

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL SELECTION**

The Board of Directors is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the schools, including the provision of instructional materials 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 instructional materials to the professionally trained personnel employed by MSAD #56, subject to the criteria and procedures for selection and the Board's policy on challenged materials as described below.

With the assistance of professional staff, the Superintendent shall establish a system for the selection of instructional materials, 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. The Board expects the Superintendent and/or his/her designee to report annually on progress made in aligning instructional materials with curriculum development and evaluation in support of the content standards contained in Maine's system of Learning Results.

### **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 system of Learning Results.

### **Objectives of Selection**

The Board recognizes that it is the primary objective of instructional materials to implement and support the curriculum. Quality instructional materials are essential to student learning. In preparing students to meet the content standards of the Learning Results, in supporting the achievement of MSAD #56'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 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**

Instructional materials selected should:

1. Support achievement of the content standards of the Learning Results;
2. Support the goals and objectives of the MSAD #56 educational programs;
3. Enrich and support the curriculum;
4. Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served;

5. Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions;
6. 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;
7. Present a balance of opposing sides of controversial issues to enable students to develop a capability for critical analysis;
8. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
9. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent decisions in their daily lives; and
10. Respect the constraints of the MSAD #56 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, 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, consulting 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.

### **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 Board 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. 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 to 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.

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 recognizes 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:

1. The complaint shall be heard first by the person providing the materials in question.
2. 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 (IJJ-E)." A copy of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent.
3. 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; in the subject area of the challenged materials; one community member.
4. The reviewing 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.
5. The report of the committee shall be forwarded to the Superintendent who will inform the complainant of the results.
6. No action will be taken and no materials shall be removed from use until the review committee has made a final decision.
7. 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. Rules)  
P.L. 107-110 § 1061 (No Child Left Behind Act)

CROSS REFERENCE: IJJ-E, Instructional and Library-Media Materials Challenge  
Form

KEC, Public Complaints About Instructional Materials

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