

**Concord School District**  
**Procedures for Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials**

**I. Definitions of Instructional Materials**

- A. Assigned instructional materials are texts and other materials used in certain classes, grades or with particular student groups.
- B. Other instructional materials are resources available for general use by students including, but not limited to: reference books, periodicals and newspapers for general use, films and filmstrips, recordings, exhibits, charts, maps, globes, and other visual aides, television materials, electronic materials, and invited presenters.

**II. Objectives of Selection**

The primary objective of the schools' instructional materials selection policy is to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the school. It is the duty of the school to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and presentation of different points of view.

The Board of Education of the Concord School district asserts that the responsibility of the professional staff is:

To provide materials and information that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.

To provide materials and information that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.

To provide a background that will enable pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.

To provide nondiscriminatory materials and information on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis.

To provide materials and information representative of many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

To promote principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure access to a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users.

**III. Responsibility for Selection of Materials**

The Board of Education of the Concord School District is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the Concord Schools.

The responsibility for the selection and coordination of instructional materials and other resources is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school district in this capacity.

#### **IV. Principles of Selection**

The Board of Education endorses the American Library Association's *Freedom to Read* principles cited below:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Publishers, librarians, teachers, principals and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine young adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expressions.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudice of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. Exercising this affirmative responsibility demonstrates that the answer to a bad book is a good one; the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

#### **V. Procedure for Selection**

In selecting materials for use, staff members will evaluate the materials and may consult reputable balanced critical assessments, review journals, specialists and/or professionally trained personnel employed by the School District. With materials used in group instruction, school staff will pay particular attention to the experience and sensitivity of their students in preparatory and follow-up activities. Commercially-released films and videos will be evaluated by the selection criteria in Section VIII, with consideration given to industry-sponsored ratings. While affirming the selection objectives outlined in Section II, the Board of Education expects educators to carefully scrutinize films and videos to ensure that there is a clear and overriding educational merit that justifies their use.

In specific areas, staff members follow these procedures:

Gift materials are judged and accepted or rejected by the criteria in Section VIII.

Multiple items of outstanding and much-in-demand instructional materials are purchased as needed.

Worn or missing standard items are replaced periodically.

Out-of-date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn from use.

Sets of materials and materials acquired by subscription are reevaluated periodically.

## **VI. Parent/School Communication**

At the beginning of each school year, the school will notify parents of the instructional materials selection policy via handout or as part of the student handbook, or both.

Parents with concerns about specific kinds of materials are encouraged to discuss these concerns with teachers. Parents have the right to request alternatives for their own children.

Professional staff will encourage all children to respect diversity and the individual differences that might be highlighted because of a parent's request for such alternatives.

## **VII. Challenged Materials**

The procedure for handling objections to assigned instructional materials is as follows:

- A. Challenged materials will remain available and lesson plans will proceed as scheduled until a final decision is made. Teachers are encouraged to use the opportunity of such challenges to promote classroom discussion of varying points of view.

Staff members unable to resolve student or parental inquiries will notify the building administrator in writing. Inquiries by other school district residents will be directed to the building administrator. All inquiries should include the following details:

1. Name and address of person making inquiry.
2. Identification of material in question.
3. Statement of specific objection.

- B. The building administrator will send the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials to the person making the inquiry.

Upon receipt of the Reconsideration Form, the building administrator will notify the Superintendent and will convene an Instructional Materials Reconsideration Committee comprised of:

1. Professional Library/Media person assigned to school
2. Building administrator or designated representative
3. Assistant Superintendent, *ex officio*
4. Person or persons involved in original selection
5. Person or persons assigning or using materials

- C. The Instructional Materials Reconsideration Committee will:

