

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

EF
(LOCAL)

The District shall provide a wide range of instructional resources for students and faculty that present varying levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and a variety of points of view. Although trained professional staff are afforded the freedom to select instructional resources for their use in accordance with this policy and the state-mandated curriculum, the ultimate authority for determining and approving the curriculum and instructional program of the District lies with the Board.

Objectives

In this policy, “instructional resources” refers to textbooks, library acquisitions, supplementary resources for classroom use, and any other instructional resources, including electronic resources, used for formal or informal teaching and learning purposes. The primary objectives of instructional resources are to deliver, support, enrich, and assist in implementing the District’s educational program.

The Board shall rely on District professional staff to select and acquire instructional resources that:

1. Enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration students’ varied interests, abilities, learning styles, and maturity levels.
2. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, enjoyment of reading, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and societal standards.
3. Present various sides of controversial issues so that students have an opportunity to develop, under guidance, skills in critical analysis and in making informed judgments in their daily lives.
4. Represent many ethnic, religious, and cultural groups and their contributions to the national heritage and world community.
5. Provide a wide range of background information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of resources of the highest quality in order to ensure a comprehensive collection that is appropriate for the school community.

Additionally, District staff shall give careful attention to ensuring:

1. The continuity from grade to grade of the instructional resources selected for use.
2. The compatibility of the instructional resources with appropriate guidelines.

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3. The consistency of the instructional resources with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the District.

Selection Criteria

In the selection of instructional resources, especially library acquisitions and supplemental resources for classroom use, professional staff shall ensure that resources:

1. Support and are consistent with the general educational goals of the state and District and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses consistent with the District and campus improvement plans.
2. Meet high standards in presentation, format, readability, content, accuracy, artistic or literary quality, and educational significance.
3. Are appropriate for the subject and for the age, ability level, learning styles, and social and emotional development of the students for whom they are selected.
4. Are evaluated as a whole and selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses. Literature selections shall not contain excessive or gratuitous explicit sexuality, excessive or gratuitous profanity, or excessive or gratuitous graphic violence. Selected resources shall not be masked, clipped, or altered in any manner inconsistent with the author's intent.
5. Are designed to provide information that will motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behavior, to understand their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens, and to make informed judgments in their daily lives.
6. Provide balanced information on opposing sides of controversial issues so that students may develop, under guidance, the skill of critical analysis.

Recommendations for library acquisitions shall involve administrators, teachers, other District personnel, and community representatives, as appropriate. Gifts of instructional resources shall be evaluated according to these criteria and accepted or rejected accordingly.

Selection of resources is an ongoing process that includes the removal of resources no longer appropriate and the periodic replacement or repair of resources still of educational value.

High School Reading Selections

Secondary parents/guardians shall be sent a notification letter of possible reading selections in District English classes for grades 9–

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12. Each parent/guardian and student shall have the right to request an alternative reading assignment. A student shall be assigned an alternative selection without penalty.

Controversial Issues

The selection of library acquisitions on controversial issues shall endeavor to maintain a balanced collection representing various views. Library resources shall be chosen to clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analyzing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems. [See also EMB regarding instruction about controversial issues and EHAA regarding human sexuality instruction.]

The District shall not remove resources from a library for the purpose of denying students access to ideas with which the District may disagree.

Challenged Materials Resources

A parent of a District student or an adult student enrolled or preregistered in a class or classes in which an instructional resource will be used shall be permitted to formally challenge an instructional resource on the basis that the instructional resource fails to meet the standards set forth in this policy.

Not Subject to Reconsideration

Resources that are not currently in use, scheduled for use, or proposed for use during the school year, and "choice" resources that are used only at the student's option as one of several choices shall not be subject to challenge.

Instructional resources and their ancillary/supplementary resources adopted by the State Board of Education shall not be subject to reconsideration during the term of the state adoption.

