

Selection Policy for Instructional Resources

I. Introduction

The purpose for this policy statement is to provide guidelines for the selection and review of various categories of instructional resources. This includes a rich variety of learning resources at varying levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view, to meet the needs of students and teachers and reflect the philosophy and goals of the School Department. The primary purpose of instructional resources is to implement, support, and enrich the School Department's educational program. This policy outlines the responsibilities, objectives, criteria for selection, as well as procedures for both selection and reconsideration of resources.

II. Definition of Instructional Resources

Instructional resources are defined as all resources designed to support the instruction of a subject or course including but not limited to textbooks, library books, newspapers, magazines, printed materials, charts, recordings, videos, DVD's, pictures, exhibits, slides, transparencies, online resources, speakers and other personnel resources and all technology based materials.

III. The Barrington Policy exists to:

1. define the criteria for determining the standards and process of selecting and reviewing instructional resources.
2. inform school personnel, members of the School Committee, and the community of the specific instructional resources selection and review practices of the School Department.
3. define the responsibilities of the individuals involved in the selection and review of appropriate instructional resources.
4. serve as a means for reaching agreement on the selection of review of instructional resources.
5. instill community confidence in the schools by presenting a thorough and reasoned philosophy and procedure underlying the selection and review of instructional resources.

IV. Statement of Philosophy

The School Department believes in the principles of intellectual freedom including, but not limited to, those described in the Library Bill of Rights by the American Library Association and the Students' Right to Read by the National Council of Teachers of English.

V. Responsibility for the Selection of Instructional Resources

The School Committee is legally responsible for the selection of instructional resources. While maintaining oversight of the selection policy, the School Committee delegates the responsibility for the selection of all instructional resources to the Superintendent. The Superintendent creates administrative procedures identifying those individuals to be defined in the selection process. The selection process is a collaborative effort involving administrators, faculty, students and community members. Responsibility for the actual selection of instructional materials rests with School Department curriculum committees which include representatives of those professionals who will be implementing or instructing with the materials.

Criteria for the Selection of Instructional Resources

a. Appropriate for recommended levels

Instructional resources should be accessible to students of varied abilities, and should meet informational and interest needs of all students.

b. Pertinent to the curriculum and the objectives of the instructional program

Instructional resources should be selected on the basis of assessed curricular needs. Resources should reflect the identified learning outcomes (Rhode Island Grade Level Expectations/Grade Span Expectations) of the instructional program.

c. Accurate in terms of content

Instructional resources should present facts in an objective manner. Authority of the author, organization, publisher/producer should be a consideration in selection. Resources concerning human development and family life should contain facts which are presented in a manner appropriate to the level of the students. Medical and scientific knowledge should be made available without a biased selection of facts.

d. Reflective of the pluralistic nature of a global society

Instructional resources should provide a global perspective and promote diversity as a positive attribute of our society by including resources by authors and illustrators of all cultures.

e. Unbiased in purpose

Resources should reflect the basic humanity of all people and should not promote stereotypes, caricatures, distorted dialect, sexual bias, and other offensive characteristics. Instructional resources concerning religious, philosophical, social, ideological and political content should inform rather than indoctrinate.

f. Representative of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects

Instructional resources should provide free and equitable access to information on all sides of a controversial issue to help students acquire a knowledge base and develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

g. Appropriate format for effective teaching of the curriculum

Instructional resources should be available in a variety of formats, e.g., print, non-print, electronic, multimedia, to meet the needs and learning styles of a diverse student population.

h. Recent copyright date as appropriate to the subject

Instructional resources should be assessed for currency of the information as it relates to the content and purpose of the item.

i. Acceptable in literary style and technical quality

Literary quality, technical merit, physical arrangement, and aesthetic characteristics should be considered as integral components in the evaluation of all media formats. Regarding language use, resources that include sexual, violent, vulgar and/or profane content should be subject to stern tests of literary and artistic merit and reality, and should take into consideration the age and grade level of the students who would use it. The fact that such content may appear does not automatically disqualify resources for use. Rather, the decision should be made on the basis of whether the resource is of literary and artistic value, and whether it upgrades human dignity.

j. Cost effective

Instructional resources should be evaluated for cost effectiveness in terms of accessibility, projected use and durability.

VII. Procedures for Selecting Instructional Resources

a. In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, appropriate sources.

b. Resources will be examined by professional staff to the extent necessary or practicable to apply the criteria.

c. Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, students and community persons as appropriate.

d. Textbooks will be selected after examination by a representative committee of teachers, principals, department chairs/curriculum leaders, librarians, and others who have professional expertise in objective evaluation of resources.

e. Gift resources shall be judged based on the same selection criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.

f. Selection of resources is an ongoing process that will include the removal of resources no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost and worn resources still of educational value.

g. Notwithstanding any language set forth above to the contrary, the principal alone shall have the authority to approve speakers and other limited resources at times or on occasions not to exceed three (3).

VIII. School Department Procedures for Reconsideration of Challenged Instructional Resources

Resources

Occasional objections to some resources may be voiced by the public despite the care taken in the selection process and despite the qualifications of person selecting resources. If the objection cannot be resolved at the school level, the following procedures should be observed:

1. Discuss objections with the building administrator or his/her designee at the building level.
2. Inform the complainant of the selection procedures.

3. Invite the complainant to file his or her objections in writing on the *Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources* form. The form will be sent to the Superintendent and he/she will keep the School Committee informed.
4. Reconsideration requests will be heard by the Reconsideration Committee. The Reconsideration Committee shall have one permanent member, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Other members shall include administration, library/media, classroom teachers and community members.
5. A meeting of the Reconsideration Committee will be scheduled to occur within three (3) weeks of the date of submission of the request for reconsideration form.
6. The Reconsideration Committee will:
 - a. Reexamine the challenged resources
 - b. Survey appraisals of the resources in professional reviewing sources
 - c. Assess the resources as a whole, based on the criteria
 - d. Discuss the resources and prepare a written report to the Superintendent within six (6) weeks of the date of the submission of the request for reconsideration form.
7. The Superintendent will review each recommendation of the Reconsideration Committee and complainant and shall render a decision regarding the matter within two (2) weeks of the receipt of the report of the Reconsideration Committee.

IX. Appeal to the School Committee

1. If the complainant disputes the decision, the complainant may appeal to the School Committee within two weeks following the rendering of the Superintendent's decision.
2. The final decision of the School Committee shall be delivered to the complainant and staff members in writing in a timely manner.

Legal Reference

Rhode Island General Laws §§[16-2-9](#) and [16-2-11](#)

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