

INSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

SELECTION AND RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUTIONAL MATERIALS

361.27

I. PHILOSOPHY:

The school district provides instructional materials to meet specific curriculum goals and to encourage independent reading and research.

The role of the Library Media Centers (LMC) in the Pittsville School District is to provide a point of access to information and ideas for students and faculty by providing a wide variety of materials and resources necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives of the school system. This philosophy acknowledges the uniqueness of each student by providing materials for various levels of learning. The LMC program strives to provide current materials with a wide range of appeal and different points of view to support the curriculum, encourage independent study, foster literacy and learning skills, and promote personal reading enjoyment.

II. SELECTION:

The selection process may involve the input of many people including teachers, support staff, administrators, parents and students, as well as approved lists, exhibits, displays, course studies, and organizations. While selection is delegated to the Library Media Specialists (LMS), text committees, Technology Coordinator, or teachers, with review by the building principals, final legal responsibility rests with the School Board of Education of the School District of Pittsville.

LMC: The selection and purchase of library materials is the responsibility of the designated Library Media Specialist for each school who is familiar with the curricula, current holdings, and professional selection aids.

Texts and classroom materials: Selection of textbooks and other classroom materials will be made by the appropriate committees and departments, with approval of the principals and superintendent, using criteria in the selection policy.

Donated materials: Materials that are donated to the district become the property of the school with no stipulations attached. As such, donated materials will be held to the same criteria as purchased materials and used, shelved, or weeded based on the selection policy.

Other media: Formats such as computer software, videos, and Internet-accessed subscriptions are evaluated using the same criteria as print instructional materials.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:

The success of the educational program in meeting the needs of the students and faculty depends upon the quantity, scope, and quality of the materials available in the collection. The selection of any item will be made on the basis of that item's contribution to these needs. Materials, whether purchased or donated, will be considered individually and selected for their strengths based on the following criteria:

- A. Authoritativeness and reputation of the author and/or publisher.
- B. Timeliness, permanence, and relevance of the item to the curriculum.
- C. Accuracy of content.

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- D. Logical organization and presentation of information.
- E. Reading level/vocabulary/use of illustrations to clarify the text.
- F. Readability and popular appeal.
- G. Presentation of various points of view depending on the need to balance the total collection.
- H. Avoidance of inappropriately stereotyped images of any group or individual.
- I. Physical and emotional development of students.
- J. Value commensurate with cost and/or need.
- K. Appropriateness of the format.

Controversial issues shall be covered from all points of view as fully as possible keeping maturity levels of the students in mind. Materials of sound factual authority shall not be excluded for partisan or doctrinal reasons.

Areas of thought that most often come under criticism are religion, political ideologies, sexual content, and profanity:

- **RELIGION:** Material on religious subjects should be available and should be factual, unbiased and broadly representative.
- **POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES:** A balance of factual material at appropriate reading and comprehension levels should be available in the collection representing various views.
- **SEX and PROFANITY:** In a work of established quality, the inclusion of profanity or frank treatment of sex is not adequate reason to exclude the material from the LMC collection.

The School District endorses the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights and the American Association of School Librarians-School Library Bill of Rights for School Library Media Programs. (See Appendix A and B)

IV. DISCARDING (WEEDING):

Just as an item earns its way into the collection based on the described criteria, items earn their way out of the collection when they no longer meet the needs of the students and faculty. To maintain a quality collection it is necessary to discard items regularly. Reasons for discarding include:

- A. Condition of the book. (missing pages, soiled pages, badly torn pages, aged paper, too fine a print, unrepairable binding, dismal editions, etc.)
- B. Items that have had very little circulation in the past five years.
- C. Currency/datedness/accuracy of content/relevance to current curriculum.
- D. Inferior or faulty visual and sound reproductions.

Materials that are discarded will be disposed of at the discretion of the LMC specialist and other school personnel based on the reason the particular item is discarded.

V. RECONSIDERATION:

Occasional objections to instructional materials will be made despite the quality of the selection process. The School Board of Education of the School District of Pittsville recognizes the right of any resident or employee of the school district to object to instructional materials. The review of questioned materials will be treated objectively, unemotionally, and as an important routine action. Every effort will be made to consider the best interests of the students, school, curriculum and the community.

