

Instructional Materials Selection, Review and Reconsideration

The Board of Education recognizes its legal responsibility for the selection of all instructional material in the Dubuque Community School District. The Board delegates this responsibility, and the authority to establish guidelines and procedures for the selection and discarding of materials to the Superintendent.

Administrative guidelines should be consistent with the general policy of the Board as stated herein: The Board of Directors of the Dubuque Community School District hereby declares it the policy of the district to provide a wide range of instructional materials at all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view. Materials will be kept current and in good condition by regular review.

A request for review and reconsideration of selected or omitted instructional materials may be submitted according to procedures prescribed by the Superintendent, and approved by the Board of Education.

The budget of the district will provide for replacement of text materials and learning resource/media center materials as required.

Adopted: November 9, 1970
Revised: June 13, 2011
Reviewed: May 8, 2017

Legal Reference:
Iowa Code 279.8; 280.3, .14; 301 (2007)
281 I.A.C. 12.3(12)

INSTRUCTIONAL SELECTION PROCEDURES

- I. Responsibility for selection of materials
 - A. The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained and certified staff employed by the school system. For the purpose of these guidelines the term “instructional materials” include printed and audio-visual materials (not equipment), whether considered classroom instructional materials or library materials.
 - B. While selection of materials involves many people, the responsibility for coordinating the selection of instructional materials for school libraries and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the certified school library staff.
 - C. Responsibility for coordinating the selection of classroom instructional materials will rest with the appropriate district-level curriculum coordinator/supervisor, department chairperson or the curriculum study committee.
- II. Criteria for selection of materials
 - A. Materials shall support and be consistent with the general education goals of the district and the objectives of the specific courses.
 - B. Materials shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
 - C. Materials shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age emotional development, ability level, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
 - D. Materials shall have aesthetic, literary, or social value.
 - E. Materials chosen shall be by competent, qualified authors and producers.
 - F. Materials shall be chosen which foster respect for women as well as men, the various racial and ethnic groups, old people as well as young people, and the disabled, and which realistically represent our pluralistic society, along with the roles and life styles open to women and men in today’s world. Materials shall include the many important contributions made by these people to our civilization. Materials may be provided which clarify the multiple historical and contemporary forces which have operated to the disadvantage or advantage of women, the various racial and ethnic groups, older people and the disabled. Materials shall objectively analyze inter-group tensions and conflicts and they shall stress the resolution of social and economic problems.
 - G. Materials shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.
 - H. Biased or slanted materials may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives.
 - I. Physical format and appearance of materials shall be suitable for their intended use.

III. Procedure for review and discarding of materials

- A. In order to provide a current, highly usable collection of materials, school library staff will oversee an ongoing renewal of the collection, not only by the addition of up-to-date resources, but by the judicious elimination of resources which no longer meet the school's need. The process of weeding materials will be done according to accepted library standards for determining the relevance and value of materials in the context of a school library.
- B. Upon consultation with the building principal, the professional school library staff may remove from the school library materials no longer of value to the library program in accordance with other district policies and utilizing the following criteria:
 1. unacceptable physical condition or format
 2. outdated, inaccurate, or unnecessary content
 3. inappropriate for the collection
- C. Materials will be evaluated to determine their possible worth to other groups or individuals and will be disposed of in the following priority order:
 1. Move to another unit of the school. If deemed of value, items will be offered for examination and transfer by a stated time.
 2. Move to another learning center or school in the district. If deemed of value, items will be offered for examination and transfer by a stated time.
 3. If deemed of sufficient value, items will be referred to the Business Office for sale, auction, or appropriate disposition.
 4. Discard items. If items are determined to be of no value, or if no group or individual under points 1, 2, or 3 above claim items, items may be discarded.
- D. Curriculum staff and study committees may remove text materials no longer of value to the instructional program. The materials will be reviewed by the committee to determine their possible worth to other groups or individuals and will be disposed of in the following priority order:
 1. Move to another unit of the school.
 2. Move to other schools in the district.
 3. If deemed of sufficient value, items will be referred to the Business Office for sale, auction or appropriate disposition.
 4. Discard items. If items are determined to be of no value, or if no group or individual under points 1, 2, 3 above claims them, items may be discarded.

IV. Reconsideration of materials

- A. Informal review. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to instructional materials used in the district's educational program despite the fact that the individuals selecting such materials were duly qualified to make the selection and observed the criteria for selecting such material. All instructional materials and any materials used with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any federally funded program must be available for inspection by citizens. All such materials must be viewed on school district premises; copies may be obtained in accordance with policy.
1. The school official or staff member receiving a complaint regarding instructional materials shall try to resolve the issue informally. The materials shall remain in use until the reconsideration committee makes its recommendation (Part III, 6, K).
 - a. The school staff member initially receiving a complaint shall explain to the complainant the school's selection criteria and qualifications of those persons selecting the materials.
 - b. The staff member initially receiving a complaint shall explain the intended educational usefulness of the material and additional information regarding its use, or refer the complaining party to someone who can explain and identify the use of the material.
 2. In the event that the person making the objection to material is not satisfied with the initial explanation, that person should be referred to someone designated by the principal to handle such complaints. If, after private consultation, the complainant desires to file a formal complaint, the person to whom the complainant has been referred will provide the Reconsideration Request Form and answer any questions regarding its completion.
 3. The individual receiving the initial complaint shall advise the appropriate building principal of the initial contact no later than the end of the following day, whether or not the complainant has apparently been satisfied by the initial contact. A written record of the contact shall be made and maintained by the principal.
 4. Each principal shall review the selection and objection policy and guidelines with the staff at least annually, stressing that the right to object to materials is one granted by policies enacted by the Board of Directors and firmly entrenched in law.