Informal Reconsideration

The school receiving a complaint about the appropriateness of an instructional resource shall try to resolve the matter informally using the following procedure:

1. The principal or designee shall explain the school's selection process, the criteria for selection, and the qualifications of the professional staff who selected the questioned resource.
2. The principal or designee shall explain the role the questioned resource plays in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and any additional information regarding its use.
3. If appropriate, the principal or designee may offer a concerned parent another instructional resource to be used by that parent's child in place of the challenged resource. In the event that the parent opts to have his or her child study alternative instructional resources, the child shall not be penalized

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in any way and the professional staff shall endeavor to minimize any negative effect on the child under the circumstances.

4. If the complainant wishes to make a formal challenge, the principal or designee shall provide the complainant a copy of this policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources form. [See EF(EXHIBIT)]

Formal
Reconsideration

All formal objections to instructional resources shall be made on the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources form. The form shall be completed and signed by the complainant and submitted to the principal or designee. Following receipt of the request, the principal shall appoint a reconsideration committee. In the event multiple challenges are made to the same resource, the District shall consolidate the formal objections received prior to the formation of the committee.

The reconsideration committee shall include at least one member of the instructional staff who either has experience teaching the challenged resource or is familiar with the challenged resource. Other members of the committee may include District-level and campus staff, library staff, students classified as a junior or senior who have previously been taught the resource, parents, and others deemed appropriate by the principal. A District-level director or coordinator shall serve as a facilitator for the reconsideration committee process, but shall not vote as a member of the committee.

All members of the committee shall read the challenged resource in its entirety. As soon as reasonably possible, the committee shall meet and determine whether the challenged resource is appropriate for its intended use. The committee as a whole shall discuss the challenged resource based on the general objectives and selection criteria set out in this policy. The objectives and selection criteria shall be used as guidelines for the committee in determining educational appropriateness. The committee shall weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the challenged resource as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context. The committee shall determine by majority vote whether or not the challenged resource shall remain in use. The committee may make a determination for an alternative use of the challenged resource. The committee shall then prepare a written report on the Checklist for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources. [See EF(EXHIBIT)] Copies of the report shall be provided to the principal, the Superintendent or designee, and the complainant.

Appeal

The complainant may appeal the decision of the reconsideration committee in accordance with EF(REGULATION). In the event the

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reconsideration committee determines that the challenged resource shall not be used as an instructional resource or that its use shall be limited or conditioned in any way, the parent of a student in or preregistered for the relevant class or classes shall have the same rights of appeal as provided to the complainant.

If the reconsideration committee decides the challenged resource is inappropriate for use, the Superintendent shall have the authority to delay the effect of the decision if he or she determines the immediate removal would be disruptive to the instructional process. A decision to delay the implementation of the decision of the reconsideration committee shall be reported at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

A complaint regarding instructional resources previously subject to reconsideration by the reconsideration committee shall not be heard until three calendar years have elapsed since the date of the final decision on the previous complaint.

A complaint seeking to reinstate instructional resource previously removed through the reconsideration process shall not be heard until three calendar years have elapsed since the date of the final decision on the removal. The complaint to reinstate shall be initially considered at the level the final decision to remove the resource was made (e.g. reconsideration committee, Superintendent or designee, or Board).

Guiding Principles

The following principles shall guide the Board and staff in responding to challenges of instructional resources:

1. A complainant may raise an objection to an instructional resource used in a school's educational program, despite the fact that the professional staff selecting the resources were qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and adhered to the objectives and criteria for instructional resources set out in this policy.
2. A parent's ability to exercise control over reading, listening, or viewing matter extends only to his or her own children.
3. When instructional resources are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view must be defended as well.
4. Access to a challenged resource shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
5. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the resource.

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The major criterion for the final decision on challenged resources is the appropriateness of the resource for its intended educational use. No challenged resource shall be removed solely because of the ideas expressed therein.

Annual Review

The principal or designee shall annually review policies EF(LOCAL) and EMB(LOCAL) in their entirety with the teaching staff.