

### **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 or designee.

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 (see administrative guidelines section) 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  
Revised: December 12, 2022  
Revised: December 11, 2023

## 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 as well as Iowa code.
- 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 lifestyles open to women and men in today’s world. Materials shall include the many important contributions made by 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.

- J. These guidelines will not be construed in such a manner as to preclude materials which accurately represent the customs, morals, manners, culture or society of a different time or different place.

III. Procedure for Selection

- A. Material purchased for libraries and classrooms is recommended for purchase by licensed employees, in consultation with administrative staff, school library staff and students. The material recommended for purchase is approved by the appropriate administrator.

1. The materials selected will support stated objectives and goals of the school district as well as Iowa code.

Specifically, the goals are:

- a. To acquire materials and provide service consistent with the demands of the curriculum;
- b. To develop students' skills and resourcefulness in the use of libraries and learning resources;
- c. To effectively guide students in the selection and use of materials and libraries;
- d. To foster in students a wide range of significant interests;
- e. To provide opportunities for aesthetic experiences and development of an appreciation of the fine arts;
- f. To provide materials to motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behaviors and to comprehend their own duties and responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic democracy;
- g. To encourage life-long education through the use of the library; and,
- h. To work cooperatively and constructively with the instructional and administrative staff in the school.

2. Materials selected are consistent with stated principles of selection. These principles are:

- a. To select material, within established standards, which will meet the goals and objectives of the school district;

- b. To consider the educational characteristics of the community in the selection of materials within a given category;
  - c. To present the sexual, racial, religious and ethnic groups in the community by:
    - 1. Portraying people, adults and children, whatever their ethnic, religious or social class identity, as human and recognizable, displaying a familiar range of emotions.
    - 2. Placing no constraints on individual aspirations and opportunity.
    - 3. Giving comprehensive, accurate, and balanced representation to underrepresented groups and women - in art and science, history and literature, and in all other fields of life and culture.
    - 4. Providing abundant recognition of underrepresented groups and women by showing them frequently in positions of leadership and authority.
  - d. To intelligently, quickly, and effectively anticipate and meet needs through awareness of subjects of local, national and international interest and significance; and,
  - e. To strive for impartiality in the selection process.
3. The materials selected will meet stated selection criteria. These criteria are:
- a. Reliability:
    - 1. Accuracy—meaningful organization and emphasis on content, meets the material's goals and objectives, and presents authoritative and realistic factual material.
    - 2. Current—presentation of content which is consistent with the finding of recent and authoritative research.
  - b. Treatment of subject—shows an objective reflection for the multi-ethnic character and cultural diversity of society.

c. Language:

1. Vocabulary:

- a. Does not use limiting word usage in generalization or ambiguities which may cause others to feel excluded or dehumanized.
- b. Compatible to the reading level of the student for whom it is intended

IV. Instructional and Library Materials Inspection and Display

- A. Parents and other members of the school district community may view the instructional and library materials used by the students. All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any federally funded programs must be available for inspection by parents.
- B. Instructional and library materials may be viewed on school district premises.
- C. Parents and guardians of students will be provided view-only access to select instructional materials through the district's classroom management software. Select instructional and library materials include:
  1. A catalog of books available in the school library;
  2. Electronic textbooks and core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary and secondary school instruction, and are required by the classroom teacher for use by students;
  3. Relevant portions of required printed textbooks and materials, if it is practical for district staff to digitize and upload;
  4. Any other materials as determined by the classroom teacher.
- D. In determining what materials should be posted on the district's classroom management software platform, the district will balance the desire for transparency with the time constraints of existing job duties and demands of employees.
- E. Parents and guardians should be advised that while district employees strive to keep information current, the most up to date materials are available upon request and subject to all applicable laws.

- F. It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to develop administrative regulations regarding the inspection of instructional materials.

V. 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.

## VI. Reconsideration of Materials

- A. Informal review. Any parent or guardian 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.
    - 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 parent or guardian 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. The Superintendent will convene a reconsideration committee within two weeks of receipt of the Reconsideration Form.
5. The committee will make their recommendation to the Superintendent within five school days of meeting.
6. The Superintendent will issue a decision related to the Reconsideration Request Form within 5 school days of receipt of the committee's recommendation. A copy of the Superintendent's decision will be provided to the complainant.
7. An appeal of the Superintendent's decision may be filed with the Board Secretary within five days of the Superintendent's decision. The Board will determine whether to hear the appeal at the next regular meeting or within 30 days of the Superintendent's decision, whichever is later. If the Board elects to hear the appeal, the Board will act to affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the Superintendent. The Board's decision will be communicated to the complainant. The Board's decision will be deemed final.
8. Generally, access to challenged instructional material will not be restricted during the reconsideration process. However, in unusual circumstances, the instructional material may be removed temporarily by following the provisions of Section B.9.g. of this rule.
9. The Reconsideration Committee
  - a. A committee of eight members shall be formed and it shall include a representation of protected classes reflective of the Dubuque Community School District community.
    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.
- 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. Special meetings may be called by the board to consider temporary removal of materials in unusual circumstances. A recommendation for temporary removal will require a two-thirds vote of the committee.
  - h. 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. The complainant has a right to anonymity. The complainant may waive that right and be given the opportunity to talk and expand on the information provided on the Request Form.
    3. Distribute reputable, professionally prepared reviews of the material when available.
  - i. 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.
  - j. 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.

- k. 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 as defined in Iowa Code. The written decision and its justification shall be forwarded to the Superintendent for appropriate action, to the complainant and to the appropriate attendance centers.
- l. 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.
- m. 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.
- n. 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.

#### 10. 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.

### IX. Prohibit Instructional Materials for a Student

- A. Any parent or guardian of a student may formally request that the student not be provided with Certain instructional materials.
  - 1. The teacher or school staff receiving a request regarding instructional materials should refer the parent or guardian to the principal or designee that handles such requests.
  - 2. Each building principal and the Superintendent or designee will have and make available Request to

Prohibit Materials Forms. All formal requests to not provide a student with certain instructional materials must be made on these forms.

3. The Request to Prohibit Materials Form shall be signed by the parent or guardian and filed with the principal or designee.
4. The Request to Prohibit Materials Form shall be signed by the parent or guardian and filed with the principal or designee.
5. The teacher shall provide alternate material to supplant the teachings of the curricular standards.

**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 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?

---

---

---

SAMPLE LETTER TO INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGING INSTRUCTIONAL OR  
LIBRARY MATERIALS

Dear:

We recognize your concern about the use of \_\_\_\_\_ in our school district. The school district has developed procedures for selection of instructional materials but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made.

To help you understand the selection process, we are sending copies of the school district's:

1. Instructional goals and objectives,
2. Instructional materials selection policy #6226 statement, and
3. Procedure for reconsideration of instructional and library materials.

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the Reconsideration Request Form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. If I have not heard from you within one week, we will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

**REQUEST TO PROHIBIT A STUDENT FROM CHECKING OUT SPECIFIC LIBRARY  
MATERIALS**

Request to prohibit a student from checking out certain library materials to be submitted to the superintendent. Please complete one form per student.

REQUEST INITIATED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of affected Student \_\_\_\_\_

Requester's Relationship to Student (must be parent/legal guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

**BOOK OR OTHER PRINTED MATERIAL TO PROHIBIT STUDENT FROM CHECKING OUT:**

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Hardcover \_\_\_\_\_ Paperback \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Publication \_\_\_\_\_

**MULTIMEDIA MATERIAL TO PROHIBIT STUDENT FROM CHECKING OUT:**

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Producer (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material (filmstrip, motion picture, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

