

### 2510 ADOPTION OF TEXTBOOKS

The Watchung Borough Board of Education believes that textbooks should support and enrich the curriculum and make possible the achievement of the district's instructional goals. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for continual review of new texts being offered and evaluation of those already in use to ensure that the textbooks used in this district are up to date in the factual matter they present and further the district's instructional goals. All textbooks and required courses of study shall be presented to the Board by the Superintendent for the Board's approval.

Textbooks and instructional materials should be judged by additional standards which shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Does the material reflect the district's affirmative action/equity policy, which prohibits the teaching or encouragement of bias based on any categories listed in law or Board policy?
- B. Does it help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking?
- C. Does it provide effective basic or advanced education for the students for whom it is intended?

The review process shall:

- A. Be conducted by teaching staff members, particularly those teachers who will be using the materials as an integral part of the instructional program;
- B. Include a written review of the material which shall reflect the consensus of the teaching staff;
- C. Provide an opportunity for public inspection of the recommended text;
- D. Materials support instruction that is aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards;
- E. Materials are interesting.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative rules outlining a procedure for the selection of instructional materials that meets the above criteria. Instructional materials used within the district should be sufficient in quantity and scope to meet the needs of every student in the district.



The Board, by law, makes the final textbook selection decision. However, prior to final adoption, the recommendations resulting from each review will be given thorough consideration.

The use of challenged materials or equipment by class or school shall not be restricted until a final decision has been reached.

The final decision on controversial reading matter shall rest with the Board after careful examination and discussion of the book or reading matter with school officials or others the Board may wish to involve.

Any citizen who objects to the final selections made by the Board should follow the procedures outlined in Board policy.

The Board of Education is legally responsible for the selection of all instructional materials used in the Watchung Borough Schools. Since the Board is the policy-making body, it delegates to the professional personnel of the district the authority and responsibility for the actual selection of materials.

For the purpose of this statement, "instructional materials" is defined as all those materials having instructional content and intended for use by teachers with children or by children themselves. Instructional materials include (but are not limited to): library books, text books, pamphlets, periodicals, pictures, films, filmstrips, recordings, tapes, slides, transparencies, maps, globes, charts and compact discs.

Instructional materials and texts other than the instructional media center materials shall be chosen by a committee selected by the administration. Final decisions on purchase, however, shall also rest with the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

The selection of materials for inclusion in the instructional media centers shall be made on the basis of the following:

- A. The needs of students to assist in the achievement of the Core Curriculum Content Standards;
- B. The value of the material in relation to the existing collection.

The criteria listed by the American Association of School Librarians shall be used in evaluating instructional media center materials. Copies of said criteria shall be in each school's instructional media center.



Each book or material shall be considered as a whole; an isolated incident or an unsavory word should not be taken out of context.

Gifts shall be accepted only if they meet standards and shall be subjected to the same criteria as any other material.

Outdated and irreparable materials shall be discarded at the discretion of the administration.

### Animal Dissection

Animal dissection is not required and alternative education to be provided:

The Board, by law, will allow students to refuse to participate in animal dissection.

- A. The Board will offer an alternate education program for a course or portion of a course involving dissection of animals.
- B. A public school student from Kindergarten through grade eight may refuse to dissect, vivisection, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction:
  1. "Alternative education project" means the use of video tapes, models, films, books, computers, or any other tools which provide an alternative method for obtaining and testing the knowledge, information, or experience required by a course of study.
  2. "Animal" means any living organism that is an invertebrate, or is in the phylum chordata or organisms which have a notochord and includes an animal's cadaver or severed parts of an animal's cadaver.
- C. The school shall notify students and their parents or guardians of the right to decline to participate in the activities enumerated in subsection A. of this section and shall authorize parents or guardians to assert the right of their children to refuse to participate in these activities. Within a week of the receipt of the notice, the students, parents or guardians shall notify the school if the right to decline participation in the enumerated activities will be exercised.



- D. Any student who chooses to refrain from participation in or observation of a portion of a course of instruction in accordance with this section shall be offered an alternative education project for the purpose of providing the student with the factual knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study. A student may refuse to participate in an alternative education project which involves or necessitates any harmful use of an animal or animal parts.
- E. A student shall not be discriminated against, in grading or in any other manner, based upon a decision to exercise the rights afforded pursuant to this act.

N.J.S.A. 18A:34-1; 18A:34-2

Adopted: 19 October 2016

