

RESOURCE MATERIALS AND DISPLAYS

It shall be the policy of the Chester Board of Education to provide resource materials and displays within the District that are appropriate for the subject area and for the age, intellectual development and ability level of the students for whom the materials and displays are selected.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view and to allow the review of allegedly concerning materials through established procedures;
- To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and personal needs of the students, taking into consideration their varied interests, abilities and learning styles;
- To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards;
- To provide a background of information which will enable pupils to make intelligent, fact-based judgments in their daily lives;
- To provide materials on opposing sides of issues so that users may develop the practice of critical analysis; and
- To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials and displays of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

- Educational goals of the District, individual student learning modes, teaching styles, curricula needs, faculty and student needs, existing materials and networking arrangements should be considered in selecting the materials;
- Resource materials and displays shall not contain obscene materials in accordance with NJ Statute Title 2C:34-3 "Obscenity For Persons Under 18";
- If resource materials and/or displays contain controversial issues, pursuant to Policy 6144, or items that are not age or developmentally appropriate, the materials will be made available to parents/guardians for their awareness through email notification and/or take home materials;
- Prior to any material being recommended for inclusion, the potential materials shall have been reviewed and approved by the building principal or the appropriate school administrator. Guidelines for the evaluation and selection of curricula resources can be found in accompanying Administrative Regulations.

RESOURCE MATERIALS AND DISPLAYS SHOULD:

- Support learning through enrichment of the curriculum and/or students' personal interests;
- Contribute to the objectives of the instructional program;
- Represent artistic, historic and literary qualities;
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial subjects (Pursuant to Policy 6144);
- Provide a stimulus to creativity;

- Be of acceptable technical quality, clear narration and sound, synchronized pictures and sound
- Be readable, typographically well-balanced; and
- For non-fiction resources, incorporate accurate and authentic factual content.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

- The Board of Education is legally responsible for the adoption of policy under which the school district operates.
- The school administration is responsible for the selection of instructional materials;
- The Chief School Administrator (CSA) will provide final disposition on any resource material or displays of a controversial nature;
- Any material(s) that may be considered controversial in nature, obscene, or inappropriate shall be provided to the Board of Education for awareness;
- Material recommendations may be based on expertise or suggestions from librarians, administrators, teachers, other District personnel, parents, and community members;
- Gifts and donations of materials must go through the same process and materials must align with the same selection criteria as purchased materials;
- School administrators are responsible for providing a list of all resource material recommendations to the Superintendent for review in the event of potentially controversial materials;
- Upon Superintendent's approval, the final list of materials for purchase, including pricing, shall be provided to the Board of Education for financial approval;
- Selection of materials is an ongoing process that includes the periodic replacement or repair of materials still of educational value; and
- For materials pertaining to the library, the certified media specialist shall keep a documented list of resources to be added or removed from the library and shared with the Superintendent.

APPROPRIATE MATERIAL

It is the District's objective to choose material that provides rich educational and/or literary content appropriate to students in the District. Parents/guardians have the ultimate say of what to introduce to their child and what they deem appropriate for their child's age. The District will prioritize resource materials suitable for educational goals that do not contain sexualized content, pursuant to N.J. Statute 2C:34-3.

Elementary Schools

No materials in elementary schools shall contain:

- Sexualized content;
- Lewd, vulgar or profane content; or
- Visual depictions of nudity—not including materials with diagrams about anatomy for science or content relating to classical works of art.

Middle Schools

No materials in middle schools shall contain:

- Sexualized content, unless there is a legitimate pedagogical reason for such content in the context of the resource material;
- Lewd or vulgar content; or

- Visual depictions of nudity—not including materials with diagrams about anatomy for science or content relating to classical works of art.

In selecting resource materials for middle school students, the selectors shall seek to prioritize the selection of materials that do not contain sexualized content. District comprehensive health and physical education educators shall stress a culture of abstinence from sexual activity in accordance with NJ Revised Statute Title 18A:35-4.21.

All curricular and accompanying materials can be found on the district website under the Curriculum tab for parental review.

- As per Administrative Regulations, questions on curricular and display materials can be directed to the building principal and/or superintendent;
- Chester Board of Education Policy 1312 Community Complaints and Inquiries outlines the procedures to be followed as directed per Policy 6161.2 Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials.

OPTIMIZING RESOURCES IN THE LIBRARY

A good collection development plan must include weeding on a routine basis to ensure that the collection remains timely and appropriate. The process of weeding is a key part of curating/assessing the collection. It helps keep the collection relevant, accurate, and useful, and it facilitates more effective use of space in the library. A thorough weeding is accomplished at least once every third year. Criteria for weeding of materials include poor physical condition, outdated content, obscene materials, and/or lack of circulation. Lost, damaged, or worn books are not automatically replaced. The decision to replace materials is based on availability and continued relevance; also considered are the availability of duplicates, the number of other books on the same subject, the availability of more recent or better material, more appropriate material, and the continued demand for the book in question. All materials are selected to provide a balanced collection. A wide range of recognized classics should be maintained in each library. As is required for any applicable resource materials, upon Superintendent's approval, the final list of materials for purchase, including pricing, shall be reviewed by the Board of Education as part of the school district budgeting process. The process of weeding will be further defined in Administrative Regulations.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Although Board policy and the outlined selection criteria may provide guidance to students, the ultimate determination of appropriateness for a student lies with the parent of that student.
- The Board recognizes that parents/guardians hold an essential role in the education of their children and have the right to guide what their children learn.
- Schools administrators, media specialists and library staff are to encourage parents to share any concerns regarding their students' resource materials.
- The District will honor and accommodate individual requests by parents/guardians, within reason, which may include restricting their child access to specific resource materials.

Legal Reference: N.J.S.A. 2C:34-3 Obscenity For Persons Under 18
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.21 Abstinence from sexual activity stressed in curriculum

Possible

Cross References: 1312 Community Complaints and Inquiries
6144 Controversial Issues
6161.1 Guidelines for evaluation and selection of instructional materials
6161.2 Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials
6163.1 Media Center/Library