

Selection of Educational Materials

Definitions

Chapter 125 of the Maine Department of Education defines “instructional materials” to include “textbooks and other print materials, software and other electronic materials, and supplies and other materials to support implementation of the system of Learning Results.” “Library-media resources” include “books, written materials, online Internet resource materials, multimedia materials and information technology that support the school unit’s curriculum.”

Selection of Materials

The Superintendent, in consultation with administrators and professional staff, is responsible for selecting instructional materials and library-media resources. Textbook selections must be submitted to the Board for approval. The Superintendent is responsible for developing any administrative procedures necessary to guide the review and selection of educational materials, and may delegate specific responsibilities to staff as the Superintendent deems appropriate. All administrative procedures must be consistent with this policy.

Criteria for Selection

Quality educational materials and resources are essential to student learning and supporting the school unit’s educational goals and objectives.

Instructional and library-media materials selected should:

- A. Support student achievement of the content standards of the system of Learning Results;
- B. Support the goals and objectives of the school unit’s educational programs;
- C. Enrich and support the curriculum;
- D. Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served;
- E. Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions;
- F. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, ethical standards, and critical analysis;

- G. Provide information that will enable students to make informed decisions in their daily lives;
- H. Be accurate and current;
- I. Reflect high quality scholarship and presentation;
- J. Represent significant authors/composers and works;
- K. Be accessible by individuals with disabilities; and
- L. Be affordable.

Selection Procedure

The highest priority must be meeting the instructional needs of the individual schools. In meeting this priority, preference will be given to basic learning materials, i.e., those that are the predominant instructional materials used at particular grade levels or courses and/or are essential to student achievement of state and local content standards.

Before selecting/recommending materials for purchase, professional staff should evaluate the existing collection, consult with staff from appropriate departments and/or grade levels, personally review the material and obtain recommendations/reviews regarding the material from appropriate reputable sources.

In accordance with state regulations, social studies and science textbooks should not be older than five years unless up-to-date supplemental instructional materials are also available.

Multiple copies of materials should be purchased as needed and within budgetary constraints. Worn or missing materials should be replaced as needed. Outdated materials or materials that are no longer in demand should be withdrawn from the collection and/or circulation.

Donated Materials

Gift materials are judged by the same criteria as materials selected by the school staff and in accordance with any applicable Board policies or procedures on gifts and donations.

Inspection of Materials by Parents and Opt-Out Requests

A student's parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, any instructional or library-media materials used as part of the curriculum. Such requests will be made to the appropriate

teacher or the library-media specialist. Access to the materials will be provided within a reasonable time after such a request is made. The Superintendent may develop any administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

If a parent/guardian wishes to restrict their child's access to particular instructional materials, the procedure in Board policy IMBB will be followed.

Challenged Materials Procedure

This procedure applies only to requests to remove materials from the school's collection or curriculum. Individual exemption requests are subject to Board policy IMBB. In the event that an RSU 40 student, parent, staff or community member has a concern regarding particular materials or requests removal of particular material from the curriculum or collection, the following procedure will be followed:

- A. The complainant must discuss their concern first with the person providing the material in question. Individual staff members may discuss concerns, but do not have the authority to remove materials from the curriculum or library collection.
- B. If the complainant is not satisfied, they will be referred to the building administrator and requested to fill out the "Citizen's Challenge to Educational Media" form. A copy of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent.
- C. The Superintendent will appoint a committee composed of the following persons to review the complaint: one administrator at the appropriate grade level; one librarian/media specialist; one classroom teacher; the department head in the subject area of the challenged materials; and one community member.
- D. The review committee will read and examine the materials referred to them; check general acceptance of materials by reading reviews; weigh the values and faults of the material. Committee members are expected to form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages or portions pulled out of context. The Committee should generally be neutral toward viewpoints expressed in materials, and will ask the Superintendent to consult legal counsel for advice concerning any questions involving freedom of speech or expression. The committee will meet to discuss the material and prepare a written report with their recommendations.
- E. The committee will provide the final report to the Superintendent, who will inform the complainant of the results.

- F. No material will be removed from use until the review committee has made a final decision.

- G. 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 to review the complaint and the committee report, and to receive testimony from representatives of the various points of view. The material in question will be:
 - 1. Reviewed objectively and in its full content;
 - 2. Evaluated in terms of the needs and interests of students, school, curriculum and community;
 - 3. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and
 - 4. Reviewed in light of the criteria set forth in this policy.

The Board will announce its decision in writing not later than the conclusion of the next regular meeting of the Board.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S. §§1001 (10-A), 1055 (4), 4002
Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 125
20 U.S.C. §1232h

Cross Reference: IJJ-E – Citizen's Challenge of Educational Media Form
IMBB – Accommodation of Sincere Beliefs in Required Instruction

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