

Lower Merion School District

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Policy No.: 108
Section: PROGRAMS
Title: CURRICULUM AND RESOURCE MATERIALS –
SELECTION, ADOPTION, REVIEW, AND OBJECTIONS
Date Last Revised: 5/20/24; 4/3/20; 11/9/18; 4/11/14; 11/2013; 8/20/01; reviewed 1/2/12

**R108 CURRICULUM AND RESOURCE MATERIALS –
SELECTION, ADOPTION, REVIEW, AND OBJECTIONS**

I. Introduction

It is the intent of the Lower Merion School District to provide, free of cost to students of all grades, necessary textbooks and other materials required in the conduct of all instructional programs in the District in accordance with the School Code of Pennsylvania.

In order to (1) give direction to the selection and evaluation of textbooks and other instructional materials; (2) provide the Board of School Directors with recommendations regarding the purchase of materials; and (3) use broad professional resources in the selection and evaluation of textbooks and other instructional materials, the following responsibilities and procedures are set forth:

II. Selection and Adoption Procedures

A. Curriculum Materials

The Superintendent or their designee shall review all lists of textbooks and other instructional materials submitted by the schools for adoption or change and shall submit the final recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools on or before April 1 annually.

In addition, the Superintendent or their designee shall receive all recommendations from District-wide curriculum committees for textbook adoption or change, shall involve others, as appropriate, in reviewing the recommendations, and shall submit the final recommendations for textbook adoption or change to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall submit annually to the Board of School Directors a list of supplementary and basic textbooks and other instructional materials which are recommended for adoption or change.

The Superintendent or their designee shall be responsible for informing all staff members of the policy on coverage of controversial issues in the curriculum. In doing so they shall emphasize the basic assumption that the ideas that may transcend traditional curricular topics and raise questions about current social, political, technical, philosophical, religious and other problems are appropriate for incorporation to the curriculum regardless of the

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controversial nature of the topic as long as, on divided issues, differing views are carefully presented.

A teacher who is in doubt concerning the advisability of discussing certain issues and materials in the classroom shall confer with the principal as to the appropriateness of doing so. The principal should involve the department chair or establish a special review procedure. If the teacher and principal are unable to agree, the issue should be referred to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

B. Resource Materials

Resource materials are to be selected to implement, enrich, and support the educational program for all students. 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.

In order to ensure the selection of appropriate print and non-print library materials, the Curriculum Department, the principals, and the librarians shall select library materials in accordance with the following criteria:

1) *Content*

- a. What is the importance of the subject matter to the curriculum?
- b. What is the permanence of the materials?
- c. Has the material been listed in any of the recognized selection aids?
- d. What is the reputation and standards of the publisher/producer in relation to desirable materials for schools?
- e. Is the author/illustrator qualified to produce in this particular field?
- f. Is the subject matter accurate?
- g. Is it suitable for the age and maturity level of the student for whom it is intended?
- h. Is the literary quality as measured by style, vocabulary, sentence structure, and form appropriate and effective for the subject matter and for the reader for whom it is intended?
- i. Does the subject matter, including illustrations and graphics, address aesthetic and ethical values?

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- j. Is the quality of the material as high as or better than other material already in the collection, and not a duplication of existing material?

2) Physical Features

- a. Is the format of the material satisfactory in size, margins, appearance, and media?
- b. Is the text readable, legible, and clear?
- c. Is the binding of print material durable and satisfactory?
- d. Is the price of the material commensurate with other current needs?
- e. Is there an adequate index?

3) Additional Criteria for Selection of Library Media

- a. The following recommended lists shall be consulted in the selection of library media, but selection is not limited to their listings:
 - i. *American Historical Fiction*
 - ii. *Basic Book Collection for Elementary Grades*
 - iii. *The Best in Children's Books*
 - iv. *Children and Books* v. *Children's Catalog*
 - v. *Elementary School Library Collection*
 - vi. *European Historical Fiction and Biography*
 - vii. *Guide to Sources in Educational Media*
 - viii. *Middle School Catalog*
 - ix. *Reference Books for School Libraries*
 - x. *Subject Guide to Books in Print*
 - xi. *Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades*
 - xii. *Subject Index to Books for Primary Grades*
- b. Generally Accepted Current Reviewing Media
 - i. *AASA Science Books and Films*
 - ii. *American Film and Video Association Evaluations*
 - iii. *Booklist*
 - iv. *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* v. *Horn Book*
 - v. *Kirkus Reviews*
 - vi. *New York Times Book Review*
 - vii. *School Library Journal*
 - viii. *VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)*

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c. Other Sources

- i. Publishers' and dealers' brochures and catalogs
- ii. Professional staff's suggestions: Specialized instructional materials are to be cleared with the supervisors and technical teachers before ordering
- iii. Students' suggestions
- iv. Various courses of study v. Book store stock
- v. Material exhibits and display

d. Duplication

The purchase of duplicate materials shall be determined by the needs of the instructional program.

e. Gifts

Gift material shall be judged by the same standards as materials that are purchased. Materials that do not meet these standards will not be accepted. It will be up to the discretion of the librarian to make this decision.

f. Culling the Library Media Collection

The criteria for the regular culling or removal of old, worn, or damaged materials that are no longer useful are the same as those used for selection.

Resource materials do not have to be adopted by the Board.

