Bristol Board of Education;
  - e) at least one grade-level-appropriate teacher familiar with the library material provided, the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the form;
  - f) a parent or guardian of a student *age thirteen years or younger* enrolled in Bristol Public Schools, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the form;
  - g) a parent or guardian of a student *aged fourteen years or older* enrolled in Bristol Public Schools, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the form;

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#### **Material Review and Reconsideration Procedure (continued)**

- h) a certified school librarian or certified library media specialist employed by Bristol Public Schools or employed by another board of education in the state.

In cases where such form is submitted by a student enrolled in *grades nine to twelve*, inclusive, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, may serve on the review committee if such student did not submit the reconsideration form, provided the superintendent consults with the principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to making this determination whether to include such student on the review committee.

5. The **review committee** shall evaluate the request for reconsideration form by reading the challenged material in its entirety and evaluating the challenged material against Bristol Public School's *Library Collection Development and Maintenance Policy*.
6. The **review committee** shall make a *written decision* on whether to remove the challenged material *within sixty school days* from the date of receiving such request and provide a copy of the committee's decision and report to *the individual with a vested interest who submitted the form and to the principal of the school*.
7. The individual with a vested interest who submitted the *request for reconsideration form* may appeal the *review committee's decision* to the Bristol Board of Education. The Board shall determine whether the reconsideration process was followed and publish the decision on the school district's website.

#### **General Provisions**

Any school library media specialist or school library staff member who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

Legal Reference: Public Act 25-168 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2027, and Making Appropriations Therefor, and Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget.

Connecticut General Statutes  
Section 10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited