

Community Relations

Public Complaints

The Orange Board of Education welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from the citizens whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the schools to do their tasks more effectively. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaint. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

Since individual Board members have no authority to resolve complaints, other than by formal Board action, Board members shall refer persons making complaints about the schools to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent of Schools. The Board expects that the administration will develop a procedure for receiving complaints courteously and that it will take steps to make a proper reply to the complainant. Follow-up shall be in the form of a written memorandum to the Board members.

Anonymous complaints provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it is the policy of the Orange Board that such complaints will not be pursued. An unsigned complaint will not be read or acted upon at any meeting of the Board and anonymous telephone complaints will not be brought to the Board by any individual Board member, administrator or other District employee. The administration will not act on any anonymous complaint.

Parents should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. Complaints for which specific resolution procedures are provided shall be directed through those channels. The decision of the Principal regarding a student must include notice to the parents of the next step of appeal. Any appeal from the decision of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed.

Complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the building level, either party is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools.

If all other remedies have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the complaint may be appealed to the Board of Education. No appeal will be heard by the Board and no charges or accusations against an employee will be investigated unless the accusations are reduced to writing, signed by the party making the complaint, and presented to the Board through the Superintendent.

The Orange Board will not consider or act upon complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate level or complaints for which specific resolution procedures have been established that do not include Board review. If the Board decides to hear the complaint, the Board shall make a decision which shall be sent to all interested parties. The Board's decision is final.

Upon receipt of a written petition signed by one percent of the voters or fifty voters, whichever is greater, the Orange Board of Education shall hold a public hearing on any question specified in the petition within three weeks of receipt of the petition.

Challenged Material

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved materials shall be established and followed. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint of standard format and an appointed committee to re-evaluate the material in question.

In all cases, the decision to retain or reject shall be made on the basis of whether the material represents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the material has literary or social value. Factual material shall be included in all instructional material collections.

(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.

Policy adopted: April 15, 2013

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If it appears necessary, the Superintendent, the person who made the complaint, or the employee involved may request a session of the Orange Board of Education for the purposes of fuller study and a decision by this body. Generally, all parties involved, including the school administration, shall be asked to attend such a meeting for the purpose of presenting additional facts, making further explanations, and clarifying the issues. Hearsay and rumor shall be discounted as well as emotional feeling except those directly related to the facts of the situation.

The Board shall conduct such meetings in as fair and just a manner as possible. The Board may request a disinterested third party to act as a mediator to help it reach a mutually satisfactory solution. After the Board's decision, the usual appeal route pertains.

Any parent, guardian, or other person who upbraids, insults, or abuses any teacher or other employee on school property or in the presence of pupils may be prosecuted by the district under the provisions of law. School employees who are sued as a consequence of performing their assigned duties shall be provided full legal services.

Request for Re-Evaluation of Instructional Materials

The following procedure shall be followed whenever there is a request for the evaluation of print and non-print material other than textbooks:

1. The Superintendent shall establish an ad hoc review committee broadly representative of :
 - a. teachers competent in the area of the content covered by the print or non-print material.
 - b. administrators, directors, and supervisors appropriate to the level and/or subject for which material is used
 - c. a media specialist shall serve on the review committee.

1. Objections to materials and requests for re-evaluation must be presented in writing on the proper form. A 'Challenged Material' form is obtainable in the office of the Superintendent.
2. Initial action on a written request on the proper form shall be taken no later than fifteen school days after receipt of the request.
3. A written report from the review committee shall be submitted to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall then communicate his or her decision to the person requesting the re-evaluation.
4. Should the decision of the Superintendent not satisfy the person requesting the re-evaluation, the Board of Education may review the Superintendent's decision.
5. Once instructional material has been adopted and re-evaluated the material cannot be subject to further review without special approval by the Board of Education. Challenged instructional materials shall remain in use in the schools pending final decision.

(cf. 6161 – Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 365 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

President's Council, District 25 v. Community

School Board No. 25 (457 F 2d. 289 (1972, cert. denied Nov. 1972)

Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District

(541 F. 2d. 577 (6th Cir. 1976)

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut

State Board of Education, 9/9/81)

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