

INSTRUCTIONAL AND LIBRARY-MEDIA MATERIALS SELECTION

Definitions

Words like textbook have multiple and changing meanings in the context of education. For the purposes of this policy, we use the following definitions.

“Instructional materials” include textbooks and other print materials, software and other electronic materials, online/Internet resources (including access), and supplies and other materials to support instruction in subject areas and implementation of the current Maine state educational standards.

“Significant instructional materials” - will be defined as those instructional materials to be used by most students in a course or classroom of at least ten students for a duration of at least four weeks of instruction.

“Textbook” includes texts used for instruction that are used by most of the classroom during more than half the duration of the course.

“Library-media resources” include books, print materials, online/Internet resources (including access), multimedia materials and information technology that, as part of the library-media program, support the school system’s curriculum.

Approach

The Board is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the schools, including the provision of instructional materials and maintenance of library-media resources that support the school system’s curriculum.

While the Board retains its authority to approve the selection of instructional materials, it recognizes the educational expertise of its professional staff and the need for such staff to be involved in the recommendation of instructional materials. The Board delegates responsibility for the selection of non-textbook instructional materials and library-media resources to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school system, subject to the criteria and procedures for selection and the Board’s policy on challenged materials as described below. For reasons of financial responsibility and a role in large curricular changes, the board expects the superintendent to recommend textbooks to the Board for approval. Approval from the board is not required for any instructional materials except textbooks. For reasons of improving communication between stakeholder groups, across the schools, and with the community at large, the board expects a list of all significant instructional materials selected to be provided to the board (via the curriculum subcommittee if said committee exists) and made publically available. Such lists should be produced by the least burdensome methods possible (e.g. use of existing syllabi or curriculum plans).

The curriculum director, in consultation with administrators and professional staff, is responsible for selecting appropriate instructional materials. The curriculum director 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. The curriculum director is expected to keep the Board informed about how curriculum purchases are aligned with the current Maine state educational standards. With the assistance of professional staff, the Superintendent shall establish a system for the selection of textbooks, including procedures to establish an orderly process for the review and recommendation of instructional materials. The Superintendent will be responsible for overseeing the purchase of instructional materials within budgetary parameters set by the Board.

Each school shall maintain a library-media program that includes books and other print materials, multimedia materials, online Internet resources and information technology that support the curriculum. A certified library-media specialist will be responsible for overseeing the library-media program, under the supervision of the Superintendent. As with instructional materials, the Board delegates responsibility for selection of library-media materials and technology and Internet resources to the school system's professionally trained staff, subject to the criteria and procedures for selection and the Board's policy on challenged materials described below.

Objectives of Selection

The Board recognizes that it is the primary objective of instructional materials to implement and support the curriculum, and of library-media resources to extend and enrich the educational programs of the schools. Quality instructional materials and library-media resources are essential to student learning. In preparing students to meet the content of the current Maine state educational standards, in supporting the achievement of the school unit's educational goals and objectives, and in providing enrichment opportunities that expand students' interests and contribute to a desire for lifelong learning, it is the responsibility of the instructional program and the library-media centers of the schools to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

Criteria for Selection

The evaluation described in this selection should normally be done by the teacher using the materials unless otherwise required in this policy. The amount of effort should be proportionate to the size of purchase. Instructional and library-media materials selected should:

- A. Support achievement of the content standards of the Learning Results or other current Maine state educational standards;
- B. Support the goals and objectives of the school system'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. Give comprehensive, accurate and balanced representation to minorities and women in history, science, leadership and the arts and acknowledge the contributions of ethnic, religious and cultural groups to our American heritage;
- G. Present a balance of opposing sides of controversial issues to enable students to develop a

- capability for critical analysis;
- H. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
 - I. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent decisions in their daily lives; and
 - J. Respect the constraints of the school unit's budget.

Other factors that should be considered are accuracy and currency of material; importance of the subject matter; scholarship; quality of writing and production; and reputation and significance of the author, artist or composer.

In evaluating software, multimedia materials and online/Internet resources, additional factors that should be considered include purpose for use; content; format (degree of interactivity or student involvement); appropriate use of graphics, sound and animation; feedback provided; and ease of use.

Procedures for Selection

Meeting the needs of the individual schools, based on knowledge of the curriculum and the existing collections of instructional and library-media materials, shall be the highest priority. Basic learning materials, i.e., those that are the predominant instructional materials used by most members of the class, are used for a significant portion of the course or receive major emphasis during a course, or are essential to student achievement of content standards of the Learning Results are to take priority in the selection process.

Before recommending materials for purchase, professional staff should evaluate the existing collection. For all purchases over \$500 they shall consult reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids and specialists from all departments and/or all grade levels.

Social studies and science textbooks should not be older than five years unless up-to-date supplemental instructional materials are also available.

Whenever possible, purchase of non-print materials and multimedia, Internet and technology resources shall be made only after personal evaluation by the librarian/media specialist and/or other appropriate professional staff. Reviewing aids may be used in lieu of personal evaluation. This paragraph only applies only to significant purchases of software and multimedia. It expressly does not apply to the use of individual web pages or sites.

Multiple copies of outstanding and much-in-demand materials should be purchased as needed. Worn or missing standard items should be replaced periodically. Out-of-date or no-longer-useful materials should be withdrawn from the collection/circulation.

Donated Materials

Gift materials are to be evaluated by the same criteria as purchased materials and are to be accepted or rejected by those criteria and in accordance with the Board's policy on gifts and donations.

Parental Authority

A student's parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the curriculum. This request should be made through the principal. The Superintendent will be responsible for developing and implementing procedures for providing access to instructional material within a reasonable time after such a request is made.

The Board recognizes that the final authority as to what materials an individual student will be exposed rests with that student's parents or guardians. However, at no time will the wishes of one child's parents to restrict his/her reading or viewing of a particular item infringe on other parents' rights to permit their children to read or view the same material.

Instructional and library-media center materials will not be removed from the collection because of criticism except in accordance with Board policy.

Challenged Materials

Despite the care taken to select materials for student and teacher use and the qualifications of the persons who select the materials, the Board recognized that objections may be raised occasionally by students, parents, school staff or community members.

In the event a complaint is made, the following procedures will apply:

- A. The complaint shall be heard first by the person providing the materials in question.
- B. If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant shall be referred to the building Principal and requested to fill out the "Instructional and Library- Media Materials Challenge 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 Principal at the appropriate grade level; one librarian/media specialist; one classroom teacher; one expert in the subject area of the challenged materials; one community member. The superintendent can add other members with relevant expertise at the superintendent's discretion.
- D. The review committee shall: read and examine the materials referred to them; check general acceptance of materials by reading reviews; weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages or portions pulled out of context; meet to discuss the material and to prepare a written report on it. The teacher whose material is being challenged will also have the opportunity to present their reason for the choice to the committee.
- E. The report of the committee shall be forwarded to the Superintendent who will inform the complainant of the results.
- F. No materials 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 Board. The Board may set aside a portion of a regular meeting or call a special meeting for the purpose of receiving testimony from representatives of the various points of view. The material in question shall be:
 - a. Reviewed objectively and in its full content;
 - b. Evaluated in terms of the needs and interest of students, school, curriculum and

community;

- c. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and
- d. Reviewed in light of the criteria for initial selection and purpose as provided herein.

The Board will announce its decision in writing not later than the conclusion of the next regular meeting of the Board following its receipt of said testimony.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 1001 (10-A); 1055 (4); 4002

Ch. 125 §§ 9.01, 9.03 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule) P.L. 107-110 § 1061 (No Child Left Behind Act)

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