

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 1 of 9

The policies set forth are officially those of the Newport School Committee and followed by all who are concerned with the selection of instructional materials. These policies are comprehensive and cover all instructional materials, including but not limited to textbooks, library books, periodicals, films, videocassettes, records, audiocassettes, and CDs. The purpose of these policies is to:

- A. Provide a statement of philosophy and objectives for the guidance of those involved in the procedures for selection.
- B. Clarify for the community the philosophy and procedures used in evaluating and selecting instructional materials. Define the role of those who share in the responsibility for the selection of instructional materials.
- C. Set forth criteria for selection and evaluation of instructional materials.
- D. Outline the techniques for the application of the criteria for the selection of instructional materials and text.
- E. Provide a procedure for the consideration of objectives to the use of particular materials in the educational program.

A. Philosophy

Instructional materials are selected by the Newport School District to implement, enrich, and support the educational program for the student. Materials must serve both the breadth of the curriculum and the needs and interests of individual students. The district is obligated to provide for a wide range of abilities and to respect the diversity of many differing points of view. To this end, principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality and appropriateness.

The objective of the library/media center is to make available to faculty and students a collection of materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and meet the needs of the students and faculty served.

It is the policy of the Newport School District to provide a wide range of instructional materials on all levels of difficulty with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view and to allow for the

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 2 of 9

reconsideration of allegedly inappropriate instructional materials through established procedures.

In addition, it is the educational function of the District to promote the intellectual, cultural, social, and physical development of students and to provide materials that extend and deepen the experiences encompassed in the curriculum. Moreover, the Committee affirms the sharing of the responsibilities presented in the School Library Bill of Rights for School Library Media Programs of the American Association of School Librarians (1969):

- To provide a comprehensive collection of instructional materials selected in compliance with basic written selection principles, and to provide maximum accessibility to these materials.
- To provide materials that will support the curriculum, taking into consideration the individual's needs, and the varied interests, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and maturity levels of the students served.
- To provide materials for teachers and students that will encourage growth in knowledge and that will develop literary, cultural and aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards.
- To provide materials which reflect the ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contribution to the American and world heritage and culture, thereby enabling students to develop an intellectual integrity in forming judgments.
- To provide a written statement, approved the local Board of Education, of the procedures for meeting the challenge of censorship of materials in school library media centers.
- To provide qualified professional personnel to serve teachers and students.

Obviously, a broad range of opinions and personal values will be presented in the school library collections of the city, when the standards above are rigorously applied to proposed acquisitions.

A procedure for parental comment about either assigned or optional student reading materials will be available for use by those who question

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 3 of 9

the suitability of material. However, to those who object to availability of a wide range of material, the Committee points out the following:

- No community is completely homogeneous. What one parent will approve for a child, another will not. The rights of one parent to provide a child with the materials that parent finds acceptable should not be abridged by the view of another.
- The rights of children and young people to read books that seem relevant to their own lives and to society as they see it cannot be abridged without the danger that books themselves will seem to them obsolete. In the books they read, children and young people have both a constitutional right and a civic duty to seek and find truth as it is seen from many vantage points. Young people are constantly surrounded by the raw materials of life as it is lived by a wide variety of people. Therefore, they need thoughtful fiction and nonfiction that will allow them to examine these materials from more than one angle.

Without the opportunity to examine various kinds of life situations through books – thereby to gain strength of judgment – young people will be suddenly thrust into situations in real life without adequate preparation.

B. Responsibility and Rules for Selection and Review of Materials

1. The School Committee is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the Newport Public Schools.
2. The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is assigned to the professionally trained and certified staff employed by the school system.
3. For the purpose of this rule the term “instructional materials” includes printed and audiovisual materials and computer software whether considered text materials or media center or computer center resources.
4. While selection of materials involves many people, including administrators, supervisors, teachers, library media specialists, students, and community persons, responsibility for actual selection shall be assigned to appropriate professionally trained personnel who shall discharge this obligation consistent with the School Committee’s

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 4 of 9

adopted selection criteria and procedures. Selection procedures shall involve representatives of the professional staff directly affected by the selections, and persons qualified by preparation to aid in wise selection.

- (a) The responsibility for coordinating selection and purchase of textbooks and other classroom materials may rest with appropriate department chairpersons or with textbook or media evaluation committees.
- (b) The responsibility for coordinating and recommending the selection and purchase of library media materials rests with the certified library media personnel.