1. Elect a Chairperson.
2. Read and examine referred materials.

3. Check general acceptance of the materials by reading reviews and/or literary criticism and may consult with district staff and/or community members with related professional knowledge.
  4. Reexamine the selection in light of the Procedures for Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials policy.
  5. Weigh values and faults; decide on acceptability based on the materials as a whole and not on passages pulled out of context.
  6. Provide the rationale of the selection to the person making the inquiry. Give that person an opportunity to ask questions and present his/her concerns orally.
  7. Issue a decision within one month of receiving the Reconsideration Form.
  8. Forward a copy of the decision to the building administrator and to the Superintendent of Schools, who will file it in a permanent file.
  9. Forward a copy of the decision report to the complainant.
- D. The person making the inquiry has a right to appeal the decision of the Reconsideration Committee to the Superintendent's Review Committee.
1. The Superintendent's Review Committee will consist of the following members:
    - a. A professional library/media person
    - b. A building administrator or a designated representative
    - c. The Superintendent or a designated representative
    - d. A community person appointed by the Superintendent
    - e. A teacher from the same department or grade level as that of the teacher(s) whose selection of materials has been challenged
    - f. A parent appointed by the appropriate PTSO president
    - g. A student appointed from the Student Council or Senate (in the case of a Rundlett or Concord High School issue)
  2. The Superintendent's Review Committee will issue its decision in a timely way.
- E. If challenged material has been reviewed and upheld, it may not be subjected to further reconsideration for three years from the date of the decision report.
- F. A decision to sustain a challenge of assigned instructional material will not preclude its availability as other instructional material.
- G. The procedure for objecting to other instructional material is limited to the complainant's raising concerns with the professional staff. Parents have the right to request that their own children be denied access to specific material. However, upon request of professional staff, the building administrator will convene an Instructional Materials Reconsideration Committee.

## VIII. Criteria for Selection of Instructional Materials

The objectives of selection and responsibility of the professional staff concerning instructional materials are previously stated. With these in mind, the following five criteria for selection should be considered:

**Authenticity** (validity, reliability, completeness)

How does the material add to the collection by:

Assuring development of a comprehensive and appropriate collection?

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Insuring principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice?

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Presenting opposing sides of controversial issue?

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**Authority** (author, producer, publisher)

How does the material:

Offer quality through the reputation and significance of the author? \_\_\_\_\_ artist?  
\_\_\_\_\_ composer? \_\_\_\_\_ producer? \_\_\_\_\_ publisher? \_\_\_\_\_

**Format, Technical Quality and Price** (appropriate to content and budget)

How does the material:

Assure the development of a comprehensive and appropriate collection?

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Have format and technical quality appropriate to content?

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Fir within the framework of the current budget?

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Appeal to the interests of the users?

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**General Suitability** (to existing collection, educational objectives, need, use)

How does the material:

Enrich and support the curriculum through consideration of varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students?

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Present the contributions of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups?

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Address the relevant intellectual issues??

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**Scope** (purpose, coverage, viewpoint)

How does the material:

Enrich and support the curriculum through consideration of varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students?

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Aid pupils in making intelligent judgments?

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Present opposing sides of controversial issues?

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Approved by Concord Board of Education June 6, 1992

Revised July 1, 1996 (Board Policies #651 and #815)

**Concord School District**  
**Request for Reconsideration of Assigned Instructional Materials**

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents:

\_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_ Organization or group

Relationship to student and/or school: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of material to be reconsidered \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material (book, record, filmstrip, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Author, if available \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher, if available \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright Date \_\_\_\_\_

To what in the material do you object? (please be specific: cite words, pages and nature of content) \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you object to this material? \_\_\_\_\_

For what age group would you recommend this material? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything good about this material? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you read, view, or listen to entire material?

What parts? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of the reviews written about this material? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like the school to do about this material? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do not assign it to my child
- \_\_\_\_\_ Withdraw if from all students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have it re-evaluated by professionally trained personnel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In its place, what material would you recommend? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think this material meets the criteria for selection used by the Concord School District? \_\_\_\_\_

As a complainant, you may request to meet with the Instructional Materials Reconsideration Committee in order to present your concerns orally.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant