

Series 600 – Education Program

Policy Title: SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Policy Code No. 605.1R1

I. Responsibility for Selection of Instructional Materials

- A. The board is responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the Newton Community School District.
- B. The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained and licensed employees by the school system. For the purpose of this rule the term “instructional materials” includes printed and materials (not equipment), whether considered text materials or library materials. The board retains the final authority for the approval of textbooks.
- C. While selection of materials involves many people including principals, teacher-librarian, students, parents and community members, the responsibility for coordinating the selection of most instructional materials and making the recommendation for purchase rests with licensed employees.
- D. Responsibility for coordinating the selection of text materials for distribution to classes will rest with the licensed employees, principals and superintendent. For the purpose of this rule, the term “text materials” includes textbooks and other print and nonprinted material provided in multiple copies for use of a total class or a major segment of a class.
- E. If the board appoints an ad hoc committee to make recommendations on the selection of instructional materials, the ad hoc committee is formed and appointed in compliance with the board policy on Ad Hoc Committees.

1. The superintendent will inform the committee as to their role and responsibility in the process.
2. The following statement is given to the ad hoc committee members:

Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.

Study thoroughly all materials referred to you and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools.

Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the material as a whole.

Your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, will be presented by the Director of Teaching and Learning to the complainant at the conclusion of our discussion of the questioned material.

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II. Material selected for use in the libraries and classrooms will meet the following guidelines:

- A. Religion - Material will represent the major religions in a factual, unbiased manner. The primary source material of the major religions is considered appropriate, but material which advocates rather than informs, or is designed to sway reader judgment regarding religion, will not be included in the school libraries or classrooms.
- B. Racism - Material will present a diversity of race, custom, culture, and belief as a positive aspect of our nation's heritage and give candid treatment to unresolved intercultural problems, including those which involve prejudice, discrimination, and the undesirable consequences of withholding rights, freedom or respect of an individual.
- C. Sexism - Material will reflect a sensitivity to the needs, rights, traits and aspirations of men and women without preference or bias.
- D. Age - Material will recognize the diverse contributions of various age groups and portray the continuing contributions of maturing members of society.
- E. Ideology - Material will present basic primary and factual information on any ideology or philosophy of government which exerts or has exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, over any civilization or society, past or present. This material will not be selected with the intention to sway reader judgment and is related to the maturity level of the intended audience.
- F. Profanity and Sex - Material is subjected to a test of literary merit and reality by the teacher-librarians and licensed staff who will take into consideration their reading public and community standards of morality.

The selection decision should be made on the basis of whether the material presents an accurate representation of society and culture, whether the circumstances depicted are realistically portrayed, or whether the material has literary or social value when the material is viewed as a whole.

These guidelines will not be construed in such a manner as to preclude materials which accurately represent the customs, morals, manners, culture, or society of a different time or a different place.

III. Procedure for Selection

- A. Material purchased for libraries and classrooms is recommended for purchase by licensed employees, in consultation with administrative staff, school library staff, students or an ad hoc committee as appointed by the board. The material recommended for purchase is approved by the appropriate building administrator.
 - 1. The materials selected will support stated objectives and goals of the school district. Specifically, the goals are:

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- a. To acquire materials and provide service consistent with the demands of the curriculum;
- b. To develop in students' skills and resourcefulness in the use of libraries and learning resources;
- c. To effectively guide and counsel students in the selection and use of materials and libraries;
- d. To foster in students a wide range of significant interests;
- e. To provide opportunities for aesthetic experiences and development of appreciation of the fine arts;
- f. To provide materials to motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behaviors and to comprehend their own duties and responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic democracy;
- g. To encourage life-long education through the use of the library;
- h. To work cooperatively and constructively with the instructional and administrative staff in the school.

