

## **POST FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 273**

Series 500: Student Policy: General

Policy No. 508.8

Policy Title: Instructional Media

Page 1 of 5

### **ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Meaningful education requires teachers and students enjoy academic freedom and exercise academic responsibility. Academic freedom allows qualified teachers to present and encourage discussion issues. The goal of academic freedom is to foster critical thinking and the free exchange of ideas in an atmosphere of mutual respect. With that freedom is a corresponding responsibility to discuss issues only after giving consideration to the relevance of the subject matter to classroom or curriculum objectives, the maturity of the students, and the diversity of community values. Public concerns about particular subject matter may be addressed through the challenged materials procedure.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

The Board of Trustees is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the Post Falls School District.

The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained and certificated staff employed by the school system. For the purpose of this rule the term instructional materials includes printed materials, audio visual materials, classroom materials, online materials and software, whether considered text materials or media center materials (media)

While selection of material involves many people (principals, teachers, students, supervisors, community persons and media specialists), the responsibility for coordinating the selection of most instructional materials and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the building administrator, certificated media personnel or other designated library personnel. For the purpose of this rule the term media specialist includes librarians, school media specialists or other appropriately certificated persons responsible for selection of media.

Responsibility for coordinating the selection of text materials for distribution to classes will rest with the building administrator, appropriate department chairperson or with the textbook evaluation committee. For the purpose of this rule the term text materials includes textbooks and other print and non-print material provided in multiple copies for use in class or a major segment of such a class.

### **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

The following criteria will be used as applicable:

Materials will support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the district and the objectives of specific courses.

Materials will meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.

Materials will be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.

Materials will have aesthetic, literary or social value.

Materials chosen will be by competent and qualified authors and producers.

Materials will be chosen to foster respect for women, minority and ethnic groups, the elderly and the handicapped, and will realistically represent our pluralistic society, along with the roles open to both women and men in today's world. Materials will be designed to help students gain an awareness and understanding of the many important contributions made to our civilization by women, minority and ethnic groups, the elderly and the handicapped.

Materials will clarify the multiple historical and contemporary forces with their economic, political and religious dimensions which have operated to the disadvantage and advantage of women, minority and ethnic groups, the elderly and the handicapped.

Materials will be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviors and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in a pluralistic, non-sexist society.

Physical format and appearance of materials shall be suitable for their intended use.

## PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS

### Media Center Materials (Media)

The district has the authority to regulate education and to determine the contents of the library collection. However, the board recognizes students' First Amendment constitutional rights. The school and classroom libraries of the district are guided by the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and by the Idaho Children's School and Library Protection Act.

School library books are provided primarily for the use of district students and staff. Use of library books outside of the district is prohibited except for interlibrary loan agreements with other libraries.

In selecting materials for purchase for the media center, the media specialist or the designated person on site, will evaluate the existing collection and the curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared selection aids and other appropriate sources. For the purpose of this rule the term media includes all materials considered part of the library collection, plus all instructional materials housed in resource centers and classrooms (if any) which are not text materials. For the purpose of this rule, the term media center is the space, room or complex of rooms and spaces designated as a library, media center, instructional materials center or similar term.

Media centers may maintain special collections to support the unique needs of each school to include a section requiring parental consent to access materials for minor students. Students over the age of 18 may check out materials without parental consent. The superintendent or designee shall develop guidelines for special collections in accordance with board policy, state and federal laws.

Recommendations for purchase will be solicited from patrons, student body and faculty.

Gift materials may be accepted in accordance with district policy 702.5 Gifts, Grants, Bequests. The school librarian shall evaluate whether a donated item meets the criteria for acceptance and ensure it is added to the collection or discarded according to the criteria in this policy.

Selection is an ongoing process which will include the removal of materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value.

#### Text Material

Text materials committees will be appointed at the time that text adoption areas are determined. Appropriate subject area, instructional level, media personnel and patrons will be included in each committee. At least half of this committee must include parents of students attending the schools within the district.

Criteria for text materials consistent with the general criteria for materials selection will be developed by the text materials evaluation committee.

The committee will present its recommendation to the superintendent or his/her designee. The superintendent or his/her designee will take the recommendation(s) to the board.

