

Instruction-

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION AND THE RECONSIDERATION OF LEARNING RESOURCE MATERIALS

For purposes of these guidelines, the term “learning resource materials” will refer to any material (whether acquired from commercial sources or locally produced) with instructional content or function that is used for formal or informal teaching/learning purposes. Learning resources include but are not limited to books, supplementary reading and informational materials, video recordings, sound recordings, software, electronic media, electronic subscription services, periodicals, pictures, charts, diagrams, slides, transparencies, flash cards, games, globes, kits, maps, and models. Textbook selection is guided by state statute and is described in Board of Education Policy #6161.

I. Selection of Learning Resource Materials

A. Gift of Learning Resource Materials:

A gift of learning resource materials, including learning resource materials donated by teachers, parents and students, free materials, commercially sponsored materials and materials donated as a result of a grant, shall be judged by the selection criteria outlined and shall be included in library media collections or used as classroom resources based on those criteria.

B. Criteria for Selection of Learning Resource Materials:

The professional staff is responsible for recommending learning resource materials which fulfill the guiding principles established by the Board of Education. Recommended materials should provide information and experiences that:

1. Implement, enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity of the students served.
2. Stimulate growth in factual and conceptual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily life.
4. Provide opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical analysis of all media.
5. Accurately present the achievements and accomplishments of individuals and groups from all ethnic and racial backgrounds and of both sexes.
6. Place the principle of open access to ideas above personal belief and reason above prejudice.

7. Are free of bias and intolerance in the areas of gender, race, color, religion, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation and disability.

Beyond these guiding principles, professional staff members are expected to become thoroughly familiar with the learning resource material and consider the following additional criteria for selection:

- Learning resource materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the district, and the aims and objectives of the Region #14 curricula. The learning resource materials shall also support individual schools and specific instruction.
- Learning resource materials shall meet high standards of quality in authoritativeness, accuracy, artistic quality, literary style, authenticity, integrity, educational significance, factual content, physical format, presentation, technical quality, functionality, and readability.
- Learning resource materials shall be appropriate for the subject area and circumstances of use, and for the age, emotional development, grade level, learning styles and social development of the students for which the materials are selected.
- Learning resource materials shall provide a background of information that will encourage students to examine their own attitudes and behavior; to comprehend their duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in our society; and to understand the many important contributions made to our civilization by diverse groups.
- The selection of learning resource materials on controversial issues will be directed toward providing differing viewpoints to encourage students to engage in critical thinking. Learning resources materials on controversial issues may be representative of particular points of view. The work must be judged as a whole, not on the basis of isolated passages. For some topics, biased or slanted resources may be included to meet specific curriculum objectives (e.g. to recognize propaganda and its purpose in a given context). Materials should not be excluded solely due to the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.
- Learning resource materials shall be selected for their overall strengths rather than rejected for their weakness.

C. Selection of Library Media Materials

1. Mission of School Library Media Centers

The library media center is an integral component of the educational program in Region #14. The role of the library media center is to implement, reflect and enrich the educational program of the school by providing a balanced collection of a variety of materials in multiple formats. Materials should serve both the breadth of the curriculum and the needs and interests of individual students. In addition to supporting the instructional programs of the school, library media centers ensure that students are effective users and producers of ideas and information by:

- Providing information resources and services to support their academic, artistic and independent needs;

- Developing technology and information literacy skills;
- Providing a welcoming physical and virtual environment that promotes appreciation for lifelong reading and learning.

2. Responsibility

The selection of library media resources may involve input from some or all of the following: administrators, library media specialists, teachers, parents, students, Board of Education and community members. The direct responsibility for coordinating requests and recommendations and acquiring library media resources rests with the school library media specialist. As part of the selection process, the library media specialist will consult reputable, professionally prepared selection guides and other appropriate review resources

3. Criteria for the selection of library media materials

In addition to the criteria in section B above, materials selected for inclusion in the library media center's collection should reflect the school library media center mission and:

- Be current and authoritative
- Encourage life-long reading and learning
- Support district reading literacy initiatives
- Provide resources to support instruction
- Further the professional development of teachers

4. Weeding

The school library media center's function is to support the curriculum with accurate and up-to-date materials; it is not to serve as an archive. Weeding is the systematic and deliberate removal of materials from the library media collection. The library media specialist shall be responsible for periodic weeding of all library media center resources based upon guidelines established by the *American Library Association*.

II. Reconsideration of Learning Resource Materials

A. Guiding Principles:

Students will have access to a wide range of materials at varying levels of difficulty with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view. Despite the quality of the selection process, occasional challenges to learning resource materials may occur. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to a learning resource material used in the district's educational program. This procedure is designed for open discourse regarding the viewpoints and opinions of those persons in the schools and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

- When learning resource materials are challenged, the importance of the freedom to read/listen/view must be considered.
- Access to the challenged learning resource material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
- Challenged learning resource material shall be considered on its own individual merits or flaws.
- If the objection can not be resolved informally, a Reconsideration Committee shall be convened to determine the appropriateness of the learning resource material using the district's guidelines and criteria for selecting learning resource materials.
- Internet resources are not subject to reconsideration under these guidelines.
- A decision to sustain a challenge shall not constitute a judgment of irresponsibility by the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

B. Procedure for Processing a Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resource Material:

If the school receives a complaint regarding learning resource material, all parties shall be respectful of each other's viewpoints and open to discourse. All parties should also allow the process to be completed before sharing information widely so the integrity of the process will not be compromised.

