

Policy IJJ: Instructional Materials And Methods And Library-Media Materials Selection

The Board is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the schools, including the provision of instructional materials and maintenance of library/media resources that support the school system's curriculum.

Definitions:

“Instructional materials” include textbooks and other print materials, online textbooks and instructional materials, other online/Internet resources (including permissible access), software, and supplies and other materials to support instruction in subject areas and the implementation of standards for student learning. Instructional materials are those used by a significant number of students in a class, or in large-scale implementations, or across a number of grades / grade spans.

“Learning Commons” is an integrated concept of space that brings together the traditional services of a school library as well as those in support of technology and media use.

“Library/media resources” include books, print materials, online/Internet resources (including permissible access), multimedia materials and information technology that, as part of the Learning Commons program, support the school system's curriculum.

“Instructional methods” include those large-scale practices of instruction and/or assessment that are typically adopted across a number of grades or grade spans.

While the Board retains its authority to approve the selection of instructional materials and methods, it recognizes the educational expertise of its professional staff and the need for such staff to be involved in the recommendation of such materials and methods. The Board delegates responsibility for selection to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school system, subject to the criteria and procedures for selection and the Board's policy on challenged materials as described below and in procedure.

With the assistance of professional staff, the Superintendent shall establish a system for the selection of instructional materials and methods, including procedures to establish an orderly process for the review and recommendation of instructional materials and methods. This system will include the involvement of the Board's Curriculum Committee. The Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent and Board Curriculum Committee shall present their recommendations to the full Board regarding the selection of instructional materials and/or methods after completion of the review process. The Board will act on the recommendations of the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent and Board Curriculum Committee concerning instructional materials and methods. The Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent will report to the Board on progress made in aligning instructional materials and methods with curriculum development and program evaluation in support of Maine's system of standards for student learning.

Learning Commons Program

Each school shall maintain a learning commons program that includes books and other print materials, multimedia materials, online Internet resources and information technology that support the curriculum. A certified library-media specialist will be responsible for overseeing the learning commons program, under the supervision of the Superintendent or designee. The Board delegates responsibility for selection of library/media materials and technology and Internet resources to the school system's professionally trained staff, subject to the criteria and procedures for selection and the Board's policy on challenged materials described below.

Objectives of Selection

The Board recognizes that it is the primary objective of instructional materials and methods to implement and support the curriculum, and of library/media resources to extend and enrich the educational programs of the schools. Quality instructional materials and library/media resources are essential to student learning. In preparing students to meet Maine's standards for student learning, in supporting the achievement of the school unit's educational goals and objectives, and in providing enrichment opportunities that expand students' interests and contribute to a desire for lifelong learning, it is the responsibility of the instructional program and the learning commons of the schools to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

Criteria for Selection

Instructional materials and methods, library/media materials, as well as any other materials used in the classroom selected should:

- A. Support achievement of Maine's system of standards for student learning;
- B. Support the goals and objectives of the school system's educational programs;
- C. Enrich and support the curriculum;
- D. Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served;
- E. Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions;
- F. Give comprehensive, accurate and balanced representation to all significant contributors to history, science, leadership and the arts and acknowledge the contributions of ethnic, religious and cultural groups;
- G. Present a balance of opposing sides of controversial issues to enable students to develop capability for critical analysis;
- H. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;

- I. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent decisions in their daily lives;
- J. Incorporate, when appropriate, the use of innovative technology and/or 21st Century learning approaches; and
- K. Respect the constraints of the district budget.

Other factors that should be considered are researched-based success; accuracy and currency of material; importance of the subject matter; scholarship; quality of writing and production; and reputation and significance of the author, artist or composer.

In evaluating software, multimedia materials and online/Internet resources, additional factors that should be considered include purpose for use; content; format (degree of interactivity or student involvement); appropriate use of graphics, sound and animation; feedback provided; the accuracy of information that changes at a fast pace; and ease of use.

The Board recognizes that there are a number of individual materials and resources that professional educators select and use on a daily basis as part of their repertoire. While selection of these would not require Board approval, the Board does expect that the educator will adhere to the criteria and principles outlined in this policy.

Material Replacement

Multiple copies of outstanding and much-in-demand materials should be purchased as needed. Worn or missing standard items should be replaced periodically. Out-of-date or no-longer-useful materials should be withdrawn from the collection/circulation.

Donated Materials

Gift materials are to be evaluated by the same criteria as purchased materials and are to be accepted or rejected by those criteria and in accordance with Board policy on gifts and donations.

Utilization of Adopted Instructional Materials and Methods

Once instructional materials and/or methods have been adopted by the Board, it is the Board's expectation that the materials and/or methods be fully implemented with fidelity, as was intended by the selection. It is understood that this may require additional training or support for staff before full implementation is accomplished. Only after a thorough evaluation of an instructional program, and/or Board action, would materials and/or methods no longer be fully utilized.

Parental Authority

A student's parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the curriculum. The Superintendent will be responsible for developing and implementing

procedures for providing access to instructional material within a reasonable time after such a request is made.

The Board recognizes that the final authority as to what materials an individual student will be exposed rests with that student's parents or guardians. However, at no time will the wishes of one child's parents to restrict his/her reading or viewing of a particular item infringe on other parents' rights to permit their children to read or view the same material.

Learning commons materials will not be removed from the collection because of criticism except in accordance with Board policy.

Challenged Materials

Despite the care taken to select materials for student and teacher use and the qualifications of the persons who select the materials, the Board recognized that objections may be raised occasionally by students, parents, school staff or community members.

In the event a complaint is made regarding instructional materials, library/media resources, or any other materials used in the classroom, the following procedures will apply:

- A.** The complaint shall be heard first by the person providing the materials in question.
- B.** If the complaint is not resolved, the complaint shall be referred to the building principal.
- C.** If the complaint is not resolved, the party submitting the complaint shall be required to fill out the "Challenge of Instructional Materials Form." (IJJ-E) A copy of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent or designee.
- D.** The Superintendent or designee shall appoint a committee composed of the following persons to review the complaint: one principal at the appropriate grade level; one librarian/media specialist; one classroom teacher, and/or the department head in the subject area of the challenged materials; one community member.
- E.** The review committee shall: read and examine the materials referred to them; check general acceptance of materials by reading reviews; weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages or portions pulled out of context; meet to discuss the material and to prepare a written report on it.
- F.** The report of the committee shall be forwarded to the Superintendent or designee who will inform the complainant of the results.
- G.** No materials shall be removed from use until the review committee has made a final decision. The decision of the committee is binding for the individual school or district-wide, depending on the nature of the challenge.

H. The review committee's decision may be appealed to the Board. The Board may set aside a portion of a regular meeting or call a special meeting for the purpose of receiving testimony from representatives of the various points of view. The material in question shall be:

1. Reviewed objectively and in its full content;
2. Evaluated in terms of the needs and interest of students, school, curriculum and community;
3. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and
4. Reviewed in light of the criteria for initial selection and purpose as provided herein.

The Board will announce its decision in writing not later than the conclusion of the next regular meeting of the Board following its receipt of said testimony.

Legal Reference: ***20-A MRS § 1001 (10-A); 1055 (4); 4002***
Ch. 125 §§ 9.01, 9.03 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)
P.L. 107-110 § 1061 (No Child Left Behind Act)

Cross Reference: ***IGA – Curriculum Development and Adoption***
IHA – Basic Instructional Program
IJJ-R - Procedures For Instructional Materials and Methods Selection
IJJ-E – Challenge of Instructional Materials Form
IL – Evaluation of Instructional Programs

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