

World History: Patterns of Interaction Textbook Challenge Appeal Process

The high school textbook *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, published by McDougal Littell, was approved by the Florida Department of Education for use in state classrooms and adopted by the Sarasota County School District for use from the 2006-2007 school year through the 2011-2012 school year.

According to School Board of Sarasota County Policy 4.30, a citizen may file a challenge objecting to the use of a textbook in district classrooms. On April 25, 2010, a citizen filed such a challenge to the textbook.

In accordance with the policy, a committee was formed to review the challenge. The committee reviewed the textbook, the challenge and related documents and issued its recommendation to Superintendent of Schools Lori White. The committee recommended that the textbook be retained through the 2011-12 school year, the end of the current adoption cycle.

Superintendent White concurred with the committee's recommendation to retain the textbook and informed the complainant of her decision. The complainant appealed the decision to the School Board, as allowed in the policy. While the procedure for addressing a challenge is detailed in the policy, the specific procedure for an appeal to the School Board regarding such a decision is left to the discretion of the School Board.

On June 15 the School Board held a work session to discuss the appeal procedure. The agenda for this work session, including related documents (citizen complaint, committee recommendation, superintendent notification to complainant, appeal request and other materials) are accessible as attachments to the June 15 work session agenda (on the School Board page of the district website, SarasotaCountySchools.net/schoolboard/, click on the School Board Agendas link on the left side of the page. On the agendas page, click on the link titled "June 15, 2010 Monthly Work Session on Tuesday, June 15.")

School Board attorney Arthur Hardy issued the memo that follows here on the next page, detailing the appeal procedure the School Board will follow in the case of this particular textbook challenge, as they agreed to in the June 15 work session.

As the memo states, the appeal proceeding will take place during the regular meeting of the School Board of Sarasota County at 3 p.m., Tuesday, July 20.

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Shirley Brown, Chair
Frank H. Kovach, Vice-Chair
Kathy Kleinlein
Carol L. Todd
Caroline Zucker
Lori White, Superintendent
CC: Gary Leatherman
Scott Ferguson
FROM: Art Hardy
RE: Textbook challenge procedures
DATE: June 15, 2010

As requested, the following is a summary of the procedures which were established at today's Board workshop:

1. The School Board will consider the appeal at its regular meeting on July 20, 2010. The meeting is at the Landings commencing at 3:00 p.m.
2. The appeal will be placed on the Board's agenda as the last item of new business.
3. Any public comment on this issue will be deferred from the normal time for public comment until the item is reached on the agenda.
4. The person initiating the appeal and the Superintendent will each have a total of ten minutes to make a presentation which, at their discretion, can include statements from other individuals. The proponent of the appeal will go first. Each side will then have five minutes of rebuttal time.
5. Following the presentations, the Board will engage in whatever discussion it deems appropriate until a motion is made, and approved by a majority vote, to resolve the appeal.