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If concern is expressed or an inquiry is made to a school board member, administrator or teacher, that person is to direct the complaint to the appropriate LMC specialist and not attempt to assume sole responsibility for reconsideration. The steps for reconsideration are set up to be followed in sequence when they are needed. Unnecessary confusion or delay may be avoided if the following sequence is followed:

- A. The person expressing concern is treated with respect. It is their right to request that material be reviewed.
- B. Material that is questioned will remain in normal use until a final decision has been made based on the approved reconsideration policy.
- C. The principal or teacher initially receiving the complaint will arrange to have the LM specialist explain to the complainant the school district's selection policy.
- D. The building principal or LM specialist will provide the complainant with a copy of the Selection and Reconsideration Policy and a letter of instructions. A completed "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials" form (See Appendix C&D) must be submitted by the complainant to the building principal for the reconsideration to continue.
- E. Within five school days of the filing of the completed form, the principal shall file the material in question with the Reconsideration Committee for re-evaluation.
- F. The Reconsideration Committee shall meet for the first time to:
 1. Distribute copies of the written request form.
 2. Distribute reputable, professionally prepared reviews of the material when available.
 3. Distribute copies of challenged material as available.
- G. Each member of the Reconsideration Committee shall:
 1. Read and examine the material in its entirety.
 2. Assess the worth of the material by reading reviews and by consulting standard evaluation aids.
 3. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the materials as a whole, not on passages pulled out of context. The committee's evaluation shall be consistent with the selection policy.
- H. The Reconsideration Committee shall meet a second time within ten school days to discuss the material.
- I. (Optional) The Reconsideration Committee shall meet with the complainant and/or the staff member responsible for selecting the material, if the complainant so desires.
- J. The Reconsideration Committee shall prepare a written recommendation to be submitted to the superintendent within one month from the filing of the written complaint. The vote on the recommendation shall be by ballot, with the majority ruling. The Reconsideration Committee's final recommendation will be one of the following:
 1. The material is compatible with the philosophy and criteria of this policy and should not be restricted or removed.
 2. The material is not compatible with the philosophy and criteria of this policy and should be restricted or removed.
 3. The material should be limited to conditions specified by this committee.
- K. After examining the written recommendation from the Reconsideration Committee the superintendent shall notify the complainant of the decision of the Reconsideration Committee.

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- L. A complainant who is not satisfied with the decision of the Reconsideration Committee may appeal to the Board of Education within ten days of the receipt of the superintendent’s report. The Board of Education shall review the recommendation of the Reconsideration Committee with the superintendent and make a final decision.
- M. Every “Request for Reconsideration” shall be acted upon. Requests to re-evaluate materials that have previously been before the Reconsideration Committee may not be reconsidered for three calendar years.
- N. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professional staff involved in the original selection or use of the materials.

The School District of Pittsville recognizes the right of an individual parent to determine the reading materials for his/her child. The parent may request that his/her child not be required to read a specific book or be allowed to check out specific materials from the LMC. Forms for requesting limited access to LMC materials will be available at each school (Appendix E). A written request must be made to the appropriate principal and Library Media Specialist. However, no parent or groups have the right to deny access to educational materials to pupils other than their own children.

The Library Media Specialist will conduct orientation sessions to inform new staff members of the Material Selection Policy at the beginning of each school year.

VI. RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE:

The Reconsideration Committee shall consist of the following members:

- The LM specialist NOT from the school in which the complaint originated.
- The principal from the school in which the complaint originated.
- One teacher from the school in which the complaint originated.
- Three members from the community.
- Two high school students.

The superintendent appoints committee members each August. If a member of this committee is the complainant, they are to be excused from committee participation.

The chairperson of the committee shall not be an employee of the district. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary.

First Reading: February 10, 2003
Second Reading: March 10, 2003
Adopted: March 10, 2003

Appendix A

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interests, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948/Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967 and January 23, 1980 by the ALA Council.

Appendix B

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shapes the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the [Library Bill of Rights](#) apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs.

School library media professionals assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School library media professionals work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School library media professionals cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources appropriate to the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources which support the curriculum and are consistent with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school district. Resources in school library media collections represent diverse points of view on current as well as historical issues.

While English is, by history and tradition, the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equal access to resources and services, the school library media program provides resources which reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library media program have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School library media professionals resist efforts by individuals or groups to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, hear, or access via electronic means.

Major barriers between students and resources include but are not limited to: imposing age or grade level restrictions on the use of resources, limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information, charging fees for information in specific formats, requiring permission from parents or teachers, establishing restricted shelves or closed collections, and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

The school board adopts policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. School library media professionals implement district policies and procedures in the school.

Adopted July 2, 1986; amended January 10, 1990; July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council.

Appendix C

SAMPLE LETTER TO COMPLAINANT

Date_____

Dear_____ ,

We appreciate your concern over the use of _____ in the School District of Pittsville. The district has developed specific procedures for selecting materials, but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made.

