

BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE CODE G12PC: GUIDELINES FOR CHALLENGED CURRICULAR AND LIBRARY MATERIALS

Summary	1
Complaints about Library or Classroom Materials	1
Ad Hoc Committee	2
Requests to Inspect Instructional Materials	2
Requests to Opt Out of Curricular Content	2
Approval and Denial of Formal Requests of Both Classroom Content and Curricular Materials	3
For Approved Requests	3
For Denied Requests	3
Appeals Process	3
Clerical Information	3
Appendix 1 - Support for Intellectual Freedom	3

Summary

Burlington School District offers a diverse range of instructional and library materials that reflect and support the identities, abilities, cultures, and languages of its students. Our curriculum and materials aim to engage and empower all learners through inclusive, balanced, and age-appropriate content. Furthermore, schools and libraries must provide an impartial environment that adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom. This procedure outlines how parents may request to inspect curricular materials or seek options to opt their children out of specific topics of study or discussion. While Vermont law (16 V.S.A. §1) guarantees a quality education for all students and generally does not permit parents to alter or opt out of the curriculum, exceptions exist. These include a religious exemption for health instruction related to disease, animal dissection, and student surveys by third parties.

Complaints about Library or Classroom Materials

If someone has a complaint about library or classroom books or materials, they should be advised to send a written letter to their school's principal/director.

1. When a written complaint is received in a school, the principal will provide a [form](#) for the formal request to challenge curriculum and library materials.
 - a. Anonymous complaints, "for the good of all" complaints, or blanket grievances that include multiple titles or materials will not be considered.
 - b. Written requests must be submitted for each individual piece of work to be reconsidered.
 - c. Complaints should be directed to the school where the materials are located.
 - i. Complaints are considered on a "per school" basis; the review committee will determine if a complaint should be reviewed at the district level.
 - ii. No materials will be removed or sequestered pending the filing of a complaint or the completion of the committee's investigation.
2. As soon as a completed form is received, the building administrator will notify the superintendent that a request is in place and appoint an **ad hoc review committee** to hold a meeting to determine if the request falls under the exemptions outlined in State or District policies. The ad hoc review committee will be made up of up to 4-8 school community members:
 - Building-level administrators
 - A school BSD librarian or a teacher with subject knowledge/expertise in the audience's age group
 - A student with parental permission (grades 6-12)
 - A community member (may include support staff, PTO member, or family)

- A representative from the Office of Equity
- A representative from the Office of Teaching & Learning

Ad Hoc Committee

During the time the ad hoc committee is meeting:

1. No materials will be removed or sequestered pending the filing of a request or investigation by the committee.
2. The building administrator will notify the superintendent that a request for curricular or materials review is in place, inform them of the members of the ad hoc review committee, and share the calendar dates of when the meetings are scheduled to take place.
3. At the initial meeting, the building administrator and committee will review the complaint and this procedure, and conduct an interview with the librarian or teacher whose curricular content is being reviewed. A member of the committee will keep electronic minutes to be shared with the superintendent.
4. The committee reserves the right to utilize outside expertise, if necessary, to inform its decision-making process.

Requests to Inspect Instructional Materials

Our procedure for the inspection of instructional materials follows the guidelines set forth in Vermont's Public Records Act. To request **an inspection of instructional materials**, the concerned party should submit a written request to the building administrator and to superintendent@bsdvt.org.

1. The administrator will then notify the student(s)' teacher(s), the Office of Equity, and the Office of Teaching and Learning within 24 working hours and will connect with BSD's Communication Specialist for assistance.
2. For most requests, the Vermont Public Records Act affords BSD three business days, upon receiving the request, to provide the records. However, there are certain instances where the District may be allowed up to 10 business days to complete the request. Within three business days, the Superintendent will provide the requester with the documents or notify them that the District will need additional time.

Note: The inspection of instructional materials differs from the inspection of a student's record. Any requests for student records, including transcripts and school records, should be made directly to the student's school(s). FERPA requests must be honored within 45 days (both working and nonworking); BSD strives to fulfill FERPA requests quicker than this.

