

152 BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS AND TREATMENT OF MINORITIES

The principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the staff rather than the material must be defended.

A file recording the basis for decision is kept on materials likely to be questioned or considered controversial.

If a complaint is made the procedures are as follows:

1. Be courteous but make no commitments.
2. Invite the complainant to file his objections in writing and offer to send him the prepared questionnaire so that he may submit a formal complaint to the library committee.
3. Suspend the material pending a decision of the library committee.
4. Inform the superintendent and the library coordinator.
5. The library committee will—
 - a. Read all books or examine materials referred to it.
 - b. Check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews, consulting authoritative lists and holdings of local libraries.
 - c. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on messages pulled out of context.
 - d. Meet to discuss the material and to prepare a report on it.
 - e. File a copy of the report in the school and administrative offices.
6. Material rejected by the committee will be removed from the school collection.

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A BOOK

Author _____ Hardcover _____ Paperback _____
 Title _____
 Publisher (if known) _____
 Request initiated by _____
 Telephone _____ Address _____
 City _____ Zone _____
 Complainant represents _____

- _____ himself.
 _____ (name organization) _____
 _____ (identify other group) _____
1. To what in the book do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages.) _____
 2. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book? _____
 3. For what age group would you recommend this book? _____
 4. Is there anything good about his book? _____
 5. Did you read the entire book? _____ What parts? _____
 6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics? _____
 7. What do you believe is the theme of this book? _____
 8. What would you like your school to do about this book?
 _____ do not assign it to my child.
 _____ withdraw it from all students as well as from my child.
 _____ send it back to the English department office for reevaluation.
 9. In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization? _____

 Signature of Complainant

QUIZ YOURSELF

HOW GOOD IS YOUR BOOK SELECTION POLICY?

1. If you are not able to see and review new books (or hear them reviewed) before purchase, do you delay purchase until you have read critical reviews (not merely advance notices or one review only) or do you rely mainly on advertising, publishers' catalogs and salesmanship?
2. Do you check annual summing-up selective lists: the ALA list of "Notable Books" of the preceding year, the annual supplement to the H. W. Wilson CATALOGS, the annual new Bowker catalog of BEST BOOKS FOR CHILDREN and lists available from certain large libraries of the year's outstanding books? Do you check recommended lists of science books issued by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and magazine summaries in Scientific American, Natural History, and Horn Book?
3. Do you spend ample time examining new books at Book Exhibits set up at association meetings, collections of review copies in state library offices, and exhibits arranged locally (suspending judgment on longer texts until you have opinion on content)?