2. Materials selected is consistent with stated principles of selection.

These principles are:

- a. To select material, within established standards, which will meet the goals and objectives of the school district;
- b. To consider the educational characteristics of the community in the selection of materials within a given category;
- c. To present the sexual, racial, religious, and ethnic groups in the community by:
 - (1) Portray people, both men and women, adults and children, whatever their ethnic, religious, or social class identity, as human and recognizable, displaying a familiar range of emotions, both negative and positive.
 - (2) Place no constraints on individual aspirations and opportunity.
 - (3) Giving comprehensive, accurate, and balanced representation to minority groups and women - in art and science, history and literature, and in all other fields of life and culture;
 - (4) Provide abundant recognition of minority groups and women by showing them frequently in positions of leadership and authority.
- d. To intelligently, quickly and effectively anticipate and meet needs through awareness of subjects of local, national, and international interest and significance; and,
- e. To strive for impartiality in the selection process.

3. The materials selection will meet stated specific selection criteria.

These criteria are:

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- a. Authority-Author’s qualification - education, experience, and previously published works;
- b. Reliability:
 - (1) Accuracy-meaningful organization and emphasis on content, meets the material's goals and objectives, and presents authoritative and realistic factual material.
 - (2) Current-presentation of content which is consistent with the finding of recent and authoritative research.
- c. Treatment of subject-shows an objective reflection for the multi-ethnic character and cultural diversity of society.
- d. Language:
 - (1) Vocabulary
 - (a) Does not indicate bias by the use of words which may result in negative value judgments about groups of people,
 - (b) Does not use “man” or similar limiting word usages in generalizations or ambiguities which may cause women to feel excluded or dehumanized.
 - (2) Compatible to the reading level of the student for whom it is intended.
- e. Format:
 - (1) Book
 - (a) Adequate and accurate index;
 - (b) Paper of good quality and color;
 - (c) Print adequate and well spaced;
 - (d) Adequate margins;
 - (e) Firmly bound; and,
 - (f) Cost.
 - (2) Non-book
 - (a) Flexibility, adaptability;
 - (b) Curricular orientation or of significant interest to students;
 - (c) Appropriate for audience;
 - (d) Accurate authoritative presentation;
 - (e) Good production qualities (fidelity, aesthetically adequate);
 - (f) Durability; and,
 - (g) Cost.
 - (3) Illustrations of book and non-book materials should:
 - (a) Depict instances of fully integrated grouping and settings to indicate equal status and nonsegregated social relationships,

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- (b) Make clearly apparent the identity of minorities;
 - (c) Contain pertinent and effective illustrations;
 - (4) Flexible to enable the teacher to use parts at a time and not follow a comprehensive instructional program on a rigid frame of reference.
 - f. Special features
 - (1) Bibliographies.
 - (2) Glossary.
 - (3) Current charts, maps, ect.
 - (4) Visual aids.
 - (5) Index.
 - (6) Special activities to stimulate and challenge students.
 - (7) Provide a variety of learning skills.
 - g. Potential use
 - (1) Will it meet the requirement of reference work?
 - (2) Will it help students with personal problems and adjustments?
 - (3) Will it serve as a source of information for teachers and librarians?
 - (4) Does it offer an understanding of cultures other than the student's own and is it free of racial, religious, age, disability, ethnic, and sexual stereo types?
 - (5) Will it expand students' sphere of understanding and help them to understand the ideas and beliefs of others?
 - (6) Will it help students and teachers keep abreast of and understand current events?
 - (7) Will it foster and develop hobbies and special interests?
 - (8) Will it help develop aesthetic tastes and appreciation?
 - (9) Will it serve the needs of students with special needs?
 - (10) Does it have inspirational value?
 - (11) It is relevant to the subject?
 - (12) Will it stimulate a student's interest?
4. Gifts of library or instructional material may be accepted if the gift meets existing criteria for library and instructional materials. The acceptance and placement of such gift is within the discretion of the board.
5. In order to provide a current, highly usable collection of materials, the teacher-librarians will ensure constant and continuing renewal of the collection, not only by the addition of up-to-date materials, but by the judicious elimination of materials which no longer meet the district's needs or find use. The process of weeding instructional materials will be done according to established and accepted standards for determining the relevance and value of materials in a given context.

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