Requests to Opt Out of Curricular Content

The following procedures outline the steps for requesting to opt out of the curriculum and the subsequent process.

Note: There are very limited content areas that families can opt their students out of. To request to opt a student out of the curriculum, the student's legal guardian must submit a request in writing to the school principal.

1. When a written opt-out request is received in a school, the teacher and the principal must both be notified of the request and its source.
2. The parent/guardian should receive a copy of this procedure to inform them of their rights. Current opt-out topics include:
 - a. ***The right to opt out of curricular content regarding the [treatment of diseases](#), [animal dissection](#), and the administration of surveys developed by 3rd parties.***
3. The parent or guardian will be notified in writing by administrators within 72 hours that their request has been received and is under review. The teacher and administrator will work with the student's legal guardian toward an informal resolution with the goal of keeping the student accessing the curriculum. An informal resolution may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Phone calls, email communications, and/or face-to-face meetings with legal guardians to further discuss concerns and share relevant information about their student's learning.
 - b. Sharing samples of curricular content in the form of syllabi, unit outlines, and/or book lists to transparently address guardian concerns.
 - c. Upon request, teachers will provide copies of the course outlines or curriculum maps for inspection of instructional materials within three business days of formal requests.
4. If an informal resolution is not reached, parents can complete a formal [Public Request for Curriculum Opt Out](#) if the areas of complaint fall under *the right to opt out of curricular content regarding the treatment of diseases, animal dissection, and the administration of surveys developed by 3rd parties*.
 - a. If complainants have concerns about curriculum that falls outside of these content areas, they can proceed with the following alternative resolutions:
 - i. Make a request to inspect instructional materials (see above).

- ii. Request a meeting with delegates from the Office of Teaching and Learning, the Office of Equity, and/or administrators, to further understand the purpose and intention behind the curricular content.

Approval and Denial of Formal Requests of Both Classroom Content and Curricular Materials

A building administrator or designee should fully participate in the Ad Hoc Committee review process. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee, including, but not limited to, the librarian, two classroom teachers, special educator, ML educator, and tech integrationist, as appropriate. The building administrator shall schedule a formal meeting within 10 school days of the school's receipt of the parental/guardian request.

At the initial meeting, the building administrator/designee and the committee will review the forms, written communications, and curricular materials. A member of the committee will keep minutes.

After the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, the legal guardian(s) will be informed if their request was approved or denied.

For Approved Requests

The teacher will provide the principal with specific dates and times where the curricular content or materials under scrutiny will be covered and provide alternative learning opportunities for the student. Alternative physical spaces will be provided to the student (such as the library or office) where the student can work on alternative academic activities when the content is being taught.

For Denied Requests

Legal guardians will receive a letter of explanation, and it will include the option for a phone or in-person conversation with the building administrator or their designee.

Appeals Process

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the committee's recommendation, the complainant may contact the Superintendent to appeal the decision within 30 days.
2. The Superintendent will review the complaint with a spokesperson from the Ad Hoc School-based Committee and legal counsel to discuss the decision. The Superintendent will schedule an appeal hearing with the complainant and render a final decision within 30 days. The Superintendent will make a final decision regarding the status of any questioned material. The superintendent's decision regarding the status of any questioned material will remain in effect for a minimum of three calendar years.

Clerical Information

BSD Version:	BSD GUIDELINES FOR CHALLENGED CURRICULAR AND LIBRARY MATERIALS
Date Adopted:	9/8/25
Legal Reference(s):	Title 16 V.S.A. § 131 Participation In Assessment and Accountability - Data Collection and Reporting Knowledge Base Library Bill of Rights ALA
Policy Reference:	F7R Pupil Privacy Rights: Student Survey G 7 Curriculum Coordination G12 Selection of Curricular Materials G17 Burlington School District G 17: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES D5 Animal Dissection AOE Comprehensive Sexual Health Program Policy
Forms	Public Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials BSD Committee Checklist for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Appendix 1

[Support for Intellectual Freedom | ALA](#)