

Policy on Complaints

The Board of Education recognizes responsibilities both to protect its employees from unwarranted charges and to provide a channel whereby citizens may register considered complaints and be assured of a courteous reply.

General Complaint Procedures. Complaints and grievances shall be handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible.

Although no member of the community shall be denied the right to petition the Board of Education for redress of a grievance, complaints shall be referred back through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Board. Exceptions are complaints that concern Board actions or Board operations only.

The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teacher
2. Principal
3. Superintendent
4. Board of Education

Complaints Regarding Educational Materials. The Board of Education has established the following guidelines for addressing complaints regarding the utilization of books and other educational materials in the instructional program.

1. A parent and/or legal guardian has the right to request that his/her child not read, view or hear given material provided a written request is made to the appropriate building Principal. No parent and/or legal guardian has the right to determine instructional materials for students other than his/her own children.
2. If there is parental/guardian concern about a particular book or instructional material, the parent will be asked to complete a "Request for Review of Book or Other Instructional Material" form. This request will be reviewed by the teacher giving the assignment, the appropriate department coordinator, and the Principal. If a question arises concerning the suitability of a library book or other library material, the same form will be used to register parental concern and the form will be reviewed by the librarian, the appropriate department coordinator, and the Principal. The Principal will discuss the results of the school's review with the Superintendent of Schools and provide an answer giving the school's position to the parent. If the parent is not satisfied with the answer given by the Principal, s/he may appeal to the Board of Education through the Superintendent of Schools.

A complaint concerning a school staff member should be made first to the school Principal. If this does not result in resolution of the problem, it is referred by either party to the Superintendent of Schools. Following this preliminary consideration and investigation, all such

complaints will be reported to the Board of Education as matters of information. In no case will complaints be registered in the presence of the pupils.

In the event that an individual Board member receives an oral or written complaint, the member will refer this to the school administration for investigation and report prior to a Board meeting. Following such report, the member may decide whether the situation can be amicably resolved, or whether steps should be taken toward formal Board consideration.

The Board of Education, as a whole, will give formal consideration in executive session to complaints against personnel, only after these have been submitted in writing, signed and investigated by the school administration. Written complaints received by the superintendent or the Board will be assured of a written reply.

- (cf. 1220 - Citizens' Advisory Committees)
- (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 (6th 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.

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NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
North Canaan, Connecticut