

Policy Number:

361.1

Title:

Instructional Materials Selection

Textbooks and other classroom instructional materials and resources, including audio-visual and digital resources, shall be carefully selected using the general criteria outlined in this policy and in accordance with established District procedures. All textbooks and other instructional materials and resources selected for use in the classroom shall support the District's mission, goals, curriculum plans, and academic standards.

The School Board delegates the general review and selection of textbooks and other instructional materials and resources to the District's administrative and instructional staff. The process shall involve obtaining input from at least one or more members of the instructional staff who will be using the materials, and may involve consultation with other personnel such as a school Library Media Specialist or the Director of Teaching and Learning. As a general rule, the Board's expectation is that the selection of core materials intended for use throughout a grade span and/or regardless of the individual instructor (e.g., textbooks) should be subject to a more extensive and participatory evaluation process and should involve more District-level oversight and coordination than the selection of class-specific or teacher-specific supplemental materials that are less likely to serve as key elements of the District's course-to-course and grade-to-grade curricular sequences.

Textbook selection recommendations shall be submitted to the Board for review and adoption as required by law. The purchase of instructional materials using District funds shall follow established purchasing procedures.

When selecting textbooks and other instructional materials and resources for use in the classroom, consideration shall be given to each of the following factors, allowing for the possibility that, in some cases, staff may determine that a particular factor is not especially relevant:

- the extent to which the materials are judged to support and enhance student learning of the subject area(s) being taught, as identified with the input of instructional staff and based on relevant research;
- the extent to which the materials (and particularly textbooks) facilitate the District's ability to provide students with an appropriately sequential curriculum, both within a grade/course and from one grade/course level to the next;
- the extent to which the materials facilitate an appropriate assessment of student learning;

- the overall appropriateness of the materials relative to the intended student audience (i.e., relative to the anticipated range of age, skills, cognition, and maturity of the students who are most likely to use the materials);
- the effect of the selection decision on the District's legal obligation under state law to provide adequate instructional materials, texts and library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society, including an evaluation of the materials for any improper or discriminatory bias, misinformation, or stereotyping;
- the extent to which the materials are likely to actively engage students and encourage their interest in learning;
- the extent to which the materials facilitate differentiated instruction and the pursuit of personalized learning objectives, including the extent to which the materials can help members of the instructional staff accommodate different learning targets and learning styles;
- the current capacity of staff members to make productive use of the resource, or planning for the staff development that would be needed to build that capacity;
- the accessibility of the item to individuals who require special formats (e.g., certain students with disabilities and English language learners), recognizing that the District has certain legal obligations to provide instructional materials and resources that will enable students with special needs to obtain applicable educational opportunities and benefits in a manner that is as timely, effective, and integrated as it is for other District students; and
- budgetary considerations, including but not limited to the extent to which the materials being evaluated would address a current priority area among possible alternative acquisitions.

The Board recognizes that occasional objections to textbooks and other instructional materials and resources used in the classroom may occur. When parents or guardians or other individuals have concerns about particular instructional materials or resources, these concerns shall be brought forward in accordance with established administrative procedures, carefully considered, and accorded the courtesy of a prompt reply by appropriate school personnel.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

The Board recognizes that occasional objections to instructional materials may occur despite the quality of the selection process. When parents or guardians or other individuals have concerns about particular instructional materials, these concerns shall be brought forward in accordance with established administrative procedures, carefully considered, and accorded the courtesy of a prompt reply by appropriate school personnel.

Challenges seeking the removal or other reconsideration of classroom texts or other classroom instructional materials shall also be brought and processed in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

Notwithstanding the reconsideration procedures set forth below, the District may redirect a complaint seeking reconsideration of materials to a different District process for resolution to the extent doing so may be required by law (e.g., for a complaint that alleges unlawful sex discrimination under Title IX).