C. Criteria for Selection of Materials

Staff members involved in the selection of resource materials shall use the following general criteria as a guide:

- educational significance
- contribution the subject matter makes to the curriculum and to the interests of the students
- favorable reviews found in standard selection sources
- favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- reputation and significance of the author, producer, and publisher
- validity, currency, and appropriateness of material
- contribution the material makes to breadth of representative viewpoints on controversial issues
- high degree of potential user appeal
- high artistic quality and/or literary style
- quality and variety of format
- value commensurate with cost and/or need
- timeliness or permanence
- integrity

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 5 of 9

The following criteria will be used as they apply:

1. Materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the system, approved curriculum content, and the objectives of the specific courses.
2. Materials shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
3. Materials shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the intended audience for whom the materials are selected.
4. Physical format and appearance of materials shall be suitable for their intended use.
5. Materials shall be designed to help students gain an awareness of, and respect for, our pluralistic society.
6. Materials shall be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their own duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in our society, and to make informed judgments in their daily lives.
7. Materials shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.
8. The selection of materials on controversial issues will be directed toward maintaining a diverse collection representing various views and meeting specific curriculum objectives.
9. Materials shall clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analyzing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems.

D. Procedure for Selection of Instructional Material

1. The process for selection covers the use of books, rentals, free loan audiovisual materials, videotapes, computer software, teacher produced materials, and all other acquired resources brought into the classroom from any outside source. The process requires a review by a

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 6 of 9

- curriculum specialist or committee, a media specialist, and/or administrators. It is also required that the requester will preview all new non-print materials. It is the responsibility of the requester to notify the department chairperson or principal of his/her decision to present this material prior to its use in a classroom.
2. In selecting materials for the media center and/or library, the media specialists and/or librarian will evaluate the existing collection and the curriculum needs and when possible will consult reputable, professionally prepared selection aids and reviewing sources.
 3. Recommendations for purchase will be solicited from faculty and student body.
 4. Gift materials shall be judged by the selection criteria in above Section and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.
 5. Selection is an on-going process which should include the removal of materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost or worn materials still of educational value.

Procedure for Selection of Text Materials

1. Appointed curriculum committees shall recommend text adoption in subject areas.
2. Criteria for text materials shall be consistent with the general criteria for selection noted above.
3. The committees shall present their recommendation(s) to the appropriate administrator and he/she shall present a recommendation to the Superintendent.

E. Procedures for Dealing with Challenged Materials

Any resident of Newport or employee of the school district may formally challenge instructional materials used in the system's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the schools and community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 7 of 9

Guiding Principles

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to materials used in a school's educational program, despite the fact that the individuals selecting such materials were duly qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and observed the criteria for selecting materials.
2. The principal should review the selection and objection rules with the teaching staff at least annually.
3. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing, or listening matter for students other than his or her own children.
4. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
5. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended purpose.
6. A decision to sustain the challenge shall not necessarily be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility by the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

1. Informal Reconsideration

The school receiving a complaint regarding a material shall try to resolve the issue informally:

- a. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the material.
- b. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain the particular place the questioned material occupies in the education program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the material.
- c. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the district Selection of Instructional Materials policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form shall be handed or mailed to the party concerned by the principal.

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 8 of 9

2. Formal Reconsideration

Preliminary procedures:

- a. Each school will keep on hand and make available Request for Reconsideration of Materials forms. All formal objections to materials must be made on these forms.
- b. The Request form shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the principal or someone designated by the principal.
- c. The Superintendent and Director of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
- d. The Request for Reconsideration shall be referred to a reconsideration committee at the school level for reevaluation of the material.

The Reconsideration Committee

1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a material, the Principal shall:
 - a. Appoint a reconsideration committee including the following membership as appropriate:
 1. 1 member of the district staff
 2. 1 member of the school teaching staff
 3. 1 member of the media center/library staff
 4. 1 member of the school committee
 5. 2 parents
 - b. Name a convener of the reconsideration committee.
 - c. Arrange for a reconsideration meeting within 10 working days after the complaint is received.
2. The reconsideration committee may choose to consult district staff and/or community persons with related professional knowledge.
3. The reconsideration committee shall review the challenged material and judge whether it conforms to the principles outlined in the District's Selection of Instructional Materials policy.
4. Resolution

Policies

Newport Public Schools

No. 6381

Instructional Resources & Materials -

Selection of Instructional Materials Page 9 of 9

The reconsideration committee shall:

- Examine the challenged material.
- Determine professional acceptance of the material and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context, discuss the challenged material in the context of the educational program, and prepare a written report.
- The written report shall be discussed with the individual questioner if requested.
- The written report shall be retained by the school principal, with copies forwarded to the Superintendent and Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development.
- Written reports, once filed, shall become public and available for examination.
- The challenger has the right to appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee to the School Committee.

Reference

Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form (Appendix)

History: IIAB/IIAC, 1978; IIBC/IIBD, 1978; IIBC-E/IIBD-E, 1970; KLB, 1978; KLB-E, 1978; KLB-R, 1978