

## **SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL AND RESEARCH MATERIALS**

The RSU 13 School Board is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the schools, including the provision of instructional and research materials and maintenance of libraries that support the state and RSU 13 curriculum.

While the Board retains its authority to approve the selection of instructional and research materials, it recognizes the expertise of its professional staff and the need for such staff to be involved in the selection of materials. That is, the Board delegates responsibility for the selection of instructional and research materials to the professionally trained personnel employed by RSU 13, subject to the conditions of this policy and accompanying procedures.

With the assistance of professional staff, the Superintendent shall establish a system for the selection of instructional and research materials, including an organized process for the preview and recommendation of materials. The Superintendent shall present recommendations to the Board's Curriculum Committee regarding the selection of textbooks after completion of such a process. The Curriculum Committee will act on the Superintendent's textbook recommendations. The Curriculum Committee will monitor progress made in aligning instructional materials with state and RSU 13 curriculum development and assessments.

Each school shall maintain a library that includes books and other print materials, multimedia materials, online Internet resources and information technology in support of the curriculum and recreational needs of the school community. The Board delegates responsibility for selection of materials for the libraries to RSU 13 certified library media specialists, subject to this policy and accompanying procedures.

### **Definitions**

"Materials" include textbooks and other print materials, software and other electronic materials, online/Internet resources (including access), and other materials to support learning in subject areas and programs as required by state and RSU 13 curriculum

"Instructional materials" are the predominant instructional materials used by most members of a course, are used for a significant portion of the course or receive major emphasis during a course, or are essential to student achievement of state and RSU 13 curriculum

"Research materials" are materials that are available in a classroom, computer lab, or school library to extend or enrich the curriculum or program, but use is not required for all students in any class. "Research materials" also include reading materials that a student could use to access recreational reading or to pursue personal inquiry.

"Parent" includes the parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in a school operated by RSU 13.

### **Objectives of Materials Selection**

The Board recognizes that the primary purpose of instructional materials is to support a specific instructional program, and of research materials is to extend and enrich the instructional programs of RSU 13 schools. Quality instructional materials and research materials are both essential to student learning. It is the responsibility of RSU 13 schools and libraries to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

The collection of instructional and research materials available to students shall:

- A. Enrich, support and extend the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served;
- B. Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions;
- C. Give comprehensive, accurate and balanced representation to race and gender in history, science, leadership and the arts and acknowledge the contributions of ethnic, religious and cultural groups to American heritage;
- D. Present a balance of opposing sides of controversial issues to enable students to develop a capability for critical analysis;
- E. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, personal inquiry, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
- F. Provide a background of information through a broad selection of fiction and nonfiction materials in a variety of formats that will enable students to make informed and intelligent decisions in their daily lives;
- G. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library media center and a variety of resources to be used in the instructional program; and
- H. Respect the constraints of the RSU 13 budget.

### **Criteria for Materials Selection**

In accomplishing the objectives listed above, the following criteria will also be applied to selection of specific materials:

- A. Accuracy and current relevance of material;
- B. Importance of the subject matter;
- C. Scholarship, quality of writing and production;
- D. Reputation and significance of the author, artist, composer, or technician;
- E. Alignment of content, degree of interactivity or student involvement and intended use;
- F. Appropriate use of graphics, sound and animation; and
- G. Ease of use.

### **Procedures for Selection**

Meeting the needs of RSU 13 schools, based on knowledge of the curriculum and the existing collections of instructional and research materials, shall be the highest priority.

- A. Purchases of instructional materials are to take priority over purchases of research materials.
- B. Before recommending materials for purchase, professional staff shall evaluate the existing collection, consulting reputable, professionally prepared selection aids and specialists from all affected departments and grade levels.

- C. Social studies and science textbooks shall not be older than five years unless up-to-date supplemental instructional materials are also available, as long as this is a requirement in state rules.
- D. Purchase of research materials shall be made only after personal evaluation by the librarian-media specialist or instructional technology personnel. Reviewing aids may be used in lieu of personal evaluation.
- E. Multiple copies of outstanding and much-in-demand materials will be purchased as needed.
- F. Donated 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.
- G. Worn or missing items will be replaced periodically.
- H. Materials that are no longer useful, as determined by the Superintendent in consultation with the school principal, will be withdrawn from the collection/circulation.

### **Parental Authority**

A parent may inspect, upon written request, any instructional or research material used in an RSU 13 program. The Superintendent will be responsible for procedures to provide parents with access to instructional material within a reasonable time after such a request is made.

The Board recognizes that the final authority as to the materials an individual student will use rests with that student's parents. However, at no time will the wishes of one parent infringe on any other parent's right to permit their students currently enrolled to read or view the same material.

Community members who are not parents of any students currently enrolled in RSU 13 schools have no right to restrict the use of instructional or research materials.

Library materials will not be removed from the collection because of criticism except in accordance with this policy and accompanying procedures.

### **Challenged Materials**

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

In the event a complaint is made, the following procedures will apply:

- A. The complaint shall be heard first by the RSU 13 staff person providing the materials in question.
- B. If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant shall be referred to the building Principal and requested to fill out the "Instructional and Research Materials Challenge Form." A copy of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent.
- C. A Review Committee, approved by the Superintendent, shall be composed of the following stakeholders to review the complaint: one Principal employed at the appropriate grade level, recommended by the Superintendent; one library/media specialist, recommended by the district librarians; two teachers (other than the person who selected the material in question) with experience and knowledge in the area of the challenged materials, recommended by the teachers in the school that generated the complaint; one member of the School Board's

Curriculum Committee, recommended by the Curriculum Committee; and one community member, recommended by the building principal.

- D. 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, pursuant to Board Procedures 3.11P.
- E. The report of the Review Committee shall be forwarded to the Superintendent who will inform the complainant of the results and post them pursuant to Board Procedures 3.11P.
- F. No materials shall be removed from use until the Review Committee has made a final recommendation to the Board.
- G. 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, and curriculum;
  - 3. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and
  - 4. Reviewed in light of the criteria for initial selection and purpose as provided herein.
- H. 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, or twenty (20) days, whichever is longer.

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

Cross Reference: IJJ F – Instructional and Research Materials Challenge Form  
IJJ P – Complaint Review Committee Procedures

Approved: 3/7/13