

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

EFA
(LOCAL)

The District shall provide a wide range of instructional resources for students and faculty that present varying levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and a variety of points of view. Although trained professional staff members are afforded the freedom to select instructional resources for their use in accordance with this policy and the state-mandated curriculum, the ultimate authority for determining and approving the curriculum and instructional program of the District lies with the Board.

OBJECTIVES

In this policy, "instructional resources" refers to textbooks, library acquisitions, supplemental materials for classroom use, and any other instructional materials, including electronic resources, used for formal or informal teaching and learning purposes. The primary objectives of instructional resources are to deliver, support, enrich, and assist in implementing the District's educational program. [See EFAA for the selection and adoption process of state-adopted instructional materials.]

The Board shall rely on District professional staff to select and acquire instructional resources that:

1. Enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration students' varied interests, abilities, learning styles, and maturity levels.
2. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, enjoyment of reading, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and societal standards.
3. Present various sides of controversial issues so that students have an opportunity to develop, under guidance, skills in critical analysis and in making informed judgments in their daily lives.
4. Represent many ethnic, religious, and cultural groups and their contributions to the national heritage and world community.
5. Provide a wide range of background information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.

SELECTION CRITERIA

In the selection of instructional resources, especially library acquisitions and supplemental materials for classroom use, professional staff shall ensure that materials:

1. Support and are consistent with the general educational goals of the state and District and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses consistent with the District and campus improvement plans.

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2. Meet high standards in presentation, format, readability, content, accuracy, artistic or literary quality, and educational significance.
3. Are appropriate for the subject and for the age, ability level, learning styles, and social and emotional development of the students for whom they are selected.
4. Are designed to provide information that will motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behavior, to understand their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens, and to make informed judgments in their daily lives.

Recommendations for library acquisitions shall involve administrators, teachers, other District personnel, and community representatives, as appropriate. Gifts of instructional resources shall be evaluated according to these criteria and accepted or rejected accordingly.

Selection of materials is an ongoing process that includes the removal of resources no longer appropriate and the periodic replacement or repair of materials still of educational value.

CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUES

The selection of library acquisitions on controversial issues shall endeavor to maintain a balanced collection representing various views. Library materials shall be chosen to clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analyzing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems. [See also EMB regarding instruction about controversial issues and EHAA regarding human sexuality instruction.]

CHALLENGED
MATERIALS

A parent of a District student, any employee, or any District resident may challenge an instructional resource used in the District's educational program on the basis of appropriateness.

INFORMAL
RECONSIDERATION

The school receiving a complaint about the appropriateness of an instructional resource shall try to resolve the matter informally using the following procedure:

1. The principal or designee shall explain the school's selection process, the criteria for selection, and the qualifications of the professional staff who selected the questioned material.
2. The principal or designee shall explain the role the questioned material plays in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and any additional information regarding its use.

3. If appropriate, the principal or designee may offer a concerned parent other instructional material to be used by that parent's child in place of the challenged material. The alternative resource shall be comparable to the challenged resource and shall be compatible with the standards, goals, objectives and intended outcomes of the lesson. The alternative resource shall not be punitive or intentionally place the student at a disadvantage which could negatively impact the student's overall grade or standing within the class or subject.
4. If the complainant wishes to make a formal challenge, the principal or designee shall provide the complainant a copy of this policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form [see EFA(EXHIBIT)].

FORMAL
RECONSIDERATION

All formal objections to instructional resources shall be made on the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form. The form shall be completed and signed by the complainant and submitted to the principal or designee. Upon receipt of the request, the principal shall notify the assistant superintendent for the appropriate division of instruction who shall appoint a reconsideration committee composed of:

1. An administrator from the division of instruction;
2. Two District staff members (i.e., librarians and/or teachers) from the area of concern and/or grade level who are not currently assigned to the campus where the resource is being challenged; and
3. Two annually, pre-selected parents who are designated by the PTA or parent organization of the campus of the resource being challenged to serve on this committee. Should there be no PTA or appropriate parent organization to designate committee members, the principal shall annually solicit volunteers from the campus parent base and shall appoint two members who shall serve for one school year.

All members of the committee shall review the challenged material in its entirety. As soon as reasonably possible, the committee shall meet and determine whether the challenged material conforms to the principles of selection set out in this policy. Both the complainant and a representative from the campus where the resource is being challenged shall be afforded an opportunity to present their views at this meeting. The committee shall then prepare a written report. Copies of the report shall be provided to the principal, the Superintendent or designee, and the complainant.

APPEAL

The concerned party may appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee by filing a written request with the Superintendent's office within seven days of the decision of the reconsideration committee. The appeal to the Superintendent's office shall contain a copy of the original complaint, the reconsideration committee's report, and dates of conferences with the principal or designee. Upon being notified of the appeal, the Superintendent or designee shall evaluate the questioned resource for its conformity with the guidelines and shall prepare a written report of his or her decision.

Following the decision, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the complainant and the school principal in writing of any action to be taken.

If the parties concerned are not satisfied with the decision of the appeal, they may then appeal directly to the Board by submitting a written request within ten days after the decision.

The Board shall hear the complaint within 30 days after the written request is filed with the Superintendent's office, and shall communicate its decision at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles shall guide the Board and staff in responding to challenges of instructional resources:

1. A complainant may raise an objection to an instructional resource used in a school's educational program, despite the fact that the professional staff selecting the resources were qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and adhered to the objectives and criteria for instructional resources set out in this policy.
2. A parent's ability to exercise control over reading, listening, or viewing matter extends only to his or her own children.
3. When instructional resources are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view must be defended as well.
4. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.

The major criterion for the final decision on challenged materials is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use. No challenged library material shall be removed solely because of the ideas expressed therein.