CONCERNS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

I. Purpose

The purpose of Policy KEC is to ensure that concerns about instructional resources are addressed and to establish the procedures for handling them.

II. Background

The Board of Education recognizes that despite care taken to select instructional resources, which are valuable for the student and the teacher, occasional objections may arise relative to the use of such instructional resources.

The Board of Education further recognizes the right of a citizen to file a “Request for Consideration of Instructional Resource” and to request the review of any instructional resources he/she finds objectionable and to seek resolution through established channels.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definition applies:

Instructional resources: Any instructional media used to teach a component of the curriculum, including a book, textbook, and on-line or digital resource.

IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

The Board of Education believes that educators are best suited to select instructional resources. The following procedure for addressing concerns about resources shall establish a multi-level process that will begin at the school level.

A. The parties should first attempt to resolve the concern at an informal meeting with the principal and/or teacher. If the objection concerns a book on a supplemental reading list, the student involved must be given a choice of another book. If the book involved is taught in class and read in common, the book will stay in the curriculum pending a recommendation of a committee (see step C below) or the Superintendent (see step D below).

B. If the complainant maintains opposition to use of the instructional resource, the complainant is to complete the attached “Request for Consideration of Instructional Resource” form (Exhibit KEC-E) and submit it to the Chief Academic Officer. It is also available at www.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/Public. Unless otherwise stated in this policy, contested instructional resources will remain in use.

1. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Chief Academic Officer will initially determine the appropriate staff member to meet with the complainant and attempt to answer any questions and resolve differences.

2. In the event a resolution is not reached, the Chief Academic Officer may appoint a committee (see step C below) or refer the concern directly to the Superintendent for a decision (see step D below). A written decision will be rendered no later than sixty (60) days after the submission of the written complaint to the committee or the Superintendent.

3. If the Chief Academic Officer has recommended that the matter is to be referred to a committee, the committee will view the instructional resource or read the written material and issue a written report.
C. The Committee and Its Deliberations

1. Composition of the Committee

   a. The committee will be composed of at least the following members to include:

      (1) Three (3) staff members

         (a) One (1) curriculum supervisor or one media supervisor
         (b) One (1) administrator
         (c) One (1) teacher

      (2) Three (3) community representatives

         (a) Two (2) parents of students enrolled in Washington County Public Schools
         (b) One (1) citizen (who may be a parent) knowledgeable in the subject area involved

      (3) One (1) high school student (grades 9-12) when the matter deals with a secondary-level, instructional resource

      (4) The committee shall serve until the specific challenge has been resolved. If there are additional challenges to the resource or challenges to supplementary, similar, or related resources, the original committee may be reconvened.

2. Deliberations

   a. The committee will meet and receive testimony from the complainant and staff concerning the contested resource. Additionally, the committee may, at its discretion, receive oral or written testimony from proponents of the resource. Barring extenuating circumstances, the committee will establish procedures governing the hearing and deliberations and will render a written report.

   b. The Chief Academic Officer will provide the report and his/her recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will render a decision and provide written notification of the decision to the complainant.

   c. The complainant may appeal the Superintendent’s decision to the Board of Education within thirty (30) days in accordance with Policy BEE and Administrative Regulation BEE-R(3).

D. Referral to Superintendent

1. In the event a “Request for Consideration of Instructional Material” is referred to the Superintendent, a written decision is to be issued by the Superintendent.

2. The complainant may appeal the Superintendent’s written decision to the Board of Education within thirty (30) days in accordance with Policy BEE and Administrative Regulation BEE-R(3).

See also: Policy BEE – “Administrative Hearings and Appeals”
Administrative Regulation BEE-R(3) – “Rules and Procedures in Appeals and Hearings--§4-202(c)(3)
Exhibit BEE-E(3) – “Appeal Information Form §4-205(c)(3)

Board of Education of Washington County