

INSTRUCTIONAL AND LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION

Objectives of Selection

The School Committee recognizes that it is the primary objective of the library media centers and the instructional program in our schools to implement, enrich and support the education programs of the schools. It is the duty of the library media centers and the instructional program to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

To this end, the School Committee asserts that the responsibility of the School Library Media Center and the instructional program is:

- A. To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served;
- B. To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
- C. To provide a background of information which will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives;
- D. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical analysis of all media;
- E. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage; and
- F. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library media center and a variety of resources to be used in the instructional program.

In addition, the School Committee 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.

Responsibility for Selection of Instructional and Library Materials

The School Committee is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the schools. The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the School Committee.

Selection of materials for the library media centers and the instructional program involves many people: principals, library-media specialists, teachers, department heads, students and community members. The Superintendent/designee may appoint citizens to textbook selection committees if deemed appropriate. The responsibility for the coordination of the selection of library and instructional materials and the recommendation for purchase rests with professionally trained personnel.

The School Committee is legally responsible for approving textbooks used in the Biddeford schools. The Superintendent shall present the School Committee with a list of recommended texts which have been selected in accordance with this policy and regulations developed by the Superintendent.

Criteria for Selection

The needs of the individual school, based on knowledge of the curriculum and of the existing collection, are given first consideration.

Materials for purchase are considered on the following bases: overall purpose, timeliness or permanence, importance of the subject matter, quality of the writing/production, readability and popular appeal, authoritativeness, reputation of the publisher/producer, reputation and significance of the author/artist/composer/producer, etc., and format and price.

Gift materials are judged by the same standards and are accepted or rejected by those standards. Multiple copies of outstanding and much-in-demand materials are purchased as needed. Worn or missing standard items are replaced periodically. Out- of-date or no-longer-useful materials are withdrawn from the collection/circulation.

Procedures for Selection

In selecting the materials for purchase, the professional personnel evaluate the existing collection, consulting reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids and specialists from all appropriate departments and/or grade levels.

Whenever possible, purchase of non-print materials shall be done only after personal evaluation by the librarian/media specialist and/or other appropriate staff. Reviewing aids may be used in lieu of personal evaluation.

The Superintendent shall recommend selected textbooks, supplies and apparatus to the School Committee for approval and shall make all these purchases under rules adopted by the School Committee.

Challenged Materials

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

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. The complainant shall be referred to the building Principal, given a copy of this policy, and requested to fill out the "Request for Reconsideration of Materials" form. Copies of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent and to the library-media specialist or classroom teacher, as appropriate.
- C. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Curriculum Director, 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; the department head/team leader in the subject area/grade of the challenged materials; one community member, and any other representatives deemed appropriate.
- 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.
- 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 School Committee. The School Committee 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:
1. Reviewed objectively and in its full content;
 2. Evaluated in terms of the needs and interest of students, school, curriculum and community;
 3. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and
 4. Reviewed in light of the criteria for initial selection and purpose as provided herein.

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

Copies of the complaint, committee report and the resolution of the complaint shall be kept on file in the Superintendent's Office.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 1001 (10-A), 1055 (4), 4002
CH. 125.22 (Maine Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Adopted: April 27, 1999