

CHALLENGING SCHOOL LITERARY MATERIALS: REVIEW AND/OR RECONSIDERATION REQUEST

Background

The Peace River School Division (PRSD) believes that students benefit from having access to a diverse collection of literary materials. These resources help children and students build important skills such as reading, communication, and critical thinking, while encouraging curiosity, self-discipline, and a love of learning. At the same time, the Division understands that families and community members may have questions or concerns about some literary materials. Maintaining public trust and respecting community values means having a clear and fair way to listen to and address these questions and concerns. For this reason, the Division has established a formal Complaint Process for individuals who wish to raise concerns about the content or the suitability of the school's literary resources available to students.

This process ensures that concerns are reviewed carefully and consistently. It allows for the review of specific school literary materials to determine whether access should be limited or whether materials should be removed, based on concerns about appropriateness or whether the materials meet the specific criteria outlined in Section 2(a) of Ministerial Order #034/2025 and this Administrative Procedure.

The procedure clearly explains how concerns can be submitted, how materials are reviewed, who is involved in the review process, and how final decisions are shared with those who raise the concern.

1. Eligibility to Submit a Request

A formal Request for Review/Reconsideration of Literary Materials Form (Form 251-1) may be submitted by any of the following individuals (eligible complainants):

- A child or student enrolled in the school;
- A PRSD employee;
- A parent of a child or student enrolled in a PRSD school;
- A member of a PRSD school council; or
- A member of the community with a direct connection to the school.

2. Principal's Initial Administrative Review

2.1 The eligible individual (complainant, as noted in Section 1 above) must complete and submit Form 251-1 to the school Principal. The request must clearly identify the material of concern and specify how it violates the standards outlined in Section 2(a) of the Ministerial Order.

2.1.1 The Principal shall forward a copy of the completed Form 251-1 to the Superintendent.

2.2 The Principal, within 10 school days, shall conduct an initial review of the challenge and the material's compliance with the Ministerial Order.

Restriction and Escalation (Non-Compliant/Merit)

- 2.3 If the Principal deems the material requires formal reconsideration and/or violates the terms and conditions of the Ministerial Order, access to the material shall be immediately restricted or the material shall be removed pending the final decision, and the Principal will escalate the request to the PRSD Review Committee.

Administrative Denial (Compliant)

- 2.4 If the Principal finds the material is in compliance with the Ministerial Order, it will remain accessible. The Principal shall notify the complainant in writing, detailing the required steps to escalate the challenge to the Formal Review Committee.
- 2.5 The Superintendent will be informed of the Principal's decision.

3 Escalation and Formal Appeal

- 3.1 A complainant appealing the Principal's denial (Section 2.4) must submit a formal letter of appeal, a copy of the original Request for Review/Reconsideration of Literary Materials Form 251-1, the Principal's written finding, and a detailed rationale for appeal (identifying specific Ministerial Order Section 2 criteria failures).
- 3.2 The required documentation must be submitted to the Superintendent (or designate) within 10 school days of receiving the Principal's decision.

4 Formal Appeal Process

- 4.1 Within 10 days of receiving the documents for appeal, the Superintendent will establish a Formal Review Committee to examine the literary work(s) being challenged.
 - 4.1.1 The Formal Review Committee will be composed of:
 - 4.1.1.1 The Superintendent;
 - 4.1.1.2 A principal from another school within the division; and
 - 4.1.1.3 The Literacy Coordinator, or designate, for the division.
 - 4.1.2 Material in question shall be evaluated with respect to:
 - 4.1.2.1 Adherence to the Ministerial Order #034/2025 and the related Administrative Procedure;
 - 4.1.2.2 The Alberta curricula in the relevant subject area;
 - 4.1.2.3 Alberta Education policy re: Controversial Issues in the Classroom; and,
 - 4.1.2.4 Existing community culture and values.
- 4.2 The Superintendent's office will inform the complainant in writing, of the membership of the committee, procedural rules, and the date and time of the formal hearing.
- 4.3 The appeal will proceed as planned, even if the complainant is unable or unwilling to attend.

5 Communication of Decision

- 5.1 The PRSD Formal Review Committee's final decision shall be communicated in writing to the complainant and the Principal within 2 business days of the formal hearing, including a comprehensive rationale.

6 Appeal of the PRSD Formal Review Committee Decision

- 6.1 If the PRSD Formal Review Committee upholds the Principal's original decision to keep the literary material in the library for student access, the complainant will be informed about the right to appeal the committee's decision to the PRSD Board of Trustees.
- 6.2 If the complainant decides to appeal the Formal Review Committee's decision to keep the literary resources in the school, a letter must be written to the Board Chair within 10 business days of receipt of the decision of the Formal Review Committee. The complainant must ensure all relevant information is shared with the Board at the time the letter of appeal is submitted.
- 6.3 Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal documentation, the Board will arrange for a meeting to hear the appeal. The Board will decide on the appeal within 2 business days, and will communicate its decision to the complainant, the Principal and the PRSD Formal Review Committee.

Adopted/Revised/Reviewed: JAN 2026

References: Ministerial Order #034/2025