

Raymond School District

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Tina H. McCoy, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Scott Riddell, Special Education Director
Todd Ledoux, Facilities Director
Jennifer Heywood, Administrative Assistant



Marjorie Whitmore, Business Administrator
Michael Whaland, Curriculum Coordinator
Karen Stuart, Human Resources Coordinator
Kevin Federico, Technology Director

Tracy Paradis
8 Sun Hill Road
Raymond, NH 03077
January 18, 2019

Dear Ms. Paradis,

I am writing in relation to your appeal to the recent decision of a committee (formed in accord with Raymond School District Policy KEC-R) to review your request for formal reconsideration of instructional materials. I have reviewed your request in light of the specific materials you object to, in the context of the overall unit of instruction (Personal Essay Writing) in 7th grade English class. I examined all of the documents forwarded to me by the committee along with your recent email correspondence related to this matter. Due to the nature of your concerns, I also asked our School Psychologist to review the materials with me, so that I could take her professional judgment into account.

In short, I find that the unit of instruction on personal essay writing in Ms. Sharrow's class was sound and developmentally appropriate as it was presented. The questions that you objected to (Lopate's suggestions for personal essay writing) were only one aspect of the overall writing project. They were presented as guidelines or ideas to consider along with many other materials designed to encourage students to self-reflect in order to choose a topic and improve their personal essay writing skills. Students were not compelled to answer the questions that constitute *Lopate's tips*, nor were they required to share their answers with peers.

I find that the Personal Narrative Unit, including Lopate's Tips for Personal Writing which are one small part of that unit, should not be withdrawn from the seventh grade English curriculum.

If you choose to file a final appeal with the School Board you may do so within 10 days. I have enclosed Raymond School Board Policy KEC, which outlines the steps you must take if you choose to file a final appeal (please see section #6).

Thank you for your correspondence and for accessing your right to appeal a decision in accord with District Policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Tina H. McCoy'.

Tina H. McCoy, Ed.D. – Superintendent of Schools

Cc Mike Whaland – Curriculum Director
Bob Bickford – IHGMS Principal

Raymond School District Policy – KEC
POLICY ON RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Persons not in agreement with the school on its selection of books or other instructional material and who wish a particular book or material to be reviewed must follow the procedure outlined below.

The Principal, upon receipt of a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials," (KEC-R) will acknowledge receipt to the complainant and list anticipated steps to be taken. The Principal will then notify the appropriate Review Committee and schedule meetings as necessary to review the complaint and to write a report.

The committee's final report will be forwarded to the complainant and the Superintendent. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the next step is to submit the request to the Superintendent for action. If the complainant does not accept the Superintendent's decision, the complainant may request a review by the School Board, whose decision will be final. The request forms are available at the school office.

During the investigation, the instructional material under consideration will remain in use. No parent/guardian or group of parents/guardians has the right to determine the reading matter for students other than their own children. The School Board does recognize the right of an individual parent/guardian to request that his/her child not read a book, provided a written request is made to the building principal. An alternative book will be provided by the school upon request.

Occasionally, the public may make objections to selected instructional material. Any complaint received by the library media generalist or a classroom teacher concerning instructional materials shall be reported to the principal. Only residents of the Town of Raymond or parents/guardians of children in the Raymond School District shall have standing to challenge the validity of any instructional material.

If a material is challenged, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The principal shall contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the school and the selection policy that is in place, and/or by providing agreed upon alternative assignments or materials. This shall take place within 10 school days. If the complainant remains unsatisfied, the administration shall schedule a meeting with the complainant and the staff member(s) involved with the selection/use of the material in question in order to review the selection criteria and intended use.
2. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant will be given the materials describing the selection policies and procedures for handling objections and the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials, (KEC-R). If the principal does not receive the form within 10 school days, the matter will be considered closed.
3. If the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form is filed with the Principal, a copy shall be sent to the library media generalist and/or the classroom teacher and the Superintendent. The principal shall then establish a Review

Committee. The ad hoc Review Committee shall consist of the Principal, two faculty members from the appropriate school or grade level, a parent/guardian and/or community member and a parent/guardian serving on the parent-teacher organization board.

4. The Review Committee shall be provided with the request for reconsideration and shall:
 - a. Read and/or examine the materials referred;
 - b. Check the general acceptance of the materials by reading reviews;
 - c. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages, statements, or images pulled out of context;
 - d. Consider policies IJ, Instructional Materials, and IJL, Teaching and Learning Materials Selection;
 - e. Meet to discuss the material and prepare a report containing their recommendation on the disposition of the matter within 20 school days.
5. A copy of the report will be provided to the Superintendent's Office and the complainant within 5 school days. If the complainant disagrees with the committee's decision, the complainant may file an appeal to the Superintendent within 10 school days. The Superintendent will render a decision based on the final report within 10 school days.
6. Should the complainant disagree with the Superintendent's decision, the complainant may file a final appeal to the School Board within 10 school days. S/he shall:
 - a. Present a written notice of appeal to the School Board through the Superintendent;
 - b. Attach a copy of the original written request and a copy of the committee's report;
 - c. Request a meeting date with the School Board;
 - d. A representative from the Review Committee may be requested to review the Committee's report with the Board.
7. The Board will make a final determination within 20 school days, recording its decision in the minutes of the meeting.

RSA 650 Obscene Matter
See Appendix KEC-R

Adopted: August 1, 2002
Revised: April 21, 2010