

SELECTION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Definitions

Chapter 127 of the Maine Department of Education defines “instructional materials” to include “textbooks and other print materials, software, and other electronic materials, and supplies and other materials to support implementation of the system of Learning Results.” “Library/media resources” include “books, written materials, online Internet resource materials, multimedia materials and information technology that support the District’s curriculum.”

Selection of Materials

The Superintendent, in consultation with administrators and professional staff, is responsible for selecting instructional materials and library/media resources. Textbook selections must be submitted to the School Committee for approval. The Superintendent is responsible for developing any administrative procedures necessary to guide the review and selection of educational materials, and may delegate specific responsibilities to staff as he/she deems appropriate. All administrative procedures must be consistent with this policy.

Criteria for Selection

Quality educational materials and resources are essential to student learning and supporting the District’s educational goals and objectives.

Instructional and library/media materials selected should:

- A. Support student achievement of the content standards of the system of Learning Results;
- B. Support the goals and objectives of the District’s educational programs;
- C. Enrich and support the curriculum;
- D. Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served;
- E. Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions;
- F. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, ethical standards, and critical analysis;
- G. Provide information that will enable students to make informed decisions in their daily lives;
- H. Be accurate and current;
- I. Reflect high quality scholarship and presentation;
- J. Represent significant authors/composers and works; and
- K. Be affordable.

Selection Procedure

The highest priority shall be to meet the instructional needs of the individual schools. In meeting this priority, preference shall be given to basic learning materials, i.e., those that are predominant instructional materials used at particular grade levels or courses and/or are essential to student achievement of Learning Results content standards.

Before selecting/recommending materials for purchase, professional staff should evaluate the existing collection, consult with staff from appropriate departments and/or grade levels, personally review the material and obtain recommendations/reviews regarding the materials from appropriate reputable sources.

In accordance with state regulations, social studies and science textbooks should not be older than five years unless up-to-date supplemental instructional materials are also available.

Multiple copies of materials should be purchased as needed and within budgetary constraints. Missing materials should be replaced as needed. Outdated materials or materials that are no longer in demand should be withdrawn from the collection and/or circulation.

Donated Materials

Gift materials are judged by the same criteria as materials selected by the school staff and in accordance with any applicable School Committee policies or procedures regarding gifts and donations.

Inspection of Materials by Parents and Opt-Out Requests

Upon request, student's parent/guardian may inspect any instructional or library/media materials used as part of the curriculum. Such requests shall be made to the appropriate teacher or the library/media specialist. Access to the materials shall be provided within a reasonable time after such a request is made. The Superintendent may develop any administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

If a parent/guardian wishes to restrict their child's access to particular instructional materials, the procedure in School Committee policy IMBB, Accommodation of Sincere Beliefs in Required Instruction, shall be followed.

Challenged Materials Procedure

This procedure applies only to requests to remove materials from the school's collection or curriculum. Individual exemption requests are subject to School Committee policy IMBB, Accommodation of Sincere Beliefs in Required Instruction. In the event that a student, parent, staff, or community member has a concern regarding particular materials or requests the removal of particular material from the curriculum or collection, the following procedure will be followed:

- A. The complainant must discuss their concern first with the person providing the material in question. Individual staff members may discuss concerns, but do not have the authority to remove materials from the curriculum or library collection.
- B. If the complainant is not satisfied, he/she shall be referred to the building administrator and requested to fill out the "Citizen's Challenge to Educational Media" form. A copy of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent.
- C. The Superintendent shall appoint a committee composed of the following persons to review the complaint: one administrator at the appropriate grade level, one librarian/media specialist, one classroom teacher, the department head in the subject area of the challenged materials, and one community member.
- D. The review committee shall read and examine the materials referred to them, check general acceptance of materials by reading reviews and weigh the values and faults of

the material. Committee members are expected to form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages or portions pulled out of context. The committee should generally be neutral toward viewpoints expressed in materials and shall ask the Superintendent to consult legal counsel for advice concerning any questions involving freedom of speech or expression. The committee shall meet to discuss the material and prepare a written report with their recommendation.

- E. The committee shall provide the final report to the Superintendent, who will inform the complainant of the results.
- F. No material shall be removed from use until the review committee has made a final decision.
- G. The review committee's decision may be appealed to the School Committee. The School Committee may set aside a portion of a regular meeting or call a special meeting to review the complaint and the committee report, and to receive testimony from representatives of the various points of view. The material in question shall be:
 - 1. Reviewed objectively and in its full content;
 - 2. Evaluated in terms of the needs and interests of students, school, curriculum and community.
 - 3. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and
 - 4. Reviewed in light of the criteria set forth in this policy.

The School Committee will announce its decision in writing not later than the conclusion of the next regular meeting of the School Committee.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. §§ 1001 (10-A), 1055 (4), 4002
Chapter 125 (Maine Department of Education Rules)
P.L. 107-110 § 1061 (No Child Left Behind Act)

Cross Reference: IJJ-E – Citizen's Challenges of Educational Media Form
IMBB – Accommodation of Sincere Beliefs in Required Instruction

Adopted by the Wells-Ogunquit C.S.D. School Committee: 01/05/05