A. A staff member, the parent/guardian of a District student, a District student (with notice to a parent/guardian if the student is a minor), or resident of the District may register criticism of material with the building principal or the building library media specialist or teacher at which time the material in question will be discussed by the complainant, principal, and librarian and/or teacher.

1. An effort to informally resolve the concern shall be made first. An informal resolution may include approving an individualized accommodation (such as an alternative reading, project, or assignment).

2. If the concern is not resolved informally, following the meeting all criticism shall be documented in writing using the "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional and Library Materials" form. The parent/guardian of a minor student must consent to a minor student's pursuit of any such complaint.

3. The statement shall be signed and appropriate contact information given which will allow proper replies to be made. To the extent the District receives a complaint/request that is anonymous or that has been submitted by someone other than a staff member, student, parent/guardian, or District resident, the District reserves discretion to decline to process the matter using these procedures and to either dismiss the complaint/request or address the concerns using other procedures.

4. The person or persons registering a complaint will be given a copy of the Instructional Materials Selection Policy (361.1) accepted by the Board of Education.

B. The form shall be given to the building principal who will inform the District Administrator. The District Administrator shall appoint a review committee consisting of the following: a school library media specialist, the Director of Teaching and Learning, the school principal, and two teachers for the appropriate grade level or subject area. As an exception to the review committee procedure, if the District concludes that a reconsideration complaint/statement is redundant to a previous request in which a relevant resource was thoroughly reviewed and evaluated for substantially similar reasons, the District may inform the complainant that the District is choosing to rely on the previous evaluation and that the complainant may immediately appeal the decision to the School Board, as identified below.

1. The administrator selecting the Committee members shall designate one person as the chairperson and presiding officer of the Committee.
2. As scheduled by the chairperson, the meeting(s) of the Materials Review Committee will be conducted in compliance with the Open Meetings Law, including ensuring appropriate public notice of the committee's meetings.

C. The review committee shall within 20 working days, unless the District Administrator approves an extension with notice of the extension to the Complainant, take the following steps:

1. Read and examine the materials to an extent appropriate considering the nature and scope of the materials and the basis of the complaint.
2. Check for general acceptance of the materials by reading any available reviews.
3. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages pulled out of context, applying the District's established goals and criteria.
4. Meet to discuss the material.
5. Prepare a written statement/recommendation to be submitted to the District Administrator.

D. After reviewing the written statement/recommendation of the committee, the District Administrator shall determine the matter and notify the complainant of the administrative decision.

1. The complainant may appeal the decision of the District Administrator to the Board of Education within ten days of receipt of the District Administrator's decision.
2. Upon an appeal, the Board of Education shall review the administrative decision and other information that is relevant to the complaint and appeal at a Board meeting. The Board may decide the appeal with or without requesting additional information and with or without requesting/permitting appearances by the complainant or by District personnel. The Board's decision is the final District decision.
3. To the extent the complaint had alleged that the challenged instructional materials violate the state student nondiscrimination laws, this reconsideration process may serve as the applicable District complaint procedure, and the notice of the final District decision shall also inform the complainant of the right to appeal an adverse determination of the complaint to the State Superintendent within 30 days and of the Chapter PI 1 procedures for making the appeal.

E. Circulation/use of challenged materials normally will not be restricted during reconsideration proceedings; however, requests of individual parents for alternative materials or an alternative assignment for their child will generally be honored without penalty, as further outlined above. Any

decision to more broadly remove or restrict access to challenged materials on an interim basis during reconsideration proceedings must be approved by the District Administrator.

The District shall not unlawfully discriminate in the selection and evaluation of instructional materials or resources on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, any physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other legally-protected status or classification. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established District procedures.

LEG REF: Wisconsin Statutes Sections §115.77, 115.787(3), §118.03, §118.13, §120.13(5), §121.02(1)(h)

Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 8.01(2)(h, PI 9.03(1)(e)

Federal Laws and Regulations 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq., 29 U.S.C. §794 et seq., Assistive Technology Act of 1998

Policy Adopted: April 19, 2023