B. Formal Review

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge instructional materials used in the district's educational program on the basis of appropriateness of its intended educational use.
2. Each building principal and the superintendent or a designee will have and make available Reconsideration Request Forms. All formal objections to instructional materials must be made on these forms.
3. The Reconsideration Request Form shall be signed by the complainant and filed with the superintendent or a designee.
4. Within fifteen (15) business days of the filing of the form, the superintendent or a designee shall convene and file the material in question with a Reconsideration Committee. The purpose of the Reconsideration Committee is to provide an open forum for discussion of challenged materials and to make an informed recommendation to the superintendent on the challenge.
5. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
6. The Reconsideration Committee
 - a. A committee of eleven members shall be formed and it shall include, in so far as is possible, both women and men, persons of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, the disabled, and older people as well as younger people.
 1. Two teachers (one elementary and one secondary) designated by the superintendent or a designee.
 2. One teacher-librarian designated by the superintendent or a designee.
 3. One member of the central administration staff designated by the superintendent or a designee.
 4. Four members from the community selected by site councils from the three instructional levels.
 5. Three high school students selected from and by the schools' student governing bodies.
 - b. The chairperson of the committee shall not be an employee or officer of the district. The secretary shall be an employee or officer of the district.
 - c. The committee shall meet as required at a time and place designated by the superintendent and made known to the members of the committee at least three days in advance. Meetings of the committee shall be posted as open meetings.

- d. A calendar of subsequent meetings shall be established and a chairperson and a secretary shall be selected at the first meeting.
- e. The calendar of meetings and notice of meetings shall be made public through appropriate communication methods.
- f. The committee shall receive all Reconsideration Request Forms from the superintendent or designee.
- g. The procedure for the first meeting following receipt of a Reconsideration Request Form is as follows:
 - 1. Distribute copies of the completed Request Form
 - 2. Give complainant or group spokesperson an opportunity to talk about and expand on the Request Form.
 - 3. Distribute reputable, professionally prepared reviews of the material when available.
- h. At a subsequent meeting, interested persons, including the complainant, may have the opportunity to share their views. The committee may request that individuals with special knowledge be present to give information to the committee.
- i. The complainant shall be kept informed by the secretary concerning the status of the complaint through the committee reconsideration process. The complainant and known interested parties shall be given appropriate notice of Reconsideration Committee meetings.
- j. At the second or subsequent meeting the committee shall make its decision in open session. The committee's final decision will be, (1) to take no removal action, (2) to remove all or part of the challenged material from the total school environment, (3) to allow students to use alternate titles, approved by school personnel involved, or (4) to limit the educational use of the challenged material. The sole criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the materials for its intended educational use. The written decision and its justification shall be forwarded to the superintendent for appropriate action, to the complainant and to the appropriate attendance centers.
- k. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection or use of the material.
- l. Requests to reconsider materials which have previously been before the committee must receive approval of a majority of the committee members before the materials

will again be reconsidered. Every reconsideration request form shall be acted upon by the committee.

- m. In the event of a severe overload of challenges, the committee may appoint a subcommittee of members or nonmembers to consolidate challenges and to make recommendations to the full committee. The composition of this subcommittee shall approximate the representation on the full committee.

7. Appeal

- a. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the committee's recommendation or decision may file an appeal with the Board of Education by writing a letter to the Board Secretary. The Board will review the appeal and render a decision.
- b. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Education may appeal to the Iowa Board of Education pursuant to state law.

RECONSIDERATION REQUEST FORM

Review initiated by:

Date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip Code _____ Telephone _____

School(s) in which item is used _____

Relationship to school (parent, student, staff, citizen, etc.) _____

Book or other printed material, if applicable:

Author _____ Hardcover _____ Paperback _____ Other _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Copyright date _____

Multimedia material, if applicable:

Title _____

Producer (if known) _____

Type of material (DVD, software program, etc.) _____

Person making the request represents: Self _____ Organization _____

Name and address of group (if applicable) _____

Please indicate here _____ if you wish to make an oral presentation to the Review Committee.

You will be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting and may be present, even if you do not wish to make a presentation.

Signature

Date

Please complete questions on reverse and submit paperwork to Superintendent's Office.

Please respond as completely as possible; provide additional information, if you wish.

1. What brought this item to your attention?

2. To what in the item do you object? (Please be specific, citing pages, scenes, etc.)

3. In your opinion, why is this item not appropriate for use at this age level?

4. Do you perceive any instructional value in the use of this item?

5. Have you reviewed the entire item? If not, what portions did you review?

6. From whom, if anyone, should the committee seek additional opinion regarding this item?

7. To replace this item, do you recommend any other material which you consider to be of equal or superior quality for the purpose intended?