To help you understand the selection process, we are including copies of the District's:

- Materials Selection Policy
- Procedure for Handling Objections
- Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. If I have not heard from you within two weeks, we will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

Principal

Appendix D

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSVILLE
CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Author Creator _____ Type of Material _____

Title _____

Publisher /Producer /Source _____

Date of Publication/Production _____

Request initiated by _____

Phone# _____ Address _____

Complainant Represents: Self Group/Org.(name) _____

I. How was this material brought to your attention?

2. What is your objection to this material? (Please be specific, cite examples.)

3. What would you prefer that your school do about this material?

- Do not assign it to my child.
- Withdraw it from all students.
- Send it to the local committee for reconsideration.

Do you wish to make an oral presentation to the committee? YES NO

Signature of Complainant

PLEASE RETURN TO PRINCIPAL

Appendix E

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSVILLE
REQUEST FOR LIMITING ACCESS TO LMC MATERIALS

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Phone _____

Address _____

I request that my child not be permitted to check out _____
from the Library Media Center in _____ School.

OR

I request that my child not be required to read/use _____
that has been assigned in _____ class. I understand that an alternate assignment
will be given.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

PLEASE RETURN TO PRINCIPAL

Appendix F

**PITTSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD TO THE RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE**

The policy of this school district related to the selection of learning materials states that any resident or employee of the district may formally challenge instructional materials used in the district's educational program. This policy allows those persons in the school and community who are not directly involved in the selection of material to make their opinions known. The task of the reconsideration committee is to provide an open forum for discussion of challenged materials and to make an informed decision on the challenge.

The reconsideration process, the task of this committee, is just one part of the selection continuum. Material is purchased to meet educational needs. It is reviewed and examined when possible prior to purchase. It is periodically reevaluated through updating, discarding, and reexamination to evaluate its need in the educational program.

Prior to hearing any presentation of the reconsideration requests, each committee member shall read the District Policy for Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials including all appendices and the written Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Media.

In reconsidering challenged materials, the role of the committee, and particularly the chairperson, is to produce a climate for a free exchange of ideas. The complainant may choose to make an oral presentation to the committee to expand and elaborate on the written complaint.

The committee will listen to the presentation of the complainant, to those with special knowledge and to any other interested persons. In these discussions the committee should be aware of relevant social pressures that are affecting the situation. Individuals who may try to dominate or impose a decision must not be allowed to do so. Minority viewpoints expressed by groups or individuals must be heard, and observers must be made to feel welcome. It is important that the committee create a calm, nonvolatile environment in which to deal with a potentially volatile situation. To this end, the complainant will be kept informed continuously of the progress of the complaint.

The committee, after listening to the views of all interested persons, will deliberate its decision. The committee should remember that the school system must be responsive to the needs, tastes, and opinions of the community it serves. Therefore, the committee must distinguish between broad community sentiment and attempts to impose personal standards. The deliberations should concentrate on the appropriateness of the material. The question to be answered is "Is the material appropriate for its designated audience at this time?"

The committee's final decision will be:

- (1) The material is compatible with the philosophy and criteria of this policy and should not be restricted or removed.
- (2) The material is not compatible with the philosophy and criteria of this policy and should be restricted or removed, or
- (3) The material should be limited to conditions specified by this committee.

Majority vote by the committee members rules.

The committee chairperson will instruct the secretary to convey the committee's decision in writing to the office of the superintendent. The decision should detail the rationale on which it was based. A letter will be sent to the complainant and to other appropriate individuals outlining the committee's final decision.

Appendix G

CHECKLIST OF RECONSIDERATION PROGRESSION

Item reconsidered _____

Name of Complainant _____

Steps:

_____ Complainant is referred to appropriate LM Specialist. Date _____

_____ School Policy explained. Date _____

_____ Complainant is given copies of:

___ School District Selection Policy

___ Letter of instructions for filing a complaint

___ Request for Reconsideration form

_____ Complainant returns completed reconsideration request form to principal. Date _____

_____ Principal files request form with reconsideration committee (within 5 school days). Date _____

_____ Reconsideration committee meets for first time. Date _____

_____ Reconsideration committee meets for second time (within 10 school days).

_____ Reconsideration committee writes recommendation (within one month of original filing) and submits it to the District Superintendent. Date _____

_____ Superintendent notifies complainant and all other concerned parties with a copy of the recommendation.

_____ If desired, complainant appeals to the Board of Education (within 10 days).

_____ Board writes final decision.

A copy of this checklist with attached committee/board decisions will be filed with the appropriate LM specialist, building principal and superintendent.