

Section I

Instruction

Policy: Instructional Materials

File Code: IIA

Schools: Bridport, Cornwall, ID#4, Ripton,
Salisbury, Shoreham, Weybridge, UD#3

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Warned: December 23, 1998

Adopted: January 5, 1999

The School District is committed to providing students the knowledge and skills necessary for independent learning and responsible citizenship in an interdependent world. Freedom to learn, teach, read and express ideas needs to be viewed as a fundamental right held by public school staff and students. To foster this freedom, it is the obligation of the school district both to provide a wide range of instructional materials for all levels of ability, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view, and to allow review or reconsideration of selected materials.

This policy shall apply to the selection of textbooks, media center books, supplementary books and other instructional materials, including all non-print resources. Selection refers to the decision that must be made either to add a given item to the collection or to retain one already in it.

Selection of Program Materials

Selection of program materials, including textbooks, computer programs, and other classroom resources is the responsibility of the professional staff using the following criteria:

1. Skill level and maturity of students
2. Needs and interests of individual students
3. Clarity, format, authority, and accuracy of materials
4. Conformity to stated curriculum goal
5. Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources

Selection of Media Center Materials

Media center materials will be selected by the media specialist according to the following guidelines established by the American Library Association and endorsed by Vermont Educational Media Association. It is the responsibility of the Media Specialist to:

1. Select materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served.

2. Select materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Select a background of information which will enable pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Select materials on opposing sides of controversial issues to allow young citizens to develop with guidance the practice of critical analysis of all media.
5. Select materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to the American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for users of instructional materials.

Requests for purchases will be considered on the basis of :

1. Overall purpose
2. Timeliness
3. Importance of the subject matter
4. Quality of the writing/production
5. Readability and popular appeal
6. Authoritativeness
7. Significance of the author/artist/composer/producer/publisher
8. Format and price

Selection will be made solely on the merits of the work in relation to the collection, value to the implementation of the curriculum, and interests of students and teachers. Materials will not be marked to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item will be restricted from use, except to protect it from harm.

Recommendations for purchase of materials may be made by administrators, teachers, students, district personnel and community persons, as appropriate.

Selection is an ongoing process which should include the removal of materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value. Gifts to the school will be subject to the same selection standards as purchased materials.

The School subscribes to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the American Library Association Library Bill Of Rights, a copy of which is appended to and made a part of this policy.

Reconsideration of Program and Media Center Materials

RECONSIDERATION: Occasional objections to instructional materials may be made despite the quality of the selection process. Any citizen may request that the school district reconsider its selection of material. Prior to beginning a formal review of particular material, objections or concerns should be discussed informally with the teacher and/or librarian and the principal. If, after informal discussions with appropriate school personnel, a citizen still believes that a selection should be reconsidered, the following formal procedure for handling reconsideration of challenged materials shall be followed. The principal of the school is responsible for ensuring that the procedure is followed.

No steps shall be taken to remove or restrict any material from normal handling and use until the School Board has made its final decision.

1. The complainant will file with the principal objections in writing on a form entitled "REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF PROGRAM MATERIAL" approved by the Board. Should the complainant wish to have assistance with the completion of the form, the principal will provide such assistance.
2. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the principal shall notify the Superintendent who in turn will acknowledge its receipt to the complainant. The principal shall refer the complaint to a Review Committee, comprised of no fewer than five (5) members, selected by the principal. The committee may include one or more of the following: media specialist, teacher, member of the School Board, parent, community member-at-large, and others as the principal deems necessary.

Using the criteria for selection, the Review Committee shall file a report of its deliberations and a recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools within thirty (30) school days from the date the complaint was filed.

3. The Superintendent shall report the committee's findings and recommendations to the School Board. Such a recommendation shall include any legal information the Board may need to make its decision.
4. The School Board will make a decision with respect to the complaint, and the Superintendent shall take appropriate action. The Superintendent will ensure that the complainant of the action taken is notified of the decision.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF PROGRAM MATERIAL

DATE: _____

TITLE OF BOOK OR OTHER MATERIAL: _____

AUTHOR (IF BOOK): _____

REQUEST INITIATED BY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

PERSON(S) FILING COMPLAINT REPRESENTS:

___ INDIVIDUAL ___ GROUP/ORGANIZATION (Identify: _____)

(If objection is to material other than a book, i.e. tapes or other non-print material, change the wording of the following questions so that they apply. Please attach additional information or pages if necessary.)

1. Why do you object to this book? Please be specific. Cite specific pages or sections if you wish.

2. Did you read the entire book? ___ If not, what parts?

3. Would you recommend this book for anyone? If so, what age group?

4. If the book were removed from circulation, what book of equal or greater quality would you recommend to replace it? Or, what book do you believe should be added to the collection to counter-balance the viewpoints of this book?

Signature of Person Filing Complaint