Informal Reconsideration

1. The building administrator (or Superintendent in the case of objections to textbooks) and other appropriate staff shall meet with the complainant to attempt to resolve the issue in an expeditious manner.
2. The administrator or other appropriate staff member shall explain the selection guidelines and criteria used for the selection of the learning resource material; the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the educational program; its intended educational usefulness; and any additional information regarding its use.
3. The complainant shall be provided with copies of Board Policy No. 6161 and the *Guidelines for the Selection and Reconsideration of Learning Resource Materials* as well as a *Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resource Materials* form
4. The complainant shall also establish whether his/her request is for reconsideration of a learning resource for his/her individual child or for its use by other students.
5. If the request is for the complainant's individual child only and the administrator is unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant will be referred to the Superintendent for further discussion and exploration of alternatives.
6. If the complainant wishes to request reconsideration of the learning resource material for broad use (other students), then the *Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources* form must be submitted to the Superintendent's office and the committee procedures outlined below should be followed.
7. If the complainant fails to complete and return the complaint within five (5) school days of receipt of the form, the complaint will be considered withdrawn.

Formal Reconsideration

1. Within ten (10) school days of the receipt of a *Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources* form, the Superintendent's designee shall appoint a Reconsideration Committee. The committee shall include the following membership: the building principal or other administrative designee, the teacher(s) and department coordinator(s) (secondary level only) involved with the learning resource, a school psychologist (as needed), the building library media specialist, and three parents (other than the complainant). The parent representatives will be annually appointed as needed and represent each school level. The Superintendent's designee may include other district staff deemed to offer expertise in the content area that is the subject of the request for reconsideration.
2. In the case of a textbook challenge, the *Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources* form shall be submitted to the Superintendent and the Board of Education shall serve as the Reconsideration Committee. They shall follow similar procedures as those defined for the Reconsideration Committee process used for all other learning resource materials, as noted below
3. The Superintendent's designee shall arrange for a Reconsideration Committee meeting as quickly as possible after the complaint is filed, giving the committee members an appropriate amount of time to read or examine the work in its entirety before the meeting. In the case of non-print learning resource materials, the committee may choose to view the material during a committee meeting and shall review the material in its entirety. The Reconsideration Committee may also consult additional district staff or other resources.
4. The Reconsideration Committee shall review the challenged learning resource material and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the district's *Guidelines for the Selection of Learning Resource Materials*. At the first committee meeting, the committee will:
 - a. Review the Region #14 Selection of Learning Resource Materials policy and guidelines;
 - b. Review the *Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resource Materials* form submitted by the complainant;
 - c. Read professional reviews of the learning resource material, if available;
 - d. Discuss the challenged material in the context of the educational program and intended audience for which it was selected;
 - e. Form opinions based on the learning resource material as a whole, rather than on passages or sections taken out of context;
 - f. Discuss the challenged learning resource material based upon documents supplied by the complainant, in the context of its use in the educational program;
 - g. Choose to schedule a second meeting if more discussion or information is necessary;
 - h. In the event a complainant is a parent/guardian of a student, all reasonable efforts shall be made to protect the identity of the complainant. Names or other forms of identifiers shall not be shared with parent representatives. However, Region #14 can not ensure anonymity and may have to release the identity of the complainant as required by law.
5. The final decision will be based on a response to the complaint as presented and will include one of the following statements:
 - a. It is the consensus of the Reconsideration Committee that the learning resource material is compatible with the philosophy and criteria of the selection guidelines and should not be restricted or removed;

b. It is the consensus of the Reconsideration Committee that the learning resource material is compatible with the philosophy and criteria of the selection guidelines, but should be restricted to conditions specified by the committee, or in the case of a textbook, by the Board of Education;

c. It is the consensus of the Reconsideration Committee that the learning resource material is not compatible with the philosophy and criteria of the selection guidelines and should be removed/replaced. (Where the Board serves as the Reconsideration Committee, the Board may not change textbooks except by a two-thirds vote of all members of the board, notice of such intended change having been previously given at a meeting of such board held at least one week previous to the vote upon such change.)

6. Resolution:

a. The Reconsideration Committee shall prepare a written decision, including the meeting date(s), a summary of the findings and a list of the individual committee members that participated.

b. The Superintendent or designee will notify the complainant of the decision and provide the complainant with a copy of the committee's written decision.

c. In the case of a non-textbook request for reconsideration, within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the decision, the complainant may appeal a decision of the Reconsideration Committee to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent shall review the written decision of the Reconsideration Committee and make a final decision.