III. Curriculum Review by Parents/Guardians and Students

Upon request by a parent/guardian, student who is eighteen (18) or older, or emancipated minor ("requestor"), the District will make existing information available about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques (collectively "curriculum information").

The following process is to be followed in connection with any such parental/guardian request for curriculum information related to their child:

1. To assist the District in providing the correct information as requested by the requestor, the request must be in writing setting forth the specific information sought.
2. The written request shall be sent to the building principal.

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3. The District will respond to the requestor within ten (10) school days in one of the following ways:
 - (a) Providing the information requested;
 - (b) Designating the time/date/location for the review of curriculum information;
or
 - (c) Requesting further clarification as to the curriculum information requested/review sought. If the scope of the curriculum information reasonably precludes a response providing the curriculum information within ten (10) school days, the requestor shall be informed of when such information is expected to be available.
4. The District may take necessary action to protect its curriculum information from loss, damage or alteration and to ensure the integrity of the files, including designating an employee to monitor the review of the curriculum information by the requestor.
5. Requestor may not alter, damage, destroy, photograph, photocopy or otherwise reproduce or remove any curriculum information provided for review. The taking of notes by requestors is permitted.
6. Requests for copies of curriculum information shall be handled pursuant to Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 801 (Community Access to School District Records)
7. Tests are not considered curriculum information until they are actually administered.

Teachers may choose to share additional curriculum information about their own class beyond that required by this policy and regulation at their own discretion.

Members of the public who are not otherwise entitled to information or access to review curriculum information in accordance with this Administrative Regulation and the accompanying Board Policy may request access to District records in accordance with Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 801 (Community Access to School District Records).

Requestors should note that all District records, including electronic and video recorded information, are not maintained indefinitely and, as such, are not available for review indefinitely. Board Policy & Administrative Regulation 705 (Safety and Security) and 800 (Records Management) detail the procedures in place regarding retention of video recordings and records.

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IV. Objections to Curriculum and Resource Materials

An individual student may be excused from curriculum or other class activities based upon religious or other objections to the content of the instruction or activity. Depending on the nature of the objection, the teacher may then assign the student alternate activities of as comparable merit, as reasonably possible. Similarly, members of the school community may object to curriculum or instructional materials generally. Although individuals may be excused from the activity, the continuation of the activity by class, school or District shall not be restricted or otherwise remove the item from the schools until final disposition has been determined pursuant to the following process:

1. Staff members shall attempt to resolve objections to instructional materials informally. If unable to do so, the objection shall be reported to the building principal.
2. The principal shall contact the person who has objected to the instructional material to discuss the objection and attempt to resolve it by explaining the philosophy and goals of the course of study or library/information center.
3. If the objection is not resolved, the person who objects shall be supplied with information including Policy 108, this administrative regulation, and a standard formal objection form (Attachment A). This form must be completed and returned to the Office of Elementary Education or Office of Secondary Education, whichever is applicable, within ten school days of receipt.
4. If the formal objection has not been received by the Office of Elementary Education or Office of Secondary Education, whichever is applicable, within ten school days, the objection shall be considered closed.
5. No materials shall be removed from the school until a final determination is made. However, access to objectionable materials can be denied to the child(ren) of any parents or guardians making the challenge, if they so desire. If access is denied, an appropriate alternative assignment will be made.
6. Within ten school days of the receipt of a completed formal objection, the appropriate central office administrator as designated by the Superintendent shall convene and chair a committee to consider the objection. This committee shall

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consist of a teacher(s), a librarian, a representative from the Home and School Association where the objection originated, and a department chairperson (secondary).

7. After the committee meets to discuss the objection, a written report containing the recommendations and disposition of the matter shall be prepared and forwarded to the Superintendent.
8. The Superintendent shall respond to the person who has raised the objection after reviewing the committee's report. The Superintendent may also seek the advice of authorities outside of the District before responding. If a decision is made to maintain the materials that cause the objection, a written explanation shall be provided to the person who made the objection. If the objection is valid, the Superintendent shall acknowledge it and direct the appropriate adjustments.
9. If the person who objects is still not satisfied, they may ask the Superintendent to present an appeal to the Curriculum Committee of the Board of School Directors.
10. If the Curriculum Committee is unable to resolve the objection, a review of the appeal will be presented to the Board. In making its final determination, the Board may seek assistance from outside educational organizations and/or legal counsel.

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ATTACHMENT A

LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT
OBJECTION TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL OR TOPIC

Author _____ Type of Instructional Material/Topic _____

Title _____

Publisher and Date (if known) _____

Objection initiated by _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

Person objecting represents:

_____ self

_____ (organization) _____

_____ (other group) _____

1. To what in the instructional material/topic do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, use additional paper if needed.)

Three horizontal lines for providing a detailed response to the objection question.

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2. What do you feel might be the result of learning from this instructional material/topic?

3. For what age group would you recommend this instructional material/topic? _____

4. Is there anything of educational value in this instructional material/topic?

5. Did you read the entire instructional material/topic? _____ If not, what parts did you read?

6. Has a member of the staff informed you of the value of the instructional material/topic and the reason for its selection?

7. What do you believe is the theme of this instructional material/topic?

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8. What would you like the School District to do about this instructional material/topic?

-
- do not assign it to students
 - withdraw it from the school
 - refer it to an official committee for re-evaluation
 - make its use optional
 - other

9. In its place, what instructional material/topic of equal literary or educational quality would you recommend?

Signature

Date