#### SENSITIVE MATERIALS

The major criteria for selecting materials for instruction should be that the material is integral to the lessons and will enhance student learning. Material must be previewed by the teacher to identify:

1. Whether it contains information that might be considered sensitive by parents or students.
2. Whether the material being considered is so integral to the lesson that the advantage to the students outweighs the sensitive nature of anything contained within it.
3. Whether the sensitive items within the material can be removed without significantly changing the effectiveness of the material. (Please refer to Guidelines for Viewing Rated Films in the Classroom if appropriate.)

If the teacher decides that the material is so important to the lesson that it should be used regardless of sensitive items within it, and if he/she feels the sensitive items cannot be removed without significantly reducing the effectiveness of the material, the teacher must:

1. Inform the building administrator.
2. Inform the students the sensitive material will be used, they are free to excuse themselves from the lesson presentation, and they will be assigned an alternate activity if they choose to be excused.
3. Inform the students and parents the sensitive material will be used by sending home the Sensitive Material Parent Permission form at least ten (10) days prior to the lesson. Students who do not return the Sensitive Material Parent Permission form **will participate in the alternate activity**. The teacher **must** be present when sensitive materials are presented.

## CHALLENGED MATERIALS

The primary purpose of having instructional materials is to implement, enrich and support the educational programs of the district. Therefore, a wide range of material at appropriate maturity levels, with diversity of appeal, and including various points of view, should be available.

Parents/guardians have the right to guide the reading, viewing, and listening of their own children and must likewise give the same right to other parents/guardians. The board has a constitutional obligation to not remove materials simply because a parent/guardian disagrees with the subject matter unless such ideas are in violation of I.C. 18-1514. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution encompasses not only freedom to share one's views but also freedom to receive information.

Any parent/guardian of a district student, any student, or any employee may formally challenge a specific learning material item used by the district's educational program. Challenges will only be accepted from individuals belonging to at least one of these groups.

In the interest of handling these complaints objectively and expeditiously, these procedures will be followed:

Concerns regarding instructional materials will be discussed by the complainant with the teacher or librarian. Continuing concerns will be addressed in a meeting with complainant, teacher or librarian and principal. If the situation cannot be resolved, the complainant will be given the Controversial Materials packet which will include the Request for Review of Educational Materials form or the Request for Review of Media Materials form.

The principal will appoint and chair the review committee consisting of two parents and/or patrons, two teachers/librarians and a counselor. The Rationale for Use of Instructional Material and the Sensitive Material Parent Permission form, if used, will be submitted by the teacher or librarian to the review committee. The complainant and teacher or librarian will be invited to present their positions to the review committee. The committee will select a person to act as secretary who will keep accurate written records of each meeting. The review committee will make its decision within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Request for Review of Educational Materials or the Request for Review of Media Materials form. Upon presentation to the review committee, a recommendation will be made based upon the entire work. The Review Committee Decision will be forwarded to the complainant, teacher or librarian, principal and superintendent or his/her designee.

Generally, access to challenged material will not be restricted during the reconsideration process. However, in unusual circumstances, the material may be removed temporarily.

The complainant or teacher/librarian has the option of either accepting the review committee's decision or appealing to the Board of Trustees. If either party chooses to appeal, he/she must then notify the principal within ten (10) days of receipt of the review committee's decision. The principal will, in turn, notify the superintendent or his/her designee.

The superintendent or designee will notify the complainant of the correct procedures to be followed for presenting his/her objection before the board. The final decision will be made by the board.

Upon appeal of the review committee's decision to the board, the superintendent or designee will

notify the board an appeal has been filed. The superintendent or designee will provide the board with all materials and information that have been accumulated as a result of the Request for Review of Educational Materials or the Request for Review of Media Materials. After review of these materials, the board will hold a meeting in open session to hear presentations from the complainant and the teacher/librarian. The board will then make a final determination on the use of the challenged material and notify the complainant and teacher/ librarian of their decision within forty-five (45) days of conducting the appeal hearing.

Legal References:	I.C. § 33-118A	Curricular Materials – Adoption Procedures
	I.C. § 33-512A	District Trustees - District Curricular Materials Adoption Committees
	I.C. § 18-1514(6)	Obscene Materials
	I.C. § 19-1814 B	Children’s School and Library Protection Act
	IDAPA 08.02.03.128	Curricular Materials Selection

Applicable Procedural Regulations: 508.8a, 508.8b, 508.8c, 508.8d, 508.8e, 508.8f

Date of Adoption: 2/12/96

Revised: 9/12/22, 8/12/24

Reviewed: 2017, 2021, 2022, 2024